

7 SW2003/0766/F - TO SITE A 10M. X 6M. TIMBER CLAD DEMOUNTABLE BUILDING WITHIN THE GROUNDS OF MUCH BIRCH PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE AND A NURSERY CLASS, 8.15AM - 5.45PM, TO INCLUDE 2 CAR PARKING SPACES AT THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE, MUCH BIRCH C P SCHOOL, MUCH BIRCH, HEREFORD, HR2 8HL

For: Ms M Roberts, Farm Childcare Group, Bromley Court, Hoarwithy, Hereford, HR2 6QN

Date Received: 11th March 2003 Ward: Pontrilas

Grid Ref: 5013 3087

Expiry Date: 6th May 2003

Local Member: Councillor G. W. Davis

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Much Birch Primary School is situated 100 metres north-west of the crossroads at which Tump Lane joins the south-western side of the A49(T) and the Class III road (C1263) joins the A49(T) from the north-west. Pedestrian and vehicular access for the school is directly onto the C1263 road. There is a parking area in front of the main building of the school. The site is on a grassed area. There is a surfaced playground between the site and the C1263 road.
- 1.2 The proposal entails erecting a 10 metres by 6 metres demountable timber clad building providing 16 places in the south-eastern part of the school site immediately adjacent to the modern stone walled and treed boundary of The Old School House. The applicant has also served notice on the owners of The Old School House such that the applicant and one other person can park at this private residence. It is between 28 to 34 metres away from the metalled edge of the hedgerow lined roadside boundary of the C1263 road.
- 1.3 The building is proposed to be used as a 16 place nursery for 3 and 4 year olds between 9.00 a.m. and 3.15 p.m., and an after school care facility until 5.45 p.m. The school hours are 8.50 a.m. to 3.15 p.m.

2. Policies

2.1 Planning Policy Guidance

PPG.17 - Sport and Recreation

2.2 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

Policy CTC.2 - Area of Great Landscape Value

Policy CTC.9 - Development Requirements

2.3 South Herefordshire District Local Plan

- Policy GD.1 - General Development Criteria
- Policy CF.1 - Retention and Provision of New Community Facilities
- Policy C.8 - Area of Great Landscape Value

3. Planning History

- 3.1 SW1999/2574/F Extension to provide additional classroom and relocate mobile classroom - Approved 02.12.98
- SW2002/0977/F Single storey extension to existing classroom - Approved 28.05.02

4. Consultation Summary

- 4.1 The Highways Agency has no objections.
- 4.2 The Sports Council does not object as the land affected is incapable of forming part of a playing pitch nor is it likely to have an adverse impact on current use of sporting facilities.

5. Representations

- 5.1 Much Birch Parish Council have no objections.
- 5.2 In a letter that accompanied the application, the applicant makes the following main points:

- the Farm Childcare Group based in Hoarwithy have provided child care for over a decade
- growth in demand, been working with schools on or near their sites, helping working parents (Little Dewchurch and Kings Cople to date)
- want to provide before school from 8.15 a.m. and after school care until 5.45 p.m.
- building will also be used as a nursery for 3 and 4 years (9.00 a.m. - 3.15 p.m). This will ease demand for places at The Farm, and Step by Step
- concern with congestion, over 100 cars arrive between 3 and 3.20 p.m., car park can only serve 15 cars at a time
- local residents have complained about their driveways being used for turning in and blocking. Police have even been involved this term. By escorting 16 - 20 children to after school care hopefully this will ease the traffic congestion.

- 5.3 One letter of representation has been received from:

Mr. & Mrs. Padden, Fair View, Much Birch, HR2 8HL

The following main points are raised:

- how many weeks a year will the facility be operating?
- building type is not clear due to poor photocopy. At least one tree will need to be removed

- application states no new access required, although one is indicated between school site and The Old School House
- car parking arrangement only temporary, could change in the future, would affect value of their property if made permanent
- lived here since 1976, it was a small village school of some 100 pupils, now 200. Children coming from Hereford City and Wormbridge due to closure of school there
- traffic congestion chronic in afternoon, often unable to leave property. Vehicles turning on my property
- proposal will not help as suggested, it will exasperate matters. Already children dropped off at 8.00 a.m. onwards, parking beyond the Monastery
- then at 4.30 p.m. road becomes busy again, people returning from work, using this 60 mph road, in spite of repeated protests by the Parish Council
- stated hours of business 8.15 a.m. - 5.45 p.m. will extend, as working parents find themselves delayed
- This commercial enterprise not required, already facilities in the village.

The full text of these letters can be inspected at Southern Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

6. Officers Appraisal

- 6.1 This proposal has generated local concerns relating to commercial need, car parking arrangements as proposed and traffic congestion
- 6.2 Demand for the facility is not a matter that falls within the remit of the Town and Country Planning Systems and development plan policies.
- 6.3 It does not follow that in respect of the traffic congestion issue there would be more traffic exacerbating the difficulties experienced by local residents. Those children using the pre-school facility from 8.15 a.m. could introduce earlier traffic congestion, however, it has to be remembered that they were going to be dropped off probably later in any case. It should hopefully entail better phasing of traffic given the availability of this pre-school facility. It appears from the letter of representation received that it is the picking up of children after school that is providing more problems than in the morning, as parents, relatives and friends manoeuvre for position and place. Fewer children leaving the premises all at one time should help matters. The nursery opening times are also phased to avoid school opening and closing times. There may also be 3 and 4 year old children who live closer to Much Birch Primary School than to Farm Childcare Centre which is in open countryside, therefore this site can be viewed as more sustainable in that it will on balance cut down the amount of travelling time undertaken. Also, children using the nursery are not subject to strict hours, many children will be there for part or possibly all of the day and may be dropped off and picked up at all times, between 9.00 a.m. and 3.15 p.m.
- 6.4 The proposal provides a base for pre-school children on a school site. The building proposed is considered to be a temporary one, therefore it would be necessary to grant a temporary planning permission. Notwithstanding this aspect, it is considered that given the distance of the building from the public highway/footpath and the existing boundary scenery and the backdrop to the building of trees and the stone wall, this building would not materially detract from this part of the designated Area of Great Landscape Value in accordance with Policies GD.1 and C.8 contained in the South Herefordshire District Local Plan.

- 6.5 Parking for two vehicles at The Old School House is advantageous in taking vehicles off the highway and easing the demand for parking at the school, however it could not reasonably be made a condition of any planning permission granted.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following condition:

- 1. The building/structure hereby permitted shall be removed from the site and the land restored to its former condition on or before 30th June, 2008 in accordance with a scheme of work submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.**

Reason: To define the terms to which the application relates as the proposed building/structure is considered to be unacceptable as a permanent fixture on this site within a designated Area of Great Landscape Value.

Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.