

DCNW2004/0080/O - SITE FOR THE BUILDING OF A REPLACEMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL ON LAND BELONGING TO BLISS HALL FARM, STAUNTON-ON-WYE. (OS: 3625/4505)

For: Governors of Staunton-on-Wye Primary School per Property Services Manager, Herefordshire Council Property Services, Franklin House, 4 Commercial Road, Hereford, HR1 2BB

Date Received:
9th January 2004

Ward:
Castle

Grid Ref:
36255, 45058

Expiry Date:
5th March 2004

Local Member: Councillor John Hope

Introduction

This application was deferred at the meeting of the Northern Area Planning Sub-Committee in order to ensure that all interested parties were fully aware of the date of the meeting and their right to speak. A site visit took place on 4 May 2002.

The attached report has been revised to take account of additional information received in the intervening period.

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application site comprises an irregularly shaped 1.5 hectare piece of sloping agricultural land which is located on the north side of the A438 and the western edge of Staunton on Wye. Its southern boundary with the A438 is defined by a mature hedgerow which partially obscures the elevated nature of the site and the remaining agricultural land to the west. Immediately to the east of the application site are the rear gardens of a total of 6 existing dwellings (outline permission exists for a further property between Brigadoon and Linton). This boundary is defined by a drainage ditch and a combination of hedgerow and domestic fencing. The northern boundary is again defined by established hedgerow with an existing field gate. In addition to the hedgerow the northern boundary is defined partly by the C1090 which links Staunton on Wye to the A438 to the west and partly by a public footpath (known as Coffin Lane) which also provides vehicular access to a number of dwellings beyond and to the north of the footpath.
- 1.2 The site lies entirely outside the settlement boundary for Staunton on Wye which is defined by the garden curtilages of the properties which bound it. The existing agricultural land is classified as high quality, Grade 1, land and its open sloping characteristics are most readily viewed from an elevated position on Tin Hill to the south-west where it can be seen in conjunction with the existing residential properties

and the commanding Grade II listed Staunton on Wye School which accommodates the Staunton on Wye Endowed Primary School.

- 1.3 Whilst the main views into the site are from the Area of Great Landscape Value, the site itself is not designated as such with the existing boundary being on the southern side of the A438.
- 1.4 Outline planning permission is sought for the provision of a new primary school on this 1.5 hectare plot of agricultural land to replace the existing school housed at Staunton on Wye School. All detailed matters relating to external appearance, siting, means of access, design and landscaping have been reserved for future consideration but indicative site plans and landscaping proposals have been submitted in the form of a Supporting Statement which is accompanied by a Transport Assessment and drainage information.
- 1.5 The indicative plans indicate that access would be derived from the C1090 at a point directly opposite Doctors Pool Cottage requiring the removal of approximately 65 metres of hedgerow. This vehicular access would serve a combined parking and turning area. The school facility would comprise a total footprint of 1325 metres² with a further 425 metres² of hardsurfaced play area and 1650 metres² of playing field. The proposed new primary school would have the capability of accommodating a theoretical total of 90 pupils (3 classrooms) taking the form of two individual buildings of 725 metres² and 600 metres² respectively.
- 1.6 Pedestrian and bicycle access would be derived via the existing footpath (Coffin Lane). The specific details of the extent and surfacing of this access remain to be resolved.
- 1.7 The proposal is not of a scale that would necessitate an Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulation 1999 although a pre-application Screening Opinion identified that landscape impact, drainage and access were of particular significance in the assessment of this outline proposal.

2. Policies

Government Guidance

PPG1 – General Policy and Principles

PPG7 – The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development

PPG13 – Transport

PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment

PPG24 – Planning and Noise

Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

Policy T.7 – Role of Traffic Management

Policy T.15 – Pedestrians and Cyclists

Policy CTC.3 – Nature Conservation

Policy CTC.6 – Landscape Features

Policy CTC.9 – Development Requirements

Policy CTC.12 – Improving Wildlife Value

Policy A.1 – Development on Agricultural Land

Leominster District Local Plan (Herefordshire)

Policy A.1 – Managing the Districts Assets and Resources
Policy A.2(D) – Settlement Hierachy
Policy A.7 – Compensatory Measures for Habitat Loss or Damage
Policy A.8 – Improvements to or Creation of Habitats
Policy A.9 – Safeguarding the Rural Landscape
Policy A.12 – New Development and Landscape Schemes
Policy A.13 – Pollution Control
Policy A.14 – Safeguarding Water Resources
Policy A.15 – Development and Water Course
Policy A.16 – Foul Drainage
Policy A.18 – Listed Buildings and their Settings
Policy A.24 – Scale and Character of Development
Policy A.25 – Protection of Open Areas or Green Spaces
Policy A.41 – Protection of Agricultural Land
Policy A.54 – Protection of Residential Amenity
Policy A.61 – Community, Social and Recreational Facilities
Policy A.66 – Access for the Disabled
Policy A.70 – Accommodating Traffic from Development
Policy A.71 – Vehicle Parking Standard
Policy A.75 – Design of Vehicle Parking Areas
Policy A.77 – Traffic Management
Policy A.78 – Protection of Public rights of Way

Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft)

Policy S1 – Sustainable Development
Policy S2 – Development Requirements
Policy S6 – Transport
Policy S7 – Natural and Historic Heritage
Policy S11 – Community Facilities and Services
Policy DR1 – Design
Policy DR2 – Land Use and Activity
Policy DR3 – Movement
Policy DR4 – Environment
Policy DR13 – Noise
Policy DR14 – Lighting
Policy T6 – Walking
Policy T7 – Cycling
Policy T8 – Road Hierarchy
Policy T11 – Parking Provision
Policy T14 – School Travel
Policy T16 – Access for All
Policy LA2 – Landscape Character and Areas Least Resilient to Change
Policy LA3 – Setting of Settlements
Policy LA5 – Protection of Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
Policy LA6 – Landscaping Schemes
Policy NC1 – Biodiversity and Development
Policy NC7 – Compensation for Loss of Biodiversity
Policy NC8 – Habitat Creation, Restoration and Enhancement
Policy HBA4 – Setting of Listed Buildings
Policy HBA9 – Protection of Open Areas and Green Spaces
Policy CF2 – Foul Drainage

Policy CF5 – New Community Facilities

3. Planning History

None relevant.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultees

- 4.1 Environment Agency has no objections, in principle, to the proposed development but recommends that if planning permission is granted the following planning condition is imposed:

Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of surface water limitation shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the plans and timetable approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 Development and Flood Risk (PPG 25).

The Agency has no objection to the proposals for the disposal of surface water using SUDs, Greywater recycling, ensuring that the existing Greenfield runoff rate is not exceeded.

It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to agree the surface water disposal proposals for the site.

- 4.2 Sport England welcomes the intention to provide improved sports facilities for the benefit of the children and the local community. This intention would be supported by government policy for the dual use of school facilities.

Whilst recognising that this is an outline application the illustrative details give concern and do not suggest that the sports facilities would be of benefit to the local community.

The pitch shown is adequate for children up to ten years in age. It may, however, be too close to the new buildings to overcome the worry of stray balls causing damage. There should be no trees within the safety run-off margins of 3m at the ends and 4m at the sides. As a general comment the landscaping should be designed to allow light onto the pitch and prevent problems from leaves.

This pitch for use by the community would be 90m x 45m plus the safety margins. The preferred orientation is around the north south axis. Young children would play across the senior pitch. The value of providing a pitch for community use does of course depend on the need in the area.

My experience from other schools is that they are unhappy, for security reasons, with having playgrounds in front of the school buildings where young children can be watched. On a sceptical note these frontage playgrounds often turn into car parks and lead to requests to hardsurface part of the grass field as a new playground. Locating hard and soft play areas together, particularly on restricted sites, can have benefits in terms of general playspace, particularly for ball games.

It would seem that the site could be capable of accommodating a grass pitch for community use if redesigned. The access design is requiring a lot of space and potentially if this were redesigned the whole of the rectangular part of the site could become available for the buildings and a sports field with a full size pitch.

Finally, I would suggest that Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 is also relevant to the consideration of the application. The Planning Objectives draw attention to the ways in which open space, sport and recreation underpin the quality of life. The Guidance stresses the need for assessments of local needs and opportunities and advises on planning for new facilities. It would be regrettable if the opportunity were not taken as part of this scheme to consider the opportunity to address any local sport and recreation needs.

- 4.3 Welsh Water raise no objection subject to conditions relating to restricting the treatment of foul and surface water drainage from the site.
- 4.4 Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment make no comment.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.5 Head of Engineering and Transportation states as follows:

"The proposals are acceptable in principle and technical details within the Transport Assessment are broadly accepted. Junction visibility splays are acceptable, however the splay to the left results in the loss of a large amount of hedgerow. A preferable option may be to locate the access to a point further east, within the layby, which would reduce the amount of hedgerow lost. Parking areas would then lead off the access road left and right.

A cycle audit of the proposal has been undertaken, which requires that at least 10 cycle spaces are provided, with the potential to provide more if required.

It is noted that there are no proposals to provide a school bus service. It is recommended that the potential for such services is investigated further, particularly in view of the increased pupil numbers."

- 4.6 Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards raises no objection.
- 4.7 Public Rights of Way Manager raises concerns with respect to the proposed alterations to the surface and character of the public footpath SY10 (Coffin Lane). It is considered that a fully surfaced and lit footpath would be inappropriate in this setting.
- 4.8 Chief Conservation Officer comments that having regard to other sites local to the village of Staunton on Wye, the proposed site would have the least environmental problems associated with its development. A number of landscape issues are raised which can be summarised as follows:-
 - a) a broader area of planting is required along the western boundary and within the southern part of the site as well as between and adjacent to the school buildings
 - b) the access will destroy 65 metres of mature species of hedgerow and the potential for reducing this loss should be considered. The access could be moved further east to effect a less visually important and thinner part of the hedgerow

- c) the width and surfacing of the proposed cyclepath needs to be carefully controlled in order to limit the damage to the existing hedgerow
- d) the proposals for the wild flower meadow are applauded but the practicality of achieving this in view of the land being cropped and with a high nutrient content will need to be considered. Details of the methods proposed for reducing the soil fertility and establishing a management plan for the wildflower area must be agreed
- e) careful attention must be given to avoid light pollution
- f) the footways alongside the car park are excessively wide and the design of roadways needs to be carefully designed to reflect the rural character of the area.

Furthermore, it is recommended that detailed ecological/habitat survey work will need to be undertaken and a detailed landscape and nature conservation management/mitigation plan submitted for formal consideration. This should incorporate issues such as wetland habitat enhancement, the conservation and enhancement of the existing and retained hedgerows and the planting of wildflowers. If appropriate it could include a bird box and feeding station scheme, a bat box scheme incorporating a bat loft in the main school building and artificial refugia for amphibians and reptiles.

- 4.9 Chief Forward Planning Officer comments that Policy A2 of the Leominster District Local Plan (Herefordshire) does allow for the development of a community building in the countryside if it is in accordance with Policy A61. Policy A61 permits a development that meets criteria set out in the policy providing it is of an appropriate scale, character and location. As the site is located on agricultural land it will have to meet the requirements of Policy A41 that protects the best and most versatile agricultural land. Although the land is Grade 1 there are no alternatives as all the land around the settlement is also Grade 1. If the application meets the requirements of Policy A61 then there is no policy objections to the principle of a school development on this site.

5. Representations

- 5.1 A total of 18 letters of representation have been received from local residents in response to the initial consultation. The comments/concerns raised can be summarised as follows:
- a) sufficient room at existing school and adjoining orchard to provide new school
 - b) additional traffic in proximity to junction used by buses, HGV traffic and doctors surgery
 - c) proposed 7 metre high hall could be much taller
 - d) field is approximately 2 metres above garden levels - school buildings will be dominant and destroy outlook from neighbouring properties
 - e) light pollution associated with security/parking - out of character since Staunton on Wye does not have streetlights
 - f) development of existing school site with access from A438 preferable to loss of Grade I agricultural land
 - g) retired people live in many of the properties neighbouring the site and will be affected by noise through the day. Proposed site affects back gardens which is worse than the current arrangements
 - h) proposed landscaping/fencing will be overbearing - sense of enclosure

- i) serious concerns over proposed sustainable drainage system and its effect on existing drainage and the environmental implications of such a system
- j) proposed access is dangerous with cars travelling at excessive speed
- k) access conflicts with on-street parking used by doctors surgery traffic
- l) larger school will mean more traffic and therefore greater threat to highway safety
- m) access via Coffin Lane is very limited - pedestrian and cycle traffic would conflict with existing vehicular rights of way. Surfacing of lane would result in loss of hedgerow and exacerbate flooding problems.
- n) loss of Grade I agricultural land and threat to viability of owner of the farm land
- o) loss of ancient hedgerows and habitat for birds and wildlife
- p) details of lighting design needed
- q) proposed school is too big for local need and as such loss of agricultural land and encroachment into countryside policies should be given greater weight
- r) re-use of existing sites has not been properly considered and proposed development would result in gross over provision of educational need when set against decline in need over next 20 years
- s) traffic monitoring exercise inappropriately carried out. Is pre-school activity included? No monitoring outside the main entrance to the school or along the narrow lane that provides access.
- t) inadequate parking on site will result in worse problems
- u) speed or traffic has been underestimated.

5.2 A signed petition objecting strongly to the proposal was received on 10 February 2004. The petition has a total of 105 signatories.

5.3 Staunton on Wye Parish Council state:

- 1) The Parish Council supports the need for a replacement school.
- 2) The general opinion of the members of the public was that the site is not suitable due to:

i) Effect on traffic

The effect on the traffic in the village road at the north end of the site has been underestimated.

The traffic survey had not been done at the most appropriate points. Allowance has not been made for the use of the 'layby' as an overflow carpark for the Doctor's Surgery, nor for residents who for many years have used the ROW for access to their garages at the rear of their properties.

The road junction at this point would need to be improved.

Overall, the increased traffic movement would be a serious danger to children and parents walking to school.

ii) Proximity to local residents

The proposed school buildings are too close to bungalows particularly those opposite the present school. The local residents will not only lose their visual amenities but will be affected by noise. This will be worse than at present

Most of the residents are elderly and so will be at home during the busy times.

The proposals for tree planting will result in loss of light into these properties, and together with a high fence the residents feel that they will be hemmed into their properties.

iii) Drainage

This site is known for its bad drainage and the proposal will add to this problem.

3) The Parish Council shares these views.

5.4 Brobury and Mornington Parish Council state:

“With respect to the proposed footpath/cycle way:-

Have the planners taken into account of a spring in this area which has been known to cause flooding to Wisteria Cottage and Corner House ?

Concern about danger to children speeding out on cycles and, maybe, skate boards going straight on on to the road. Suggest a staggered fence at each end rather than a bollard.

Parish Council’s comments on original application still apply.”

5.5 A further two responses have been received following a reconsultation on additional traffic related information and a possible design for the proposed cycle route. In response the following comments have been made:

- a) position of pedestrian and cycle entrance will still lead to conflict with private individuals leaving their properties via Coffin Lane
- b) entrance point should be moved further to the east which will avoid risk of collisions
- c) is it necessary to tarmac the pathway
- d) remains a mystery why this site was selected when it involves compulsory purchase and there is some 11,500 metres 2(squared) space available at the existing site
- e) opposed to all plans for new school on Bliss Hill Farm land
- f) don't want more concrete/tarmac with associated loss of good land
- g) land has been offered at the school
- h) trying to get land for nothing whilst we can't build on the land
- i) school should be built near church which would have a good influence on children

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

6. Officers Appraisal

6.1 This outline application seeks planning permission for the relocation of the existing primary school from its established site at the Grade II listed school building to a 1.5 hectare strip of Grade I agricultural land which lies outside, but is immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary for Staunton on Wye.

6.2 The application has proven to be a highly controversial one as is evidenced by the strength of opposition, which is primarily directed towards the choice of site, although a significant number of more detailed issues have arisen. It is advised at this stage that this outline proposal reserves matters relating to siting, means of access, external appearance, design and landscaping for future detailed consideration should this permission be granted.

- 6.3 It is considered that the main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are as follows:
- a) The principle of relocating the existing school facility including the justification, site selection criteria and the loss of Grade I agricultural land;
 - b) The visual and ecological impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the site and surrounding countryside;
 - c) Traffic and access related issues;
 - d) Impact on residential amenity and
 - e) Foul and surface water drainage arrangements.

The Principle of Relocation

- 6.4 Policy A2(D) of the Leominster District Local Plan (Herefordshire) established a strong presumption against development in the open countryside but does, in exceptional circumstances, allow for the provision of a community, social or recreational facility (such as a primary school) subject to compliance with Policy A.61 of the Local Plan. Policy A.61 requires proposals to meet the normal criteria associated with development proposal such as providing safe access but also requires consideration of the appropriateness of the scale in relation to the needs of the local community whilst ensuring that the character of the location is preserved and the site is well related to the settlement that would be served by the facility.
- 6.5 In the first instance it is necessary to consider the need for the new facility, which in this case results from the serious physical shortcomings of the existing school building and grounds. Particular reference is made to the three-storey nature of the existing school which fails to meet disabled access standards, the limited size of classrooms, other resource areas and play areas which do not meet the space requirements of the School Premises Regulations, the building is difficult to ventilate and it has been advised that lighting is below guidance levels. Furthermore the layout of the school makes it difficult to adequately secure and monitor the various points of access and parking provision is very poor with limited facilities for parents. The capacity of the school falls below current government requirements and the listed status of the building make its internal and external alteration more onerous and unfeasible.
- 6.6 On this basis, it is considered that the case for an improved replacement facility exists and having regard to the majority of comments received from local residents it is not the principle of a new primary school but rather the choice of site, which is the source of concern.
- 6.7 This said, reference has been made to the wider educational need for a larger school facility with particular respect to the trend of falling school roles. This definition of need is one determined by the Local Education Authority and not one that can carry significant weight, as a material consideration in a planning decision. The size of the proposed school is established by Government standards and as such unless the size of the school building has specific planning implications; it would not be reasonable to recommend the refusal of permission based upon this wider definition. It is a stated intention that the school would have a maximum capacity of 70 pupils and would, in all likelihood, continue to provide a pre-school facility, as is currently the case.
- 6.8 In terms of site selection, a number of alternative locations have been considered and ruled out due to their isolated positions, access problems and landscape impact. There are no sites that lie within the settlement boundary of the village and as such the visual and physical relationship to village edge has been an important factor. Three

sites emerged with potential and include Rhydwrr Farm opposite the village hall, which benefits from a residential permission ruling out its viability, a site incorporating the existing school grounds to the east and the application site itself. It is clear that the redevelopment of the existing school site is the option strongly supported by the local community.

- 6.9 The existing school site has a number of constraints which include the area of land that can be made available (although this has been challenged by local residents who have indicated that approximately 1.15 hectares is available at the existing school); the serious implications associated with developing within the setting of the listed school, which the Chief Conservation Officer has advised would not be supported in view of its detrimental effect on the building and the important spatial qualities which define the character of the associated conservation area; the limited width of the access and the unsuitable cul-de-sac form that would result. Development costs associated with the removal of power lines and earth levelling are referred to although these are not regarded as significant problems. Finally on this site, the development of a new facility could have serious implications for the viability of seeking alternative uses for the listed building (a factor that must be given due regard according to paragraph 2.16 of PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment).
- 6.10 The development of the existing school site would clearly have less implications for development beyond the village settlement boundary whereas the proposed option would involve development wholly outside the boundary. A fundamental constraint of the application site is its Grade I Agricultural Land classification, which has greater implications in view of the amount of land involved. The owner of the site is strongly opposed to the loss of the land in terms of its economic viability. In this case it is considered that if approved, this proposal would represent a unique one-off development that would not result in additional pressure for the loss of more agricultural land and although a difficult balance to strike, the local need for the improved school facility is considered to be greater than the benefits of retaining this 1.5 hectare site in agricultural use. It is advised that all the agricultural land surrounding the village has the same Grade I classification and as such there is no obvious alternative location that would address this policy constraint.
- 6.11 The view in this instance is that if the need is accepted, the loss of the agricultural land would not necessarily be a ground for refusal under the terms of Policy A.41 of the Local Plan.

Landscape/Ecological Impact

- 6.12 The application site, in terms of the wider effect of its development, can be viewed from Tin Hill to the east, which rises from its junction with the A438. From this vantage point, the openness of the site is appreciated but so to is its close visual relationship with the existing properties on the edge of the village and more significantly the existing school building, which dominates the local landscape. It is acknowledged that this site will have an impact upon the site and surroundings but the view is that if the need for this facility is proven, the application site represents the most viable option and the scheme allows for the introduction of additional landscaping along the site margins to facilitate its integration into the area to an acceptable level. Careful treatment of the design and materials will need to be given at the reserved matters stage in order to maximise the planting area and ensure that an appropriate pallet of materials is used within a layout that will seek to break up the visual mass of the complex.

- 6.13 More locally, the indicative access proposals would necessitate the removal of approximately 65 metres of hedgerow along the northern boundary of the site. The loss is regrettable but would be reduced by a repositioning of the main point of access (an issue accepted by the Head of Engineering and Transportation) further eastwards bringing into line with Pool Cottage. A replacement hedgerow including tree planting would be planted along the visibility splay and although it would clearly take time to establish itself it would ultimately compensate for the loss.
- 6.14 The ecological value of this hedgerow and the site as a whole is stressed by the Chief Conservation Officer. In this case it is recommended that if outline permission is granted, a full ecological assessment including measures for mitigation and habitat creation in the form of a management plan should be carried out. This requirement can be controlled by way of a condition and the intention would clearly be to document any other ecological value on the site as a whole.
- 6.15 The indicative shared pedestrian/cycle path has potential implications for the remaining hedgerow along the northern boundary. The concern is that the surfacing of a 2.5 metre wide path could undermine the hedgerow and as such the recommendation is that the point of access is changed in order to reduce this pressure. This incidentally would overcome a concern of a local resident regarding potential collisions between cyclists and cars using the right of way along the footpath.
- 6.16 The landscape impact of lighting and road surfacing would be controlled by conditions with the emphasis on limiting the effect on the rural character and appearance of the site and surroundings.
- 6.17 Having regard to the need for the school and the limited likelihood of an alternative more appropriate site coming forward it is considered that the potential landscape and ecological impact can be overcome although there will inevitably be an initial effect until planting becomes established.

Traffic and Access

- 6.18 A Transport Assessment has been submitted and further amended following concerns raised about the methodology of the survey work. The findings indicate that as a replacement proposal, and having regard to the relatively low traffic speeds and low injury accident record, there would be no issues relating to road and junction capacity resulting in a measurable increased threat to the safe use of the local road network. The opportunity to provide improved parking facilities including pick up/drop off arrangements has been utilised which together with appropriate warning signs would result in an improvement to the current situation which results in congestion on the main road at peak times.
- 6.19 The issue of traffic generation and highway safety is clearly and quite rightly a cause for local concern but in this case the assessment, which has been considered and endorsed by the Head of Engineering and Transportation, demonstrates that the new primary school could be satisfactorily accessed via the position shown on the indicative layout plan. It is also advised that the traffic generated by the pre-school facility has been assessed and considered acceptable in these terms.
- 6.20 The finer detail of the design and surfacing of the shared pedestrian/cycle path including how it accesses the school site will require further consideration in conjunction with the Public Rights of Way Manager, Chief Conservation Officer and

local residents affected by this part of the proposal and can be reserved for final approval. It is considered that an acceptable compromise can be struck and as such a condition is appropriate.

- 6.21 The application incorporates a framework for a Green Travel Plan, which has and will continue to be refined in consultation with the Head of Engineering and Transportation. The site although on the edge of the village remains accessible by a range of transport modes and the emphasis will continue to be on the reduction of private car use and further discussion regarding bus provision in particular. Secure cycle facilities would be provided and controlled by way of a condition.

Residential Amenity

- 6.21 It is recognised that the established outdoor activities associated with the existing school are an accepted part of life for those people living in close proximity and furthermore that an increase in the number of children and the relocation of the school could change what has become the norm in Staunton on Wye.
- 6.23 The main issue raised so far as noise impact is concerned relates to the proposed school site and its relationship to the rear gardens of properties to the east. Emphasis is placed on the fact that people expect a greater privacy and tranquillity in their rear gardens and also that the current situation is one where fewer residents are affected in this manner. Furthermore it is clear that most residents in the immediate vicinity have retired and as such would be affected during normal school hours.
- 6.24 PPG24 – Planning and Noise advised that housing and school sites are noise-sensitive developments and accordingly advice has been sought from the Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards. It is considered that the level of activity will be limited to a relatively short duration between the hours of 0900 and 1530 and although the occasional event during the evening is a realistic assumption to make, it is not considered that demonstrable harm to the amenities local residents will occur. This view is shared by the Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards who raises no objection to the proposal following his visit to the site.
- 6.25 The points raised about the extent of lighting and the effect of fencing and landscaping upon the immediate neighbours have been recognised and attention will be given to these issues pursuant to conditions should the outline permission be granted.

Drainage

- 6.26 Foul drainage would be discharged to the existing mains sewer leaving the potential implications of increased surface water run-off as a key concern having regard to the known problems with existing private arrangements at neighbouring properties. The volume and quality of surface water run-off was identified at the “Screening Opinion” stage and as such proposals have been provided with this outline application. It is acknowledged that there is the potential for saturation of the southern end of the site with its attendant problems with the flooding of the A438, the drainage ditch and the rear gardens of immediately neighbouring properties. A range of potential mitigation measures have been identified which include ‘greywater’ recycling from the roof of the school and a balancing pond, soakaways, filter drains and infiltration trenches, a range of which could be adopted to reach the required discharge rate.
- 6.27 The Environment Agency have assessed the details provided with the application and are satisfied that appropriate measures can be taken to limit surface water

drainage/contamination to an acceptable level. A condition attached at this stage would enable the final design to be agreed in a timely manner.

- 6.28 Welsh Water raise no objection to the proposal subject to the effective separation of foul and surface water and restrictions on surface water entering the public sewerage system.

Conclusion

- 6.29 In essence the determination of this application must initially relate to the strength of the justification for a new school. The shortcomings of the existing school buildings have been identified and the Government set parameters for the size of any new school facility are beyond the control of the local planning authority. Furthermore the Local Education Authority is clear in its support for the educational need for a larger and better equipped school. It therefore falls to the local planning authority to assess the acceptability of the submitted proposal against a number of key criteria, which have been identified in the appraisal.
- 6.30 There is clear support for retaining a primary school in the village and on balance and having regard to the merits of the case submitted and the limited likelihood of an acceptable alternative site being pursued, it is considered that supporting the proposal with appropriate conditions would best serve Herefordshire Councils policy for strong support for small village schools.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be approved subject to the following conditions:

- 1 - A02 (Time limit for submission of reserved matters (outline permission))**

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2 - A03 (Time limit for commencement (outline permission))**

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3 - A04 (Approval of reserved matters)**

Reason: To enable the local planning authority to exercise proper control over these aspects of the development.

- 4 - A05 (Plans and particulars of reserved matters)**

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 5 - F20 (Scheme of surface water drainage)**

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding by ensuring the provision of a satisfactory means of surface water disposal.

- 6 - F32 (Details of floodlighting/external lighting) (details of time limitations, level of illuminance, light shelling and the angle of floodlights)

Reason: To safeguard local amenities.

- 7- F48 (Details of slab levels)(buildings, hardstanding areas and playing field)

Reason: To ensure that the impact of the development upon the character and appearance of the site, surroundings and the immediately neighbouring properties is minimised.

- 8 - G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

- 9 - G06 (Scope of landscaping scheme) (Condition 3)

Reason: In order that the local planning authority may be satisfied that the deposited scheme will meet their requirements.

- 10 - A full ecological assessment of the site and the surrounding hedgerows shall be undertaken prior to the submission of any reserved matters application and shall include details of mitigation measures and proposals for habitat creation and enhancement within and around the site. The approved details shall be carried out prior to, or commensurate with the development of the site, whichever is appropriate, and thereafter retained in accordance with a landscape and nature conservation plan for the site.

Reason: To ensure that the nature conservation interest of the site is elevated and protect where necessary.

- 11 - H03 (Visibility splays)(4.5 metres) (70 metres)

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

- 12 - H13 (Access, turning area and parking)

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure the free flow of traffic using the adjoining highway.

- 13 - H21 (Wheel washing)

Reason: To ensure that the wheels of vehicles are cleaned before leaving the site in the interests of highway safety.

- 14 - H27 (Parking for site operatives)

Reason: To prevent indiscriminate parking in the interests of highway safety.

- 15 - H29 (Secure cycle parking provision)

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate provision for secure cycle accommodation within the application site, encouraging alternative modes of transport in accordance with both local and national planning policy.

16 - Prior to the commencement of the use of the school hereby approved, the full details of the Green Travel Plan together with measures for monitoring its effectiveness shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The document shall be maintained and kept available for inspection by the local planning authority upon request and all reasonable improvements agreed in writing shall be incorporated into the Green Travel Plan.

Reason: To ensure that a range of sustainable transport alternatives are available and promoted users of the site in accordance within sustainable objectives of Herefordshire Council and Central Government.

17 - The details of the design, extent and surfacing of the shared pedestrian and cycle path shall be submitted for consideration and the reserved matters stage. The approved details shall be carried out prior to the commencement of the use of the school and thereafter maintained.

Reason: To ensure that a locally acceptable and safe pedestrian and cycle access is provided.

Informative(s):

- 1 - HN1 (Mud on highway)
- 2 - HN2 (Public rights of way affected)
- 3 - HN3 (Access via public right of way)
- 4 - HN5 (Works within the highway)
- 5 - N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC

Decision:

Notes:

.....

Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.