School house extension, Charlton CE Primary School, Barton Road, Dover – DO/08/724

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 9 September 2008.

Application by the Governors of Charlton Church of England Primary School for the extension to the School House at Charlton Primary School, Barton Road, Dover (DO/08/724)

Recommendation: Planning permission be granted

Local Member(s): Mr. G. Cowan & Mr. B. Newman Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. Charlton Primary School is located off Barton Road on the north-western side of the town's one-way road network. The site is located north of the main town of Dover, and backs onto the neighbouring site of St. Edmund's Catholic School. A recently completed Business Resource Centre shares the western boundary of the site, whilst residential properties are located to the west and south of the site. A site location plan is attached on page D2.2

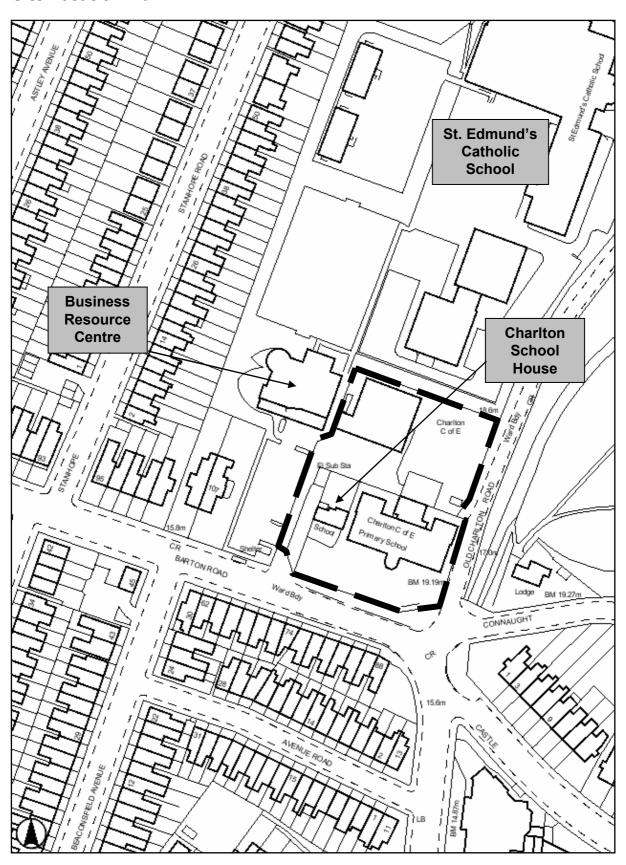
Background & Proposal

- 2. Charlton Primary School is a very popular and well-supported Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School. Despite falling primary school rolls in the area, Charlton remains over-subscribed, however a recent Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) inspection has identified that the School is under-provisioned in a number of significant areas. In order to bridge this gap, the application to extend the School House proposes to provide accommodation for the following elements:
 - Office reception area
 - Staff room and kitchen
 - Disabled toilet
 - Group room / Intervention room
- 3. The proposed extension involves a double height extension to the rear of the existing School House, with the front of the House (visible from Barton Road) remaining unaltered. As part of the proposal, there would be <u>no increase</u> in staff or pupil numbers, and as such travel patterns are not expected to alter from those currently occurring to and from the site.

Planning History

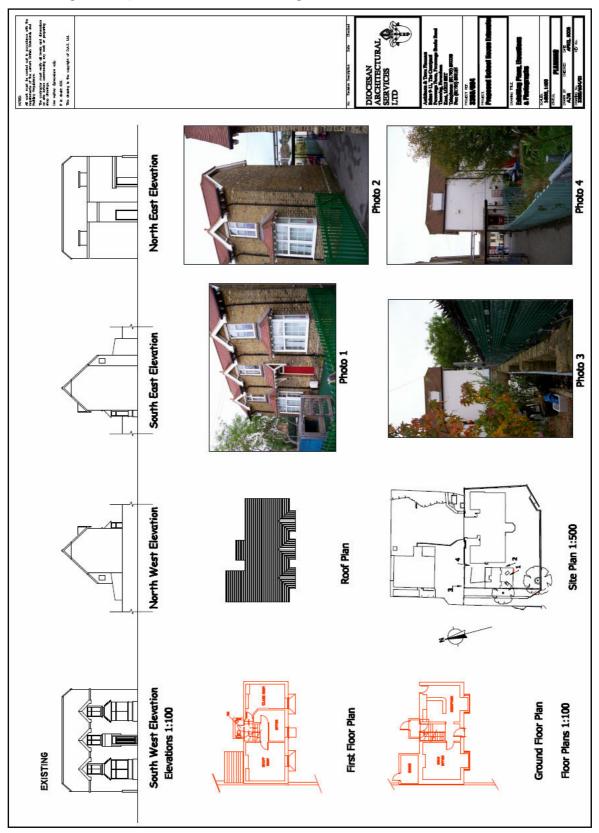
- 4. Planning permission has been granted for the following the following development at Charlton Primary School:
 - Erection of a new school hall in July 2003, under reference DO/03/238;
 and the following development at the neighbouring St. Edmunds Catholic School:
 - Two-storey extension to sixth form centre in October 2003, under reference DO/03/1126:
 - Music recording studio in February 2004, under reference DO/04/1037;
 - Provision of a floodlight sports pitch in July 2004, under reference DO/04/1509;

Site Location Plan

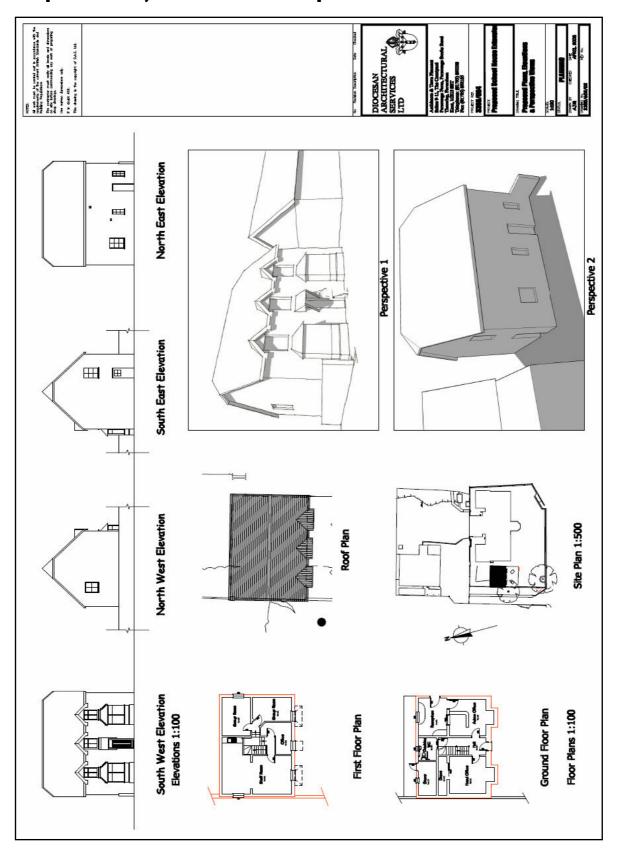


Site Location Plan – Charlton Primary School Scale 1:1250

Existing Plans, Elevations & Photographs



Proposed Plans, Elevations and Perspective Views



Erection of a Business Resource Centre in December 2005, under reference DO/05/729
 [superseded by retrospective application for the corrected siting of the Business Resource Centre in July 2006, under reference DO/06/714]

Planning Policy

- 5. The Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to consideration of the application:
- (i) The adopted 2006 Kent & Medway Structure Plan:

Policy SP1 – The primary purpose of Kent's development and environmental strategy will be to protect and enhance the environment and achieve a sustainable pattern and form of development. This will be done principally by, amongst other matters:

- protecting the Kent countryside and its wildlife for future generations;
- protecting and enhancing features of importance in the natural and built environment:
- encouraging high quality development and innovative design that reflects Kent's identity and local distinctiveness and promoting healthy, safe and secure living and working environments;

Policy QL1 – All development should be well designed and be of high quality. Developments, individually or taken together, should respond positively to the scale, layout, pattern and character of their local surroundings. Development which would be detrimental to the built environment, amenity, functioning and character of settlements or the countryside will not be permitted.

Policy QL7 – Requires the archaeological and the historic integrity of sites to be protected and, where possible, enhanced. It requires an archaeological evaluation or assessment to be carried out in advance of the determination of a planning application.

Policy QL11 – Provision will be made for the development and improvement of local services in existing residential areas and in town and district centres, particularly where services are deficient. Flexibility in the use of buildings for mixed community uses, and the concentration of sports facilities at schools, will be encouraged.

Policy TP3 – Local planning authorities should ensure that development sites are well served by public transport, walking and cycling, or will be made to do so as a result of the development. Travel Plans should be encouraged for larger developments that generate significant demand for travel, to promote the use of these means of transport.

Policy TP11 – Facilities for pedestrians and cyclists will be provided within new developments and their use promoted.

Policy TP19 – Development proposals should comply with the respective vehicle parking policies and maximum standards adopted by Kent County Council.

Policy NR1 – Proposals for development should incorporate sustainable construction techniques and demonstrate that their design and layout contributes to the conservation and prudent use of energy, water and other natural resources, and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through reuse or the more efficient use of resources.

(ii) The adopted 2002 Dover District Council Local Plan

Policy DD1 – Proposals for development will not be permitted unless they are acceptable in terms of the layout and functional needs of the development; siting, massing and scale of new buildings; architectural style and materials; spatial and visual character of the surrounding area; and landform and landscaping.

Policy CF1 – Proposals for the establishment or expansion of community facilities will be permitted provided they are well related to the community which they serve.

Consultations

6. **Dover District Council:** has raised no objection.

Dover Town Council: has raised no objection.

Divisional Transportation Manager: has raised no objection on the basis that the application is for the improvement of existing facilities and would not result in the increase of staff or pupil numbers. In addition, he notes that the application would not affect any off-street parking or the highway.

Environment Agency: has no objection, but offers advice and conditions relating to the proposal, including a condition to ensure that there is no discharge of foul or contaminated drainage from the site into either groundwater or any surface waters.

The County Archaeologist: notes that the site lies on the outskirts of Dover in an area that is generally rich in archaeological remains. Although the groundworks associated with the development are limited, it is possible that further archaeological remains may be exposed. On this basis, a condition requiring the developer to afford access at all reasonable times to any archaeologist nominated by the County Planning Authority is recommended.

Local Members

7. The local County Members, Mr. G. Cowan and Mr. B. Newman were notified of the original application on 16 June 2008.

Publicity

8. The application was publicised by the posting of a site notice on the main entrance of the school with Barton Road, and the individual notification of 12 neighbouring residential properties.

Representations

- 9. I have received a letter of objection from a local resident in respect of this application. The main points of objection are summarised below:
 - Raise an objection to any further development in the immediate area surrounding my property – property already "depreciated in value as a direct result of KCC incompetence at managing the botched project [Business Resource Centre] at St. Edmunds School";
 - Road infrastructure is not sufficient to handle the volume of traffic as it stands at school drop off and pick up times – there are daily minor traffic accidents, many of which go unreported, or KCC chooses to ignore
 - No car parking provision for residents, and in last month yellow lines have been extended on Barton Road causing further traffic chaos;
 - When are KCC going to serve the community effectively and impose traffic calming speed cameras and impose a 20mph speed restriction on this road? – there are 4 schools within 400 yards and at times the speed of cars in my opinion exceeds 70mph;
 - When will KCC impose a residents' parking scheme with the introduction of the bus stop clearway and the removal of the school keep clear signs. I have lost the facility to park near my property – a luxury I did have when I purchased the property and there were no plans to develop the school or introduce a clearway, or extend the yellow lines.

Discussion

Introduction

- 10. The application seeks planning permission for a two-storey rear extension to the school house at Charlton Primary School. The application proposes to increase the total amount of floorspace by approximately 42 sq. metres, increasing the space available within the school house to meet the under-provisions identified within a recent Ofsted report, whilst proposing no net increase in either staff or pupil numbers. The application is being reported for determination as a result of the objection received from a nearby local resident, as summarised in paragraph (9) above.
- 11. In considering this proposal, regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (5) above. Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore the proposal needs to be considered in the context of the Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity. Issues of particular relevance in this case include the potential impact of the proposed development on the surrounding residential amenity, the impact of the proposed development on the local highway network and the visual appearance of the proposed development.

Impact on residential amenity

12. I note that the application proposes a relatively small-scale (approx. 42 sq. metres) twostorey extension to the rear of the existing school house at Charlton Primary School. The extension proposed would not be visible from the main road, being only visible from within the site, and from slight views experienced from surrounding residential areas.

- 13. In addition, I note that the distance between the proposed extension and nearest residential property would be 29 metres, that distance being separated by the school's main vehicle entrance and the newly constructed car park of the Business Resource Centre. In my opinion, given the large separation distances in this particular case, and the extent of the proposed development, I do not consider the proposal to give a significant rise to any detrimental effect on residential amenity.
- 14. Accordingly, I would not seek to raise an objection on residential amenity grounds, and consider that the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan, most notably Policy QL1 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan and Policy DD1 of the Dover District Council Local Plan.

Impact on highway network and vehicle parking

- 15. Members will note that the residential objection, as summarised in paragraph (9) above, relates largely to the impact the proposed development is likely to have on the surrounding highway and parking network. I note however that as part of this proposal neither staff nor pupil numbers at the school would be altered. On this basis, the Divisional Transportation Manager has raised no objections on the basis that the application is purely for improvement of existing facilities (with no increase of staff or pupil numbers), and therefore would not affect any off-street parking or the wider highway network.
- 16. Accordingly, I would not seek to raise an objection on highway or parking grounds in relation to this application, in line with the advice received from the Divisional Transportation Manager in this particular case.

Design, scale and visual appearance

- 17. The design of the two-storey extension is shown on 'Proposed Plans, Elevations and Perspective Views' (page D2.4). The design concept takes to form of extending the rear of the building by approximately 3 metres, raising the ridge height of the roof and the alteration of the roof pitch to suit the increased width of the school house. The extension is proposed to be carried out in matching materials to that of the existing school house. In terms of the appearance the building would look wider with a slightly increased roof height, but remain broadly similar to that of its original design.
- 18. I consider that the design approach taken is both in-keeping with the existing building, whilst having a minimal impact on the surrounding wider street-scene. Accordingly, I would not seek to raise an objection on design, scale or visual appearance grounds as I consider the proposed to be in accordance with the Development Plan, in particular Policy QL1 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan. In addition, I consider that the external materials should be secured by planning condition to match those of the existing building, and accordingly recommend that planning permission be granted on this basis.

Other issues

19. Members will note that residential concern has been raised regarding the Business Resource Centre [approved under consent DO/06/714] at St. Edmund's Catholic School. In particular, concern has been raised relating to the depreciation in property value as a result of the construction of the Business Resource Centre. However, I note that the application for the extension of the School House at Charlton Primary School bears no relation to the Resource Centre, and therefore consider that an objection on

these grounds cannot be sustained. In any case, the depreciation in the price of property values as a result of a proposal is not a material consideration in the determination of a planning application.

20. In addition, Members will note that concern has also been raised relating to a residents parking scheme and traffic calming measures for the Barton Road area. I note that both of these measures would be the responsibility of the District Council and Kent Highway Services. In relation to this application neither of these issues would, in my opinion, be affected and are therefore not appropriate for consideration as part of the determination of this application.

Conclusion

21. Having regard to the Development Plan Policies, and the material planning considerations received from both consultees and a local resident, I consider the proposal to be an acceptable solution in terms of its design, scale and visual appearance, whilst giving rise no rise to any adverse impact on the surrounding highway network. On this basis, I consider the proposal to be in general accordance with the Development Plan. Accordingly, I recommend that planning permission should be granted, subject to the following conditions as set out in paragraph (22) below:

Recommendation

- 22. I RECOMMEND that PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO conditions, including conditions to cover the following aspects:
 - Standard time limit :
 - The development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
 - All external materials match those of the existing building;
 - Developer allow access at all reasonable times to an archaeologist to observe the excavations and record items of interest and finds.

Case officer – Julian Moat

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Background documents - See section heading