

- City of London
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email: graham.allison@montagu-evans.co.uk

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Planning Department
London Borough of Hillingdon
Civic Centre
High Street
Uxbridge
Middlesex
UB8 1UW



CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Clarges House
6-12 Clarges Street
London W1J 8HB

Tel: 020 7493 4002

Fax: 020 7312 7548

www.montagu-evans.co.uk

Dear Sir / Madam

HIGHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL, HILLINGDON

Re: Planning Application for the Installation of a Temporary Classroom

Montagu Evans has been instructed by Mace to act on their behalf as planning consultants in respect of the Hillingdon Primary Capital Schools Programme and to submit various planning applications arising from this.

Proposed Development

This application is for a new temporary mobile classroom at Highfield Primary School, situated to the east of the main school, partly on a grassed area to the side of the playing field and partly on an area of hard standing. The classroom will be capable of accommodating sixty additional children and will require an additional four members of staff. The application seeks permission for the Classroom for a period of three years from 30 June 2011 to 1 September 2014.

Application Submission

The application submission comprises five copies of the following documentation:

- Application Forms, Agricultural Holding and Ownership Certificates signed and dated;
- Existing Location Plan (site outlined in red) (Drg Ref: 26117-A-004);
- Proposed Location Plan (Drg Ref: 26117-A-005);
- Proposed Layout Plan and Elevations (Drg Ref: 26117-A-006);
- Design and Access Statement including Transport Statement dated March 2011

The application fee of £1,005 has been dealt with by way of internal transfer. If you have any queries in this regard please contact Roselyn Enegbu.

Educational Requirements and Need

Under part 1, schedule 3, section 13 of the Education Act 1996, Local Authorities have duty to educate children within their administrative area. The act states:

"13 General responsibility for education.

(1) A local education authority shall (so far as their powers enable them to do so) contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education, and secondary education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area."

The Hillingdon Primary Capital Schools Programme is part of Hillingdon Council's legal requirement to meet the educational needs of the borough. In recent years the borough, as well as the country as a whole, has seen a rise in birth rates up to 2008 and the trend has continued through 2009 and 2010. This growth in the birth rate combined with net in migration and new large scale housing developments in the borough, has meant that there is now a need to provide 34 additional primary school classrooms across the borough over the next five years. This includes an identified urgent need for six new classrooms by September 2011 which can only be met by temporary accommodation. This was ratified by the Council, at its Cabinet meeting in May 2010.

The longer term strategy is to provide permanent accommodation as part of the programme to meet all existing and future needs in the period to 2015. Feasibility work in relation to this is ongoing and applications for permanent extensions will be submitted at selected schools in the future.

Site Selection Process

The borough is broken down into fourteen school catchments, which contain a total of fifty six main stream primary schools. The Local Education Authority has undertaken a review of each of these catchments in terms of its educational needs and has identified schools to meet these needs having regard to the following:

- Whether they are within the statutory walking distance for pupils as defined by the Education Act 1996, this being two miles for a child who is under the age of eight or three miles for a child who aged eight or over.
- Whether each school is of a sufficient site size for expansion (some local schools have been ruled out as the sites are too small);
- Where two schools met the above criteria, those schools that are already very large and/or at which building works for expansion are already scheduled, they have been excluded; and
- Consideration has been given to planning constraints and the schools operational requirements.

With regards to the educational needs of Catchment Area 7, Highfield Primary School has been identified as being the most suitable location to meet this need. This is on the basis that it is of a suitable size, is within the walking distance required and is not already scheduled for expansion.

The school has been consulted and is content with the proposed siting and location of the classroom from an operational view point.

Prior to the submission of the application, pre-application discussions have taken place with planning officers from the London Borough of Hillingdon regarding the siting and location of the temporary accommodation. Sport England has also been consulted where the proposed siting has a potential impact on playing fields.

Planning Policy Overview

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with policies of the statutory development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the Statutory Development Plan comprises the London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations) 2008 and the saved policies within the London Borough of Hillingdon Unitary Development

Plan 1998. The London Plan is presently under review and a draft was published in 2009. The inspectors report is expected imminently and the draft plan is therefore a material consideration of some weight.

Policies from within the Statutory Development Plan and other material considerations relevant to the consideration of this application are referred to below.

Assessment

1. Educational Needs

Policy 4A.2 (Education Facilities) of the London Plan supports the provision of new educational facilities and planning to meet the need over the plan period. It advises that Local Authorities should:

"Reflect the demands for pre-school, school and community learning facilities, taking into account GLA demographic projections, and should ensure adequate provision in partnership with the local education authority, local strategic partnerships and users."

The policy goes on to state that:

"Boroughs should provide criteria based approach to the provision of different types of educational facilities and the expansion of existing facilities, taking into account:

- *The need for new facilities, with particular reference to areas for regeneration;*
- *The potential for expansion of existing provision;*
- *The possibility of inter borough provision;*
- *Safe and convenient access by pedestrians cyclists and by public transport users;*
- *Proximity to homes and workplaces;*

Perhaps what is more pertinent is the replacement London Plan Policy 3.19 which recognises of the shortfall of primary school places over the plan period and encourages those proposals which address this shortfall:

*"B Development proposals which enhance education and skills provision will be supported, including new build, expansion of existing or change of use to educational purposes. **Those which address the current projected shortage of primary school places will be particularly encouraged.**"*

This recognises the acute needs for such provision at the regional level and the importance of securing these places over the plan period. The inspectors report into this document is expected imminently. At the local level saved Policy R10 of the London Borough of Hillingdon UDP states that the principle of providing new educational accommodation is acceptable subject to other policies in the plan.

"R10 The local planning authority will regard proposals for new meeting halls, buildings for education, social, community and health services, including libraries, nursery, primary and secondary school buildings, as acceptable in principle subject to the other policies of this plan."

This policy position is rolled forward in the Pre-Submission Core Strategy 2011 under policy CL1, which is presently out to consultation.

As noted above Highfield Primary School is one of six locations considered most appropriate to meet identified educational needs as at September 2011. The provision of such accommodation is supported by policy subject to satisfying other relevant considerations

2. Playing Fields and Open Space

The area where the proposed Classroom is to be sited is partly on an area of hardstanding and partly on an area of playing field.

Consequently, the Development Management Procedure Order 2010, requires consultation with the English Sports Council (Sport England) where a proposal is to be sited on an area of playing field. The definition of a playing field is "the whole of the site which encompasses at least one playing pitch". Therefore, the proposals fall within the remit of Sport England.

Sport England's Planning Policy Statement 'A sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England' sets out their position in relation to development on playing fields. Policy P1 states:

"Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field in an adopted or draft deposit local plan unless, in the judgement of Sport England one of the specific circumstances applies"

Montagu Evans is of the view that the proposals accord with this policy for two reasons. Firstly, the proposals are sited in an area of the school grounds, which do not presently physically form part of a playing pitch. Secondly, the Classroom will only be in situ for a temporary period of three years after which the classroom will be removed and the land restored to a standard at least as good as existing.

A pre-application meeting was held with Sport England who confirmed they are supportive of this view.

A similar issue arises from saved Policy R4 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan which states:

"R4 the local planning authority will not normally grant planning permission for proposals which involve the loss of land used (or where the last authorised use was) for recreational open space, (including publicly accessible open space and playing fields, private or school playing fields, private or public allotments), particularly if there is (or would be) a local deficiency in accessible open space."

For the same reasons as stated in relation to Sport England's policy, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in light of this policy.

3. Amenity

Due to the siting of the proposed classroom, there are no adjoining residential properties in the immediate vicinity. The proposals will therefore not have any adverse impact in terms of sunlight daylight, outlook and privacy. The proposals are therefore compliant with saved policies BE20, BE21 and BE24 of the Unitary Development Plan.

4. Accessibility

Full consideration has been given to the proposals in terms of access both to and from the school and also in and around the building, having regard to saved policy R16, which states:

"R16 the local planning authority will only permit proposals for shops, business uses, services, community and other facilities open to the public if they include adequate provision for accessibility, in particular those of elderly people, people with disabilities, women and children. Where appropriate to the scale and nature of the development proposed, new development should include:-

- (i) safe and convenient access by public and private transport
And on foot;*
- (ii) safe and convenient means of physical access to all floors;*
- (iii) facilities for child and baby care accessible for male and
Female carers; and*
- (iv) toilets accessible to people with disabilities;"*

The classroom makes provision for disabled access through the provision of a ramp; and ensuring all internal areas are accessible. The proposals also make provision for a disabled WC.

Additionally, the school has an existing Travel Plan, which sets out how the school can be accessed by various modes of transport other than the private car and the application is also accompanied by a Transport Statement, which concludes that the proposals will have not have a significant impact upon the highway network.

Full details disabled access and accessibility are set out in the design and access statement.

5. Design

The proposed building is located to the rear of the existing school buildings and as such it is not visible in the street scene or from public vantage points. The external finish of the classroom is in Ebony, with black guttering and down pipes, and white aluminium windows.

The proposals are therefore considered to comply with policies BE13 and BE19 of the Unitary Development Plan which state,

"BE13 development will not be permitted if the layout and appearance fail to harmonise with the existing street scene or other features of the area which the local planning authority considers it desirable to retain or enhance"

"BE19 the local planning authority will seek to ensure that new development within residential areas complements or improves the amenity and character of the area."

Full details of the buildings design and appearance are set out in the Design and Access Statement and detailed on the application drawings.

6. Construction

The classrooms come in pre-built segments which will arrive and be installed at their location one the same day. Works at the school will then continue during normal workings hours to connect services (electricity, drainage, IT) to the building.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above assessment and having regard to all due considerations Montagu Evans are conclude that the proposed location of the temporary classroom accords with national, regional and local planning policy.

We trust the above application is sufficient for your purposes and look forward to receiving notification that it has been registered. However, if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact either Will Edmonds or Graham Allison on the above number.

Yours faithfully,



Montagu Evans LLP