



JOINT AREA COMMITTEES IN SOUTH SOMERSET
Officer Report on Planning Application:
08/05347/R3C

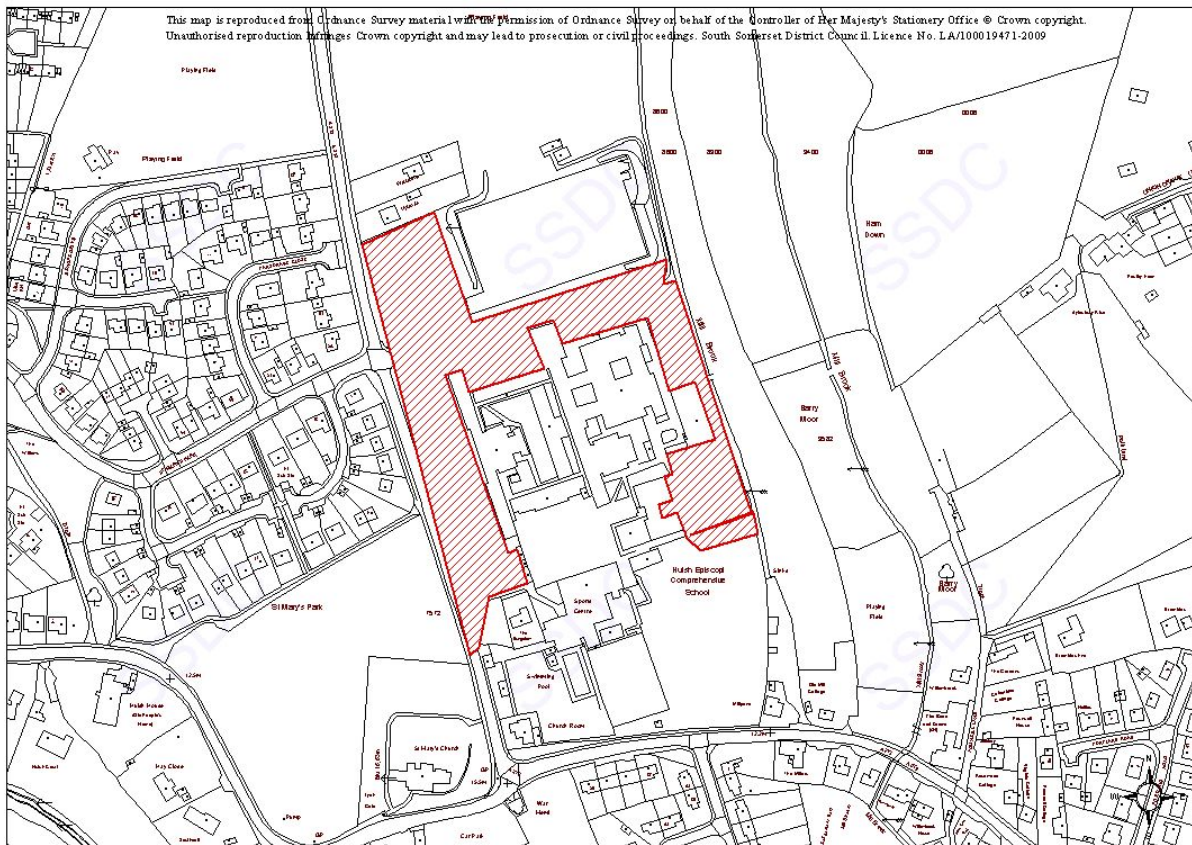


Proposal:	Erection of two storey extension and single storey science extension with associated works alterations to visibility splay and car parking arrangement and new play court. (GR 342761/126819)
Site Address:	Huish Episcopi Secondary School, Wincanton Road, Huish Episcopi
Parish:	Huish Episcopi
Ward: (SSDC Member)	LANGPORT AND HUISH Mr R Mills (CIlr)
Division: (SCC Member)	LANGPORT AND HUISH Mr D Yeomans (CIlr)
Recommending Case Officer:	Claire Nute Tel: 01935 462295 Email: claire.nute@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date:	30th January 2009
Applicant:	The Governing Body
Application Type:	Non PS1 and PS2 return applications

REASON(S) FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

This is a Regulation 3 application, which means Somerset County Council have asked South Somerset District Council to comment on the planning application that has been submitted by one of their own departments. As this is a significant proposal that has a wider impact, the application is being reported to the Joint Area North Committee so that a consultation response can be formulated and submitted to Somerset County Council. This application is currently outside the scope of the Joint Area Committee (JAC) because this application relates to a major application, which falls outside the JAC criteria for dealing with planning applications.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



The site is a secondary school located between Huish Episcopi and Langport, directly adjacent to the A372. The buildings are a combination of single storey and two-storey, constructed from red brickwork and either flat roofs or hipped roofs with brown concrete mix double Roman roof tiles. The building complex fronts the A372 to the west, and is surrounded on other sides by playing fields, sports courts and a sports hall.

The proposal seeks planning approval for two single storey extensions to the west elevation of the science block, a two storey extension to the north elevation of the school to form a sixth form block, the formation of a new hard surfaced play area to the west of the science block extensions, formation of additional car parking in the northeast corner of the site, and alterations to the visibility splays on the two road accesses to the site.

It is proposed to construct the science block extension from red brickwork, timber cladding on the upper walls, a single ply membrane flat roof and grey aluminium windows and doors.

The proposed science block is to be constructed from coloured render and cedar clad walls, single ply membrane flat roof, and grey aluminium windows, doors, window shades and rainwater goods.

HISTORY

There are several previous planning applications relating to extensions and alterations at the school site, however it is considered these applications are not particularly relevant to this proposal.

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise,

PPS's/PPG's

PPS1 - Sustainable Development

PPG13 - Transport

Relevant Development Plan Documents

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South West (RPG10) (adopted September 2001):

Policy VIS 1 - Expressing the Vision

Policy VIS 2 - Principles for Future Development

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan (adopted April 2000):

Policy STR1 - Sustainable Development

Policy 39 - Transport and Development

Policy 42 - Walking

Policy 43 - Access for People with Disabilities

Policy 44 - Cycling

Policy 48 - Access and Parking

Policy 49 - Transport Requirements of New Development

Policy 50 - Traffic Management

South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006):

Policy ST5 - General Principles of Development

Policy ST6 - The Quality of Development

CONSULTATIONS

HUISH EPISCOPI PARISH COUNCIL - (Response to SCC Case Officer) Huish Episcopi considered the extensive plans for Huish Episcopi Science and Languages College at its meeting on 28th January and Councillors were impressed by the design and vision, which will provide tertiary education locally. However, they wish to register their concerns about the increase in traffic and parking problems that the Sixth Form College undoubtedly will bring to the immediate area. It is considered that an extra 28 car spaces is totally inadequate. At present, St Mary's Park estate and the Church car park are both acting as all-day overspill parking for school staff and visitors, so these 28 extra spaces are required

now before any students and their additional staff, join the Sixth Form. Residents are already very unhappy about this intrusion. Figures quoted by Richard Huish College suggest that at least 10%, probably more, of Sixth Form students will drive cars to college and an additional number will bring mopeds, especially in this rural area. It is unclear from the plans whether "cycle spaces" includes space for mopeds as well as bicycles. The Parish Council therefore feels that the school should be considering further dedicated parking spaces for at least 40-50 cars, perhaps exploiting the little used grass space between St Mary's Church Rooms and the swimming pool. This would definitely ease existing parking problems for Sports Centre clients as well. It is also possible that on occasion both the new lecture theatre and the school hall will play host to separate functions on the same evening, which would also extend the car parking need. The Parish Council is actively campaigning for a roundabout at Bartlett's Elm junction (A372/B3153) and has quoted the provision of a Sixth Form and its associated additional traffic, whether individual students or parents driving them to college, as part of its argument. It is also likely that the numbers of students needing to cross the main roads at Bartlett's Elm junction will also increase. The provision of the roundabout is primarily, and essentially, one of safety. Councillors are of the opinion that the work on this roundabout should be undertaken before the Sixth Form is operational. They also consider that the County Council should certainly be required to contribute to the installation of this roundabout, as have the major new housing developments in the vicinity. Huish Episcopi Parish Council is indeed delighted that its local secondary school is to acquire a Sixth Form, but feels it is absolutely vital that the issues of parking and traffic should be properly addressed before planning permission is granted.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER

The proposals will be viewed as being in close correspondence with the existing building complex, which is a substantial established footprint. As the extensions only marginally increase the current layout, and as they will be primarily seen against the backdrop of, or are shielded by, established built form, then I do not consider the proposals to be visually incongruous, or at variance with the character of the immediate locality, where the school and its grounds are a dominant element. Consequently, there are no substantive landscape issues, and I confirm the landscape proposal submitted as part of this application, to be acceptable.

AREA ENGINEER

No comment

DISTRICT RIGHT OF WAY OFFICER

No objection

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OFFICER

No observations

REPRESENTATIONS

No representations have been received.

CONSIDERATIONS

It is considered that the main planning considerations with regard to this proposed development are:

1. Contribution the proposed development makes towards education requirements in the local area.
2. Impact on visual and residential amenity by the scale and design of the proposed works.
3. Impact on traffic and parking at, and surrounding the site, as a result of the proposed development.

In relation to the above issues:

1. The sixth form block extension will allow a college facility, which does not currently exist in this part of the District. The science block will improve the existing science facilities at the school. The new play court, car parking and visibility splays are all associated features that will be required from an increase in students and staff at the school.
2. The Parish Council and Landscape Officer have not raised objections to the scale or design of the proposed development. The design of the sixth form block is considered to be reasonably innovative, and maximises natural resources such as light and warmth by incorporating extensive glazing. The design of the science block extension is in keeping with the existing

adjacent school buildings. All extensions are situated adjacent to existing building cluster and therefore will only be seen with existing buildings as a backdrop and will not have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the area.

3. The provision of a sixth form facility will cause an increase in the number of students and staff travelling to and from the site on a regular basis. Students and staff will use a variety of modes of transport, including cars, buses, bicycles, mopeds, and walking, and this will increase the pressure on the local infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Members consider this application, and provide a view on the development to enable South Somerset District Council to submit a consultation response to Somerset County Council.
