



Report to East Area Planning Committee

Application Number:	PL/23/1818/FA
Proposal:	Single storey detached classroom building
Site location:	Amersham School Stanley Hill Amersham HP7 9HH
Applicant:	The Amersham School (Mr Matthew Fuller)
Case Officer:	Rachel Timlin
Ward affected:	Little Chalfont & Amersham Common
Parish-Town Council:	Amersham Town Council
Valid date:	27 July 2023
Determination date:	31 October 2023
Recommendation:	Conditional permission

1.0 Summary & Recommendation/ Reason for Planning Committee Consideration

- 1.1 This application is for the erection of a single storey detached building to accommodate additional teaching space at Amersham School, Stanley Hill. The site is within the open Green Belt. The works have recently been completed on site.
- 1.2 The application is for determination by planning committee as the land is Council-owned, though Amersham School is leased to the Academy Trust. Therefore, the application is required to be put forward to the Committee as per the procedures of the Constitution.
- 1.3 The recommendation for the proposal is to grant conditional permission.

2.0 Description of Proposed Development

- 2.1 The application is for the erection of a single storey detached classroom building, measuring approximately 13m x 4.7m. The front and side elevations are clad in Piranha Traditional Composite Cladding in Carbon Black. The rear elevation is clad in Upvc Soffit Board in Black. The works also include a new paved area to the front of the new classroom building and other associated works.
- 2.2 The application is accompanied by:
 - a) Location Plan
 - b) Site Plan
 - c) Detailed plans of proposed building and paved area

3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 There is extensive planning history at Amersham School. The most recent decisions are listed below:

- PL/21/2289/FA – Conditional Permission - 17 November 2021 - Erection of 2 canopies and access ladder to the roof of Block N
- PL/21/1621/AV – Conditional Consent - 25 June 2021 - 2 Non illuminated fascia signs
- PL/20/4414/NMA – Minor Amendment Accepted - 18 January 2021 - Non material amendment to planning permission CC/0013/19 (Proposed demolition of an existing defunct single-storey Dining Hall in poor condition and its replacement with a two-storey, and a single-storey classroom extension on the existing science block) to allow for an additional side entrance door to Science Block (Block E) extension, where a window is currently proposed
- PL/20/1631/ADJ – No Objections - 11 June 2020 - Consultation from Buckinghamshire Council - Minerals and Waste Planning Team for Non Material Amendment application to the approved planning application CC/0013/19 at Amersham School; this amendment seeks to reduce the height of the approved parapet on Block N by 1.05 metres. (BCC Ref- NMA/0030/20)
- PL/20/1629/ADJ - No Objections - 11 June 2020 - Consultation from Buckinghamshire Council - Non-Material Amendment application to the approved planning application ref: CC/0013/19 at Amersham School to seek a minor alteration to the section of roof on Block E as it links into the existing Science Block. (BCC Ref- NMA/0031/20)
- PL/20/1599/ADJ - No Objections - 1 June 2020 - Consultation from Buckinghamshire Council - Amendments to the layout of the car park and surrounding soft landscaping for Application CC/0013/19. (BCC Ref -NMA/0021/20)

4.0 Summary of Representations

4.1 None received.

4.2 Amersham Town Council raised no objection.

5.0 Policy Considerations and Evaluation

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2023
- National Design Guidance, January 2021
- Core Strategy for Chiltern District - Adopted November 2011:
- Chiltern District Local Plan adopted 1 September 1997 (including alterations adopted 29 May 2001), consolidated September 2007 and November 2011.
- Chiltern and South Bucks Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule
- Buckinghamshire Council Biodiversity Netgain SPD (2022)

Principle and Location of Development – Green Belt

Core Strategy Policies:

CS1 (The spatial strategy),

Local Plan Saved Policies:

GB2 (Development in general in the Green Belt)

5.1 The application site is within the Green Belt where, in accordance with Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), most development is considered to be inappropriate development. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When

considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.

- 5.2 As per the provisions of Paragraph 149 of the NPPF and Local Plan Policy GB2, the extension or alteration of an existing building is acceptable, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. In this case, given the nature of the works and modest size of the building, it is considered that the works would not comprise a disproportionate addition, when considered cumulatively with any previous additions, and the development therefore aligns with Local and national Green Belt policy.

Raising the quality of place making and design

Core Strategy Policies:

CS4 (Ensuring that the development is sustainable)

CS20 (Design and environmental quality)

CS29 (Community)

CS32 (Green infrastructure)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

GC1 (Design of development throughout the district)

GC4 (Landscaping throughout the district)

- 5.3 Local Plan Policy GC1 refers to the design and appearance of the development and requires all proposals to be assessed with regard to the scale of development, height, siting and relationship with adjoining boundaries and highway, car parking, materials, form, detailing of building work in sensitive locations and design against crime.

- 5.4 The classroom building has a simple and functional appearance comprising of traditional composite cladding and uPVC soffit boards, both in black. Given the modest scale of the building and simple appearance it is not considered to be obtrusive or harmful. The building is set amongst other school buildings and set back from Stanley Hill. This siting is appropriate and will not be readily visible from the street and as such is not to the detriment of the area.

Amenity of existing and future residents

Local Plan Saved Policies:

GC3 (Protection of amenities throughout the district)

GC7 (Noise-generating developments throughout the district)

- 5.5 Given the location of the classroom building, it is not considered to be to the detriment of any neighbouring residential amenities in terms of visual amenities or privacy. The proposal would not result in any increases in pupil numbers and therefore the proposed development would not result in any undue impact in terms of noise disturbance over and above the existing use of the site.

Transport matters and parking

Core Strategy Policies:

CS25 (Dealing with the impact of new development on the transport network)

CS26 (Requirements of new development)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

TR2 (Highway aspects of planning applications throughout the district)

TR3 (Access and road layout throughout the district)

TR11 (Provision of off-street parking for developments throughout the district)

TR15 (Design of parking areas throughout the district)

TR16 (Parking and manoeuvring standards throughout the district)
Buckinghamshire Parking Guidance September 2015

- 5.6 The proposed development would not facilitate any increase in pupil numbers at the subject school site. As such, the new classroom building is not considered to generate an additional parking requirement or lead to any highway safety implications.

Ecology

Core Strategy Policies: CS24 (Biodiversity)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

NC1 (Safeguarding of nature conservation interests throughout the district)

- 5.7 The proposed development would be located on existing hard surfacing located within the existing building envelope of the school. Core Strategy Policy CS24 and the Council's Biodiversity Net Gain SPD seeks that developments demonstrate biodiversity net gains.
- 5.8 As such, it would be reasonable to seek ecological enhancements as part of the development and this can be sought by way of planning condition.

6.0 Weighing and balancing of issues / Overall Assessment

- 6.1 In determining the planning application, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Section 143 of the Localism Act amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to the determination of planning applications and states that in dealing with planning applications, the authority shall have regard to:
- Provision of the development plan insofar as they are material,
 - Any local finance considerations, so far as they are material to the application (such as CIL if applicable), and,
 - Any other material considerations
- 6.2 As set out above it is considered that the proposed development would accord with most of the development plan policies and the provisions of the NPPF.
- 6.3 Local Planning Authorities, when making decisions of a strategic nature, must have due regard, through the Equalities Act, to reducing the inequalities which may result from socio-economic disadvantage. In this instance, it is not considered that this proposal would disadvantage any sector of society to a harmful extent.
- 6.4 The following recommendation is made having regard to the above and also to the content of the Human Rights Act 1998

7.0 Working with the applicant / agent

- 7.1 In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF (2023) the Council approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments.
- 7.2 The Council work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

7.3 In this instance the application was acceptable as submitted and no further information was required.

8.0 Recommendation: Conditional Permission. Subject to the following conditions:-

1. The exterior of the development hereby permitted shall only be constructed in the materials specified on the plans hereby approved or in materials which shall previously have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the development is not detrimental to the character of the locality.

2. Within 3 months from the date of the decision of the development hereby approved, a scheme of biodiversity enhancements shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority to ensure an overall net gain in biodiversity will be achieved. The scheme will include details of landscape planting of known benefit to wildlife and provision of artificial roost features, including integrated bat boxes, integrated bird boxes and swift boxes. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved.

Reason: In the interests of improving biodiversity in accordance with NPPF and Core Strategy Policy24: Biodiversity of the Chiltern District Core Strategy

3. This permission relates to the details shown on the approved plans as listed below:

List of approved plans:

<u>Received</u>	<u>Plan Reference</u>
5 Jun 2023	Amersham School Garden Room
5 Jun 2023	External Dimensions
5 Jun 2023	Fenestration
5 Jun 2023	Internal Dimensions
5 Jun 2023	lighting
5 Jun 2023	Location on School Premise
29 Jun 2023	Proposed Paving Area By Finance _ LRC
26 Jul 2023	01324-xx-G-001
27 Jul 2023	The Amersham School House
29 Jun 2023	Proposed Site Plan

APPENDIX A: Consultation Responses and Representations

Councillor Comments

None received at the time of drafting the officers report.

Amersham Town Council Comments

Received 8th August 2023:

No objection

Representations

None received at the time of drafting the officers report.