

Committee: **Regulatory
Planning and Highways Sub Committee**

Date: **13 October 2004**

Report by: **Director of Transport and Environment**

Proposal: **Retention of one single and one double mobile classroom**

Site Address: **Firle C E Primary School, The Street, Firle**

Applicant: **Director of Education and Libraries**

Application No. **LW/2338/CC**

Key Issues: **i. Need
ii. Impact on residential amenity
iii. Impact on Listed Building, Conservation Area and AONB
iv. Disabled access
v. Traffic**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

To grant planning permission subject to conditions.

CONSIDERATION BY DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

1. The Site

1.1 Firle Primary School is located towards the western edge of Firle village at the junction of the Street and Firle Bostal. The school site lies within Firle Conservation Area and the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The main school building is a Grade II Listed Building and is set within a small playground area which is linked by a narrow access to another piece of land adjacent to and to the rear of School Bungalows on Bostal Road to the south. The two mobile classrooms are located on this piece of land with residential properties on all boundaries. Access to this part of the site is across a grassed area which has a frontage on Bostal Road.

2. The Proposal

2.1 It is proposed to retain a single and a double mobile classroom located on the site both coloured grey with white painted windows under a flat green felt roof. The classrooms accommodate two of the three classes currently at the school as well as a staff room and group working area.

3. Site History

- 3.1 Granted LW/1389/CC 1993 Erection of double mobile classroom.
- 3.2 Granted LW/ 1389/CC/1 1998 Temporary retention of double mobile classroom.
- 3.3 Granted LW/1389/CC/2 2001 Temporary retention of double mobile classroom.
- 3.4 Granted LW/ 1871/CC 1998 Erection of single mobile classroom.

3.5 Granted LW/ 1871/CC/1 2001 Temporary retention of single mobile classroom.

4. Consultations

4.1 Lewes District Council does not object to the retention of these mobile classrooms.

4.2 Firle Parish Council requests approval be conditional on the LEA coming forward with proposals to implement a full scheme for permanent accommodation by 2006/7 and that the proposals address the issue of parking congestion at the school.

4.3 Local Representations: One letter has been received expressing concern over the retention of the classrooms because of the absence of parking places at the school and their proximity to residential properties.

5. The Development Plan policies of relevance to this decision are:

5.1 East Sussex Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011: Policy S1(m) protecting and enhancing conservation areas and listed buildings S1(b) minimizing the impact on residential properties S1(j) protection of AONB and Conservation Areas EN 2 preserving and enhancing the AONB, EN23 protect listed buildings and Conservation Areas from inappropriate development and TR3(f) Accessibility by various modes of transport including by foot.

5.2 Lewes District Plan Adopted March 2003 : Policy H2(b) Listed buildings H5 Conservation areas CT2 protection of AONB; RE10 Community infrastructure

6. Considerations

i. Need

6.1 Policy RE10 of Lewes District Plan supports the provision of development for educational purposes. The single mobile classroom accommodates one class, and the double mobile classroom is divided to allow its use as a permanent classroom, a staff room and separate group room. These facilities are still needed by the school until such time as permanent accommodation can be provided on the site. In 2001, at the time of the last renewal, the Director of Education was advised to continue with discussions to progress the replacement of these buildings with permanent accommodation. At that time proposals for new permanent buildings were under discussion. At the present time this school is part of a County wide review of temporary accommodation and the feasibility of providing permanent accommodation. It is anticipated that this will be complete in 2006/7 and hence a three year permission is being sought.

ii. Impact on residential amenity

6.2 The mobile classrooms have been on the site since 1993 and 1998. Whilst the location is close to neighbouring properties and not ideal, this is a very restricted site and the siting of these buildings has been accepted on a temporary basis. A 1.8m fence has been erected on the boundary of the adjoining residential properties School Bungalows, as a condition of a previous permission, to minimise the impact on residential properties and to comply with Policy S1(b) of East Sussex Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011. Whilst neighbours are still concerned about the impact of these mobiles on their properties I am satisfied that the retention of the buildings has limited impact on amenity and has to be balanced against the continuing educational need.

iii. Impact on Listed Building, Conservation Area and AONB

6.3 The school site is of restricted size and there is an absence of alternative possible locations for the temporary mobile classrooms. In their current position they are not considered to have an adverse visual impact on the setting of the Listed Building, the

Conservation Area or in the wider context the AONB because of their position within a group of buildings and restricted public viewpoints. As such their appearance and setting for a temporary period are considered to comply with Policies H2(b), H5 and CT2 of Lewes District Plan and Policies S1(j)(m) and EN2 and EN23 of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011. An informative is attached to the recommendation to underline the importance of permanent classrooms to allow these temporary buildings to be removed from this sensitive location.

iv. Disabled access

6.4 The classrooms are at present accessed by steps, which does not comply with the requirement of ramped access to school buildings for disabled persons as set out in Policy TR3(f) of East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011. This can be addressed by the imposition of a planning condition should the need arise.

v. Traffic

6.5 Policy TR3 East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011 states development proposals should provide for the demand for access that they create. The mobile classrooms provide accommodation for two of three classes at the school and the school has no on site parking provision. The restricted size of the school site makes it unrealistic to provide on site parking. I do not consider vehicular activity is any greater than that experienced at other rural schools. There is a nearby public car park situated to the east of the school on the other side of The Street. It is possible for parents to use this facility and walk the children along a footpath leading to School Bungalows. Accordingly, the school should be required to submit a school travel plan giving details of the ways in which the pupils can arrive and depart from the school, and a planning condition is recommended to this effect.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The temporary accommodation clearly meets an identified need for teaching accommodation at the school, without the existence of this accommodation the school would fail to function.

7.2 The proposal to retain the mobile classrooms is considered by reason of the siting and appearance of the buildings to comply with Policies H2(b), H5 and CT2 of Lewes District Plan, Policies S1(j) & (m) and EN2 & EN23 of East Sussex Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011. It is supported by Policy RE10 of Lewes District Plan. A temporary consent for the period of three years would assist in minimizing the impact of the mobile classrooms on the neighbours and the locality and accord with Policy S1(b) of East Sussex Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011. A condition relating to the access to the site, including disabled access would be considered to meet the requirements of Policy TR3 of the East Sussex Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011. An informative should be included to stress the need to provide permanent accommodation at this site.

8. Formal Recommendation

8.1 To recommend the Planning & Highways Sub Committee to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:-

1. The buildings hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to playground on or before the end of a period of 3 years from October 13 2004. (B1A)

Reason: To enable the County Planning Authority to control and regulate the development of the site in the interests of the amenity to comply with Policies H2(b), H5 and CT2 of Lewes District Plan or Policies S1(b)(j)(m) and EN2 and EN23 of East Sussex Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011.

2. If staff or pupils with ambulant disabilities enrol at, or are employed at Firle CP School, then the temporary building hereby permitted shall have a disabled access and ramp constructed immediately, to the written satisfaction of the Director of Transport and Environment.

Reason: In the interests of access for all and to comply with policy TR3(f) of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011.

3. A School travel plan shall be submitted for the approval in writing of the Director of Transport and Environment within 6 months of this planning permission. The plan shall include details of the provision made for pupils arriving at the school, by car, by public transport, by bicycle and on foot, including a timetable for its implementation and monitoring.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and amenity and to comply with Policy S1(b) and TR3 of the East Sussex Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011

INFORMATIVE

Further temporary planning permission is unlikely to be supported for these mobile classrooms. The County Education Officer is accordingly strongly recommended to actively progress the replacement of these mobile classrooms with permanent accommodation.

BOB WILKINS

Director of Transport and Environment

5 October 2004

P&HSUB: P13October-LW2338CC

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Local Member: Councillor Neighbour

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

East Sussex Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011.

Lewes District Plan 2003.

LW/1389/CC 1993 Erection of double mobile classroom.

LW/ 1389/CC/1 1998 Temporary retention of double mobile classroom.

LW/1389/CC/2 2001 Temporary retention of double mobile classroom.

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