

DELEGATED REPORT

Report considered and agreed by Assistant Director (Policy)

..... date 10/08/04

Report considered and agreed by Team Leader Development, Minerals and Waste Group

..... date 9/8/04

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

Proposal: **Single mobile classroom unit to east of main school buildings**

Site Address: **Helenswood Lower School, The Ridge, Hastings**

Application No: **HS/2318/CC**

Applicant: **Director of Education and Libraries**

Key Issues: i) **Design and siting**
 ii) **Impact on Residential Amenity**
 iii) **Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

RESOLUTION OF THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT:

Under the powers delegated to me by the Council, I resolve to grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in the recommendation.

CONSIDERATION OF RELEVANT PLANNING MATTERS

1. The Site and Surroundings

Helenswood Lower School is a large secondary school site on the north side of The Ridge in Hastings. The site was formerly the landscaped grounds of a country mansion known as Hydney House, now demolished.

The main school building was erected following the grant of planning permission in 1977. The school is on one and two storeys and has flat roofs with red brick elevations. The school buildings are located towards the rear of the site and there are tennis courts and car parking areas between the school and The Ridge. A large sports hall that is open to the public during the day and evening has recently been erected to the north east of the school buildings under planning permission granted in 1998.

Access for vehicles and pedestrians is via the entrance off of the roundabout on The Ridge, which also serves The Conquest Hospital. To the rear of the site the land drops away sharply to the predominantly open countryside of the High Weald AONB.

2. The Proposal

The applicant seeks temporary planning permission for a single mobile classroom unit to the east of the main school buildings.

3. Site History

1995 – HS/1628/CC - Granted – extension to provide drama and music facilities.

1998 – HS/1892/CC - Granted – Extensions and alterations to provide new sports hall, dance studio changing and recreational facilities and floodlighting to tennis courts.

1999 – HS/1956/CC - Granted – Two-storey extension to include art room and four class bases, adaptations to reception area and addition of circulation route.

2000 – HS/2000/CC - Granted – Dining room extension, reception area extension and internal alterations.

There are also 14 planning consents that have been granted for the erection or retention of mobile classrooms on the site since 1978.

4. Consultations and Representations

Hastings Borough Council: No comments received.

Sport England: Raise no objection.

Local Residents: No comments received.

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

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011: Policy S1 (sustainability) and EN1 (environment).

Hastings Local Plan, Adopted April 2004: Policy DG1 (development form) and L2 (High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

6. Considerations

Design and Siting

Policy EN1 of the East Sussex Brighton & Hove Structure Plan seeks to ensure that development sustains, conserves and where possible enhances the character, local diversity and quality of the landscape and the natural and built environment. Policy S1 seeks to ensure a sustainable approach to development.

The proposed mobile classroom is located to the west of the main school buildings, south of a tennis court. There are two mobile classrooms already on the site which are located to the east of the proposal. The mobile classroom is separated from The Ridge by a hedge, fence and boundary of trees to the south, and is largely concealed from view from the surrounding area.

The design of the proposed temporary mobile classroom is utilitarian and consists of green elevations and white uPVC windows under a flat green, steel roof. The external appearance of the building is considered to be acceptable when taking in to account the nature and appearance of the surrounding school buildings.

The design and siting of the proposed development is considered to be compliant with the identified policies in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan and Hastings Local Plan, and is therefore acceptable for a temporary period.

Impact on Residential Amenity

Policy S1(b) of the East Sussex Brighton & Hove Structure Plan seeks to ensure that development has minimal impact on the environment including residential areas. Policy DG1(f) of the adopted Hastings Local Plan advocates the protection of living conditions of existing and future occupants from, for example, noise, dominance and loss of outlook, light and privacy.

The proposed mobile classroom would be located to the west of the main school buildings and to the south of the tennis courts, and will be the third mobile classroom unit on the site. There is a hedge, fence and trees along the southern boundary of the site, separating the proposal from The Ridge, which will largely obscure the view from the road and the area containing residential dwellings further south.

The nearest residential dwellings are approximately 100 metres from the proposal, and The Ridge and the tree-lined southern boundary of the site separate them. For this reason it is considered unlikely that the residents will experience any adverse impact as a result of the proposed mobile classroom.

For the reasons above the impact on residential amenity of the mobile classroom is considered to be in accordance with the relevant policies in the Structure Plan and Hastings Local Plan and therefore acceptable for a temporary period.

Impact on an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Policy S1(j) of the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Structure Plan seeks to ensure that development does not cause damage to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Policy L2 of the Hastings Local Plan seeks to ensure that development does not adversely affect the natural beauty of the High Weald AONB.

The majority of the school site is located adjacent to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and an area in the north east of the site is within it. The proposed mobile classroom is largely obscured from view from the AONB by virtue of its position to the south west of the existing school buildings. It is considered that the development will not have a significant impact on the AONB by virtue of its proximity and association to the existing school buildings.

The proposal is therefore in accordance with the identified policies in the Structure Plan and Hastings Local Plan, and therefore acceptable in terms of its impact on the High Weald AONB.

7. Conclusion and reasons for approval

In accordance with Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the decision on this application should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposed temporary building is considered to be acceptable in terms of its visual impact, design and siting and impact on an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty subject to a condition to secure its removal after a period of five years. It is considered to be in accordance with policies S1 and EN1 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011, and policies DG1 and L2 of the Hastings Local Plan, Adopted April 2004.

There are no material considerations which indicate that permission should be refused.

8. Recommendation

For the reasons above it is recommended to grant planning permission, subject to the following condition:

- 1) The building hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition as a grassed area on or before the end of a period of five years from this date of consent in accordance with a scheme submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Transport and Environment.

Reason: To ensure the removal of this temporary structure in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policy EN1 of the East Sussex Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 2001 -2011.

BOB WILKINS
Director of Transport and Environment
09 August 2004

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Councillor Scott

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS