

DELEGATED REPORT

Report considered and agreed by Assistant Director (Policy)

..... [REDACTED] date 1.11.05

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

..... [REDACTED] date 1st November 05.

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

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

Site Address: **Hurst Green CE Primary School, Hurst Green, Etchingham**

Application No: **RR/661/CC/5**

Applicant: **Director of Children's Services**

Key Issues: **1. Need
2. Condition of the unit
3. Impact on amenities**

RESOLUTION OF THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT:

Under the powers delegated to me by the Governance Committee on 30 January 2003 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

Hurst Green Primary School is located on the west side of the A21 London Road in Hurst Green at the southern extent of the village. The site is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The overall size of the site is 6,070m².

The school occupies a reasonably level site with the school buildings to the south of the site, car parking to the east and the school playing field on the western side. North of the school building is relatively low-density two-storey housing, situated on a lower ground level than the school buildings. The school site is overlooked by one house in this area, however, elsewhere the school benefits from good screening by fence and hedge. Use of adjoining land is primarily agricultural, with some development along the A21. There are two entrances to the school site from the A21, a pedestrian entrance at the southern end and a vehicular entrance at the northern end. These are the only points at which the school site is visible from the road.

2. The Proposal

There are currently two mobile classrooms on the site located to the north of the main school building on the edge of the school playing field. The application is for the extension of an existing temporary permission for the easternmost classroom. This classroom was first granted planning permission in 1982 and has since been granted permission for temporary retention on four occasions, the most recent being in 2002. The Director of Education is seeking to retain the unit for a further period of five years.

The classroom is a box shape with brown painted walls of timber cladding and a grey felt, gently sloping roof. It is single storey with a total floor space area of 68m². There is a window and door on each of the two longest sides of the classroom, and a ramp leading up to the entrance on the southern side. The windows have white timber frames and the doors are painted yellow.

3. Site History

1980 – Granted – RR/428/CC – Single classroom in permanent construction

1982 – Granted – RR/661/CC – Erection of a single prefabricated classroom unit (being transferred from Brighton, Moulsecoomb County First School)

1984 – Granted – RR/661/CC/1 – Retention of single prefabricated classroom unit

1985 – Granted – RR/898/CC – Proposed additional classroom

1989 – Granted – RR/661/CC/2 – Retention of single prefabricated classroom unit

1996 – Granted - RR/661/CC/3 - Retention of single prefabricated classroom unit

2002 – Granted - RR/661/CC/4 - Retention of single prefabricated classroom unit

2002 – Granted – RR/2212/CC – Retrospective planning application for the retention of existing single mobile classroom

2004 – Granted – RR/2314/CC – Extension of existing car park

4. Consultations and Representations

Rother District Council: Raises no objections

Hurst Green Parish Council: No comments received

Neighbours: No comments received

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

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011:

EN2 (Development in an AONB), S1 (General Development Policy), S9 (Villages), TR3 (Accessibility).

Rother District Local Plan Revised Deposit November 2003:

DS1 (Development Strategy), GD1 (General Development Considerations), CF1 (Community Facilities)

6. Considerations

Need

The classroom is required by the school to provide sufficient teaching space for the number of pupils on the school roll, which is expected to remain consistent over the coming years. A feasibility study has recently commenced to show how permanent accommodation could be provided to replace the mobile classrooms on this site, but this investigation is expected to take time to reach any conclusions.

Policy S9 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011 establishes that development and change within village boundaries will be supported where it contributes to meeting established local needs for the maintenance or provision of local services and/or facilities.

Condition of the Unit

The unit is in relatively good condition and is capable of providing adequate accommodation in the future.

Policy TR3 (f) of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011 states that appropriate provision should be made for access for people with disabilities. The classroom complies with this policy through the provision of a ramp leading up to one of the entrances, making the classroom accessible to people with limited mobility. There are two low, wide steps leading up to this entrance as an alternative to the ramp, and a hand rail has been provided.

Impact on Amenities

Policy EN2 (f) of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011 outlines the importance of minimising the impact of development in an AONB by carefully integrating the development into the landscape. In this case, the temporary classroom is well screened from most areas outside of the school site, and set back away from nearby residential properties. The points from which the classroom is visible to the public are on or adjacent to a busy trunk road, and the elevation visible is partly covered with plant growth, thus reducing the building's visual impact. The classroom's retention in the short term would not be detrimental to amenities in the area.

Policy S1 (b) and (f) establish criteria that development must meet in minimising impacts on the environment and protecting and enhancing the attractiveness and individual character of urban and rural areas. For the reasons stated above, this proposal is considered to be in accordance with these requirements. Similarly, the classroom complies with policy DS1 (vi) of the Rother District Local Plan Revised Deposit November 2003 in that it does not prejudice the character and qualities of the environment.

The classroom also meets relevant criteria of Policy GD1 of the Rother District Local Plan, including (iv) respecting the character and appearance of the locality and (vi) respecting the topography, important views and retaining site features. As the development is in accord with policies GD1 and DS1, it also meets Policy CF1, as a community facility within a development boundary.

7. Conclusion and reasons for approval

In accordance with Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the decision on this application should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The need argument for the retention of this classroom is overriding. It has been judged to pose no nuisance to neighbouring property and since the last application there has been some progress in planning for the replacement of the temporary unit with permanent accommodation. The retention of the classroom for a temporary period complies with Policies EN2, S1, S9 and TR3 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011 and with Policies DS1, GD1 and CF1 of the Rother District Local Plan Revised Deposit Nov 2003. It is therefore appropriate to grant a temporary consent for this building for a period of five years from the lapse of the last consent. This period of five years will expire on the 30 September 2010 and should provide ample time for the submission of an application for permanent accommodation at the school.

There are no other material considerations and the decision should be taken in accordance with the development plans.

8. Recommendation

It is recommended to grant planning permission for application RR/661/CC/5 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 30 September 2010. (B2)

Reason: To enable the County Planning Authority to control and regulate the development and to comply with Policy EN1 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011.

BOB WILKINS
Director of Transport and Environment
01 November 2005
Policy:

Contact Officer: Holly Bonds Tel.No 01273 481595
Local Member Councillor Barnes

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011
Rother District Local Plan Revised Deposit November 2003