

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND GOVERNANCE**

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2021/2363/FULL
Location: Chancellor's School Pine Grove Brookmans Park Hatfield AL9 7BN
Proposal: Erection of a new single storey outbuilding for use as new site office
Officer: Ms Kirsty Shirley

Recommendation: Granted

6/2021/2363/FULL

Context	
Site and Application description	<p>The Chancellor's School is a mixed 11-18 secondary school with a current intake of approximately 1200 students. The application site is located within the Chancellor's School, Brookmans Park, to the north of the existing school buildings. The application site is wholly within the Metropolitan Green Belt.</p> <p>The proposal is for the erection of an outbuilding to be used as an office.</p>
Constraints (as defined within WHDP 2005)	<p>GB - Greenbelt - Distance: 0 PAR - PARISH (NORTH MYMMS) - Distance: 0 ROW - FOOTPATH (NORTH MYMMS 068) - Distance: 32.01 Wards - Brookmans Park & Little Heath - Distance: 0 FM00 - Flood Zone Surface Water 1000mm (7618372) - Distance: 0 HEN - No known habitats present (high priority for habitat creation) - Distance: 0 SAGB - Sand and Gravel Belt - Distance: 0</p>
Relevant planning history	<p>Application Number: E6/1961/1466/ Decision: Granted Decision Date: 05 February 1963 Proposal: Site for secondary school.</p> <p>Application Number: E6/1966/1834/ Decision: Granted Decision Date: 07 February 1967 Proposal: Library block</p> <p>Application Number: E6/1968/0111/ Decision: Granted Decision Date: 31 July 1969 Proposal: Science block and part of teaching block.</p> <p>Application Number: E6/1972/5431/ Decision: Granted Decision Date: 13 March 1973 Proposal: Addition to refectory and new teaching accommodation.</p> <p>Application Number: S6/1974/0742/</p>

	<p>Decision: Granted Decision Date: 08 January 1975 Proposal: Two storey extension to changing rooms.</p> <p>Application Number: S6/1995/0205/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 11 May 1995 Proposal: Erection of single storey building to provide four new classrooms. (Revision of permission S6/0786/94)</p> <p>Application Number: S6/1997/0652/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 10 November 1997 Proposal: Extensions to provide new gymnasium, music/drama classrooms and associated storage and circulation space</p> <p>Application Number: S6/2001/0981/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 24 September 2001 Proposal: Erection of new main entrance and reception area to existing school</p> <p>Application Number: S6/2002/1570/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 16 January 2003 Proposal: INSTALLATION OF FIRE ESCAPE TO BLOCK E</p> <p>Application Number: S6/2004/1882/FP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 27 June 2005 Proposal: ERECTION OF NEW I.C.T BUILDING</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2019/0085/MAJ Decision: Granted Decision Date: 29 November 2019 Proposal: Erection of building comprising sports hall with associated changing facilities and 7 x classrooms built on existing hard play tennis courts; 4 x hard play sports pitches to be provided to replace existing; provision of 33 x parking spaces; and two mobile classrooms to be provided for the duration of the project</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2020/0830/FULL Decision: Granted Decision Date: 24 July 2021 Proposal: Formation of earth mounds and elevation of approved hard-play sports pitch</p> <p>Application Number: 6/20201766/FULL Decision: Granted Decision Date: 14 September 2021 Proposal: Erection of building to accommodate new electric meter.</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2020/2581/FULL Decision: Granted Decision Date: 03 March 2021 Proposal: Erection of external canopy (to be used as dining space) and laying</p>
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	<p>of hard surfacing to connect existing path to canopy</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2020/2617/FULL Decision: Granted Decision Date: 22 December 2020 Proposal: Erection of external canopy (to be used as dining space) and laying of hard surfacing to connect existing path to canopy</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2020/3398/LAWP Decision: Granted Decision Date: 02 March 2021 Proposal: Certificate of lawfulness for erection of fencing, gates and bollards to enclose parking area</p> <p>Application Number: 6/2021/0995/FULL Decision: Granted Decision Date: 25 May 2021 Proposal: Erection of external fire escape stair to teaching block and replacement curtain walling and insertion of new door to enable escape and stair access.</p>		
Consultations			
Neighbour representations	Support: 0	Object: 11	Other: 0
Publicity	<p>Site Notice Display Date: 7 September 2021 Site Notice Expiry Date: 28 September 2021 Neighbour notification letter</p>		
Summary of neighbour responses	<p>60 Bell Lane – Object: Chancellors school has not complied with the conditions of their previous planning consent which requires them to have a traffic management plan and so no planning consent should be given until this has been rectified. The effect more buildings on the Chancellors site will inevitably give rise to more cars needing parking places exacerbating the traffic issues.</p> <p>65 Pine Grove– Object: This application appears to be the continuation of an unrelenting scheme to over-develop the school. It is unclear what the building will be used for and not clear where the rubbish will be stored. The outbuilding will also be visible to nearby properties.</p> <p>77 Pine Grove - Object: The Travel Plan is not being implemented or monitored and the levels of traffic in Pine Grove on a daily basis is dangerous. Additional development at the site should not be supported without resolving the ongoing issues that both pupils and residents have to endure on a daily basis.</p> <p>51 Pine Grove – Object: The residents are sick of the volume of school buses and traffic we have to deal with on a daily basis during the school term. This extension will cause even more traffic on our road when the council and the school should be encouraging parents and teachers to reduce their carbon footprint and use alternative means of transport.</p> <p>18 Pine Grove - Object: The area is already extremely dangerous, congested and hazardous for children attending school. Expanding the school further lacks any common sense.</p>		

	<p>38 Pine Grove - Objection: The traffic and congestion as a result of the school is very dangerous. Further expansion of the school will exacerbate the current dangerous situation.</p> <p>64 Pine Grove - Object: The development impacts the Green Belt and the additional traffic to the existing road safety issues that have still yet to be addressed/resolved by the School and Local and County Council, will further impact the surrounding highways of the village that already suffers from severe traffic congestion and parking problems. The local and county council have a duty under its articles to take action to not only to have this breach corrected but also must deny any future planning applications by the school until such time the present breaches and road safety issues have been corrected. The proposed development is on Green Belt land and I believe that the application falls short of achieving very special circumstances in order to be approved. The present application also does not appear to have fully examined other options for the better use of the existing site.</p> <p>18 Pine Grove – Object: I have been made aware from residents of Pine Grove that Chancellors School plans to extend further beyond the current expansion that has already made the road a hazard for both children/ other pedestrians and also dangerous for drivers and residents. This is due to an absence of any traffic planning / sufficient parking for the school and no escape routes for such heavy flow of people attempting to attend the site. This application would add to the current untenable dangerous situation.</p> <p>44 Bell Lane – Object: The parking is not managed by this school, which needs a traffic management plan not another building.</p> <p>68 Bell Lane - Object: The pick-up and drop off time congestion at the school results in poor parking, damage to flower beds and is dangerous. The school haven't complied with a traffic condition of a previous application which should be dealt with first. The proposal will lead to more vehicles and more congestion. The council and highways authority have shown they are incapable of managing worsening traffic issues.</p> <p>64 Bell Lane - Object: During term-time the cars of parents block roads and park double yellow lines and grass verges. A further increase in the size of Chancellors School would further exacerbate these problems.</p>
Consultees and responses	North Mymms Parish Council - <i>No comment.</i>
Relevant Policies	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NPPF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GBSP1 <input type="checkbox"/> GBSP2 <input type="checkbox"/> M14 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supplementary Design Guidance <input type="checkbox"/> Supplementary Parking Guidance <input type="checkbox"/> Interim Policy for car parking and garage sizes	
Main Issues	
Green Belt	
<p>The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt.</p> <p><i>Appropriateness</i></p> <p>Paragraph 149 of the NPPF outlines that a local planning authority should regard the construction of</p>	

new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt, apart from a limited number of exceptions. One of these exceptions (relevant in this case – as explained below) is the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

Although the proposed building would not be attached to a building, it would be close to and intimately associated with the other school buildings. As such, it is considered that it should be treated as an extension for the purposes of the NPPF.

The original school building has been substantially extended over the years. Having regard to the scale and location of existing extensions which have already taken place, it is considered that the original school buildings have already been disproportionately extended.

The proposed building would be a single storey structure with a footprint of 22m². Whilst relatively modest in size, the outbuilding would contribute further to the significant increase in size to the original building, representing a cumulative addition over and above the size of the original building.

Openness

There is no definition of openness in the NPPF but, in the context of the Green Belt, it is generally held to refer to freedom from, or the absence of, development. However, assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt requires a judgment based on the circumstances of the case. Openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects - in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant. The duration of the development, degree of activity, the specific characteristics of the proposal and its setting are also relevant in this case when making an assessment.

As a consequence of the size and scale of the building, the loss of Green Belt openness in spatial terms would be minimal. The visual impact would also be limited given the use of sympathetic materials to the school buildings and close proximity to existing built form which is of a greater scale. The building would be read in the context of the existing school blocks. Having regard to these factors, it is considered that the proposed building would not result in a detrimental loss to Green Belt openness and the level of harm would be limited.

Very Special Circumstances

Paragraph 147 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in Very Special Circumstances.

Paragraph 148 of the NPPF goes on to state that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.

Very Special Circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The proposed outbuilding would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt and result in a loss of Green Belt openness. In accordance with the NPPF, substantial weight is attached to this harm.

The supporting information submitted with this application explains that the outbuilding is required as a result of the loss of former estate manager's office following its consolidation with a workshop and store area to facilitate space for the increased sixth form students at the school. The outbuilding would be located in an area of existing hard-standing adjacent to the existing, re-modelled estate's workshop area. The outbuilding would replace a current storage unit, which is located in this area

and no longer required. The location is ideal for the estate management team, with ease of access to existing key areas and would have good surveillance of the car park. The proposed outbuilding would provide required and adequate office space for the estates team, who are required for the day to day running of the school.

It is therefore considered that the considerations above amount to Very Special Circumstances necessary to clearly outweigh the harm identified to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and limited loss of Green Belt openness.

Would the development reflect the character of the area?

Yes No

The proposed outbuilding would feature a flat roof in keeping with the mainly flat roofed buildings within the school site. The outbuilding would be clad in anthracite grey weather board which would be in keeping with the existing grey cladding of the main teaching blocks. The size, scale and massing of the outbuilding would be subservient to the existing built form within the school and would be read in the context of existing school blocks.

Would the development maintain the amenity of adjoining occupiers? (e.g. privacy, outlook, light etc.)

Yes No

Numerous objections for this application have been received from nearby residents.

The objections received concern the traffic and congestion issues the school currently experiences, particularly at drop-off and pick-up times at the school, with concerns that this development will exacerbate these current issues.

The applicant has confirmed that the outbuilding would not facilitate any additional staff and so would not contribute to any additional journeys to or from the school. It is therefore considered that the proposed outbuilding would not exacerbate the current traffic and congestion issues.

It is noted that the school has a School Travel Plan, adopted in May 2019, which encourages changes in travelling behaviour and creates an awareness of traffic-related issues.

Conclusion

Very Special Circumstances exist which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and the proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms.

DRAWING NUMBERS

1. The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details:

Plan Number	Revision Number	Details	Received Date
2207 3 00 0001		Existing Location And Site Plan	10 August 2021
2238 3 00 0002		Proposed Site Location Plan	10 August 2021

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and details.

1. POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework and material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer's report which can be viewed on the Council's website or inspected at these offices).

Informatives:

1. This permission does not convey any consent which may be required under any legislation other than the Town and Country Planning Acts. Any permission required under the Building Regulations or under any other Act, must be obtained from the relevant authority or body e.g. Fire Officer, Health and Safety Executive, Environment Agency (water interest etc.) Neither does this permission negate or override any private covenants or legal interest (easements or wayleaves) which may affect the land.
2. In addition, and separate to your planning permission, for the majority of schemes, you are required by law to appoint a building regulator who will inspect your property at various stages during the course of your building project. This is to ensure it is compliant with the Building Regulations and the Building Act 1984.

The checks the building regulator will carry out include, but are not limited to, the structure, foundations, fire precautions and escape routes, electrical and plumbing compliance and other issues such as drainage and insulation. The objective of these checks is to ensure that your building is safe to live in, accessible and environmentally sustainable.

Once all build stages are checked and the works are finished, a Completion Certificate is issued confirming that these objectives have been met. You will also need the Completion Certificate, should you sell the property, as it will confirm to future owners that the work has been carried out in compliance with the Regulations.

As the owner of the property, you are responsible for Building Regulations compliance so we would urge you to decide which regulator to use, as opposed to leaving your builder or architect to make the choice. This is so that you can be sure the building regulator is truly independent and working to protect you from any breach or omission during the works.

Hertfordshire Building Control Limited are a Company wholly owned by eight local authorities in Hertfordshire including Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council. Please contact them on 01438 879990 or at buildingcontrol@hertfordshirebc.co.uk to discuss the process and all that is involved. Or alternatively refer to the Homeowner Information section on their website at www.hertfordshirebc.co.uk

Determined By:

Mr Mark Peacock
6 October 2021