

2.4 REFERENCE NO - 17/500660/FULL			
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Continuation of use of temporary car park created during building works as an overflow car park now that building works are complete (retrospective).			
ADDRESS Iwade School, School Lane, Iwade, Kent, ME9 8RS			
RECOMMENDATION – Grant subject to conditions			
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION The proposal would not give rise to unacceptable harm to visual amenity or highway safety and convenience.			
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE Parish Council objection.			
WARD Bobbing, Iwade And Lower Halstow	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Iwade	APPLICANT Iwade County Primary School AGENT N/A	
DECISION DUE DATE 06/04/17	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 06/04/17		
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (including appeals and relevant history on adjoining sites):			
App No	Proposal	Decision	Date
15/510695/COUNTY	Submission of details of a landscaping scheme	No objection	21/01/16
15/509841/SUB	Submission of details of hard landscaping	No further action	N/A
15/509679/SUB	Submission of details of a traffic management plan	Approved	10/12/15
15/5089163/COUNTY	Submission of details of a travel plan	No further action	09/11/15
15/500126/SUB	Submission of details of materials, reptile impacts and a construction management strategy	No objection	04/03/15
14/500739/R3REG	Two storey extension, new access, parking and hard and soft landscaping	No objection	30/10/14

MAIN REPORT

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 The site forms Iwade Primary School which has been extended following the approval of the County applications referenced above. As the school is now an academy, planning control sits with Swale Borough Council.
- 1.02 The school fronts School Lane, School Mews and Meadow Close to the south, east and south west with playing fields to the north and north west. The surrounding area is primarily residential in nature.

1.03 The specific area which this application relates to fronts directly onto School Lane and Meadow Close and has been in use as a car park for over 2 years while building works took place. This was informally agreed with Kent County Council at the time. It was previously a grassed area.

1.04 The car parking area has 2 large well established willow trees within it.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.01 The proposal seeks planning permission for the permanent retention of this space for car parking, providing approximately 15 additional spaces to those created as part of the previous extensions.

2.02 The surface was laid with a geogrid filled in with white stones and gravel, and this is proposed to remain as is.

2.03 Access is via a dropped kerb from within the school site and this is proposed to remain as is.

2.04 No further physical changes are proposed.

3.0 PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

3.01 Potential Archaeological Importance

4.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

4.01 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG): The NPPF and NPPG are relevant in that they encourage good design and seek to minimise serious amenity concerns.

4.02 Development Plan: Saved policies E1, E10, E19, and T3 of the adopted Swale Borough Council Local Plan 2008 and policies CP 4, DM 7, DM 14 and DM 29 of the emerging Swale Borough Council Local Plan Bearing Fruits 2031 are relevant in that they relate to general development criteria and design, parking and trees.

4.03 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.04 The NPPF was released on 27th March 2012 with immediate effect, however, para 214 states “that for 12 months from this publication date, decision-makers may continue to give full weight to relevant policies adopted since 2004 even if there is a limited degree of conflict with this Framework.”

4.05 The 12 month period noted above has now expired, as such, it is necessary for a review of the consistency between the policies contained within the Swale Borough Local Plan 2008 and the NPPF.

4.06 This has been carried out in the form of a report agreed by the Local Development Framework Panel on 12 December 2012. Saved policies E1, E10, E19, and T3 are considered to accord with the NPPF for the purposes of determining this application and as such, these policies can still be afforded significant weight in the decision-making process.

5.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

5.01 The Parish Council and surrounding neighbours were sent notification of the application. A site notice was also erected to the front of the site on School Lane. No neighbour representations were received, however Iwade Parish Council objected to the proposal for the following summarised reasons:

- No detail around the surfacing of the car park
- No soft landscaping proposed to soften the view
- Land is adjacent to protected species
- There should be a barrier between the cars and pathway used by children, such as a hedge
- A condition should be imposed restricting staff parking from School Lane or the village centre

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.01 Kent County Council Archaeology confirmed that no measures are required in connection with the proposal.

6.02 Kent County Council Highways and Transportation had no objection to the proposal.

6.03 Kent County Council Ecology confirmed that no ecological measures are required in connect with the proposal.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS

7.01 The applications referenced above all relate to the recent extensions and alterations at the school.

8.0 APPRAISAL

8.01 The application site is located within the defined built up area boundary of Iwade in which the principle of development is acceptable subject to the other relevant policy considerations outlined below.

Visual Amenity

8.02 The parking of cars over a previously grassed area visible in the street scene undoubtedly gives rise to some visual harm. I consider therefore, whether the existing, large willow trees within the area mitigate this harm somewhat, and whether the additional parking space is justified.

8.03 The school currently has approximately 40 parking spaces (not counting the area which is the subject of this application) for the full-time equivalent of 60 staff. The number of staff is expected to further increase over the coming years. According to the Kent Vehicle Parking Standards, the maximum provision of parking spaces for primary schools should be 1 space per staff, plus 10%, which in this case would amount to a guided number of around 66 spaces at present.

8.04 The current parking provision is therefore below this guidance. Given this, the undesirability of on-street parking around the surrounding roads and the potential for the future increase in staffing numbers, I believe there is a strong justification in

favour of allowing the retention of this area of parking which adds around 15 spaces, for a total of 55.

- 8.05 The 2 willow trees on the site are very large, well established, and attractive. I believe they significantly soften the view of the parked cars and provide significant visual mitigation without the need for further landscaping.
- 8.06 Taking into account the need for parking space and the visual mitigation in place, I consider the impact upon visual amenity to be acceptable without the need for further measures in this regard.

Highway Safety/Convenience

- 8.07 KCC Highways and Transportation had no objection to the proposal. I believe the continued use of this parking area would help prevent additional and undesirable on-street parking in the surrounding roads. The Parish Council suggested a condition restricting staff from parking on these roads. While it is hoped that this would be the case, such a condition would not be enforceable and therefore fails the tests set out within the NPPF and cannot be imposed.
- 8.08 The Parish Council considers the need for an internal barrier (such as a hedge) separating the parking area from the pathway which children use. The school has confirmed that as per its own travel arrangements, cars are restricted from moving around the site during the periods in which children arrive and leave. Furthermore, car parking around the rest of the site is also adjacent to the footpaths which children could use. I consider that the arrangements already in place do not give rise to concern in this regard and that such a barrier is not necessary.

Other Matters

- 8.09 I consider the Parish Council's comments in terms of protected species (Great Crested Newts) near to the site. I believe this relates more to the fields and pond to the rear of the school, from which this part of the site is clearly separated. Nonetheless, I consulted with KCC Ecology who confirmed that the measures implemented as part of the previous extensions were acceptable and that no further measures are required in connection with this proposal.
- 8.10 I consulted with the Council's Tree Consultant in relation to the 2 large Willow trees which are on the site and surrounded by the parking area. He states that he would have had concern as to the impact of the surfacing upon these trees, had the application not been made retrospectively. However, it has now been in place for over 2 years and the trees appear to be in good condition with no apparent damage. He concluded that it, in his professional opinion, it would now be **more harmful** to the trees to remove the surface than to leave it in place. Accordingly, he raises no objection but requests a condition to prevent the surface being changed without the prior agreement of the Council in the future, to safeguard these trees. He also requests a condition that the trees be retained and that any pruning must not be carried out without the prior written approval of the Council. In the unfortunate event that the trees do become diseased or dying he requests a condition that they should be suitably replaced with the prior written agreement of the Council. I will impose such conditions below.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.01 Taking into account all of the above, I believe the provision of much needed parking space, and the mitigation provided by the existing willow trees, outweighs the visual harm of the proposal, which is acceptable in all other aspects, subject to the conditions below. I therefore recommend that planning permission be granted.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION – GRANT Subject to the following conditions:

CONDITIONS

(1) The existing permeable geogrid surface of the car park shall remain intact and no changes to its surface area/makeup shall take place without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of safeguarding the existing trees to be retained and in the interests of visual amenity.

(2) No trees within the car park area shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be pruned in any manner, be it branches, stems or roots, without the written prior approval of the Local Planning Authority. All tree works shall be carried out in accordance with the British Standard 3998: 2010 'Tree Works – Recommendations'. If any tree within the car park area becomes diseased or dying, a replacement tree shall be planted and that tree shall be of such size and species, and shall be planted at such a time and in a position to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of safeguarding the existing trees to be retained and in the interests of visual amenity.

The Council's approach to this application:

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- Offering pre-application advice
- Where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome.
- As appropriate, updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

In this instance:

The application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required.

The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant had the opportunity to speak to the Committee and promote the application.

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.
The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.