

Planning Committee

20 March 2014

Reference:
APP/14/00011

Area Team:
North Team

Case Officer:
Mrs S Lacey

Ward:
Hoylake and Meols

Location: Great Meols Primary School, ELWYN ROAD, MEOLS, CH47 7AP
Proposal: Erection of a sports hall and relocation of store buildings.
Applicant: Headteacher
Agent : Weightman & Bullen Ltd

Site Plan:



Development Plan Designation:

Primarily Residential Area

Planning History:

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols, Wirral, CH47 7AP
Application Type: Full Planning Permission
Proposal: Erection of single storey extension to the front of the building and associated works
Application No: APP/09/05431
Decision Date: 29/05/2009
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols, Wirral, CH47 7AP
Application Type: Work for Council by Council
Proposal: Erection of single storey extension to provide 2 additional classrooms and cloakroom area
Application No: APP/02/06009
Decision Date: 16/08/2002
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols ,Primary School ,Elwyn Road ,Meols ,L47 7AP
Application Type: Deemed
Proposal: Sitting of one double and one single mobile classroom.
Application No: DPP/82/20635
Decision Date: 22/07/1982
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, ELWYN ROAD, MEOLS, CH47 7AP
Application Type: Full Planning Permission
Proposal: Erection of an extension to existing school to provide preschool and classrooms to replace a mobile classrooms.
Application No: APP/10/00345
Decision Date: 17/05/2010
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols, Wirral, CH47 7AP
Application Type: Full Planning Permission
Proposal: Erection of a sun shade
Application No: APP/09/06116
Decision Date: 19/10/2009
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols, Wirral, CH47 7AP
Application Type: Work for Council by Council
Proposal: Construction of car park to rear of school, including access to existing car park.
Application No: APP/03/06453
Decision Date: 05/09/2003
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols, Wirral, CH47 7AP
Application Type: Work for Council by Council
Proposal: Construction of car park to rear of school, including access from existing car park.
Application No: APP/03/07654
Decision Date: 22/01/2004
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols, Wirral, CH47 7AP
Application Type: Full Planning Permission
Proposal: Car park extension to rear of school and erection of sectional garage to replace storage containers.
Application No: APP/04/05660
Decision Date: 04/06/2004
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols, Wirral, CH47 7AP
Application Type: Full Planning Permission
Proposal: Retention of a temporary classroom.
Application No: APP/01/06804
Decision Date: 01/11/2001
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols, Wirral, L47 7AP
Application Type: Work for Council by Council
Proposal: Erection of a container for storage of equipment.
Application No: APP/97/06466
Decision Date: 20/02/1998
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Hoylake
Application Type: Deemed
Proposal: 1 Classroom/Library and resources area.
Application No: DPP/75/03492
Decision Date: 13/10/1975
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols, Wirral, CH47 7AP
Application Type: Full Planning Permission
Proposal: Variation of condition no.6 on permission no APP/2001/6575 to extend the period for which a temporary double mobile classroom can remain on the site to 8th April 2002.
Application No: APP/02/05313
Decision Date: 26/07/2002
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols, Wirral, CH47 7AP
Application Type: Work for Council by Council
Proposal: Removal of existing perimeter fence and replace with palisade fencing.
Application No: APP/00/06020
Decision Date: 12/07/2000
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols, Wirral, CH47 7AP
Application Type: Work for Council by Council
Proposal: Erection of temporary classroom.
Application No: APP/99/06327
Decision Date: 04/10/1999
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols. L47 7AP
Application Type: Work for Council by Council
Proposal: Erection of one mobile classroom.
Application No: APP/86/05844
Decision Date: 17/07/1986
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols. L47 7AP

Application Type: Work for Council by Council
Proposal: Erection of two single storey classroom extensions and covered ways, and relocation of mobile classroom unit.
Application No: APP/87/07070
Decision Date: 14/01/1988
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols, Wirral, CH47 7AP
Application Type: Work for Council by Council
Proposal: Erection of a single storey classroom extension at side.
Application No: APP/99/06532
Decision Date: 12/10/1999
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road ,Meols ,L47 7AP
Application Type: Deemed
Proposal: Erection of new double mobile classroom unit
Application No: DPP/78/10425
Decision Date: 30/11/1978
Decision Type: Approve

Location: Great Meols Primary School, Elwyn Road, Meols, Wirral, CH47 7AP
Application Type: Work for Council by Council
Proposal: Erection of a single storey extension to provide three classrooms and erection of a temporary double mobile classroom
Application No: APP/01/06575
Decision Date: 28/09/2001
Decision Type: Approve

Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:

REPRESENTATIONS

Having regard to the Council Guidance on Publicity for Applications, 32 letters of notification were sent to neighbouring properties and a site notice was displayed on the highway. 17 objections have been received from No.s 3, 11, 19, 21, 23, 25, 56, 62, 68 Guffitts Rake, No.19 and 21 Newlyn Road, No.s 3, 6, 8, 12 Elwyn Road, No.37 Centurion Drive, 3 Guffitts Close, and two further representations where no address has been provided. A petition of 53 signatures from separate households has been received. The concerns are summarised as follows:

1. It is not obvious why the school, which already has a hall, requires a sports hall of this size;
2. The appearance of the sports hall which is out of character with the surrounding residential properties;
3. Highway safety concerns - there is a dangerous existing traffic situation, and the proposal will generate traffic, there is no parking provision, and if the school is open in the evening it will increase congestion including obstruction to resident access, parking on corners, parking with engines running, restricting/denying access for larger vehicles (including emergency vehicles);
4. Are there restrictions to who can use the hall and hours of operation;
5. The proposal will be used by people outside the local area;
6. Highway restrictions should be conditioned to prevent driveways being blocked;
7. Lack of neighbour notification;
8. Disturbance during construction, and in the evenings if used by the community;
9. The proposal will be visible from the road;
10. Loss of a view;
11. Building on green space;
12. The height of the building is obtrusive;
13. Devaluation of property;
14. Concern regarding the hours of opening;
15. The late opening hours will make neighbours more vulnerable;
16. Light pollution;
17. The school has already had a lot of extensions;

18. The industrial cladding is inappropriate in a residential location;
19. Will it be necessary to increase the height of the existing chimney?
20. The cost of heating the building;
21. The hall is too detached from the main school building without a link;
22. The relocated store buildings are too close to neighbouring properties;
23. Loss of play area and established garden space.

Councillor Hale raised the following concerns:

1. The height and design of the sports hall is out of character with the surrounding properties;
2. The school has expanded to become one of the largest Primary Schools on the Wirral which has led to huge car parking problems;
3. The sports hall should not necessitate late evening noise and disruption;
4. The proposal is detrimental to the amenities of neighbouring properties;
5. Potential light pollution.

CONSULTATIONS

Head of Environment and Regulation (Traffic and Transportation Divisions) - no objections to the proposal.

Head of Environment and Regulation (Environmental Health Division) - no objections to the proposal.
Sports England had no objection to the proposal. They commented the size and lack of changing provision would limit the potential for community use.

Director's Comments:

Consideration of this application was deferred from Planning Committee on 20 February 2014 to allow for a Members site visit.

REASON FOR REFFERAL TO PLANNING COMMITTEE:

A petition with signatures from 53 separate households has been received and individual letters of objection from 17 separate households. As such, having regard to the Scheme of Delegation for Determining Planning Applications, this application is required to be considered by the Planning Committee.

INTRODUCTION

The application proposes a sports hall, and relocation of store buildings. The application includes a statement setting out the requirement for the sports hall to enable activities to be undertaken especially at lunch time and after school, as well as during the school day. The sports hall will also have the potential for community usage.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The application site is designated Primarily Residential Area under the Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map. Approval of the proposed development would be subject to complying with the criteria for protecting local amenity in UDP Policy HS15 Non-Residential Uses in Primarily Residential Areas, Policy RE1 Criteria for Urban Recreation Facilities, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The school building comprises of single-storey brick/clad buildings, with playing fields to the south-west. There is off-street parking provision, which will be retained. The site is surrounded by residential properties with 15 metre (on average) rear gardens. The entrance is onto Elwyn Road, and there are parking restrictions outside the school entrance.

POLICY CONTEXT

Policy HS15 Non-Residential Uses in Primarily Residential Areas of the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan, and SPD4 Parking Standards set out the relevant policies to be used in the determination of this application. Section 7 'Requiring Good Design and Section 8 'Promoting Healthy Communities' in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are also material considerations.

UDP Policy HS15 indicates that within Primarily Residential Areas, small scale built development can

be permitted providing there is no detrimental impact on the character of the area or the residential amenities of surrounding occupiers.

Policy RE1 sets out that proposals for new facilities for sport and recreation within the urban area will be permitted where the scale and visual impact of the proposals is appropriate; the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance, and; adequate provision is made for highway access and on-site car parking and manoeuvring.

Policies WM8 and WM9 of the Joint Waste Local Plan are relevant, establishing requirements for waste prevention in demolition and construction, and waste management in the design and layout of new development.

NPPF paragraph 72 states that the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local Planning authorities should take a pro-active, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools, and work with schools to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

The proposed sports hall would be situated on a hard surfaced area within the built environment of the school. It does not result in loss of playing fields, and it is considered the land could not be realistically used as a playing field or pitch. Although the height is greater than the existing building, in terms of area it occupies a relatively small part of the school site. No increase in pupils is proposed and as such no increase in noise, disturbance or parking is anticipated during normal school hours. The proposed use of the sports hall outside of school hours will increase activity, however, this will be at a time when the demand for parking has reduced and the hours of use and the availability of the schools parking can be controlled by conditions.

The provision of a community facility and the increased opportunity for recreation and sport to the wider public is in line with guidance in NPPF and is similar to activities undertaken in schools across the borough.

This proposal would provide improved small scale education facilities and the increased opportunity for recreation and sport to the wider public can be supported in the context of both UDP Policies HS15 and RE1 and NPPF, sections 7 and 8.

APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES

The proposal is considered acceptable in scale and design and is not considered to harm the character of the original building or the surrounding residential area. The sports hall will be higher than the surrounding flat roof buildings, but this in itself is not a reason to refuse the application. The scale of the proposed sports hall is considered appropriate to surrounding two-storey dwellings, and it is set 20 metres away from the perimeter of the school, maintaining the spacious quality of the area. The proposed sport hall measures 8 metres in height to Sport England standards capable of use for badminton and indoor sports. The height of the proposed sports hall is not considered to form an overbearing feature when viewed from residential properties as there would be a 45 metre separation distance between the nearest dwellings directly facing the proposal on Guffits Rake. The proposal materials are considered acceptable, and a condition can be applied to ensure a sympathetic finish is achieved. Whilst concerns were raised citing the appearance of the sports hall, it is not considered an alien feature within a school grounds. The relocated sheds remain 4m off the boundary of the site, and are not above the size of a structure you would expect to see in a residential area. The applicant also proposes to use planting to soften the appearance of the sheds to surrounding properties. Consequently, it is considered the proposal complies with Policy HS15 and Policy RE1 of the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan and the requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Objections were received regarding: the need of the sports hall and who will be using it; the lack of neighbour notification; loss of a view; building on green space; devaluation of property; the late opening hours will make neighbours more vulnerable, and; pointing out that the school has already extended. The applicant has set out the need for the development in their statement, and the role of the LPA is to assess the potential harm of the development. It is not considered enforceable or

reasonable to condition who can use the school facilities. 32 letters of notification were sent to neighbouring properties and a site notice has been posted on Elwyn Road on 23rd January 2014, in accordance with the adopted Council Guidance on Publicity for Applications, which goes beyond legislative requirements. Loss of a private view is not a planning reason for refusal. The sports hall is not located on the playing fields but within the cluster of existing buildings at the school. It is not considered that the proposal will result in any significant increase in crime or anti-social behaviour. Each application received is assessed on its individual merits.

SEPARATION DISTANCES

Habitable room windows directly facing each other should be at least 21 metres apart. Main habitable room windows should be at least 14 metres from any blank gable. As considered in detail above, separation distances required are, in this instance, achieved – there would be a 45m separation distance to the nearest residential property. No residential properties will be affected by the proposed development in terms of overlooking or loss of privacy.

HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS

Objections were received regarding highway safety concerns. No increase in pupils is proposed and as such no increase in parking is anticipated during normal school hours. The proposed use of the sports hall outside of school hours will increase activity, however, this will be at a time when the demand for parking has reduced, and there are 35 off-street parking spaces within the site which will be available. The Head of Environment and Regulation (Traffic & Transportation Divisions) had no objection to the proposal.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

Objections were received regarding noise and disturbance, late opening hours and light pollution. The Head of Environment and Regulation (Environmental Health Division) had no objection to the proposal, and did not request any conditions. Whilst there are no restrictions on the use of the school, and the existing hall can be used at any time for out of school activities, it is considered reasonable to restrict the hours of operation for the sports hall in accordance with the applicant's requested hours. Noise and light pollution is not anticipated given the nature of the development proposal, however, if neighbours were to experience noise or light pollution, there is environmental health legislation to deal with this.

HEALTH ISSUES

The proposed sports hall will promote health and wellbeing by enabling sports and recreation, in accordance with the NPPF.

CONCLUSION

The proposal is considered acceptable in scale and design and is not considered to harm the character of the original building or the surrounding residential area. The proposal complies with policy HS15 Non-Residential Uses in Primarily Residential Areas, and RE1: Criteria for Urban Recreation Facilities of the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan, Waste Local Plan Policies WM8 and WM9, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Summary of Decision:

Having regards to the individual merits of this application the decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regards to the relevant Policies and Proposals in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2000) and all relevant material considerations including national and regional policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following:-

The proposal is considered acceptable in scale and design and is not considered to harm the character of the original building or the surrounding residential area. The proposal complies with policy HS15 Non-Residential Uses in Primarily Residential Areas, and RE1: Criteria for Urban Recreation Facilities of the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan, Waste Local Plan Policies WM8 and WM9, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Recommended Approve
Decision:

Recommended Conditions and Reasons:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans received by the local planning authority on 07 January 2014 and listed as follows: drawing numbers 7870/01 (dated Jan 14), 7870/02 (dated Jan 14), 7870/03 (dated Dec 13), 7870/04 (dated Jan 14).

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to define the permission.

3. Before any construction commences, samples of the facing and roofing materials to be used in the external construction of this development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved materials shall then be used in the construction of the development.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policy HS15 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

4. The sports hall hereby approved shall not be used except between the hours of :-
07:00 hours and 21:30 hours Mondays to Fridays
09:00 hours and 18:00 hours Saturdays
and at no time on Sundays and Bank Holidays without the written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the enjoyment by neighbouring occupiers of their properties.

5. No development shall take place until a Site Waste Management Plan, confirming how demolition and construction waste will be recovered and re-used on the site or at other sites, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Plan shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development would include the re-use of limited resources, and to ensure that the amount of waste for landfill is reduced to accord with policies WM8 of the Waste Local Plan.

6. Prior to the first occupation of the development arrangements for the storage and disposal of refuse, and vehicle access thereto, shall be made within the curtilage of the site, in accordance with details to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance and adequate standards of hygiene and refuse collection, having regard to policies WM9 of the Waste Local Plan.

Last Comments By: 13/02/2014 09:23:28

Expiry Date: 04/03/2014