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Committee Date:	16/04/2015	Application Number:	2015/00710/PA
Accepted:	03/02/2015	Application Type:	Full Planning
Target Date:	31/03/2015		
Ward:	Billesley		

Dame Ellen Pinsent School, Ardencote Road, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 0RW

Erection of 2 storey classroom block and creation of new car parking area to front of school site

Applicant: Birmingham City Council  
Education & Skills Infrastructure, 1 Lancaster Circus, Queensway,  
Birmingham, B4 7DJ  
Agent: Glancy Nicholls Architects  
The Engine Room, 2 Newhall Square, Birmingham, B3 1RU

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Recommendation

**Approve Subject To Conditions**

1. Proposal

- 1.1. This application is for the erection of a new two storey classroom block and creation of new car parking area to the front of Dame Ellen Pinsent School, Ardencote Road, Billesley.
- 1.2. The proposed two storey, detached, classroom block would be constructed to the north of the existing school building. It would be set higher than the existing building with a new stepped access with canopy over and ramp provided. The building would be cut into the existing ground, with hardstanding around the building and resulting in the need for a 1.8m retaining wall to the north east corner. The building would provide 7 new classrooms, a number of meeting rooms and offices, toilets and circulation space over two storeys. The extension would be of a rectangular shape and constructed with brick and block work, with walls colour rendered and aluminium framed windows and doors. It would have a total length of 30m and width of 9.6m. It would measure 7.6m in height.
- 1.3. The proposed works would see the removal of two temporary portacabins at the front of the school and the replacement with a 32 space car park. A new footpath leading to the existing school building would be provided and new 1.2m high railings would enclose the car park area. Vehicle access to the school would remain as existing, as would the existing boundary treatment around the school. The existing informal playground parking would be retained although new gates in the playground would be installed. An 11 space car park with disabled bays and minibus bays would also be retained.
- 1.4. The proposed development would facilitate an increase in the number of pupils from 135 to 156, with the new places split across the year groups, based on referrals and the needs of the individual pupil. The development would also result in an increase

in the number of staff (including cleaners and administrative staff) from 55 (45 full time and 10 part time) to 66 (56 full time and 10 part time). The School's main operation hours are to remain the same as existing.

- 1.5. A tree survey submitted with the application indicates that none of the 15 individual trees on the site (none of which are protected) would be removed as part of the proposal.
- 1.6. In support of this application, the applicant has also submitted a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal; A Ground Investigation Report; Transport Note; and Design and Access Statement.

[Link to Documents](#)

2. Site & Surroundings

- 2.1. The application site relates to Dame Ellen Pinsent School located off Ardencote Road, Billesley. The school provides specialist teaching for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties.
- 2.2. Pedestrian and vehicular access to the school is via Ardencote Road to the south of the site. The main school building sits centrally within the site, with playground area to the west and playing field to the east. There are residential properties bounding the school on all sides, with traditional semi-detached and terraced housing along Wheelers Lane to the north, Hollie Lucas Road to the west, and Hollybank Road and Ardencote Road to the east and south east.
- 2.3. The school has a mix of one and two storey elements and there are a number of single storey buildings within the site including two temporary portacabins to the front.
- 2.4. The site of the proposed extension is a landscaped area located to the north of the existing School building, which is set on higher land. The boundary beyond this to the north is characterised by trees and shrubbery which screen the school from residential properties beyond.

[Site location map](#)

[Street view](#)

3. Planning History

- 3.1. 17/04/1997 – 1997/00773/PA Retention of mobile classroom. Approved temporary.
- 3.2. 21/09/2001 – 2000/03454/PA Erection of classroom. Approved temporary.
- 3.3. 09/05/2003 – 2003/01349/PA Retention of double mobile classroom. Approved temporary.
- 3.4. 31/01/2008 – 2007/07448/PA Erection of a single storey rear extensions. Approved subject to conditions.
- 3.5. 10/02/2010 – 2009/05539/PA Retention of new modular building and renewal of previous permission 2006/04807/PA for retention of modular classroom. Approved temporary.

#### 4. Consultation/PP Responses

- 4.1. Transportation Development – No objection subject to conditions for cycle parking to be provided.
- 4.2. Regulatory Services – No objection subject to a contamination land report and remediation scheme to be submitted
- 4.3. West Midland Police – No objection, recommend alarm system to be fitted.
- 4.4. West Midlands Fire Service – No objection.
- 4.5. Severn Trent – No objection subject to a drainage condition.
- 4.6. Letters of notification have been sent to surrounding occupiers, local residents associations, Billesley Ward Councillors and Planning Committee members from the Selly Oak Constituency and the MP for Northfield. A site notice has also been posted.
- 4.7. Five letters of objection have been received from surrounding occupiers objecting to the proposal for the following reasons.
  - There will be increased noise during construction and once completed from the additional pupils.
  - There will be adverse visual impact.
  - The application does not deal with the existing boundary fencing, which is significantly damaged.
  - The development will increase the security threat to the occupier.
  - The extension should be on the eastern side of the school to maintain privacy of houses on Wheelers Lane.
  - There will be overlooking of adjacent properties.
  - The extension will be overbearing.
  - There will be a devaluation of properties.
  - The council has not followed the correct procedure in notifying people about this application.

#### 5. Policy Context

- 5.1. The following local policies are relevant
  - The Birmingham Unitary Development Plan (2005)
  - Draft Birmingham Development Plan (2013)
  - SPG: “Places for All” (2001)
  - SPD: Car Parking Guidelines (2012)
- 5.2. The following national policy is relevant.
  - The National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

#### 6. Planning Considerations

- 6.1. I consider the key planning issues to be assessed as part of this application are: the impact of the proposed increase in pupils and staff on car parking, traffic generation

and highway safety; the design and appearance of the proposed classroom block; and the impact on the amenity of local residents.

6.2. *Siting, Design and Appearance*

I consider the siting of the proposed two storey classroom block to be acceptable. It would sit to the north of the existing School building albeit on ground that is 0.8m higher than the ground level of the existing building. However, I consider it would still be of an appropriate size and scale for a school building, with no adverse effect in terms of its massing when viewed in the context of the existing school building.

6.3. The two storey classroom block sits approximately 11m from the northern boundary of the site and is some 42m from the rear elevations of properties beyond on Wheelers Lane. Given this distance; the use of rooms and position of openings within the northern side of the building, and that there is a good degree of hedging and tree planting along this part of the boundary to help give some screening to the building, it is unlikely that this extension would appear particularly visible from the gardens and windows of adjoining residential properties sufficient to warrant the refusal of the application. It is considered that there would not be any overlooking or overshadowing to neighbouring properties that would harm their privacy and amenity.

6.4. I consider the appearance of the proposed two storey classroom block would be in keeping with the existing school building. It would introduce a modern addition to the school and would have a roof design that picks up the existing flat roofs across the site. I consider the extension would not have any detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the area.

6.5. *Noise and Disturbance*

Regulatory Services have raised no objection to the proposed development. Adjoining residential occupiers are unlikely to notice an increase in noise levels from the small increase in 21 pupil numbers travelling to and from the site on foot and using outdoor play areas, with the most significant activity and associated noise being concentrated around two limited periods, drop off and pick up times rather than a constant source throughout the day.

6.6. *Traffic, Parking and Highway Safety*

The proposal seeks to formally lay out a new, larger car park on the site, which would provide 32 spaces and see the removal of two temporary buildings. This would be in addition to the retained area of 11 spaces within the site (which contains 5 disabled bays and areas for mini bus parking) and the informal parking available on the schools playground. The Car Parking Guidelines SPD suggests a maximum of 1 space per 2 members of staff be provided. A total of 66 full time members of staff are proposed, equating to a maximum provision for 33 spaces, which would comply with the requirements of the SPD. There are also potentially 10 part time members of staff including cleaners and lunchtime supervisors, working at different times throughout the day. It is considered the total number of spaces would be sufficient to cope with this demand. It is also noted that managed double parking could be re-introduced if necessary. Given this, my Transportation Development Officers raise no concern regarding on-site parking provision.

6.7. In addition the site has good public transport provision within acceptable walking distance of the school and there are cycle routes in the area. I concur with my Transportation Development Officer that details of a secure cycle storage should be secured by an appropriate condition.

6.8. *Ecology*

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment has been submitted, based on a desk study and walkover ecological survey/Phase 1 Habitat survey completed in September 2014. Overall, the proposals would result in the loss of small areas of habitats of generally limited ecological value. The Council's Ecologist suggests good practice mitigation measures should be implemented during development to minimise the likelihood of adverse impacts occurring. A condition requiring this is recommended. In addition a condition for a scheme to enhance the biodiversity of the site is also recommended.

6.9. *Trees and Landscaping*

Although no comments have been received from my Tree Officer, the only impact on existing boundary trees is likely to involve laying of hard surfacing around the proposed classroom block, which may fall within the root protection areas of these trees. As such I recommend attaching a condition to any consent requiring submission of an arboricultural method statement, and a condition which ensures existing trees are retained (for residential screening, amenity and wildlife value). I also recommend attaching levels, landscaping and boundary treatment conditions (the latter for the new railings).

6.10. *Other Matters*

The submitted Ground Investigation Report has identified elevated levels of carbon dioxide. As such my Regulatory Services Officer recommends that a full site assessment is carried out and remediation scheme undertaken if required. This is to be secured by condition.

6.11. Local residents have raised concerns in respect of security, the planning application notification procedure and on property values. The latter is not a material planning consideration. West Midlands Police have not objected to the proposal and whilst they do recommend a security system be fitted, I do not consider this to be a reasonable condition in this instance. Furthermore, I note the concerns regarding the state of the boundary of the school site. However this is outside the scope of this application and the matter should be addressed between the school and existing occupiers. The correct notification procedure has also taken place as outlined in section 4.6 above.

7. Conclusion

7.1. I consider the proposed classroom block to be acceptable in terms of siting, scale and appearance. The proposed development would unlikely result in an increase in traffic generation. It would accord with both national and local planning policy and there would be no harm to the amenities of local residents or highways implication sufficient to justify refusal of this application. I therefore recommend that the application be approved subject to the attached conditions.

8. Recommendation

8.1. Approve subject to conditions.

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1 Requires the scheme to be in accordance with the listed approved plans

2 Requires the prior submission of a contamination remediation scheme

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- 3 Requires the prior submission of a contaminated land verification report
  - 4 Requires the prior submission of a drainage scheme
  - 5 Requires the prior submission of a scheme for ecological/biodiversity/enhancement measures
  - 6 Requires the development to be implemented in accordance with ecological mitigation measures.
  - 7 Requires the prior submission of cycle storage details
  - 8 Requires the prior submission of sample materials
  - 9 Requires the prior submission of hard and/or soft landscape details
  - 10 Requires the prior submission of boundary treatment details
  - 11 Requires the prior submission of level details
  - 12 Protects retained trees from removal
  - 13 Requires the prior submission of an arboricultural method statement
  - 14 Limits the approval to 3 years (Full)
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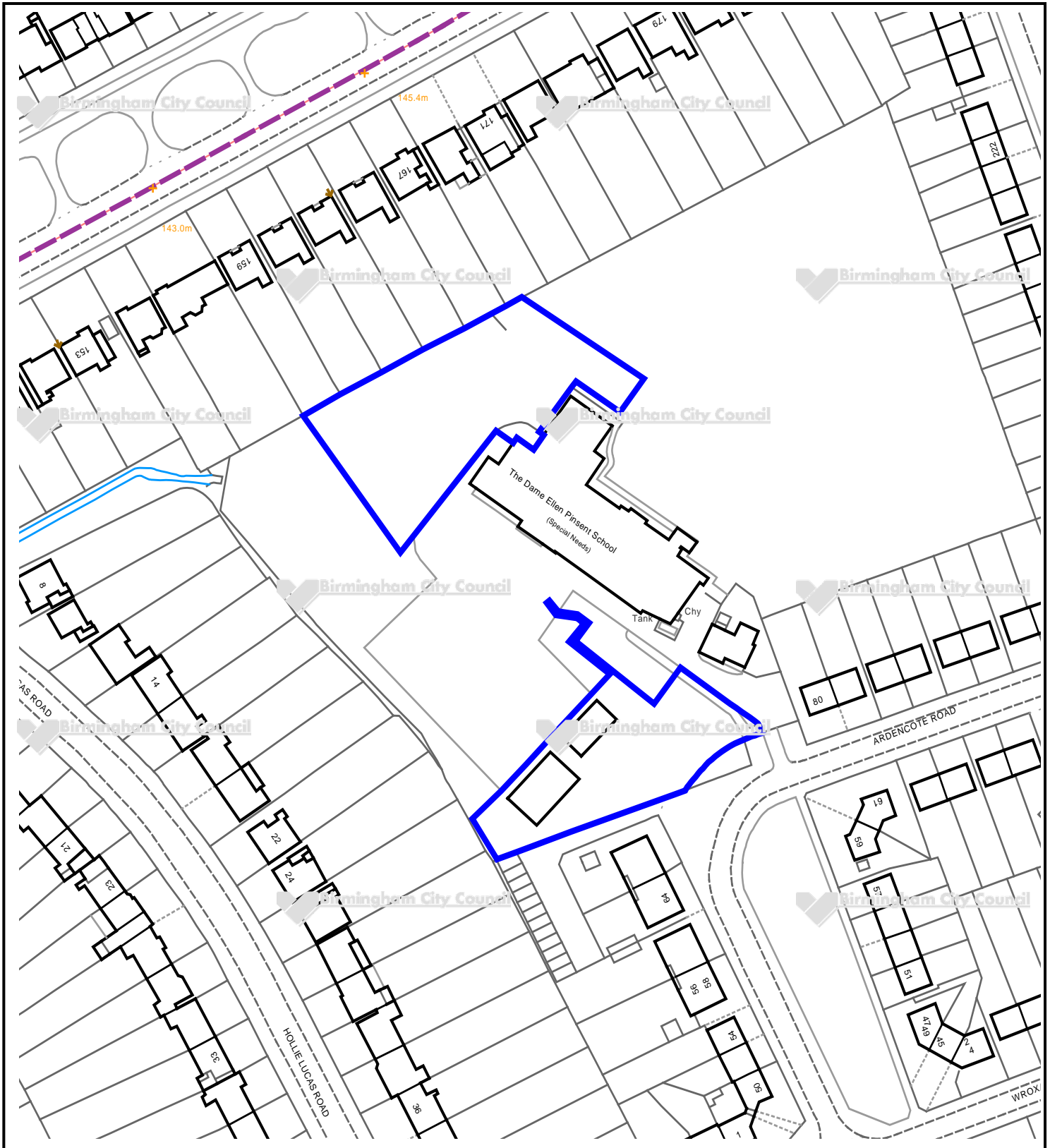
Case Officer: James Mead

**Photo(s)**



Photograph 1: View of site from Ardencote Road

# Location Plan



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