St Marys C of E Primary School, Hamstead Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B20 2RA

Erection of single storey extensions to nursery (Phase 1) and three storey classroom extension to rear (Phase 2)

Applicant: St Marys C of E Primary School
292 Hamstead Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B20 2RA
Agent: Sparc Design
120 Wergs Road, Wolverhampton, WV6 8TJ

Recommendation
Approve Subject To Conditions

1. Background

1.1. St Marys C of E school currently supports 369 pupils aged between 3 and 11 with 43 members of staff. The school have identified an urgent need to replace some of their existing temporary classrooms which are in poor condition and unfit for use. The school have previously obtained consent in 2010 for development of the school car park, redevelopment of the school reception and the creation of three classrooms (see planning history). Since then the car park has been refurbished however the schools aspirations for the class bases has increased due to increased demand.

2. Proposal

2.1. This application seeks planning consent for the erection of extensions to an existing primary school in two phases. The first phase proposes a single storey infill extension between existing buildings to provide a new classroom with associated toilets and lobby entrance, and a single storey extension to extend the entrance lobby to the school reception, with an extended school office and head teachers office.

2.2. Phase 2 would involve a three storey extension at the rear of the site. An existing landscaped terrace would be excavated to create a lower ground level studio space that would be at the lower playground level. Above this would be two classrooms and associated toilets at ground floor, and two classrooms and toilets at first floor. There would be associated works to create new steps down to the lower playground. The school proposes the removal of two temporary outbuildings as part of these works.

2.3. In total, there is 747 square metres of floor space proposed. The extensions have been designed to complement the existing building which is a mix of single storey
and two storey flat roofed buildings. The proposed external materials would be a mix of render, cedar board spandrel panels and a samafil roof with aluminium capping.

2.4. The proposed phase 2 extension would involve the removal of 6 small trees located within the landscaped bank. An existing line of conifer trees along the site boundary are proposed to be retained.

2.5. The proposed extensions would accommodate an additional 103 pupils taking the total number to 472 pupils. It is proposed to reach the total capacity within 3 years. There would be 6 new jobs created (4 full time and 2 part time).

2.6. The application is accompanied by a Transport Study, Sunlight study and a tree survey.

2.7. [Link to Documents]

3. Site & Surroundings

3.1 The school is situated on Hamstead Road and is set back with a staff car park fronting the school buildings. The school currently has three accesses into the school from around the site. The primary access for parents and pupils is accessed via Hamstead Road adjacent to Trinity Way. There is also a secondary pedestrian access via Manwood Close from the north. The staff car park is accessed via Hamstead Road and provides a total of 25 spaces.

3.2 The site has a significant change in level to the rear with the playground set at a lower level to the school buildings accessed by existing steps within the site. There are groups of trees situated along the site boundaries.

3.3 The surrounding area contains a mix of residential properties to the south and east of the site. The former Endwood public house is situated to the north west which is grade II listed.

3.4 Site Location

3.5 Street view

4. Planning History

4.1. 06/04/2010 - 2010/00415/PA – Erection of two storey classroom extension and extension of school reception with reconfiguration of car park. Approved subject to conditions.

5. Consultation/PP Responses

5.1. Site Notice erected. MP, Ward members, residents associations and neighbouring properties notified. Three representations received, one of which states that they have no objections to the plans but request that staff and parents should be prevented from parking on the private road (Hamstead Road to the south of the site) inappropriately as this can block their driveway causing them disruption. The 2nd representation states that they object on the grounds that the extension sought will be very imposing for the properties on David Road and Hylda Road and will affect their outlook and privacy. They also object that the building will cause a shadow on
the landscape. The third representation states that they are objecting on behalf of residents of Trinity Way on the grounds that the school have not consulted residents and is not taking any responsibility to provide parking for their school parents. They comment that when residents challenge parents regarding inconsiderate parking they have received verbal abuse and been assaulted. A private parking company has been commissioned to issue tickets to parents who park on the private drive.

5.2. Councillor Zaffar has written to support the latter objection and to request that the application be determined at Planning Committee.

5.3. Transportation Development – No objections. Comments that the proposal will increase demand for staff parking and increase the amount of demand for on street parking from parents and carers dropping off and collecting their children. They comment that there is a need for new TRO’s at the junction of the private road with Hamstead Road on the HMPE, and at the junction of Manwoods Close, Upper Grosvenor Road and Wellington Road to prevent inconsiderate parking at these junctions which can cause an obstruction to pedestrians and vehicles. Also recommends conditions relating to school travel plan, cycle storage, and restricting the number of students and staff at the school.

5.4. Regulatory Services – No objections. Recommends conditions relating to ground contamination remediation and subsequent verification.

5.5. Education – Fully supportive of their proposals to increase the school capacity.


5.7. Local Services – Comments that whilst there may be a technical loss of play space, we would not object as the loss seems relatively minor in nature and the school seems to have plenty of playing field area beyond the proposed school buildings which could still be utilised.

5.8. West Midlands Police – No objections. Makes detailed comments in relation to Secured by Design measures including alarm system, CCTV, lighting, IT equipment and climbing aids.

6. Policy Context


8. Planning Considerations

8.1. The adopted UDP does not contain specific policies relating to education provision at schools. The draft BDP sets out in policy TP35 that as the City’s population grows there will also be a need for additional Primary, Secondary and Special Needs school and college provision. Proposals for the upgrading and expansion of existing schools and development of new schools in locations where additional provision is required will be supported subject to the criteria below. Proposals for new schools should have safe access by cycle and walking as well as by car, have safe drop-off and pick-up provision, provide outdoor facilities for sport and recreation and avoid conflict with adjoining uses.
8.2. The NPPF states in paragraph 14 that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development which means approving proposals that accord with the development plan without delay, and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

8.3. Paragraph 72 sets out 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 proactive, 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.

8.4. The principle of the proposed extensions at the school is considered to be acceptable. The school site has sufficient space to accommodate the extensions proposed without adversely affecting the function of the school or adversely affecting neighbouring uses.

8.5. I note the evidence submitted by the applicant in their Transport Study in respect of traffic and parking issues and the advice received from Transportation. With regard to staff parking, the applicant advises that the existing car park meets current needs with demand for approximately 6 additional spaces to meet the needs of additional staff to be employed. In my view the additional demand for car parking for staff will be adequately met by the existing staff car parking on the site. The applicant also states that they have access to 15 overspill spaces that at the church rectory on Trinity Way where need arises.

8.6. The increase in school capacity will bring with it a likely increase in on-street parking for parental drop-off and pick-up of children. The survey states that currently 37% of pupils travel to and from school by car. For the proposed extensions the study estimates that this will generate an additional 38 vehicle trips during the am and pm peaks. However, as some trips will be shared with siblings also at the same school, they estimate that there will be 20 extra trips in practice. The applicant’s survey sets out that the core of parking tends to take place within a 60 metre radius of Hamstead Road school entrance. The survey demonstrated that there is still space available in some side roads with parking on Hamstead Road narrowing the width of the road slightly but still allows cars to pass unhindered. There is some evidence of there being problems in the past where parents have parked in the adjoining private road, causing obstruction and inconvenience to residents. There has also been an issue with parents parking on the footway at the junction of the private road and Hamstead Road causing an obstruction to pedestrians. Parking has also been observed in the vicinity of the Manwoods Close/Wellington Road/Upper Grosvenor Road junction. I also note the comments made by residents in respect of these issues.

8.7. The applicant has advised that they have previously approached the Council to request that some form of physical deterrent be installed to prevent parking on the footway, though no funding could be identified for this. The school have stated that they are willing to pay for these works if this was deemed to be an appropriate solution. The school also state that they place the transport issues at the heart of their forthcoming meetings and discussions with parents to change the mindset of parents dropping off their children. They advise that over the years the school has implemented a variety of strategies to deal with parents parking in an adhoc manner which has seen great improvement from previous years. Notwithstanding this, the
objection received on behalf of residents in Trinity Way suggests that there are occasions where problems still occur.

8.8. The school are in agreement with the advice from the Transportation officer that consideration is given to the introduction of new TRO's around the junctions, alongside possible physical deterrents such as bollards to ensure that such issues are appropriately addressed. An appropriate condition for these highway works has therefore been recommended, and with this I consider the proposal to be acceptable in regard to its impact on highway safety and parking. The issue of inconsiderate parking in the private road is more difficult to address as the Council cannot enforce parking restrictions on the private road. The school's commitment to discouraging parents from parking here is an issue of appropriate management of the school regardless of this proposed development. I have recommended a condition relating to the provision of a school travel plan.

8.9. The proposed design and appearance of the building will complement the existing building in its design scale and mass and the proposed external materials. The extensions will not be visible from the front of the site.

8.10. The applicant has provided a sun shadowing analysis to consider the effect of the position, scale and mass of the proposed rear extension on the amenity of the residential properties located to the east in Hylda Road. The assessment sets out that there is already some shadow cast by the mature tree line along the boundary of the site. The assessment demonstrates that there will be no adverse effect in December as there will be no shadowing of the neighbouring houses or their gardens from the proposed development. In March, the only shadowing effect on the gardens and houses would be in the evening around 6pm, though this is no worse than the existing situation from the existing buildings and trees at this time of day. In July, there would be some increased shadowing of the rear gardens of 23 and 24 Hylda Road, but only in the evening from 6pm. The shadowing in September would be similar to March where there is some shadowing effect in the evening, but this would be comparable with the existing situation. Given this analysis, I consider that the proposed development will not have an unacceptable shadowing effect on neighbouring properties.

8.11. The rear extension would be situated approximately 24 metres from the rear of the neighbouring houses at 23 and 24 Hylda Road. Taking into account the levels, the proposed scale and mass of the extension will have an acceptable relationship to the adjoining houses, bearing in mind the part of the extension is at a lower ground level. The proposal therefore accords with the guidance in Places for Living. The applicant proposes only high level slot windows on the side elevation facing towards the residents houses so as to ensure that there will not be an overlooking effect on these properties.

8.12. I do not consider that the proposed development results in the loss of playing field. The rear extension would be situated in an area where there is currently a landscaped bank with the existing play ground to be retained.

8.13. The applicant has submitted a tree survey which sets out that the extension requires the removal of 4 trees within the landscaped bank, and some pruning works to the line of sycamores along the boundary. I consider that the proposals submitted are reasonable and have recommended a landscape condition to agree suitable replacements. My tree officer has no objections.

9. Conclusion
9.1. The proposed development accords with the relevant policies and guidance that are relevant to the proposed school extensions, in the UDP, draft BDP, and the NPPF, particularly with regard to the impact of the design of the development, the impact on neighbouring residents and on traffic and parking.

10. Recommendation

10.1. Approve subject to conditions.

1 Requires the prior submission of a contamination remediation scheme
2 Requires the prior submission of a contaminated land verification report
3 Requires the prior submission of a drainage scheme
4 Requires the prior submission of level details
5 Requires the prior submission of sample materials
6 Requires the prior submission of hard and/or soft landscape details
7 Requires the prior submission and completion of works for the S278/TRO Agreement
8 Requires the prior submission of cycle storage details
9 School Travel plan
10 Requires the scheme to be in accordance with the listed approved plans
11 Limits the approval to 3 years (Full)

Case Officer: Stuart Morgans
Figure 1: Rear elevation