

Lend Lease on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council

Corby Old Village Primary School
New Hall and Building Alterations

M5496

November 2014

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Corby Old Village Primary School

Planning Statement
for
Proposed Alterations and New Hall

M5496

20 November 2014

	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
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DATE	SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE
24 November 2014			
15 December 2014			
8 January 2015			

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Applicant

This Statement has been prepared to support a detailed Planning Application for Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) (the 'Applicant') for the provision of a new larger Hall and three extended Classrooms to the existing Corby Old Village Primary School.

1.2 The Agent

This Statement has been prepared by QMP on behalf of Lend Lease who are the 'Agent' for the Planning Application.

1.3 The Determining Authority

NCC Planning Services (the 'Local Planning Authority' or 'LPA') is the determining authority for the application. Northampton Borough Council (NBC) planning officers have been consulted during the preparation of the application scheme and NBC policies have informed the application.

1.4 The Scope of the Planning Application

The scope of the submitted planning application accords with that agreed with the LPA. This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the following Statements as well as the submitted plans and elevations.

Statements:

- Application Form
- Statement of Educational Need
- Design & Access Statement
- Travel Plan

Drawings:

- Location Plan
- Existing and Proposed Plans
- Existing and Proposed Elevations

1.5 Screening Option

Due to the scale of the development a Screening Opinion, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and

Wales) Regulations 1999, is not, we understand, required for the Site. The documentation submitted for previous proposals for the site indicate that this development would not give rise to any significant environmental effects and hence the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) would not be required.

1.6 Pre-Application Consultation and Community Engagement

Pre-application consultation has taken place prior to the submission of the application. Discussions with planning officers at both Borough and County levels has led to the current appearance of the building in terms of materials and massing. Earlier Feasibility Studies carried out early in the design stages ruled out a number of options as being unsustainable. Locating the new Hall anywhere other than within the 'courtyard' would have resulted in excessive lengths of corridors and excessive lengths of external walling. These would have unnecessarily increased running costs, locating the Hall within the courtyard reduces running costs and reduces corridor lengths.

It is intended that further consultations both with stakeholders and the community will continue after the submission has been made. The scope and nature of the pre-application was agreed with LPA Officers prior to commencement. The application proposals reflect extensive consultation with representatives of the LPA, CBC and other consultees. The approach followed and influence upon the development of the proposals is detailed further within Design & Access Statement.

The proposals have been subject to consultation with local residents. A consultation exercise was undertaken at the school on the evening of Thursday 23rd October 2014. This exercise consisted of a manned exhibition that was supported by members of the NCC Client Team and the Design Team throughout the evening. Feedback from this event has been included in the supporting Design & Access Statement.

2 Site Context

2.1 The Site

The site is that of the existing Corby Old Village Primary School at the junction of High Street and Meeting Lane behind the listed Old School, the former home of the school before it was transferred to the local authority. Part of the playground of the current school is, as a consequence, leased from the Rowlett Educational Foundation. Further details are contained within the Design & Access Statement.

2.2 The Surrounding Area and Land Uses

The existing school buildings lie within the old village of Corby which itself lies within the 'suburban' area of Corby New Town, forming a 'Neighbourhood Centre'. The High Street to the South is a residential area, the High Street to the West is the centre of the village with a number of retail shops etc. Meeting lane to the North is also a residential area, with the exception of a derelict industrial building immediately to the North. The areas further out to the North and East of the dual carriageway road are the commercial and industrial areas of the New Town including the site of the former steelworks.

2.3 Access

The site is well served by public transport, private vehicles and pedestrians.

2.4 Built Heritage

The school site lies outside the village Conservation Area and is not a listed building. It does however lie adjacent to the Grade 2 listed Old School and near a number of Grade 2 properties in the centre of the village to the West and the Mediaeval Church, further to the South. None of the proposed building works encroach any nearer than the existing school buildings and lie outside the curtilage of the listed Old School (as at 1948 as defined in the T&CPAs).

3 Planning History

3.1 Planning History

The planning history considered relevant to the application site is set out below:

- *Storage building adjacent to Hall - ref: 05/00240/COC - Planning Application Permitted*
- *New extension to provide office, meeting room and library. new access and reception office to change existing office to classroom - ref: 10/00399/COC - Approved*
- *Stand alone kitchen unit - ref:11/00174/DPA - Application permitted*
- *Horse chestnut tree overhanging public footpath and blocking light from neighbour's property. Reduce bulk of tree by 40% with Weldon Forestry completing the works.*

Sycamore tree overhanging public footpath and blocking light from neighbour's property. Reduce bulk by 40% with Weldon Forestry completing the work. Cut back other trees at south of the School where overhanging the footpath - ref: 14/00407/CAT - Pending Consideration.

Permission for the storage building was granted on 6th July 2005 and is understood to have been constructed in full accordance with the approved plans. Permission for the above extension was granted on 3rd March 2011 and has been partially completed. The new access and reception office to change existing office to classroom was completed. However the needs of the school changed such that the current application for extended classrooms and a new larger hall was required.

We understand that the School are awaiting a decision on the works to the trees, all of which lie on or near the Southern boundary, well away from the proposed works that are the subject of this application.

4 Proposed Development

4.1 The Need for Development

Like many schools in the County, an increase in the population has already meant that the current facilities are 'stretched' and cannot cope with a further proposed increase without expansion. Please refer to the Statement of Need that accompanies this application.

The school has been increasing intake numbers since 2011, with school teaching in undersized classrooms. As the school is one classroom short with a combined year group, it becomes critical for school in September as without the extension, a year group of 20 and year group of 25 will be sharing the same classroom. Up to September 2010 the school had a PAN of 20 pupils per year group, totalling a 140 intake with a need to increase to full 1 form entry of 210 pupils, an increase of 70 pupils. In effect, because of the increases since 2011, school has already taken on 30 additional pupils (although oversubscribed, so 33 additional pupils are already there) without any increase in teaching area. This is in anticipation of expanding the school as part of this project. It is not proposed to increase staffing levels.

4.2 Description

In order to meet the guidance contained with the Building Bulletins from Central Government three classrooms are required to be extended in order to cater for classes of 30 pupils. The new larger hall is also required to cater for the 210 pupils proposed to provide assembly, dining and PE functions as well as the possibility of being made available for community use. The existing hall is to be re-designated as the library to provide an additional teaching resource space as well as library.

5 Planning Policy

5.1 Policies and Local Guidance

This section of the Planning Statement summarises the planning policy context relevant to the Proposed Development. Subsequently, Section 6 provides a more detailed assessment having regard to the relevant planning policies and the conclusions of the technical work submitted as part of this planning application

The guiding policies are those of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (NNCSS) and Corby Borough Council's own policies. Many of CBC's planning policy documents are not available on line and those that are do not relate to Corby Old Village directly.

Paragraph 72 of the NPPF makes it clear 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 and requires that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement for development that will widen choice in education provision. Paragraph 72 goes on to state that local planning authorities should:

- Give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; Work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

The relevant provisions of the NPPF in addressing the key issues to the determination of the Proposed Development are considered in detail within the following Section of this Planning Statement.

Policy 13 (General Sustainable Development Principles) of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy requires developments to meet the needs of residents and businesses without compromising the ability of future generations to enjoy the same quality of life that the present generation aspire to. By providing energy efficient additional education facilities within the context of the existing school all aspects of the policy are met.

In summary, the Proposed Development would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development via:

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BENEFIT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

An economic role:

- A capital investment of approximately £1 million
- Additional spend will be generated within village centre economy

A social role:

- Expansion of an existing Primary School
- Provision potential publicly accessible amenity and sports facilities
- Additional local footfall will help to sustain and enhance existing shops and services

An environmental role:

- Targeting the creation of a building with lower energy demands
- Continued use of an existing building
- Enhancement of the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area and Listed Buildings
- Encouraging walking, cycling and use of public transport in a highly sustainable location
- All development outside the floodplain

5.2 Other material Considerations

The Government Policy Statement (DCLG August 2011) seeks to ensure that the answer to proposals for the development of state-funded schools should be, wherever possible, “yes”.

The policy statement sets out the following guidance and principles:

- There should be a **presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools**, as expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Local authorities should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling the development of state-funded schools in their planning decisions. The Secretary of State will attach significant weight to the need to establish and develop state-funded schools when determining applications and appeals that come before him for decision.
- Local authorities **should make full use of their planning powers to support state-funded schools applications**. This should include engaging in pre-application discussions with promoters to foster a collaborative approach to applications and, where necessary, the use of planning obligations to help to mitigate adverse impacts and help deliver development that has a positive impact on the community.

- Local authorities should only impose conditions that clearly and demonstrably meet the tests set out in Circular 11/95. Planning conditions should only be those absolutely necessary to making the development acceptable in planning terms.
- **Local authorities should ensure that the process for submitting and determining state-funded schools' applications is as streamlined as possible, and in particular be proportionate in the information sought from applicants.** For instance, in the case of free schools, authorities may choose to use the information already contained in the free school provider's application to the Department for Education to help limit additional information requirements.
- A refusal of any application for a state-funded school, or the imposition of conditions, will have to be clearly justified by the local planning authority. Given the strong policy support for improving state education, the Secretary of State will be minded to consider such a refusal or imposition of conditions to be unreasonable conduct, unless it is supported by clear and cogent evidence.
- Appeals against any refusals of planning permission for state-funded schools should be treated as a priority. Where permission is refused and an appeal made, the Secretary of State will prioritise the resolution of such appeals as a matter of urgency in line with the priority the Government places on state education.
- Where a local planning authority refuses planning permission for a state-funded school, the Secretary of State will consider carefully whether to recover for his own determination appeals against the refusal of planning permission.
- This statement applies to both change of use development and **operational development necessary to the operational needs of the school.**

6 Assessment of the Proposed Development

6.1 Principle of Development

The Government Policy on the provision of state schools (DCLG August 2011) seeks to ensure that the answer to proposals for the development of state-funded schools should be, wherever possible, “yes”.

The above Policy Statement is reiterated by Paragraph 72 of the NPPF which stresses the need for local planning authorities to ensure that adequate choice of school places is provided for existing and new communities.

Paragraph 73 of the NPPF seeks to ensure the future vitality of town centres and states that planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centre over the plan period. In this instance read ‘village’ for ‘town’ as the school lies within the original village of Corby, which lies within Corby New Town.

6.2 Good Design

Paragraph 56 of the NPPF identifies that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and that good design is indivisible from good planning. One of the twelve core principles of the NPPF is also to always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

In accordance with national guidance/regulation and local policies a Design & Access Statement has been prepared by QMP (November 2014) and accompanies this planning application. The Design & Access Statement sets out a detailed rationale of the design approach employed for the building itself and how it interacts within its surroundings.

6.3 Sustainable Transport

The NPPF states at paragraph 29 that the transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel. Paragraph 32 states that developments that generate a significant number of trips should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment, and that plans and decisions should take into account whether:

- opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending upon the nature and location of the site;
- safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and
- improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development.

In accordance with national and local level policies a Travel Plan has been submitted as part of this application, outlining how car journeys in the future may be suitably reduced and travel by other modes increased.

The Proposed Development reduces slightly the number of parking spaces available, however the school is located close to the centre of the village and is readily accessible by pedestrians and cyclists. The railway station is only 10 minutes walk away and 5 bus stops within 300 metres of the school.

6.4 Sustainable Development

Paragraph 96 of the NPPF advises that developments should take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

By placing the new Hall within the existing courtyard and extending Classrooms the external wall area of the existing building is little altered and minimises energy consumption.

6.5 Sustainable Drainage

Paragraph 100 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided and Paragraph 103 of the NPPF states that development should not increase flood risk elsewhere.

New build elements of the proposed development are located within the general massing of the original massing on areas currently surfaced as tarmac and away from the flood zone located at the North West corner of the site. There will therefore be no increase in the flood risk elsewhere.

6.6 Built heritage

Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that LPAs should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by development, including any contribution made to their setting. Paragraph 129 adds that the LPA should then identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset and take this in to account when considering the impact of proposals. In particular, paragraph 131 states that LPAs should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets;
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 137 of the NPPF advises that Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. The NPPF then goes on to state proposals that make a positive contribution to better reveal the significance of an asset should be treated favourably.

Although the application site lies outside the village conservation area and the existing school is not listed, the Old School which lies adjacent is listed Grade 2. About half of the site boundary is shared the boundary of the conservation area.

The massing of the proposed development ensures that no new buildings encroach nearer to the Old School than the current building, therefore reducing impact to a minimum.

The Design & Access Statement through both illustration/appraisal and the quality of the design response proposed, demonstrates that the Proposed Development will result in an enhancement to surrounding assets. It is therefore considered that the proposals are in accordance with the requirements of the NNCSS and NPPF.

6.7 Contamination, Noise and Air Quality

Paragraph 109 of the NPPF sets out how the Government seeks to prevent both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.

Paragraph 120 of the NPPF advises that where there is a site affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.

Paragraph 123 of the NPPF details that proposals should seek to avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development.

The Ground Investigation Report revealed an element of made ground in close proximity to the existing school buildings which has been taken into consideration in the design of the new building elements. The site lies within an area of high expected Radon levels, the new building is therefore subject to 'full protection' measures which have also been taken into consideration.

The Utilities Survey did not reveal any problematical issues other than the shallowness of the 'combined' drainage runs, which will need to be diverted to avoid the new work whilst continuing to provide the drainage service to other properties. This has of course been taken into consideration in the proposed works.

By locating the new hall within the existing courtyard it is unlikely that noise levels in and around the school will be increased and will probably be reduced due to the better acoustic performance of the new construction over that of the existing buildings.

6.8 Ecology (including Arboriculture)

Paragraph 109 of the NPPF set out the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, in part, minimising the impact upon biodiversity. The NPPF also details that development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted and that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged (Para. 118).

A number of Ecological Reports were prepared and submitted as part of the previous, approved, planning application for the site. It is not therefore envisaged that there are any aspects that the new proposals will affect to any detrimental degree.

6.9 Archaeology

Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that LPAs should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by development, including any contribution made to their setting.

Paragraph 129 adds that the LPA should then identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset and take this in to account when considering the impact of proposals. In particular, paragraph 131 states that LPAs should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Although early maps show some evidence of occupation by earlier buildings on the South and Western edges of the site there is little to expect anything of significance archaeologically within the actual ground covered by the new construction works due to the major ground disturbances that would have made during the construction of the original school. However, as is usual in such circumstances, the current legislative and good practice generally, should ensure that anything of note if discovered will be handled and dealt with appropriately.

7 Construction Management

7.1 Contractors compound

The location of the Contractor's compound is envisaged to be located near the South Western entrance gate to the site to avoid conflicts between school traffic and construction traffic under standard Health and Safety regulations. The extent will need to be agreed between the school, the contractor and any planning conditions imposed on approval.

8 Conclusions

8.1 Conclusions

There is a proven need for the additional school places proposed and that the Proposed Developments are necessary to provide the associated facilities required. Extending and adapting the existing school is the most cost effective and sustainable solution.

The local community will also be able to benefit from the improved facilities and all the responses to the proposals during the meeting with the community were favourable.