Brief

Upton Meadows is a mixed Primary School located in Upton, on the western fringes of Northampton adjacent to the A45. It is a relatively new building, sited within a housing development which commenced in 2005, and is accessed via a quiet residential street. Pupils are aged 4 to 11 and the proportions of pupils with learning disabilities and those eligible for free school meals are both above those seen nationally.

The School first opened its doors in temporary accommodation in September 2006 with just 40 pupils. The initial planning approval for the permanent School building included full permission for six additional classrooms and associated WC s to what was actually built. We understand that a decision was taken post planning to split the development into two phases, possibly due to budgetary constraints. The first phase of the new building, having suffered delays to the build programme, eventually opened in April 2007 and now, in its fourth academic year, Upton Meadows caters for 237 pupils aged 4 to 11. The aim is to increase the number of pupils to 420 with the second phase of development, completing the two-form-entry school originally intended.

The second phase is now ready to go ahead, with the addition of a Parents’ Room and a Plant Room, necessitating an application to the Local Authority to vary this portion of the approved scheme. The phase 2 gross internal area in these amended proposals is 561sqm. When compared with the 510sq already approved, the net additional area is 51sqm. The addition of a Group Room was also discussed at feasibility stage; however this was not pursued due to site and budgetary constraints.

A new Children’s Centre and Pre-School is currently being constructed to the north of the School site. The extension to the School can only commence once this building is completed and open, which is due to take place in spring 2011.

Design Development

The location and form of the proposed phase 2 extension had already been determined by the original approved scheme, which envisaged two similar wings extending out on either side of the School’s central core. The extension will complete the northeastern wing with the additional accommodation already discussed above. The position of the new Children’s Centre and Pre-School presented the main constraint as to possible extent of the addition, as sufficient space for emergency vehicle access would need to be maintained between the two buildings. In addition, the School uses the space between the buildings as their main pupil access route and therefore a generous degree of separation was desirable.

The architectural style for the extension was also determined by the existing School building and the approved scheme. Discussions with the Planning Department established that the continuation of the external form and materiality, which had been developed in accordance with the Upton Design Guide, was essential to an acceptable scheme.

A Consultation Evening was held at the School on 20th October 2010. Approximately 20 parents, governors and outside building users attended, all of whom expressed positive opinions about the proposals and were pleased that phase 2 was finally going ahead. They also welcomed the fact that the existing building aesthetic would be replicated.
**Detailed Proposals**

The existing central corridor is continued, giving access to three new classrooms on either side, as in the approved scheme, and a Parents’ Room. There are several reasons for requiring a parents’ room at Upton Meadows Primary School. Firstly it will be a room where the Friends of Upton Meadows Primary (FUMPS) can meet, plan and discuss their next social or fundraising event. Secondly the room will be used to support parents with their own literacy, numeracy or IT needs. The school has a high proportion of children for whom English is an Additional Language (20%) and these parents need extra support with their own language. A number of parents only have basic literacy or numeracy skills themselves and it is hoped these parents will be supported during the school day or after school. Also, the area has a high level of deprivation, so not all parents have access to a computer or high levels of IT knowledge. The room will allow the school to organise access to a set of computers and some basic training on computers. Finally, the Learning Mentors will use the room to speak to parents about a range of issues and put in place some parenting classes which can be run during the school day whilst children are attending school. For all of the above, the outside door will mean the room can be used discretely after school or when the rest of the school is in use during the school day.

Two new WC and cloakroom pods are added to match the existing, each being shared between two classrooms. The remaining two classrooms are given access to existing WC pods. These proposals are exactly as the approved scheme. Classroom sizes are in line with or in excess of Building Bulletin 99 requirements of 60sqm. BB 99 also requires 1.5sqm storage per classroom however the School expressly requested that stores are not provided and therefore this additional area is included within the classroom sizes.

An externally accessed plant room is added to the north elevation within the step of the building to accommodate air source heat pumps as proposed by Mechanical Engineer Peter Sharp Associates to achieve the required BREEAM rating.

External materials remain unchanged and will match the existing School, with brick faced cavity walls and curved coloured Trespa panels to the WC pods. The existing 35 degree pitched plain tiled roof is continued above the new accommodation with continuous eaves and ridge lines. Window configurations will also match the existing, with much needed additional natural light in the end two classrooms being made possible via windows in the gable wall as in the approved scheme. The existing classrooms are lit at the back by two Velux rooflights, however the natural lighting levels are poor and it is therefore proposed to incorporate an additional rooflight in each new classroom, subject to space being available between the steel structure. Some natural light is also to be gained in the corridor via the provision of four sun pipes where the corridor widens out. The sun pipes were not included in the approved scheme however the School expressed a desire to improve natural light levels in the corridor having had the benefit of experience in using the building. Glazed screens between the corridors and classrooms will be incorporated as in the existing School and the approved scheme, providing borrowed light in the corridor as well as facilitating monitoring of classroom activities.

The existing high level curved ceilings have been problematic for the School, with several ceiling tiles having popped out of their grid system. It is therefore proposed that raked, straight ceilings are used in the phase 2 extension, which will still create the dramatic sense of volume in the classrooms.

External landscaping will simply involve making good the existing permeable tarmac surface up to the extension as originally proposed.
Access

The main vehicular and pedestrian access routes into and through the site remain unchanged. The existing main entrance to the school will remain as the principal entrance and classroom glazing configurations with external glazed doors giving level access directly to the hard play area are unchanged. The additional parents’ room has the same glazing configuration as the classrooms.

The circulation route accessing the new accommodation is unchanged, with a level, 2m wide single central corridor feeding all rooms as a continuation of the built part of the corridor. The floor finish inside entrances will be slip-resistant matting that will not impede the movement of wheelchairs. The colour of doors will give a high contrast to the frames and the leading edge will be similarly distinguishable from the door leaf on non-self-closing and hold-open doors. Doors will have a 300mm minimum unobstructed access before any return wall to the pull side. Vision panels will meet the requirements of Approved Document M paragraph 3.10. All opening furniture will contrast with the door leaf and will be suitable for operation with a closed fist.

Internal signage, including directional signage and room names, will have upper and lower case lettering on a contrasting background as a minimum. Switches, socket outlets and controls will be mounted at appropriate heights in accordance with Approved Document M paragraph 4.30; and will be located in dado trunking which projects from the wall surface. Sockets outlets will indicate whether they are on or off.

A disabled WC cubicle is provided within each pod. Refreshment making facilities in the new Parents’ Room will be in accordance with Approved Document M paragraph 4.16.
PLANNING PERMISSION

Name and address of applicant
Northamptonshire County Council
Education Services
John Dryden House
PO Box 216
Northampton

Name and address of agent (if any)
County Property Officer
PO Box 128
County Hall
Northampton
NN1 1AS

Part I - Particulars of application

Date of Application
08.03.05

Application No.:
NO/05/509

Particulars and location of development
Erection of a new two form entry single storey primary school with associated staff car park, hard and soft play area and playing fields at land at Upton, Northampton.

Part II - Particulars of decision:

The Northamptonshire County Council

Hereby give notice in pursuance of the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that permission has been granted for the carrying out of the development referred to in Part I hereof in accordance with the application and plans submitted subject to the following conditions:-

Time limit

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of FIVE YEARS from the date of this permission.

Scope of Permission

2. Except as otherwise required by conditions attached to this planning permission the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted application i.e. Flood Risk Assessment and supporting e-mails to the Environment Agency from (i) Duncan Clarke, Pell Frischmann dated 30th March 2005, and (ii) Adam Granger, RPS Design Ltd to Duncan Clarke, Pell Frischmann dated 30th March 2005; and drawing

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numbers 26/01 (Revision G), 02 (Revision F), 03 (Revision D), 04 (Revision F).

Materials

3. Prior to the commencement of the development samples of all external facing and roofing materials shall be submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority.

Front boundary to school

4. Prior to the commencement of the development the design and materials to be used for the proposed front boundary wall, railings and gates to the school shall be submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority.

Protection of breeding birds

5. Operations that involve the destruction and removal of vegetation shall not be undertaken during the months of March to August inclusive, except when approved in writing by the County Planning Authority, once they are satisfied that breeding birds will not be affected.

Protection of Trees

6. Adequate protection of existing trees on the eastern boundary of the site, including that which is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order, must be carried out, to fully adhere to British Standard 5837 – (Trees in Relation to Construction). Prior to the commencement of any development hereby granted permission a ‘method statement’ clearly stating the proposals for the protection of these trees and the existing hedgerow during the construction period, and the erection of boundary fencing in a position to be agreed, shall be submitted to and agreed by the County Planning Authority.

Boundary Treatment

7. Prior to the proposed school coming into operation, a scheme for security fencing and boundary treatment for the whole site indicating the positions, design, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected shall be submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority. Prior to the school coming into operation a timetable for the implementation of the above works shall be agreed in writing by the County Planning Authority.

Travel Plan

8. Before the school is first brought into use an Interim School Transport Plan shall be submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority. Within 6 months of the school being first brought into use a detailed School Travel Plan shall be submitted to the County Planning Authority for its approval. The scheme shall be based on appropriate survey work, assessment of the results of this work, consideration of options and shall result in the formulation of an

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Action Plan, all of which shall be undertaken in regular consultation with the County Council's Travel Plan Team. Upon approval, the School Travel Plan shall be fully implemented within 3 months and an annual monitoring report on its effectiveness shall be submitted to the County Planning Authority on the anniversary of such approval, the conclusions and recommendations of which shall, within 3 months, be implemented in full.

Cycle provision

9. Within 3 months of the date of this planning permission, a plan shall be submitted to the County Planning Authority showing the precise location and layout of 75 individual and secure cycle parking places in accordance with the standards set out in the County Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Parking' and, except as may otherwise be agreed in writing, the plan shall be fully implemented in a phased manner, on an annual basis, over a period of 3 years from the date of first occupation with not less than 25% of the cycle spaces available on first occupation.

Lighting

10. Prior to the new building coming into operation a scheme of external lighting provision related to the development hereby permitted has been submitted to, and approved by the County Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the types and height of lights and/or light columns, their locations, technical specifications, means of preventing or minimising light spillage and the proposed hours of use.

Landscaping

11. Within 3 months of the date of this permission a scheme of landscaping incorporating native species shall be submitted to the County Planning Authority. Once approved, the scheme shall be implemented during the first available planting season following the commencement of development. Any trees, shrubs or hedges planted in accordance with the approved scheme shall be maintained and any plants which within five years of planting die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the County Planning Authority.

Community use agreement

12. A community use agreement for the use of all the school sports facilities and associated sports development plan shall be drawn up and submitted to the County Planning Authority on a date to be agreed prior to the new sports facilities coming into operation. The approved scheme shall be thereafter implemented and maintained.

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Reasons for Conditions and relevant Development Plan Policies

1. Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. To define the scope of the permission and in the interest of clarity.

3&4. To retain control of the external appearance of the development in the interest of visual amenity.

5. To ensure that breeding birds are not adversely affected.

6. To ensure the adequate protection of trees, including those subject of a Tree Preservation Order (Northampton Borough Local Plan 2001: Policy E11)


8. To reduce the number of car borne journeys related to the development and to encourage the use of means of transport other than the private car.

9. To ensure that an appropriate number of cycle spaces shall be provided in accordance with the standards set out in the Supplementary Planning Guidance (‘Parking’) adopted in March 2003 by the County Council.

10. In the interest of residential amenity.

11. In the interests of visual amenity (Northamptonshire County Council Structure Plan: Policy GS5)

12. To encourage the community use of the facility.

Informative(s)


The applicant’s attention is also drawn to the Northampton Borough Council Tree Preservation Order No. 154 (Oak Tree to the rear of 27 and 29 Brunel Drive, Upton Grange, Northampton).

REASONS FOR APPROVAL

It is considered that the proposals meet planning policy objectives with regard to design and appearance, consideration of traffic matters and planning out crime. It is further considered that the proposals would not have an unacceptable detrimental

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impact on neighbour amenity that would justify the refusal of the application. The proposals are considered to be acceptable having regard to policies GS5, T1, T3, T8 and T9 of Northamptonshire County Structure Plan (2001) and policies E11, E13, E20, H4, T21 and T22 of Northampton Local Plan (1997).

Date 8th July 2005 Signed C. P. Watson

Authorised to sign on behalf of the Head of Sustainable Development

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