

Development Control Committee
Meeting to be held on 19th June 2019

Electoral Division affected: Lancaster Rural North

Lancaster City: application number. LCC/2019/0027
Single storey extension to create a new class base and wheelchair store facing existing courtyard. Bleasdale House School, Emesgate Lane, Silverdale

Contact for further information:
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Executive Summary

Application - Single storey extension to create a new class base and wheelchair store facing existing courtyard. Bleasdale House School, Emesgate Lane, Silverdale

Recommendation – Summary

That planning permission be **granted** subject to conditions controlling time limits, working programme and building materials.

Applicant's Proposal

The application is for a new class base and attached wheel chair store. The building would measure approximately 11 metres by 3.4 metres with a height of 3.4 metres. The building would have a flat PVCu roof which would be hidden behind a parapet roof with natural stone capping. The walls would be finished with a grey render to match the existing building. The extension would have four PVCu windows with brick cills to match the window designs elsewhere on the existing building.

Description and Location of Site

Bleasdale House School is located on Emesgate Lane in the village of Silverdale, immediately north of the village centre and approximately 6km north of Carnforth. The site is located within the Arnsdale and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The school itself is bordered to the west by Emesgate Lane, to the north by a fire station and to the east and south by residential properties the nearest being approximately 35 metres from the proposed development. The school is divided into two sites, one on each side of Emesgate Lane.

The proposed extension is located on the part of the school to the east of Emesgate Lane. The area proposed for the extension is currently paved and is adjacent to the main entrance to the school.

Background

History

The site is an established special school.

Planning permission was granted at Bleasdale School, Emesgate Lane, Silverdale in June 2016 for a single storey extension.

Planning permission was granted at Bleasdale School, Emesgate Lane, Silverdale in April 2018 for a single storey rebound therapy room with ramp access.

An application for a wheel chair store and classroom was submitted in March 2019 (ref LCC/2019/0016). The classroom element of the proposal was withdrawn but the wheelchair store was reported to Development Control Committee on 8th May 2019. The Committee resolved to defer consideration of the application.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs 8 -11, 94, 124 – 132, 170 – 172 and 197 of the NPPF are relevant in terms of achieving sustainable development, the requirement for school places, the need to achieve well designed places, conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and impact on non designated heritage assets.

Lancaster City Council Development Management DPD

Policy DM35 – Key Design Principles

Policy DM36 – Sustainable Development

Arnsdale and Silverdale Development Plan Document

Policy AS08 - Design

Consultations

Lancaster City Council; The City Council consider that the proposals are inappropriate in terms of design and location within the courtyard and that the extension would detract from the attractive frontage of the courtyard which they consider to be a non designated heritage asset. The City Council consider that there are three other sites at the rear of the school that could be used for the siting of the accommodation.

Silverdale Parish Council: No observation received.

LCC Highways Development Control: No objection.

Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB; No observations received

Representations – The application has been advertised by site notice, and neighbouring residents informed by individual letter. No representations have been received.

Advice

A planning application for the development of a new classroom and wheel chair store at Bleasdale House School was submitted in March 2019 ref LCC/2019/0016. The application was subject to an objection from Lancaster City Council raising design issues and conflict with the policy in the Arnsdale and Silverdale Development Plan Document. In order to address the objection from the City Council, the classroom element of the proposal was withdrawn leaving only the wheel chair store. This was reported to the meeting of the Development Control Committee on 8th May 2019 when it was resolved to defer consideration of the application.

Since that meeting, the school have revisited the proposals and have now submitted a different proposal for the classroom and wheel chair store in order to address the design issues raised by the City Council.

Although the school is not located within a conservation area and no part is a listed building, it is located within the Arnsdale and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The City Council also consider that the existing building would qualify as a non designated heritage asset and that the proposed extension would be inappropriate in terms of its design and location within the courtyard and would detract from the appearance of the building.

The main planning issue relates to the design of the proposed extension and conformity with Policy ASO8 in the Arnsdale and Silverdale Development Plan Document.

Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and are sympathetic to local character and history. Paragraph 130 states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area. Paragraph 197 also requires that the effect of an application on a non designated heritage asset should be taken into account and that a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Policy ASO8 of the Arnsdale and Silverdale Development Management Document requires that the highest standards of design and construction will be required and that the design of development should respond to the character of the local built environment including buildings and roofscapes and should reinforce what is special and locally distinctive about design in Arnsdale and Silverdale through careful consideration of solid form, design detailing and finishes.

The existing school building is a single storey building with a pitched roof covered in Cumbrian slate incorporating some small dormer windows. The building is arranged around three sides of a court yard now used for parking and accessed off Emesgate

Lane. A front entrance lobby is a later addition and has a flat roof running into the eaves level of the main building.

The proposed extension would be immediately adjacent to the entrance lobby and would also have a flat roof to match the height of the lobby. The walls would be rendered to match the materials used elsewhere on the main school building. The design would incorporate a stone capping parapet and use of brick in the window cills to reflect detailing found elsewhere on the main school building or on other nearby structures. The applicant has agreed to carry the stone capping onto the existing lobby to integrate the new development with the existing.

The ground floor area of the proposed extension is not significant and would not add unacceptably to the built area of the school in proportion to its grounds. It would not require the removal of any landscaping or existing distinctive boundary features. Given its location within the courtyard there would be some loss of the symmetry of the existing frontage of the school. However, the location of the extension also restricts the visibility of the extension from Emesgate Lane such that the site is not particularly prominent within the street scene except from the school entrance itself. It is accepted that the proposed flat roof design would not conform with the roof design used on many local buildings and that of the majority of the adjacent school. However, due to the single storey form of the existing school, any design with a pitched roof would require extensive modifications to the roof of the existing building which would make the project prohibitively expensive given also that the roof coverings would have to match those used on the existing school. Although the applicant has attempted to raise the standard of design by incorporating stone cappings to the parapet roof and brick detailing on the window cills, it is still considered that the form and design of the development does not match the design quality of the existing building and therefore conflicts with Policy ASO8 of the Arnside and Silverdale Development Plan Document.

However, the design issues have to be balanced against the requirement to provide the specialist school places and the availability of other locations at the school to provide the accommodation.

Paragraph 94 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Paragraph 94 therefore requires that great weight should be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools.

Bleasdale House School is a special school for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The school is split across two sites. A large house to the west of Emesgate Lane provides residential facilities and also currently teaching facilities for 16 to 19 year old children. To the east of Emesgate Lane is the main school site. The school wish to teach the 16 to 19 year old pupils in the main school building as this would provide easier access to the nursing facilities in the main school and all the pupils will also be on one site.

Currently there is no room to accommodate these pupils in the main school building. Bleasdale is the main provider for pupils with these difficulties in Lancashire and 5 additional pupils are expected at the school in September. Without the additional

classroom, the school state that they will have difficulty in accommodating these students which will result in them having to be placed elsewhere, possibly to the independent sector.

National planning policy requires that great weight should be given to the need to expand schools – this applies to special schools such as Bleasdale as well as main stream schools. To address the objections of the City Council, the school have examined other locations within the school for the additional provision but space at the rear of the school is very limited and restricted by gradients. There is space at the northern end of the school grounds but additional provision in this area would require a freestanding building which would further remove open space and would not directly link with the existing teaching accommodation. The school therefore consider that application site is the only location which fulfils their operational needs and which does not compromise other existing school accommodation.

The development would have some negative impacts on the design of the existing building and would conflict with the requirements of Policy AS08. However, these impacts have to be balanced with the requirement within the National Planning Policy Framework to give great weight to the need to provide new teaching accommodation and the lack of any acceptable alternative sites within the school to provide this accommodation. On balance it is considered that the requirement for the accommodation outweighs any negative impacts in terms of design.

In view of the scale, location and nature of the development, it is considered that no Convention Rights set out in the Human Rights Act 1998 would be affected.

Recommendation

That planning permission be **Granted** subject to the following conditions:

Time Limits

1. The development shall commence not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Imposed pursuant to Section 91 (1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Working Programme

2. The development shall be carried out, in accordance with the following documents:
 - a) The Planning Application received by the County Planning Authority dated 23rd May 2019 as modified by the email from Design and Construction dated 4th June 2019.
 - b) Submitted Plans and documents:

Drawing 01 - Location Plan

Drawing 04 - Drawing as Proposed and Elevations

Reason: To enable the County Planning Authority to adequately control the development and to minimise the impact of the development on the amenities of the local area, and to conform with and policy AS08 of the Arnside and Silverdale Development Plan Document.

3. The colour of the render used for the elevations of the extension shall match that used on the elevations of the existing main school building. The bricks to be used for the window cills and the stone capping used for the parapet walls of the extension and over the existing main entrance shall match the appearance of the brick and stone materials used elsewhere on the main school building.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and to conform with Policy AS08 of the Arnside and Silverdale Development Plan Document.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Ext
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None

Reason for Inclusion in Part II, if appropriate
N/A