

Development Control Committee
Meeting to be held on 6 December 2023

Electoral Division affected:
Longridge With Bowland

Ribble Valley Borough: Application number LCC/2023/0023

Erection of two storey detached teaching block and additional staff car parking. Longridge High School, Preston Road, Longridge

Contact for further information:
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Brief Summary

Application - Erection of two storey detached teaching block and additional staff car parking. Longridge High School, Preston Road, Longridge

Recommendation - Summary

That planning permission be **granted** subject to conditions controlling time limits approved drawings, materials, highway matters, drainage details, landscaping, hours of working and construction management plan.

Applicant's Proposal

The application proposes the erection of a new two storey classroom block comprising of six classrooms, two pupil toilet areas, office and plant rooms. The building would have a footprint of approximately 37.6m by 12.18m with a maximum height of 8.1m. It would have a mono pitched roof with external elevations constructed from facing brickwork to match the existing school buildings and the roof finished in a standing seam single ply roofing system. Windows and doors would be double glazed aluminium in steel blue.

The proposed classroom block would be located within the existing school grounds to the north of the existing synthetic grass pitch. There would be a temporary car park accessed from Preston Road via the existing access to the Longridge Sports Centre for the duration of the construction works as the existing parking close to the proposed building would be used as a site compound.

The application also proposes the installation of 15 no. cycle hoops to provide cycle parking for 30 cycles at three locations within the school grounds and some mixed



native hedge and tree planting along the eastern boundaries with St Cecilia's Roman Catholic High School and Chapel Hill Trading Estate respectively.

Description and Location of Site

Longridge High School is located on the B6244 Preston Road approximately 1km south of Longridge town centre. To the north and east the school grounds are bounded by a mixture of residential and commercial uses and on the southern boundary, the grounds of St. Cecelia's Secondary School. To the west the school is bounded by the B6244 Preston Road, which comprises mainly of residential development, with a number of roads leading off it to further residential and commercial uses.

The main vehicular access to the school is located off Preston Road on the western boundary of the school grounds, with a further pedestrian access to the south of the vehicular access and an unused pedestrian access to the north off Little Lane.

The proposed two storey classroom block would be located adjacent to the existing netball courts to the west and synthetic grass pitch to the south. The building would be accessed via a new pathway from the existing car park to the south.

History

The following planning permissions have been granted for education development at this site:

LCC/2015/0044 Provision of four canopies, repositioning of an existing canopy and siting of a modular building to be used as a food kiosk
Approved 18 June 2015

03/12/1041 3-metre-high replacement security fencing around the astroturf pitches
Approved 8 January 2013

03/09/0733 Installation of a storage container
Approved 29 September 2009

03/05/0057 Two storey extension to form lift enclosure, office and first floor landing
Approved 14 March 2005

03/04/1071 Erection of a 15m high wind turbine
Approved 9 June 2005

03/02/0654 Construction of car park to provide 12no. spaces
Approved 25 September 2002

03/02/0310 Two storey contiguous extension of existing teaching block to form new stores and staircase with specialist teaching areas for music and drama
Approved 17 June 2002



Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Paragraphs 11-14, 95, 99-111 and 126-136 are relevant in terms of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, providing choice of school places, protecting open space and the need for high standards of design.

Ribble Valley Council Core Strategy 2002-2028 (adopted December 2014):

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development
Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Key Statement DM12: Transport Considerations
Policy DMG1: General Considerations
Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations
Policy DMG3: Transport and Mobility
Policy DMB4: Open Space Provision
Policy DME6: Water Management

Ribble Valley Housing and Economic Development - Development Plan Document (adopted October 2019):

Policy OS1: Open Space

Longridge 2028 Neighbourhood Development Plan (made April 2019):

Policy LNPD3: Longridge Design Principles
Policy LNPD13: Protecting and enhancing open spaces and recreation facilities

Consultations

Ribble Valley Council: comments awaited.

Lancashire County Council Highways: Additional information regarding the car parking on site is requested.

It is also requested that further details are submitted for the parking of operatives' vehicles, storage of materials, loading and turning of large delivery vehicles and wheel washing during the construction phase in order to minimise the disruption to the highway network. A condition is therefore recommended requiring the submission and approval of a construction method statement prior to the commencement of development.

Conditions to secure the implementation of the proposed cycle parking spaces and implementation of the Travel Plan are requested.

United Utilities: Recommend the imposition of a condition requiring details of a sustainable surface water drainage scheme and foul water drainage scheme to be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of development.



Longridge Town Council: no comments received.

Representations: The application has been advertised by site notice and neighbouring residents informed by individual letter. Two letters of objection to the proposals from local residents have been received. They make the following comments:

- Healthy trees are being cut down to accommodate this work.
- Lack of consultation.
- Additional pupils will cause even more traffic problems due to teachers parking on the road and parents collecting children. They park across driveways blocking resident's access.
- The proposal includes six additional staff parking spaces, but at present there are at least double this number of cars parked permanently on Preston Road, causing problems for passing traffic.
- Cars also park on Hacking Drive and Shay Lane and the problems are heightened at the end of the day when parents pick up their children.
- Many children when leaving school are not crossing the road safely.

Advice

Background

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a new two storey teaching block that would provide an additional six classrooms at Longridge High School.

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In considering the issues that arise from the proposed development, it is necessary to take into consideration the relevant policies of the Development Plan and the planning history of the site and all other material planning considerations. Government policy is a material consideration that should be given appropriate weight in the decision-making process. The Development Plan for the site is made up of the Ribble Valley Council Core Strategy 2002-2028 (adopted December 2014), the Ribble Valley Housing and Economic Development - Development Plan Document (adopted October 2019) and the Longridge 2028 Neighbourhood Development Plan (made April 2019).

Paragraph 95 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states 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 that Local Planning Authorities should give great weight to the need to expand schools.

The application site is an existing secondary school within the defined settlement of Longridge. There are currently 825 pupils on roll, and this is due to increase to 1050. This is due to a rising secondary age population in Longridge due to inward migration and a high primary school population forecast to move through to secondary schools in future years.



Lancashire County Council (LCC) has a statutory duty to ensure that a primary or secondary school place is available for every child of statutory school age living in Lancashire who requests one. The County Council's School Place Provision Strategy 2022-2025 identifies the Ribble Valley area as requiring 60 additional permanent secondary school places in the medium term.

On 6 October 2022, Lancashire County Council's Cabinet approved an updated School Place Planning Delivery Programme 2023-25, which includes the provision of 133 additional secondary places in future years in Ribble Valley.

At its meeting in February 2023, Lancashire County Council's Cabinet approved the proposal to permanently increase the published admission number of Longridge High School by 15 places from 2023/24, and by a further 30 places from 2024/25, gradually increasing the school's capacity from 825 to 1,050. Capital funding for this projected was updated and agreed at the Cabinet meeting in November 2023.

The application site is an existing secondary school within the settlement boundary of Longridge (Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy). There is a presumption in favour of appropriate sustainable development subject to other policies and material considerations within Key Statement DS2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

The proposal would therefore meet the aim within Paragraph 95 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in relation to the provision of an adequate level of school places and it is considered that there is a local need for this development.

Highways

The main concern associated with the proposed expansion of the school is the potential exacerbation of traffic congestion arising from an increase in pupil drop off/pick-up at the start and end of the school day and increased staff numbers. Two letters of objection have been received expressing concern that the proposal could result in additional parking in the roads nearby and cause traffic problems.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway safety grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Policies DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy state that new development should consider the potential for traffic and car parking implications. Development should be located within areas that are highly accessible by means other than the private car and proposals will be required to provide adequate car parking and servicing space.

The application is accompanied by a travel plan document and proposes the provision of 30 cycle parking spaces as part of the proposals. At present there is no cycle parking provided at the school. It is proposed to use the existing car parking area (with 31 parking spaces) that is closest to the proposed building as a temporary site compound during the construction period, and consequently a temporary car park is proposed that would provide an additional 34 spaces. Two spaces of the



existing car park would be lost to provide access to the temporary car park. This would be accessed via the existing entrance off Preston Road that serves Longridge Sports Centre to the south of the school.

Lancashire County Council Highways have advised that one parking space per classroom is required, which can be reduced by up to 35% with a Travel Plan for accessible sites. The applicant has advised that the school presently has 45 classrooms. The application proposes the provision of a further six classrooms therefore due to the sustainable location which is close to the town centre and public transport routes, the level of car parking proposed would meet the advised parking standards.

Nevertheless, the issues regarding parking and traffic congestion around school pick up and drop off times raised by residents are noted. Lancashire County Council Highways have noted that they received a recent complaint about on-street car parking on Preston Road close to the junction of Doctors Row, which is sited approximately 200m south of the school entrance. This may be associated with overspill car parking from the school. The applicant has indicated that they may consider retaining the temporary car park should funding be secured in order to provide further staff parking within the school. This would help to alleviate some of the issues about parking on surrounding roads but would need to be the subject of a further planning application for the retention of the car park on a permanent basis.

As no objections have been raised by Lancashire County Council Highways, it is considered that a refusal on highway safety grounds could not be sustained. The proposed conditions recommended by Lancashire County Council Highways are considered to be reasonable and appropriate and it is recommended that additional requirements regarding construction management, the restoration of the temporary car park and provision of cycle parking are imposed.

Neighbour Amenity

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that developments should provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy also seeks to ensure that new development does not adversely affect the amenity of the surrounding area and is of a high standard of design.

Directly north of the application site is Singletons Dairy. The closest residential properties are on Oak Avenue, approximately 90m to the north.

Additional neighbour letters were sent to properties in the area following the receipt of the comments outlined above regarding lack of consultation.

It is considered that the proposed building would be sufficiently far from neighbouring residential properties so as not to cause an unacceptable degree of overlooking or loss of privacy. The land where the proposed building would be located slopes from north to south with a difference in levels of approximately 1m and with the land levels on the eastern side being approximately 2.2m higher than the western side. The proposed building would have a finished floor level approximately 1m higher than the adjacent netball courts to the west and cut into the slope adjacent to the grass



playing pitches, with the finished floor level approximately 2m below the ground level of the playing pitches.

Whilst the proposal would result in an overall increase in pupil numbers at the site it is considered that the increased level of noise and disturbance arising from either the operation of the school or vehicle movements to and from the school would not be sufficient to warrant refusal of the application.

Loss of Open Space

Policy DMB4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy identifies the land around the school buildings, including where the proposed classroom block is to be located as existing open space. This policy, together with policy OS1 of the Housing and Economic Development - Development Plan Document, seeks to protect existing open space and states that development which involves the loss of open space will be only be approved in exceptional circumstances where a loss of a site is justifiable because of the social and economic benefits of the proposal, or where alternative facilities are to be provided.

The proposed building would be located in a narrow area of the school grounds between the existing synthetic grass pitches to the south, the netball courts to the west and the site boundary to the north. The proposed building would not encroach on any area presently used as grass pitches to the east due to the shape of the site and topography of the land. Whilst the proposed building would not result in any loss of playing field area, there would be some impact on open space that is protected under policy DMB4 of the Core Strategy. However, there are only very limited areas of the school grounds that can be developed without affecting playing field/allocated open space areas.

The proposed building would also give rise to social and economic benefits in the form of increased school place provision, as evidenced in the County Council's School Place Provision Strategy 2022-2025 and these factors are considered to outweigh the impact on open space provision.

Design and appearance

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy seeks to ensure that all new development delivers high standards of design, is sympathetic to existing and approved land uses in terms of size, intensity and nature, as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials.

The external elevations of the proposed teaching block would be constructed of facing brickwork to match the existing school and a single ply system for the roof, the specific details of which have not been provided. The existing school buildings are constructed from a variety of materials and styles as the school has expanded over time. The nearest adjacent existing teaching block to the west is constructed from grey and blue cladding, whilst the main school buildings to the south are faced in brick. Neighbouring properties are of a variety of styles, designs and materials although red brick is the predominant material.



The proposed building would be approximately 95m from Preston Road to the west. The proposed building would lie in an elevated position relative to the road, with the finished floor level being approximately 3.5m higher than Preston Road. It is considered that some views of the building would be afforded from the street scene, particularly when viewed from the north west. However, it would also be afforded some degree of screening by existing buildings (the existing teaching block closest to Preston Road is approximately 6m in height), trees and fencing. There would be distant views of the building afforded from the rear gardens of properties on Oak Avenue approximately 90m away to the north and 150m away on Little Lane to the north east.

Additional soft landscaping in the form of native hedge and tree planting is proposed along the eastern boundaries of the school grounds with St Cecilia's Roman Catholic High School and Chapel Hill Trading Estate. This can be the subject of a planning condition.

The size, scale and appearance of the proposed building is considered to be in keeping with the existing use of the site as a school and existing buildings on the site. The proposal would be viewed in the context of the existing school buildings and grounds and would therefore not form an unduly incongruous or prominent feature.

Subject to conditions requiring the details of the proposed materials to be submitted and approved it is considered that the proposed building would be of a size, scale, design and appearance that is in keeping with the existing school and wider area.

Surface water drainage

The application site is not within an area at risk from flooding. The applicant has indicated that the proposed building will be connected to the existing drainage system.

United Utilities have not raised any objections to the proposals and have recommended a number of conditions regarding submission of details and implementation of a sustainable surface water drainage system.

Conclusion

The proposal would provide additional school spaces and would therefore satisfy the policy in Paragraph 95 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions the proposal would not give rise to any undue loss of amenity for neighbouring residents or harm to highway safety.

The proposal would result in the loss of a small area of open space. However, it is considered that the benefits of the scheme outweigh the loss of this open space, which is not capable of being used as playing pitches due to its location and topography.



The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the policies of the Development Plan and is accordingly recommended for approval subject to the following conditions.

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, (except where modified by the conditions to this permission), in accordance with the following documents:

- a) The Planning Application and supporting statement received by the County Planning Authority on 6 July 2023

- b) Submitted Plans and documents:

Design and Access Statement received 6 July 2023

Arboricultural Assessment received 6th July 2023

Ecological appraisal received 6th July 2023

School Travel Plan 6th July 2023

Drawing No. P2-00-DR-A-40_50_63-0001 Rev. S4-P02 Site Plan - Location

Drawing No. P2-00-DR-A-40_50_63-0002 Rev. S4-P03 Site Plan - Existing

Drawing No. P2-ZZ-DR-A-40_50_63-0004 Rev. S4-P04 Plans - Proposed

Drawing No. P2-ZZ-DR-A-40_50_63-0005 Rev. S4-P04 Elevations - Proposed

Drawing No. P2-00-DR-A-40_50_63-0006 Rev. S4-P03 Site Plan Masterplan - Proposed

Drawing No. LA02 Rev H General Arrangement Plan

Drawing No. LA07 Section - Showing new teaching block and surrounding buildings

Reason: To minimise the impact of the development on the amenities of the area and to conform with Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Local Plan



Safeguarding of Watercourses and Drainage

3. Prior to the commencement of development, details of a sustainable surface water drainage scheme and a foul water drainage scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The drainage schemes must include:
- (i) An investigation of the hierarchy of drainage options in the National Planning Practice Guidance (or any subsequent amendment thereof). This investigation shall include evidence of an assessment of ground conditions and the potential for infiltration of surface water in accordance with BRE365;
 - (ii) A restricted rate of discharge of surface water agreed with the local planning authority (if it is agreed that infiltration is discounted by the investigations);
 - (iii) Levels of the proposed drainage systems including proposed ground and finished floor levels in above Ordnance Datum (AOD);
 - (iv) Incorporate mitigation measures to manage the risk of sewer surcharge where applicable; and
 - (v) Foul and surface water shall drain on separate systems.

The approved schemes shall also be in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (March 2015) or any subsequent replacement national standards.

The drainage shall be installed in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation of the proposed development and retained thereafter in operational condition for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To promote sustainable development, secure proper drainage and to manage the risk of flooding and pollution and in accordance with Policy DME6 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Building Materials

4. No development shall take place until details of the building materials to be used for the external elevations and the roof of the development have been submitted to the County Planning Authority and approved in writing. Thereafter, only those materials approved by the County Planning Authority shall be used.

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of the area and to conform with policy DMG1 Ribble Valley Core Strategy.



Highway Matters

5. No development shall take place, including any works of clearance, until a construction method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The method statement shall provide for the following:
- i) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors.
 - ii) The loading and unloading of plant and materials.
 - iii) The storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development.
 - iv) Measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction.
 - v) A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from clearance and construction works.
 - vi) Details of working hours.
 - vii) Timing of deliveries.
 - viii) Measures to ensure that construction and delivery vehicles do not impede access to neighbouring properties.

The approved statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policies DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

6. No development shall commence until a scheme for the restoration of the temporary car parking area has been submitted to and approved in writing to by the County Planning authority. The car park shall thereafter be constructed and retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to ensure that the final details of the highway scheme/works are acceptable before work commences on site and to conform with Policy DM12 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

7. Prior to the development being brought into use, cycle parking shall be provided in accordance with details shown on plan ref. 13340-LCC LA02 Rev. H General Arrangement Plan received 30 October 2023. The cycle parking area shall thereafter be kept free of obstruction and available for the parking of cycles only at all times.

Reason: To ensure the provision and availability of adequate cycle parking and to ensure that the development provides the infrastructure for sustainable forms of transport and to confirm with Policies DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Hours of Working

8. a) No construction development, delivery or removal of materials shall take place outside the hours of:

07:30 to 18:00 hours Monday to Friday (except Public Holidays)



08:00 to 18:00 hours on Saturday.

No construction development, delivery or removal of materials shall take place at any time on Sundays or Public Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of local residents and adjacent properties/landowners and land users and to conform with Policies DMG1 DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Landscaping

9. The approved landscaping works as shown on plan ref. 13340-LCC LA02 rev. H General Arrangement Plan received 30 October 2023 shall be undertaken in the first planting season following the completion of the development and shall thereafter be maintained for a period of five years including weed control, replacement of dead and dying trees and maintenance of protection measures.

Reason: In the interests of visual and local amenity and the local environment and to conform with Key Statement EN4 and Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

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

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Ext
LCC/2023/0023	November 2023	Helen Ashworth Planning and Environment 01772 530084

Reason for Inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

