

Development Control Committee
Meeting to be held on 23 January 2019

Electoral Division affected: Ribble Valley North East
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Ribble Valley Borough: application number LCC/2018/0047
Single storey extension to rear, new canopy and non-floodlit multi-use games area (MUGA) at Barrow Primary School, Old Row, Whalley Road, Barrow, Whalley

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Executive Summary

Application – Single storey extension to rear, new canopy and non-floodlit multi-use games area (MUGA) at Barrow Primary School, Old Row, Whalley Road, Barrow, Whalley.

Recommendation – Summary

That planning permission be **granted** subject to conditions controlling commencement, working programme, hours of construction working, sustainable drainage and a travel plan.

Applicant's Proposal

The planning application is for a proposed single storey extension to the rear of the existing school, a new canopy and non-floodlit multi-use games area (MUGA).

The single storey rear extension would measure approximately 35m x 11m x 7.5m high at roof ridge for a new hall section and 5m high for classroom, kitchen and toilets. The external elevations would comprise reconstituted pitched face sandstone walling with smooth cut quoins, banding, and window and door surrounds with sandstone mortar, and sections of white painted render. The roof would be covered with artificial grey coloured roof slates and ridge tiles, coloured slate grey.

There would be a gazebo style canopy approximately 5m x 6m x up to 4m high made with a red fabric canopy and green steel posts. This would be located centrally within the school site adjacent to the school building.

The multi-use games area would be approximately 39m x 19m comprising a polymeric porous surface surrounded by 4m high grey coloured steel mesh fencing.

Three parking places displaced by the new rear extension would be re-located adjacent to existing parking close to the northern boundary. An additional space would be provided close to the eastern boundary.

Description and Location of Site

Barrow Primary School is situated off Whalley Road (C549), in the village of Barrow, approximately 2km north of Whalley and 2km south of Clitheroe. The school building is attached to a stone fronted church building that forms the frontage to Whalley Road and is adjacent to residential properties that stretch along Whalley Road including 'Old Row'. Properties at Old Row are some 45-50m away from the proposed extension and multi-use games area. Beyond the linear development along Whalley Road is largely agricultural land. Two detached properties known as 'Wigga Vista' and Penrhyn are located beyond the northern boundary of the school site at a distance of approximately 20-30m respectively. The school site includes a large detached building that serves as a nursery. Beyond the school and agricultural land to the south east is a service station area including industrial units and food outlets.

The school site falls within an area designated as essential open space in the Ribble Valley Local Plan.

Background

Planning history

The application relates to an existing school site.

Planning permission was granted in 2003 for a single storey extension (ref 03/03/0372).

Planning permission was granted in July 2007 for the provision of a temporary pre-school building (ref 03/07/0501).

Planning permission was granted in July 2008 for the creation of a playground incorporating permanent play equipment and erection of sail type canopy (ref 03/08/0469).

Planning permission was granted on September 2012 for the conversion of temporary nursery building for permanent use and extension to the building (ref 03/10/0680).

Planning permission was granted on 28 March 2011 for the variation of condition 2 of permission 03/10/0680 to allow for the retention of a flat roof and existing external appearance of an existing building (ref. 03/11/0083).

Planning permission was granted on 23 January 2013 for a single storey extension, car parking area to provide 11 spaces, bicycle store and extended hard play area (ref. 03/12/1050).

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs 11-12, 94, 97, 108-109 and 124 are relevant with regards to the definition of sustainable development, the need for new school places, open space and recreation, promoting sustainable transport, and requiring good design.

Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 – 2028

Policy DS1 – Development Strategy
Policy DMG1 – General Considerations
Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations
Policy DMG3 – Transport and Mobility
Policy DME6 – Water Management
Policy DMB4 – Open Space Provision

Consultations

It should be noted that some of the consultation comments below relate to the original planning application which involved the demolition of a chapel building which forms part of the school. The application does not now include this demolition.

Ribble Valley Borough Council – The extension and improvement of the school is supported in principle. However, there are concerns in relation to the loss of the chapel and hall due to their age and contribution to the wider street scene. While not formally listed the buildings are considered to be non-designated heritage assets. Consideration should be given to Paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework and subject to the necessary policy tests.

Barrow Parish Council – Very much in favour of plans to expand pupil numbers but object to the application because of the proposal to demolish the chapel, the replacement building is not in keeping with nearby properties and because there is a lack of parking provision and traffic management plan. An alternative site for a new school building should be found.

Lancashire County Council Ecology Service – The bat survey has identified that the building to be demolished has high potential to support roosting bats. Presence/absence surveys are therefore required (in accordance with the best practice guidelines) to establish the presence/absence of roosting bats, the extent to which bats might be affected, and the need for mitigation/compensation. In the absence of this further survey, it is not possible to determine whether or not the proposed works would result in a breach of legislation and, if so, whether the proposals would be likely to be licensed.

With the exception of bats, potential impacts on 'other' biodiversity are sufficiently well understood such that, once the outstanding issue of impacts on bats is resolved to the satisfaction of the planning authority, mitigation/compensation for other impacts could be secured by planning condition.

Lancashire County Council Highways Development Control – There are concerns regarding the parking issues currently experienced outside the school. The applicant subsequently provided a transport statement, which makes reference to a travel plan and the potential for a walking bus operating from Barrow Brook. The latter should be a defined objective of the school travel plan, which should be updated to cater for the anticipated pupil increases.

Sport England – The proposed development does not fall within either their statutory remit or non-statutory remit. If the proposal involves the loss of any sports facility then full consideration should be given to whether the proposal meets Paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Lancashire Archaeological Advisory Service – In response to the initial submission there is no heritage statement nor does the Design and Access Statement provide an assessment of the heritage values of the chapel and attached buildings which are proposed for demolition.

No objection is made to the works to the rear of the site but comments are made regarding the history and heritage value of the chapel building at the frontage of the site and the assessment work that will be required should the chapel be proposed for demolition.

In response to the amended application details it is noted that the application appears to have been divided into two phases, with the demolition and redevelopment of the original chapel and hall along the Whalley Road frontage being placed into a second phase [outside the scope of this application]. As noted in the original comments, there are no objections to the works to the rear of the site and as such have no issues with what appears to be the Phase 1 element of the scheme.

Lancashire County Council Lead Local Flood Authority – No comment.

Representations – The application has been advertised by press and site notice, and neighbouring residents informed by individual letter. One representation has been received stating no objection to the proposed development but wishing to discuss boundary fence issues which are outside the scope of the planning application.

Advice

Barrow Primary School consists of an original school building and a former chapel along with a number of modern extensions to the rear of the school building. The school grounds also contain a Nursery School that is a stand-alone unit. The existing main school entrance and offices are located away from the frontage and are accessed via a side footpath alleyway. Dining provision is currently available in the former church hall but is considered to be extremely restricted and has access issues associated with changing floor levels.

This application originally proposed the demolition of the former chapel, classroom, hall (currently used as a dining hall), and kitchen area followed by the construction of a replacement single storey extension to the front of the school building for classrooms, reception, office area, and also a new main entrance area. However, it

has been established that further survey work is required to confirm the presence or absence of bats within the parts of the school that are to be demolished. This survey work can only be undertaken between May and September in accordance with Natural England guidance. On this basis the applicant has chosen to withdraw the part of the proposal relating to the demolition and rebuilding works. A separate application for the demolition of the former chapel and hall and new single storey extension is now likely to be submitted in summer 2019 following the outcome of the further bat surveys.

The application therefore now only relates to a single storey extension to the rear, a new canopy and a non-floodlit multi-use games area. Therefore concerns raised in relation to the demolition works and potential impacts on bats are no longer relevant.

The primary aim of the proposal is to increase the number of pupils admitted to reception year at Barrow Primary School from 20 to 30 with an additional 10 reception places in September 2019 and for each subsequent year resulting in the school's capacity eventually increasing from 140 to 210 pupils. Staff numbers would increase by 2 during the same period.

Lancashire County Council has a statutory duty to provide a school place to every child of statutory school age living in Lancashire. The need for the new primary school places has been identified through a basic needs assessment which has been undertaken to establish the future demand for primary school places in this area.

It has been identified that Barrow and surrounding areas will be likely to have a shortage of primary school places due to significant levels of planned housing development combined with higher birth rates. However, the actual number of required school places is difficult to forecast as there is no certainty over the timeframe of availability of new housing in the area. Consequently, there is no certainty in the number of children in a locality requiring school places in any new school year. Therefore, the expansion of existing schools is the preferred way to provide viable school places and to disperse the impact of the need for additional school places across several locations.

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 and Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement and to development that will widen choice in education. Also they should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications.

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy identifies the general considerations that development proposals must comply with. This includes a high standard of building design, which is sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of size, intensity, nature, scale, style and use of building materials. There should be consideration of traffic and parking issues, and there should be no adverse effect on local amenity and the environment or heritage assets. There should be no net loss of important open space including playing fields. The policy also requires that

consideration should be given to the likely effect on existing trees and other natural features on the site, visual appearance and in relation to surroundings and local landscapes and landscaping.

The school site is identified as being 'Essential open space' on the allocation plan accompanying the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. Policy DMB4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy relates to open space provision and states that the borough council will refuse development proposals which involve the loss of existing public open space, including private playing fields which are in recreational use but consent may be granted because of social and economic benefits that would arise or where replacement facilities are provided. In this instance the loss of a small area of playground and grassed area for a school hall and multi-use games area would be an acceptable use of the land. Sport England has raised no objection principally as the site does not fall within the definition of a statutory playing field. The proposed MUGA would contribute towards improved sporting facilities.

The rear extension would complement elements of the existing school building. The scale and design of the new extension and multi-use games area is acceptable and is considered to comply with the relevant policies of the development plan in this respect. The multi-use games area would provide a new sporting facility for the school to enhance the quality and availability of usable open space. There would be no negative impact on biodiversity or on local amenity given the nature of the existing amenity grassland and the proximity to neighbouring properties. However, a condition is recommended to control construction working to a typical working day to minimise the likelihood of disturbance.

Concerns have been raised in relation to traffic impacts associated with the proposal. Following a request, the applicant submitted a transport statement. The report notes that the school currently has 13 car parking spaces including 1 disability space for staff. Parking provision would be maintained at 13 spaces as part of the development in a slightly altered layout. The report continues by stating that as with most primary school sites there is parent parking demand at the start and end of the school day. However, there are significant areas of on-street parking available in the vicinity of the school and site observations indicate that such parking does not result in any significant operational or safety issues on the local highway network. It is also indicated that there is additional parking capacity available.

Approximately 70% of pupils currently travel by car and a number of pupils attend breakfast and after school clubs, which spreads the parking demand over a longer period. Parking and drop-off demand is further reduced by siblings travelling together. In summary, of approximately 140 existing pupils there are only approximately 70 car journeys to school in the morning and at pick up. The proposed development would incrementally add up to an additional 30-35 journeys in the morning and afternoon after 6 years once the additional classroom space is fully occupied.

In terms of potential improvements, the transport statement states that there could be potential to implement a 'walking bus' scheme with pick-up and drop-off at the recently opened Barrow Brook Services. The owners of the site have agreed to its use. The site is approximately 650m walk from the school.

LCC Highways Development Control have raised concerns in relation to availability of parking on Whalley Road during school pick-up and drop-off. Consequently, it is recommended that the opportunity for a 'walking bus' and other transport initiatives should be explored through a travel plan. A condition is recommended for a school travel plan to seek to promote alternative modes of transportation to the private car.

The only other condition considered necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in highway terms is in relation to ensuring that construction traffic carries no debris onto the highway.

Policy DME6 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy recognises that there should be a promotion of designs that adopt principles of sustainable construction including Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The applicant has submitted a drainage study. A feasible sustainable drainage solution would be to provide a below ground cellular storage system with a flow control unit to restrict discharge to main sewer, which is considered to be a suitable scheme.

In conclusion, the proposed development would provide additional teaching areas to enable the primary school to increase the school's admission numbers in accordance with local demand, and to enhance its sporting facilities. The layout, scale and design of the development would ensure a suitable educational setting. The location of the new built development and multi-use games area would have no detrimental impact on neighbouring residents subject to a condition controlling hours of working to reasonable times. It is considered that the proposed development complies with the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework and the development plan.

In view of the scale, nature and design 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, except where modified by the conditions to this permission, in accordance with the following documents:
 - a) Submitted Plans and documents:

Drawing no. A01, Rev C1 - Site Location Plan

Drawing no. A18, Rev P4 - Proposed Elevations - Phase 1
Drawing no A19, Rev P4 - Proposed Layout Plan - Phase 1
Drawing no. A21, Rev P3 - Proposed Site Layout Plan - Phase 1

Reason: To minimise the impact of the development on the amenities of the area and to conform with Policies DMG1 and DME6 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

3. No construction development shall take place outside the hours of:

08.00 to 18.00 hours Monday to Friday (except Public Holidays),
08.00 to 14.00 hours on Saturday.

No construction development shall take place at any time on Sundays or Public Holidays.

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

4. Measures shall be taken at all times during construction works to ensure that no mud, dust or other deleterious materials are tracked onto the public highway by vehicles leaving the site.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and local amenity and to conform with Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

5. Prior to the use of the building extension and MUGA, sustainable drainage shall be provided in accordance with the details shown drawing no. A21, Rev P3 - Proposed Site Layout Plan - Phase 1. The sustainable drainage system shall thereafter be retained in full working order.

Reason: To seek to ensure that drainage from the site can be adequately controlled and to minimise flood risk and to conform with Policy DME6 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

6. Within 12 months of the date of this planning permission, a School Travel Plan shall be submitted to the County Planning Authority for approval in writing. The Travel Plan shall describe the means by which visitors, staff, parents/carers shall be encouraged to travel to the site by means other than the private car. This shall include exploring the potential for a walking bus operating from Barrow Brook. The Plan as approved shall be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis and a copy of that annual review shall be submitted to the County Planning Authority within 3 months of the completion of the annual review.

Reason: To seek to promote alternative means of transport and to conform with Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Ext
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None		
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Reason for Inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
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