Committee Date: 26/06/2014  Application Number: 2014/03252/PA
Accepted: 28/05/2014  Application Type: Full Planning
Target Date: 23/07/2014
Ward: Brandwood

Allens Croft Primary School, Allens Croft Road, Birmingham, B14 6RP

Erection of a temporary two classroom building for a 6 month period

Applicant: Birmingham City Council
Education & Skills Infrastructure, 1 Lancaster Circus, Birmingham, B2 2RT
Agent: Acivico Ltd
1 Lancaster Circus, Queensway, Birmingham, B4 7DG

Recommendation
Approve Temporary

1. Proposal

1.1. The application is for the installation of a temporary demountable building and access ramp / steps, for a six month period to the rear (east) of Allens Croft Primary School. The proposed development is intended to cope with an increased pupil intake in the 2014/15 academic year prior to the construction of an additional eight classrooms granted planning permission in 2013 (2013/07833/PA) but not yet constructed. The proposed development would provide two temporary classrooms (and toilets) and would be an interim measure to be removed from site when the new classrooms to the south are completed.

1.2. The proposed temporary building would be finished in ivory / buttermilk colour and would measure 16.8m long x 9.8m wide x 3.5m high. It would be sited on a landscaped area next to a wildlife garden at the rear of the school.

Proposed Plan

Proposed Elevations

2. Site & Surroundings

2.1. Allens Croft Primary School is a 1-2 storey building constructed in buff blockwork and grey cladding, along with the adjacent 2-3 storey Allens Croft Children’s Centre. The building was completed in 2007 (2005/02287/PA) as part of a PFI and is managed by Balfour Beatty. The school itself occupies the south western end of the site and is set back from Allens Croft Road behind a parking area. It has a pitched roof, single storey rear wing running east along the southern boundary of the site with a small landscaped area separating the building from its 2m high palisade boundary fence. Beyond the school building, the land rises up significantly and levels out with a MUGA pitch set on this. The playing field beyond the MUGA rises up slightly from west to east and is landscaped with a gravel path around, grassed
mounds and a number of tree saplings. The proposed temporary classroom would be positioned adjacent to the Wildlife garden on the north western extent of the playing field.

2.2. Surrounding the application site to both the east and south is Dawberry Fields Neighbourhood Park, a large expanse of public open space which has been incrementally improved over a number of years as part of the Allens Croft Initiative. Within the park there is a children’s play area to the south of the school site, football pitches to the south east and former allotments (which are to be re-laid as part of the initiative), to the east. The public car park for the neighbourhood park is accessed off a single track tarmac road from Allens Croft Road, which runs along the southern boundary of the school.

2.3. The proposed temporary classrooms would be over 50m away from the rear elevations of two storey residential properties on Waldrons Moor to the north and over 160m away from two storey houses on Brandwood Park Road, beyond the neighbourhood park to the south.

3. Planning History

3.1. 12/08/05 - 2005/02287/PA - Demolition of existing school and new replacement 2-storey school and children’s centre with new access car park and new sport pitches/games court off Allens Croft Road- Approved.

3.2. 28/11/2013 - 2013/07833/PA - Erection of a two storey school extension to accommodate 8 classrooms (210 additional pupils) and associated external works – Approved subject to conditions.

4. Consultation/PP Responses

4.1. Application advertised as a Departure via site and press notices. Local Councillors and local residents notified, no responses received.

4.2. Sport England – did not wish to comment

4.3. West Midlands Police – no objection

4.4. Regulatory Services - no objection

4.5. Transportation Development – no objection. However the delivery would require a temporary closure of a Public Right of Way, which would need to be negotiated with the Constituency Engineer.

5. Policy Context

5.1. National Policy

• National Planning Policy Framework
6. **Planning Considerations**

**Policy**

6.1. Within the adopted UDP, policy 3.52A states that proposals which would result in the loss of open space will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, with the availability of public open space nearby taken into account. Policy 3.53 notes that a standard of 2 hectares of public open space per 1000 head of population will be used to assess the adequacy of public open space provision and 3.57 adds that development of playing fields would not normally be allowed, particularly in areas where playing field provision falls below 1.2 hectares per 1000 head of population. The policy adds that in exception circumstances when permission is granted, this will be subject to provision of equivalent long-term recreational community benefit.

6.2. Policy TP9 of the draft Birmingham Development Plan reiterates public open space and playing field space standards in the UDP and states that playing fields will be protected and only considered for development where they are shown to be surplus or alternative provision is provided which is of equivalent quality, accessibility and size.

6.3. Nationally, paragraph 74 of the NPPF states that existing open space, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: - an assessment has been provided showing that the land is surplus to requirements; the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision.

**Principle**

6.4. The salient issue with the principle of the proposed classrooms are their location on school playing field land. However, this proposal is for a temporary development for use in the interim in order to alleviate the pressure for classroom space caused by a deficiency in school places in Brandwood ward at the start of the 2014/15 academic year. As such, I do not consider the proposal conflicts with both local and national planning policy guidance. The proposed classrooms will be removed from this site upon completion of an extension to the school granted planning permission by your Committee in 2013 (2013/07833/PA). Construction of these permanent classrooms has not yet started and they will not be ready for occupation at the start of the academic year in September 2014. Given the pressure for classroom space at this school in the coming year, a temporary classroom block is the most logical way to increase the available space until the permanent classroom block is completed. Therefore the proposed temporary classroom block is considered in principle.

6.5. Sport England have stated that they do not wish to comment on this application. The location of the proposed temporary classrooms, adjacent to the Wildlife Garden on the edge of the school site and its relatively small 156 sq m footprint, would leave ample space (over 11,600 sq m ) for sports pitches in the interim. Therefore I consider that in this instance, there are exceptional circumstances which justify the loss of part of the school playing field for the proposed development without the requirement for alternative sports or recreation facilities.
6.6. Transportation Development and Education and Skills Infrastructure have no objection to the proposed development, which is not considered to have an adverse impact on highway safety or the amenity of the surrounding area.

6.7. Concerning impact on surrounding residential properties, the location of the proposed temporary building, within the playing field area behind the school, means that it is isolated from residential properties backing onto the park the nearest of which is over 50m away. Therefore the proposal is not considered to have an adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding residential properties by way of overlooking, outlook or noise and disturbance. Regulatory have also raised no objections to the proposal and no comments have been received from neighbouring residents.

7. **Conclusion**

7.1. While this development would see the temporary loss of playing field the proposed classrooms are intended to be a stopgap measure until the permanent classrooms planned for the school (2013/07833/PA) are completed, at which time the playing fields would be reinstated. With this in mind, the proposed temporary classroom block is seen as an acceptable short-term measure which would not harm the amenity of the surrounding area.

8. **Recommendation**

8.1. Approve subject to conditions

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<td>Requires the prior submission of a scheme to show how the building would be removed within six months</td>
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Case Officer: John Richardson
Facing North West (towards the school)
Location Plan

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