

### **Proposal**

- 1 The proposal involves the construction of a single storey classroom building with a pitched roof (12.8m long, 9.3m wide and 5.1m to ridgeline) on a grassed area between the existing sports hall and classrooms on the western side of the site (see attached plan). The building is designed to be eco friendly and would incorporate straw bales in the walls and railway sleepers as the foundations. The roof would be constructed using salvaged timber and reclaimed slates. The elevations would be covered externally in lime render and painted cream. The 8 no. windows would be constructed using soft wood obtained from a sustainable source. The building would be positioned on an area formerly occupied by class rooms which were demolished in 2000.
- 2 The building would be DDA compliant and a brick and concrete ramp would be formed at the entrance to the building to enable disabled access. Additionally a fire exit with 2 no. steps in similar materials would be positioned on the building's eastern elevation.
- 3 Access to the building would be gained from existing footpaths within the school grounds and the development is not expected to generate significant additional vehicular or pedestrian movements to the site once completed.

### **Consultation and Representations**

- 4 Chester le Street District Council (consulted 07 January 2008) view is not yet available.
- 5 Sacriston Parish Council (consulted 07 January 2008) has not commented on the proposal.
- 6 The application has been advertised on site. No representations have been received.

### **Planning Comment**

- 7 The proposed building would be located on an established school site within the settlement boundary of Sacriston and is not specifically covered by current policies in the Chester le Street District Local Plan. Detailed planning considerations include its siting and appearance and impacts on the site and the surrounding area.

## Visual Appearance

- 8 Fyndoune Community College is made up of a series of buildings of largely CLASP type construction. The proposed building would have a simple design and would relate acceptably in terms of scale, form and appearance to surrounding structures. It would be situated on an area that has previously been used as a location for school classrooms and is largely enclosed to the rear of the site by existing buildings and boundary planting. The incorporation of key sustainable development principles in the design is supported in planning terms.

## Residential Amenity

- 9 The closest residential properties to the proposed building lie approximately 100m to the north on Abbey Mews. It would be set back above these properties and screened at distance by boundary planting and existing school buildings. Other properties on Findon Hill, over 200m away, to the east (front) of the school site would not have views of the proposed eco classroom. It is not considered therefore that the amenity of adjacent residents would be adversely affected.

## Recommendation and Reasons

- 10 The proposed building would provide additional educational facilities at the school and would be constructed in accordance with sustainable construction principles. It would be located on a grassed area previously occupied by buildings and can be satisfactorily accommodated without having an adverse visual or local amenity impact. I therefore **recommend** that planning permission be granted for the development subject to appropriate conditions regarding precise details of external materials for the following reasons:
- i) The proposed development would be located on an established school site within the settlement boundary of Sacriston and would not conflict with development plan policies.
  - ii) The proposed building in terms of its size, location and appearance would relate acceptably to the surrounding area and would have not have a significant impact upon visual or residential amenity.

## No Departure

**Background Papers:** Application, consultations and responses, site location plans.

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<b>Local Member:</b>	<b>Councillor Wright</b>	

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# Proposed Eco Classroom, Fyndoune Community College, Findon Hill, Sacriston

