

Planning Committee

24 July 2008

**Development by the
County Council**



Report of Rod Lugg, Head of Environment and Planning

Purpose of the report: To enable the Committee to determine applications for planning permission which have been received in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.

Chester-le-Street District: Proposed erection of a waiting shelter and cycle storage shelter on land at Park View Community School, Lombard Drive Chester-le-Street (Regulation 3)

Introduction

- 1 Park View Community School is located to the north of Chester-le-Street and is working with the County Council on its School Travel Plan that aims to increase the numbers of students walking to school and reduce vehicle congestion around the site. A need for a formal, sheltered area for cycle storage has been identified as part of this process, along with the need for a sheltered area for pupils while they wait for school buses to arrive at the end of the day. As a result the school is seeking planning permission for both a cycle storage shelter and waiting shelter.

The Proposal

- 2 The proposed cycle storage shelter would be located on an existing concrete hardstanding where pupils currently store their bikes adjacent to the south eastern end of the school building, approximately 25m from the eastern boundary of the site with residential properties along Leander Avenue (see attached plan). It would provide storage for 10 cycles.
- 3 The waiting shelter would be located on an existing Bitmac area close to the western boundary of the school, adjacent to the bus boarding area. Both the cycle storage shelter and waiting shelter would be 4.1m in length by 2.4m in width and have a height of 2.3m. The steel frames of both structures would have a powder coated black finish and would be clad in translucent panelling.

Consultations and Representations

- 4 Chester-le-Street District Council has no objections to the proposal but notes that consideration should be given to relocating the waiting shelter away from the existing neighbour at 5 Lombard Drive so that noise issues would be at a minimum when in use in order to avoid any undue disturbance.

Comment: The applicant has revised the location of the waiting shelter and it would now be positioned approximately 35m away from the nearest residential property.

- 5 North Lodge Parish Council (consulted 20 May 2008) has not commented on the proposal.
- 6 Durham Constabulary Planning Architectural Liaison Officer has no objections to the proposals and notes that there has been no recorded crime at the school and that relating to the surrounding area is extremely low.

- 7 The application has been advertised on site and adjacent properties along Lombard Drive and Leander Avenue were notified of the proposal. Two letters were received from the residents of 1 and 5 Lombard Drive about the scheme as originally submitted. These raised the following concerns:
- i) The position of the shelter behind the fence of 1 and 5 Lombard Drive would cause excess disruption to the lives of residents. The waiting shelter would become a focus point for groups of youths to use the school grounds outside of school hours to engage in anti-social activities such as underage drinking. There have been previous instances of this behaviour in the past and the structures would encourage this to occur.
 - ii) The position of the parent waiting shelter would give rise to accidents involving vehicles entering the site and the pupils waiting at the shelter for buses to arrive.
 - iii) The secondary school does not need a parent waiting shelter as no parents collect their children from school.

Comment: The waiting shelter would provide a place for pupils to wait prior to boarding the school buses at the end of the day and is not intended for parents; issues relating to residential amenity are discussed in paragraphs 11 and 12. These residents were re-notified about the revised location of the shelter, no written representations have been received although one resident has advised via telephone that they wish their objections to stand.

Planning Comment

- 8 None of the saved policies contained within the Chester-le-Street District Local Plan are directly relevant to the application. The principal detailed issues relate to the visual and residential amenity impacts of the structures.
- 9 Park View Community School is located within a residential area and is bordered to the east and south by residential dwellings and to the north and west by existing school playing fields.

Visual Amenity

- 10 The waiting shelter would be located in a fairly prominent position within the school grounds on an existing Bitmac area immediately to the west of the bus boarding area. However, two mature trees and a boundary hedge are situated between the proposed shelter and the nearest house and a bungalow which would help to provide screening at ground floor level from these. In addition, the overhanging canopy from a well established and substantial copse of mature trees and hedge on the western boundary of the school would also provide screening.

Residential Amenity

- 11 When originally submitted the waiting shelter was positioned 3m off the southern boundary of the school. It would now be situated approximately 27m from the boundary of the nearest residential property and 29m from the house itself. Direct impacts from the use of the shelter on neighbouring occupiers would therefore be limited and this area is currently used for bus drop off and pick up. Whilst there are concerns about the potential misuse of the shelter outside of school hours, it is unlikely that this would be a major attraction to youths during this period and Durham Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer offered no objection to the proposal.
- 12 The area proposed for the cycle storage shelter is currently used to store pupil cycles and the shelter would provide a more secure and sheltered arrangement without affecting the amenities of surrounding residents. It would be located 34m from the nearest residential property at Leander Avenue.

Recommendation and Reasons

- 13 The proposed shelters are required as part of the School's Travel Plan that is intended to help encourage pupils to use alternative modes of transport to school in line with wider transport and health initiatives. They would not be prominent outside the school grounds and would have limited overall affect on the appearance and amenities of the area. I therefore **recommend** that planning permission be granted for the following reason, subject to a relevant condition concerning the colour of the shelters.

The proposed structures by reason of their purpose, scale, location and colour would not significantly detract from the appearance of the existing school buildings and grounds or the amenities of the surrounding residents.

No Departure

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

Contact:	John Byers	Tel: 0191 383 3408
Local Members:	Councillors Cordon and May	

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