

Planning Committee Report – LA01/2017/0908/F Old Dreen Primary School, 339 Townhill Road, Rasharkin	24th January 2018
PLANNING COMMITTEE	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Protecting and Enhancing our Environment and Assets
Outcome	Pro-active decision making which protects the natural features, characteristics and integrity of the Borough
Lead Officer	Principal Planning Officer
Cost: (If applicable)	N/a

**Old Dreen Primary School, 339
Townhill Road
Rasharkin**

LA01/2017/0908/F

24th January 2018

<u>No:</u>	LA01/2017/0908/F	<u>Ward:</u>	RASHARKIN
<u>App Type:</u>	Full Planning		
<u>Address:</u>	Old Dreen Primary School, 339 Townhill Road, Rasharkin		
<u>Proposal:</u>	Proposed economical replacement of existing primary school with a dwelling using design previously approved under LA01/2015/0754/F		
<u>Con Area:</u>	No	<u>Valid Date:</u>	17.07.2017
<u>Listed Building Grade:</u>	N/a		
Agent:	2020 Architects		
Applicant:	Michael Hasson, 70 Tamlaght Road, Rasharkin Ballymoney		
Objections:	0	Petitions of Objection:	0
Support:	0	Petitions of Support:	0

Drawings and additional information are available to view on the Planning Portal- www.planningni.gov.uk

1 RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Committee has taken into consideration and agrees with the reasons for the recommendation set out in section 9 and the policies and guidance in sections 7 and 8 and resolves to **REFUSE** planning permission subject to the refusal reason set out in section 10.

2 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is located roadside at Townhill Road Rasharkin. The site accommodates an old school building which is linear in style with stone walls, red brick detail and a roof which has been stripped off slates. The existing building is fairly large and linear in form extending to approximately 25 metres long. The entire site comprises hardstanding and is enclosed within a perimeter wall. The existing building is quite vernacular in terms of proportion and fenestration detail.
- 2.2 The site is located within the rural remainder as designated by the NAP 2016 and also falls within the hazard constraint area of the north-

west gas pipeline. The area is generally rural in character with a small number of individual rural dwellings and farm groupings.

3 RELEVANT HISTORY

LA01/2015/0754/F

Old Dreen Primary School, 339 Townhill Road, Rasharkin. Proposal to Extend and Renovate Existing Building for new use as Dwelling House including Garage.

Approved 11.03.2016

4 THE APPLICATION

- 4.1 The economical replacement of existing primary school with a dwelling using design previously approved under LA01/2015/0754/F

5 PUBLICITY & CONSULTATIONS

5.1 External

None

5.2 Internal

Environmental Health Department: No objections.

NI Water: No objections

DFI Roads: No objections.

Health & Safety Executive Northern Ireland: Consultation required with GNI (UK)Ltd.

GNI (UK) Ltd: No objections

6 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Section 45(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires that all applications must have regard to the local plan, so far as material to the application, and all other material considerations. Section 6(4) states that in making any determination where regard is to be had to the local development plan, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 6.2 The development plan is:

- Northern Area Plan 2016 (NAP)

- 6.3 The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) is a material consideration.
- 6.4 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) is a material consideration. As set out in the SPPS, until such times as a new local plan strategy is adopted, councils will apply specified retained operational policies.
- 6.5 Due weight should be given to the relevant policies in the development plan.
- 6.6 All material considerations and any policy conflicts are identified in the “Considerations and Assessment” section of the report.

7.0 RELEVANT POLICIES & GUIDANCE

The Northern Area Plan 2016

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

Planning Policy Statement 3: Access, Movement and Parking

Planning Policy Statement 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside

8.0 CONSIDERATIONS & ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The main considerations in the determination of this application relates to: the principle of development; design; integration and character, and access.

Principle of Development

- 8.2 The principle of development must be considered having regard to the SPPS and PPS policy documents before mentioned.
- 8.3 The SPPS allows for a number of circumstances for a dwelling in the countryside.
- 8.4 PPS 21 sets out the planning policies for development in the countryside. Policy CTY1 of PPS21 outlines the types of development

which in principle are considered to be acceptable in the countryside and that will contribute to the aims of sustainable development.

- 8.5 The proposal is for the replacement of a school house with a dwelling. The SPPS does not permit the replacement of former schools for dwellings, only their conversion where it involves minimal intervention.
- 8.6 The direction of the SPPS is that through the conversion and re-use of locally important buildings in the countryside, their upkeep would be secured and the building retained for future generations.
- 8.7 Policy CTY 3 'Replacement dwellings' of PPS 21, permits the replacement of redundant non-residential buildings with a single dwelling, where the redevelopment proposed would bring significant environmental benefits and provided that the building is not listed or otherwise makes an important contribution to the heritage, appearance or character of the locality.
- 8.8 The previous planning permission was granted for the conversion of the school house into a dwelling as it was classified as a suitable local building of merit for retention. To approve its replacement would be contrary to that decision and planning policy. Under Policy CTY 3 its replacement is not acceptable, the existing building by reason of its traditional design and historical associations makes an important contribution to the heritage, appearance and character of the locality and its redevelopment would not bring significant environmental benefits.
- 8.9 The Agent has argued that Policy CTY4 – the Conversion and Reuse of Existing Buildings, justification and amplification text refers to Policy CTY 3 for replacement. As discussed above in Paragraphs 8.7 & 8.8 the proposal does not meet with Policy CTY 3
- 8.10 The Agent has advised that it is not economical to convert the school house into a dwelling. Though structurally sound, the costs to upgrade the stone walls are unsustainable. The agent also argues that the existing building will match the previously approved and the costs will be significantly reduced for their clients making the project tenable. The Agent also advises that the proposal is similar to a previous application presented to the Planning Committee. The previous application was LA01/2015/0862/F 'Proposed replacement hall with dwelling' 200m South of junction at Calhome Road and Drumrane Road, Limavady. The Planning Officials recommended refusal on the

basis that the existing building was not eligible for replacement as there would not be significant environmental benefits. However, the Planning Committee took an alternative view for the reasons outlines below:

- (i) The existing building is currently unsound and is not structurally intact
- (ii) Renovating the existing building would not make an important contribution to the heritage, appearance and character of the locality
- (iii) Replacing the existing building would provide significant environmental benefits

8.12 Planning policy as mentioned in the preceding paragraphs does not permit the replacement of such a building where there are no significant environmental benefits. Works have commenced on site to convert the building to a dwelling as approved. The costs should have been a factor in the decision of the developer at the time of development and there is no allowance to allow replacement due to costs under Policy CTY 3.

Design

8.13 The design which was approved under the previous application, is acceptable. It proposes reducing the size of the windows on the main elevation and creating a first floor with three front elevation zinc finished dormers. Similar dormers are positioned on the rear elevation of the main body of the house while a further single storey "L" shaped rear projection is proposed which includes an integral garage. The footprint of the rear return is substantial and incorporates a large portion of the site extending to the rear boundary. However, the single storey design ensures that it does not dominate the roadside building to an unacceptable degree and does not have an unacceptable visual impact within the locality. The design is based on the conversion of the locally important building.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 No significant environmental benefits have been demonstrated for demolishing the building and rebuilding it. Therefore the building should be retained and renovated as previously approved under application LA01/2015/0754/F. There are no other compelling material considerations to justify departing from the policy requirements. The proposal is contrary to Policy CTY3 of PPS21 and Paragraph 6.73 of the SPPS. Refusal is recommended.

10 Refusal reasons

10.1 The proposal is contrary to Para 6.73 of the Strategic Planning Policy for Northern Ireland (SPPS) and Policy CTY1 and CTY3 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside as the non-residential building which it is proposed to replace makes an important contribution to the heritage, appearance and character of the locality and no significant environmental benefits would be brought about by its redevelopment.

Site location

