

Planning Committee Report	23rd November 2016
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

LA01/2015/0967/F

Full Application

Development of new school for Rossmar Co-Educational special school for 100 pupils on existing school site with school meals accommodation, associated playing grass pitch and playing areas, along with car parking, service area, landscaping and site works.

23rd November 2016

<u>No:</u>	LA01/2015/0967/F	<u>Ward:</u>	Coolessan
<u>App Type:</u>	Full Application		
<u>Address:</u>	Rossmar School 2 Ballyquin Road, Limavady		
<u>Proposal:</u>	Development of new school for Rossmar Co-Educational special school for 100 pupils on existing school site with school meals accommodation, associated playing grass pitch and playing areas, along with car parking, service area, landscaping and site works.		
<u>Con Area:</u>	N/A	<u>Valid Date:</u>	27 th November 2015
<u>Listed Building Grade:</u>	N/A		
Agent:	Samuel Stevenson & Sons 4 Greenwood Avenue Belfast BT4 3HR		
Applicant:	Education Authority Western Region		
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

1.0 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 section 7 & 8 and resolves to **APPROVE** full planning permission.

2.0 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION & CHARACTER OF AREA

- 2.1 The site comprises the existing Rossmar School and associated lands at the junction of Ballyquin Road and Greystone Road, Limavady. The main school buildings are located in the northern corner of the site while the western and southern portion of the site are dominated by mature trees, open space with mature trees and playing fields. The boundary is defined by a 2m fence.
- 2.2 The site is located within Limavady as defined by the Northern Area Plan 2016. A large portion of the site is within the

Greystone Local Landscape Policy Area which is designation LYL 08. The surrounding area comprises a concentration of education and community uses and residential units. There is a residential development to the north which abuts the site and consists of two block of apartments which are gable ended to the boundary fence, with a central parking court. To the south is further residential development consisting of terraced dwellings and apartments.

3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

LA01/2016/0422/F - 2 Ballyquin Road, Limavady - Proposed new 3 classroom school building with associated administration facilities – Granted 28.09.2016

4.0 THE APPLICATION

This is a full application for the development of new school for Rossmar Co-Educational special school for 100 pupils on existing school site with school meals accommodation, associated playing grass pitch and playing areas, along with car parking, service area, landscaping and site works.

The proposal falls within the major category of development and as such the applicant entered into PACC (pre application community consultation) with the submission of a PAN (Proposal of Application Notice), organisation of a public event, with appropriate community notification and advertisement. The applicant submitted a pre-application community consultation report with the application which documents any comments raised at the public meeting.

5.0 PUBLICITY & CONSULTATIONS

External:

5.1 Neighbours:

No objections have been received.

Internal:

5.2 NIEA– No objection.

Transport NI – No objection subject to conditions.

Environmental Health – No objection.

NI Water – No objection.

Rivers Agency – No Objection.

6.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Section 45(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires that all applications must have regard to the local development 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

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

Northern Area Plan 2016

Strategic Planning Policy Statement

PPS 3 - Access, Movement and Parking

DCAN 15 – Vehicular Access Standards

Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland

8.0 CONSIDERATIONS & ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The main considerations in the determination of this application are; the principle of development; the impact on the Local Landscape Policy Area; the impact on adjacent residential properties; design and other consultations.

Principle of development

- 8.2 The proposal is for a replacement school building which is to be located in the southern portion of the site. The existing school will be demolished and will be replaced with a playing pitch and car parking area, reversing the existing layout of the site.
- 8.3 The building comprises three parallel linear sections which are interconnected by a central link. This forms a series of courtyards which serve as playgrounds and amenity space. A belt of trees to the south of the site and several more across the site will be lost as a result of the development. While the main belt of trees which define the boundary of the site along Ballyquin Road and the southern site boundary are to remain, a total of 27 trees are to be removed.
- 8.4 The main policy consideration is outlined in the Northern Area Plan 2016, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. While there is no specific policy in relation to education infrastructure there is a presumption in favour of education, health, community and cultural facilities. The principle of a replacement school within the curtilage of an existing school is acceptable. The proposal provides modern a co-educational special school to meet the needs of the area and as such is supported in principle by policy.

Impact on Local Landscape Policy Area

- 8.5 Policy ENV 3 of the Northern Area Plan 2016 states that development that would result in the loss of trees, hedges or other features that contribute to the character of the landscape, or are of nature conservation value, will not be permitted unless provision is made for appropriate replacement planting and the creation of new features.

- 8.6 The western portion of the site is dominated by a belt of mature trees comprising mature beech and scots pine which are a defining characteristic of the Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) designation which covers this portion of the site.
- 8.7 It has been recommended by an arboriculturalist's report that five of the trees within the site should be removed due to their condition. A further six trees are to be removed to facilitate the access arrangements for construction and approximately 14 of the less prominent trees within the site are to be removed to facilitate the new school building. In considering the impact on the LLPA, consultation was carried out with the Tree Officer. They have recorded no objection to the proposal stating; it is clearly evident when considering the design process and level/content of the information provided that effort has been made to seek the maximum retention of trees on the site. The level of retained trees on site along with the landscaping proposed should help maintain the attractive local landscape setting of the LLPA on the site. It is therefore concluded that the proposal is not at variance with policy ENV3 of the Northern Area Plan 2016.

Impact on Residential Properties

- 8.8 In considering the impact of the proposed development on the neighbouring residents one must consider the fact that reversing the existing site layout brings the school buildings closer to the residential development to the south, albeit the residential units to the north are afforded a greater separation distance. The playing fields which also present an opportunity for noise and general disturbance have also been rearranged. On balance, any impact on neighbouring amenity would be offset given that the layout presents a reversal of the existing arrangement. The proposed layout of the building also creates a series of courtyards which serve as play areas. This contains potential noise generating events within built form which would act as an acoustic barrier. The layout also allows for the ongoing use of the existing school during the construction phase. No objections were received from neighbouring properties as a result of advertisement or neighbour notifications. In conclusion, the proposal is not considered to have a negative impact on the adjacent residential properties.

Design

- 8.9 With regards visual impact the proposed building replaces a two storey 1960's school building. The proposed building is single storey and although the footprint is larger than existing, the arrangement of the parallel blocks and interconnecting link reduces the overall sprawl of the building.
- 8.10 The design consists of a series of single storey units with a mono-pitched roof design. The overall appearance of the building is lifted with a series of bay windows with zinc cladding. The entrance is articulated by angling one of the linear blocks to provide a wider courtyard which lines up to the main access road. In general the building is unassuming and does not present a significant visual impact. The low profile form and the mature trees which define the site boundary limit public views of the building.
- 8.11 The design requires the provision of an acoustic fence to the main road. The Agent has indicated that this is a requirement of the education authority.
- 8.12 In addition, the main boundary fence is to be increased from 2.4 metres as existing to 3 metres. While Planning has raised some concern at the scale of the fence relative to the public footpath, a case has been made that a higher fence is a requirement given the specific needs of some of the pupils within the school. When considered in the context of the needs of pupils, the height of the existing fence and the scale of the mature trees which provide a backdrop to the fence, the increase in height of the boundary treatment by 0.6m will not present a demonstrable harm to the visual amenity of the area.
- 8.13 The new building is acceptable and will not detract from the character and visual amenity of the townscape or the surrounding area and is appropriate in terms of design, scale and use of materials and complies with policy DES2 of the PSRNI.

Consultations

- 8.14 NIEA Water Management Unit and Natural Environment Division were consulted and have not raised any objection to the proposal.

8.15 River Agency were consulted to assess the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage assessment which was provided as part of the application and concluded that they have no objection to the proposal and accept the findings of the FRA.

8.16 Transport NI, Northern Ireland Water and Environmental Services have all recorded no objection to the proposal.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 The proposal is considered acceptable in this location having regard to the Northern Area Plan 2016, and other material considerations, including the SPPS. The site comprises an existing two storey school building which was erected in the 1960's. The principle of a replacement school is acceptable. The proposed arrangement reverses the existing layout in a move which enhances the relationship of the building to the playing fields and associated lands and affords the school the ability to conduct a phased decant on completion of the new building.

9.2 The design and general appearance of the new building is acceptable and careful consideration has been given to the amenity of neighbouring properties and the defining characteristics of the LLPA. Approval is recommended.

10.0 Conditions

10.1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: As required by Section 61 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

10.2 All site works affecting retained trees shall be undertaken in accordance with Arboriculture Method Statement and Planting Plan received 16th November 2015 and BS5837 (2012) 'Trees in Relation to Construction'. The fencing must be in place before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of the approved development and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be

stored or placed within any area fenced in accordance with this condition. The ground levels within the fenced off areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made or any other works carried out, materials stored or fires lit.

Reason: To ensure the retention of trees and to the ensure continuity of the landscape amenity afforded by these trees.

10.3 Prior to any works commencing on site (including site preparation and clearance) a European Protected Species (EPS) License must be obtained from the NIEA Wildlife Licensing Team.

Reason: To protect roosting bats

10.4 Prior to any works on site a minimum of three bat boxes must be erected on site. The location of these bat boxes must be shown on plans and agreed in writing by NIEA Wildlife Licensing Team as well as the exact specifications of the boxes to be erected on site.

Reason: To protect bats



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101

Playing Fields