

Committee: **Regulatory
Planning Committee**

Date: **10 December 2008**

Report by: **Director of Transport and Environment**

Proposal: **Proposed oak framed building to create a multi-use
learning resource area.**

Site Address: **Nutley Primary School, High Street, Nutley.**

Applicant: **Director of Children's Services**

Application No. **WD/2742/CC**

Key Issues: **I. Siting and Design**
 **II. Effect on the High Weald Area of Outstanding
 Natural Beauty and the Archaeologically
 Sensitive Area**
 III. Effect on Residential Amenity
 IV. Waste Minimisation

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. To grant planning permission subject to conditions as set out in paragraph 8.1 of the report.**
-

CONSIDERATION BY DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

1. The Site and Surroundings

1.1 Nutley Primary School is located in the northern part of the village within the development boundary, approximately 7 kilometres north-west of Uckfield. It lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and within an Archaeologically Sensitive Area. There are about 100 pupils on roll.

1.2 The School occupies a small, roughly rectangular site on the eastern side of the A22. It is situated on ground that slopes gently down from north to south and from west to east. The main building lies at the front (west) of the site, with a playground behind. There is no playing field provision but the School owns a playing field on the opposite side of the A22. There is no provision on site for vehicles.

1.3 The school site is bordered to the south and east by private roads which are also public rights of way. The closest residential property to the site

is “Fermain”, School Lane; about 15 metres to the south. Residential properties also lie on higher ground to the north. There are a number of mature trees on the site’s northern boundary, and several other trees in the vicinity of the site to the south and east.

1.4 The original School building, which fronts the A22, is a two-storey, multiple pitched roof Victorian structure with sandstone-faced walls and white painted window frames. There is a substantial red-brick, pitched roof extension to the rear, also of two storeys. A sandstone wall about 1 metre high defines the site’s front (western) and southern boundaries, and other boundaries are secured by a mixture of timber and chain-link fencing with some vegetation cover.

1.5 Due to the sloping nature of the site, the playground lies about 2 metres lower than the ground floor of the adjacent School building. It is accessed from the building via a raised walkway and steps attached to the building’s rear elevation. The playground occupies an area of hard-standing of about 480 metres²; including a wood-chip surfaced play area in the southern part containing various structures including a play-house and pergola.

2. The Proposal

2.1 It is proposed to construct an oak-framed, two-storey building at the rear of the site, in the south-western part of the playground and about 3.5 metres from the site’s southern boundary. The building is a stand-alone structure rather than an extension, but it would be attached to the existing raised walkway on the rear elevation of the existing building. It would provide 55 metres² of additional internal floor-space, which would be used for teaching purposes.

2.2 Only a small part of the lower floor of the proposed building would be enclosed, with the majority left open. The upper floor would be supported by 2.1 metres high stilts raised from the playground, which would enable the accommodation on this floor to be at the same level as ground-floor accommodation within the existing adjacent School building. The open area beneath the upper floor, measuring about 40 metres², would be carpeted with a suitable safety surface and used as a sheltered play area. The contained area on the lower floor, measuring about 11 metres², would be used for storage.

2.3 The building has been designed in the style of a barn or timber outbuilding. It is proposed to be shiplap-clad in natural stained timber, with the roof tiled with concrete plain tiles to match the roof of the existing building. It has a pitched, hipped roof containing 8 roof lights and a timber and glass door on each of the eastern and western elevations. The main access to the building would be from the School’s existing building and would be level and suitable for disabled people. An emergency access from the playground would be provided by steps on the eastern elevation. It is proposed to use the area between the proposed building and the site’s southern boundary as a storage area for bicycles.

2.4 The proposed hours for construction working are from 8am to 6pm on Mondays to Fridays only, and the applicant anticipates construction would last 8 to 10 weeks and the building completed by spring 2009.

3. Site History

3.1. 2001 – Granted - WD/2013/CC - Alterations and extension to replace existing hall, mobile classroom and lavatory block.

3.2 1998 - Granted - WD/1880/CC - Change of use of School House from residential to educational.

3.3 1997 – Granted – WD/1781/CC - The provision of a single mobile classroom and the removal of a resources room.

4. Consultations and Representations

4.1. Wealden District Council – raises objections to the proposal on the grounds of design and siting, although it acknowledges the need for additional class space. The District Council considers the elevated level and detachment of the classroom from the main building would result in the proposed structure being perceived as a stand-alone building with a poor relationship to the School. This would be further compounded by the use of contrasting materials and design. Concern is also expressed with the functional relationship of the structure and the District Council considers that a structure of the size and permanence proposed should be integrated into the main building in order to optimise the limited open space around the site and be fully accessible at all times.

4.2. Maresfield Parish Council – recommends approval providing that mitigating measures such as opaque windows or blinds are installed to preserve the privacy of the neighbouring property.

4.3. Sussex Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor – notes that the location is a low risk crime area and assumes that the new building would be linked to the School's existing intruder alarm system. Some concern is raised that, as the outside stairs would offer unrestricted access to the upper levels on both the proposed and existing buildings, the doors and windows on that level could become vulnerable and should be treated as if on the ground floor. Doors and windows should conform to specified standards, any glazing should be laminated, and all opening windows should be fitted with restrictors.

4.4. Local Residents – no representations have been received.

5. The Development Plan policies of relevance to this decision are:

5.1. East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011: Policies: S1 (j) (AONB and Archaeology), EN2, EN3 (AONB).

5.2. East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Waste Local Plan 2006: Policy WLP11 (Reduction, Re-Use and Recycling during Demolition and Design, and Construction of New Developments).

5.3 Wealden Local Plan 1998: Policies: EN27 (1, 2, 3, 5) (Design), EN6 (High Weald AONB).

5.4. Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan 2005: Policies: BE1 (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8) (Design), NE5 (High Weald AONB).

6. Considerations

Siting and Design

6.1 Policies EN27 (1) and BE1 (1-3) of the Wealden Local Plans require new development to respect the character of adjoining development in terms of scale, form, site coverage, density, design, the use of materials and landscaping and, where appropriate, promote local distinctiveness. Policies EN27 (3 and 5) and BE1 (6 and 8) seek to ensure new developments provide a satisfactory environment for the future occupants, including adequate provision for daylight and sunlight; and have regard to crime prevention measures.

6.2 The building is proposed at the rear of the site where it would only be readily visible from the private road/public footpath on the site's southern boundary, and from nearby properties. It is, however, set back from site boundaries and of a smaller scale than existing buildings on site, and therefore would not appear overbearing when viewed from outside the site. Although the District Council has expressed concern about the building's detachment from the main School building, I consider the building is situated as close as possible to the main building and is connected via the existing walkway. Whilst the new building is of a different design to the main building, I do not consider this unacceptable due to the existing mix of architectural styles and building materials in the locality, including on the School site itself. Some continuity with the existing building would be provided by the proposed pitched roof in matching tiles. I consider the design of the building is appropriate in the village setting, and given the limited opportunity for public view I consider the aesthetics of the building acceptable.

6.3 The building's proposed position within the playground would result in some loss of open play-space. This has been minimised and compensated for by the proposed use of the space beneath the upper floor as a sheltered play area. There are constraints to any new building because of the limited area of the site, and I am not convinced that any alterations to the design or layout could further maximise open space provision. The School has confirmed that the new covered area would present a valuable facility, as currently the site lacks a covered play area for the youngest pupils; a shortfall identified by Ofsted. The School considers that the new play area would be sufficiently lit by the open sides of the structure, and supervision requirements would be unaltered. It appears that the School has carefully considered the design of

the facility to meet its specific needs, and I consider the proposal acceptable in terms of usability. Additionally, the applicant has confirmed it has considered the advice received from Sussex Police concerning crime prevention, as noted in paragraph 4.3 above.

Effect on the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Archaeologically Sensitive Area

6.4 Policies S1 (j), EN2 and EN3 of the Structure Plan, and EN6 and NE5 of the Wealden Local Plans seek to conserve and enhance landscape quality and character in AONB's and do not permit development that would involve change or damage to their character or qualities. Policy NE5 allows for small-scale development within the High Weald AONB where it meets the social and economic needs of local communities, and provided it is consistent with the purpose of the AONB designation. Policy S1 (j) of the Structure Plan seeks to protect areas of recognised archaeological importance.

6.5 In this case the proposed building is of a small scale and would only be visible within the site's immediate locality and would have no significant impact on the wider AONB landscape. I consider the proposed barn-style design and materials are appropriate in the area and would conserve the village character. The building would provide required teaching and play space for the School and is therefore supported by Policy NE5. In terms of archaeology, the scale of the ground disturbance involved in construction is likely to be small, but in light of the archaeological potential I am recommending a condition to allow appropriate access for the County Archaeologist during construction works. This should ensure that any archaeological resource is appropriately managed and the proposal does not conflict with Policy S1 (j).

Effect on Residential Amenity

6.6 Policies EN27 (2) and BE1 (7) of the Wealden Local Plans seek to ensure that development has no unacceptable adverse impact on the privacy and amenities of adjoining developments and the neighbourhood by reason of scale, height, form, noise and traffic movements.

6.7 The proposed building would be no closer to the property nearest to the School, 'Fermain', than the existing main building. At present there are existing views of 'Fermain' gained from the raised walkway to the rear of the School buildings. The new building would not involve a loss of privacy from overlooking due to its separation from the site boundary and the angle of the windows in the slanted roof elevation, which restricts outward views except perhaps, if the windows were open. Properties to the north would not be affected by overlooking due to a separation distance of about 25 metres and a line of mature trees on the School's northern boundary. Therefore, while I acknowledge the Parish Council's concern with protecting amenity, I do not consider that measures to obscure the windows are necessary or would offer any benefit.

6.8 The proposed use of the building would be associated with the normal operation of the School. Therefore, on completion of the construction period the proposal would not alter the impact on amenity in terms of noise, disturbance or traffic movements.

6.9 The applicant has confirmed that the method of accessing the site for construction personnel has not yet been determined, but it is likely to involve the temporary removal of some fencing to the playground on the site's southern boundary and possibly also a short section of the existing low stone wall. Vehicular access to the site would not be provided, and vehicles are likely to park and unload materials at the front of the School. Construction activities are likely to be relatively minor, as much of the oak-framed building is to be manufactured off site with the majority of on site construction taking place within the building. Therefore, I consider construction is unlikely to cause unacceptable nuisance or disturbance to local residents, subject to a condition limiting construction activities to the hours proposed. However, as the final details of the construction process are not yet available I am recommending a condition to require details of construction access and any provision for reinstatement of the affected site boundary. I consider this would ensure that the proposal has limited effect on residential amenity, and consequently, it accords with the Policies above.

Waste Minimisation

6.10 Policy WLP11 of the Waste Local Plan requires development proposals to have regard to the need to minimise, re-use and recycle waste generated during construction. A Waste Minimisation Statement has been submitted with the application which confirms that waste arising from construction would be minimal because of the design of the building as a stand-alone structure on pad foundations. Construction materials would be sourced locally from renewable sources wherever possible. I consider the applicant has appropriately addressed the need to minimise waste, and the proposal accords with Policy WLP11 of the Waste Local Plan in this respect.

7. Conclusion and reasons for approval

7.1 In accordance with Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the decision on this application should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.2 This is a small scale development which would provide valuable teaching space and sheltered play space for the School. Given the building's proposed position at the rear of the site and the limited opportunity for public views, the design is acceptable. The siting of the building is also acceptable given the constrained nature of the site in terms of space available for new development. The building would have no adverse effect on the High Weald AONB and the recommended condition should ensure that any archaeological resource uncovered during construction is appropriately managed. The

recommended conditions relating to the construction process should ensure there is no unacceptable effect on residential amenity.

7.3 The proposal, therefore, complies with Policies S1 (j), EN2 and EN3 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011, Policy WLP11 of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Waste Local Plan 2006, Policies EN27 (1, 2, 3, 5) and EN6 of the Wealden Local Plan 1998 and Policies BE1 (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8) and NE5 of the Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan 2005.

7.4 There are no other material considerations and the decision should be taken in accordance with the development plan.

8. Recommendation

8.1 To recommend the Planning Committee to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. Construction activities associated with the development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than between the hours of 0800 and 1800 on Mondays to Fridays inclusive and not at any time on Saturdays, Sundays, Bank and Public Holidays unless otherwise agreed first in writing by the Director of Transport and Environment.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of properties in the vicinity of the site and to comply with Policy EN27 (2) of the Wealden Local Plan 1998.

3. Development shall not commence until the following details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Transport and Environment:

(a) The proposed method(s) of accessing the site and loading/unloading materials to facilitate construction of the building.

(b) The extent of any existing boundary fence or wall, to be removed to facilitate construction access.

(c) Provision for the reinstatement of any boundary wall or fence removed under section (b).

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details which shall be implemented in full.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of properties in the vicinity of the site and to comply with Policy EN27 (2) of the Wealden Local Plan 1998.

4. Access shall be given at all reasonable times during construction work to any archaeologist, authorised by the Director of Transport and Environment, to observe the excavations and prepare archaeological records. At least three weeks notice in writing shall be given to the Director of Transport and Environment of the date when construction work is likely to start.

Reason: To allow any items of archaeological interest to be appropriately managed, and to comply with Policy S1 (j) of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011.

5. The roof tiles to be used in the construction of the building hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing adjacent School building.

Reason: To ensure the appropriate appearance of the development in the area in accordance with Policy EN27 (1) of the Wealden Local Plan 1998.

INFORMATIVE

1. To applicant is requested to minimise as far as possible construction vehicle movements to and from the site during School drop-off and pick-up times, in order to reduce the potential for adverse traffic impacts arising from construction taking place alongside the normal operation of the School.

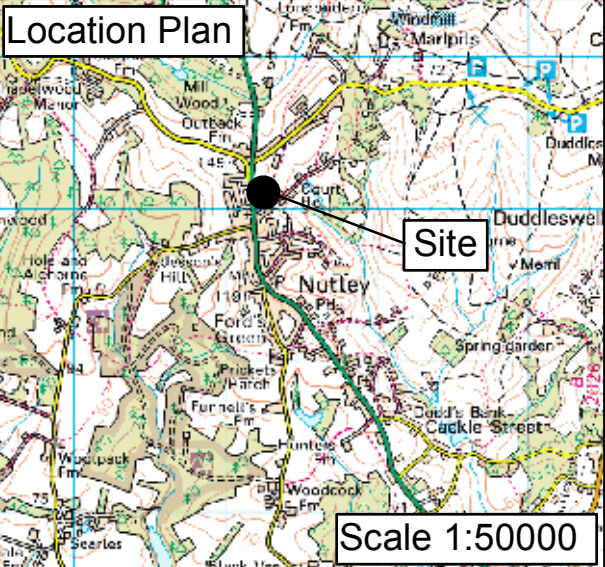
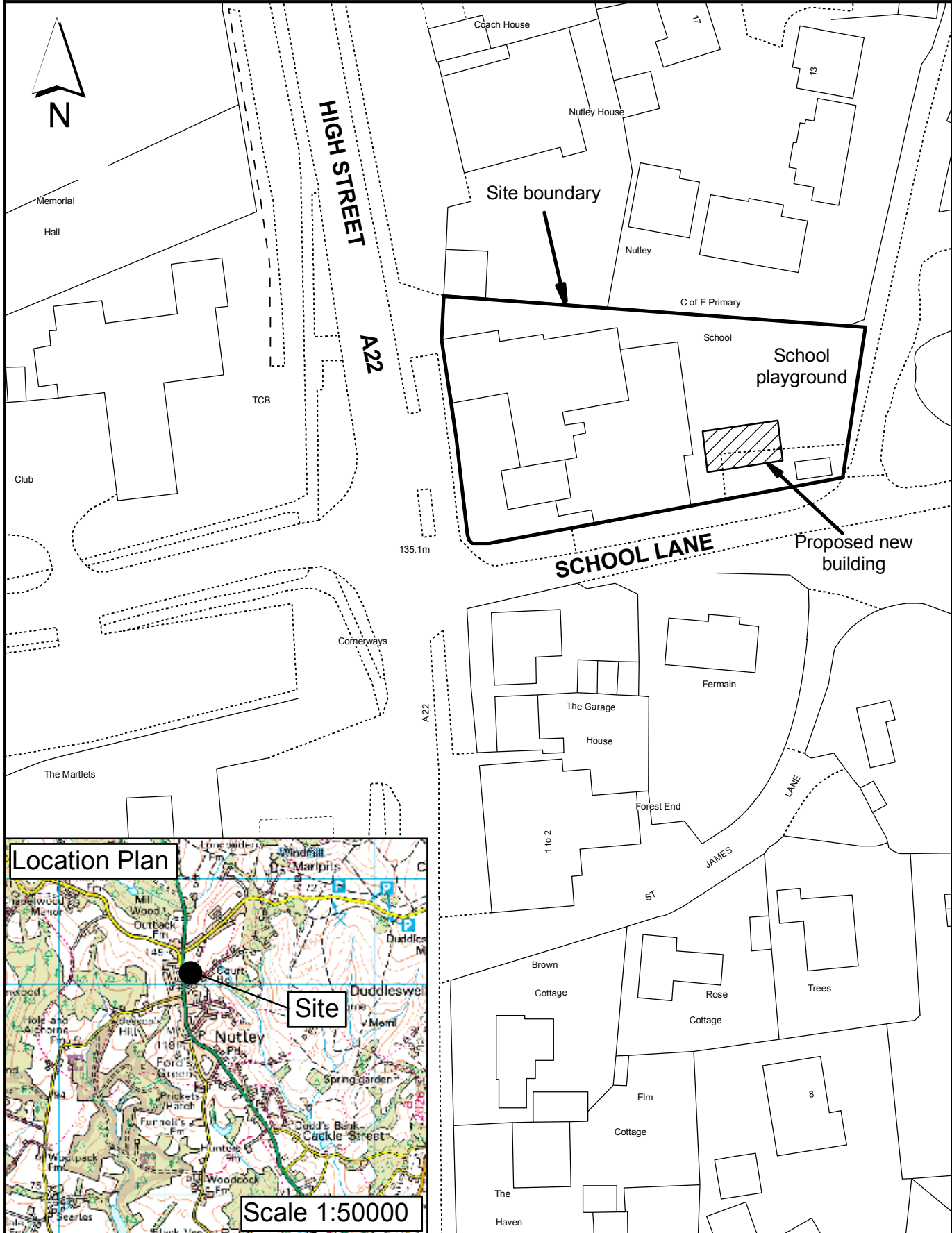
RUPERT CLUBB
Director of Transport & Environment
2 December 2008

Contact Officer: Holly Bonds Tel. No. 01273 481595
Local Member: Councillor Tony Reid

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Structure Plan 1991-2011
East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Waste Local Plan 2006
Wealden Local Plan 1998
Non-Statutory Wealden Local Plan 2005.

WD/2742/CC



Scale 1:750

Rupert Clubb
BEng (Hons) CEng MICE
Director, Transport and Environment
East Sussex County Council

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. East Sussex County Council, 100019601, 2008