

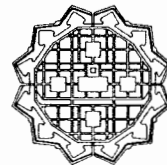
Stockton Heath Primary School

***Proposed rebuild of Stockton Heath
Primary School***

Planning Supporting Statement

28 JUN 2005

Prepared by



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Supporting Statement has been prepared by Paul Butler Associates on behalf of Stockton Heath Primary School to accompany the resubmitted full planning application for the proposed rebuild of Stockton Heath Primary School, Egerton Street, Stockton Heath.
- 1.2 The planning application is for the redevelopment of the site to create new school buildings and an all weather sports pitch, including temporary mobile classrooms during the construction period, following the demolition of the existing school buildings.
- 1.3 This Planning Supporting Statement is one of a series of four documents produced in support of the resubmitted planning application. It considers the reasons for the refusal of the original planning application (Application Number: 2006/07415) by Warrington Borough Council Development Control Committee on 20 March 2006, before evaluating the resubmitted scheme against the relevant national and local planning policy context and justifying the need to demolish the existing school buildings.
- 1.4 The other documents in the series are: a Planning Design & Access Statement, which demonstrates that the proposed scheme is in accordance with national and local planning guidance and has utilised a thoughtful design process and a sustainable approach to access; a Strategic Vision and Background Information Statement, which justifies the educational need for the new school building; and an Education Vision, produced by Stockton Heath Primary School to illustrate the aims, requirements and desires of the school, its staff and its pupils.

2. Reasons for Refusal of the Original Application

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- 2.1 The original application was refused planning permission as it was considered to contravene of Policy BH5 '*Locally Important Buildings and Structures of Architectural or Historic Interest*' of the Warrington Unitary Development Plan.
- 2.2 It was argued that the proposed development would result in the demolition of a locally listed building that adds value to the local scene as a result of its architectural or historic

character. In addition, it was considered that the reasons provided in support of the demolition of the existing school building and the proposed new development did not clearly demonstrate the justification for the removal of the existing structure.

- 2.3 It is the purpose of this document to consider this reason for refusal and to address the Development Control Committee member's concerns by demonstrating that the demolition of the existing school building, and the subsequent construction of the replacement building, is fully justified.

3. National and Local Planning Context

- 3.1 It is not the intention of this statement to be repetitive of the other reports prepared in support of this application, and in particular the Planning Design and Access Statement, but rather to evaluate the proposed new school building against the relevant national and local planning policy context.

- 3.2 The Development Control committee report produced by Warrington Borough Council for the original planning application made reference to numerous national and local planning policies, including PPS1 *'Delivering Sustainable Development'*, PPG15 *'Planning and the Historic Environment'*, PPG16 *'Archaeology and Planning'* and policies contained with the Warrington Unitary Development Plan (adopted January 2006).

- 3.3 The committee report recommended that the application be approved as it was considered that the scheme successfully addressed and satisfied all the relevant local planning policies, including those relevant to: design (policies DCS1 *'Development control strategy'*, HOU13 *'Privacy and daylight in housing development'*) and DCS4 *'Design statements'*, transport (policies LUT2 *'Transport priorities in development control strategy'*, LUT11 *'School travel plans'* and LUT20 *'parking'*), the natural environment (Policy GRN2 *'Environmental protection and enhancement'* and the historic environment (policies BH5 *'Locally important buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest'*, BH6 *'Designation and review of Conservation Areas'* and BH14 *'Archaeological evaluations'*).

- 3.4 The design and specifications of this resubmitted application are largely unchanged from the previous application and therefore the scheme continues to adhere to and satisfy all

relevant national and local planning policies. This includes Policy BH5, which can be held accountable for the refusal of the original application. It is this policy, therefore, which is considered in greater detail below.

4. Justification for Demolition of the Existing School

- 4.1 This section considers the designation of statutory and locally listed buildings, before illustrating the need for a new school building and demonstrating how this need outweighs any considerations about retaining the existing building.
- 4.2 Due to the fundamental role that Policy BH5 '*Locally Important Buildings And Structures Of Architectural Or Historic Interest*' of the Warrington UDP played in the refusal of the original planning application, it is listed below in full for clarification purposes:

Policy BH5

'Buildings and structures which, although not of national listed building status, are valued for their contribution to the local scene as good examples of local architectural styles or for their historic associations, will be included on a local list produced by the Council. Development proposals likely to have an adverse effect on a building or structure included on the Local List will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the development which outweigh the need to safeguard the particular local architectural or historic value involved, and that any damage is the minimum necessary to enable the development to proceed.

To be included on the local list, a building should be substantially unaltered and retain the majority of its original features and either:

- 1. Be a good example of a particular local building type, craftsmanship, architectural quality, style or detailing, or*
- 2. Display physical evidence of periods of local economic, technical or social significance, well-known local people or historic events'*

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Local Listing

- 4.3 Stockton Heath Primary School was officially opened in 1910 and its design and architectural style is archetypal of an educational establishment constructed at that time. The school is included on Warrington Borough Council's Schedule of Buildings and Structures of Locally Important And Historic Interest: 'the local list', due to its contribution to the local scene.
- 4.4 Buildings that are locally listed are not considered to be of such special architectural or historic interest which merits inclusion on the statutory list of listed buildings maintained by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), but are however of such local architectural or historical value that they are considered appropriate for non-statutory protection.
- 4.5 The inclusion of a building on the local list does not convey any special privileges. When a planning application is submitted, the local listing status will be one of the material considerations to be considered, but the buildings do not enjoy the same degree of protection that applies to the statutory list.
- 4.6 Inclusion on the local list does not remove any permitted development rights and indeed a locally listed building has the same development rights as a non locally listed building in the same locality. Therefore, in accordance with Part 31 of the Town And Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, Stockton Heath Primary School could be demolished without the need for planning permission.

Statutory Listing

- 4.7 It is understood that a number of applications have been made to the Secretary of State to add Stockton Heath Primary School to the statutory list. Following an appraisal of the school by English Heritage, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State, the application for spot listing was refused on the grounds that the building is:

'A 1910 board school, which although locally significant, does not possess sufficient architectural quality or innovation of floor plan within a national context to qualify for listing' (English Heritage, 15 December 2005).

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- 4.8 It is important to note that even if the school were to be statutorily listed then its demolition would still be possible as national planning policy within paragraphs 3.16 to 3.19 of Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15) '*Planning and the Historic Environment*' and local planning policy contained within Policy BH4 '*Demolition Of A Listed Building*' of the Warrington Borough Council UDP do permit the full or partial demolition of listed buildings.
- 4.9 Section 3.17 of PPG 15 states that consent for the demolition of a listed building would be granted where the redevelopment would '*produce substantial benefits for the community which would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition*', whilst Policy BH4, which itself is derived from PPG 15, states that consent would be granted for the demolition of a listed building in exceptional circumstances. Whilst Policy BH5's test cannot be so rigorous, the appraisal that follows does show there to be exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional Circumstances

- 4.10 The educational advantages of a new school building are extensively justified in the other reports prepared in support of this application and it is not the intention of this document to go over these points again. However, it must be reaffirmed the School's governing body is increasingly concerned with the ability of the existing school buildings to cope with the demands of modern teaching and educational practices. Many of the school's ancillary buildings, including the prefabricated HORSAs huts, are nearing the end of their useful life. The huts, which accommodate the dining hall, a private nursery and several classrooms, were built as temporary accommodation over 50 years ago and are wholly unsuitable for modern teaching practice.
- 4.11 Without substantial and immediate intervention, the condition of the school buildings will continue to decline to the detriment of the students' welfare and education. Three options were proposed for the school. However, two have subsequently been discounted. Full details can be found in the Strategic Vision and Background Information Statement also submitted to accompany the application. However, in brief the building of a new school on an alternative site would have an unsatisfactory impact on other local schools. Refurbishing and extending the existing school would exceed the available budget, yield increased disruption and would produce a poorer education service. Furthermore, the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) are unable to

supply departmental funding to refurbish and extend the existing building, as the scheme's original objectives would not be met by this option.

4.12 The only viable option that remains therefore is redevelop the site following the demolition of the existing school buildings. Although the existing school building is only locally listed, and therefore governed by Policy BH5, it is considered that the stiffer tests to justify demolition of a listed building would still be met by this proposal.

4.13 Paragraph 4 of PPS1 '*Delivering Sustainable Development*' states that one of the aims of the planning system is to deliver social progress which recognises the needs of everyone and therefore, in this case, the educational, social and community issues will be material considerations in the determination of this planning application. The educational, social and community benefits that will be provided by the new build, set out extensively in the Strategic Vision and Background Information document, are so substantial that they can be considered to be 'exceptional circumstances' and as such provide an overwhelming case for demolition.

4.14 Although the educational need alone justifies the loss of the existing building, the proposed new building has been designed to be sympathetic in scale to the surrounding predominately residential area and to make use of carefully selected palette of materials, which are harmonious with the local residential vernacular. The proposed new school, therefore, is a worthy replacement to its predecessor.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The justification for the appropriateness of the new school in the context of the local area is fully set out in the Planning Design and Access statement. It is understood that the Development Control Committee had no planning concerns over the suitability of the new school. Bearing in mind that, strictly speaking, demolition of the old school is permitted development, it is the suitability of the new school that should be paramount. Inevitably however, the two issues - demolition and new build - are linked. This statement has shown that in planning policy terms demolition is fully supported and adheres to all national and local planning policy guidance, including PPS1, PPG15 and policies BH4 and BH5 of the Warrington UDP.

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- 5.2 The proposed rebuild represents a real opportunity to create an appropriate and significant new building that is suited for modern teaching and educational practice.

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Document Information:

PBA Project Number: 06/409
File name: Planning Supporting Statement ss06
Printed: 27 November 2006