

DELEGATED REPORT: 201074NMA

Address: Mapledurham Playing Fields Upper Woodcote Road

Proposal: Non-Material Amendments to condition 20 (drainage scheme) of planning permission 182200

Relevant Planning History

171023FUL - Erection of 2FE primary school (350 pupils) with associated landscaping, multi-use games area (MUGA), car and cycle parking, and servicing - Granted (S016 linked)

182200VARIAT - Erection of 2FE primary school (350 pupils) with associated landscaping, multi-use games area (MUGA), car and cycle parking, and servicing, without complying with conditions 2 (approved plans), 9 (landscaping scheme) and 10 (details of hard and soft landscaping of the MPF Community Car Park) of planning permission 171023/FUL - Granted (S106 linked)

190240REG3 -Landscaping works to Mapledurham playing fields Granted

Background

The approved drainage scheme secured under condition 20 of planning permission 182200 proposed that the site would be served by a traditional geo-cellular soakaway. However, following further geotechnical investigations on the site, it was found that the geology on the site was not favourable to the original strategy due to solution features within the underlying chalk requiring a 20m offset from any proposed or existing building for a traditional or geo-cellular soakaway which would not be achievable within the confines of the site.

Proposals

The application seeks non-material amendments (application under S96A) to the drainage scheme under condition 20 for the following:

- Use of deep borehole soakaway drainage to the main school site by way of 3 x 26m deep and 0.2m diameter deep boreholes
- Retention of traditional geo-cellular soakaway for the community car park part of the site

Consultations

Environment Agency - No objection - are satisfied with the amendments to the drainage strategy from the perspective of groundwater quality. The drainage system separates clean drainage from the building and play areas from potentially polluted drainage from the car parking areas. Mitigation is given to this potential polluted drainage in the form of an oil interceptor and shallower infiltration drainage allowing more chemical attenuation in the shallow soils and thicker unsaturated zone.

RBC Transport (& SuDS) - No objection - the proposed scheme would result in lower run off rate from the site than the existing situation.

Public Consultation

Applications under S96A are not applications for planning permission, so are not covered by the publicity requirements as set out in the DMPO.

Notwithstanding the above, nine objections to the application have been received. A summary of the issues raised is set out below:

- Should not be an NMA as it is a significant variation to the drainage plans
- Run off from the school site will not be clean and would pollute the groundwater
- The discharge from 2 septic tanks enter into the school curtilage and could pollute the groundwater via the boreholes
- There have been a number of drainage problems in Hewett Avenue and MPF over last 12 years and the application should be subject to full consultation with residents.
- Has the EA been consulted?
- Why wasn't proper SUDS scheme submitted with the application?
- What if boreholes get blocked?
- Increased pressure on sewer system from development in nearby area which could potentially flood into the boreholes
- No testing has been done to provide this will not cause flooding nearby

Appraisal

Policy EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems) seeks that all major developments incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and should result in runoff rates that are no greater than the existing conditions of the site.

The proposed deep borehole drainage system has been designed to utilise 3 existing trial boreholes such that no further drilling works is required as a result of the proposals. Therefore, it is not considered that the changes would result in any adverse additional disturbance (noise/vibration) to surrounding occupiers.

The below ground nature of the drainage proposals is such that any changes to the appearance of the development would be minimal.

The Environment Agency have been consulted on the application and have raised no objection - they have advised that the drainage system design proposed is considered acceptable and to be safe.

The deep borehole drainage is proposed to the main school site where the school building, playground, bike shed and hardstanding MUGA are located. The EA consider that water infiltration from this part of the site would be 'clean' and therefore they do not consider there would be any contamination risks to groundwater. For 'clean' water to enter the boreholes it is required to first pass through a granular sub-base which will prevent debris from entering whilst the boreholes have been designed with filters at the entrance to act as a further debris trap. The boreholes do not lead directly to the below ground aquifer - clean water infiltration would enter the earth via the boreholes and percolate into the ground.

Drainage from the community car park area is not considered 'clean' due to particulates from cars and therefore drainage from this part of the site would not utilise the deep boreholes and would instead utilise more traditional geo-cellular soakaways located directly below the surface of the car park and by-pass filters would ensure hydrocarbons do not enter the ground.

The boreholes are lined for their full length to prevent seepage from existing underground polluter such as septic tanks. The EA have confirmed that there is no way for septic discharge to enter the boreholes.

The Council's drainage adviser has confirmed that the drainage proposals as a whole would result in a reduced level of surface run off when compared to the existing/former site conditions and therefore the proposals are not considered to result in an increased risk of local flooding.

Officers have considered the proposals and, in short, are content that the changes are:

- 'Non-material amendments', in that they are of a scale and/or nature that results in a development which is not materially different from the one which has already been approved
- The non-material amendments are acceptable in themselves in terms of all material planning considerations

Conclusion:

The changes as proposed are considered to be acceptable non-material alterations.

Recommendation:

Agree non-material amendment to condition no. 20 of planning permission ref. 182200.

DECISION

Condition no. 20 of planning permission ref. 182200 is amended as follows:

20. The School building hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the sustainable drainage scheme for the application site has been completed in full in accordance with the following approved documents:

- 'Curtins The Heights School Drainage & SuDS Strategy ref. THPS-CUR-00-XX-RP-C-0002 Rev P01' (dated 20 July 2020)

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 29th July 2020

- 'Curtins letter ref. 069468/LLFA/01 - The Heights School, Reading - Drainage Strategy (dated 20th October 2020)

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 20th October 2020.

The sustainable drainage scheme shall be managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved documents.

Reason: To reduce the risk of flooding onsite or elsewhere in accordance with Policy EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

INFORMATIVES

1. This notice relates only to the changes to condition 20 of planning permission 182200. It shall only be read in the context of the substantive planning permission and is bound by all the conditions and obligations attached to that permission. That permission still stands and this notice (and any other notices issued under section 96a for this development) should be read together.
2. In reaching this decision, the local planning authority is satisfied that the changes proposed by this application do not constitute material changes to the approved planning permission.
3. The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to determine under the non-material amendment procedure within reasonable timeframes.

Case officer: Matt Burns