

Reference:	20/00261/BC4
Application Type:	Borough Council Regulation 4
Ward:	Southchurch
Proposal:	Erect three temporary porta cabins for use ancillary to Main School Building
Address:	Southchurch High School, Southchurch Boulevard, Southend-on-Sea
Applicant:	Southchurch High School
Agent:	Mr David Lillico of Portakabin Ltd
Consultation Expiry:	19th March 2020
Expiry Date:	15th April 2020
Case Officer:	Charlotte White
Plan Nos:	DLSCHCLBP, DLSCHSSL 102, DLSCHSSL 072
Recommendation:	GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION, subject to conditions



1 Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The application site (site outlined in red) is an 'L' shaped site located within the existing car park of Southchurch High School, to the rear of the main school buildings. The application site forms part of the wider school site (site outlined in blue). To the west of the site is Southend High School for Girls, to the north, east and south is the wider school grounds with residential dwellings beyond.
- 1.2 The application site has no specific allocation within the Development Management Documents Proposal's Map. The school site to the south and east of the application site (largely the playing fields) is allocated as protected green space, but the site falls outside of this designation.

2 The Proposal

- 2.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of three porta cabins to the south of the main school building, within the car park area for a temporary period of 2 years. The porta cabins are to provide two changing rooms and an office for P.E (Physical Education). The information provided within the Design and Access Statement submitted states *'The school is struggling for space and this solves the issue in the interim until a permanent solution is found.'* It is stated by the applicant that currently a space which is part of a corridor is being used for this purpose.
- 2.2 The porta cabin buildings have a combined overall floor space of 80.43sqm. Two designs of porta cabin are proposed:
- 2.3
- SL102 which measures 2.61m high, 3.27m wide and 10.24m deep. The design includes one door and 6 windows; two on the longer flanks and one on each end. Two of these porta cabins are proposed.
 - SL072 which measures 2.57m high, 3.4m wide and 7.48m deep. The design includes one door and a total of 4 windows; one on each elevation. One of this type of porta cabin is proposed to the north of the site.
- 2.4 Whilst the porta cabins will be located on an existing car park, the application identifies that *'there is ample parking at this site and the car park only reaches 70% capacity even at peak times.'* The information submitted indicates that the development will result in the loss of 11 parking spaces, with the overall number of spaces reduced from 95 to 84. The applicant states that there is to be no increase in staff numbers as part of this application.
- 2.5 The Design and Access Statement submitted states *'External walls are of a durable one-piece construction with high-performance, low maintenance plasticol-coated galvanised steel cladding to offer protection against fire, extreme weather and accidental damage. The roof deck in of one-piece construction and is impact resistant.'*

3 Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 The site has a fairly extensive planning history, none of which is of particular relevance to this proposal.

- 3.2 07/01672/FULM – Erect two storey building for use as a vocational training college, lay out sports pitches, recreational space, car and cycle parking and landscaping – planning permission granted.

4 Representation Summary

4.1 Public Consultation

38 neighbouring properties were consulted and a site notice displayed. 2 letters of representation from 1 objector have been received which make the following summarised comments:

- Porta cabins are unnecessary.
- Query how there can be a lack of space for P.E when the old school building is sitting unused with a fairly modern sports building. This is an irresponsible waste. Should use existing buildings not erect more buildings.
- Design unacceptable.
- Detract from the modern, attractive building.
- Visually offensive and intrusive.
- Concerns the porta cabins will be permanent.

The concerns raised are noted and they have been taken into account in the assessment of the proposal. However, they are not found to represent a reasonable basis to refuse planning permission in the circumstances of this case.

4.2 Education

Fully support the proposal.

4.3 Highways Team

No objection.

4.4 Environmental Health

Will not have an impact on any nearby residents in terms of noise and disturbance. Recommend conditions restriction construction hours and the hours of use from 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday.

4.5 Parks

No comments.

5 Planning Policy Summary

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)

5.2 Core Strategy (2007): Policies KP1 (Spatial Strategy), KP2 (Development Principles), KP3 (Implementation and Resources), CP3 (Transport and Accessibility), CP4 (The Environment and Urban Renaissance), CP6 (Community Infrastructure), CP7 (Sport, Recreation and Green Space).

5.3 Development Management Document (2015): Policies DM1 (Design Quality), DM2 (Low Carbon Development and Efficient Use of Resources), DM3 (Efficient and Effective Use of Land) and DM15 (Sustainable Transport Management).

5.4 Design & Townscape Guide (2009)

5.5 CIL Charging Schedule (2015)

6 Planning Considerations

6.1 The main considerations in relation to this application include the principle of the development, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area, residential amenity, traffic and transportation, sustainability and CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy).

7 Appraisal

Principle of Development

7.1 Policy CP6 of the Core Strategy supports *'Improvements to existing and provision of new facilities to support the needs of education, skills and lifelong learning strategies.'*

7.2 Paragraph 94 of the NPPF states *It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will wider choice in education. They should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications...'*

7.3 The proposed porta cabins are sought for a temporary period of 2 years and would provide better facilities for P.E, with a P.E office and changing rooms provided. The application is therefore acceptable and complies with National and Local Planning Policy in principle. In line with the NPPF, the principle of the proposal in meeting education requirements is to be given great weight. Whilst it is noted that a neighbour has commented that the existing buildings within the adjacent site could be utilised, it is noted that prior approval to demolish these buildings under reference 20/00308/DEM has recently been submitted.

7.4 The development is acceptable and policy compliant in the above regards.

Design and Impact on the Character of the Area

7.5 Good design is a fundamental requirement of new development to achieve high quality living environments. Its importance is reflected in the NPPF, in Policies KP2 and CP4 of the Core Strategy and also in Policy DM1 of the Development Management Document. The Design and Townscape Guide also states that *"the Borough Council is committed to good design and will seek to create attractive, high-quality living environments."*

7.6 Paragraph 124 of the National Planning Policy Framework States that *'The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.'*

- 7.7 Policy KP2 of the Core Strategy states that new development should *“respect the character and scale of the existing neighbourhood where appropriate.”* Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy requires that development proposals should *“maintain and enhance the amenities, appeal and character of residential areas, securing good relationships with existing development, and respecting the scale and nature of that development.”*
- 7.8 The proposed porta cabins are utilitarian in design, but porta cabins are not uncommon features within school sites. The porta cabins are set behind the main school buildings and given their size, scale and position would not be particularly prominent or evident in the surrounding area. As such it is considered that the proposal would not result in any material harm to the character and appearance of the site or the wider surrounding area. It is also noted that this application seeks that the porta cabins be for a temporary period of 2 years only.
- 7.9 The development is acceptable and policy compliant in the above regards.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 7.10 Policies DM1 and DM3 of the Development Management Document and CP4 of the Core Strategy refer to the impact of development on surrounding occupiers. High quality development, by definition, should provide a positive living environment for its occupiers whilst not having an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbours. Protection and enhancement of amenity is essential to maintaining people’s quality of life and ensuring the successful integration of proposed development into existing neighbourhoods.
- 7.11 The proposed porta cabins are relatively modest in scale and located behind the main school buildings and within the main school site. The proposed porta cabins are located a considerable distance (a minimum of some 150m) from the nearest residential dwellings to the north, south and east. As such, it is considered that the development would not result in any material harm to the residential amenity of nearby or adjoining residents in terms of dominance, an overbearing impact, loss of light and outlook, overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing or noise and disturbance. It is also noted that Environmental Health has raised no objection on this basis.
- 7.12 Whilst Environmental Health have suggested a condition is imposed restricting the hours of use of the development, given its location and the significant separation to nearest residential dwellings, this is not considered necessary in this instance.
- 7.13 The development is acceptable and policy compliant in the above regards.

Traffic and Transportation Issues

- 7.14 Policy DM15 of the Development Management Document states *‘Development will be allowed where there is, or it can be demonstrated that there will be, physical and environmental capacity to accommodate the type and amount of traffic generated in a safe and sustainable manner.’*

- 7.15 Policy DM15 also states *'All development should meet the parking standards (including cycle parking) set out in Appendix 6 Residential vehicle parking standards may be applied flexibly where it can be demonstrated that the development is proposed in a sustainable location with frequent and extensive links to public transport and/or where the rigid application of these standards would have a clear detrimental impact on local character and context.'*
- 7.16 The parking standards for schools, as set out within Appendix 6 of the Development Management Document, are a maximum of 1 space per 15 pupils. This proposal would result in the reduction of 11 parking spaces for a temporary period of 2 years retaining 84 spaces. The information submitted indicates that the existing parking only reaches 70% capacity and that the development would not result in an increase in the number of staff. A site visit has been undertaken by the case officer, during school hours, which demonstrated that the car park was not near capacity. As such, it is considered that the temporary development is acceptable and policy compliant in this respect. The Council Highways Team has not raised any objection to the proposal.

Sustainable Construction

- 7.17 Policy KP2 of the Core Strategy requires that *"at least 10% of the energy needs of new development should come from on-site renewable options (and/or decentralised renewable or low carbon energy sources), such as those set out in the Design and Townscape Guide, wherever feasible. How the development will provide for the collection of re-usable and recyclable waste will also be a consideration."* Policy DM2 of the Development Management Document also states that *"to ensure the delivery of sustainable development, all development proposals should contribute to minimising energy demand and carbon dioxide emissions"*
- 7.18 In this instance, given the temporary nature of the proposed porta cabins it is not considered necessary or reasonable to require the development to meet the above requirement. No objection is therefore raised on this basis.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 7.19 As the proposed development equates to less than 100sqm of new floorspace, and does not involve the creation of a new dwelling (Class C3), the development benefits from a Minor Development Exemption under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) and as such no charge is payable.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 Having taken all material planning considerations into account, it is found that, subject to compliance with the attached conditions, the proposed development would be acceptable and compliant with the objectives of the relevant development plan policies and guidance. In light of the NPPF, the proposal's contribution towards addressing education requirements is to be given great weight. The proposal would have an acceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and the character and appearance of the application site, street scene and the locality more widely. There would be no materially adverse traffic, parking or highways impacts caused by the proposed development. This application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

9 Recommendation

9.1 GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions:

- 01 The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this decision.**

Reason: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 02 The permission hereby approved is for a temporary period of only 2 years from the date of the permission. After 2 years from the date of the granting of this permission, the use hereby approved shall cease, all structures associated with this consent shall be removed from the site and the land shall be returned to its previous use as a car park.**

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and Policies KP1 and KP2 of the Core Strategy (2007).

- 03 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out solely in accordance with the following approved plans: DLSCHCLBP, DLSCHSSL 102, DLSCHSSL 072.**

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan.

- 04 The construction works associated with the development hereby approved shall only be undertaken between 08:00 and 18:00pm Monday to Friday and 08:00 and 13:00 Saturdays and at no other time whatsoever.**

Reason: In the interests of the residential amenity of the adjoining residents and to ensure that the development complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Core Strategy (2007) Policies KP2 and CP4, Development Management Document (2015) Policies DM1 and DM3 and the advice contained within the Design and Townscape Guide (2009).

Informatives:

- 01 You are advised that as the proposed extension(s) or change of use to your property equates to less than 100sqm of new floorspace, and does not involve the creation of a new dwelling (Class C3), the development benefits from a Minor Development Exemption under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) and as such no charge is payable. See the Planning Portal (www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200136/policy_and_legislation/70/community_infrastructure_levy) or the Council's website (www.southend.gov.uk/cil) for further details about CIL.**

- 02 You should be aware that in cases where damage occurs during construction works to the highway in implementing this permission that Council may seek to recover the cost of repairing public highways and footpaths from any party responsible for damaging them. This includes damage carried out when implementing a planning permission or other works to buildings or land. Please take care when carrying out works on or near the public highways and footpaths in the borough.**