

Application No: Y18/0061/SH

Location of Site: Pent Valley Technology College, Surrenden Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 4ED

Development: Consultation by Kent County Council in respect of the renewal of the temporary permission for the 'Sharman Block' modular building, erection of a 2.4 metre high fence and gates to separate it from the rest of the former Pent Valley School, construction of a 1.8 metre wide access path to a new 2.2 metre high gate onto Bowen Road, and erection of a 2.2 metre high fence between the building and the electric substation. (KCC Application PA/KCC/SH/0343/2017)

Applicant: Gen 2 on behalf of KCC

Date Valid: N/A

Expiry Date: N/A

PEA Date: N/A

Date of Committee: 20.03.18

Officer Contact: Wendy Simpson

SUMMARY

This is a consultation by KCC in respect of a planning application that has been submitted to them. KCC is the determining authority, not the district council.

It is considered that the continued use of the building for education purposes, the erection of fencing separating the application site from the wider Pent Valley Technology College site and the introduction of a pupil access gate from Bowen Road accords with current policy and guidance and would not harm the visual amenity or residential amenity of the area.

RECOMMENDATION: That no objection be raised subject to conditions to prevent general access through from Bowen Road to the wider Pent Valley Technology College site and to remove the gate to Bowen Road if the proposed use ceases.

1.0 THE PROPOSAL

1.1 Shepway District Council is being consulted in respect of a planning application for :

- the renewal of the temporary permission to enable the retention of the 'Sharman Block' modular building for a further five years;

- the erection of a 2.4 metre high fence and gates to separate it from the wider Pent Valley Technology College;
 - the construction of a 1.8 metre wide access path, to:
 - a new 2.2 metre high pedestrian gate (palisade style) into the existing boundary fence to provide pedestrian access onto Bowen Road;
 - the erection of a 2.2 metre high fence between the building and the electricity substation.
- 1.2 The fencing design is partially of a palisade style (galvanised finish) and partly wire mesh (powder coated green).
- 1.3 The need for the proposal is to allow the relocation of the educational support service from an existing facility at Cheriton Road, which has been deemed to be unsuitable. It involves the reuse of the vacant, modular building within the Pent Valley Technology College site.
- 1.4 The applicant has advised that the unit will provide alternative curriculum support for schools in the Folkestone area and will be run by local schools, providing for a maximum of 24 pupils aged 11 to 16 years old. Pupils would access the site from the new pedestrian access off Bowen Road and staff will park within the Pent Valley Technology College site. The majority of the pupils currently use public transport to go to the Cheriton Road site and others walk. It is anticipated that the majority will use public transport to travel to this site.

2.0 SITE DESIGNATIONS

2.1 The following apply to the site:

- Inside settlement boundary

3.0 LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 3.1 The site is located in the south western corner of the grounds of Pent Valley Technology College. It contains a white, flat roofed, single storey, modular building in a good state of repair. The site is accessed from the main school grounds, to the north-eastern and eastern sides of the site. Immediately to the east of the site is an electricity substation.
- 3.2 To the southern, western and north-western sides of the site are residential dwellings in Wells Road, Bowen Road, Darlinghurst Road and Postling Road.

4.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 4.1 As Shepway District Council is a consultee on the application and not the determining authority no consultations were required to be carried out by the

district council. Notwithstanding, the following representation was received from the town council:

4.2 Folkestone Town Council

Object subject to there being more details on what the access actually serves. Bowen Road is a side road and the corner is 90 degrees. It is not clear whether the access will be a busy one or not.

5.0 REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 As the district council is a consultee no consultations were required to be carried out by the district council. Comments from neighbours in respect of the proposal were required to be sent to KCC, as directed on the site notice and neighbour letters sent out by KCC.

5.2 Comments received into Shepway District Council from members of the public are therefore not reported but can be viewed on the Council's web page at:

<https://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/>

6.0 RELEVANT POLICY GUIDANCE

6.1 The full headings for the policies are attached to the schedule of planning matters at Appendix 1 and the policies can be found in full via the following links:

<http://www.shepway.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan>

<https://www.shepway.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/documents-and-guidance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

6.2 The following saved policies of the Shepway District Local Plan Review apply: SD1, BE1

6.3 The following policies of the Shepway Local Plan Core Strategy apply: DSD, SS1, SS3

6.4 The following paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework are of particular relevance to this application:

7 – Achieving sustainable development

11 – Determination in accordance with the development plan

17 – Core planning principles

56 – Good design

7.0 APPRAISAL

Relevant Material Planning Considerations

- 7.1 The site has an extant use for education purposes and as such the use of the building as intended does not require planning permission. However, the retention of the building for a period of a further five years does require planning permission. Relevant issues for consideration are the suitability of the modular building for retention on the site and the design of the gates and fencing in terms of visual amenity; and the acceptability of the new fencing and pedestrian access onto Bowen Road in terms of neighbouring amenity.

Design

- 7.2 The modular building is existing and is in a good state of repair. The only additional structures to be erected under this application are the fencing/gates to separate the building from the wider school area and the new pedestrian gate which is to be inserted into the existing boundary fence to Bowen Road.
- 7.3 The proposed wire mesh fence is of a design that means it cannot be climbed. Visually this has a minimal impact whilst effectively achieving the separation of this site from the main school site. Some small lengths of palisade style fencing are also proposed where single gates are required to give access to areas inside the site. All of the fencing proposed is of a utilitarian design to suit its purpose but none runs adjacent to boundaries of the site adjoining the street or residential boundaries and as such it will not harm the street scene or character of the area. The appearance of the pedestrian gate is considered acceptable.
- 7.4 No objection is raised to the design and appearance of the development or its impact on the street scene.

Amenity

- 7.5 The use of the site for education purposes is not changing and therefore the use as intended does not require planning permission. Due to the size of the building there is a limit to the number of pupils/staff that can use the building at any one time.
- 7.6 As the building is existing, to retain it for a further period of five years will not result in any additional impacts to neighbours' amenities in terms of loss of outlook, daylight, privacy matters or overshadowing.
- 7.7 The additional fencing proposed will not result in harm to neighbours' amenities in terms of loss of outlook, daylight or overshadowing.
- 7.8 The Town Council and residents have raised concern in respect of the introduction of the new pedestrian access gate into the boundary fence to Bowen Road. To date there is no access to the Pent Valley Technology College site from Bowen Road. Such concern is understood if the gate were to provide general access to the whole site and officers have raised this with

the KCC case officer. The applicant now further advises that: the access gate to Bowen Road will be unlocked by the first member of staff arriving at the unit and locked at the end of the day; the gate between the site and the wider Pent Valley Technology College site will be fitted with a key fob opening system so staff parking in the main school site can come through to the application site. Also they advise that staff will need to use the key fob to access between the sites if the fire alarm sounded or if a wheelchair user needed to access the application site.

- 7.9 Therefore, if only the pupils of the support service unit are to be using the proposed access gate from Bowen Road then the introduction of this additional footfall in Bowen Road is not considered to be of such a frequency or scale that it would result in harm to the residential amenity of Bowen Road.
- 7.10 Furthermore, notwithstanding that most pupils are expected to come to the site on public transport, if some pupils are dropped off and collected by car in Bowen Road, again the frequency and scale of this activity would not be so great as to justify the district council raising an objection to the planning application.
- 7.11 Therefore no objection is raised to the proposal in terms of impacts on neighbours' amenities subject to the use of a condition that ensures that there is no general access through the site from Bowen Road to the wider Pent Valley Technology College site. A further condition should also be used so that if the use of the application site as a separate education facility should cease, or the site should be used in association with any of the adjacent school/education site, then the gate providing pedestrian access from Bowen Road shall be removed and fencing reinstated prior to the commencement of the alternate educational use of the site, or site and building.

Other matters

- 7.12 Cllr Collier has raised concern of 'over intensive development' but the modular building is existing and has been used for many years as an education building. The use as intended does not require planning permission. All that can be considered in this respect is the pedestrian traffic off Bowen Road, which it is not considered will be of such a level as to be significantly harmful to residential amenity.
- 7.13 This application is reported to Committee at the request of Cllr Collier due to concerns of over intensive development, parking/traffic implications of pupil drop off and pick up.

RECOMMENDATION – That no objection be raised subject to conditions to prevent general access through from Bowen Road to the wider Pent Valley Technology College site and to remove the gate to Bowen Road if the current use ceases.

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