Planning application supporting Statement

PERMIT

Property name St Thomas More's RC (VA) Primary School

Property address Hooks Lane, Havant, Hampshire, PO9 3DR

Works Construction of new boundary fencing to enclose school grounds

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Existing Building and Site

The site is home to St Thomas More's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School. The site is currently fenced with an old railing type system set between a number of large brick piers. The railings were originally set out to meet with a number of large Oak trees which were growing along the boundary of the school. Due to a fungal disease these large Oak trees had to be taken down during the summer of last year (2010) as they were classed as dangerous. Following the removal of the trees there are now some large gaps in the fencing which have been temporarily infilled with Chestnut pailing fencing. The original railings and gates are in a fairly poor condition which is further exacerbated by the removal of the trees forming gaps within the railings.

The fencing in question forms the North boundary of the school site running alongside Hooks Road and as such provides the security for the site. Along with security the fencing to the boundary also provides the initial image of the school and grounds

Brief

The school approached HCC Property Services due to a number of issues arising which relate to both the security of the site and the aesthetics of the boundary. Following the removal of the trees as described above there are now a number of large gaps in the fencing temporarily protected using chestnut paling fencing which is niether secure nor aesthetically pleasing. The design of the existing railings with a rail at low level and a rail on the top of the fence also makes this extremely easy to scale by unauthorised persons and vandals. The school has in the past suffered from vandalism and in particular lead theft from the roofs of the buildings. There is also some concern with regards youths gathering within the grounds of the school which neighbours community playing fields and the HFRC rugby pitches.

The school has also raised concerns in terms of the safeguarding of pupils on the site during normal working hours from unauthorised access by others. This issue was made worse by the fact that the existing main pedestrian entrance gate had to be left unlocked in order to allow visitors to access the site. This gates leads onto and through the Key Stage 1 play area. The school were also concerned that it was difficult for visitors to the school to establish which gate forms the main entrance.

Concerns were also raised in terms of the visibility of pupils utilising the main playground area

as there were a number of locations where pupils would be out of site particularly beside the gas intake building. The large wall dividing the Key Stage 1 play area from that of the Key Stage 2 pupils was also a concern to the Head Teacher.

Design Principles

The fencing proposed is designed to provide maximum security and prevent unauthorised access to the grounds whilst at the same time remaining aesthetically pleasing. The fence height will be restricted to approximately 1500mm in order to prevent this looking obtrusive from either outside and within the school grounds. Rather than curving in and out away from the boundary line the fence will be installed along the boundary and the existing large brick piers will be removed and made good to be replaced by metal posts much smaller in section. The brick piers could also be easily scaled to gain access to the grounds. The fencing would be constructed from vertical bar in accordance with BS 1722-9:2006 with blunt tops powder coated blue similar to the existing railing colour and blue paint used on the school and as part of the school logo.

The new fencing would be constructed with a number of lockable gates but the main pedestrian entrance gate would be provided with electronically controlled locking operated by Reception staff following the use of an intercom fixed to the outside of the gate. This would allow the gate to remain locked at all times when not in use preventing access of unauthorised persons and eliminating the risk of any young pupils running out of the gate. The new pedestrian gate has also been designed to incorporate the school's logo as indicated in the drawing in order to identify this gate as the main point of entry to the school grounds.

The existing wall separating the two playgrounds would be removed and replaced with bow top fencing in order to allow better vision between the two play areas. This bow top fencing would be moved and would be installed to meet the boundary fence to remove the possibility of pupils accessing an area which could be out of sight of staff monitoring the playground.

Design Solutions

The design solution has been discussed at length with both the previous Head Teacher, the current Head Teacher and one of the school Governors. The location of the fencing to follow the boundary and the security of the site has been an issue for a number of years. Careful consderation has been given to the design solution in terms of the type and height of the fencing proposed to take into account neighbouring properties.
Due to the increased risk of persons scaling the fence of the neighbouring property adjacent to the frontage of the building the proposals include the fencing of this section.
Liaison has also taken place with Martin Leeds - Development Officer HCC in order to gather views on the proposals.

Access and Inclusion Principles

The main entrance pedestrian gate along with the pupil entrance gate will both provide 1500mm clear opening and will be suitable for wheelchair users. The gate closer installed on the main pedestrian entrance gate to ensure this latches following operation will be installed to ensure the opening force at the leading edge of the gate is no greater than 20N. On the pull side of the gate, if required the hard surfacing will be adapted to ensure an unobstructed space of at least 300mm between the leading edge of the gate and the edge of the hard surfacing.

Buildings & Plant/Servicing
N/A

Highways
The new fencing will be on the boundary of the school along Hooks Lane. No changes will be made to the location of the existing pedestrian gates or the vehicle gates other than the removal of the small pedestrian gate between the two entrance gates which is no longer required.

Environmental Protection
Works will be undertaken during normal working hours and may include school term times as noise will be minimal. If works are to be undertaken during school term time adequate segregation will be required between the contractors operatives, pupils, staff and visitors to the site.

Landscape Design
As described previously the route of the fence line has been decided following careful consideration.

Ecology/Biodiversity
No longer applicable following the removal of the large Oak trees along the boundary line of the school grounds.

Sustainability
N/A

Archaeology
N/A