

Application No: 16/00410/VAR **Variation / Removal of Condition**

Site: Coxlease School, Clay Hill, Lyndhurst, SO43 7DE

Proposal: Application to vary condition 8 of planning permission reference 10/95478 (subsequently varied by planning permission reference 15/00491) to allow a maximum of 110 pupils

Applicant: Priory Group

Case Officer: Clare Ings

Parish: LYNDHURST

1. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Contrary to Parish Council view

2. DEVELOPMENT PLAN DESIGNATION

Listed Building

3. PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

DP1 General Development Principles
DP17 Extensions to Non Residential Buildings and Uses

4. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Not applicable

5. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Sec 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Sec 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

6. MEMBER COMMENTS

None received

7. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Lyndhurst Parish Council: Recommend that permission be refused.

There are strong neighbour objections and there has already been a considerable increase in pupil numbers with a number of unfortunate incidents. Whilst the Parish Council commends their ethos it would like to see some improvement in care in the surroundings before the application comes back to the Committee. It was also considered that traffic

movements were a problem which would impact on an already busy village. The proposals do not uphold Policy DP1 in that amenity would be affected.

8. CONSULTTEES

8.1 Highway Authority (HCC). Comments awaited - Members will be updated at committee.

9. REPRESENTATIONS

- 9.1 One letter of objection received on the following grounds:
- significant increase in traffic movements which would have a direct negative impact on safety, noise and disturbance levels over shared access to Squirrel Cottage
 - increase in noise disturbance as a result of increased number of pupils on site
 - increased cases of incidences caused by pupils
- 9.2 New Forest Association objects on the following grounds:
- it is not a community facility and pupils attend from beyond the National Park boundaries
 - not associated with the Park's special qualities
 - it would increase activity on the site contrary to policy DP17, especially traffic

10. RELEVANT HISTORY

- 10.1 A number of planning applications for various works to the grounds, including surfacing of car parks, fencing and floodlights. Other more specific applications:
- 10.2 Application to vary condition 8 of planning permission reference 10/95478 to allow a maximum of 80 pupils (15/00491) - granted permission on 9 September 2015
- 10.3 New teaching and staff accommodation; removal of temporary clad structures (revised design to planning permission ref 09/94802) (10/95478) - granted permission on 5 November 2010, and partially implemented.
- 10.4 New teaching and staff accommodation; removal of temporary clad structures (revised design to planning permission ref 94802) (10/95478) - granted permission on 5 November 2010
- 10.5 Removal of existing temporary timber clad structures. construction of new teaching and staff accommodation (09/94802) - granted permission on 19 March 2010
- 10.6 New buildings to provide assembly, teaching and staff/admin accommodation (09/94200) - granted permission on 15

11. ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 Coxlease School lies within an extensive wooded site to the west of the A337 and to the south of Lyndhurst. It is accessed from a gravel track which falls down to the site. The site comprises a main building, which is Grade II* listed, a recently constructed single storey teaching complex to the south-west of the main building, a former stable complex now converted to school accommodation and a dwelling, also forming part of the school accommodation. There are also other more temporary-looking structures. The site is very wooded, with some specimen trees which formed part of a previous historic landscape associated with the main listed building. There is a large gravel area for turning to the front of the main building and extending to the more modern constructions. A car park lies to the north of the gravel driveway separated from it by tall hedging. Adjoining the wider site to the north are the grounds of Foxlease, an activity centre owned by Girl Guiding UK. There are a couple of cottages associated with this use and other cottages accessed via the same drive.
- 11.2 The school is a specialist school for children aged 9 to 18 with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties who may also have learning difficulties (BSED), and there is also a separate element for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The school operates primarily as a day school, a significant change from 2009 when it was largely residential, with the children brought onto the site from registered children's homes. A small number of bed spaces are provided on site for children attending the school.
- 11.3 Previous consents for extensions and additional accommodation (specifically 09/94200 and subsequently revised) were conditioned such that the number of pupils on the site should not exceed 55 which reflected the nature of the school and number of pupils at the time. A more recent application allowed a variation to the condition, and allowed the maximum number of pupils to be increased to 80 (15/00491). This current application is to further increase the number of pupils by 30 to 110. The additional numbers would be children of primary school age with the same behavioural, social and educational difficulties (BSED) who cannot be supported in mainstream schools.
- 11.4 The key considerations are whether the proposal would be acceptable in terms of impact on the amenities of surrounding residential properties (noise and disturbance) and increased traffic movements, and whether the increase would comply with policy DP17.
- 11.5 The site has been operating as a school since the early 1980s,

and originally was a residential school for children with behavioural problems. Since the current owners took over in 2006, there has been a building programme, not all of which has been implemented but which has an extant permission. In addition, the nature of the school has changed from residential to mainly day pupils, with the number of children who now reside on site considerably reduced, and the overall teaching ratio has changed resulting in fewer people on site, mainly through significant reduction in staff numbers. By way of comparison, the pupil numbers in 2009 was restricted to 55, but the staff numbers were about 140 (195 in total). With the most recent application (15/00491) which increased the pupil numbers to 80, there was a reduction in the number of staff to 98 (178 in total). This current application, which seeks a further increase in the number of pupils to 110 (and also staff by a maximum of 13 to 111) would result in a total number of people on site of 221 and thus only a small increase over and above the number in 2009. This illustrates a more realistic comparison, and the increase is therefore considered would be acceptable. In addition, because the nature of the school has changed, ie being predominantly for day pupils, the level of activity at weekends and in the evening has also reduced.

11.6 Traffic movements would increase, primarily as a result of the increase in pupil numbers (60 additional movements assuming all children arrive singly), although the school has a policy of car sharing, and those pupils who live together off-site would arrive by mini-bus or shared taxis. It is proposed to stagger start times so that the increase for primary age children would be after the main school times for delivery and prior to picking up in the afternoons. The school exits onto the A337, an already heavily trafficked road, and it is not considered that the additional number would have a significant impact onto the road network to the detriment of road safety. However, at the time of writing the views of the Highways Authority have not been received, and members will be updated at committee.

11.7 The comments of the New Forest Association are noted. The school does cater for children with special needs and by definition this would include many who live outside the National Park area, which is also the current situation. However, the school already has many of the facilities, such as shared school management, administration and teaching and pastoral support, and it would seem logical for primary children to be taught on the site and then move through into secondary education without disruption to their education. Separate sites have been looked at and proposed to the National Park Authority in pre-application form, and the advice given by the Authority was that a new school would be unlikely to receive a favourable response, and that a marginal increase in numbers at an existing site would be preferable. The increase is limited and, whilst it would result in some increased activity on the site, it is not considered so significant as to adversely harm the

wider National Park and result in the application being refused.

- 11.8 The comment of the neighbours in relation to "incidences" are also noted. It would appear that only one such case involved near neighbours and was resolved speedily.
- 11.9 Permission is therefore recommended, but the applicant will be advised that no further increases in number are likely to be acceptable.

12. RECOMMENDATION

Grant Subject to Conditions

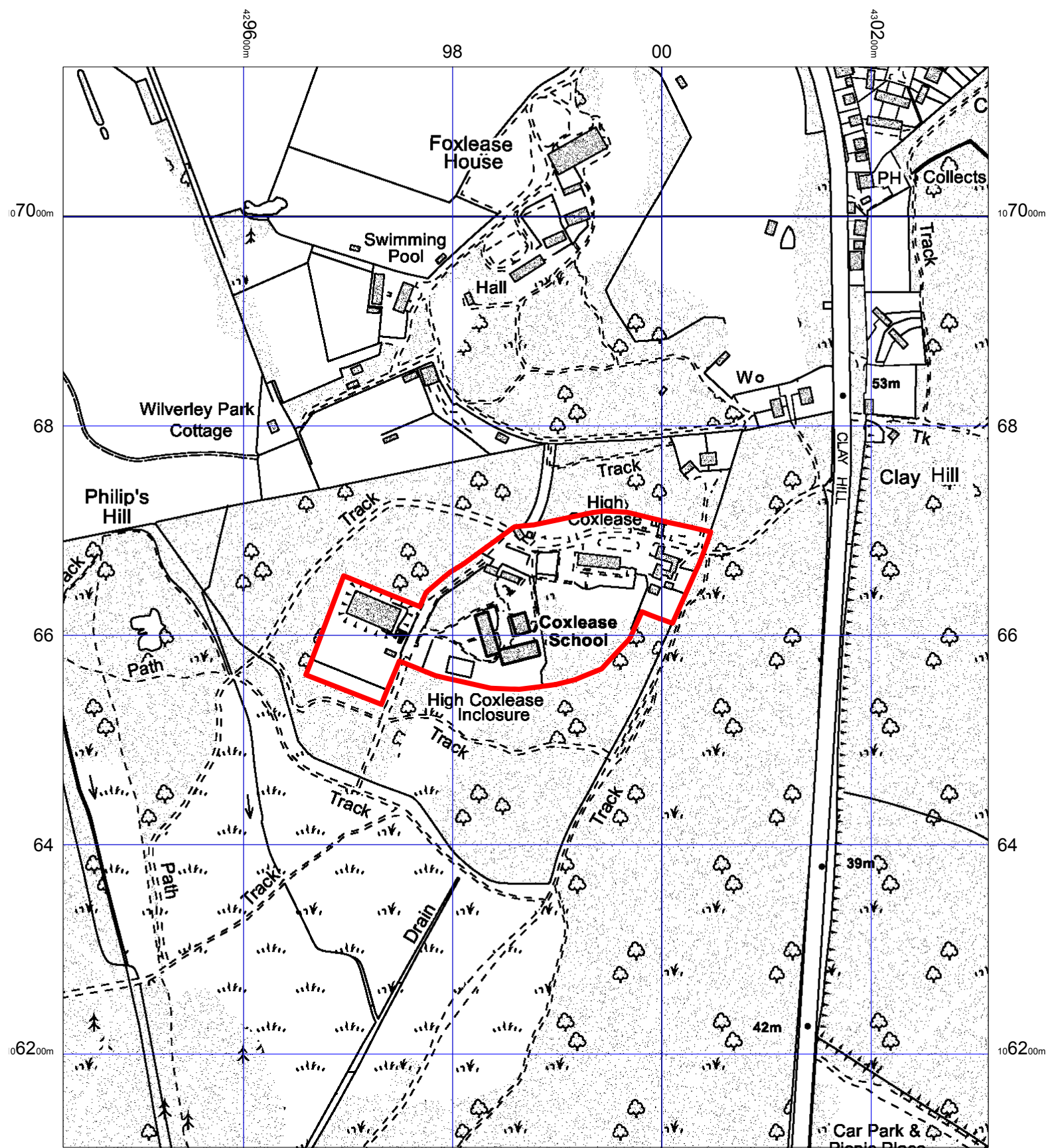
Condition(s)

- 1 The school roll shall comprise no more than 110 pupils attending the site at any time. Records of the schools rolls shall be kept at the site and made available to the New Forest National Park Authority on request.

Reason: To prevent any further intensification in the use of the site and thus to avoid an increase in vehicle movements at a substandard access and additional levels of activity and human pressure on the forest, in accordance with policies DP1 and CP14 of the New Forest National Park Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (DPD) (2010).

Informative(s):

- 1 The applicant/agent is advised that further increases in the number of pupils at the school are unlikely to be granted due to the sensitive nature of the school and its setting, and the impact in the wider area.



New Forest National Park Authority
 Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road,
 Lymington, SO41 9ZG

Tel: 01590 646600 Fax: 01590 646666

Date: 01/08/2016

Ref: 16/00410/VAR

Scale: 1:5000

© Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 1000114703

