



Application Reference:	P0650.18
Location:	Marshalls Park School, Pettits Lane, Romford
Ward:	Pettits
Description	Demolition of single storey former youth centre block and erection of part single storey and part two storey teaching block with associated external works and car parking adaptations to allow 2FE expansion to existing school.
Case Officer:	Suzanne Terry
Reason for Report to Committee:	The application is by or on behalf of the Council and is a significant development.

1 SUMMARY OF KEY REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The application seeks planning permission for demolition of an existing former youth centre block and replacement with a part single storey, part two storey teaching block, to enable a 2 form of entry (2FE) expansion of the school.
- 1.2 The development is acceptable in principle and meets requirements to provide school places within the Borough. The building is well-designed and of scale, mass and external materials which complement the existing school and local character. The development has an acceptable impact on neighbouring amenity and is not judged to result in any material adverse impacts in terms of highways and parking over and above current site conditions. No materially harmful environmental impacts are considered to occur. The proposals are therefore considered to be acceptable.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That upon expiry of the consultee consultation period, the Head of Planning is delegated authority to resolve any material planning issues that arise from the consultation and to GRANT planning permission, subject to conditions to secure the following matters:

Conditions

1. Time Limit – development to be commenced within three years
2. Accordance with Plans
3. External Materials – submission of samples to be used in external construction of the building
4. Hard and Soft Landscaping – details of hard and soft landscaping within the site, including any proposed planting, to be submitted for approval
5. Tree Protection – details of construction methods and tree protection methods to be used to ensure the protection of trees within the site
6. Construction Hours – All building operations in connection with the development only to take place between 08.00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays/Public Holidays
7. Vehicle Cleansing – details of vehicle cleansing facilities to prevent mud being deposited on the public highway during construction works
8. Construction methodology – submission of a detailed Construction Method Statement
9. Parking – alterations and extension to car parking provision to be completed and available for use before the new building is first occupied. The new parking and drop off area to be retained permanently thereafter.
10. Cycle Parking – details of additional cycle storage provision
11. Contaminated land – requirement to submit a Phase III (Remediation Strategy) report if the Phase II report confirms the presence of a pollutant linkage requiring remediation. Following completion of remediation measures a “Verification Report” to be submitted for approval.
12. Bat roosts – requirement for a bat emergence survey to be undertaken prior to works to demolish any buildings on site and, if roosting bats are discovered, further survey works and mitigation measures to be submitted for approval.

Informatives

1. INF28: Approved with no negotiation

2. Flood Resilience: Measures that may be considered as part of the development to improve flood resilience

3. Fire Brigade: Advice to applicant to consider use of sprinklers within the development

4. Jersey Cudweed: Advice to applicant that Jersey Cudweed is a protected species. The presence of the species must continue to be monitored and if the species detected then a mitigation and enhancement strategy to be developed as part of a licence application to Natural England.

2.2 That if material planning issues are raised in consultations that cannot be resolved by the Head of Planning, the application be brought back to committee for determination.

3 PROPOSAL AND LOCATION DETAILS

3.1 Proposal

The application is seeking planning permission for:

- The demolition of a single storey former youth centre block and erection of part single storey and part two storey teaching block.
- The block will be sited on the western side of the school site, on land which lies between the frontage of the school and the boundary with Pettits Lane.
- The building is predominantly two storeys high. It has a maximum length of 53m (excluding the glazed link to the existing school) and has a height of some 8m. The building will be predominantly brick, with detail added by variation in brick bond. Part of the extension will be rendered and there is a glazed section, which links the new building to the existing school.
- The block will primarily provide additional classrooms, together with an activity studio and three new science labs. The facilities will enable a 2 form of entry (2FE) expansion of the school, increasing the school to 8FE and an increase in pupil capacity from 900 to 1200 pupils.
- The proposal includes the reconfiguration of the existing car park at the southern end of the site to provide for a replacement delivery and drop off area, as well as an expansion of the car park towards the southern boundary of the site.

3.2 Site and Surroundings

- Marshalls Park school is situated on the eastern side of Pettits Lane. It consists of a 1930's, red brick school building, with later additions and a comparatively more modern addition at its northern end. There are currently two vehicular accesses from Pettits Lane, one towards the northern end of the

site leading to a delivery/drop off area, and one to the southern end, which provides access to the staff car park. There is an existing school house within the centre of the site frontage, alongside which is a row of trees, predominantly horse chestnut.

- The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character. Residential properties adjoin both the north and south boundaries of the site. There are houses opposite the site. Local character is predominantly generous-sized, detached dwellings, although the properties to the north are low-level flatted development. To the rear, the site shares a boundary with residential properties and Raphaels Park.

4 Planning History

4.1 The following planning decisions are relevant to the application:

P0207.09 - Two storey extension to accommodate changing rooms and dance studio at ground level and offices above. Approved and development implemented.

P1761.17 - Erection of a 2 storey, 6 classroom demountable building. Approved.

P0618.18 - Single storey rear extension and conversion to teachers' accommodation (School House). Approved, not yet implemented.

5 CONSULTATION RESPONSE

5.1 The views of the Planning Service are expressed in the MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS section below.

5.2 The following were consulted regarding the application:

Fire Brigade: No objection raised, recommend use of sprinkler systems.

Fire Brigade (water supply) – confirm no additional fire hydrants needed

Environmental Health: No objection, conditions recommended in relation to contaminated land and hours of construction.

Highways: No objection.

EDF Energy – consultation period not yet expired.

Sport England – consultation period not yet expired

6 LOCAL REPRESENTATION

6.1 A total of 63 neighbouring properties were notified about the application and invited to comment. The application has also been publicised by way of a site notice displayed in the vicinity of the application site and in the local press.

6.2 The number of representations received from neighbours, local groups etc in response to notification and publicity of the application were as follows:

No of individual responses: 3, of which all objected.

Representations

6.3 The following issues were raised in representations that are material to the determination of the application, and they are addressed in substance in the next section of this report:

Objections

- The building is ugly
- Development will make the car park obsolete, with consequent impact on dropping off and picking up

Non-material representations

6.4 The following issues were raised in representations, but they are not material to the determination of the application:

- Existing youth centre has asbestos and removal will be a health and safety risk (OFFICER COMMENT: Asbestos is not a material planning consideration as it is controllable under other legislation. However, the applicant has confirmed that the Council employs a specialist team specifically to deal with asbestos in its buildings and any works would be undertaken in strict adherence to HSE procedures for compliance and public safety.)

7 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 The main planning issues raised by the application that the committee must consider are:

- The principle of development and the need for school places
- The design and visual impact of the building
- Impact on amenity
- Parking and Highway issues
- Environmental impacts, including ecology and impact on trees and landscaping

Principle of Development

- 7.2 All Local Authorities, including Havering, have a statutory duty to ensure that there are enough school places available in the borough to accommodate all children who live in the borough and might require one. Havering is experiencing an increase in demand for school places, which is now filtering through to an increased requirement for secondary school provision.
- 7.3 The NPPF attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of education facilities are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local Authorities are encouraged to take a proactive and positive approach to development that will widen choice in education, with great weight given to the need to create, expand or alter education facilities.
- 7.4 Replicating this, Policy 3.18 of the London Plan details that development proposals which enhance education and skills provision will be supported, including new build, expansion of existing or change of use to educational purposes. Policy DC29 states that the Council will ensure that the provision of primary and secondary education facilities is sufficient to meet the needs of residents by, amongst other things, seeking to meet the need for increased school places within existing sites.
- 7.5 The proposal represents an expansion in the secondary education provision to increase the capacity of the school from 6FE to 8FE, an increase in pupil capacity from 900 to 1200 pupils. The proposal is considered to be a necessary expansion in order for the school to continue to meet the needs of residents as well as future demands from population changes. As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle.

Design and Visual Impact

- 7.6 The development will require the removal of the existing former youth centre block at the northern end of the site. This is a later addition to the original school and no objection is raised to its loss. If the building is found to contain asbestos, this will be safely removed by specialist contractors and is governed by health and safety legislation, that operates outside the planning process.
- 7.7 The proposed new building is a substantial structure and will be sited in a prominent position, lying perpendicular to the site frontage on to Pettits Lane. The scale and mass of the proposed building is however considered to be compatible with existing buildings within the school site. The building does not exceed the height of other buildings within the grounds and is set back from the front boundary. The proposed building is predominantly constructed in red brick, which reflects the character of the original school building. The visual mass of the building is broken down by variations in the brick bond, which also help to reflect the proportions of the original school building. The proposed development is considered to result in a modern expansion to the

school which acceptably reflects the character of the existing school site. The proposal is therefore considered to be compliant with Policy DC61 of the LDF.

Impact on Amenity

- 7.8 The proposed building is situated in excess of 40m from the northern boundary of the site with properties in Great Pettits Court, which is judged sufficient to maintain residential amenity. The block is set in over 7m from the front boundary of the site and separated from facing properties by the public highway. As such, the building is not considered to materially harm the amenity of residents opposite the site. The building is substantially away from the southern site boundary so does not materially affect residents to the south of the site. The building lies some 13m to the north of the school house, partly screened by existing trees. This is considered acceptable and staff also note that planning permission has recently been given to convert this into teachers accommodation.
- 7.9 Whilst the proposals do provide for an expansion in the size of the school, this is a long-standing secondary school site and Staff do not consider the increase in pupil numbers to give rise to a materially greater impact on neighbouring amenity, by reason of noise and activity, compared to the existing conditions. Regard is also had to the fact that increased levels of activity at specific times of day is a reasonable expectation in close proximity to a large school site.
- 7.10 The proposal also includes alterations to the parking provision within the site. The existing vehicular drop off area will be removed but alternative provision will be made via the existing southern site entrance. Additional car parking will be laid out on an existing area of hard surfacing to the southern side of the site, which would lie behind residential properties in Parkland Avenue. This is approximately 5.5m from the shared boundary and this distance is considered sufficient to acceptably maintain neighbouring residential amenity.
- 7.11 Staff note that the expanded parking area would result in the loss of some of the hard surfaced playground within the site, however it would not affect the outdoor PE court and, as such no net loss of sports pitches is considered to result.

Parking and Highway Issues

- 7.12 A Transport Assessment has been submitted with the application. It identifies that the proposed expansion increases pupil capacity, on an incremental basis, by 300 pupils and there would be an increase in staff equivalent to 10 FTE. The school is in a residential area and data from the existing school travel plan indicates that the majority of students (around 79%) currently use sustainable modes of travel, predominantly walking. The school has a travel plan in place. LBH Highways have confirmed that they have no objection to the proposals in terms of travel to and from the site and the impact on the public highway. Staff therefore consider that the proposal would not give rise

to any materially harmful impacts on the functioning of the highway and, as such, the development would comply with Policy DC32 of the LDF.

- 7.13 The proposal will result in the loss of an existing visitor parking and delivery area at the northern end of the site. However, there would be alterations to the car park at the southern end to form a new delivery and drop off area. There would also be the creation of disabled parking bays, two bays for the school mini-buses and 13 additional parking bays. It is considered that this would adequately compensate for the loss of the existing drop off area, as well as creating improved parking facilities within the site overall. Additional cycle parking can be required by condition.

Environmental Impacts

- 7.14 Environmental Health have not raised any air quality issues as a result of the application. A condition relating to contaminated land will however be imposed.
- 7.15 The application site is in flood zone 1 and at low level risk of flooding. It is recommended that threshold levels of buildings are a minimum 300mm above ground level to reduce risk from surface water flooding. An informative relating to flood risk resilience will be included.
- 7.16 There are a number of trees within the application site, most notably an oak tree adjacent to the western site boundary, and a row of horse chestnuts adjacent to the schoolhouse building. The application indicates that all trees of significance on the site would be retained by the development. However, given the proximity of the building and ground works to the oak tree on the frontage, it is recommended that further details of the proposed construction methods and method of protecting this and other trees close to the building during construction works is required by condition.
- 7.17 An ecology report has been submitted with the application. Whilst the report does not identify any protected animal species within the site, Jersey cudweed, a legally protected rare plant species was found within the site. Such species could only be removed from the site by special licence issued by Natural England. More recent surveys of the site indicate that the Jersey cudweed is no longer present and Staff do not therefore believe a condition for mitigation is necessary. It is however recommended that an informative be used to draw the developers attention to the potential presence of a protected plant species and the need to obtain special licence before it can be removed. No evidence of roosting bats was found, although a condition is recommended to require a bat emergence survey to confirm this is the case before demolition works commence.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 All other relevant policies and considerations have been taken into account. Planning permission should be granted for the reasons set out above. The details of the decision are set out in the RECOMMENDATION.