



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

**Strategic Planning
Committee
22 April 2021**

Pre-Application Reference: PE/01351/20

Location: Harris Academy, Lambs Lane South, Rainham

Ward: Rainham & Wennington

Description: Pre app proposal to construct 3 storey sixth form building with associated car parking, landscaping and new access from Wennington road

Case Officer: Habib Neshat

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This proposed development is being presented to enable Members of the committee to view it before a planning application is submitted and to comment upon it. The development does not constitute an application for planning permission and any comments made upon it are provisional and subject to full consideration of any subsequent application and the comments received as a result of consultation, publicity and notification.
- 1.2 This is the first presentation to committee. However, the scheme has been subject to pre application discussion with the applicant for a number of years.

2 PROPOSAL AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposal

- 2.1 The erection of three storey building, L-shape to provide a new 400-place 6th form college for pupils aged 16-19 on the existing site of Harris Academy, with the floor space of 4000sqm.
- 2.2 The disused swimming pool building would be demolished to make way for the new school.

- 2.3 The proposal includes the provision of new access from Wennington Road. The proposal includes car-parking spaces to the front of the proposed college building. Social/amenity spaces are proposed to be positioned between the existing sport hall and the proposed college. Further amenity space would be provided on the north west of the site adjacent to the area allocated for the dining hall within the proposed college building.
- 2.4 The proposal would also include the relocation of a sub-station adjacent to Wennington Road.

Site and Surroundings

- 2.3 This is an existing established school site. The wider site is located on Lambs Lane South but the complex of building also front onto Wennington Road. The current buildings includes the school buildings, playing field, hard surface playing grounds, a covered sport hall and a disused swimming pool building. The site is located at the edge of the built up area of Rainham.
- 2.4 A primary school separates the application site from agricultural land and buildings to the south. To the north and west the existing school buildings separate the site from Academys open playing fields. There are residential buildings to the north of the site.
- 2.5 Apart from the schools, the area is generally suburban residential area with low rise detached and semi-detached housing.
- 2.6 The site is located in the designated Green Belt. There is no other designation.

Planning History

- 2.8 There is no relevant planning history. However, there have been pre-application discussion with the officers since around 2018. Initial discussions were in relation to a proposal for building to the open area to the north of the site on the playing fields. However, the position changed when the existing swimming pool building became redundant.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 At this stage, it is intended that the following will be consulted regarding any subsequent planning application:
- Greater London Authority
 - Children's Services

- Highways
- Transport Planning
- Environmental Health
- Historic England Archaeological Service

3.2 The following consultees have commented as part of the pre-application process:

Children's Services - there is a need for the education facilities proposed.

Highways - subject to a number of amendments, the proposed access to the site from Wennington Road, could be acceptable.

Transport Planning:

- There should be a combined travel plan to demonstrate that there would be a robust travel policy in place that actively promotes, encourages and educates their staff and pupils on the health and environmental benefits of active and sustainable travel.
- Demonstrate a significant level of modal shift away from car use to show that the plan is having a positive effective.
- Deliveries and waste collections for both the Secondary School and Sixth Form could be combined to help reduce number of vehicle movements.
- Vehicle access/movements including deliveries should be restricted during the beginning and end of day.
- Making the entrance to the college more green (tree planting) avoid car park in a prominent position
- Staff cycle parking to be kept separate and lockable – provide for both the Secondary and Sixth Form College.
- There is an overspill of staff parking in the nearby area. We would like to see how this will be tackled/reduced for both the Secondary School and Sixth Form College at earlier stage as there is no current travel plan to refer too.

Environmental Health - Need to demonstrate the environment within the building (light and temperature) would be comfortable.

3.3 The scheme has been subject to examination by the Quality Review Panel. A summary of the comments received is below:

- This an appropriate site for a sixth form college, with both good access to Rainham Station and the potential to integrate into a wider educational campus.
- Any scheme should embrace the entire site, and should not be looked as a standalone project, currently there is poor integration

- A masterplan for the whole campus, showing how the new sixth form is connected within it and identifying how the proposed connections will operate beyond the red line of the sixth form site itself.
- The scale of the building is appropriate the set back of the elevation fronting to Wennington Road is too apologetic for a civic building in this location. The presumed building line of the street is not well-enough established to require such a low-key presence.
- Greater presence on the street could be achieved by relocating the social spaces, including the dining room, to the front of the building and creating a stronger visual connection between the street and the main entrance.
- Better internal and external circulation integration should be achieved – concern over narrow corridors with poor natural light.
- Layout compromises the quality of the public realm, having an industrial appearance,
- Vehicle movement and car parking further undermines the quality and quantity of the available public realm, and the panel would like to see further consideration given to shared access with the wider school campus in order to free up amenity space within the scheme.
- The grassed area of amenity space will likely be unusable and social space needs better treatment. The proposed outdoor dining area appears to be squeezed between fencing and car parking, with no landscape character.
- Better quality landscape required
- The elevations are perhaps too rigidly uniform
- The metal cladding to the elevations feels industrial and utilitarian
- The main entrance to the school is effectively celebrated, but visually disconnected from Wennington Road
- The student entrances are underwhelming and more akin to side entrances.
- Do not demonstrate sustainable quality. Measures should include;
 - Life-cycle assessment of the scheme's carbon impact, including the embodied carbon of the proposed materials and those of the demolished swimming pool. The potential for reusing materials should be fully explored
 - Air-source heat pumps should be a critical component of the scheme's energy strategy, and the rationale for the number and location of the proposed PV panels should be clarified.
 - Solar shading.
 - More detail re ventilation
 - Water strategy,
 - Green or living roofs should be explored,
 - Enhance the scheme's contribution to biodiversity.

4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1 The applicant is currently in the process of engagement with the local community.

5 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

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

- Principle of development; whether the education facility would be acceptable in this location which is designated Green Belt.
- impact on openness of the Green Belt
- the height, layout and massing of the proposal
- design and layout of space around the proposed building
- the integration of the proposed building with the existing context including impact on the streetscene
- the scale and quality of the external amenity space for the 400 pupils; the quality of the internal space, particularly social/communal areas and circulation
- energy efficiency, particularly how ventilation, natural light and solar shading can be used to minimise overheating to classrooms
- highways, Car parking issues;
- active travel strategy, the quantum of car parking, cycle storage, and how it affects the layout of the proposed development
- general access to the site / building pedestrian and vehicular

5.2 In principle the provision of improved and additional education facilities for the Borough is supported and accords with planning policies in the NPPF, London Plan, LDF and draft Local Plan. The site is in the Green Belt and the impact on openness would need to be carefully assessed. Although the siting of the building to replace existing swimming pool building and within the envelope of the built up part of the site may limit the loss of openness, it still may be necessary to demonstrate sufficient very special circumstances to outweigh any identified harm to the Green Belt.

5.3 There will need to be an assessment of the quality of the proposal in design terms, impact on street scene and standard of provision for pupils and staff.

5.4 The impact of the additional educational provision on the highway network including parking, together with measures to promote sustainable forms of travel will need careful consideration.

Financial and Other Mitigation

5.5 At this stage, it is not clear whether any financial contribution or other control would be required through a S106 agreement. This would depend on the likely transport implications and any necessary mitigation identified.

5.6 As an educational use, the proposal would not be liable to Mayoral or Havering CIL contribution

Conclusions

- 5.7 The development is still in the pre-application stage and additional work remains to be carried out on it. Members comments on the proposal would be useful in developing the proposal further to planning submission.