



REPORT

REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

5 December 2013

Subject Heading:

**P1215.13: Towers Junior School,
Windsor Road, Hornchurch, RM11 1PD**

**Erection of an extension to the existing junior school building to increase the capacity of the school from 2 form entry to 3 form entry. Demolition of existing school caretaker's house, erection of timber decking, reconfiguration of car parking spaces, and new landscaping works.
(Application received 25 October 2013).**

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Policy context:

**Local Development Framework
London Plan, Planning Policy
Statements/Guidance Notes**

Financial summary:

None

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Clean, safe and green borough	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellence in education and learning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of every individual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

The proposal is for an extension, decking area and reconfiguration of car park and access to the existing junior school building to increase the capacity of the school from 2 form entry to 3 form entry, it would include the demolition of existing school caretaker's house with associated new landscaping works

The application site comprises Council owned land and the planning merits of the application are considered separately from the land interest.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in all material respects and it is recommended that planning permission is granted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Time Limit – The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Materials – All new external finishes shall be carried out in materials to match those of the existing building(s) and samples of the materials to be used shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any of the works hereby permitted.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the premises and the character of the immediate area and to accord with Policy DC61 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

3. Accordance with plans - The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans, particulars and specifications.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority consider it essential that the whole of the development is carried out and that no departure whatsoever is made from the details approved, since the development would not necessarily be acceptable if partly carried out or carried out differently in any degree from the details submitted. Also, in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

4. Travel Plan - Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted, a revision to the existing Travel Plan which reflects the increase in pupil numbers shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The revised Travel Plan shall include a review of walking routes and conditions in the area around the school and measures to reduce private vehicular trips and proposals for monitoring and reporting progress to the Local Planning Authority and include a timetable for its implementation and review. The approved Travel Plan as revised shall remain in force permanently and implemented in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To help bring about a reduction in private car journeys, to minimise the potential for increased on street parking in the area, to mitigate the impact of increased private car journeys at peak times and to accord with Policy DC32. To ensure the interests of pedestrians and address desire lines and to accord with Policy DC34.

5. Landscaping & existing tree root protection - No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping and all existing trees which are not directly affected by the buildings and works hereby approved shall be clearly located and described in the required landscaping scheme. Such trees shall be retained and shall not be lopped, topped, felled, pruned, have their roots severed or be uprooted or their soil levels within the tree canopy altered at any time unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details of root protection measures shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority in conjunction with the proposed landscaping scheme. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised within the scheme shall be carried out in the first planting season following completion of the development and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local Planning Authority.

Reason: In accordance with Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to enhance the visual amenities of the development, and that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61

6. Construction Hours - All building operations in connection with the construction of external walls, roof, and foundations; site excavation or other external site works; works involving the use of plant or machinery; the

erection of scaffolding; the delivery of materials; the removal of materials and spoil from the site, and the playing of amplified music shall only take place between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday, and between 8.00am and 1.00pm on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays/Public Holidays.

Reason: To protect residential amenity, and in order that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

7. Construction Methodology Statement - Before development is commenced, a scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority making provision for a Construction Method Statement to control the adverse impact of the development on the amenity of the public and nearby occupiers. The Construction Method statement shall include details of:

- a) Parking of vehicles of site personnel and visitors;
- b) Storage of plant and materials;
- c) Dust management controls;
- d) Measures for minimising the impact of noise and, if appropriate, vibration arising from construction activities;
- e) predicted noise and, if appropriate, vibration levels for construction using methodologies and at points agreed with the Local Planning Authority;
- f) Scheme for monitoring noise and if appropriate, vibration levels using methodologies and at points agreed with the Local Planning Authorities;
- g) siting and design of temporary buildings;
- h) Scheme for security fencing/hoardings, depicting a readily visible 24-hour contact number for queries or emergencies;
- i) Details of disposal of waste arising from the construction programme, including final disposal points. The burning of waste on the site at any time is specifically precluded.

And the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme and statement.

Reason: To protect residential amenity, and in order that the development accords the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

9. Roof terrace- The roof area of the extension hereby permitted shall not be used as a balcony, roof garden or similar amenity area without the grant of further specific permission from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring dwelling, and in order that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

INFORMATIVES

1. Statement Required by Article 31 (cc) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management) Order 2010: No significant problems were identified during the consideration of the application, and therefore it has been determined in accordance with paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
2. The applicant is advised that planning approval does not constitute approval for changes to the public highway. Highway Authority approval will only be given after suitable details have been submitted considered and agreed. The Highway Authority requests that these comments are passed to the applicant. Any proposals which involve building over the public highway as managed by the London Borough of Havering, will require a licence and the applicant must contact StreetCare, Traffic & Engineering on 01708 433750 to commence the Submission/ Licence Approval process.
3. Should this application be granted planning permission, the developer, their representatives and contractors are advised that this does not discharge the requirements under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and the Traffic Management Act 2004. Formal notifications and approval will be needed for any highway works (including temporary works) required during the construction of the development.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Site Description

- 1.1 The application site is Towers Junior School which measures 0.59 hectares and is located within a rectangular site bounded by Windsor Road to the South and Towers Infant School to the North. Between the two school sites to the centre of the site is a large expanse of playing field. The school site is currently made up of inter-connecting single storey buildings; however the school hall and new entrance building are double height.
- 1.2 To the south west of the school building is a two storey detached house which was previously occupied by the school caretaker, this building is now vacant. To the front of the school entrance and along the access way is the school parking.
- 1.3 Access to the application site is via Windsor Road to the south. The application site is located within a predominantly residential area and is joined on the south, east and west by one and two storey housing with associated rear gardens.
- 1.4 The topology of the site is on a gradient which slopes down towards the south east of the site.

2. Description of Proposal

- 2.1 To accommodate an increase in demand for school places within the Borough Towers Infant and Junior Schools have opted to extend their student intake. To accommodate this increase in pupil numbers additional classrooms and learning space is required. Towers Infant School is in the process of being extended having gained consent in March 2013.
- 2.2 For Towers Junior School the proposal is to demolish the existing, vacant, caretakers house and build an extension to the south west of the school building, providing 4 new classrooms, toilets, cooking facilities and ICT area. With an increase from 2 form to 3 form entry the extension will allow for the existing school to be reconfigured to create 'cluster groups' where there will be four areas across the school each containing a year 3, 4, 5 and 6 class.
- 2.3 The extension is being built to accommodate an additional 120 pupils and 6 new staff, and the overall building is formed by three connecting blocks and would measure 23.3 metres depth (maximum), 21.9 metres width (maximum) and would be approximately 375 square metres floor area footprint in total.
- 2.4 The proposal also includes an additional 11 formal car parking spaces. There are currently 11 official spaces, although informal parking takes place on the access road from Windsor Road. The proposal is to formalise this parking by removing one of the footways on the access road to accommodate 6 of the 11 spaces as mentioned.
- 2.5 The extension would also include two timber decking areas to the rear of the proposed extension. It would adjoin both flanks of the proposed central block which would connect the new extension to the existing school.
- 2.6 The plans show an introduction of new trees to the south-west corner of the site in front of the proposed extension and also a new tree to the proposed decking area adjacent to the western boundary.
- 2.7 It is noted that some of the proposed plans under this application show the repositioned bin storage and a new detached store building on the south-east corner of the application site. These do not form part of the application under consideration.

3. Relevant History

- 3.1 The school has had numerous previous extensions. The most recent planning history is set out below:
- P1466.06 - Various single storey classroom extensions and alterations. Approved.

- P0265.08 - To install a cycle shelter. Approved.
- P0675.09 - Proposed single storey front and side extension including new entrance and access ramps to front and side of building. Approved.
- N0023.09 Minor Amendment to P0675.09 - Approved
 - Minor revision to parapet entrance levels
 - Parapet height of new build has been raised, no longer aligns with existing
 - Painted pattern proposed to one of the main walls to the entrance and underside of canopy
 - Relocation of existing bin store

Although not on the Junior school site, there is an extant planning permission under planning reference P1501.12 within the adjoining Towers Infant school site to the north, this was for a similar proposal for a; Single storey extension with 3 classrooms and hard standing play area and an extension to the car park. This was approved by committee on 14th March 2013.

4. Consultations/Representations

4.1 Notification letters were sent to 98 neighbouring properties, 3 letters of objection were received with detailed comments that have been summarised as follows;

- Noise and Disturbance from additional people associated with the proposed extension
- Inadequate parking provisions for staff, parents and other visitors
- Increase in hardstanding
- Traffic Issues and Congestion as a result of the additional vehicles
- Provision to be made for trees in the area

The above points would be addressed within the report detail paragraphs below.

4.2 Highways Authority – No objections subject to the appropriate conditions and informatives.

4.3 Tree officer – No objections, Arboricultural report is satisfactory, however would need to clarify the species of the trees, the proposed decking area and the building number '19' on the plans.

- 4.4 Environmental Protection – No objections and confirmed that the submitted report on Comino is satisfactory and meets the regulatory regime for contaminated land.

5 Relevant Policies

- 5.1 Policies CP17 (Design), DC29 (Educational Premises), DC33 (Car parking), DC34 (Walking), DC35 (Cycling) and DC61 (Urban Design) of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Documents are material planning considerations. In addition, Policies 3.18 (Educational facilities), 6.13 (Parking) and 7.4 (Local character) of the London Plan and Chapters 7 (Requiring good design) and 8 (Promoting healthy communities) of the National Planning Policy Framework are relevant.

6. Staff Comments

- 6.1 This proposal is put before the Committee owing to the land being Council owned. The issues arising in respect of this application and which will be addressed through this report are the principle of development, impact on the streetscene and design, amenity issues and parking and highways implications.

7. Principle of Development

- 7.1 The application relates to additions and alterations to an existing educational use to provide four new classrooms, hard standing play areas and an extension to the car park. The proposal is acceptable in principle and complies with LDF Policy DC29.
- 7.2 Paragraph 72 of the NPPF states that the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:
- give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and
 - work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

Therefore the principle of the development in terms of its use is considered acceptable

8. Design and Appearance

- 8.1 Policy DC61 seeks to ensure that all new developments are satisfactorily located and are of a high standard of design and layout. In this regard it is important that the appearance of any new development is compatible with the character of the local street scene and the surrounding area.
- 8.2 The proposal would see the removal of no fewer than 7 buildings in which the biggest would be the caretaker's house, which were built circa the late 1960s and are constructed with red brick and flat felt roofs. Staff consider the removal of the group of buildings and replacement with a modern design building would result in an improvement in appearance.
- 8.3 The proposed extension to the existing southern elevation would be of a contemporary design consisting of three distinct sections all being flat roofed. This is located on a higher gradient than the majority of the school.
- 8.4 The central section would be glazed on all elevations and would be the tallest one at 6 metres in height which would match the height of the existing hall. This section would contain cooking and ICT facilities.
- 8.5 The two flank sections either side of the central glazed corridor containing two class rooms each side would be lower at 4 metres in height and would project slightly forward to the central block mentioned above, it would be constructed of rendered grey walls with central glazed openings.
- 8.6 The layout of the extension has been designed to be flexible in how it is used to accommodate out of hours school and community clubs.
- 8.7 The design and materials proposed would differ to the design of the existing school. However staff consider the size, scale and bulk is in-keeping with the proportions of the school.
- 8.8 The contemporary designed block would complement the existing main entrance of the school which is also of a modern design with a simple rectangular design and flat roof, it would also be very similar in size. It would also be similarly matching with the new ICT block which is also modern in design and rendered in grey which is to the east elevation.
- 8.9 It is considered that the flat roofed extension, new car parking and buildings would not be harmful to the streetscene. It is considered that the extension has been designed in sympathy with the existing school building and is set back from the highway by approximately 60 metres.
- 8.10 The proposed formalised parking spaces on the access from Windsor Road is considered to make a minimal visual appearance difference to surrounding area, the difference would be the removal of the footway to accommodate additional off-street vehicle parking spaces which is considered more beneficial than the additional vehicles parked on the street within the surrounding area.

8.11 Staff are satisfied that the proposed development would sufficiently complement the existing buildings. The development is considered to be acceptable and accords with the principles of Policy DC61

9. Impact on Amenity

9.1 Policy DC61 of the LDF requires new development not to harm the amenities of adjoining occupiers by reason of noise and disturbance, loss of light, overlooking or other impacts.

9.2 The most affected neighbouring properties would be Nos.110-116 Grosvenor Drive to the west of the extension and No.4-12 Windsor Road, these houses are characterised by over 25-30 metre long rear gardens.

9.3 The proposed extension would be sited approximately 27 metres away from the rear elevations of the closest neighbouring properties as mentioned above.

9.4 Staff consider that there would not be any overlooking from the glazed openings of the extension from any of the elevations, as these windows only serve ground floor level rooms, there is no upper floor within the extensions.

9.5 The south and west elevation of the application site is enclosed by an existing fence and some vegetation ranging between the heights of 2-3 metres. The application also proposes additional trees on the south-west corner of the application site and this would be conditioned. It is judged that this would be sufficient to successfully mitigate against any likely harmful impacts towards the adjoining residents of No.2-10 Windsor Road.

9.6 It is recognised that an additional 120 pupils would increase noise and disturbance, although this would be balanced against pupils utilising the whole of the school site. Given the nature, extent and position of the proposed extension and related uses, any level of noise and disturbance would be contained within the existing building and seen against the background of existing school activity.

9.7 It is acknowledged that increasing the parking on site would create additional activity on the access, especially next to No. 16-18 Windsor Road and 151-153 Lyndhurst Drive. However, it is noted that the additional parking spaces are for staff and therefore, they will only be used during term time and would not be in constant use. It is also noted that these spaces are currently informally used. As such, it is considered there would not be a material increase in noise and disturbance to these neighbours as a result from the proposals.

9.8 Staff are therefore satisfied that the proposed development is sufficiently well enough removed from residential properties and unlikely to result in any material harm. The development is considered to be acceptable and accords with the principles of Policy DC61.

10. Parking and highway issues

- 10.1 As mentioned above, the proposal also includes an additional 11 formal car parking spaces, there are currently 11 official spaces, although informal parking takes place on the access road from Windsor Road and the proposal is to formalise this parking by removing one of the footways on the access road to accommodate it.
- 10.2 Full time teaching staff at the school would increase from 20 to 26 and there would be 22 spaces in total. This is slightly below the standard required schools, which is 1 parking space per teaching staff, however the Highway Authority has no objection to the proposals.
- 10.3 Near the application site, both Osborne Road to the north and Hornchurch Road to the south are well served by buses. Going to and from Romford at regular intervals from Osborne Road, and to and from Romford, Cranham, Harold Wood from Hornchurch Road.
- 10.4 However a planning condition is suggested relating to the submission of a Travel Plan, which can incorporate and update walking routes and seek to reduce private vehicular trips.

11. Other Issues

- 11.1 There are a number of trees to the western boundary, three of the main trees on the boundary would be removed for safety measures, and 6 of them would be removed to make way for the new extension. Adjacent to the car park there would be a single plum tree to be removed.
- 11.2 Staff recommend that a landscaping condition be imposed to ensure that suitable replacement planting is carried out together with details of root protection measures for the trees that are to be retained.

12. Mayoral CIL implications

- 12.1 The extension is ancillary to the Junior school, educational uses are exempt from CIL payments, as such the CIL liability would be zero.

13. Conclusion

- 13.1 The proposals meet the main aims of both local and national policies and seek to ensure that efficient use is made of educational land in order to provide a varied range of opportunities. The proposals would complement and improve on the existing facilities offered by the school and enable an expanded range of training opportunities, consistent with the aims of planning policies.
- 13.2 In view of the statutory requirements for schools to provide educational space in line with growing needs, the proposed extension would be

consistent with design Policy DC61, with no detrimental impact on visual amenity. The improved access and natural pedestrian circulation to the building and the activities within it is supported and in line with Policies DC34 and DC62 of the LDF.

- 13.3 Having regard to all relevant factors and material planning considerations staff are of the view that this proposal for an extension, decking and configuration to the car park would be acceptable. Staff are of the view that the proposal would not have an impact on the streetscene or result in a loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in all other respects and it is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None directly affecting the Council.

Legal implications and risks:

The application site comprises Council owned land and the planning merits of the application are considered separately from the land interest.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None relating directly to the proposal.

Equalities implications and risks:

The development is a community facility and has been designed to ensure inclusivity of access. It has been designed to meet DDA standards for access.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Application form, drawings and supporting statement received on 8th October 2013.