

TWC/2020/0357

Telford Langley School, Duce Drive, Dawley, Telford, Shropshire, TF4 3JS
Erection of a new teaching block ***amended plans received***

APPLICANT

Telford & Wrekin Council

RECEIVED

27/04/2020

PARISH

Great Dawley

WARD

Dawley and Aqueduct, Malinslee and
Dawley Bank

AS THE COUNCIL IS THE LANDOWNER/APPLICANT, THIS APPLICATION IS TO BE DETERMINED BY MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE.

Online planning file:

<https://secure.telford.gov.uk/planning/pa-applicationsummary.aspx?applicationnumber=TWC/2020/0357>

1. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 It is recommended that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT FULL PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to conditions, informatives and the applicant entering in to a Memorandum of Understanding to secure financial contributions to monitor a Travel Plan.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This is a full application for the erection of a new teaching block at Telford Langley School, Duce Drive, Dawley, Telford, TF4 3JS.
- 2.2 The proposed teaching block has an internal gross floor area of 2142sqm comprising of 14 general teaching rooms, 1 Special Educational Needs rooms, 1 nurture room, 2 group rooms and associated supporting provisions (toilets, plant etc.)
- 2.3 The application is supported by the following:
- Design and Access Statement,
 - Ecology Report,
 - Transport Assessment
 - Framework School Travel Plan
 - Coal Mining Risk Assessment
 - Flood Risk Assessment
- 2.4 Amended drawings relating to the external design of the building and its landscaping have been provided, as well as additions to the Design & Access

Statement and Ecological Assessment relating to the loss of Green Network. These were all submitted at the request of the Planning Officer.

- 2.5 The applicants undertook a pre-application enquiry earlier in the year and the advice given was that the development may be acceptable following amendments to the design and greater justification/understanding on the impact/loss of the Green Network and the sites recreational use. It was recognised by the Council's Healthy Spaces Officer that this part of the site is not being used to the same level as the remainder of the sports facility and its loss from a recreational perspective would not be significant, but that the applicant should undertake a formal consultation with Sports England.

3. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The application site is located within the built up area of Telford & Wrekin and falls within the Green Network. There are no nearby Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas.
- 3.2 The existing school site is 66,000sqm site. The Telford Langley School is a 900 place secondary school in the Dawley, Telford. Previously known as Phoenix Academy, the existing school building was opened in 2013. Part of the building is occupied by the NHS, including a suite of consulting rooms, offices and a fitness suite which is shared with the school. The school was designed with extensive sports facilities to support the school's sports specialism.
- 3.3 The site is located within the Coal Authority High Risk Area and a Coal Mining Risk Assessment supports the application.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 TWC/2010/0036 - Outline application for a mixed use development of 35.3 hectares of vacant land at Dawley and Malinslee comprising of a new school and associated sports pitches, retail units, residential dwellings, a nature park, a childrens playground, BMX track, public open space, landscaping and rights of way and associated works (outline) – Outline Granted. 12/08/2010.
- 4.2 TWC/2011/0591 - Erection of a 900 place Secondary School (incorporating ancillary office and consulting space), community sports facilities and associated car parking and works ***Amended description and amended plans/information received*** - Reserved matters granted. 18/11/2011.

5. RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS

- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 5.2 Telford and Wrekin Local Plan (2011-2031)
 - SP1 Telford
 - SP4 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 - NE1 Biodiversity and geodiversity
 - NE2 Trees hedgerows and woodlands
 - NE6 Green Network
 - COM1 Community Faculties
 - C3 Implications of development on highways
 - C5 Design of parking
 - BE1 Design Criteria
 - BE9 Land stability
 - ER11 Sewerage systems and water quality
 - ER12 Flood Risk Management

6. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 Neighbouring occupiers were consulted upon receipt of the application with one letter received from the occupiers of 3 New Road, but they did not object to the application nor raise any material planning considerations. No further letters were received following a re-consultation of the revised plans and supporting documentation.
- 6.2 The occupier of 3 New Road said they could not decipher from the submitted information how/if the proposal would impact upon their property. 3 New Road lies on the southern side of the Portley Corner traffic light junction and any perceived impact would be minimal given that the site lies in excess of 250m to the north and is shielded in part by existing housing and landscaping. It is considered therefore that any impact on this neighbour is minimal.

7. STATUTORY REPRESENTATIONS

Standard Representations:

- 7.1 Great Dawley Parish Council: No comments received.
- 7.2 Ward Councillors: No comments received.
- 7.3 Highways: Support subject to conditions

The Local Plan (LP) Parking Standards for a D1 Use Class require 1 space per 1 staff, plus drop-off parking spaces. With regards to the level of parking available within the site, the Transport Statement states that there are 134 spaces, with 98 Full Time Equivalent existing staff, and an additional 22 staff required for the proposed teaching block. The Transport Statement includes a Parking Survey, which suggests that there is spare capacity within the school car parks to accommodate some pick up/drop off parking. It is therefore considered that the level of parking meets the LP parking requirements of 120 spaces + pickup and drop off spaces.

There is currently no effective Travel Plan in place for the school and the Framework Travel Plan submitted alongside the Application is noted as deficient in some areas following review by the Council's Travel Plan Coordinator; these comments can be provided in full to the Applicant upon their request. The lack of an existing effective Travel Plan is illustrated within the findings of the Transport Statement, which states that of the 70 existing cycle parking spaces, conveniently located within the site, only 6 cycles were observed to be parked. This indicates the potential for a large modal shift towards cycling, which can be brought about by the introduction of a new, robust, Travel Plan. Subsequently, the Local Highway Authority will be requesting a condition pertaining to the implementation of a Travel Plan, along with a monitoring contribution, in addition to the upgrading of the existing cycle parking facilities to ensure policy compliance and to promote greater utilisation.

Although it is considered that the above measures will go some way to offsetting the new vehicular trips associated with the new teaching block, it is essential that the operational capacity and safety of the staggered 4-arm signal junction at Portley Corner, as a result of the additional development traffic, is safeguarded. To note this specific matter was outlined by the LHA during pre-application discussions with the applicant. Therefore, in order to mitigate any residual vehicular impact, it is considered appropriate that a MOVA intelligent traffic signal system is implemented at the Portley Corner signal junction. It is understood that there are plans to install such a system in the short to medium term and the LHA are satisfied with the certainty of the delivery of such a scheme to feel there should be no specific planning obligation on this application to deliver such works.

7.4 Drainage: Support subject to conditions

While we are broadly happy with the proposals, there is a known drainage issues from the existing land drainage serving the school. The development should ensure that no runoff from the new areas of hardstanding drains towards green spaces and this should all be picked up in a positive drainage

system. If the proposed drainage is connected into the existing system serving the school, the drainage scheme will need to demonstrate that this additional area of drainage does not impact of the design capacity/return period of the existing system. A surface water drainage condition should be imposed.

7.5 Arboriculture: Support subject to conditions

- No comments received.
- Comments received at pre-app confirmed that the trees planted during the construction of the main school are still early in their life and therefore their removal would not be significant but that they should be replaced in alternative locations around the development site.

7.6 Ecology: Support subject to conditions

Habitats

The site comprises an area of regularly cut amenity grassland within the existing school grounds, there is a small shed and raised bed allotment present and a small pond just offsite. There are no habitats of principal importance for nature conservation present on the site.

Great Crested Newts

There is a small pond within the school grounds just outside the development area, the pond scores 0.47 on the Habitat Suitability Index scale but is considered to have probable presence of great crested newts following conversations with staff on the site. The pond is surrounded by an area of suitable terrestrial habitat and will not be impacted by the proposed development. No habitats with terrestrial value for great crested newts will be impacted by the development – the areas to be impacted are low value and easily inspected.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal contains a detailed reasonable avoidance measures method statement to be followed during the works and the Council's Ecologist are satisfied that the measures set out are sufficient to further reduce the low risk of newts being discovered during the works.

There is no potential habitats for nesting birds or reptiles which are affected by the development.

Green Network

The site is part of the designated Green Network under Local Plan policy NE6. The Design and Access Statement (DAS) sets out the six criteria of the

Green Network and how this development will not impact upon the functions of the Green Network within this area of Telford. The Council's Ecologists are satisfied that sufficient information is provided within the DAS to show that this development will not be detrimental to the functioning of the Green Network under policy NE6.

Conditions imposed requiring the development to be undertaken in accordance with the Ecological Survey, any external lighting plan to be submitted and approved prior to installation, and an informative for nesting wild birds.

7.7 Sport England: No objection

It is acknowledged that the proposed site affects an area of the site intended for use as Artificial Grass Pitches (AGP). There are unaware of any evidence that there has previously been a playing pitch demarked on the site and note that the width of the playing field would practically limit the potential, save perhaps for U7-8s pitches. It is noted that the school has an extensive areas of playing fields and other outdoor sports facilities which are extensively used by the wider community, in addition to the school.

Given the extensive areas of playing field available the loss of the throwing area is unlikely to result in a significant impact on the provision of facilities for sport.

Having assessed the application, Sport England is satisfied that the proposed development meets exception 3 of our playing fields policy, in that:

The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- reduce the size of any playing pitch
- result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);
- reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;
- result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or
- prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site.'

This being the case, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application.

7.8 Healthy Spaces: No comment.

7.9 The Coal Authority: Support subject to conditions

Based on a review of relevant sources of coal mining and geological information, and the results of previous investigatory and remedial works, the report recognises that the application site lies in an area where coal mining activity has taken place and acknowledges the presence of mine entries within the site. Nevertheless, the report author is able to conclude that mine entries, opencast mining and past shallow underground mining activity do not pose constraints to the proposed development. No further investigations or remedial works are proposed in this regard.

The Coal Mining Risk Assessment report does, however, recommend that gas monitoring is carried out in order to inform any necessary gas protection measures. The Coal Authority recommends that the LPA seek comments on this matter from the Council's Environmental Health / Public Protection Team.

In light of the above, the Coal Authority wishes to raise no objection to this planning application. Although the proposed development is outside of the defined development High Risk Area, as it lies within an area where coal mining activity has taken place, it is requested that an appropriate informative is placed on the decision notice.

7.10 Public Protection: No comments received

- Condition imposed for gas monitoring as advised by the Coal Authority.

7.11 Cadent Gas: No objection subject to an informative

Affected Apparatus

The apparatus that has been identified as being in the vicinity of your proposed works is:

- Low or Medium pressure (below 2 bar) gas pipes and associated equipment. (As a result it is highly likely that there are gas services and associated apparatus in the vicinity)

Informative to be added.

7.12 Shropshire Fire Service: Standard Fire Informative

8. APPRAISAL

- ### 8.1
- Having regard to the development plan policy and other material considerations including comments received during the consultation process, the main planning considerations are:

- The principle of development;
- Loss of Green Network/Sports Facilities
- Impact on neighbouring amenities;
- Highway Safety
- Massing, Design & Visual Impact
- Drainage or Other Material Considerations

8.1 The principle of development

8.1.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the development plan consists of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan (TWLP) and the Waters Upton Neighbourhood Plan. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out policy guidance at a national level and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

8.1.1.2 The site is located within the Telford built up area where the principle of new build development is generally acceptable and is therefore in accordance with the general principles of Policy SP1.

8.1.1.3 The site does not form part of a Conservation Area and neither are there any nearby listed buildings which may be effected by the proposal. However, the sites does form part of the Green Network as discussed below.

8.2 Loss of Green Network/Sport Facilities

8.2.1 The site forms part of the Green Network which is protected by the provisions of Policy NE6 of the Local Plan. Land included within the Green Network has been designated for one or more of the six functions listed in the policy sub-text.

8.2.2 This site was designated primarily due to its recreational value but the applicants were required to look at all the functions of the Green Network and provide justification as to how/if the proposal would cause any impact and if an adverse impact was identified, how the benefits could outweigh any perceived harm.

8.2.3 During the course of the application, both the Design & Access Statement and Ecological Assessment were updated to provide greater clarity on the loss of Green Network.

- 8.2.4 Both Sports England and TWC's Healthy Spaces Officer have confirmed that this part of the site is highly underutilised for sports, particularly given the extensive wider sports facilities and pitches available at Telford Langley. Therefore, the sites main function as Green Network is now considered to be negligible in the overall site strategy and its loss would not be considered significant.
- 8.2.5 In terms of visual amenity, it is considered that the site does provide some views to the surrounding landscape but these are obstructed by fencing/buildings associated with the adjoining sports facilities and the access/levels associated with this area of the site.
- 8.2.6 The Ecological Assessment submitted by the applicant has been assessed by the Council's Ecology Officer, and the site was found to have limited habitat potential.
- 8.2.7 Whilst it is acknowledged that the land contributes to providing separation between built-up areas, this parcel of land is only a small portion of the overall sports facility. It is well associated to the built form of the adjoining school/sports facility and nestles between this and existing residential dwellings to the west, and would therefore not be a significant intrusion into any open aspect.
- 8.2.8 The site has no geotechnical or archaeological value.
- 8.2.9 The interconnectivity of the surrounding area will be unaffected by this development. A public footpath aligns the western boundary of the site and another passes through the school site to the north. Both will remain open and unaffected by this proposal.
- 8.2.10 It is therefore considered on balance that as the primary recreational function of the land is no longer required, that the land is best utilised by the school for alternative purposes. There is a clear demand for additional secondary school places and we therefore believe that the benefits of the scheme, in this case, outweigh the minimal harm identified by the loss of Green Network.
- 8.3 Impact on neighbouring amenities
- 8.3.1 The site is bound on three sides by the existing school/sports facility. Residential properties are located on the western boundary, separated by existing landscaping and a public footpath.
- 8.3.2 The side elevation of the proposed school building and the side elevation

of the nearest property known as 14 New Street, are separated by a 35m distance. In addition to this, they are set at different levels (as shown on the cross-sections which support the application) and screened with appropriate mature landscaping either side of the public footpath.

8.3.3 No objections have been received by neighbours living on New Street.

8.3.4 As such it is considered that the scheme preserves neighbouring amenity by virtue of the separation distances, level differences and existing mature landscaping.

8.4 Highway Safety

8.4.1 As is noted above, the scheme meets the Local Plan parking standards for car parking and the Parking Survey undertaken by the Applicant's Highways Consultants identified that there was spare capacity (there are 134 existing spaces and 120 are required for the existing and proposed scheme combined).

8.4.2 There is currently no effective Travel Plan in place for the school and the Framework Travel Plan submitted in support of the application is noted as being deficient. The findings of the Transport Statement demonstrate this as it identified that only 6 of the 70 cycle spaces were observed being used and there is therefore a potential large modal shift towards cycling. A condition has been imposed pertaining to the submission and implementation of a new robust Travel Plan along with a £5k monitoring contribution.

8.4.3 Whilst the Travel Plan will go some way to offsetting any new vehicular trips associated with the new teaching block, it is essential that the operational capacity and safety of the staggered 4-arm signal junction at Portley Corner, as a result of the additional development traffic, is safeguarded. A MOVA intelligent traffic signal system is required at the Portley Corner signal junction. It is understood that there are plans to install such a system in the short to medium term and Officers are content with the certainty of the delivery of such a scheme, to feel there should be no specific planning obligation on this application to deliver such works.

8.4.4 As such, subject to conditions and a monitoring contribution for the Travel Plan, it is considered that the development will not have a significant impact on the highway network.

8.5 Massing, Design & Visual Impact

8.5.1 Policy BE1 of the TWLP provides guidance to assess whether or not proposals are of an appropriate design quality and relate positively to their context. It advises the Council to assess proposed development in relation to its scale, massing, form, density, orientation and layout, proportions, materials, landscape elements, access, parking and spatial quality. The Council will support development which seeks to respect and respond positively to its context, demonstrating an integrated design approach and respecting its landscape setting.

8.5.2 The overall facility which currently exists at Telford Langley comprises a number of architecturally unique but cohesive blocks which form the main entrance/foyer, the sports centre and the teaching block; making for a very attractive elevation facing Duce Drive/High Street. The scheme submitted during the pre-application enquiry sought to mirror the existing teaching block and keep an element of continuity with this design, but it was considered by the Planning Officer that in simply repeating the style, it added greater horizontal emphasis on an already prominent elevated position (being highly visible from Finger Road).

8.5.3 The Planning Officer made suggestions including but not limited to:

- The building should represent the school in terms of design but be a clear evolution of the facility;
- Incorporation of contrasting brickwork;
- Introduction of alternative coloured window panels to respect but contrast against the existing block;
- Break up the singular roofline;
- Reduce the uniformity of the window placement;
- Demonstrate that the proposed building will sit at a lower ridge height than the existing block and respect the natural contours of the site which stepdown in a southerly direction.

8.5.4 In reviewing the submitted scheme, Officers were pleased to note that all of the design comments had been accepted and incorporated into the scheme.

8.5.5 A further minor amendment was suggested by the Planning Officer and incorporated into the scheme, which was the introduction of a burnt orange (an autumnal colour to respect its natural setting) window panel as an alternative to the green seen throughout the existing block. This feature was incorporated onto the northern elevation which faces the main

entrance and car park.

- 8.5.6 As such, Officers believe the scheme has achieved a high level of design which compliments its setting, whilst representing a clear evolution of the facility. The siting, heights and proposed materials will ensure that the development will have minimal impact on the surrounding landscape and not cause any overbearance, but be a positive architectural addition to the school site.

8.6 Drainage or Other Material Considerations

- 8.6.1 There is a known issue with an existing land drain serving the school. As such, in order for the application to comply with the provisions of Policy ER12 of the TWLP, a surface water drainage condition has been imposed.
- 8.6.2 The loss of two newly planted tree specimens is considered acceptable on balance with conditions imposed to ensure an appropriate replacement tree planting schedule to be incorporated into any landscaping scheme. As such, the scheme is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Policy NE of the TWLP.
- 8.6.3 The proposal has been supported by an Ecological Assessment which concludes that the site is of low habitat potential and as such, it is the view of our Officers that the development is to have minimal impact ecologically. Conditions and informatives have been imposed to ensure the development complies with the provisions of Policy NE1 of the TWLP and the development carried out in accordance with the submitted ecology survey.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 In conclusion, the principle of development on this site within the built up area is acceptable and it is considered that matters relating to highway safety, design, neighbouring amenity and the loss of Green Network have been adequately addressed and any adverse impact weighed against the benefits of the development and found to be acceptable.

10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 Based on the conclusions above, the recommendation to the Planning Committee on this application is that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the following:

- a) The applicant/landowners providing a Memorandum of Understanding

agreement relating to:

- i. to the provision of a £5,000 for Travel Plan monitoring (subject to indexation from the date of committee with terms to be agreed by the Development Management Service Delivery Manager)
- b) The following conditions (with authority to finalise conditions and reasons for approval to be delegated to Development Management Service Delivery Manager):-

A04	Time Limit Full
B011	Samples of materials
B012	Sample Brick Panel
B045	Travel Plan
B062	Surface Water Drainage Scheme
B049	Cycle Stand Enhancements
B133	Replacement Trees
B140	In accordance with Ecological Survey
B145	Lighting Plan
C022	Landfill Gas Monitoring – Foundation Design
C038	Development in accordance with plans
B150	Site Environmental Management Plan

Informatives

117a	Coal Authority – High Risk Area
I25b	Nesting Bird (construction)
I25f	Replacement planting
I32	Fire Authority
I40	Conditions
I41	Reason for Grant
ICustom	CadentGas
ICustom	Coal Authority – Ground Gas
RANPPF2	Approval following amendments - NPPF