

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

11th August, 2016

<u>UPRN</u>	<u>APPLICATION NO.</u>	<u>DATE VALID</u>
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16/P1487

26/04/2016

Address/Site: Harris Academy Merton (Tamworth Manor High School),
Wide Way, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 1BP

Ward: Pollards Hill

Proposal: New two storey classroom block comprising 6 no. general
teaching classrooms, 2 no. ICT suites, staff room, offices
and other auxiliary spaces to existing secondary school

Drawing No.'s: 'Location and Block Plan 1824_0001 Rev P2', 'Proposed
Site Plan 1824_0008 Rev P2', 'External Works Plan
1824_0009 Rev P2', 'Ground Floor Plan 1824_0011 Rev
P4', 'First Floor Plan 1824_0012 Rev P3', 'Clerestory
Plan 1824_0013 Rev P3', 'Roof Plan 1824_0014 Rev P3',
'East and South Elevations 1824_0016 Rev P3', 'West
and North Elevations 1824_0017 Rev P3', 'Sections AA &
BB 1824_0019 Rev P3', 'Sections CC & DD 1824_0020
Rev P3' & 'Sections EE & FF 1824_0021 Rev P1'

Contact Officer: Felicity Cox (020 8545 3119)

RECOMMENDATION

Grant planning permission subject to Conditions

CHECKLIST INFORMATION

- Is a screening opinion required: No
- Is an Environmental Statement required: No
- Has an Environmental Statement been submitted: No
- Press notice: Yes
- Site notice: Yes
- Design Review Panel consulted: No
- Number of neighbours consulted: 14
- External consultations: Sport England
- Number of jobs created: 10 Full-time
- Controlled Parking Zone: No

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is being brought to the Planning Applications Committee as it

involves development on a major site that has been submitted by the LBM Children, Schools and Families Department. Furthermore, as the proposal involves building on designated open space, the application is a departure from planning policy and therefore needs to be brought before the Planning Applications Committee.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site of the Harris Academy is located on the north-eastern side of Wide Way. The site is owned by The Harris Federation. The school site is bound by William Morris Primary School to the south, Pollards Hill recreation ground to west and residential gardens to the remaining boundaries to the north. The adjacent buildings and surrounding houses are two storeys in scale.
- 2.2 The current school site comprises a total of 7 buildings. They are all 2 storeys except for the science block which is single storey, and generally feature face brick external walls. D&T and Science blocks are outdated and nearing the end of their useful life. It is considered they will need to be replaced in the near future in order to keep up with changing teaching requirements and demands. Externally, hard play spaces and soft play areas are quite generous and organized throughout the site.
- 2.3 There are two vehicular access points to the school, both off Wide Way. These access points provide access to various staff car parks throughout the site. The southern access point is the school's preferred service access.
- 2.4 The adjacent buildings and surrounding houses two storeys in scale.

3. CURRENT PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The current proposal is to erect a new two storey classroom block comprising 6 no. general teaching classrooms, 2 no. ICT suites, staff room, offices and other auxiliary spaces to existing secondary school. The expansion is part of a Borough wide programme and seeks to extend the school and increase pupil capacity from 1200 (900+300 6th form) to 1500 (1200+300 6th form) whilst avoiding the need for any temporary buildings.
- 3.2 The current proposal results from a feasibility study commissioned by London Borough of Merton Council to determine what general and specialist classrooms are required as per BB103 and the Harris Federation accommodation model in order to increase the school student places by 300.
- 3.3 The new two storey classroom block will be located south of the sports hall and communication block and west of the school's artificial football pitches, in the south of the school. The site is currently a grassed area with long jump track, and is separated from the buildings to the north by the internal access road.
- 3.4 The proposed block provides a total of 8 new teaching classrooms plus auxiliary spaces. The building is organized with a central corridor with 2 classrooms each side (x2 floors) and a staircase at each end, designed to enable the building to be extended in future when required. Three general

teaching classrooms and an ICT suite will be located in each floor. Plant rooms, a staff room and an office will be located at ground floor level, and a total of 4 offices are to be provided at first floor level. Externally, a new level access will be provided between the new block and the existing buildings. The new build block will have a total gross internal area of 840m².

- 3.5 The new classroom block elevations will be characterized by two storey facing brick piers and ground floor plinths to external windows to match the existing in other school buildings. With PPC aluminium double glazed window bays, louvres and rainscreen cladding provided to each classroom, office and staff room with a faced finish that will provide a light appearance to the two storey block. The rainscreen cladding colours will reflect the school branding colours. The new classroom block roofs will be low pitched steel roofs to match existing roofs in the school's most recent buildings. The roof fascia, roof soffit (with an integrated gutter) and downpipes are to be aluminium. The colour is to match the mid grey RAL colour of the windows, to provide a modern appearance to the new building.
- 3.6 The long jump track is to be relocated north, to be sited in between the school's artificial football pitches and tennis courts.
- 3.7 A new area of planting will be provided to the perimeter of the new building. Timber sleeper planting beds are located to the side of externally opening doors.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 The site has an extensive planning history relating to miscellaneous applications for new teaching blocks, parking, sporting facilities and caretaker facilities associated with the school. As the proposed building is to be located on an undeveloped section of the site, it is not considered relevant to detail the extensive planning history of the site in this instance.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Fourteen (14) neighbouring properties were consulted by letters, a site notice was displayed and two notices were published in the Wimbledon Mitcham Morden Guardian for the purpose of advertising the application as a Major Application and a Departure from Planning Policy.
- 5.2 No representations were received in response to the consultation.
- 5.3 Sport England: Sport England is satisfied the proposal meets the Sport England Policy exemption E3 and therefore has no objections to the application.
- 5.4 LBM Traffic & Highways: recommended a condition be imposed requiring the school to achieve bronze Stars accreditation standard before the new teaching facilities are occupied and refreshed yearly for a minimum period of 5 years.
- 5.5 LBM Environmental Health: Officers have reviewed the application and have

no comments or objections to the proposal.

5.6 LBM Climate Change: No objections to the proposal. Officers have recommended that the new build non-residential (BREEAM) standard pre-commencement and pre-occupation conditions are applied to the development.

5.7 LBM Urban Design: Officers had no comments or objections to the proposal.

6. POLICY CONTEXT

6.1 NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework (2012):

Part 7 Requiring Good Design

Part 8 Promoting Healthy Communities

6.2 Paragraph 72 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that there is a sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive approach to meeting this requirement and should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools.

6.3 Ministerial Policy Statement

Policy statement - planning for schools development, 15 August 2011

6.4 In August 2011 a letter to Chief Planning Officers from Central Government provided a Policy Statement on Planning for Schools Development. The policy statement advised that “We expect all parties to work together to proactively from an early stage to help plan for state-school development and to shape strong planning applications. This collaborative working would help to ensure that the answer to proposals for development of state-funded schools should be, wherever possible, ‘yes’.”

6.5 The policy statement advises “A refusal of any application for a state-funded school, or the imposition of conditions, will have to be clearly justified by the local planning authority. Given the strong policy support for improving state education, the Secretary of State will be minded to consider such a refusal or imposition of conditions to be unreasonable conduct, unless it is supported by clear and cogent evidence.”

6.6 London Plan Consolidated (2015).

3.16 Protection and Enhancement of social infrastructure;

3.18 Education Facilities

5.1 Climate change mitigation

5.2 Minimising carbon dioxide emissions

5.3 Sustainable design and construction

5.7 Renewable Energy

6.3 Assessing effects of development on transport capacity

6.9 Cycling

6.13 Parking

7.4 Local character

- 7.6 Architecture
- 7.15 Reducing noise and enhancing soundscapes
- 7.18 Protecting local open space and addressing local deficiency

- 6.3 Merton Sites and Policies Plan (July 2014).
 - DM C1 Community facilities
 - DM C2 Education for children and young people
 - DM D2 Design considerations in all developments
 - DM T3 Parking
 - DM O1 Open space

- 6.4 Merton Core Strategy (2011).
 - CS 11 Infrastructure;
 - CS 13 Open Space;
 - CS 14 Design;
 - CS 15 Climate change
 - CS 18 Active transport
 - CS 20 Parking, servicing and delivery

7. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The main planning considerations include assessing the increased demand for school places, the loss of open space, the design of the building, neighbour amenity, car parking and highway safety, landscaping and sustainable construction.

Principle of Development/Need for additional school places

- 7.2 The spatial vision for the borough set out in the adopted Core Strategy and supported by the Community Plan [2009-2019] states that the Council will support community life. This support will be through facilitating development that meets local needs including education opportunities.
- 7.3 Core Planning Strategy Policy CS 11 and Policy DM C2 of the Sites and Policies Plan 2014 states that development proposals for new schools and/or improved education facilities for young people will be supported, particularly where new facilities are required to provide additional school places in an area to meet an identified shortfall in supply.
- 7.3 London Plan policy 3.18 states that development proposals that enhance education provision will be supported. The policy states that those proposals that address the projected shortage of secondary school places will be particularly encouraged.
- 7.4 The need for school places as set out in Part 1 of the submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement and in more detail in the 15 October 2014 '*School places strategy, in particular secondary school provision*' report to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the 18 January 2016 '*Secondary School expansion including new school*' report to Cabinet, demonstrate that the London Borough of Merton as a whole is experiencing an unprecedented demand for primary school places. This rise in demand

from primary school is flowing to secondary school age, with an immediate need for at least an additional 300 year 7 places (10 forms of entry) required by September 2018. Existing schools are being extended where possible to cope with this increased demand in addition to a new school in Wimbledon.

- 7.5 The current application relating to the expansion of the school would provide 8 new teaching classrooms plus auxiliary spaces that will support 300 new pupils commencing from September 2017 and reaching capacity in 2020. The proposed expansion of Harris Academy would clearly address an urgent need for secondary school places in the local area and accord with London Plan policy 3.18, the National Planning Policy Framework and policy DM C2 of the Sites and Policies Plan.

Building on designated open space

- 7.3 The new teaching building is to be erected on designated open space. Merton's adopted Sites and Policies Plan Policy DM O1 states that designated open space should not be built on unless the open space is surplus to the requirements of the Borough, the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity or quality, or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

- 7.4 With the exception of a small parking area and spaces between the buildings, the Sites and Policies Plan designates all of the Harris Academy Merton site that has not already been developed as open space. This designation of undeveloped school land as open space is common to all schools within the London Borough of Merton and therefore it is recognised that expanding any school without encroaching into designated open space is difficult.

- 7.5 As set out in Part 4 of the submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement, four alternative options for the new teaching block were investigated. The assessment has concluded that the alternative locations are significantly less suitable for the new teaching block due to issues that would arise in relation to amenity impacts on adjoining dwellings, loss of staff carparking that would require replacement in alternative locations on site, safety issues during construction associated with proximity to the main school access, departmental fragmentation, loss of sunlight and daylight to existing classrooms, existing school buildings approaching end of their useful life and therefore extensions to these buildings being impractical and inefficient, loss of grassed areas, loss of hardstand areas used for informal school activities and pupil movement, and disruption to education provision during school term and exam periods.

- 7.6 It is noted that the proposed location for the teaching block is distant enough from any residential neighbours to avoid noise disruption, visual intrusion and overlooking issues, and will avoid departmental fragmentation by being located in proximity to the Communication Block. The proposed location will also have the advantage of minimizing any disruption to the school operations, with enough space for the contractor to set up its compound with a

close by service access that allows a complete separation from students, minimizing safety and security issues.

- 7.7 This proposal would see the development of a teaching block on an isolated and underutilised part of the school site, with the long jump track to be relocated to the main school fields to the satisfaction of Sport England. The site offers the potential for expansion of the building in future, creating one singular cohesive teaching block. It is highly likely that this will be needed in the future, and the educational needs would be best met by this single block, rather than expanding the site in piecemeal fashion.
- 7.8 Based on this, the proposed site is considered to be the most suitable location in terms of safety, impact on neighbour amenity, impact on existing school facilities and ancillary external spaces, impact on school operations and education provision both in the short and long term. In light of the need to provide additional school places to meet the significant demand for secondary school places in the Borough and the potential for the site to meet this need both in the short and long term, it is considered that the community benefits from the proposal would outweigh the loss of designated open space, and therefore a departure from planning policy is considered to be acceptable in this instance.

Character and Appearance

- 7.5 London Plan policies 7.4 and 7.6, Core Strategy policy CS14 and SPP Policies DMD2 and DMD3 require well designed proposals that will respect the appearance, materials, scale, bulk, proportions and character of the original building and their surroundings.
- 7.6 Due to the siting of the dwelling within the middle of the site, it is noted that the building will not be observable from the street. The proposed two storey building is considered to be complementary of the scale, height, design and massing of the surrounding buildings within the school, which are predominantly two storeys and of a larger building footprint. Furthermore, the proposed height is respectful of the scale of buildings and dwellings surrounding the site which are two storeys.
- 7.7 The proposed materials and simple building design draws upon the design and appearance of the existing teaching blocks and is considered to complement the character of the school and surrounding area. The pitched roof form is respectful of the hipped roofs of surrounding buildings.
- 7.8 Overall, the proposal is considered to be of an acceptable design, height, scale and massing that would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the area in accordance with the above policies.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 7.13 SPP policy DMD2 states that proposals must be designed to ensure that they would not have an undue negative impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light, quality of living conditions, privacy, visual intrusion or noise.

- 7.14 The building has been sited within the middle of the site and adjacent to the Pollards Hill Recreation Ground, approximately 140 metres from the nearest residential property, and is therefore not considered to be within proximity to these dwellings to result in adverse amenity impacts on occupiers in terms of loss of light, quality of living conditions, privacy, visual intrusion or noise. The building is also sufficiently separated from the buildings and play areas of the William Morris Primary School to not detract from the amenities of this school. It is therefore not considered that the proposal would detract from the amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with the above policies.

Sustainable design and construction

- 7.30 The Council's Core Strategy reinforces the wider sustainability objectives of the London Plan with policy CS15 requiring all development to demonstrate how the development makes effective use of resources and materials and minimises water use and CO2 emissions. All non-domestic development over 500 square metres will be expected to achieve a BREEAM 'very good' standard and to meet CO2 reduction targets.
- 7.31 The submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement has stated that the development will be built to a minimum of BREEAM Very Good and meet CO2 reduction targets in line with current regulations. LBM Climate Change officers have recommended that new build non-residential (BREEAM) standard pre-commencement and pre-occupation conditions are applied to the development to ensure compliance with the above policies.

Traffic and car parking

- 7.26 Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy [July 2011] states that the Council will seek to implement effective traffic management by requiring the developers to demonstrate that their development will not adversely affect pedestrian and cycle movements, safety, the convenience of local residents or on-street parking and traffic management.
- 7.12 Sites and Policies Policy DM T3 states that development should only provide the level of car parking required to serve the site taking into account its accessibility by public transport (PTAL) and local circumstances in accordance with London Plan standards unless a clear need can be demonstrated. Furthermore, potential for increased traffic movement as a result of a new school building must be considered with any potential impact on local highway safety.
- 7.11 The Transport for London Planning Information Database shows the application site with a Public Transport Accessibility Level of 2. The main vehicular and pedestrian access to the school site is from Wide Way. The site currently has 86 parking bays including 6 disabled, and the proposal will not result in a loss of any of the existing spaces. It is noted that the London Plan does not specify a minimum car parking standard for schools.
- 7.12 The submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement states that the proposal does not expect to have a significant impact in the local traffic issues

as an overwhelming 70% of students come to school by bus. Only a small percentage are dropped off and picked up by car.

- 7.13 In order to reduce future travel impacts, LBM Transport and Highways have recommended a condition be imposed requiring the school to achieve bronze Stars accreditation standard before the new teaching facilities are occupied and refreshed yearly for a minimum period of 5 years.

Cycle storage

- 7.32 Core Strategy Policy CS 18 and London Plan policy 6.9 states that the Council will promote active transport by prioritising the safety of pedestrian, cycle and other active transport modes, by supporting schemes and encouraging design that provides attractive, safe and covered cycle storage.
- 7.33 The site currently provides cycle stores for the existing students and staff. LBM Traffic & Highways have advised that sufficient cycle parking should be provided to accommodate the additional students/staff in accordance with London Plan standards (Long stay – 1 space per 8 staff + 1 space per 8 students; Short Stay – 1 space per 100 students). It is therefore recommended that a planning condition is attached requiring submission of details and ongoing maintenance of bicycle parking facilities.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed new teaching building is considered to be of an appropriate design, siting and scale to minimise amenity impacts on neighbours, maintain the character and appearance of the area and meet the educational needs of the school. In light of the need to provide additional school places to meet the significant demand for secondary school places in the Borough and the potential for the site to meet this need both in the short and long term, it is considered that the community benefits from the proposal would outweigh the loss of designated open space, and therefore a departure from planning policy is considered to be acceptable in this instance, and is therefore recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant permission subject to conditions

Conditions

- 1) A1 Commencement of works
- 2) A7 Built according to plans; 'Location and Block Plan 1824_0001 Rev P2', 'Proposed Site Plan 1824_0008 Rev P2', 'External Works Plan 1824_0009 Rev P2', 'Ground Floor Plan 1824_0011 Rev P4', 'First Floor Plan 1824_0012 Rev P3', 'Clerestory Plan 1824_0013 Rev P3', 'Roof Plan 1824_0014 Rev P3', 'East and South Elevations 1824_0016 Rev P3', 'West and North Elevations 1824_0017 Rev P3', 'Sections AA & BB 1824_0019 Rev P3', 'Sections CC & DD 1824_0020 Rev P3' & 'Sections EE & FF 1824_0021 Rev P1'

- 3) B3 External Materials as Specified
- 4) D10 External Lighting
- 5) F02 Landscaping (Implementation)
- 6) H06 Cycle Parking – Details to be submitted
- 7) H08 Travel Plan
- 8) H10 Construction Vehicles, Wash-down Facilities etc (major sites)
- 9) H13 Construction Logistics Plan
- 10) L6 BREEAM – Pre-Commencement (New building non-residential)
- 11) L7 BREEAM – Pre-Occupation (New building non-residential)

12) School Travel Plan

Before the new teaching building is occupied, an updated School Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and Transport for London demonstrating that the school has achieved not less than a bronze star accreditation standard.

The School Travel Plan shall be updated and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and Transport for London on a yearly basis for a minimum period of 5 years and the development shall be implemented only in accordance with the approved School Travel Plan.

Reason for Condition: To promote sustainable travel measures and comply with policy CS18, CS19 and CS20

13) NPPF Informative

To view Plans, drawings and documents relating to this application please follow [the link](#)

Please note that this link, and some of the related plans may be slow to load