

**Application Number**

P/2016/0056

**Site Address**Torquay Academy  
Cricketfield Road  
Torquay  
TQ2 7NP**Case Officer**

Mr Scott Jones

**Ward**

Tormohun

**Description**

New multi use hall, dining area extension and refurbishment of existing drama space to provide additional classrooms

**Executive Summary/Key Outcomes**

The application relates to the Torquay Academy school site off Cricketfield Road, Torquay and the proposal seeks extensions and modifications in order to provide a new multi-purpose hall, a new dining room extension and refurbishment of the existing drama space to create new formal class spaces.

The proposed multi-use hall is to the south of the existing main educational block between it and the existing sports hall, which is visible from Cricketfield Road, set on part of the existing outdoor MUGA (Multi Use Games Area). The building will cover a footprint 30m by 25m with a mono-pitched roof that sets the building height at 7.5m and 10m at its lowest and highest points. The design is clearly modern and seeks to assimilate with the main building. It is considered an acceptable addition to the site.

The dining room extension is single-storey and is set in an existing east-facing recess created by the irregular footprint of the main campus block. The character is again clearly modern with clean render under a mono-pitched roof that also seeks to harmonise with the main building. The footprint is 8.5m by 12m and it is considered an appropriate extension to the main building with little impact due to its scale and location.

The altered drama space is located in the northern part of the main education block and encompasses a footprint that is approximately 25m by 25m. It converts the existing ground floor drama and music hall, along with the void above, in order to provide six classrooms over two floors and an additional smaller "dark room". The alterations will have little impact and are considered acceptable.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages local planning authorities to work positively and collaboratively with schools to help to meet their needs in providing sufficient choice of school places and places great importance

on this issue. The proposal has been evolved in conjunction with the Torbay Development Agency in order to secure improved indoor hall facilities and cater for a change in focus in terms of the curriculum towards more academic subjects.

Local Plan Policy SC3 (Education, skills and labour) outlines that that improvement to existing and the provision of new education facilities will be supported.

The extensions and alterations are suitable scaled and formed and will have a relatively insignificant impact upon the wider character and appearance of the school site.

Impact upon local amenity will be negligible as the proposals are set amongst the existing building pattern and are relatively central to the site. The additional facilities are unlikely to present any notable change to the amenities afforded adjacent occupiers when considering the current function of the site and buildings.

The proposals, which do not increase staff or pupil numbers, will not have an impact upon the highway network.

The drainage strategy is considered acceptable and responds to the context of the wider Critical Drainage Area Designation over Torbay, with existing attenuation and controlled discharge of surface waters being altered to accept the additional capacity. The supporting information does not include the detailed design in regard to achieving the increase in capacity. This must be addressed, to the satisfaction of the Council's Drainage Department, prior to any grant of planning permission.

### **Recommendation**

Approval; subject to:

1. the prior receipt of surface water attenuation design to the satisfaction of the Council's Drainage Department; and
2. conditions to include those outlined within this report.

### **Statutory Determination Period**

This is a major application and the 13 week determination date is 10.05.2016.

### **Site Details**

The site is the existing Torquay Academy school, which has been relatively recently redeveloped into a modern educational facility held in a contemporary multi-winged building complex central within the site, supplemented by a detached sports hall and hard and soft outdoor play/games space.

The main access is from the south off Cricketfield Road which sits aside the open sports field.

Closer to the main block sits the detached sports hall which is adjacent to an all weather pitch and a MUGA.

There are no designations over the land although Torbay more widely is designated as a Critical Drainage Area.

### **Detailed Proposals**

The proposal seeks extensions and modifications in order to provide a new multi-purpose hall, a new dining room extension and refurbishment of the existing drama space to create revised class space.

The proposed multi-use hall is to the south of the existing main campus building between the block and the existing sports hall that is visible from Cricketfield Road, set on part of the existing outdoor MUGA (Multi Use Games Area). The building will cover a footprint 30m by 25m with a mono-pitched roof that sets the building height at 7.5m and 10m. The design is clearly modern and seeks to assimilate with the main building.

The dining room extension is single-storey and is set in an existing east-facing recess created by the irregular footprint of the main campus block. The character is again clearly modern with clean render under a mono-pitched roof that also seeks to harmonise with the main building. The footprint is 8.5m by 12m.

The altered dining area is located in the northern part of the main building block and encompasses part of the building with footprint that is approximately 25m by 25m. It converts the existing ground floor drama and music hall, along with the void above, in order to provide six classrooms over two floors and an additional smaller "dark room".

Surface water drainage from the new buildings would be managed by connecting into the existing attenuation facilities that discharge at a controlled rate to the public sewer. The attenuation tanks are to be modified to cater for additional capacity however a detailed design scheme is absent.

### **Summary Of Consultation Responses**

*Sport England* No objection.

*Strategic Transport Officer* There will be no increase in pupil or staff numbers, as indicated within the Design and Access Statement, and the school is located within the built up area with good pedestrian access from residential areas. The accompanying travel plan cites that over 70% pupils walk to school.

It is recommended that the introduction of waiting restrictions on Barton Hill Road achieved by an obligation of £1500 should be sought, and that the Travel Plan is amended to provide targets for staff travel, reductions in student travel to school by (non shared) car and implementation of a walking and cycling targets, achieved by condition.

The proposal is supported on transport grounds subject to the above.

*Drainage Department* The drainage strategy is considered acceptable and responds to the context of the wider Critical Drainage Area Designation over Torbay.

The supporting information does not include the detailed design in regard to achieving the increase in capacity of the attenuation for controlled discharge and appropriate design detail should be achieved prior to determining the application.

*South West Water* No objection to the controlled discharge subject to the Council's Drainage Department being satisfied. Comment that development should not be within 3m of public sewers running through the site.

*Community Protection* No objection.

*Arboricultural Officer* The proposal is acceptable on arboricultural merit as the development is away from existing trees and shrubs on the site, which means the impact is likely to be negligible. Storage / works should be conducted away from existing trees and request that a specification for the low level planting is submitted.

*Police Liaison Officer* No objection.

### **Summary Of Representations**

Three objections have been received from local residents raising the following concerns:

- loss of privacy
- loss of light
- potential structural damage, noise and dust.

These have been sent electronically for Members consideration.

### **Relevant Planning History**

The school has been recently redeveloped to provide modern facility with a main central educational block supported by a large detached sports hall and hard and soft play areas, which include a flood-lit all weather pitch.

There is no direct history relevant to the proposals currently being considered.

## **Key Issues/Material Considerations**

The key issues are:

1. The Principle of the Development
2. Design and visual impact
3. Impact on local amenity
4. Impact upon highways and movement
5. Drainage and flood risk.

### **1. The Principle of the Development -**

The principle of improvements to the educational facility is considered acceptable.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages local planning authorities to work positively and collaboratively with schools to help to meet their needs in providing sufficient choice of school places and places great importance on this issue. The proposal has been evolved in conjunction with the Torbay Development Agency in order to secure improved indoor hall facilities and cater for a change in focus in terms of the curriculum towards more academic subjects.

Paragraph 72 of the NPPF states:

"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."

Local Plan Policy SC3 (Education, skills and labour) outlines that that improvement to existing and the provision of new education facilities will be supported.

The improvement of the school facility is supported in policy guidance for the reasons stated above.

### **2. Design and visual impact -**

The impact of the proposals upon the character and appearance of the area is considered acceptable.

The multi-use hall is set between the dominant building on the site, the main central teaching block, and a secondary but still significant building, the detached

sports hall. The proposed scale and height of building responds to the context set by these two buildings and hence it will sit comfortably in its surrounds. The design of building is clearly modern and will align itself comfortably with the wider built form, reinforcing the modern character of the educational site. Visual interest is added by way of design which incorporates two-tone render, recessed areas and elements of glazing.

The new dining room is relatively diminutive due to its limited scale and location within a natural recess that is formed by the irregular pre-planned building lines of the main teaching block. The proposed form of building is reflective and is again modern and contemporary, with a mono-pitched roof, clean render and glazing.

The alterations to reform the drama space into more formal classrooms over two floors will assimilate the outer form with the immediate building form and within the context of a large teaching block would have limited visual impact.

The location of development within areas with established buildings will help limit any impact and the proposals appear a pragmatic solution for further development. The scale and form of development is consistent with the current character and the proposals would hence have little impact upon the character and appearance of the school site and its contribution to the wider built environment.

The proposal is considered acceptable in design terms and in accordance with Policy DE1 (Design) of the Torbay Local Plan.

### **3. Impact upon local amenity -**

Representations have raised concerns about a potential increase in loss of privacy and light, noise impacts and potential structural damage.

The multi-use hall will sit between the main block and the detached sports hall to the south. The character of the relationship between the school and residential properties will be largely unaffected, as the building is a similar scale to the buildings that it will sit between and will retain the gap between school development and the adjacent properties to the north and east at around 70m-80m. Considering the scale and distance to the edge of plot the multi-use hall will not result in any undue harm on local amenity.

The dining room extension would not affect amenity due to its scale and location within a recess of the footprint of the main teaching block.

The revisions to the drama hall to provide new formal teaching rooms will not increase the footprint or general scale of the main teaching block and would have little impact upon adjacent amenity for these reasons.

The proposal is supported by a geotechnical survey and the land appears capable of being developed to provide the development detailed. Neighbours have cited previous effects of development and the potential for this development to affect their properties. The development impact and potential liabilities upon third party properties is a civil matter and, where the land is considered capable of being developed, should not inhibit the granting of planning permission.

The proposal, for the reasons above, is considered to retain suitable levels of amenity for adjacent occupiers, in accordance with Policies DE1 (Design) and DE3 (Development amenity) of the Torbay Local Plan.

#### **4. Impact of highways and movement -**

The proposal is considered acceptable on highway and movement grounds.

The development seeks to improve and adopt the school facilities to provide enhanced education space to suite a change in the curriculum focus. It does not seek to provide additional space to increase pupil or staff numbers.

In light of the above the implications upon the wider highway network are on face value absent, as school numbers are not proposed to increase.

The Strategic Transport Officer is in agreement that the development would have limited impact where there is no actual increase in school numbers. It has however been requested that £1500 is secured to provide a change to parking restrictions on Barton Hill Road, and that some further detail in regard to travel plan aspirations should be secured by condition.

In the absence of increased pupil or staff numbers it is not considered fair or reasonable to seek the obligations for parking restrictions that has been requested. This view is considered consistent with similar school extensions where obligations have not been sought where there is no net increase in teaching numbers.

To conclude in the absence of any likely impact the movement and transport affects of the development are considered limited and the proposal is suitable for planning approval, being compliant with Policies TA1, TA2 and TA3 of the Torbay Local Plan.

#### **5. Drainage and flood risk -**

Surface water drainage is proposed to a revised attenuated system that discharges at a controlled rate in to the public sewer.

South West Water has raised no objection to this concept and are content with the strategy subject to the Council's Drainage Department being supportive to the detail.

The Council's Drainage Department is also content with the strategy of a controlled discharge from an amended attenuated system.

It is noted that the submitted documents do not include the detailed design in regard to achieving the increase in capacity of the attenuation for controlled discharge and appropriate design detail should be achieved prior to determining the application.

The concept of attenuation and controlled discharge is considered acceptable in the content of the Critical Drainage Area designation that sits over Torbay, however it is considered necessary to seek detailed information on the attenuation requirements to respond to the 1 in 100 year storm event plus an allowance for climate change, in order to ensure that the risk of flooding is not increased.

It is recommended that any grant of permission is subject to the prior receipt of the attenuation design to the satisfaction of the Council's Drainage Department.

**S106/CIL -**  
N/A.

### **Conclusions**

The application is acceptable, subject to further information in regard to the detailed design of the drainage attenuation to the satisfaction of the Council's Drainage Department, and conditions to include those laid out within this report.

The proposal will enhance an educational facility in order to meet changing needs, with little impact upon the built environment, local amenity, transport or drainage for the reasons stated within this report.

### **Condition(s)/Reason(s)**

01. Prior to the first use of any building hereby approved an updated Travel Plan for the school shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include details of improvements towards a modal shift towards sustainable travel with suitable targets for car usage of staff, targets for the reduced student travel by (non shared) car, and details and implementation of walking and cycling targets.

Reason: To ensure that the development incorporates sustainable development principles, in line with Policy TA1 and TA2 of the Torbay Local Plan.

02. All external material finishes, in terms of both form and colour, shall seek to assimilate the proposed development with the predominant existing building form on the site, in order to reinforce the broad character and



appearance of the site and its contribution to the wider built environment.

Reason: To ensure a suitable form of development in accordance with Policy DE1 (Design) of the Torbay Local Plan.

03. All shrub or tree removal shall take place outside of the main bird nesting season (March-September inclusive), or will be subject to a pre-removal inspection by persons competent in order to establish any presence of nesting birds. Should nesting birds be found to be present the shrub/trees shall not be removed until any fledglings have left.

Reasons: To ensure a suitable form of development in accordance with Policy NC1 of the Torbay Local Plan.

04. Prior to the first use of the multi-use hall four Schweglar Type 25 swift nest boxes shall be installed within the northern wall to at least a height of 5m from ground level and at least 1m apart from each other.

Reason: To ensure that the development proceeds with due consideration of resulting in biodiversity improvements, in accordance with Policy NC1 of the Torbay Local Plan.

05. All construction lighting shall be limited at night to low-level motion activated lighting set on short timers. All post-construction lighting shall be designed to minimise light-spill into areas of the site that are presently dark and/or non-illuminated.

Reasons: To ensure that the development proceeds with due consideration to bats, in accordance with Policy NC1 of the Torbay Local Plan.

### **Relevant Policies**

SC3 - Education, skills and local labour

DE1 - Design

DE3 - Development Amenity

TA1 - Transport and accessibility

TA2 - Development access

TA3 - Parking requirements

ER1 - Flood Risk