

Application Number

P/2017/1072

Site Address

Torquay Academy
Cricketfield Road
Torquay
TQ2 7NP

Case Officer

Verity Clark

Ward

Tormohun

Description

Extension to Torquay Academy, comprising 6no. Classrooms, 3no. Dry changing rooms, associated internal access corridors and 1-to-1 interview/group room. Extension to be 3 storeys in height with facade treatments and layout to match existing Academy building.

Executive Summary

The application relates to the Torquay Academy school site off Cricketfield Road, Torquay. The proposal seeks consent for extensions and modifications in order to provide 6 new classrooms, 3 dry changing rooms, access corridor and group 1 to 1 room with ancillary storage. The proposal also includes works to form the link between the existing and proposed building with reinforcement of the retaining wall and the realignment of the existing external steps and works to the hardstanding.

The proposed extension extends out from the South East corner of the existing main educational block which is visible from Cricketfield Road. The building will feature a linking flat roof element and a mono-pitched roof design. The design is clearly modern and seeks to assimilate with the main building. It is considered an acceptable addition to the 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 proposal appears to not facilitate an increase in staff or pupil numbers however clarification is sought from the applicant on this point. The response will confirm if further detail on the parking arrangements is required.

A method statement with supporting methodology for soil improvements for the Tulip tree is required prior to determination alongside and a detailed landscaping plan to mitigate for the trees to be lost will be required by condition.

National planning guidance in 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. Policy SC3 (Education, skills and local labour) of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 supports provision of new educational facilities in Torbay.

The application is recommended for conditional approval.

Recommendation

Subject to the receipt of additional information relating to highways and arboriculture, conditional approval delegated to the Executive Head for Assets and Business Services in order that the detailed wording of the conditions can be finalised.

Reason for Referral to Development Management Committee

The application has been referred to the Development Management Committee in accordance with the Council's constitution which states that applications relating to land owned, controlled or occupied by the Council (unless there are no objections or it is a minor variation to an existing planning permission) must be referred to the Development Management Committee.

Statutory Determination Period

8 weeks. The determination date is the 19th December 2017.

Site Details

The site is the existing Torquay Academy School, which has been 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 by the Environment Agency.

Date of Officer Site Visit: 03/11/17

Detailed Proposals

The proposal seeks permission for an extension and modifications in order to provide 6 new classrooms, 3 dry changing rooms, access corridor and group 1 to 1 room with ancillary storage. The proposal also includes works to form the link between the existing and proposed building with reinforcement of the retaining wall and the realignment of the existing external steps and works to the hardstanding.

The proposed extension extends out from the South East corner of the existing main educational block. The building will feature a linking flat roof element and a mono-pitched roof design for the main classroom block. The extension is three stories with a total height of 13.3m at its highest point from ground level. The highest point of the extension will sit 0.1m lower than the existing eastern wing which it attaches to. The lower ground floor will be finished with blue-black brick whilst the upper floors will feature fibre cement rainscreen cladding and aluminium windows which will match the existing block. Elements of glazing in the form of a curtain wall are included whilst the flat roof will be a continuation of the existing flat roof utilising sarnafil single ply membrane with aluminium capping and fascias. The design is clearly modern and seeks to assimilate with the main building with a continuation of the glazed corridor along the Northern elevation.

The proposal will be visible from Cricketfield Road although as the extension extends off of the main education block which is separated from the street scene by the schools playing fields, the extension will not be overly dominant within the street scene.

The design and access statement notes that the proposed extension is required to provide new teaching space for the existing students.

Summary Of Consultation Responses

Community Safety: This department has received a number of complaints about noise arising from the school from residents in Audley Avenue. Whilst this cannot be considered a statutory noise nuisance because the school is not acting unreasonably, it does make sense for the school to design out some of the issues that can give rise to complaints about noise. It would seem, that as alterations are to be made to the school, it would be appropriate to see how we could mitigate some of the issues raised by residents.

Future Planning (Highways): Policy TA3 of the Local Plan Appendix F sets out the parking standards for secondary schools. Higher educational establishments should provide 1 space per 3 staff (FTE) and 1 space per 20 students and 1 cycle space per 10 students. The D&A Statement implies the 6 new Classrooms (615sq m GIA) will serve the existing school pupils, however Section 2.1 of the Travel Plan notes the intended expansion of the school from 1,100 pupils to the (current) 1,200 pupils and 160 staff, with intentions to increase to 1,300 pupils (Sept 17) and 1,400 in Sept 2018. This implies the extension (six classrooms of 32 pupil capacity) will provide the 200 extra place capacity for planned future expansion by September 2018. The Travel Plan indicates that the existing travel modes are as follows: Pupils: 61% of the 1,271 pupils walk to school. With 36% travelling by car. And only 2 % of pupils cycle. Staff: 85% of the Staff travel By PMV of which 69% are single occupancy. The submitted mode share suggest a target of 30% for pupils and 65% for staff. Policy TA2 of the Local Plan seeks a 30% modal shift of all potential users 30% pupils and 30% staff. It would be helpful to see a 30%

modal shift (i.e. pupils: 36% down to 25% and staff: 85% down to 60%) over 5 to 10 year period.

Police Liaison Officer: It is appreciated that the proposal is for an extension to the existing building but designing out opportunity for criminal or antisocial behaviour should still be considered.

Arboriculture: Agreement is made with the arboricultural assessment of the trees on site and the suitability for mitigation to address visual loss in this instance. No detail of the required AMS (CT_4579.17_AMS) for tree protection of the prominent Tulip tree during step creation is attached despite the target note on the TPP. The cycle of decline of the prominent tree should be addressed by way of rooting environment improvements including aeration and incorporation of organic matter. Given the visual prominence of the mature Tulip tree I would be unable to recommend approval on arboricultural merit prior to submission of the necessary method statement for review with supporting methodology for soil improvements for the Tulip tree. A detailed landscaping plan to mitigate for the trees to be lost should also be submitted for review.

Ecology: There are no ecological constraints to the development. Any vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (March to September inclusive). Clearance works should be undertaken during the winter months (October to February inclusive), as this is generally when birds are less likely to be breeding. The installation of swift boxes should be considered. We do recommend that limited external lighting be used and that security lighting should be on a fixed-timer. Bollard lighting should be fitted with down-lighters. Cowls and louvers should be installed to reduce light spill. Any lighting should be of a sensitive design and be positioned and angled away from any linear vegetation, i.e. hedgerows or tree-lines that may be used as flightpaths for bats. There should be no increase in ambient light levels post-construction. Post development opportunities should be taken with any landscaping to further enhance the biodiversity relative to that currently presented on site.

Summary Of Representations

Publication type: Neighbour notification letters/Site notice

6 representations have been received. 1 representation and 5 objections. Issues raised:

- Neighbour amenity
- Noise
- Impact of existing building
- Impact on property values
- Dirt from construction
- Highways and parking.

Relevant Planning History

P/2016/0056 New multi use hall, dining area extension and refurbishment of

existing drama space to provide additional classrooms. Pending consideration

P/2009/0799 Amendments to applications P/2007/0151/MR3 and P/2007/1336/PA - raising existing school playing fields by maximum of 1.5M and approved all weather pitch and associated floodlights by maximum of 1.5M. Approved 01/10/09

P/2008/0672 Minor amendments to previous approval (ref app P/2007/0151/MPA) for new school with access, parking and landscaping. Approved 10/6/2008.

P/2007/1336 Floodlighting system to approved all weather pitch. Approved 5/10/2007.

P/2007/0151 Demolition of school; build new school with associated areas, parking and landscaping; reposition all-weather pitch. Approved 30/4/2007.

P/2006/0027 Room extension on building beside car park (as revised by plans received 14/2/2006). Approved 21/2/2006.

P/2005/0446 Demolition of boys gym; erection of new music suite block. Approved 26/5/2005.

P/2003/1965 Single storey extension to existing school reception with roof lights. Approved 12/1/2004.

P/2003/1496 New sports hall (facing Cricketfield Road) and changes to parking areas. Approved 31/10/2003.

P/2002/0871 Erection of extension to science prep room. Approved 25/7/2002.

P/2002/1785 Erection of 2 storey extension to enhanced provision unit. Approved 23/12/2002.

P/2000/1482 Erection of detached building to provide "pre-school" teaching facilities. Approved 20/12/2000.

P/2000/0563 Alterations and erection of extension to form drama, studio and dining hall (revised scheme). Approved 1/8/2000.

Key Issues/Material Considerations

The key issues to consider in relation to this application are:

1. Principle of the development
2. Impact on Highways
3. Impact on trees and ecology
4. Design
5. Impact on Amenity
6. Drainage.

1. Principle of the Development

Policy SS11 (Sustainable communities) of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 states that proposals that regenerate or lead to the improvement of social, economic or environment conditions in Torbay will be supported in principle. Policy SS11 details further that development proposals will be assessed against 13 criterion which includes promoting social inclusion, and seeking to eliminate exclusion based on access to housing, health, education, recreation or other facilities. Policy SC3 (Education, skills and local labour) of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 specifies that the Local Plan will support the improvement of existing and provision of new educational facilities to meet identified needs in Torbay. Policy SC3 notes further that this includes the expansion of schools to meet identified short to medium-term needs. Policy SC5 (Child poverty) of the Torbay Local Plan 2012 states that new development will be assessed for its contribution towards reducing child poverty, proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal. This includes the need to support investment in existing schools and make appropriate contributions, and improve equality of access to high quality education provision for all, including early-years education.

Furthermore, Paragraph 72 of the NPPF specifies:

"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;

- o give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and
- o work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted."

The proposed development would improve the education facilities in the area. As such, it is deemed that the principle of the development would accord with Policies SS11, SC3 and SC5.

2. Impact on Highways

Consultation from the Council's Senior Strategy and Project Officer has noted that Policy TA3 of the Local Plan Appendix F sets out the parking standards for secondary schools of 1 space for 2.5 staff (FTE) plus 1 cycle space per 10 students with a proportion of disabled parking and non-motorised scooters (per 10 pupils). Higher educational establishments should provide 1 space per 3 staff (FTE) and 1 space per 20 students and 1 cycle space per 10 students. A Transport Assessment should be provided for proposals generating over 30 trips during the morning peak (8-9am). From the information provided to date it is unclear if the proposal triggers this requirement.

The Travel Plan (para2.3.23) states 100 car parking spaces, including 3 disabled bays, 3 car share bays and 20 cycle storage spaces for pupils are currently provided on the site. It is unclear if there are changing facilities for staff and if there is any electrical car charging provision and non-motorised scooter parking facilities.

The Design and Access Statement implies the 6 new Classrooms will serve the existing school pupils, however Section 2.1 of the Travel Plan notes the intended expansion of the school from 1,100 pupils to the (current) 1,200 pupils and 160 staff, with intentions to increase to 1,300 pupils (Sept 17) and 1,400 in Sept 2018. This implies the extension (six classrooms of 32 pupil capacity) will provide the 200 extra place capacity for planned future expansion by September 2018. It is not clear if increased intake of students will be disaggregated across the 11-16 range or if it will include the sixth form pupils and the anticipated staff numbers by September 2018. The Travel Plan indicates that the existing travel modes are as follows: Pupils: 61% of the 1,271 pupils walk to school. With 36% travelling by car. And only 2% of pupils cycle. Staff: 85% of the Staff travel By PMV of which 69% are single occupancy. The submitted mode share suggest a target of 30% for pupils and 65% for staff. Policy TA2 of the Local Plan seeks a 30% modal shift of all potential users 30% pupils and 30% staff. It would be helpful to see a 30% modal shift (i.e. pupils: 36% down to 25% and staff: 85% down to 60%) over 5 to 10 year period. These targets might be assisted with an increase in the proportion of 'car share' parking spaces and a large increase in the provision of covered cycle storage and associated changing/locker facilities for staff and sixth form students. Alongside any measures to improve pedestrian and cycle issues/access set out in Travel Plan Section 2.7.

The Strategic Transport Officer advises that the proposal should confirm if the extension will facilitate additional pupil numbers and that a revised Travel Plan should be submitted which sets out how a 30 % modal shift can be achieved, as required by Policy TA2 (Development access) of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 these comments have been passed on to the applicants and the Members will be updated at Committee.

3. Impact on trees and ecology

Consultation from the Council's Arboricultural Officer has stated that agreement is made with the arboricultural assessment of the trees on site and the suitability for mitigation to address visual loss in this instance. No detail of the required AMS (CT_4579.17_AMS) for tree protection of the prominent Tulip tree during step creation is attached despite the target note on the Tree Protection Plan. The cycle of decline of the prominent tree should be addressed by way of rooting environment improvements including aeration and incorporation of organic matter. Given the visual prominence of the mature Tulip tree he would be unable to recommend approval on arboricultural merit prior to submission of the necessary method statement for review with supporting methodology for soil improvements for the Tulip tree. A detailed landscaping plan to mitigate for the trees to be lost

should also be submitted for review via condition.

These comments have been passed on to the applicant and the Members will be updated at Committee.

An ecological assessment dated December 2015 and an addendum to this assessment dated September 2017 have been submitted. It is recommended that construction should be undertaken in accordance with CIRIA guidance (2001) and BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Care should be taken to avoid damage to the Root Protection Area (RPA) of the mature tulip tree immediately to the north and tree and ornamental shrub removal should be undertaken outside the main bird nesting season (i.e. undertaken between October and February), or subject to a pre-start check by an ecologist to ensure that no nests were present. It is also recommended that a minimum of two swift nest boxes be installed within the northern walls of the proposed classroom extension. This would create new bird nesting habitat within the site. The Council's external ecological consultants have confirmed that proving the recommendations of the addendum are adhered to the proposal will comply with Policy NC1 of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030.

4. Design

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

The proposed scale and height of the classroom extension is considered to respond to the context set by the existing building 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 and the existing building which it extends beyond. Visual interest is added by way of design which incorporates fibre cement rainscreen panels, blue-black brick and elements of glazing.

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 proposed reinforcement of the retaining wall and the realignment of the existing external steps and works to the hardstanding are considered to be appropriate.

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

5. Impact on Amenity

Representations from local residents have raised concerns about the noise impacts and have highlighted existing concerns with the relationship between the school and nearby residential properties.

Consultation from the Council's Senior Environmental Health Officer has noted that the Council has received a number of complaints about noise arising from the school from residents in Audley Avenue. Whilst this cannot be considered a statutory noise nuisance because the school is not acting unreasonably, it does make sense for the school to design out some of the issues that can give rise to complaints about noise. Complaints have been received about a great many issues, one of which is noise from the Multi Use Games Areas affecting the residents at the rear of Audley Avenue. It would seem, that as alterations are to be made to the school, it would be appropriate to see how we could mitigate some of the issues raised by residents. In order to mitigate the effects of noise from the existing development and the addition of the reflected sound from the proposed development, he recommends that a solid barrier be provided between the residential accommodation and the Multi Use Games Area that removed line of sight to the domestic residential accommodation. This should significantly reduce noise affecting residents to the rear of the premises.

Given the distance of the proposed extension to the nearest residential properties it is considered that there will be no material loss of amenity to the occupiers of these properties from the proposed development and the character of the relationship between the school and residential properties will be largely unaffected. The proposal will primarily provide additional classrooms and does not provide additional outside space for sport or recreation. It is not considered that the proposal would result in a loss of privacy to the occupiers of the adjacent properties. It is noted that there are existing concerns with the use of the school however it is not considered reasonable to request noise mitigation measures for an existing problem which will not be exacerbated by the current proposal.

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 2012-2030.

6. Drainage

Detailed information has been submitted with regards to surface water drainage from the proposed development. The Council's Drainage Engineer has raised a concern with the details currently submitted. As such, a condition is recommended which states that the drainage should be constructed to comply with the requirements of BRE Digest 365 for the critical 1 in 100 year storm event plus 30%

for climate change.

Human Rights and Equalities Issues -

Human Rights Act: The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act, and in particular Article 1 of the First Protocol and Article 8 of the Act itself. This Act gives further effect to the rights included in the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests/the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance

Equalities Act: In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010, particularly the Public Sector Equality Duty and Section 149. The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief (or lack of), sex and sexual orientation.

CIL -

CIL: The application is for commercial development in zone 2 where the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is £0 per square metre of additional gross internal floor area created.

The CIL liability for this development is Nil as the CIL rate for this type of development is Nil and therefore no CIL is payable.

Conclusions

Subject to the imposition of conditions and the submission of further information relating to highways and arboricultural matters, the proposals accord with the provisions of the Local Plan and are recommended for approval.

Condition(s)/Reason(s)

01. Drainage
02. Trees
03. Ecology - to include provision of swift boxes
04. Material finishes
05. Highways travel plan
06. External lighting
07. Construction Management Plan
08. Landscape Plan

Relevant Policies

DE1 - Design

DE3 - Development Amenity
SC3 - Education, skills and local labour
SC5 - Child poverty
TA2 - Development access
TA3 - Parking requirements
C4 - Trees, hedgerows and natural landscape
NC1LFS - Biodiversity and Geodiversity_
ER1 - Flood Risk
ER2 - Water Management
SS11 - Sustainable Communities Strategy