

**Application Number**

P/2012/0281

**Site Address**

Torquay Girls Grammar School  
30 Shiphay Lane  
Torquay  
Devon  
TQ2 7DY

**Case Officer**

Mr John Burton

**Ward**

Cockington With Chelston

**Description**

Formation of new sports hall. Revised plans received showing amended design, orientation and access to the proposed new sports hall

**Executive Summary/Key Outcomes**

The School is in need of a new purpose built sports hall as a result of increasing intake of pupils. The building will provide enhanced opportunities for sport for the pupils at the school with the resultant likelihood of improved health and well being. Projects like this are also likely to provide increased incentives for future generations of young people to take up sport, both as amateurs and potentially as professionals. The sports hall will provide a flexible space for an array of sports.

An original proposal was presented to the Design Review Panel in May of this year, and has subsequently been re-designed to take on board the panels comments. The school has now also examined other alternative sites for provision as referenced in the panel's findings, but reached the conclusion that the site adjacent to the current all weather pitch would cause least harm to local residents and the environment in general. Sport England had raised an objection, primarily on a lack of research relating to need, position and impact upon existing playing fields. This has now been countered and Sport England are expected to respond positively. One letter of objection has so far been received and all of the concerns expressed have been taken on board. It is considered that the proposed position would cause least impact to those properties on Heywood Close. The school maintains that this proposal will be used by the school, its pupils and staff only, and will not be used by general members of the public. As such, it is not considered that a contribution towards Sustainable Transportation would be required as the users would already be on site.

**Recommendation**

Conditional Approval; subject to consideration of any further comments that might be received before the expiry of the new public advertisement on 10th

August; and subject to the further views of Sport England; and subject to further arboricultural considerations. Conditions to be delegated to the Executive Head of Spatial Planning.

### **Site Details**

Existing field immediately adjacent to and behind the existing all weather pitch, with the tree lined footpath to the side and properties fronting Heywood Close approx. 60 metres to the east.

### **Detailed Proposals**

Permission is sought for a new sports hall on playing fields within the Grammar schools ownership. The site lies adjacent to the existing all weather pitch and the footpath linking Shiphay Manor Drive with Heywood Close. This is a private footpath in the ownership of the Girls school and is not a Council owned or maintained route or a public right of way.

The proposals show a large rectangular building of 30.3 metres in width, 34.8 metres in length and a roof height varying between 6.8 and 9.1 metres in height. The roof has a curved profile. The building is shown set into the existing embankment by about 1.2 metres in order to take advantage of on site gradients and reduce the impact of the building. The highest part of the roof will be on the side of the footpath which is lined by trees. Access to the building is shown from the school across the footpath to a set of steps and a ramped path with a maximum gradient of 1:21. Access to the hall is at ground floor level with internal steps and a lift to access upper floor levels.

Inside there are two levels of accommodation, with changing facilities, plant room, storage and offices at ground floor level, fitness suite, class room and viewing gallery above at second floor level, and four courts (tennis/badminton size) to the side taking up the full height of the structure.

Materials are proposed as a facing brick plinth, render and metal cladding panels above, and a dark grey coloured standing seam roof. The doors and windows are polyester powder coated aluminium.

### **Summary Of Consultation Responses**

*Sport England:* Originally raised an objection on the principle of the possible loss of playing fields. However, the field is of low grade, not used for organised sport by the school, and does not contribute to the pool of playing fields within the Bay. On this basis, Sport England has been sent further evidence and information to show that the loss of the playing fields would not be significant. Their further observations are awaited.

### **Summary Of Representations**

One letter received from original public advertisement, with concerns relating to noise and the height of building. The letter also expresses concerns over the

potential for light pollution and requests there to be not night time use of the building. However, the representation does offer support for the improvement of the school facilities. This letter is re-produced at Page T.200.

The application has since been re-advertised to reflect the revised scheme, which was received following comments from the Design Review Panel (these written comments are also re-produced at Page T.200) and negotiations with officers. No new representations have been received to date, the revised consultation period expires on 10th August.

### **Relevant Planning History**

P/1999/0019	Erection of sports hall with ancillary parking and landscaping. Approved 13/4/1999.
P/2002/0816	Erection of new dining hall and sports hall and associated facilities with 3 tennis courts. Approved 7/7/2003.
P/2003/1462	New science block. Approved 9/10/2003.
P/2004/1350	Erection of learning resource centre and new classroom to replace existing mobile classrooms. Approved 15/12/2004.
P/2006/1538	Music And Drama/6th Form Building. Approved 29/12/2006.

### **Key Issues/Material Considerations**

#### **Principle and Planning Policy -**

In principle, it is considered that the Council should be supporting a school that wishes to improve sporting facilities for its pupils. This is supported by policy CF10 of the Saved Adopted Torbay Local Plan which stipulates that proposals for new schools or improved facilities can be supported providing that:-

- (1) the location is suitable for the proposal,
- (2) the site is of sufficient size to accommodate the new facility,
- (3) the proposals safeguard existing playing fields; and,
- (4) the scheme would not adversely affect surrounding residential areas.

All of these criteria are considered to be satisfied by the current application. There is a large area of playing fields between the existing all weather pitch and Heywood Close and these are not specifically marked out or used for organised sporting activity. The loss of the area upon which the new sports hall is proposed would not adversely affect the ability of the school to lay on outdoor sporting activities or the pupils to recreate. The nearest edge of the proposed new hall would be some 60+ metres from the nearest property in Heywood Close. This property would in any event be reasonably protected by an existing tree screen along the footpath. The new building is also likely to cut out light spill the floodlights to the all weather pitch.

### **Design -**

The building has now been redesigned to take on board the comments made at the Design Review Panel.

The building has been pushed back towards the bank and this enables an improved landscape setting to the building and reduces the dominance of the building in its setting. The form and shape of the building now flows back towards the bank and this revised approach to siting and form is complemented by revised elevations, roof form and materials composition. Openings have also been introduced to break up the mass of the building and help it relate to the outside activities and areas better.

### **Visual amenity and impact upon properties in Heywood Close -**

This is a school site, with an existing multiplicity of buildings and design forms. The difference with this proposal is that whereas most of the school buildings are located to the north-east of the tree lined foot path which currently forms a natural boundary, this hall would be on the other side.

However, the new hall is proposed on the edge of the site and would be bordered by the existing fenced all weather pitch. It is not considered therefore that the new building would adversely intrude into the open space of the playing fields that exist between the Girls and Boys schools. The building would also be closely associated with the outdoor uses around it and has been designed to be in keeping with its setting.

The building would not be substantially visible from the north of the site (due to the trees, all weather pitch and distance). It would be visible to some of the properties in Heywood Close, but at a distance of some 60 metres and with trees obscuring vision to some of the properties. As the hall would be to the side of the open space of the playing fields, it is not considered that it would impact upon the open feel to the view from these properties.

Officers are of the opinion that residents of Heywood Close would not be unduly or adversely affected by the proposal.

### **Economy -**

The proposal is being funded by a significant grant and so will not place a burden upon the local Council tax payer. The proposal will provide opportunity for jobs in construction during the build, and will sustain existing employment in teaching at the school.

### **Closing the gap -**

The building will provide enhanced opportunities for sport for the pupils at the school with the resultant likelihood of improved health and well being. Projects like this are also likely to provide increased incentives for future generations of

young people to take up sport, both as amateurs and potentially as professionals. The sports hall will provide a flexible space for an array of sports.

### **Climate change -**

The revised design incorporate measures to address concerns expressed by the Design Review Panel in respect of environmental, energy and sustainability considerations. The proposal is now submitted with a detailed 'environmental systems concept design servicing strategy' document. This is currently being analysed and officer's opinion of this document will be reported to members at the meeting. The document gives internal and external design conditions, including high efficiency lighting, high efficiency plant, water saving measures, rainwater harvesting, solar water heating, passive ground source cooling, inverter drives, photovoltaic panels, fully condensing low Nox boilers, and a commitment to achieve a BREEAM 'excellent' rating.

### **Environmental Enhancement -**

The building has been redesigned and its position revised to provide an enhanced landscape setting and a better relationship to the existing landscape. The hall is dug into the ground to minimise its impact. However, the greatest effect of the new hall environmentally is likely to be upon the row of trees lining the footpath. A tree report has been submitted and this is currently being examined to check the impact upon existing trees. Further observations in respect of the tree impact will be reported at the committee meeting.

### **Accessibility -**

Although there will be a requirement for temporary vehicular access to the site during construction. There will be minimal if any impact upon highways, access and parking facilities because the new hall will replace an existing outmoded facility and will only be used by pupils already at the school. In this way no new trips or vehicle attraction is expected. Access to the hall and within the hall itself has been designed to take on board the needs of the disabled.

### **S106/CIL -**

The school has clearly stated that the new sports hall is only to be used by its pupils, and not opened up for general community use. On this basis, there would be no undue costs or requirements arising out of the proposal that ought to be funded by the development itself. The only possible requirement could in any event be to make a contribution towards sustainable transportation, if one considered that the proposal would generate new pedestrian and/or vehicular activity that could be better met by encouraging greater use of public transportation. The Strategic Transportation section have confirmed that the nearest 'out of hours' service would be the no. 12 route on Newton Road. They are of the opinion that any likely patronage to be generated by 'out of school hours' use would not justify the provision of new or enhanced services along Shiphay Avenue/Shiphay Lane. Therefore, it is concluded that if there is to be any 'out of hours' use of the facility then this can be covered by adaptation of the

School's existing Green Travel Plan. There will be no requirement to make any financial contributions as part of any permission that may be granted.

### **Conclusions**

This is clearly a much needed facility for the school and the application proposes the best site available to minimise the impact upon the environment and nearby residential properties. The current proposal is a big improvement on that originally submitted and the design and principles have positively altered to take on board comments made by the Design Review Panel. There are not considered to be any policy objections to the proposal.

It appears that the applicant has overcome the initial objections raised by Sport England, but this has yet to be verified. There is currently only one representation from the general public. This expresses basic support for the proposal, but does indicate some concerns, which have now been overcome in the re-design.

There remains a need to clarify the impact upon trees, but subject to this, the recommendation is one of approval.

### **Relevant Policies**

BES Built Environment Strategy  
BE1 Design of New Development  
BE2 Landscaping and Design  
CFS Sustainable Communities Strategy  
CF10 New Schools and Improved School Facilities  
LS Landscaping Strategy  
L10 Major Development and Landscaping  
T1 Development Accessibility

### **Conditions**

To be delegated to the Executive Head of Spatial Planning and to include inter alia:

Materials specification  
Agreement over construction access  
Tree protection  
Landscaping  
Hours of operation