

Northwood College

Planning Statement

on behalf of Girls' Day School Trust

June 2017

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement supports a planning application ("the Application") for the renewal of an existing temporary planning permission for a 1,600sqm educational building ("the Proposed Development") at Northwood College, Maxwell Road, Northwood, London HA6 2YE ("the Site").
- 1.2 The Application is prepared on behalf of the Girls' Day School Trust ("the Applicant").

2. Site Description

- 2.1 The Site which forms part of Northwood College is located on the western side of Maxwell Road in Northwood.
- 2.2 The proposed application site makes up the northern portion of what was the school's existing sports pitch, comprising an area of grassland and Astroturf tennis pitch.
- 2.3 The current use of the Site however relates to the accommodation of a temporary science block for the School which was approved for a temporary period from September 2014 – September 2017 (see further details in Section 3 below).
- 2.4 The main entrance to the site is provided via Maxwell Road outside the main school building, which houses the main school reception.
- 2.5 The area surrounding the site is predominately residential in character with a range of housing types varying from large storey detached properties to 3-4 storey purpose built flats. The local centre (Northwood) is located to north of site where a range of shops and services can be accessed within a short five minute walk. In terms of transportation, the centre is served by Northwood Underground Station (Metropolitan Line) and a number of buses including the 331 bus route (located on Maxwell Road) which directly serves the College from Uxbridge to Ruislip.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 This section considers the planning history of the Application Site. Although the wider School site has an extensive planning history the Application Site, in relating to a small area of the campus, has more limited planning history which is considered to be of direct relevance to the Proposed Development.

Application Number 2082/AOO/2014/600

- 3.2 This application secured the use of the current temporary science block, which was permitted for a period of three years from 4 September 2014.
- 3.3 The description of development as approved states:

Demolition of existing storage sheds and construction of two storey building comprising 1,600 sqm of temporary classroom accommodation, for a period of 3 years from 4 September 2014 (excluding construction/deconstruction period).

4. Proposed Development

- 4.1 The Proposed Development seeks the continued use of the extant temporary permission for a science block (identified in Section 3). The proposed description of development is defined as:

“Continued use of temporary classroom accommodation comprising of a two storey building of 1,600 sqm for a further period of 3 years from 4 September 2017 (as previously approved in planning application ref: 2082/APP/2014/600).”

- 4.2 The Proposed Development is required to ensure that teaching accommodation remains in place whilst wider rationalisation proposals for the School emerge. These longer-term proposals will seek to increase and enhance the permanent accommodation, ultimately allowing for the demolition of the Proposed Development. This Application seeks to ensure that sufficient accommodation is provided in the interim to allow teaching to continue uninterrupted.
- 4.3 At the time of the original planning application it was not envisaged that the temporary planning permission would need to be extended for a further 3 year period. Although, the wider rationalisation proposals have taken longer to emerge than originally envisaged, GDST are committed to bringing this forward and we aim to present further information on this to Officers prior to the determination of the planning application for the continued use of the temporary science block.
- 4.4 Further, it was noted during pre-application discussion with Officers that at the time of the original application the School had stated that the temporary teaching accommodation was not required for the merger and as such Officers sought information on the justification for the extended period.
- 4.5 It is evident that the original proposals came about in order to support the amalgamation of Northwood College and Heathfield School. The Committee Report for the original application makes clear that although technically feasible if the amalgamation of the schools was not supported by the temporary science block then this would lead to a breach of the School's policy on classroom sizes.
- 4.6 It is essential that the high quality learning environment of the School is maintained and that the temporary science block is retained for a further 3 year period prior to permanent facilities being implemented.

5. Development Plan and Other Material Considerations

5.1 The London Borough of Hillingdon Development Plan is comprised of:

1. Hillingdon Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies (adopted 2012 as the Core Strategy);
2. Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (2007); and
3. The London Plan (2016, as amended).

5.2 In addition to the Development Plan Document, we consider the following to be Other Material Considerations to the determination of this Application:

1. National Planning Policy Framework ("the NPPF");
2. National Planning Practice Guidance ("NPPG"); and
3. Emerging Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2: Development Management Policies.

5.3 Relevant national and local level policies are summarised below. Section 6 (below) then seeks to assess the proposed development against the policy objectives.

National Planning Policy Framework (2011)

5.4 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" (our emphasis).

Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies (2012)

Policy HE1: Heritage

5.5 The Site is located in the Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane Conservation Area ('the Conservation Area') to which this policy relates. It states that the Council will conserve and enhance Hillingdon's distinct and varied environment, its settings and the wider historic landscape, which includes designated heritage assets such as, inter alia, Conservation Areas.

Policy BE1: Built Environment

- 5.6 This policy relates to design of new development. In the context of the Site it is closely relates to Policy HE1. The policy seeks to require all new development to improve and maintain the quality of the built environment in order to create successful and sustainable neighbourhoods, where people enjoy living and working and that serve the long-term needs of all residents. All new developments should achieve a high quality of design in all new buildings.

Policy EM1 – Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

- 5.7 This policy details a range of expectations of new development in order to adapt to climate change. The policy seeks in part, for climate change mitigation to be addressed at every stage of the development process by (in part), by ensuring development meets the highest possible design standards whilst still retaining competitiveness within the market.

Policy CI1 – Community Infrastructure Provision

- 5.8 This policy sets out the Council's approach towards new educational facilities. It states that the Council will ensure that community and social infrastructure is provided in Hillingdon to cater for the needs of the existing community and future populations by, inter alia, supporting extensions to existing schools and the development of new schools and youth facilities.

Saved UDP Policies (1998)(Saved 2007)

- 5.9 Policy R10 states that the Council will consider proposals for new buildings for education will be acceptable in principle subject to other policies.

The London Plan

Policy 3.18: Education Facilities

- 5.10 This Policy adds considerable support to proposals that expand educational facilities.
- 5.11 Policy wording (planning decisions section only):
- *Development proposals which enhance education and skills provision will be supported, including new build, expansion of existing or change of use to educational purposes.*

Those which address the current and projected shortage of primary school places and the projected shortage of secondary school places will be particularly encouraged.

Proposals which result in the net loss of education facilities should be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no ongoing or future demand.

- In particular, proposals for new schools, including free schools should be given positive consideration and should only be refused where there are demonstrable negative local impacts which substantially outweigh the desirability of establishing a new school and which cannot be addressed through the appropriate use of planning conditions or obligations.*

5.12 Although the wording of some elements of this policy is focused on provision of new schools it gives an indication of the general thrust of London Plan policy on supporting education provision in the Capital.

Policy 5.2: Minimising Carbon Dioxide Emissions

5.13 Policy 5.2 of the London Plan (July 2011) requires development proposals to make the fullest contribution possible to reducing carbon emissions. Major development schemes must be accompanied by an energy assessment.

6. Planning Assessment

6.1 We consider the following to be key issues to consider in the determination of this Application:

- Principle of Development;
- Design and Heritage
- Sustainability
- Transport

Principle of Development

6.2 The London Borough of Hillingdon has previously accepted the principle of development and we consider that the policy framework continues to support such a proposal in this location.

6.3 National Planning Practice Guidance does not prevent temporary planning permissions from being extended however, it is clear that adequate justification based on the specific circumstances needs to be provided.

6.4 We consider that this Application falls within the circumstances where it is justifiable to renew the temporary consent. Although, the wider rationalisation proposals have taken longer to emerge than originally envisaged, GDST are committed to bringing this forward and we aim to present further information on this to Officers prior to the determination of the planning application for the continued use of the science teaching block.

6.5 The GDST will set out a clear plan of action for the rationalisation of Northwood College, which will be facilitated through the renewal of this consent. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to support educational choice and to work proactively with schools to ensure that “great weight” is given to the need to expand and alter schools (Paragraph 72). This proposal would help the school achieve its future ambitions and therefore it should be supported in line with the NPPF.

Design and Heritage

6.6 The design of the temporary building is unchanged from that as approved in application 2082/AOO/2014/600.

6.7 As identified in the committee report for the original application the size and height of the building has been kept to the minimum possible to provide the necessary accommodation. Its design would be typical of that of temporary classroom provision and on a temporary basis it is

it considered to be acceptable. Notably, the Council's Urban Design/Conservation Officer raised no objections in this respect with the previous application.

Sustainability

- 6.8 As set out in the committee report for the previous application, notwithstanding Policy 5.2 of the London Plan, it is acknowledged that the proposed building is only required for a temporary three year period, after which it would be removed from site. As such, it would not be viable to achieve such savings on such a short term proposal due to the long pay back periods associated with renewable energies.
- 6.9 The applicant has however submitted an Energy Statement in support of the application which confirms that a number of energy efficient building measures, such as ensuring the building is well insulated, use of energy efficient lighting, etc, will be incorporated. Notably, when the building is removed from site it will be used elsewhere which is, in itself, considered to be relatively sustainable.
- 6.10 The manufacturer (Sybcas) have confirmed that, taking the temporary nature of the building into consideration, the science block still complies with Building Regulations as regards to Energy Efficiency.
- 6.11 In addition, the Council's Sustainability Officer raised no objections to the previous application.

Transport

- 6.12 An updated Transport Statement has been prepared by Vectos and is submitted alongside this application. The original Transport Statement carried out to support the previous planning application confirmed that the proposals would not result in any demonstrable harm. The updated Transport Assessment considers that these conclusions are still valid given that the current number of pupils on site does not exceed the figure tested in the original application.
- 6.13 The Transport Statement concludes that there are no outstanding issues in relation to highways and transportation associated with the renewal of temporary permission for Northwood College and as such there are no reasons for refusal on these grounds.

7. Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1 This Planning Statement supports a planning application for the continued use of temporary classroom accommodation at Northwood College for a further 3 year period (from 4 September 2017 to 4 September 2020).
- 7.2 The application is required to ensure that the School can continue to offer its students a high quality learning environment in the period prior to further permanent facilities being brought forward at the site. GDST are committed to bringing forward these longer term proposals and we aim to present further information on this to Officers prior to the determination of this planning application.
- 7.3 It is evident that, with regard to the policies of the Development Plan, London Plan and NPPF, the Proposed Development is appropriate for a further 3 year temporary period.
- 7.4 The application is supported by an updated Transport Statement (at the request of Officers) which demonstrates that no material change in circumstance has occurred to alter the conclusions of the previous Transport Statement.
- 7.5 Other relevant policies in relation to design, heritage and sustainability have been addressed.
- 7.6 In conclusion, the Proposed Development complies with the Development Plan and national policy and therefore should be approved.