

<b>Planning application no.</b>	21/01053/FUL	
<b>Site</b>	Hill Avenue Academy, Hill Avenue, Wolverhampton, WV4 6PY	
<b>Proposal</b>	Extension to create 4 new classrooms, entrance reception and staff room. Erection of new canopy and amended car park layout.	
<b>Ward</b>	Spring Vale	
<b>Applicant</b>	Hill Avenue Academy (Elliott Hateley)	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Stephen Simkins Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration	
<b>Originating service</b>	Planning	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Vijay Kaul	Senior Planning Officer
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## 1.0 Summary recommendation

1.1 Grant subject to conditions.

## 2.0 Application site

- 2.1 School built in the 1950's within a residential estate, mainly of single storey scale, with one and half storey main hall. There have been previous extensions erected on these premises.
- 2.2 The site includes a formalised hard surface play and sports area, which provides a multi games layout and running track. To the south-east of the site there is soft landscaping with mature trees, lawned areas and vegetation.
- 2.3 There is parking immediately in front of the school accessed directly off Hill Avenue, which is a no through road. There is further informal car parking toward the north of the site. To the south of the site, pedestrian access is available from Waverley Crescent.

## 3.0 Application details

- 3.1 Single storey extension to provide additional four classrooms, new reception area and office space, created by partial demolition of the main school building. This will front the main entrance of the school.
- 3.2 An infill single storey extension will be built along the north-western elevation to create a re-located staff room.
- 3.3 A new mono-pitch external canopy will be erected along the south-east elevation to provide a cover to existing play areas.
- 3.4 The planning submission confirms the extension will accommodate its planned increase of pupil places by 105 overall (from 1.5 forms of entry - 45 places per year group to 2 forms of entry - 60 places per year group). Over a seven-year period starting in September 2022, 15 additional pupils per year will mean admission numbers increased from 315 places to 420 places.
- 3.5 Part of the existing car parking to the front of school will be relocated to the side and accessible along the existing short service and delivery road. In total eight existing parking spaces will be relocated, and three new parking spaces provided. There will be a minimum of 22 parking spaces, including a new disabled parking bay and two parking bays served by electric vehicle charging points.

#### **4.0 Relevant policy documents**

- 4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 4.2 The Development Plan:  
Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan (UDP)  
Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS)

#### **5.0 Publicity**

- 5.1 The application was advertised by direct neighbour notification, site notices and local newspaper advert. Six representations (one letter includes an 18-name petition), have been received and can be summarised as follows:
  - Concerns about safety for children
  - Increased pavement parking and blocking residential driveways, causing anti-social behaviour from parents
  - Increased volume of traffic to surrounding roads
  - School should take responsibility for children leaving premises
  - Emergency vehicles may not get through

- Waverley Crescent: Grass island on used as overspill parking, car drop off children in middle of road, walking parents congregate on driveways. Some ideas for improvement:
  - staggered finish times
  - boulders on island to prevent parking
  - H-markers to each property funded by council
- Coaches and delivery vehicles causing obstruction
- No more outdoor space being created

## **6.0 Consultees**

### **Internal**

- 6.1 Highways – No objection subject to conditions and funding of Traffic Regulation Order.
- 6.2 Environmental Protection (Land Contamination) – No objection, as there are no contamination issues.
- 6.3 Education – Supportive of proposal.

### **External**

- 6.4 Severn Trent Water – No objections subject to conditions
- 6.5 Western Power Distribution - Welcomes contact with the developer to provide safety guidance for construction.

## **7.0 Legal implications**

- 7.1 The legal implications arising from this report are set out below SE/05112021/B.

## **8.0 Appraisal**

- 8.1 The main issues for consideration are:

- Principle of development
- Character and appearance
- Highways and parking
- Residential Amenity

### **Principle of development**

- 8.2 Hill Avenue is currently a 1.5 form entry primary school and is rated outstanding by Ofsted. As expected, it is extremely popular with the number of 1<sup>st</sup> preferences for the school significantly exceeding the number of places on offer over the past four years. As a result of this demand in the local area, City of Wolverhampton Council have requested that the Pupil Admission Number (PAN) for the school is increased by 15 pupils a year over a 7-year period leading to a total increase of 105 pupil places.

- 8.3 The proposal from Manor Multi Academy Trust responsible for Hill Avenue Academy is for a permanent expansion from 1.5 forms of entry (45 places per year group) to 2 forms of entry (60 places per year group), a total of 105 additional permanent places to be accommodated in the extended facilities. The expansion of the school is already included in the Council's Primary School Expansion Programme 2021 and 2022 (PSEP 2021 and 2022). The proposed expansion would be effective from September 2022.
- 8.4 In addition, the Academy meets the factors that are considered when prioritising potential school expansion schemes including schools which are popular with parents, those judged as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, attainment, stable and proven leadership and being located in an area of high demand. To conclude, the expansion of Hill Avenue Academy will support the Local Authority's statutory duty in ensuring sufficient school places are available in the local area.
- 8.5 The local planning authority is satisfied that the need for the proposal to provide additional accommodation at the school to accommodate school place demand has been demonstrated. In accordance with paragraph 95 of the NPPF, LPA's must give great weight to any proven need to expand the school and attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. The NPPF also states that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive, and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.
- 8.6 Furthermore, as the new building elements of this proposal have been designed to sit within and adjacent to the existing main school building footprint, there is no loss of formal sports or activity space. The principle of development is acceptable.

### **Character and appearance**

- 8.7 The design of the extension featuring a flat roof, facing brick finish and modern glazing would ensure the extensions integrate with the existing school complex. The external canopy is a largely transparent structure and would be an appropriate addition.
- 8.8 The local planning authority are therefore satisfied that the proposal would not cause harm to the surrounding character of the area.

### **Highways and Parking**

- 8.9 Residents are concerned that the expansion of the school would bring more pupils with the potential for being dropped-off and collected by car, exacerbating existing conflicts between parents and residents on Hill Avenue, Gordon Avenue, Pruden Avenue, with considerable concern raised in respect of Waverley Crescent.
- 8.10 The Highway Authority acknowledge these issues given the increase of up to 34 cars anticipated in the submitted Transport Assessment. However, some of these existing issues arise from inconsiderate driver behaviour and parking by those dropping-off or

collecting children. As is evident at schools across the City, there are often competing pressures on the available street parking at drop off and pick up times.

- 8.11 An analysis of the most recent accident data suggests that there are no historic accident trends that might be exacerbated by the proposal.
- 8.12 To alleviate some of the concerns about traffic movement and parking, the Education Authority has been in discussion with the applicant (and their highway consultant) about the introduction of mitigation measures.
- 8.13 The school is currently awaiting approval from the governing body to re-introduce staggered start and finish times – with two start (0830 and 0845) and two finish times (1500 and 1515). This will serve to dilute the impact of additional trips but also to provide a benefit in terms of lessening the concentration of existing drop-off / pick-up. The staggered times arrangement initiated across other schools in the City has improved parking capacity during peak times. A condition will be required to confirm the introduction of these times and also ensure that children with siblings with conflicting schedules are managed, so that they are allowed to start / finish school early.
- 8.14 The submitted Travel Plan has been prepared in accordance with the nationally recognised, Modeshift STARS programme, which the school has now signed up to and commits the school to reducing its traffic impacts – it sets targets to reduce the overall proportion of both staff and pupils travelling to school by car alone by 10% (over the period of expansion). Within the Travel Plan, there is a specific commitment that the school will seek to identify suitable Park & Stride locations, that are (moderately) remote from the school, with the specific purpose of reducing the number of vehicles using either Hill Avenue or Waverley Crescent. The Travel Plan commits the school to developing a considerate drivers code of conduct with a view to discouraging unsociable behaviour that impacts negatively on access to residents' properties.
- 8.15 The applicant has confirmed the expansion will lead to an increase seven full time equivalent (FTE) staff, with a proportion of these likely to be part-time. It is considered that the level of parking proposed to cater for the uplift in staff is appropriate, in the context of the constraints of the site and the school's commitment to reducing car trips amongst staff, as set out in its Travel Plan.
- 8.16 The applicant has agreed to a condition to fund the Council review of existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) in the vicinity of the school.
- 8.17 In light of these above measures, and the relative short period of potential impacts at drop off and pick up times, the proposed development would not conflict with transport and parking development plan policies, nor with would there be conflict with NPPF paragraph 111 which says that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

## **Residential Amenity**

- 8.18 Given the limited scale and massing of the built form with sensitively positioned glazing, the proposed development has been designed to ensure that the newly formed classrooms would not harm the living conditions of surrounding residential occupiers. The external canopy to the south-east would cover already utilised outdoor space.
- 8.19 No adverse impact upon residential amenity would arise.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

- 9.1 The proposed development is acceptable and in accordance with the development plan.

## **10.0 Detail recommendation**

- 10.1 That planning application 21/01053/FUL is granted subject to following conditions:
- Materials
  - Drainage
  - Parking layout implementation
  - Construction Management Plan (including traffic control measures)
  - Transportation mitigation measures (inc staggered pick up/drop off times, TRO)
  - Travel Plan
  - Cycle/motorcycle parking
  - Electric vehicle charging points

