

Planning application no.	22/00155/FUL	
Site	Wednesfield Technology Primary School, Lichfield Road, Wolverhampton, WV11 1TN	
Proposal	New School	
Ward	Wednesfield South;	
Applicant	Tilbury Douglas Construction Ltd on behalf of Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Stephen Simkins Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy	
Accountable Director	Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration	
Originating service	Planning	
Accountable employee	Tracey Homfray	Planner
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1.0 Summary recommendation

1.1 Grant subject to a Unilateral Undertaking and conditions.

2.0 Application site

2.1 The site is the former Edward the Elder Primary school, which is on a main arterial route. Much of the site is bounded by residential dwellings, and along the north/eastern boundary runs the Wyrley and Essington Canal. The surrounding area is a mix of residential and commercial properties. The original school has been demolished.

3.0 Application details

3.1 The proposed new Wednesfield Technology Primary School has been developed to provide teaching spaces for Early Years children through to end of Key Stage 2:

- Nursery – 26 children
- Reception – 60 children
- Key Stage 1 – 120 children
- Key Stage 2 – 240 children.

- 3.2 The design of the building incorporates a two-storey block, with single storey to the hall and kitchen element equating to 2179m², which corresponds to a gross external area of 2374m². The design is Passivhaus, which aims to achieve a very high level of energy efficiency.
- 3.3 The external layout incorporates parking to the frontage with access/exit off Lichfield Road and a drop off/pick up area. There is a soft outdoor PE area along the canalside to the north of the building and a hard outdoor PE area directly to the north of the hall, along with soft and hard informal and social areas. There are also habitat areas, which are wooded areas to the northwest, northeast and southeast corners of the site. There is a service access north of the site from Lichfield Road.

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).
- 4.3 UDP C4 and BCCS HOU5 "Education and Health Care Facilities".

5.0 Publicity

- 5.1 Nine letters of concern, raising the following issues:
- Loss of historic building;
 - Disruption to adjacent roads from parking and increased traffic;
 - Disruption to parking for the adjacent shops due to parents parking;
 - Highway and pedestrian safety;
 - Suitable drop off and pick point;
 - CCTV required on site;
 - Mud and dust from construction;
 - Keep the historic date sign and incorporate it into the development;
 - Security and maintenance of the site;
 - Loss of wildlife;
 - Previous school resulted in accidents, therefore parking access etc needs to be improved;
 - Traffic regulation orders would have a negative impact on parking for both residents and businesses, which will also increase the usage of the shops for parking;

- Increase the width of the access to provide vehicular drop off and pick up required on site;
- Design of the access should be improved for the presentation of the village.

6.0 Consultees

- 6.1 Coal – place mining advice note on decision.
- 6.2 Drainage/Flood Risk – acceptable subject to conditions.
- 6.3 Canal Society – no objection subject to note for information.
- 6.4 Highway and Transportation – no objection subject to Traffic Regulation Order, pedestrian crossing, and commitment to the schools Travel Plan. Detailed comments are addressed in the Appraisal section below at 8.5 to 8.9.
- 6.5 Ecology – no objections subject to the recommendations of the relevant reports.
- 6.6 Tree Officer – no objection subject to new planting scheme on and off site, and tree protection during development.
- 6.7 Sports England – no objection.
- 6.8 Strategic Health – no objections subject to replacement trees, either on-site or a payment for planting off-site.
- 6.9 Conservation Officer - no objection subject to retaining the lodge house at the front entrance to the property, due to its relationship with the listed building opposite.

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report [SE/05092022/A].

8.0 Appraisal

Principle of Development

- 8.1 This is an established school site. Its redevelopment would therefore accord with UDP C4 and BCCS HOU5 “Education and Health Care Facilities” which supports improvements to educational facilities in the city.

Design

- 8.2 The proposed building would be higher and have a larger footprint than the original school. This would be appropriate in the context of nearby housing. It would front onto Lichfield Road, set well back from the highway to accommodate access, parking and circulation areas. The frontage would be broken up by landscaping to soften the visual appearance of the parking/circulation area.
- 8.3 The proposal has a modern approach, especially with respect to sustainability, with a Passivhaus design. Some of the key characteristics of this approach include thermal

comfort, low energy demands, fresh air throughout the building, appropriate insulation, airtight design and low energy costs. The design is welcomed and is acceptable.

- 8.4 The development has resulted in the loss of most of the former school. The school was not listed but did have some historic relevance in the area. The retention of the small coach house maintains a part of the historic fabric, especially as this has visual links with the listed Vine Public House across the road. The date plaque from the school is to be retained and erected on site.

Access and Parking

- 8.5 The proposed parking provision would be sufficient to accommodate the likely staff and visitor demand for parking during the school day.
- 8.6 In the interests of ensuring highway safety and free flow of traffic, the approach to the school along Lichfield Road needs to be kept clear of parked vehicles during the times when children are delivered and collected. A Unilateral Undertaking requiring waiting restrictions on this section of the highway will be required..
- 8.7 The development would intensify traffic movements, particularly at peak times, at the entrance to the school along Lichfield Road which is a main arterial route. In response to this, the applicant has allocated a drop off and pick up point within the school grounds, with a suitable circulation area, which should help to mitigate against congestion within the surrounding roads. The Unilateral Undertaking would also include the provision of a pedestrian crossing, to provide safe access across a busy arterial route for pupils and families making their way to school on foot; this would also be conditioned.
- 8.8 A Travel Plan has been devised for the school to monitor and adjust, if necessary, once the school is at full capacity. The school must ensure the Travel Plan is understood by employees and parents, and promote alternative methods of travelling to and from school for the benefit of the environment and neighbour amenity. The plan would be conditioned as part of the proposal. The plan would make clear the areas of access for parents with respect to parking and dropping children off for school and collecting them at the end of the day, and highlight other areas to park within suitable distance to the school.
- 8.9 Local shop owners have raised concern regarding possible encroachment of car parking areas which are available for customers. The car parking provided for the new school is sufficient. The applicants have also taken on board the concerns which have been raised and amended the car park layout to include an onsite drop off/pick up point, which would be managed by the school via marshals. This should keep the flow of traffic on and off the site and mitigate against any overflow parking onto neighbouring streets/sites, with parents parking up to get their children into school. The school must ensure that parents are fully aware of the Travel Plan and promote alternative methods of travel. The Travel Plan will also highlight other sites of appropriate parking within Wednesfield Village, which are within walking distance to the school, as an alternative option if

necessary. The reintroduction of a school at this location, with additional passing traffic and pedestrians, would benefit local shops, particularly during or after the school run, which is positive for the local economy.

Residential Amenity

- 8.10 The building would be 19m away from the boundary with residential properties along the Halecroft Avenue, and more than 22m from the rear of those dwellings; the boundary at this point would also be screened with landscaping. Properties in Lichfield Road along the western boundary have rear gardens longer than 40m. Considering the separation distances and the intervening tree and fence screens, the building would not have any significant detriment through shadowing or loss of light, privacy or outlook impact upon neighbours.
- 8.11 A grass playing pitch is proposed along the eastern boundary with the canal, and there is a hard surface play area along the western boundary with properties along Lichfield Road. A noise report and lighting report have evidenced no significant impact to neighbouring amenities. Acoustic fencing is proposed along the western boundary with those properties adjacent to the play areas, to reduce the impact of noise, light and general disturbance on surrounding housing. A restriction can be placed on the hours of use through a condition and restrict how many children that can play outside at any one time.

Drainage

- 8.12 The proposed drainage is acceptable with no detriment to the surrounding area, including the neighbouring canal, subject to conditions.

Ecology/Landscaping

- 8.13 The proposal would result in the loss of some trees on site and vegetation. A landscaping scheme has been produced to mitigate some of the loss. To compensate for the loss of trees and biodiversity, additional planting off site will be financed by the applicant via a Unilateral Undertaking, which would be conditioned as part of the proposal. Conditions would require the recommendations of all ecological reports to be carried out, and new reports (if time constrained) to be redone as necessary.

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 The new school would improve educational provision in this part of the city, updating the existing school site and providing good quality facilities for the benefit of future generations of children. The Passivhaus approach is welcome. The proposal would improve the current parking and access/circulation provision for the school. Ecology and neighbouring amenity have been satisfactorily considered. Subject to a Unilateral Undertaking and any necessary conditions, the proposal is acceptable and in accordance with the development plan.

10.0 Detail Recommendation

10.1 Grant subject to the signing of a Unilateral Undertaking including:

- Traffic Regulation Orders
- Pedestrian crossing
- Offsite planting for the loss of biodiversity on site

and any necessary conditions including:

- Unilateral Undertaking
- Removal of permitted development rights
- Materials
- Flood risk and drainage
- Recommendations of ecology reports
- Landscaping/Fencing/Acoustic Fencing
- School Travel Plan: access, circulation, drop off and pick up, and parking to be provided prior to occupation and managed as part of the Travel Plan
- Passivhaus design
- Commercial deliveries and collections time
- External lighting
- Acoustic fencing
- Construction Method Statement
- Restricted outside play times
- Electric charging points
- Traffic Regulation Orders
- Pedestrian crossing
- Bellmouth access
- Vehicular Circulation and drop off/pick up area to be provided and retained
- CCTV
- Protective fencing
- Cycle and motorcycle parking
- Hours of operation during construction
- Hours of deliveries and collections.

