

Committee	PLANNING COMMITTEE (B)		Item No. 4
Report Title	NORTHBROOK C OF E SCHOOL, TAUNTON ROAD SE12 8PD		
Ward	Lee Green		
Contributors	Emma Talbot		
Class	PART 1	Date	4 FEBRUARY 2010

Reg. Nos. DC/09/72596, DC/09/72596A and DC/09/72596C

Application dated 28.9.09 revised 2.10.09 and 22.12.09

Applicant Atkins Ltd on behalf of Lewisham Schools for the Future LEP Ltd

Proposal Variation of Condition (11) of the planning permission dated 16 December 2008 (DC/07/67730) for the demolition of the existing buildings at Northbrook C of E Secondary School, Taunton Road SE12 and the construction of a single storey to four storey building, to provide a new secondary school with associated facilities, landscaping and play area, an electricity sub-station, bin store, 60 cycle spaces and 1 car parking space, **in order to amend the approved windows to integrate louvres and alter the colour of the render.**

Applicant's Plan Nos. 108033 SK-10027 Rev 3, 10028 Rev 1, 10029 Rev P1, 10030 Rev P1, NB-WGI-A-A-XX-SK-10031, NB-WGI-A-A-XX-SK-10032, NB-WGI-A-A-XX-SK-10033, 108033 NB-WGI-A-S-E0-L-00001, Planning, Design & Access Statement, Colour Chart, Permarock Render Brochures, Render and Louvre Samples

Background Papers

- (1) Case File LE/445/A/TP
- (2) Adopted Unitary Development Plan (July 2004)
- (3) Lee Manor Conservation Area Character Appraisal (June 2008)
- (4) Lee Manor Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document (June 2008)
- (5) Local meeting notes (24 November 2009)

Zoning UDP – Existing Use

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In October 2008, the Strategic Planning Committee resolved to approve a planning application along with Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of the existing buildings at Northbrook C of E Secondary School and the construction of a single storey to four storey building to provide a new secondary school with associated facilities. When approved, the planning permission was subject to various conditions including Condition (11) which, as well as requiring some further details of the exact design of the oversailing entrance window, fixed the details of the windows, bricks and render to the building.
- 1.2 Since this time a further application has been received to make a change to the approved render and windows which were part of those details 'fixed' as part of Condition (11) with no opportunity to provide further details. The fact that these details are now proposed to change when residents could not have reasonably expected this has required a new application to vary Condition (11) and residents have been consulted.
- 1.3 On the plans submitted outlining the changes to the windows and render the detail of the oversailing entrance has been shown although this is not an element that forms part of the current planning application.
- 1.4 The case when originally considered by the Strategic Planning Committee included a window which oversailed the entrance. The detailed design of this was not provided but the description of it in the report to the Planning Committee stated that it would be designed using different colours and textures of glass in a design to reflect the Christian ethos of the school which was something that emerged during the application in light of CABA objections. Based on this, the detailed appearance of the window was secured by condition with all other materials fixed.
- 1.5 Earlier this year the Planning Service received the 'detail' submission for the window which was a design in different colours and textures of glass which was the approach that was outlined in the report to the committee. These details were approved by officers under delegated powers with no local consultation.

2.0 Property/Site Description

- 2.1 The present site is approximately 0.5Ha in size and extends from Taunton Road at the junction with Wantage Road and Hedgley Street to Brightfield Road to the rear and is bounded by two storey residential properties and Manor House Gardens. The replacement school building is currently under construction with the playground to the north and west adjacent to the properties on Hedgley Street and Brightfield Road. The houses to the west on the north side of Taunton Road were previously separated from the school building by a two storey caretaker's property with their gardens adjoining part of the playground. This building has recently been demolished.
- 2.2 A small part of the site which until recently comprised the caretakers house is within the Lee Manor Conservation Area. The conservation area was extended in 2008 and an Article 4(2) Direction served which removes certain permitted development rights for alterations and extensions to dwellinghouses to elevations visible from the public realm. The boundary now encompasses all the properties surrounding the main school building and a small corner of the school site which until recently contained the caretaker's house. The adjacent Manor House

Gardens is Grade II listed in the non-statutory Register of Parks and Gardens. The Gardens are Public Open Space as defined in the adopted UDP. The site is partially within Flood Zone 3a as defined in PPS 25 Development and Flood Risk.

3.0 Planning History

- 3.1 There have been various planning applications historically for extensions and temporary prefabricated classrooms to the previous school building. The applications of most relevance to this case however are:
- 3.2 2008 – Planning Permission and Conservation Area Consent granted for the demolition of the existing buildings at Northbrook C of E Secondary School, Taunton Road SE12 and construction of a single storey to four storey building to provide a new secondary school with associated facilities, landscaping and play area, a electricity sub-station, bin store, 60 cycle spaces and 1 car parking space.
- 3.3 2009 – conditions attached to the aforementioned Planning Permission were submitted and discharged throughout 2009 as ‘approval of details’ applications. This included the details of the oversailing entrance which took the form of a cross using different colours and textures of glass and the signage. In line with the Council’s usual procedure, no public consultation was undertaken on the further details submitted.
- 3.4 January 2010 – a further submission for approval of details has been submitted to propose a new design for the oversailing entrance window pursuant to Condition (11) and new details for signage pursuant to Condition (12). Officers are currently assessing the details. Given the known local interest in these specific details, the Planning Service have consulted those residents who were consulted or who have responded to this current application.

4.0 Present Application

- 4.1 The present application is for the variation of Condition (11) of the 2008 Planning Permission to change the details of the originally proposed windows and colour of the render.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the timber windows are changed from those originally agreed to incorporate louvres to the lower sections of some windows where they were originally proposed to be fully glazed. The windows would remain as timber with a brown colour finish with the louvres finished in varying shades of browns and yellows to the ground and first floors and grey to the second and third floors.
- 4.3 The original scheme included coloured render panels between the windows which were approved as three different shades of green. It is now proposed that the render would be finished using a palette of six colours ranging from yellows to orange and red. Samples of the render painted in each of the colours as identified on the plans have been provided along with a RAL colour wheel.
- 4.4 Consequently, along with the material samples submitted as part of the original application, the palette of materials for the building as secured and proposed are yellow brick, textured render in white and six different shades of yellows to red, timber windows finished brown with tinted glazing and sedum to certain flat roofs which would have metal coping along with a section of green wall. Although the subject of a further approval of details application irrespective of whether the applicant chooses to implement the approved design or any other which is the

subject of the current approval of details application, it is proposed to use a curtain wall glazing to the entrance bay of the building which would seek to use a range of colours in similar tones to the proposed render and types of glazing.

5.0 Consultations and Replies

Neighbours & Local Amenity Societies etc

5.1 Letters of consultation were sent to 365 addresses in the local area and to the Lee Manor Society. In addition to this notices were displayed on the site and in the local press in conformance with the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement. Ward Councillors were also consulted.

5.2 Following the initial consultation exercise, letters of objection were received from the residents 61, 65, 68, 70, 74, 78, 80 and 104 Taunton Road, and 12 Micheldever Road as well as the Lee Manor Society. A letter from 46 Brightfield Road was also received which commented on the proposals but raised no objection to the render and louvres. The main issues in the objections relating to the present application (as opposed to the window to the oversailing entrance) are:

- (1) The tone of the colour palette proposed which are considered to be garish and an offensive intrusion into the conservation area and residential street;
- (2) The change from shades of green which were felt to be more in keeping with the park setting;
- (3) The colour scheme would draw more attention to the building and would be insensitive;
- (4) Some letters stated that there were no objections to the details actually within the application and the issues raised related to the main window and the use of a cross;
- (5) Various comments were made about the unacceptability of the school building itself which was approved in October 2008.

The Lee Manor Society

5.3 The Lee Manor Society has raised a series of concerns in their letters. The matters raised are set out below:

The main concerns related to the design of projecting glass entrance feature into a 'gigantic Christian symbol'. The colours proposed would make this feature even more dominating in a quiet residential street. Any glazing scheme should not be used to emphasise the dominating position of this building on the street but to help it blend in as far as possible.

5.4 The Society are concerned that the new render scheme is "busier" than the original with a wider palette of colours. They are opposed to anything that draws more attention to the school in its street setting. They noted that yellow is a closer match with the surrounding yellow stock brick houses but on the west - gardens - side of the building the original green colours are less intrusive. It was considered that the architect was trying to "tart up his building with cheap and gaudy embellishments".

- 5.5 The visual impact of the louvres was considered to be minimal and no objection was raised.
- 5.6 Due to the level of response, a local meeting was held on the 24th November 2009. All residents who had made representations were invited to the meeting.
- 5.7 At the meeting further issues raised regarding the details of the present scheme were about the need for the change to incorporate louvres, the noise from the school if windows needed to be opened (given the concerns regarding ventilation which has resulted in the present application) and the maintenance of these features over time. There was also a fear that there would be further changes to the scheme. A note of the meeting is included as an appendix to this report.
- 5.8 Following the local meeting, the school agreed to revisit the details of the render (as well as the oversailing entrance window) through a forum to meaningfully involve local residents in the details. Revisions to the scheme were made to change the proposed tones of the render and a further period of consultation was undertaken. A hard copy of the revised plans were provided directly to the Lee Manor Society.
- 5.9 Following the reconsultation a further letter from the Lee Manor Society was received. The matters raised related largely to the oversailing window as well as other matters that are not directly related to the application currently under consideration. However, they noted that there is no objection to the louvres but made no comment on the revised colour details as at the time of writing the letter, the applicant had not provided them with the details of the render.
- 5.10 At the time of drafting this report the render samples had been delivered to the Lee Manor Society and any further comments will be reported verbally.

(Letters are available to Members)

Amenity Societies' Panel

- 5.11 The Panel considered that the proposed louvres were acceptable but that the proposed glazed corner feature with its giant red cross would be too overpowering, particularly if it was intended to be illuminated at night. The Panel therefore recommended that a more restrained palette with no reference to symbols be used.

6.0 Policy Context

- 6.1 Recent planning legislation has required the Unitary Development Plan to be replaced by the Local Development Framework. At present some UDP policies have been deleted. The relevant saved planning policies from the UDP are set out in the following paragraphs.

Saved Policies from the Adopted Unitary Development Plan

- 6.2 The saved UDP policies most relevant to the proposal include: URB 3 Urban Design; URB 16 New Development, Changes of Use and Alterations to Buildings in Conservation Areas; and HSG 4 Residential Amenity.

Supplementary Planning Document

6.3 Lee Manor Conservation Area Character Appraisal

7.0 Planning Considerations

7.1 The main planning considerations are the impact of the proposed variations on the proposed building and the character and appearance of the streetscene, the conservation area and residential amenity.

The proposed building – its design and relationship to the streetscene and conservation area

7.2 Policy URB 3 Urban Design states that the Council will expect a high standard of design in new development whilst ensuring that schemes are compatible with, or complement the scale and character of existing development and its setting. The following factors are of particular relevance: the scale and mass of development; layout and access arrangements; relationship of development to existing townscape; the height of development in relation to its surroundings; the scale and alignment of existing street frontages. Materials should be of high quality and durability; developments at ground floor level should provide visual interest for the public including the pedestrian environment, with the incorporation of doors and windows to provide physical and visual links between buildings and the public domain and contribute to energy and natural resource efficiency.

7.3 Since the approval of the scheme, the design has progressed to the detailed construction phase which identified a concern regarding the heat that would be generated internally from IT equipment and the need for additional ventilation. In this case, the external noise levels have meant that a natural solution relying on opening windows would mean that the building would fail to meet the requirements of BB93 for internal noise levels. Full mechanical ventilation would require additional plant space resulting in the building having to be raised in height which for reasons of scale and daylight and sunlight, would not be acceptable in planning terms. The proposed solution therefore relies on a partial natural and mechanical system whereby a series of louvres draw air into the building with the air then heated or cooled depending on the ambient temperature.

7.4 Given the somewhat industrial appearance of louvres, the present scheme seeks to integrate them into the building as part of a coherent design solution, picking up on the approved colour palette for the oversailing entrance window and the brown finish of the windows as originally approved. A series of options were explored about the most sensitive ways which have been outlined in detail in the accompanying design and access statement. It was decided that a slim bladed metal louvre with a graduated colour treatment so that the tones of the main window as approved under Condition (11) would be filtered along the façade was the preferred solution. As a result, the render colour treatment would also be changed so that the overall scheme would have a clear design approach rather than the green render which would have been at odds with what was approved.

7.5 The proposed changes are considered to be well designed, providing visual interest as well as a coherent design approach. In this regard it is considered that the scheme would comply with URB 3 within the UDP. The changes to the colour palette during the current application has improved the proposal by replacing some of the harsher tones with more subtle variations whilst retaining the colour

palette. Overall it is felt that the colours would relate well to the yellow brick without trying to imitate it and instead of picking up on the greenness of the adjacent Gardens, would complement the autumnal colours which is still considered to be an appropriate backdrop.

- 7.6 Policy URB 16 requires that the redevelopment of sites within and adjacent to conservations areas should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 7.7 It is not considered that the changes as proposed given their detailing would in their own right be overly obtrusive so as to detract from the conservation area or it's setting. It is considered that there would be no discernible difference on the impact of the building overall due to the change whether the colour finish was green as originally approved or the current solution.

Residential Amenity

- 7.8 The colour choice and use of louvres are not considered to give rise to any issues of visual amenity that would significantly harm nearby residents.

8.0 Consultations

- 8.1 The planning matters relevant to this planning application have been discussed in Section 7. However, there have been various issues raised throughout the process which are not directly related to this application but which have still been set out below for clarification.

Consultation

- 8.2 Concerns have been raised about an initial letter sent to residents for this scheme which failed to mention the site address in the description of development. This was an error by the Planning Service and as soon as officers were made aware of this, new letters were sent and a new 21 day period of consultation started.

Failure to consult on the detailed design of the oversailing window to the entrance

- 8.3 Where conditions state 'to be agreed in writing' only very rarely are residents consulted about details (for example if there is something proposed which might slightly differ from what was applied for such as the removal of a tree which was originally proposed to be kept). In this case given the fact that the principle of the window was addressed as part of the submission which set out that different colours and textures of glass would be used in a design to reflect the Christian ethos of the school, the content of the 'detail' submission for the window did not differ from this approach which was effectively agreed in principle when the application was approved. It was therefore not considered warranted to consult residents about the actual design detail of this element.

The Use of Christian Symbolism

- 8.4 Although the detail of the oversailing window and approved cross do not form part of this application, many objections have been made and this has resulted in a revised scheme for the window which officers are currently considering. However, in any case, religious and moral issues are not relevant planning considerations, and cannot be taken into account by the Council in making decisions on planning applications.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 It is recommended that the variation of Condition (11) is agreed.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION AGREE TO VARY CONDITION (11) TO READ:-

- (11) The building shall be finished in those materials identified on drawing no. 108033 SK-10027 Rev 3 and the samples of windows, brick and render submitted, unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority. Notwithstanding the details hereby approved, samples of the proposed glazing to the oversailing entrance element and full details of the finishing and fixing of the feature shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of works. The details shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason

- (11) To ensure that the local planning authority may be satisfied as to the external appearance of the building and to comply with Policies URB 3 Urban Design, URB 16 New Development, Changes of Use and Alterations to Buildings in Conservation Areas and URB 9 Signs and Hoardings in the adopted Unitary Development Plan (July 2004).