

25 February 2016

# Chiswick Community School, Chiswick

in the London Borough of Hounslow

planning application no. P/2015/5458

**Strategic planning application stage 1 referral**

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Greater London Authority Acts 1999 and 2007; Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008.

**The proposal**

Erection of a single storey extension to the hall and construction of a new two storey teaching block.

**The applicant**

The applicant is **Chiswick Community School**, and the architect is **Pick Everard**.

**Strategic issues**

**School extension on Metropolitan Open Land** is the key issue. The Council is advised to work with TfL to resolve the **transport** issues raised.

**Recommendation**

That Hounslow Council be advised that the application complies with the London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 30 of this report and does not need to be referred back to the Mayor.

**Context**

1 On 19 January 2016 the Mayor of London received documents from Hounslow Council notifying him of a planning application of potential strategic importance to develop the above site for the above uses. Under the provisions of The Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor has until 25 February 2016 to provide the Council with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking that view. The Mayor may also provide other comments. This report sets out information for the Mayor's use in deciding what decision to make.

2 The application is referable under Category 3D of the Schedule to the Order 2008: *"Development – (a) on land allocated as Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land in the development plan, in proposals for such a plan, or in proposals for the alteration or replacement of such a plan; and (b) which would involve the construction of a building with a floor space of more than 1,000 square metres or a material change in the use of such building."*

3 Once Hounslow Council has resolved to determine the application, it is required to refer it back to the Mayor for his decision, as to whether to direct refusal or allow the Council to determine it itself, unless otherwise advised. In this instance, the Mayor does not need to be consulted again on this application.

4 The Mayor of London's statement on this case will be made available on the GLA website [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk).

## Site description

5 The application site is located on Metropolitan Open Land, Burlington Lane, within the London Borough of Hounslow. The land is Freehold within the ownership of the Hounslow Council, and lies fully within the Chiswick House Conservation Area. Directly to the North and East of the school site is the Chiswick House Estate itself. To the South West lies Chiswick Cemetery and local allotments and to the East and South East lie residential properties on Great Chertsey Road.

6 Two bus services directly serve the site (the E3 & 190) and connect the school with Chiswick and Turnham Green stations. The bus stops are located approximately 280m from the site entrance. These buses operate at an average frequency of 7 buses per hour. The nearest London Underground station is Gunnersbury, located approximately 1.5km north-west of the site. The station is served by the District Line providing a frequent service into central London. The nearest section of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN), Burlington Lane, is located approximately 75m east of the site. The nearest section of the Strategic Road Network (SRN), Chiswick High Road, is located approximately 1.2km north of the site. As a result, the site currently records a public transport accessibility level (PTAL) of 2, on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1a is the lowest and 6b the highest.



*Aerial view of the application site and site plan of the proposals: Source – applicant's design and access statement.*

## Details of the proposal

7 The application seeks full planning permission for the construction of a new two storey teaching block of 1,493sqm (GIA), erection of a single storey dining hall extension of 193sqm (GIA) and internal remodelling of an existing classroom to provide nine new WC's for pupils. The total gross internal floor area of the new and extended development will be 1,686sqm (GIA).

## Case history

8 There was a planning application for a similarly located 3-storey teaching block at the site, which was granted planning permission in March 2015 - (LPA reference: P/2014/3999). The GLA raised no strategic concerns in relation to this previous application (D&P/3615). However, the Council was unfortunately unable to secure funding from the EFA for the proposal, hence the current new two storey building and a single storey extension proposal has been submitted.

## Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance

9 The relevant issues and corresponding policies are as follows:

- Metropolitan Open Land *London Plan;*
- Education *London Plan; Mayor's social infrastructure SPG;*
- Transport *London Plan; Mayor's Transport Strategy;*

10 For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the development plans in force for the area are the 2015 Hounslow Local Plan and the 2015 London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations since 2011).

11 The following are also relevant material considerations:

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Technical Guide to the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance.
- The Mayor's Social Infrastructure SPG (2015).
- The draft Minor Alterations to the London Plan (draft MALP, 2015).

### **Principle of and Use: Education facility on Metropolitan Open Land**

12 In relation to the provision of educational facilities, policy 3.18 'Education facilities' of the London Plan states that *"Development proposals which enhance education and skills provision will be supported, including new build, expansion of existing facilities or change of use to educational purposes"*.

13 The above policy states *"The Mayor will support provision of early years, primary and secondary school and further education facilities adequate to meet the demands of a growing and changing population and to enable greater educational choice, particularly in parts of London with poor educational performance. ...Development proposals which enhance education provision will be supported, including new build, expansion of existing facilities or change of use to educational purposes."*

14 The Mayor's Social Infrastructure SPG provides guidance on planning for social infrastructure provision at strategic level starting with the GLA's own demographic projections and the ways in which these can be used to understand need for health, education and sports facilities. It sets out that the Mayor is keen to support the development of free schools in London, not only through increasing provision of places in areas where there is unmet demand but also in driving up the quality of provision.

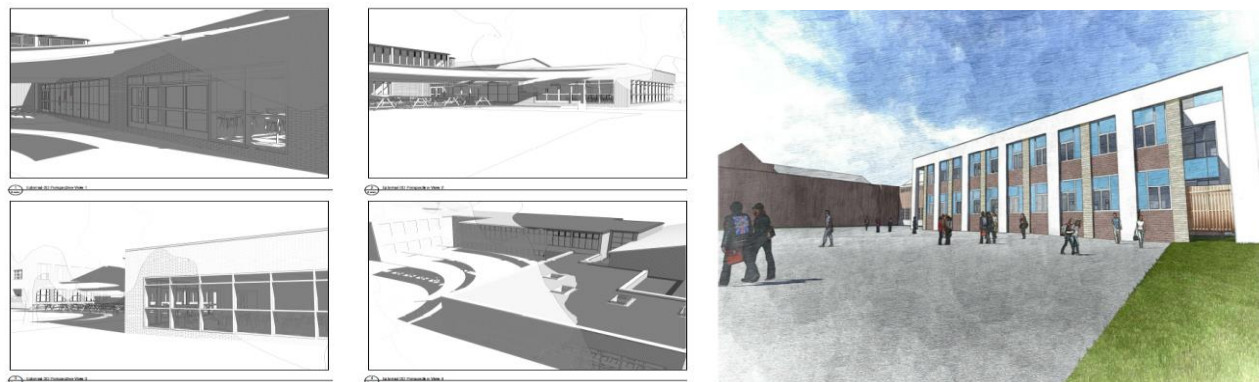
15 The application site forms part of a Metropolitan Open Land. The London Plan (policy 7.17) which gives the MOL the same level of protection as in the Green Belt and The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 89) set out that only development associated with agriculture, forestry, outdoor sport and recreation, limited infilling and redevelopment of existing sites is appropriate in the Green Belt. All other forms of development are, by definition, 'inappropriate'. In order for 'inappropriate' development to be acceptable in the Green Belt, very special circumstances must apply.

16 The applicant has stated "By 2020 there is a projected population increase of around 22% in Hounslow school aged children aged 4-19, which will significantly affect demand for school places. In order to meet the increased demand for secondary school places within the London Borough of Hounslow, the Council have concluded that Chiswick School should be expanded through the construction of a new teaching block on the current school site, and to expand the existing dining hall to accommodate the increased number of pupils on the school role."

17 Reiterating their case the applicant has stated "early stage concept and feasibility studies were undertaken to assess the suitability of other school sites within the Borough to cater for the expanding pupil role. In order to meet the additional pupil places within the London Borough of Hounslow, the Council have identified Chiswick Secondary School as a target for expansion. The school will need to expand from its existing 7.2 Form Entry ('FE') to 9FE, to be delivered for the September 2017 intake."

18 GLA planning officers' position: Although the applicant has not explicitly stated whether the application is appropriate or inappropriate development in the MOL, assessing the layout, scale and massing, it can be well demonstrated that the proposals fall within the NPPF definition of previously developed land, limited infilling and redevelopment of existing sites. Therefore, GLA officers are satisfied that the proposed development is appropriate as it meets the exceptions in paragraph 89 the NPPF.

19 In addition, as detailed above the applicant has reiterated the need for the expansion of the School in order to accommodate the increased demand for secondary school places in that part of Hounslow. This is acceptable and supported in terms of Policy 3.18 of the London Plan.



3D – Visualisations of the proposed development: Source – applicant's design and access statement.

20 Visual impact assessment: GLA officers, in assessing the view impacts submitted and considering the location, massing and scale of the proposals, they are satisfied that the extension and the new teaching block are carefully designed. Therefore, the impact of the proposals on the openness of the MOL is limited and not harmful. It was also noted that the proposals would not significantly reduce opportunities for outdoor recreation given the existence of large playing fields adjacent to the application site.

21 In summary, officers have concluded that the benefits of the development outweigh the limited impact on the MOL; therefore, the GLA is supportive of the scheme in land use terms. However, the Council needs to satisfy itself that the details of the application comply with other planning policies.

## **Transport for London's Comments**

22 It is understood that the proposed development will result in the loss of a total of 13 car parking spaces to facilitate the provision of cycle parking and minibus spaces. This will leave a provision onsite for 45 cars in the main car park, alongside five spaces situated in the canteen car park. As such, TfL welcomes the reduction of parking.

23 The transport assessment has calculated that during a 'worst case' scenario from a transport perspective, it is identified that there will be an additional 20 pupils travelling to and from the school by private cars following implementation of the proposed development, alongside an additional eight two-way car trips associated with additional staff members. It is therefore concluded that the development will have a negligible impact on TfL's transport network and subsequently TfL will not be seeking any mitigation measures. TfL is satisfied that current bus services will be able to deal with the minimal uplift in passengers; therefore no mitigation for bus services will be required. TfL however requests that the applicant clarifies if the current cycle parking facilities meet the minimum requirements set in the London Plan to cater for the expected increase in number of students. If not, TfL requires additional cycle parking facilities be provided in accordance with the London Plan standards (Policy 6.9) and that its location, convenience and security be carefully considered.

24 The travel plan document states that the existing school provides 20 cycle bays for staff and 45 cycle bays for student; however the proposal does not provide any further details on whether new arrangements will be provided to facilitate the access of a growing number of students to the site. TfL suggests that the applicant provides a study of 'cycling level of service' of streets and junctions in the vicinity of the school. TfL welcomes the applicant's commitment to update the existing school travel plan taking into account of the proposal. The updated travel plan should include setting assertive targets to encourage the use of walking and cycling, public transport/ as the preferred modes of transport, rather than private cars. The travel plan should nevertheless be secured by condition/ s106 obligation; and be accredited by the TfL School Travel Plan Accreditation Scheme (STAR) in line with

London Plan policy 6.3. The applicant is required to submit a framework construction logistics plan (CLP) and a deliveries & servicing plan (DSP). These should be included to be secured by condition.

25 As the proposed development is for a school as defined by the Education Acts, no Mayoral CIL will be chargeable for this development.

26 In summary, TfL has no significant transport concerns over the current proposals, however clarification must be provided on travel planning, including how cycle parking meets the latest London Plan standards.

### **Local planning authority's position**

27 Hounslow Council planning officers have yet to confirm their position.

### **Legal considerations**

28 Under the arrangements set out in Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor is required to provide the local planning authority with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking that view. Unless notified otherwise by the Mayor, the Council must consult the Mayor again under Article 5 of the Order if it subsequently resolves to make a draft decision on the application, in order that the Mayor may decide whether to allow the draft decision to proceed unchanged or direct the Council under Article 6 of the Order to refuse the application. There is no obligation at this present stage for the Mayor to indicate his intentions regarding a possible direction, and no such decision should be inferred from the Mayor's statement and comments.

### **Financial considerations**

29 There are no financial considerations at this stage.

### **Conclusion**

30 London Plan policies on **Metropolitan Open Land** and **Education** are the most relevant strategic issues to this planning application. In general, the application complies with these policies, for the following reasons:

- **School expansion on Metropolitan Open Land:** The proposals are supported and comply with the London Plan (policy 3.18) and falls within the exception of the NPPF (para 89). However, the Council needs to satisfy itself that the application accords with other aspects of planning policies.
- The Council is advised to work with TfL to resolve the transport issues raised.

31 The Mayor does not need to be consulted again on this planning application.

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