

Development, Enterprise and Environment

Stephen Hissett
Hounslow Council
Civic Centre
Lampton Road
Hounslow
LONDON TW3 4DN

Our ref: D&P/3499/TT01
Your ref: PP/2015/2516
Date: 29 July 2015

Dear Mr Hissett,

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Greater London Authority Acts 1999 and 2007; Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008
Nishkam School, 152 Syon Lane, Isleworth, TW7 5PN
Local planning authority reference: P/2015/2516

I refer to the copy of the above planning application, which was received from you on 22 June 2015. On 29 July 2015, the Mayor considered a report on this proposal; reference D&P/3499/01. A copy of the report is attached, in full. This letter comprises the statement that the Mayor is required to provide under Article 4(2) of the Order.

The Mayor considers that the application does not comply with the London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 68 of the above-mentioned report; but that the possible remedies set out in that paragraph could address these deficiencies.

If your Council subsequently resolves to grant permission on the application, it must consult the Mayor again under Article 5 of the Order and allow him fourteen days to decide whether to allow the draft decision to proceed unchanged, or direct the Council under Article 6 to refuse the application. You should therefore send me a copy of any representations made in respect of the application, and a copy of any officer's report, together with a statement of the decision your authority proposes to make, a statement of any conditions the authority proposes to impose and (if applicable) a draft of any planning obligation it proposes to enter into and details of any proposed planning contribution.

If your Council resolves to refuse permission it need not consult the Mayor again (pursuant to Article 5(2) of the Order), and your Council may therefore proceed to determine the application without further reference to the GLA. However, you should still send a copy of the decision notice to the Mayor, pursuant to Article 5 (3) of the Order.

Please note that the Transport for London case officer for this application is Rachel Yorke (email: RachelYorke@tfl.gov.uk, telephone: 0203 054 7029).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Wilson', written in a cursive style.

Colin Wilson

Senior Manager – Development & Projects

cc Tony Arbour, London Assembly Constituency Member
Nicky Gavron, Chair of London Assembly Planning Committee
National Planning Casework Unit, DCLG
Alex Williams, TfL
Ms Liz Fitzgerald, Vincent And Gorbings, Sterling Court Norton Road, Stevenage,
Hertfordshire, SG1 2JY

29 July 2015

Nishkam School, Syon Lane, Isleworth

in the London Borough of Hounslow

planning application no. P/2015/2516

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

Development of Part-two/Part-three storey “all-through” Free School, with ancillary access, parking, sport pitches and MUGA.

The applicant

The applicant is **BAM Construction Ltd on behalf of Education Funding Agency (EFA)**, and the architect is **BAM Design Ltd**.

Strategic issues

Principle of land use: education facilities on MOL, playing fields, community use, biodiversity, urban design, inclusive design, sustainable development/energy, flooding and transport are the key strategic issues relevant to this planning application.

Recommendation

That Hounslow Council be advised that while the application is generally acceptable in strategic planning terms the application does not comply with the London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 68 of this report. However, the remedies set out in that paragraph could possibly lead to the application becoming fully compliant with the London Plan. The application does not need to be referred back to the Mayor if the Council resolves to refuse permission, but it must be referred back if the Council resolves to grant permission.

Context

1 On 22 June 2015 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 31 July 2015 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 the following categories of the Schedule to the Order 2008:

- Category 3D: “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 1000 square metres or a material change in the use of such building.”
- Category 3E: “Development – (a) which does not accord with one or more provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the application site is situated; and (b) comprises or includes the provision of more than 2,500 square metres of floorspace for a use falling within any of the following classes in the Use Classes Order – (xi) Class D1 (non-residential institutions).”

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, if the Council resolves to refuse permission it need not refer the application back to the Mayor.

4 The Mayor of London’s statement on this case will be made available on the GLA website www.london.gov.uk.

Site description

5 The application site is located on a Metropolitan Land within Isleworth in the heart of the borough of Hounslow, between Syon Lane to its north east and Wood Lane to its south west. There are three Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) within 200m of the site (Piccadilly Line Railsides in Hounslow, Osterley Park and Wyke Green Golf Course). There is also Syon Park Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) about 2kms to the south east of the site.

6 The overall site is 8.8ha with the development area restricted to 4.17ha and is wholly owned by the Education Funding Agency. Currently, the site is vacant and was formerly occupied by sports and social clubs. Its lawful planning use is for outdoor recreation.

7 As shown below, the site is bounded on three sides by suburban housing; to the north west is the remainder of the former sports and social club pitches and facilities of the Conquest Sports Club and Wycombe House Cricket and Tennis Club.



Aerial view of the existing site and the proposals layout: Source- applicant’s design and access statement.

8 The nearest Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) is the A4 Great Western Road some 350m to the south where it intersects Wood Lane and Syon Lane with traffic signals. The busier of the two junctions, Syon Lane, has uncontrolled pedestrian crossing facilities including an underpass on its eastern arm. A Cycleway facility is provided on both sides of the A4. To the east of

Syon Lane, the A4 also provides access to the M4 at Junction 2. The A315 London Road is a further 550m south of this and forms part of the Strategic Road Network.

9 The site is not well connected by public transport, with a low-frequency bus service (Route H28) operating along Wood Lane and terminating at the Tesco Supermarket, some 440m from the site. The H91, runs along the A4 with a bus stop (eastbound) located some 200m south. Just over a kilometre away to the west is Osterley underground station (Zone 4) while Syon Lane railway station is just under a kilometre to the south. The public transport accessibility level (PTAL) methodology assumes a maximum walk distance of 640 metres to bus services and 960 metres to rail services. As such, the site records a PTAL of 1b (where on a scale of 1-6, level 1 is the least accessible).

Details of proposal

10 The application seeks full planning permission for the construction of Part-two/Part-three storey “all-through” Free School for circa 1,400 pupils (4-19), with ancillary access, staff and visitors parking, coach drop off, sport pitches and MUGA, hard and soft landscaping.

Case history

11 An informal pre-planning application meeting was held in July 2014 between the applicant, and GLA planning officers on sequential test matters and a formal pre-planning application meeting was held separately with TfL on transport matters in June 2015. As a result, substantial formal and informal advice reports were issued on both occasions.

Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance

12 The relevant issues and corresponding policies are as follows:

- Education *London Plan; Social Infrastructure SPG;*
- MOL *London Plan;*
- Playing fields *London Plan;*
- Biodiversity *London Plan;*
- Urban design *London Plan;*
- Access *London Plan; Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment SPG replacement;*

- Community use *London Plan;*
- Sustainable development *London Plan; Sustainable Design and Construction SPG; Mayor’s Climate Change Adaptation Strategy; Mayor’s Climate Change Mitigation and Energy Strategy; Mayor’s Water Strategy;*

- Flooding *London Plan;*
- Transport *London Plan; the Mayor’s Transport Strategy;*

13 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 2003 Hounslow Unitary Development Plan amended and saved as of September 2007, and the 2015 London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations since 2011).

14 The National Planning Policy Framework and Technical Guide to the National Planning Policy Framework, the Mayor’s Social Infrastructure SPG (2015) and Minor Alteration to the London Plan (MALP, 2015), and the emerging Hounslow Local Plan (which is at advanced stage for adoption as the Examination in Public ended on 16 April 2015 with a recommendation from the Inspector for a set of action points and suggested further changes) are also relevant material considerations.

Principle of land use: Provision of school on MOL

15 The population in Hounslow is ethnically diverse, with 43% being from ethnic minorities. It is noted that there are twelve faith based schools in Hounslow (primary and secondary), this includes three Church of England and nine Catholic. Although the Nishkam School West London (free school) is a Sikh ethos, multi-faith school for boys and girls aged 4-19, it has been identified that the school population has a high ethnic minority mix of approximately 67%. The school will be run and managed by the Nishkam Trust and delivered through the Education Funding Agency.

16 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"*.

17 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.*

18 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.*

19 The application site is part of a larger area identified as MOL. The London Plan (policy 7.17) gives the MOL the same level of protection as in the Green Belt, and the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 89) sets 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 the 'inappropriate' development to be acceptable in the MOL, very special circumstances must apply.

20 The NPPF in Para 87 sets out that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in 'very special circumstances'. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

21 At this stage the applicant has identified the very special circumstances that may justify the proposed school development on MOL, though the applicant considers educational need is key to the justifications for this development. All the special circumstances set out by the applicant are summarised below:

- Educational need: A full assessment of the educational need has been submitted. The assessment cross referenced the Hounslow's School Place Strategy 2010 – 2020 (January 2011), which sets out the Authority's school place planning strategy for the period 2010 – 2020. The strategy focuses on the 3-19 age range and specialist provision. The strategy outlines key principles for the effective organisation of school places (including early years and post-16), the demand for places, the current provision, and issues and opportunities for the future. Based on the birth rates, the Strategy identified that the demand for school places in all areas of the Borough was predicted to rise from 2008/9 onwards, with

significant pressure being on places within the centre of the Borough, in which the shortage cannot be met from existing schools.

- Lack of alternative sites: An extensive sequential test exercise has been carried out and efforts have been undertaken to identify both a suitable and available site (permanent and temporary), both through local knowledge, local agents and discussions with the Councils Property teams and via this sequential test exercise. The test exercise points out that some 196 sites were originally identified and mapped. Following the assessment, there were no sites identified that fell outside MOL or the Green Belt and 28 of those sites in the protected lands were shortlisted. As a result, the applicant concluded that the current application site was the only one identified as capable of meeting the needs of the Nishkam School and was available immediately.
- Impact on character and appearance of the area: The very special circumstance report states that the development site is currently undeveloped, having formerly been used as playing pitches. It is understood that the introduction of a part two, part three storey building of circa 5,300sqm (GEA) will make a difference to the character and appearance of the locality. However, the proposal seeks to retain the existing mature trees as much as possible (though very few will be felled), whilst applying well tree management principles and where appropriate, proposes to bolster the tree belt with additional planting. The report further confirms the siting of the school within the southern end of the site seeks to ensure that the openness of the wider site is retained, as it extends into the remainder of the MOL and the Green Belt beyond. Finally, the applicant asserted that this proposed development will result in a change in the character and appearance of the locality, however, given the nature of the proposed design and careful consideration of appropriate landscaping, it is not considered that this proposal will be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area, but will add to the soft appearance of the locality with attractive and meaningful planting.

22 In summary, GLA officers comment in terms of principle of land use is as follows:

- Educational need: Hounslow Council has identified a need to expand both primary and secondary places in the borough as a result of unprecedented population increase. The Mayor supports the expansion and building of new of schools (in particular free schools) and acknowledges that there are various factors that limit potential sites and configurations to address the pressing need of school places and quality of education. In this instance, the applicant has clearly set out the predicted demand for school places across the borough and how the proposed new school will assist in the provision of much needed school places as well as quality education. As a result, it is concluded that the educational need constitutes a very special circumstance, in this instance concerning school places provision at this site.
- Lack of alternative sites: Extensive evidence has been presented that there are no other suitable and available sites in the catchment area. As discussed at the informal pre-application meeting, and having reviewed the sequential test documentation, it is clear that a very thorough robust exercise has been carried out in the investigation of potential sites. The methodology is sound and the fact that it has been developed in discussion with Hounslow Council adds strength to this. It is clear that the Council has commented on the assessment as part of an iterative process, which is to be welcomed. Again this adds to the robustness of the process. In conclusion, and given GLA's wider experience of similar exercises for schools and other inappropriate developments on Green Belt/MOL, the extensive sequential test exercise has demonstrated an appropriate methodology and is suitably thorough and robust. As a result, it is concluded that the lack of alternative sites constitutes a very special circumstance, where statutory school placement requirements and educational need are critical in the borough.

- It is noted that the proposals will result in the loss of a few trees on site, primarily as a result of the formation of two new access points. Cumulatively the proposed development requires the removal of ten trees (out of the existing 82 trees) to facilitate development. The removal of seven of these trees is as a result of tree management, as opposed to direct development impact. That said, the applicant has committed itself to an extensive planting plan as discussed in the Arboriculture Impact Assessment and the Landscape Site Plan, which illustrates a total of 91 new individual trees and eight small clusters/groups of trees will be planted. Many of the individual trees line up the new access route from Syon Lane. This is welcomed.

23 In conclusion, officers accepted that very special circumstances in particular the compelling local educational need and lacks of alternative sites have been demonstrated that justify the proposed inappropriate development on MOL. The design and layout of the school development have been thought carefully to minimise as much as possible the visual impact of the development on the openness of the MOL. In this instance, the proposed school development on site is, on balance, accepted in strategic land use terms.

Playing fields

24 Although part of the application site is claimed as a disused playing field, the applicant should demonstrate the proposed development enhances the use of the playing fields and how this proposal benefits the wider communities.

25 That said, the applicant is advised to work closely with Sport England and any comment from them and their recommendation for conditions should be considered and secured.

Community use

26 The London Plan policy (3.18E) expects community use of educational facilities to be maximised. As discussed at the informal pre-application meeting, the applicant needs to make an early engagement with the local community, nearby schools and sport clubs in the production of its community use plan, which demonstrates the extent of proposed community use of the facilities, in a form that can be secured by the Council to ensure delivery.

27 The design of the school should assist in this by creating zones where out-of-hour community use will be easily provided (for instance the Library facility, the assembly hall, the MUGA and other sport facilities), while ensuring that access to other parts of the school will be segregated from the remainder of the school preventing unwarranted access to other areas. This community use provision needs to be secured.

Biodiversity

28 As discussed above in the site description section, there are three Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) adjacent to the application site. The Ecology Survey Report states that the majority of the site itself was not found suitable for habitats and species protected by legislation and planning policy, such as bats and reptiles. However, the report recommends to enhance the site with respect to bats, wildflower grassland could be planted around the extended areas of open space. This would provide improved foraging opportunities. It also recommends that in order to enhance the site with respect to bird nesting opportunities, a series of bird boxes are to be incorporated into the proposed scheme.

29 Subject to the above measures recommended in the Ecology Survey Report are fully secured, the proposal is acceptable and in line with policy 7.19 of the London Plan. In addition, any support/comment from Natural England and their possible recommendation for conditions should be considered and secured.

Urban design

30 It is understood that the proposals have been developed through consultation with Council officers, where it has been established that locating the campus within the south western portion of the site would be the most suitable location based on the need to protect the open quality of the MOL. This approach is supported in principle from a strategic planning perspective; however the applicant should provide further information that demonstrates the proposal's impact on the quality of openness of MOL, through the submission of a detailed views analysis to enable officers to reach an informed judgement and to fully satisfy London Plan Policy 7.17.

31 Notwithstanding the above, the layout principles underpinning the scheme are broadly supported and have been designed to meet the key objectives of EFA baseline school design guidance, which is welcomed. The building's arrangement around a central hub learning resource area, with four wings splaying outwards (as shown below) provides the opportunity to maximise the amount of teaching spaces with external outlooks, enabling passive ventilation and daylight penetration whilst also defining secure areas of recreation and play space between each wing. The splayed building line at the main entrance forms a welcoming public facing frontage which is supported; however some concern is raised with regards to the dominance of car parking spaces flanking the full length of the access road into the campus and the road access stretching along the MOL extensively. This is likely to result in circulation issues along the road, particularly during peak hours and is also likely to result in a detrimental visual impact on the open quality of MOL. The applicant is advised to explore alternative means of consolidating the car parking as far as is feasible, and ideally to the rear of the school building in order to optimise the open and green quality of MOL.



Front view of the proposals looking south and rear view facing Wood Lane- Source: applicant's design and access statement.

32 The form and massing strategy is supported, with the part-two/part-three storey building positioned a sufficient distance from residential properties to avoid any overbearing massing impact, while also drawing on their predominant heights. Notwithstanding this and while acknowledging the budget limitations in place, the applicant is advised to explore the use of alternative facing materials to render as this is likely to be susceptible to staining over time. The use of high quality timber panelling or brickwork would provide a softer and more durable finish, in keeping the character of the surrounding MOL. The Council is encouraged to secure key details through conditions, including facing materials and window reveals in order to secure the highest possible quality of architecture.

Access

33 The design and access statement states that the design of the new school and grounds will be fully compliant with Part M of the Building Regulations and designed to be fully inclusive to encourage use by all members of the community. The statement confirms that the site layout and design of the landscape has been carefully considered to ensure people of all ages and abilities can move easily and safely around the site in order to provide step-free access throughout. Approaches

to external doors and access into the building will be suitable for wheelchair use and will take account of the age range of pupils within the school. These issues are more discussed below.

34 The statement demonstrates that for ease of access disabled and visitor parking is located adjacent to the main entrance which will have automated doors with controls located beneath the covered entrance canopy to provide shelter prior to entry. It is noted that the site is generally flat which so there will be little requirement for ramped access, however, where required, external door thresholds will be step-free and level throughout. All corridors and teaching spaces are generous for ease of movement and upper floors are served with a fully accessible lift. Staircases have been designed to incorporate disabled refuges which will incorporate alarms on the upper landings in line with the fire evacuation strategy. The reception will include part of the desk at appropriate height for wheelchair users. All furniture will be of age appropriate size and all teaching spaces will be provided with adjustable furniture to suit pupils and staff of all abilities. This is welcomed.

35 The design and access statement and the supporting floor plans demonstrate that appropriate number of accessible toilets has been distributed around the building throughout all floors to reduce the distance needed to travel, which is welcomed.

36 The statement states that for people with hearing difficulties a hearing loop will be provided at the main reception desk and in the assembly hall. Appropriate tactile signage will be provided throughout the building and the selection of colours will provide contrast between walls and floors and at key points such as door openings for users and visitors and with impaired sight. This is welcomed.

37 Provided the proposed measures are secured, the scheme complies with inclusive design policy (7.2) of the London Plan.

Sustainable development/energy

Energy efficiency standards

38 A range of passive design features and demand reduction measures are proposed to reduce the carbon emissions. The demand for cooling will be minimised through solar control glazing. The applicant should provide evidence of how The London Plan policy 5.9 has been addressed to avoid overheating and minimise cooling demand. Dynamic overheating modelling in line with CIBSE Guidance TM52 and TM49 is recommended.

39 The development is estimated to achieve a reduction of 6% in regulated CO₂ emissions. However, it is unclear whether this is from a 2010 or 2013 Part L Building Regulations compliant base line as both are mentioned in different parts of the energy strategy. The applicant should note that, in line with the latest GLA guidance, the carbon emissions and savings should be calculated following Part L 2013 methodology and targeting a 35% carbon reduction. The applicant should therefore update the energy strategy to reflect this requirement. Part L 2013 BRUKL sheets including efficiency measures alone should also be provided to support the savings claimed. The applicant should also provide the total carbon emissions in tonnes per annum for each stage of the hierarchy and update the energy strategy report accordingly. See Table 1 and Table 2 in the latest GLA assessment guidance for the required format: <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/GLA%20guidance%20on%20preparing%20energy%20assessments%20April%202015.pdf>

District heating

40 The applicant confirmed that there are no existing or planned district heating networks within the vicinity of the proposed development. The applicant has, however, provided a commitment to ensuring that the development is designed to allow future connection to a district heating network should one become available, which is welcomed.

41 The applicant should confirm the proposed heating solution for the building. The applicant should note that the heat network should be supplied from a single plant room. Information on the floor area and location of the energy centre should be provided.

Combined Heat and Power (CHP)

42 Due to the intermittent nature of the heat load, CHP is not proposed. This is accepted in this instance.

Renewable energy technologies

43 The applicant is proposing to install Photovoltaic (PV) panels on the roof of the building. A roof layout drawing showing the amount of roof that is available within the development and that could be used to install photovoltaic modules with suitable orientation and free from shading should be provided. The applicant should also provide quantification of the size of the PV array (kWp and sq.m.) and also the amount of roof area that could be used to install photovoltaic modules. It is claimed that a reduction in regulated CO₂ emissions of 34% will be achieved through this third element of the energy hierarchy. However, the applicant should ensure that the modelling has been undertaken using the Part L 2013 methodology and provide the savings in tonnes per annum of carbon emissions.

Overall carbon savings

44 Based on the energy assessment, a reduction of 40% in regulated emissions is expected. However, it is not clear whether the emissions have been calculated using the Part L 2010 or 2013 methodology. The applicant should note that, in line with the latest GLA guidance, the carbon emissions and savings should be calculated following Part L 2013 methodology and targeting a 35% carbon reduction. The applicant should therefore update the energy strategy to reflect this requirement.

45 The total carbon emissions savings in tonnes per annum for each stage of the hierarchy should be provided. See Table 1 and Table 2 in the latest GLA assessment guidance for the required format: <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/GLA%20guidance%20on%20preparing%20energy%20assessments%20April%202015.pdf>

46 The comments above should be addressed before compliance with the London Plan energy policies can be verified.

Flooding & sustainability

47 Flood risk: A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted. The site is within flood risk zone 1 with low risk of surface water flooding and the proposal is acceptable in principle. It is noted that there is an area of surface water flood risk to the immediate north of the site.

49 Drainage: There are areas of surface water flood risk in the local vicinity, including an area almost immediately bordering the site. Therefore it is important to apply the London Plan Sustainable Drainage Policy (5:13). Given that the site is currently predominantly greenfield, it will be expected that post development run-off rates will remain as greenfield run-off rates. Furthermore, given the nature and location of the proposals, greenfield run-off rates should be readily achievable.

50 The FRA sets out an outline drainage strategy. This has yet to be confirmed. Therefore a suitable planning condition should be applied to any planning permission, which specifies that a drainage strategy which achieves greenfield run-off rates should be agreed with the Lead Local Flood Authority.

Transport for London's comments

Car Parking and Access

51 A new pedestrian access into the site from each of Syon and Wood Lanes is proposed, segregated from any vehicular traffic. All vehicles access (excluding servicing) will be from a modified existing access onto Syon Lane employing a new 'right-turn in' lane. An additional access for servicing and servicing will be on-site off Wood Lane.

52 The provision of 85 spaces (including 6 blue badges and visitor spaces) from the outset is proposed, this will equate to 1:1 per staff in the first two years of operation and 1:2 when the school roll is at full complement. This has not been fully justified in the Transport Assessment (TA) nor linked to any assessment of the junction capacity of Syon Lane/A4. The quantum is also disappointing given the lack of provision currently on site, the already congested nature of the road network and in the context of cumulative impact of development sites along the 'Golden Mile' corridor which will be subject of further intensification, particularly at two key junctions. TfL does not therefore support it notwithstanding Hounslow Council's standards which allow up to one space per staff member. Also, the current proposal for only two electric car charging points in total does not meet the strategic London Plan Policy 6.3 (Parking) which regardless of land use requires provision for 1 in 5 spaces (both active and passive) to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles. A Car Parking Management Strategy (CPMS) should also be secured by condition.

53 The applicant is in discussion with a number of local landowners to investigate the use of their car parking for pick up and drop off facilities. As this may encourage more car use, TfL is wary of this becoming a tenet of the school's travel plans and potential mitigations. As already stated at pre-application stage, TfL would not support the use of the car park to the Osterley Hotel on Wood Lane. Whichever arrangement for dropping off the applicant is pursuing, TfL considers that it will only be enforceable subject to Syon Lane being marshalled by the school entrance, so as to deter illegal parking, and to the Travel Plan identifying a review programme of its traffic impacts on the public highway.

Walking & cycling

54 The catchment area is likely to predominantly be to the south of A4; further safe crossing points should therefore be identified and their provision assessed in terms of potential impact on the A4 traffic flows. The addition of more formal crossing point(s) should be explored on both Wood Lane and Syon Lane to connect desire lines with school entrance points. Syon Lane footways are to be widened and a new footway will be provided on the Wood Lane. These mitigations are supported and should be secured by s278 agreement.

55 Cycle parking facilities have been designed to meet the London Plan's long-term standards which require 1 space per 8 staff and 1 space per 8 students long-term, or the equivalent to 175 spaces. TfL welcomes that the applicant will accept a condition to provide all the cycle parking up front and as well as showers and changing facilities. A further 14 short term (visitor) spaces should nevertheless be provided to meet the 2015 London Plan standards of 1 space per 100 students.

56 Detailed advice on cycling analysis was given in the TfL pre application letter and so it is disappointing that the applicant has not addressed these requirements as part of the submission of the planning application. Accordingly, the TA is considered to be incomplete and many of its assumptions with regards to cycling network safety surrounding the school site are not supported by evidence. This should be addressed. TfL would also reiterate that it is the responsibility of the applicant to identify and recommend safe cycling routes to/from the school by using latest cycling design guidance.

Traffic Impact

57 With the review and clarification of a number of points and issues in the TA Addendum, TfL considers the applicant's methodology to be sufficiently robust and acceptable in terms of strategic impacts. Some necessary assumptions have been made including travel routes and student home addresses, based on students at existing school and local knowledge. Seven agreed committed schemes have also been accounted for in the TA.

58 Although the trip levels predicted by the development on its own are considered modest and within daily fluctuations, initial assessments of LINSIG modelling undertaken for the seven junctions suggest the morning peak is particularly operating at overcapacity. As the development will put further pressure on the network and in the context of cumulative impact, these impacts should be further identified and any potential effects mitigated. This is particularly a concern for

TfL in relation to the TLRN and accordingly the applicant's conclusion that the junctions, including the busiest one (Syon 3 Lane with A4) can accommodate the school development traffic and could not be construed as having a severe impact is questionable. On balance, the view is that a range of the 'soft measures' package, could make a positive contribution towards mitigating those impacts. These measures include but are not confined to private school / shuttle buses, a robust School Travel Plan, potential change in traffic signals timings, attractive and safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists and heavy marshalling of staff, pupils and parents/guardians on both Syon Lane and Wood Lane. This would complement a limited programme for junction improvements including Syon Lane with the A4 West Road which should start shortly, funded by the BSKyB development.

59 TfL welcomes the applicant's commitment to self-imposed staggered start and finishing times for school opening but requests that it is secured by condition.

Buses

60 For Free Schools like the Nishkam Academy, TfL has a limited but dwindling bus funding package already in place. Although it will be used to respond to increases in bus usage as and when they occur, it is vital that the applicant provides supplementary mitigation of peak pressures on the local bus and street network for the wider catchment area of the school. TfL supports the proposal for a private school bus facility, initially operating 3 bus journeys a day, to serve the areas to the west and south of the school and notes this is an appropriate reflection of the forecast pupil postcode distribution included in the TA Appendix. This level of service will however need to be secured and maintained through s106 agreement, also linked to regular review through the Travel Planning process.

61 Additional public buses will be likely to be required on both the H28 and H91 routes to accommodate the additional demand generated by the site; the H28 is a near-capacity low-20 minute frequency service, which without staggered start times the peak demand from the school will coincide with only 1 bus journey. The H91 is however a more frequent double deck service with some spare capacity which might be sufficient to accommodate a certain level of demand. TfL would expect further discussion on this matter as soon as practicable, before stage 2 referral. TfL notes and welcomes the provision of on-site coach waiting/dropping off.

Construction and servicing

62 The plan showing "Movement through the site" indicates that servicing vehicles can enter on Wood Lane and turn on site to exit in a forward gear; however swept paths and an indication of distance from the nearby south-bound bus stop on Wood Lane have been requested. It is understood that the applicant is working on them. Although a Framework Construction Management Plan has very recently been received, which is acceptable to TfL, the production of a Delivery and Service Management Plan remains outstanding. This is contrary to the aims of current London Plan policy 6.14 however in this particular case TfL could accept a condition to secure the full Plan.

Travel planning

63 This application contains a framework hybrid School Travel Plan and regular Travel Plan, which draw adequately on a sufficiently broad range of survey sources (including the existing temporary small school). Ideally TfL would expect a condition requiring that an STP specific to this land use and the school's particular characteristics be drawn up and assessed with a 'Pass' score obtained prior to the school opening.

Summary

64 Further information is needed to assess current and improved cycle routing; pick-up and drop-off facilities and servicing tracking in relation to bus stop positions; a framework DSP is awaited. Further discussion on bus capacity and a 'soft measures' package, as detailed in this letter, should be considered in combination with lower parking levels to assist in mitigating the

impacts on the TLRN and local highway network.

Local planning authority's position

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

Legal considerations

66 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

67 There are no financial considerations at this stage.

Conclusion

68 London Plan policies on principle of land use: provision of school on MOL, playing fields, community use, biodiversity, urban design, access, sustainable development/energy, flooding and transport are the key strategic issues relevant to this planning application. Whilst the application is broadly acceptable in strategic planning terms, on balance, the application does not comply with the London Plan. The following changes might, however, remedy the above-mentioned deficiencies, and could possibly lead to the application becoming compliant with the London Plan:

- **Principle of land use-provision of school on MOL:** The proposed development of the free school is supported as it will contribute to address the shortage and quality of school places in London. Very special circumstances have been demonstrated that justify the inappropriate development on MOL.
- **Playing fields:** The applicant should demonstrate the proposed development enhances the use of the playing fields and how this proposal benefits the wider communities. Any comment from the Sport England and their recommendation for conditions should be considered and secured.
- **Community use:** The applicant should demonstrate how the proposal benefits the wider communities such as out-of-hour provision of the school facilities appropriate for community use, which should be secured.
- **Biodiversity:** Subject to the recommended enhancement measures are fully secured, the proposal is acceptable and in line with policy 7.19 of the London Plan. Any support/comment from Natural England and their possible recommendation for conditions should be considered and secured.
- **Urban design:** The design approach, form and massing strategy is supported. The applicant should reconsider where practical the shortening of the length of the stretched access road along the MOL. The Council is encouraged to secure key details through conditions, including facing materials and window reveals in order to secure the highest possible quality of architecture.
- **Access:** The proposal to incorporate inclusive design is supported, and needs to be secured.

- **Sustainable development/energy:** The comments detailed above in the energy section of this report should be addressed before compliance with the London Plan energy policies can be verified.
- **Flooding:** No major concerns, however, a suitable planning condition should be applied to any planning permission, which specifies that a drainage strategy which achieves greenfield run-off rates should be agreed with the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- **Transport:** Further information is needed to assess current and improved cycle routing; pick-up and drop-off facilities and servicing tracking in relation to bus stop positions; a framework DSP is awaited. Urgent discussions on the H91 bus capacity and additional public buses are required. A 'soft measures' package, as detailed in this letter, should be considered in combination with lower parking levels to assist in mitigating the impacts on the TLRN and local highway network.

For further information, contact: GLA Planning Unit (Development & Projects Team):

Colin Wilson, Senior Manager – Development & Projects

020 7983 4783 email: colin.wilson@london.gov.uk

Justin Carr, Strategic Planning Manager (Development Decisions)

020 7983 4895 email: justin.carr@london.gov.uk

Tefera Tibebe, Case Officer

020 7983 4312 email: tefera.tibebe@london.gov.uk
