

<b>Application Number:</b>	22/00642/FUL
<b>Proposal:</b>	Erection of sports & wellbeing extension & remodelling of existing sports hall.
<b>Site:</b>	Ashton Sixth Form College, Darnton Road, Ashton-under-Lyne
<b>Applicant:</b>	Ashton Sixth Form College
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Grant planning permission subject to conditions.
<b>Reason for Report:</b>	A Speakers Panel decision is required because the application constitutes major development.
<b>Background Papers:</b>	The planning application documents are background papers to the report. They are open to inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

## 1. SITE & SURROUNDINGS

- 1.1 Ashton Sixth Form College campus fronts on to Darnton Road, it is situated behind houses on Montague Road to the west and Arundel Street to the east. It encompasses all of the land between the two roads which run parallel in southwards direction from their respective junctions with Darnton Road. The campus covers an area of approximately 3 hectares, the main collection of buildings are located within the northern portion of the site with sports fields and facilities located to the south.
- 1.2 The campus comprises a series of buildings built around the original (former) Ashton Grammar School built in 1928 and fronting Darnton Road. There is a mixture of architectural forms, styles and materials across the buildings within the campus. Buildings range in height between one and three storeys but the original block remains the dominant feature.
- 1.3 The application concerns development to the north of the existing sports hall building. This currently comprises of a single storey changing block, covered walkway and hard surfaced areas which is surrounded by buildings to 3 sides. The central area, along with the presence of adjacent buildings dictates that the building is screened from public view.

## 2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for a three storey extension to and remodelling of the college's existing sports block. The existing main sports hall shall be retained but areas will be remodelled internally. The proposals involve the demolition of an existing single storey lean-to building and covered walkway, the extension will include a first floor walkway to existing accommodation.
- 2.2 The accommodation will provide 1,303 square metres (sqm) of floor space with a footprint of 31.8 metres x 12.8 metres. The accommodation would comprise of the following:
  - Ground Floor: 2 x classrooms, new changing facilities, storage accommodation
  - First Floor: 4 x Classrooms, staff changing facilities, bridge link to existing student social area
  - Second Floor 4 x classrooms and a staff room.
- 2.3 The extension is designed with a mono-pitched roof set behind parapets. There are large elements of glazing set within a deep reveal to elevations, the windows will also include

integrated louvres. The proposed materials include brickwork, and metallic silver/grey cladding with some elements of curtain walling.

- 2.4 The application is accompanied with the following documents:
- Coal Mining Risk Assessment
  - Design & Access Statement
  - Parking Statement
  - Full Plans Package
- 2.5 The supporting statement identifies that the College is an Ofsted 'Outstanding' college and the leading provider of post-16 education in the Tameside area. A strategic decision was taken in 2021/22 to cap student numbers to a maximum of 2600, there are currently 2505 students on roll. The colleges states that at present, it is stretched in terms of teaching space, where the proposals represent a response to provide essential and necessary space to deliver its curriculum to both its existing roll and upper capacity. It is anticipated that there will be a minimal increase in the number of staff required as a result of the proposals.

### **3. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 The campus has been extended and remodelled significantly over the years and there have been numerous application to reflect this. The most recent applications approved at the site are summarised as follows:
- 3.2 21/01072/FUL – Erection of a single storey food kiosk – Approved 03.11.2021
- 3.3 20/00546/FUL – Erection of a new storey classroom building – Approved 07.09.2020
- 3.4 16/00787/FUL – Demolition to the single storey wing to the main building, erection of a new two storey Art Building together with landscaping and associated works, including restatement of 4 no external canopies – Approved 11.10.2016
- 3.5 14/00471/FUL – Two-storey cafe and social space building (replacing the single storey wing to the main building and the existing external canopy area) together with landscaping and associated works – Approved 21.07.14

### **4. PLANNING POLICY**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 4.1 Paragraph 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.
- 4.2 Paragraph 11 states that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay (as per section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). However, where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date, planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protects areas or assets of particular importance, provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.
- 4.3 Paragraph 12 of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan,

permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

- 4.4 Paragraph 95 emphasises the importance of planning decisions responding positively to meeting educational needs. It states; 'Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education'.

#### **Development Plan**

- 4.5 The adopted development plan is the Tameside Unitary Development Plan (2004) and the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document (2012).

#### Tameside Unitary Development Plan (2004)

Tameside UDP - Part 1 Policies:

1.3: Creating a Cleaner and Greener Environment

1.12: Ensuring an Accessible, Safe and Healthy Environment.

Tameside UDP - Part 2 Policies:

H6: Education and Community Facilities

OL4: Protected Green Space

OL10: Landscape Quality and Character

T1: Highway Improvement and Traffic Management

T7: Cycling

T8: Walking

T11: Travel Plans

C1: Townscape and Urban Form

N5: Trees within Development Sites

MW11: Contaminated Land

MW14: Air Quality

U3: Water Services for Developments

#### **Places for Everyone**

- 4.6 The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document was published in August 2021. It was submitted to the Secretary of State in February 2022 and inspectors are appointed to carry out an independent examination. It is a joint plan covering nine of the ten Greater Manchester districts, including Tameside, and is intended to provide the overarching framework to strategically manage growth across the boroughs.

- 4.7 Paragraph 48 in the NPPF states that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to: the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater weight may be given); the extent to which there are unresolved objections (the less significant, the greater the weight that may be given); and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

- 4.8 Whilst Places for Everyone has been published and submitted, a number of representations have been received objecting to policies, and so in accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, only very limited weight can be given to those policies at this time.

#### **Other Considerations**

- 4.9 The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a persons rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the Convention of the same Act which sets out his/her rights in respect for private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposed

development would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles in respect of the human rights of surrounding residents/occupiers.

- 4.10 The application has been considered in accordance with the Tameside One Equality Scheme (2018-22), which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people in a diverse community. In this case the proposed development is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

## **5. PUBLICITY CARRIED OUT**

- 5.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement the application has been advertised as a Major Development by neighbour notification letter, display of a site notice; and advertisement in the local press.

## **6. SUMMARY OF THIRD PARTY RESPONSES**

- 6.1 One letter of objection has been received the reasons for which are summarised as follows:
- There have been too many extensions at the college all of which are built to mixed design;
  - The extension will block out views of the Pennine hills;
  - Will there be more extensions in the future with little regard to nearby residents
  - Local residents are never considered

## **7. RESPONSES FROM CONSULTTEES**

- 7.1 Coal Authority – Do not support the submitted Coal Mining Risk Assessment which does not give an adequate assessment of the ground conditions of the applicant site. Request that a pre-commencement planning condition to secure site investigation works to definitively prove the shallow coal mining situation within the site can be addressed.
- 7.2 Contaminated Land - When considering the information from the historical mapping, potential sources of contamination at the site could include made ground, which may have concentrations of contamination. No objection but recommend a condition that remediation strategy is undertaken prior to commencement of works.
- 7.3 Environmental Health – No objections to the proposals recommend conditions controlling working hours and that the details of any fixed plant be submitted for approval prior to installation.
- 7.4 Local Highways Authority – No objections confirm that the access and egress arrangements are acceptable. The overall off street parking provision is acceptable but provision should be made for dedicated electric charging (6 spaces). Also recommend that a construction management plan is conditioned and that the Colleges Travel Plan is updated.
- 7.5 United Utilities – Do not support the submitted drainage strategy. The application has failed to provide robust evidence that the drainage hierarchy has been thoroughly investigated. If planning permission was to be granted recommend conditions relevant to the sites drainage.
- 7.6 Waste Management – No issues raised by the proposals. The site is served by a private contractor and suitable arrangements are in place.

## **8. ANALYSIS**

- 8.1 Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.2 Paragraph 219 of the NPPF confirms that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF. At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 8.3 The current position is that the Development Plan consists of the policies and proposals maps of the Unitary Development Plan (2004) and the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan Development Document.
- 8.4 The NPPF states that a presumption in favour of sustainable development should be at the heart of every application decision. For decision on planning applications this means:
- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
  - where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting planning permission unless:-
    - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or
    - specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.

## **9. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

- 9.1 The principal policies that are most relevant in the determination of this application are highlighted above. The National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions and this advises that Local Planning Authorities should approach decision making in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development.
- 9.2 Within this overall framework the main issues in considering this application relate to:-
- The acceptability of a new building at the site in land use terms;
  - The impact of the proposed new building and associated works on the character and appearance of the locality;
  - The impact of the activity from the new use in terms of traffic and pedestrian movements and associated parking requirements
  - The sustainability credentials of the proposals.
- 9.3 Ashton Sixth Form College is an established education institution which has operated from the Darnton Road campus for a considerable time. The estate has constantly evolved to meet the changing needs of the curriculum to provide the highest standard of learning environment, the application would secure an increase in education floor space which would provide further qualitative improvement. As per the provisions of paragraph 95 of the Framework improvements to educational facilities to meet current and future needs is afforded significant weight for decision making purposes.
- 9.4 In terms of land use, the proposals are directly compatible with the established educational use. The college is one of the largest providers of education within the Borough and the proposals will facilitate the continued delivery of their higher education curriculum. The expansion of their property portfolio confirms that as an organisation they are a substantial investor and employer within the Borough. Investment within education is a key priority, and improvements to overall attainment will help to support the future development of the economy. The proposals are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable, the campus improvement will attract additional staff and students, whose presence would give a major and timely boost to local businesses. Large numbers of students and staff will also be on the immediate doorstep of local shops and services, increasing local spend. In addition,

redevelopment of an existing asset which is within an accessible location reduces environmental impact. Overall the proposals would be compatible with the economic, social and environmental elements of sustainable development.

## **10. DESIGN**

- 10.1 The college campus fronts three highways and is a prominent complex within the locality. The campus comprises a collection of buildings with the oldest dating from the 1920's. Buildings range in height between one and three storeys, the original Darnton Road block is the most prominent structure. The architectural form varies significantly across the site, this largely reflects the age of construction and primary use. The submitted Design and Access Statement provides a thorough analysis of the sites characteristics and constraints.
- 10.2 The building which would be demolished is a lean-to construction of no architectural merit. The building has a central location within the complex of buildings and being only single storey in height screened from any public vista.
- 10.3 The proposed building would have a rectangular footprint that would measure approximately 31.8 metres by 12.8 metres. The ridge height of the building would stand at 3 storeys with a maximum ridge/parapet height of 12m, owing to its central location within the campus it would not have a prominent appearance. Whilst it would be larger in height than the building it would replace, views would be largely limited to within the campus itself owing to screening provided by the surrounding structures. As a result of the position and screening, there would be no significant overlooking or overshadowing issues arising.
- 10.4 Given the variety of materials and architectural form to buildings within the campus there is scope for flexibility to the design and finish of the extension. The materials would be taken from a relatively limited palette which includes brickwork plinth to first floor level above which a rain screen cladding system, the incorporation of large glazed openings within a deep reveal adds welcome depth and texture to the finish and appearance. The increase in height would give the building more prominence than the one it replaces, this will sit comfortably against the height and scale of the adjacent sports hall building.
- 10.5 The materials, scaling, massing and form of the proposal are felt to be sympathetic to the locality. The building has a more interesting architectural form to that which would be replaced, as a result it will enhance the immediate space and setting of neighbouring buildings. Perhaps more importantly, the proposal would create an improved modern learning and teaching environment which addresses the needs of a 21st century.
- 10.6 Overall, the proposed design and its use of high quality materials would enhance the campus by regenerating the area it would be sited within. This in turn would have a very positive benefit upon the character and appearance of the campus which would comply with the NPPF's recommendation on sustainable design.

## **11. RESIDENTIAL AMENITY**

- 11.1 The central location of the proposed development with the campus means that it is separated from the site boundaries by other buildings or areas of car parking. In recognition of the intervening distances, the development is unlikely to have a detrimental impact upon the amenity afforded to residents of the surrounding environment in terms of levels of outlook, privacy and light.
- 11.2 The main consideration from an amenity perspective is that relating to disturbance associated with the construction phases of the development. It is recommended that a condition be

attached to secure the submission of a construction management plan prior to the commencement of development.

## **12. HIGHWAYS**

- 12.1 The site is served by three independent accesses and there is a total of 161 car parking spaces along with dedicated secure cycle storage. The access arrangement and parking provision would be unaltered by the proposals. The college has confirmed that they are currently in the process of updating their travel plan, this is intended to promote sustainable travel methods to and from the College to all visitors and users.
- 12.2 The new classrooms are intended to provide the appropriate accommodation to meet curricula requirements. As a result of the new teaching spaces the college does not anticipate an increase to student or staff numbers. The new facilities will therefore see no specific need to increase staff or pupils numbers which would have no impact in terms of traffic demands at the site.
- 12.3 The location on the periphery of the town centre means that the site is highly accessible not only to the principal highway network but also a variety of transport means. There are a number of pedestrian crossing points in the vicinity which ensures that the site is easily accessible for those travelling on foot. There are frequent bus services accessed from Darnton Road with further rail and tram connections offered from Ashton Town Centre and Stamford Street. The site is highly sustainable in transport terms.
- 12.4 The LHA has considered the impact of the development on parking in the vicinity of the application site, the potential impact on public transport and the impact of the increased traffic flows on the surrounding highway network. The proposals are considered acceptable subject to the safeguarding of the recommended conditions.

## **13. DRAINAGE**

- 13.1 The site is not located within an area that has any risk of flooding. The building is a replacement for an existing structure and there would be no increase in runoff rates occurring at the site. Drainage to the development will pick up existing connections with separate provision made for foul and surface water disposal. It is however likely that flows would have to be reduced to meet relevant drainage authority standards.

## **14. GROUND CONDITIONS**

- 14.1 A Coal Mining Risk Assessment of the site has been carried out and submitted with the application. The report has been reviewed by the Coal Authority but objections have been raised relevant to the age and relevance to the proposals. Agreement has been reached with the Coal Authority for a conditional approach, this will ensure that adequate assessment is made and the detailed design of the building (namely foundations) prior to commencement of development. This will be assessed and discharged through consultation with the Coal Authority.
- 14.2 Regulatory services recommend that further investigations are undertaken into potential ground gas issues. This would be addressed via a standard condition requiring further investigation. Once the level of contamination is revealed, a remediation strategy should be submitted and approved together with a verification report confirming that the remediation measures have been carried out. The EHO identifies that the development is acceptable in this respect and conditions as requested can be imposed.

## **15. SUSTAINABILITY**

- 15.1 The Design & Access statement identifies a commitment to improving the energy performance of the building. The extension would be constructed from to high levels of thermal insulation and airtightness along with low energy appliances. In comparison to the existing building it replaces it would represent a significant improvement in energy usage.

## **16. LANDSCAPING & ECOLOGY**

- 16.1 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. The area of development is completely void of any soft landscaping, the site is remote from areas of soft landscaping and there would be no loss to and landscaping features or trees. There are no associated adverse impacts arising from the development proposals.

## **17. CONCLUSION**

- 17.1 It also considered that the proposal would make a positive contribution to the teaching environment of the sixth form College. The extension will replace existing outdated accommodation with a modern teaching and learning environment for future students. The development is aligned with Councils economic and social aspirations of raising attainment within the Borough and will contribute directly to the Councils corporate objectives.
- 17.2 The design and scale addresses the site in a positive manner providing consistency to recent developments at the campus. The position, central within the site ensure that it would not have an impact upon the levels of outlook or amenity of residential properties located outside of the boundary.
- 17.3 The proposal has been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework and the provisions of the development plan and other relevant material considerations. The proposal represents development in a highly accessible location and is in accordance with general planning policy principles aimed at promoting sustainable growth and spatial planning. The proposal is for an appropriate use and form of development within the established education campus.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.  
Reason: In order to comply with the provision of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans/details:  
Plans:  
022011-AAD-01-ZZ-DR-A-0001-P01 - WIP\_Site Location Plan  
022011-AAD-01-ZZ-DR-A-0002-P01 - WIP\_Existing Ground Floor Plan  
022011-AAD-01-ZZ-DR-A-0003-P01 - WIP\_Existing First Floor  
022011-AAD-01-ZZ-DR-A-0004-P01 - WIP\_Block Plan  
022011-AAD-01-ZZ-DR-A-0005-P01 - WIP\_Proposed Ground Floor Plan  
022011-AAD-01-ZZ-DR-A-0006-P01 - WIP\_Proposed First Floor Plan  
022011-AAD-01-ZZ-DR-A-0008-P01 - WIP\_Floor Plans

022011-AAD-01-ZZ-DR-A-0009-P01 - WIP\_Proposed Elevations

022011-AAD-01-ZZ-DR-A-0010-P01 - WIP\_Sections

Reports:

022-011 Design & Access Statement Rev A

FUL-WORMS\_EYE\_PHASE\_2\_INVESTIGATION\_TREE\_AND\_MINING\_SUPPLEMENT-1435947

Reason: To ensure compliance with policies of the adopted Tameside UDP.

3. No development, other than site clearance and site compound set up, shall commence until a remediation strategy, detailing the works and measures required to address any unacceptable risks posed by contamination at the site to human health, buildings and the environment has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The scheme shall be implemented and verified as approved and shall include all of the following components unless the LPA dispenses with any such requirement specifically in writing:

1. A Preliminary Risk Assessment which has identified: - All previous and current uses of the site and surrounding area. - All potential contaminants associated with those uses. - A conceptual site model identifying all potential sources, pathways, receptors and pollutant linkages.

2. A site investigation strategy, based on the Preliminary Risk Assessment in (1) detailing all investigations including sampling, analysis and monitoring that will be undertaken at the site in order to enable the nature and extent of any contamination to be determined and a detailed assessment of the risks posed to be carried out. The strategy shall be approved in writing by the LPA prior to any investigation works commencing at the site.

3. The findings of the site investigation and detailed risk assessments referred to in point (2) including all relevant soil / water analysis and ground gas / groundwater monitoring data.

4. Based on the site investigation and detailed risk assessment referred to in point (3) an options appraisal and remediation strategy setting out full details of the remediation works and measures required to address any unacceptable risks posed by contamination and how they are to be implemented.

5. A verification plan detailing the information that will be obtained in order to demonstrate the works and measures set out in the remediation strategy in (4) have been fully implemented including any requirements for long term monitoring and maintenance.

Reason: To ensure any unacceptable risks posed by contamination are appropriately addressed and the site is suitable for its proposed use in accordance with paragraph 178 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. Upon completion of any approved remediation scheme(s), and prior to use, a verification / completion report demonstrating all remedial works and measures detailed in the scheme(s) have been fully implemented shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the LPA. The report shall also include full details of the arrangements for any long term monitoring and maintenance as identified in the approved verification plan. The long term monitoring and maintenance shall be undertaken as approved.

If, during development, contamination not previously identified is encountered, then the Local Planning Authority (LPA) shall be informed and no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the LPA, shall be undertaken at the site until a remediation strategy detailing how this contamination will be appropriately addressed and the remedial works verified has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the LPA. The remediation strategy shall be fully implemented and verified as approved.

The discharge of this planning condition will be given in writing by the LPA on completion of the development and once all information specified within this condition and any other requested information has been provided to the satisfaction of the LPA and use of the development shall not commence until this time unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA.

Reason: To ensure any unacceptable risks posed by contamination are appropriately addressed and the site is suitable for its proposed use in accordance with paragraph 178 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Prior to any demolition or site clearance works being undertaken a full demolition plan shall be submitted for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be undertaken in full accordance with approved details. Following demolition a separate Construction Management Plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing prior to any construction works taking place. The development shall be constructed in full accordance with approved details. Both the demolition and construction management plans shall include details of:

Hours of construction work and deliveries  
Wheel wash facilities for construction vehicles;  
Arrangements for temporary construction access;  
Contractor and construction worker car parking;  
Turning facilities during the remediation and construction phases;  
Details of on-site storage facilities;  
Site manager contact details;  
Full details of any relevant signage and hoardings

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Construction Environmental Management Plan at all time.

Reason: To protect residents and the environment from adverse impacts during construction of the development hereby approved in accordance with UDP policies 1.12 and T1 'Highway Improvement and Traffic Management'.

6. No development shall commence (excluding the demolition of existing structures) until;
  - a) a scheme of intrusive investigations has been carried out on site to establish the risks posed to the development by past shallow coal mining activity; and
  - b) any remediation works and/or mitigation measures to address land instability arising from coal mining legacy, as may be necessary, have been implemented on site in full in order to ensure that the site is made safe and stable for the development proposed.The intrusive site investigations and remedial works shall be carried out in accordance with authoritative UK guidance.

Reason: To ensure that mining legacy issues are adequately addressed in the interests of the future occupation of the site and paragraphs 183 and 184 of the NPPF.

7. Prior to the occupation of the development, or it being taken into beneficial use, a signed statement or declaration prepared by a suitably competent person confirming that the site is, or has been made, safe and stable for the approved development shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. This document shall confirm the methods and findings of the intrusive site investigations and the completion of any remedial works and/or mitigation necessary to address the risks posed by past coal mining activity.

Reason: To ensure that mining legacy issues are adequately addressed in the interests of the future occupation of the site and paragraphs 183 and 184 of the NPPF.