

**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

**COMMITTEE DATE: 2 April 2014**

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<b>APPLICATION REF. NO:</b>	14/00080/FUL
<b>STATUTORY DECISION DATE:</b>	26 March 2014
<b>WARD/PARISH:</b>	HUMMERSKNOTT
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Carmel College, The Headlands
<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>	Erection of two storey extension to north west of the site to form the Music and Drama department and associated additional car parking
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Carmel College - A Catholic Academy

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**APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site is within a residential area and contains the main school buildings and associated parking areas and playing fields. The site has undergone significant redevelopment over the years, where buildings dating from the 1950s/60s have been replaced by modern educational buildings. The main pedestrian and vehicular access to the site is located off The Headlands but there is also a pedestrian access off Clare Avenue to the north. The site contains a number of trees which are covered by a tree preservation order dated 2004.

The proposal involves the erection of a two storey building positioned between the existing Science and General Teaching Blocks in the north section of the site. The extension would provide a new home for the Music and Drama Departments (first floor) and additional space for the Science Department (ground floor).

The extension would be sited on an informal parking area for approximately 10 vehicles but a further 23 spaces would be created as part of this proposal resulting in a net increase of 13 spaces. The additional 23 parking spaces would be mainly to the front of the school and adjacent to existing parking areas. Four bays would be located to the south of the existing Technology Block within an existing parking area. Eighteen spaces would be sited on an existing grassed area, alongside the main parking area at the School entrance and a further space would be provided within the main parking area.

The extension would measure approximately 20m long; 16m wide with an overall height of 9.5m. It would be a modern contemporary building constructed from materials to match the recent extensions that have been built on the site.

The existing Music Department is located within a single storey 1950s/1960s building which is in poor condition. This building, along with a detached Stable Block building will be left vacant

and possibly demolished at a future date.

The School has no proposals to increase the student intake or staffing numbers in regard to this proposal.

The School carried out a pre-application Statement of Community Involvement exercise with local residents in accordance with the Council's adopted guidance

### **PLANNING HISTORY**

The most relevant entries are:

06/00687/FUL In September 2006 planning permission was GRANTED for the demolition of the existing science, art and general teaching accommodation and erection of three new school buildings around external space

12/00491/FUL In September 2012 planning permission was GRANTED for the erection of a first floor extension to incorporate three classrooms with associated storage, seminar room and accessible toilet, erection of replacement roof over dining terrace, two replacement staircases, provision of a new platform lift and replacement of the main visitor entrance doors

### **PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND**

#### **Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997**

- E2 Development Limits
- E3 Protection of Open Land
- E12 Trees and Development

#### **Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011**

- CS2 Achieving High Quality Sustainable Design
- CS16 Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety
- CS17 Delivering a Multifunctional Green Infrastructure Network
- CS18 Promoting Quality, Accessible Sport and Recreation

#### **Other Documents**

Supplementary Planning Document – Design for New Development  
Tees Valley Design Guide & Specification - Residential and Industrial Estates Development

### **RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY**

Seven letters of objection have been received and the concerns can be summarised as follows:

- *Regarding the increase in size of Carmel School, please try to consider the impact on the surrounding areas. The cycleway entrance into the school from Clare Avenue has now become a main entrance encompassing an increased amount of cars, parked illegally at times which may result in an accident in the future. The funding for the cycleway was provided by a supplier with the intention of increasing the use of cycles to and from school, this has not happened instead traffic has increased by 100%. If this planning application does in fact go ahead then please do consider increasing car park facilities, and cycle to school initiative*
- *We have given our full support to Carmel College's previous expansion because the emphasis was for the construction to be built on the existing footprint. Therefore we must object to the new planning application on the grounds of it encroaching on*

- surrounding residential properties, ourselves included. We would also like you to consider the loss of car parking spaces if planning was granted as Clare Avenue is already used as an overflow car park and we feel the problem will only be exasperated*
- *At 49 Clare Avenue we are possibly the closest neighbour to the proposed building together with No 51. Firstly, if this proposal proceeds it will significantly again reduce the angle of view to the distant horizon from our kitchen and living room windows. Instead we will have a brick wall to look at. The previous development was supposed to be within the existing building line but filled in the corner between the adjacent wings and cut 3.5 degrees from our view. The new building will again fill in a corner between the existing wings but this time will cut a further nine degrees from our view thus reducing the total view we previously had by some 24% from what was, before the first development, a 56 degree vista. This is in addition to the fact that the previous development put a higher, sloping roof onto the building in place of the previous flat roof which again significantly cut the amount of light from the southern aspect of our property which was able to enter the house through the windows, apart from spoiling the view of the skyline.*
  - *My second objection is the apparent loss of parking spaces which appear to be at a premium because there are now, as other neighbours have stated, cars parked on our road all day and presumably a loss of parking spaces can only make this problem potentially worse.*
  - *I would like to be able to support the school as it is clearly doing a good job from an educational point of view but I am afraid that it is certainly not behaving as a good neighbour to the residents with which it shares its boundaries and goodwill is running out.*
  - *I would also like to mention that the previous development caused a lot of noise and dust over an extended construction period including starting work too early in restricted hours with no regard to the disturbance this caused to the residents.*
  - *Because the College utilises old buildings, application of the subject type are inevitable. The College has grown beyond the suitability of the site. Entrance and feeder roads are a particular concern. Approval should therefore be conditioned in that buildings to be replaced are destroyed. Additional car parking may also add to concerns*
  - *The new building would overlook what is at present a secluded garden and spoil the outlook from my house. I don't particularly wish to have students gazing into my garden and windows 8 hours a day 5 days a week. Clare Avenue and Hillclose used to be a desirable place to live but unfortunately Carmel College and spoiling the local resident's lives with the increased antisocial behaviour, parking and building encroaching on the surrounding properties. The proposed site will occupy what is currently 17 car parking spaces. Carmel are not addressing the current parking issues at present as Clare Avenue is increasingly being used as an overspill car park for students and teaching staff. Although Carmel has added additional parking spaces to the initial proposal it is still not enough parking spaces to satisfy the demand. Why increase the building and not proportionally increase the parking facilities?*
  - *The noise assessment was conducted but my concerns are that we already get loud noise from the main hall, particularly bass and drums. With best intentions the windows will never be closed during the summer months. The proposed new building is a music building so can only imagine the antisocial noise from the building. I would not get away with playing loud music and disturbing neighbours so why should Carmel?*
  - *The Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been submitted with the application and refers to trees that are recommended to fell. There is no plot plan submitted to show where*

*these trees are. Are these trees where the mentioned additional parking is to be? Is there a reason the plot was not submitted?*

- My fear is that because there will be so few properties effected by this proposal that it will get "rail roaded" through by the might of Carmel College. I hope the planning authority gives some credence to the neighbours of the school on this occasion.*
- Car parking would be a big issue if this goes ahead. Carmel would lose 17 car parking spaces. What provision has been made to address this issue? If this goes ahead how will the residents of Clare Avenue and Hillclose Avenue be protected from unwanted cars parked on footpaths close to driveways and clearly a nuisance to residents who perhaps need to have deliveries to private housing. Not to mention more children, staff and teaching staff being in and around the area. In addition, car parking on the street would be a great nuisance to residents, some are elderly and there are also young families. This would create yet another hazard for residents. Clare Avenue and Hillclose Avenue are already busy thoroughfares for traffic. I myself sometimes cannot gain access to by drive at certain times of the day for parked cars and I cannot gain access to my house. The post box is also used by local residents and quite often this is surrounded by children who are noisy, they drop litter and I have to clear this up from my garden. This is an accident to happen. My house (18 Hillclose Avenue) is right next to the school pathway.*
- The impact on those nearest to any development will be substantial and have a serious impact on their environment and emotional wellbeing both during and after any construction. The school clearly has a need to expand and further the quality of provision and I welcome this, however I question the need to encroach so closely upon its neighbouring properties. The wider implications of continued development also need to be considered further within any planning process especially if the number of parking spaces on the school site is reduced. Car parking and access to the school via the pedestrian entrance on Clare Avenue are already areas of significant concern to the safety of the residents and pupils alike*

One letter of support has been received making the following comments

- When we read and hear of the quality of the education which students receive at this college, we are both of the opinion that anything which the college can do to increase this quality can only benefit of the students and a credit to the municipal standing of Darlington. We raise no objections to any work which is to be carried out and wish the College every success in its venture*

### **Consultee Responses**

The Council's Highways Engineer has raised no objections to the proposal

The Council's Environmental Health Officer has raised no objections to the proposal

Sport England has raised no objections to the scheme

Northumbrian Water has raised no objections to the proposal

### **PLANNING ISSUES**

The main issues to be considered here are whether or not the proposal is acceptable in the following terms:

Planning Policy

Impact upon the Visual Appearance of the Surrounding Area

Residential Amenity

Highway and Parking Matters

## Impact upon Trees

### **Planning Policy**

The site is within the development limits for the urban area and it forms part of the Open Land Network as designated by Saved Policy E3 of the Local Plan. The Policy seeks to ensure that the usefulness, appearance and nature conservation interest of the open land network and its interconnections should be maintained. The policy also states that proposals will only be appropriate where there is no net harm on the visual appearance of the network, the character and appearance of the locality through the loss of openness and greenery; facilities for organised sport; facilities available for other formal recreational and leisure activities; the internal continuity of the system and any areas recognised for their nature conservation or wildlife interest.

The proposed extension would be located on an area of hard standing which has no ecological interest and the extent of the uptake of grassed areas for the new parking bays is not considered to be extensive and would not harm the visual relief of the wider open land network. The existing sports facilities within the site would be retained and are not affected by the proposal. The remaining extent of the school grounds would ensure that the continuity of the open land network remains intact.

Sport England has confirmed that the grassed area to be used for the 23 parking spaces would constitute part of a playing field but as the extent of the incursion would be limited it is unlikely that there would be any conflict with the way pitches are set out. The four bays would also technically involve the loss of playing field but the land is on top of a small embankment and is unlikely to be used for sport. Sport England has no objections to the proposal.

The loss of playing fields are only permitted in exceptional circumstances (Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy) and the proposal would accord with one of the exceptional circumstances as the development only affects part of the site and does not adversely impact on its overall value to sport and recreation.

It is considered that in general planning policy terms, the proposal is acceptable and consistent with the relevant development plan policies.

### **Impact upon the Visual Appearance of the Surrounding Area**

As the site has been redeveloped over the recent years, there are examples of different designs and materials between the old and new buildings that make up the school. The most recent buildings have utilised a combination of contrasting bricks and render with dark grey single ply membrane roofing and aluminium framed glazing and curtain walling. The scale, design and proposed mix of materials for the proposed extension would relate well to the most recent additions to the school. The proposal would therefore be acceptable in design terms and it would generally accord with the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document – Design for New Development

### **Residential Amenity**

The proposed extension would be positioned to the south of the properties on Clare Avenue and Hillclose Avenue. Whilst there is a belt of mature and well established trees and hedges on the north boundary of the site, the extension would be visible from these properties but would be located approximately between 45 - 55m away from their rear elevations. This is considered to be an acceptable distance in terms of protecting the amenities of these properties from

overlooking and reducing the visual impact of the proposal.

The proposed building would be sited behind the existing Science building and its north facade does not contain any window openings. It does contain an open fronted, 8m long, covered corridor linking the proposed extension to the existing Science building but this is not considered to raise any significant amenity problems due to the aforementioned proximity distances.

The first floor of the extension would be used by the music and drama departments. The planning application implies that the music rooms may be used after school hours and on a Saturday. There are not proposed to be any opening windows within these rooms (alternative sources of ventilation would need to be considered) however it is still considered appropriate to impose a planning condition requiring a Noise Impact Assessment to be submitted and agreed prior to the commencement of the development to assess noise (including from the playing of music and the the operation of any plant and machinery) and vibration as appropriate, associated with the development.

It is considered that the additional parking spaces to the front of the School would not adversely affect the amenities of the dwellings located at the entrance to the school. The 18 spaces adjacent to the main parking area are positioned so that they face away from the rear elevations of the dwellings on The Headlands, which are partially screened by trees and hedging. The four spaces near the Technology Suite would be a small increase in the existing number of bays in this area and they are located at the furthest possible point from the dwellings on St Hild Close and Barrett Street.

There has been concerns raised about the potential disruption to residents during the construction phases of the development and it is considered appropriate to impose a planning condition requesting the submission of a Construction Management Plan.

### **Highway and Parking Matters**

There are currently 98 full time staff and 47 part time staff at the college which will remain unchanged. The Tees Valley Design Guide stipulates that a maximum of 0.8 car parking spaces should be provided per full time teaching staff and 1 space per 3 part time staff on duty at any one time. Equating this to the numbers of teaching staff there would be a need for 94 car parking spaces with an additional 5 visitor spaces.

There is in the order of 300 students attending the 6th form as confirmed by the College and it is assumed that 150 of these students will be of driving age, but not all will own or drive a car. However taking a worst case scenario for calculating parking, it could be assumed that all of the 150 students over the age of 17 could potentially own and use a vehicle for travelling to the college. The Tees Valley Design guide stipulates that a maximum of 1 car parking space for 10 students over 17 should be provided. This would equate to 15 car parking spaces required to accommodate student vehicles.

In total a maximum recommended level of car parking for the College is derived from 94 staff spaces, plus 5 visitor spaces, plus 15 student spaces totalling a need to provide 114 car parking spaces throughout the site. Given the additional 13no car parking spaces provided as part of the proposals the proposed parking levels (a total of 129 spaces) are in line with the maximum parking standards set out in the design guidance to cater for the numbers of staff and students.

It has been noted that the College runs an adult course for initial teacher training for 60 people and a teaching assistant course for 15 people once a week on differing days. These numbers are dependent on requirement and take up on courses. However based on a parking requirement equivalent to a Further College of Education where it is expected that students are of minimum driving age and above, the parking requirements is 1 space per 15 students which would still bring the total number of parking spaces required below the maximum provision within the school grounds.

There is a reported issue of parents dropping off children around school opening and closing times and this causes issues on the surrounding local highway network including Clare Avenue/Hillclose Avenue and The Headlands. This application would not increase the numbers of staff or students attending the college and only provides additional classroom space and therefore it should not impact further on the parking issues currently being experienced.

### **Impact upon Trees**

The proposal would not result in the loss of any trees and the building would be sited outside of the root protection areas of the nearest trees to the north. However, a condition would need to be imposed to secure the submission of an arboricultural method statement and a tree protection plan.

The Tree Survey does mention that if the buildings which will become vacant as a result of this proposal are demolished, care would need to be taken during the demolition works with regard to trees in the gardens of the properties to the north but the demolition works do not form part of this application

### **SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998**

The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is considered that the proposed extension by reason of its size, position and appearance is in keeping with the external appearance of the existing school buildings and will not cause harm to the character and appearance of the site or the surrounding area. The extension has no significant impact in terms of loss of daylight or sunlight to neighbouring dwellings and maintains adequate levels of privacy. The creation of the additional parking spaces would not create any significant residential amenity issues. The proposal involves increasing the number of spaces with a net overall gain of 13 spaces. The proposed parking levels are in line with the maximum parking standards set out in the design guidance to cater for the numbers of staff and students and visitors. There is a reported issue of parents dropping off children around school opening and closing times which causes issues on the surrounding local highway network. This application would not increase the numbers of staff or students attending the college and only provides additional classroom space and therefore it should not impact further on the parking issues currently being experienced. No issues are raised in relation to crime prevention.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:**

1. A3 – Implementation Limit (Three Years)
2. B4 – Details of Materials (Samples)
3. Prior to the commencement of the works, a Construction Management Plan shall be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The Construction Management Plan shall include hours of construction and deliveries to the site, a Dust Action Plan, details of how noise and vibration would be controlled during the construction works, designating and signing construction vehicle and plant routes, warning signage, construction phase proposals and keeping public roads clear of all construction debris. The construction phase proposals should also highlight how the day to day operation of the school will be kept separate from the construction traffic. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed Construction Management Plan.  
REASON: In the interests of highway safety and residential amenity
4. Prior to the commencement of the development, an Arboricultural Method Statement, including a tree protection plan, shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved Statement  
REASON: To protect the existing trees within the application site.
5. Prior to commencement of the development, a full Noise Impact Assessment shall be undertaken and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Prior to commencing the Assessment the scope of the report, which must include noise and vibration as appropriate, including musical noise and all plant and machinery associated with this planning permission shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The findings of the Noise Impact Assessment shall be implemented in accordance with a timescale to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority. The Noise Impact Assessment must show that the noise emissions from the development will comply with the noise limit stated in planning condition 6 of this permission. Use of the development shall not commence until the Local Planning Authority has given notice, in writing, that it is satisfied that the level of noise emissions from the identified noise sources will comply with condition 6.  
REASON: In the interests of residential amenity
6. The Rating Level (as defined in BS 4142:1997), as a result of musical noise and all plant and machinery associated with the development shall be at least 5 dB(A) below the background noise level at any residential property, when measured in accordance with BS 4142:1997. The background noise level to be used shall be measured by the applicant during appropriate day time and evening periods and the levels agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.  
REASON: In the interests of residential amenity
7. In the event that suspected contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development, it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken, in accordance with best practice guidance, the details of which are to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Where remediation is shown to be necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared and submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a

verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that the development proposed can be implemented and occupied with adequate regard for environmental and public safety

8. Prior to the commencement of the development, a lighting assessment relating to all aspects of the planning application shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting levels shall comply with the limits given for Environmental Zone 2 in Table 2 of the Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance Notes for the reduction of Obtrusive Light and the development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details

REASON: In the interest of residential amenity

9. B5 – Detailed Drawings (Accordance with Plan)

**THE FOLLOWING POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT WHEN ARRIVING AT THIS DECISION:**

**Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997**

- E2 Development Limits
- E3 Protection of Open Land
- E12 Trees and Development

**Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011**

- CS2 Achieving High Quality Sustainable Design
- CS16 Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety
- CS17 Delivering a Multifunctional Green Infrastructure Network
- CS18 Promoting Quality, Accessible Sport and Recreation

**Other Documents**

- Supplementary Planning Document – Design for New Development
- Tees Valley Design Guide & Specification Residential and Industrial Estates Development