

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 29 June 2022

APPLICATION REF. NO: 21/01438/FUL

STATUTORY DECISION DATE: 1st July 2022

WARD/PARISH: College

LOCATION: Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Vane Terrace
DARLINGTON DL3 7AU

DESCRIPTION: Erection of additional accommodation level above the existing two storey side extension (for existing students and a projected increase in students at the College from 2096 to 2329) comprising of 4 no. classrooms, 2 no. break out/other work areas, circulation spaces, storage and roof access and associated alterations (additional information and amended Travel Plan received 20 April 2022)

APPLICANT: Mr Stuart Hargrove

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT PERMISSION SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

Application documents including application forms, submitted plans, supporting technical information, consultations responses and representations received, and other background papers are available on the Darlington Borough Council website via the following link:

<https://publicaccess.darlington.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=Q82CFLFPLCD00>

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

1. The existing college building is located on Vane Terrace to the west of Stanhope Park. The site includes a number of buildings, including the main teaching block and a Sports Hall. The site is located within a primarily residential area and also within the West End Conservation Area.
2. The proposal involves the erection of additional accommodation above the existing two storey side extension which was constructed in the 1960s and cladded under planning

permission ref nos 13/00603/FUL and 14/00251/FUL. The accommodation will comprise 4 no. classrooms, 2 no. break out/other work areas, circulation spaces, storage and roof access and associated alterations.

3. The Design and Access Statement submitted in support of the planning application states that the College is a larger than average, 16-19 sixth form college with currently 2,096 students on roll. The College was rated 'Good' by Ofsted following an inspection in March 2020. The College serves a diverse community and recruits learners from South West Durham, North Yorkshire and Teesside, as well as students from the local borough of Darlington. The College is the major provider of A-level courses for young people in the area. The vast majority of learners are aged 16 to 18 and follow A-level programmes. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds is generally higher than the local population.
4. The Statement continues to state that the College's strong academic performance and reputation for high standards has made it an attractive choice for parents and students alike. This has led to an increase in student numbers over the last few years. Despite some recent capital investment, the growth in students has become a strain on the College's estate particularly in respect to teaching space. The College's usable estate currently amounts to 11,262m², which would indicate the College is currently operating at only 5.55m² per student, compared to the benchmark of 6. This will come under further pressure due to projected growth in students resulting from the change in exam format from modular to linear coupled with local demographic growth as noted from data received from feeder secondary schools. By 2019/20, it was shown that without any extra accommodation the area per learner would drop to 4.87m² and 4.58m² by 2022/23, this is clearly unsustainable without extra teaching space
5. The Statement further highlights that in order to ensure the College is able to continue providing the high quality A Level provision in the locality the estate needs to be expanded so that it can contribute positively towards achieving this goal as opposed to being a hindrance. Following a strategic review of its estate, the College have identified that the proposed redevelopment project offers the most appropriate solution to overcome accommodation.
6. A planning application (reference number 18/00250/FUL) for the erection of additional accommodation (for existing students and a projected overall increase of students at the College from 2000 to 2427) above the existing 2-storey side extension to create 4 full sized additional classrooms, 2 break out/other work areas, circulation spaces, storage and roof access and associated alterations was refused in 2019 for the following reason

Having considered the document entitled "Travel Plan" dated April 2019 and produced by Transport Planning Associates, the Local Planning Authority considers that insufficient measures have been put forward that would mitigate for the increase in demand for parking and the increase traffic congestion on the local highway network which would arise from the additional student population and potential staff at the

College generated by the proposed development. The application would be contrary to Policy CS2 (Achieving High Quality Sustainable Design) of the Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011 as the proposal fails to provide parking provision suitable for its use and location in accordance with the standards set out in the Tees Valley Design Guide & Specification - Residential and Industrial Estates Development.

MAIN PLANNING ISSUES

7. The main planning issues to be considered here are whether the proposed development is acceptable in the following terms:
 - a) Highway Safety, Parking Provision and Accessibility Matters
 - b) Impact on General Street Scene and West End Conservation Area
 - c) Residential Amenity
 - d) Flood Risk and Drainage
 - e) Nutrient Neutrality

PLANNING POLICIES

8. The application site is located within the development limits for the urban area as identified by the Policies Map of the Darlington Local Plan (2016 – 2036). The principle of development within the limits will be acceptable subject to compliance with other national and local policies (policy H3 of the Local Plan). The relevant planning policies are as follows:

Darlington Local Plan (2016:2036)

SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DC1: Sustainable Design Principles and Climate Change

DC2: Flood Risk & Water Management

DC3: Health & Wellbeing

DC4: Safeguarding Amenity

ENV1: Protecting, Enhancing and Promoting Darlington's Historic Environment

IN1: Delivering a Sustainable Transport Network

IN2: Improving Access and Accessibility

IN3: Transport Assessments and Travel Plans

IN4: Parking Provision including Electric Charging Points

Also relevant

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021

West End Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Supplementary Planning Document – Design for New Development

Travel Plan Guidance (2022)

RESULTS OF TECHNICAL CONSULTATION

9. The Council's Environmental Health Officer, Highways Engineer, Travel Plan Officer and Sustainable Transport Officer have no objections to the principle of the development and have requested the imposition of planning conditions should the application be recommended for approval.

RESULTS OF PUBLICITY AND NOTIFICATION

10. Following the Council's notification and publicity exercises, 14 letters of objection have been received and the comments can be summarised as follows:

- *The site cannot accommodate any further increases in pupil numbers*
- *Now is the time for a new campus to be built*
- *The streets are filled with parked cars and pavements packed by students during break times*
- *Extension not keeping with the existing Victorian building*
- *Pedestrians have to walk on the road due to students and car parking is spreading in all the surrounding streets*
- *Travel Plan fall short of any chance to succeed and should be rejected*
- *This is an overdevelopment of the site*
- *This will lead to an increase in traffic congestion and illegal parking in Residents Parking Areas*
- *The Travel Plan is just a fresh presentation of old ideas*
- *There will be an increase in pollution*
- *This will lead to an increase in litter and antisocial behaviour*
- *Increase bicycle space will not increase bicycle use. Existing spaces are underused*
- *Reducing student single occupancy journeys would be difficult as coach and public travel is not always suitable*
- *Extra parking spaces will increase congestion*
- *We have lost parking spaces to a large bus stop area on Abbey Road. Coaches are using the bays to park for long periods of time with engines running and some are left unattended*
- *Students queueing to use the coaches block the footpaths forcing pedestrians onto the road or to cross a busy road between coaches*
- *Coaches travel at excessive speeds*
- *The Park gets taken over by students and used as a playground resulting in damage and discarded litter*
- *The arguments against the scheme are the same despite a change in student numbers*
- *The College does not appear to have taken any action to voluntarily implement any proposals to attenuate the existing issues of which it is clearly aware as a gesture of goodwill to the neighbourhood and has surreptitiously increased the number of students*
- *The extra storey will only exacerbate the existing extension which is an eyesore and inappropriate in colour, style and shape*
- *Building work will be disruptive and noisy in a residential area*
- *The additional level will block east light to our second floor flat and the building will be overbearing, and we will be overlooked*
- *Adverse impact on road safety*
- *Increase student flow on Duke Street preventing access to local shops for residents without transport*

- *The extension might have an impact on mobile telephone signal*
- *There is no evidence that the proposed measures in the Travel Plan will be effective and delivered*
- *The Travel Plan and Transport Assessment are both flawed*
- *The proposed development will not preserve or enhance the Conservation Area*

PLANNING ISSUES/ANALYSIS

a) Highway Safety, Parking Provision and Accessibility Matters

11. It is acknowledged that the College site is not within close proximity (less than 400m) to existing bus stops with a regular bus service. The bus stops on Abbey Road are not served by regular bus services. However, this site is very close to Darlington town centre, which can be easily reached by pedestrians walking routes and has multiple bus services that serve this site and also provides facilities for students. The site is within a sustainable location.
12. This submission follows a planning application (ref no: 18/00250/FUL) which was previously refused (see paragraph 6) and which projected a growth of 417 students over a five-year period. This application was ultimately refused owing to potential highways impact, where the application was considered to constitute an over intensification of the site, did not offer sufficient mitigation for increased parking demand, or fully assess potential impact via a suitably detailed Transport Assessment and Travel Plan.
13. This new application is of reduced magnitude over the previous submission, now seeking to provide accommodation for an additional 233 students, with a projected increase from 2,096 to 2,329 (11% increase). It is supported by both a Transport Assessment (TA) and a Travel Plan (TP) using the preferred Modeshift platform, as requested by the Council's Travel Planning Officer.
14. It is confirmed within the submitted documentation that no additional staffing numbers are proposed, and as such the application has been considered on this basis.

Additional Traffic Generation and Parking Demand.
15. A Transport Assessment (TA) has been prepared in order to determine the likely traffic impact of the proposed scheme and identify any mitigation measures required. To give robust and accurate predicted trip generation rates, reference was made to the results of the January 2019 travel survey which determined actual and % mode share of student travel. The proposed expansion of the College will lead to an increase of 233 students from 2,096 to 2,329 and no change in staff numbers. Applying the current modal split to the proposed increase of 233 students, provides a forecast of all modes of trips to the application site.
16. The morning peak hour vehicular trip generation for private cars will be an additional 46 arrivals and 19 departures. Some 27 of the arrivals will be students seeking to park their vehicle, whilst the other movements will be drop-offs by parents/others. About a fifth of the trips will be walk trips and over half of the trips will be by college bus or public transport trips. The total trip generation therefore equates to approximately one

additional two-way trip per minute. During the evening peak, vehicular trip generation will be 16 arrivals and 43 departures. Like the morning peak period, a fifth of students will walk home and over half will use the College buses and public transport.

17. The submitted Travel Plan is intended to offset any increase in vehicle trips. In addition to this, there will be a Car and Coach Management Plan in place to better control current congestion issues at drop off and pick up times. The submitted Travel Plan will be used as a key tool in influencing mode share away from single occupancy car journeys and hence reducing both car journeys and on street parking demand. This will be reviewed and monitored by a dedicated officer to ensure that the Plan is robustly implemented and effective.
18. Whilst pedestrian footfall is increased, the Highway Authority considers that this can be adequately accommodated within existing or proposed infrastructure, where the Duke Street remodelling scheme offers a better walking and cycling environment with greater priority to pedestrian movement with increased footway widths.
19. However, it is also acknowledged that there is an existing issue of students stuck in bottlenecks at the Stanhope Road North leg of the Abbey Road/Duke Street/Stanhope Road roundabout when crossing the road at the start and end of the college day, at lunchtimes and throughout the day albeit at a lower level. There is a concern that the increase in student numbers will further exacerbate this problem leading to greater thronging and increased potential for accidents. Following discussions between the College and Officers, the College has agreed to make a £25,000 contribution towards the costs of improved crossing facilities on Stanhope Road North and this would be secured by a Unilateral Undertaking.

Parking general standards

20. The Tees Valley Design Guide (TVDG) parking standards advise that provision should be based on 1 space per 2 full time members of staff, with 1 additional space per 15 students. Parking for students will be related to a Transport Assessment/Travel Plan. Regarding vehicle parking for students, the TA refers to a parking standard which equates required provision to 1 car parking space per 60 students, therefore concluding that provision of 4 additional spaces is sufficient mitigation. However, based on recognised TVDG standards, and previous requirements set out by the Highways Authority as part of the 2018 application, this would equate to a requirement of 15 additional spaces, before considering predicted trips and demand based on the evidence base of the 2019 travel survey data of actual mode share.

Parking baseline Scenario

21. It is accepted that fully addressing existing traffic problems caused by inadequate parking provision for the current college site will not be possible within the scope of this planning application. However, any future development and expansion will need to demonstrate that sufficient parking provision is delivered in line with current guidelines, and that any other issues identified in the Transport Assessment and Travel Plan are appropriately mitigated to ensure that any further detriment is not caused to the local

highway network or residential amenity from increased congestion or insufficient parking.

22. The College currently has 2096 students and 150 this staff. Recommended parking provision based on TVDG standards is therefore, 140 spaces for students and 75 spaces for staff. This equates to a total parking requirement of 215 spaces based on current guidance.
23. There are 32 car parking spaces on-site which includes four marked disabled bays and a space permanently reserved for a disabled member of staff. A further 22 car parking spaces are available at Abbey Fields including two disabled bays. This gives a total of 54 car parking spaces, although there is some inconsistency with the submitted application form. which refers to 60 spaces. This equates to just 25% of recommended provision, based on the lower figure of 54 spaces. Hence there is significant offsite parking demand within neighbouring residential streets.
24. This is further exacerbated when looking at actual surveyed mode share of students, which demonstrates a higher demand for car parking from single and shared occupancy car trips at 8.1% & 3.3% respectively (total of 11.4%). This equates to a total parking demand of 238 spaces for students rather than the 140 spaces advised by Design Guide standards. Whilst no data is provided for staff mode share, it would not be unreasonable to conclude that a similar upshift could be expected.

Predicted parking demand and mitigation proposed.

25. Based on the above TVDG parking standards, of 1 space per 15 students, this would equate to an additional parking demand of 15 spaces. However as discussed regarding the baseline scenario, actual surveyed mode share, demonstrates a higher demand at 27 spaces. To mitigate increased demand, an additional 15 parking spaces are proposed at the Abbey Fields site, thus addressing TVDG standards.
26. The increase of 27 students travelling by car obviously creates a demand higher than the 15 spaces to be provided at Abbey Fields. To mitigate against this increase, it is proposed to implement a Travel Plan to reduce single occupancy car journeys. The Travel Plan targets aim to decrease 18 car parking trips from students whilst there would be a fall of 10 car trips from staff. In combination with the additional parking at Abbey playing fields of about 15 car spaces, it is expected that there will be no residual impact from the proposed increase in students from increased on street parking.
27. This additional car parking would need to be the subject of a planning condition. The additional parking would be for the use of staff which would ensure that the parking within the college site is prioritised for accessible bays for any visitors, staff, or students with mobility impairment. Additional parking spaces can be created at the playing fields without impacting on the playing pitches and would be constructed from grasscrete to minimise the visual and physical impact and allow for drainage.

28. Several residents parking zones (RPZ) are enforced within the streets surrounding the college with the objective of ensuring that convenient parking places can be found for car owning residents within the area, a further increase in student numbers would inevitably lead to additional students and visitors looking for parking within the highway if not suitably mitigated as discussed earlier.
29. The implementation of an extended Residents Parking Zone (RPZ) as suggested by the applicant is not something that can be delivered via the planning system as part of this application, as this requires significant consultation with affected parties. As such, there is no guarantee that such mitigation measures can be delivered, or that the delivery of such a scheme would not inequitably impact others, including residents and visitors.
30. It is for this reason that mitigation has been sought by the applicant in the form of increased private parking provision and a Travel Plan. It is however accepted that the implementation of extended RPZs may be an effective tool to encourage students to use more sustainable modes of travel, however this would primarily address issues with the existing college site and will need to be led by the needs of residents and appropriate consultation undertaken by the Highways Authority.

Cycle parking

31. To encourage use of sustainable modes of transport sufficient cycle parking should be provided. Required numbers based on the Tees Valley Design Guide would equate to 210 spaces with a further 23 spaces needed to accommodate an additional 233 students. However current usage has been assessed as part of the Travel Plan, which identifies that there is spare capacity within the existing provision based on current usage levels. This would be monitored and reviewed as part of the Travel Plan with the Council's Travel Plan Officer, with additional capacity added as and when required from increased mode share.

Coach Travel.

32. As identified previously, measures have been taken by the Council to address congestion caused in part by coaches at drop-off and pickup times, whilst this has helped, it was a measure towards alleviating an existing problem and not something to enable future expansion or development. The implementation of the coach parking areas has not been without issues; its creation necessitated the loss of on-street parking for residents and complaints have been received about the excessive amount of time coaches have been parked up rather than them being used for short term duration drop off and collection. Restrictions are in place and any misuse of coach parking can be enforced by traffic wardens; however, the College are proposing to assist the Highway Authority by having a clear management plan for coach times.
33. The TA contains a coach management plan (appendix D) which seeks to address the above concerns. It is established that there is some spare capacity within the existing coach service provision, and this will be subject to ongoing review between the College and the Council as part of the Travel Plan implementation and monitoring. The current coach provision is 5 x 70 seaters and 6 x 57 seaters. This gives a capacity of 692

students. It is understood that utilisation is 569 students, about 82%. There is currently capacity to support an additional 123 students should demand increase.

Construction Management Plan

34. A robust construction management plan (CMP) will need to be secured by a planning condition and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works on site. The plan must consider, amongst general amenity issues, the timing of the construction phase and interim parking facilities whilst construction works are being undertaken, if needed.

Travel Plan

35. A travel plan is a site-specific document for travel behaviour change that can be applied to any setting (education, business, community). Its purpose is to ensure developments within the Darlington Borough Council area minimise the negative impacts of traffic as result of their development and facilitate and promote the use of alternative sustainable transport. Its ultimate objective is to change the behaviour of individuals to more sustainable modes of travel and maintain that change once it has occurred
36. A travel plan is not a one-off document; it is a long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that is regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure it continues to achieve its objectives. Darlington Borough Council will be actively involved in this process alongside the owner of the travel plan for the lifetime of the document. It requires the author of the document and the subsequently appointed Travel Plan Coordinator to be familiar with the local transport options and maintain an ongoing communication with all transport suppliers and Darlington Borough Council's Transport Planning team, which includes a Travel Plan Officer.
37. Implementing a travel plan is of benefit to both the developer and the user of the site. Different settings may dictate the focus of attention of the plan's action and its subsequent benefits.
38. In accordance with Council guidance, a Travel Plan has been submitted using the [Modeshift STARS](#) platform. The platform is a comprehensive travel planning tool that:
- Creates, develops, and supports travel plans
 - Assists in monitoring and evaluation
 - Recognises and rewards excellence for the promotion of sustainable and active travel
39. Modeshift STARS allows users to collect data and information linked to a site or a collection of sites and to input into the system. This process is more efficient than paper and PDF travel plans. Users of the system will save time when putting together a travel plan and they will be able to access their site's information online at any time. By providing clarity and a standardised approach towards what is required in a travel plan, this will allow the quality of travel plans submitted in support of planning applications to be assessed in a fair and consistent way.

40. If a Full Travel Plan is submitted it must attain Green standard prior to planning permission, being granted. Upon occupation all Travel Plans must attain Bronze standard within 12 months of occupation (unless agreed otherwise with Darlington Borough Council) It is hoped that all travel plans will go on to achieve higher standards in subsequent years and be recognised with a higher-level award.
41. The Council's Transport Planning Team have engaged with the College on a regular basis since the submission of the planning application. The Council are actively engaged directly or indirectly with working with the students, promotional activities and practical support for both staff and students with bike and public transport modes. With Travel Plans being submitted via the Modeshift platform, the Council's Travel Plan Officer can monitor the Plan and be alerted to overdue measures and targets and should any alerts be received, the Council are in a strong position to engage with the College to resolve any issues. Whilst, it is the College's responsibility to implement its Travel Plan and achieve its targets, the Council, through the Travel Plan Officer, are in a strong position to assist and react where required.
42. The Council's Travel Plan Officer has advised that the Travel Plan submitted with the application has been approved and achieves the necessary Green Standard. The resubmission of the Plan onto the Modeshift platform will allow the Council access to real time implementation of Travel Plan measures and raise alerts to any outstanding and overdue measures, allowing improved enforcement.
43. Overall, whilst there are existing operational and highways issues associated with the College, this is an existing situation and not something that can be fully addressed as part of this planning application. Given the constrained nature of the site, it is accepted that the full parking requirements for the College cannot be provided within the QE site, however offsite mitigation can be provided for the increase in student numbers by providing additional staff parking within the Abbey Road site playing field site. This will effectively offset the increased on-street student demand.
44. The proposed increase in student numbers and resultant increase in vehicle trips and parking demand is sufficiently mitigated via the measures put forward, which include increased parking provision of 15 spaces, a net reduction in single car occupancy journeys to be implemented via the submitted Travel Plan along with increased uptake of coach occupancy and cycle mode share.
45. In considering the evidence provided with the Transport Assessment, the applicant proposes sufficient mitigation for the development to have a neutral impact with regard to parking demand and does not demonstrate the 'Severe impact' required to justify refusal on highway or roads safety grounds under NPPF guidelines. The Council's Highways Engineer, Sustainable Transport Officer and Travel Plan Officer have raised no objections to the proposed development, subject to the imposition of planning conditions, and the proposal would accord with policies IN1 to IN4 of the Local Plan in this regard.

b) Impact on General Street Scene and West End Conservation Area

46. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 asks that local planning authorities pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas.
47. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (para 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021).
48. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance (para 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021).
49. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification (Para 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021).
50. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss (Para 201 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021).
51. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use (Para 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021).
52. The application site is in a prominent location within the West End Conservation Area overlooking Stanhope Park and whilst it is not a listed building, it is a building of local historic and architectural merit. The College building is a traditional red brick Victorian building designed by architect G.G. Hoskins as a Grammar school. Attempts to List the building, the last in August 2008, failed because its exterior has been compromised by extensive 20th century extensions, the original H-plan has been infilled and because the remainder of the interior is plain and functional.
53. The West End Conservation Area is designated for its high quality suburbs ranging from the mid-eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. It is part of Darlington's inner residential suburbs and is a generally prosperous and attractive part of town. Ranging

from high-density town houses near the centre of town to large, detached villas in substantial grounds, this area makes a significant contribution to Darlington's housing offer. The part of the Conservation Area the college lies within is leafy, opposite Stanhope Park; it is surrounded by other large buildings, including the former Arts Centre and numerous large, elegant terraced houses.

54. The proposal involves the addition of a further floor above a block that was originally constructed in the 1960s, and was then refurbished in 2015 where the facades were over clad in grey and orange Marley Eternit Equitone Tectiva fibre cement panels and the windows upgraded. The extension is currently flat roofed, two storeys high and located on the northern elevation of the original college building.
55. The additional floorspace would be within a mansard roof which slopes back from the building line, in order to ensure that main College building remains the dominant building and the extension is subservient. This is also achieved by the height of the extension being lower than the ridge height of the original building. The fenestration, style, colour and size of the windows to the new extension will match and tie in with the existing, with top hung opening sashes provided albeit that the windows will be dormer, encapsulated in leadwork. The mansard roof is to be clad in panels to match the existing walls, with the top in standing seam zinc system typically Anthra Zinc from VM Zinc, which is a matt finish, light to mid-grey material to complement the existing slate roofs.
56. Under the provisions of the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document – Design for New Development, the application site is located within the Town Centre Outer Ring Character Zone (Zone 2) and this document states that new developments of between two and five storeys would can be permitted.
57. The extension will be visible within the street scene and the Conservation Area and it is clear that some consideration has been given, in design terms, to be sympathetic to the existing building. It is considered that the proposed extension would sustain the significance of the West End Conservation Area and would not have an adverse impact on the general character and appearance of the street scene. As no adverse effects have been identified, it is not necessary to identify public benefits and the proposed development would accord with policies ENV1 and of the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 in this regard. The development would also accord with policy DC1 of the Local Plan and the Design SPD.

c) Residential Amenity

58. The application site is located primarily within a residential area. The former Arts Centre building to the north is now in residential use and there are existing dwellings to the south on Abbey Road and to the west on Scholars Park. Dwellings also bound Stanhope Park which is the east of the College campus.
59. The former Arts Centre building has now been converted into apartments and its two storey south facing elevation, which will contain habitable openings, overlooks the existing college building and extension. The existing extension has ground and first floor

window openings along its north facing elevation facing back onto the former Arts Centre building. The distance between the two buildings is approximately 24m and the two sites are separated by a solid brick wall which is approximately 2m high.

60. The proposed addition to the two storey extension will include further classroom window openings in the north elevation as part of the mansard roof design. Whilst it is acknowledged that there will be some overlooking between both buildings, these views and the proximity distance are already in existence and would not significantly worsen the existing situation to justify a reason to refuse the planning application on such grounds. Also, it is recognised that there will be a visual impact upon the neighbouring building due to the increase in height of the existing extension (an increase from 9.24m (existing) to 12.75m), the extension has been designed to try and minimise this impact by including the third floor within a mansard roof which is lower than the ridge of the main college building. Again, it is considered that the proposed development would not be such a dominant or overbearing structure when viewed from the neighbouring building to justify a reason to refuse the planning application.
61. The other neighbouring dwellings would not be directly impacted upon by the physical alterations to the building due to the proximity distances and other intervening existing buildings which would provide a visual screen between them.
62. It is noted from the submitted comments, that there are concerns that the increase in the number of students at the College campus will lead to an increase in litter, antisocial behaviour and an erosion of Stanhope Park. Whilst these points are recognised by the Local Planning Authority, it is considered that these potential impacts during term times would not carry sufficient weight to justify a reason to refuse the planning application. If there were any issues such as those listed above, the Council would have other legislative powers to investigate and it could possibly be matters which should also be reported to the Police and to the College to investigate further.
63. As stated above, the planning application has not been supported by a Construction Management Plan (CMP). A CMP detailing how potential disruption during the construction phase of the development will be minimised, as well as the aforementioned highway safety and parking matters is required as the development is within an established residential area.
64. Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact upon the amenities of the existing properties in the locality and would generally accord with policies DC3 and DC4 of the Local Plan in this regard.

d) Flood Risk and Drainage

65. The application site is within Flood Zone 1 with a low risk of flooding. The surface water and foul sewage would be dispersed via the existing mains sewer. The planning application would accord with policy DC2 of the Local Plan in this regard.

e) Nutrient Neutrality

66. Natural England together with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUCH) announced on 16th March 2022 that the administrative area of Darlington Borough Council is now located within the catchment area of the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area. Under the Habitats Regulations, those planning authorities falling within the catchment area must carefully consider the nutrients impacts of any projects, including new development proposals, on habitat sites and whether those impacts may have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site that requires mitigation. This impacts on all planning applications, both existing and proposed, which relate to primarily all types of overnight accommodation, such as new dwellings, care homes, student accommodation, holiday accommodation etc. and impacts all developments for one dwelling upwards. It also affects other applications where development may impact upon water quality, including those seeking to discharge planning conditions relating to foul and surface water drainage for a range of development proposals.
67. Based on the guidance as it is currently written, most industrial/commercial/non-residential developments can be screened out as the guidance is focussed on additional foul sewage that results from residential accommodation and additional surface water runoff is not covered by the guidance.
68. Whilst the development may bring students into the catchment from elsewhere, such developments can still be screened out, as there will be students from within the catchment as well so, they cancel each other out. Furthermore, the proposed development does not include any further welfare facilities within it and the students would use the existing facilities elsewhere within the College building. The proposed development would fall outside the scope of nutrient neutrality.

THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

69. In considering this application the Local Planning Authority has complied with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 which places a statutory duty on public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The existing reception area on the ground floor of the two storey extension is accessible via an existing ramp at the main entrance and this arrangement would remain unaffected by the proposed development.

SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

70. 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 AND RECOMMENDATION

71. The proposed extension is required in order to meet a demand in the increase of student numbers at the College campus. The proposed extension has been designed to be sympathetic to the West End Conservation Area and the original college building in terms of scale and massing and it is considered to have a neutral impact on the significance of the Area in accordance with local and national planning policy. The physical alterations to the building will not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties and whilst the comments made by objectors with regard to existing issues arising from students using the local area and concerns over such matters increasing as a result of the development are acknowledged they carry limited weight in the overall planning balance when determining this planning application and are not outweighed by the benefits of the proposal and other material planning considerations
72. A previous application for a similar proposal to accommodate a greater increase in student numbers was refused planning permission in 2018 for the reasons set out in Paragraph 6 of this report. In this instance, this subsequent planning application proposes sufficient mitigation for the development, in terms of an approved Travel Plan and offsite parking provision, to satisfy Officers that the development will have a neutral impact with regard to parking demand and does not demonstrate the 'Severe impact' required to justify refusal on highway or roads safety grounds.
73. The College has also agreed to a financial contribution of £25,000 towards a scheme for a safe pedestrian crossing point to help alleviate pedestrian and highway safety concerns for students and residents when crossing the road at the Stanhope Road/Abbey Road/Duke Street roundabout which would be secured via a Unilateral Agreement.

THAT PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS

1. A3 – Implementation Limit (Three Years)
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans, as detailed below
 - a. Drawing Number 18457.103b Rev A – Elevations as Proposed
 - b. Drawing Number 18457.101 Floor Plans as Proposed
 - c. Drawing Number 18457.102 Roof Plan as Existing and Proposed
 - d. Drawing Number 18457.104 Cross Section as Existing and Proposed
 - e. Drawing Number 18457.105 Site Plan as Existing and Proposed Location Plan

REASON – To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the planning permission

3. Prior to the commencement of the development, a site-specific Construction Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include the following, unless the Local Planning Authority dispenses with any requirement[s] specifically and in writing:
 - a) Dust Assessment Report which assesses the dust emission magnitude, the sensitivity of the area, risk of impacts and details of the dust control measures to be put in place during the construction phase of the development. The Dust Assessment Report shall take account of the guidance contained within the Institute of Air Quality Management "Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction" February 2014.
 - b) Methods for controlling noise and vibration during the demolition and construction phase and shall take account of the guidance contained within BS5228 "Code of Practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites".
 - c) Construction Traffic Routes, including parking areas for staff and visitors.
 - d) Details of Contractor Parking and Compound
 - e) Pedestrian Routes
 - f) Details of wheel washing.
 - g) Road Maintenance.
 - h) Warning signage.

The development shall not be carried out otherwise in complete accordance with the approved Plan

REASON: In the interests of highway safety and the amenity of the surrounding area

4. Prior to the occupation of the proposed development, precise details of a scheme for the provision of 15 car parking spaces at the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College Playing Field and Pavillion Abbey Road, Darlington shall be submitted to and agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed scheme shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the development and remain in situ during the lifetime of the development

REASON: In the interests of highway safety and to increase parking provision for the College

5. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the submitted and approved Travel Plan which is a long-term management strategy for the QE Sixth Form College site. The Plan shall be regularly reviewed and monitored for the lifetime of the Plan by the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College in conjunction with Darlington Borough Council to ensure it continues to achieve its objectives.

REASON: In order to minimise the negative impacts of traffic as result of the proposed development and facilitate and promote the use of alternative sustainable transport.

INFORMATIVES

The Developer is required to enter into an agreement under Section 59 of The Highways Act 1980 prior to commencement of the works on site. Where Darlington Borough Council, acting

as the Highway Authority, wish to safeguard The Public Highway from damage caused by any Construction Traffic serving your development. Contact must be made with the Assistant Director: Highways, Design and Projects (contact Mr Steve Pryke 01325 406663) to discuss this matter