

21 February 2024

Item: 5.

Application No.:	23/02979/FULL
Location:	Lowbrook Academy The Fairway Maidenhead SL6 3AS
Proposal:	Single storey rear extension following demolition of existing shed.
Applicant:	Mr Rooney
Agent:	Oxford Architects LLP
Parish/Ward:	Cox Green Parish/Cox Green

If you have a question about this report, please contact: David Brett on 01628 796580 or at david.brett@rbwm.gov.uk

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The application seeks planning permission for the demolition of a shed to the rear of the main school building at Lowbrook Academy, and the erection of a single storey extension. The single storey extension would facilitate internal alterations to two of the existing classrooms and a toilet block inside the building.
- 1.2 The proposal would improve and enhance the existing facilities at Lowbrook Academy. The principle of the development is therefore acceptable. The proposed development would be in keeping with the existing building and would not therefore harm the overall appearance of the existing building and surrounding area. Furthermore, the proposals would not result in unacceptable harm to amenity or parking and highway safety in the surrounding area due to its scale and siting.
- 1.3 On this basis, the application demonstrates compliance with relevant development plan policies.

It is recommended the Committee grants planning permission with the conditions listed in Section 12 of this report.

2. REASON FOR COMMITTEE DETERMINATION

- The Council's Constitution does not give the Assistant Director of Planning delegated powers to determine the application in the way recommended; such decisions can only be made by the Committee as the Council has an interest in the land (ownership); such decision can therefore only be made by the Committee.

3. THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The application site comprises Lowbrook Academy, an existing school site which is accessed from The Ridgeway. The school provides for 330 pupils, aged 5-11.
- 3.2 The school building is set comfortably within the 1.2ha site, with the surrounding area predominantly residential in nature. Manor Green School and Cox Green School are located to the west of the site.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The application seeks planning permission for the construction of a single storey extension to the rear of the main school building.

- 4.2 The Design and Access Statement that accompanies this application sets out that the development is proposed in order to adapt the building to the new Department for Education (DfE) standards and requirements. The extensions to two existing classrooms would ensure that compliance with the current BB103 guidance (which is a document which provides guidance on new school buildings, refurbishment or conversion projects, including the number, size and type of rooms) set out by the DfE would be maintained.
- 4.3 The proposed extension (38sqm) would provide a new extended internal layout for two existing classrooms, with associated cloakroom, storage, and pupil's WC. The proposed extension would have a depth of 2.7m, a ground to eaves height of 2.6m, a maximum height of 3.8m, and a width of 17.6m. The external walls of the proposed extension would be constructed in cedar timber cladding, with white uPVC windows, doors and cills, black uPVC rooflights and concrete roof tiles.
- 4.4 During the course of the application, an amended site location plan was submitted. No changes were proposed to the form of the extension as part of this.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Description	Decision
20/03470/FULL	Single storey front extension to classroom.	Approved 02/03/2021
17/02230/FULL	Proposed two storey detached building to accommodate 4 additional classrooms and sports hall.	Approved 14/06/2018
16/03424/CONDIT	Details required by Conditions 2 (external materials) 4 (cycle parking) 5 (construction management plan) of planning permission 16/02247 for and extension to form new classroom, washrooms, lobby and outside breakout area.	Approved 15/11/2016
16/02247/FULL	Extension to form new classroom, washrooms, lobby and outside breakout area.	Approved 08/09/2016

6 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 6.1 The main relevant policies are:

Borough Local Plan (BLP)

Issue	Policy
Spatial Strategy for the Borough	SP1
Climate Change	SP2
Sustainability and Placemaking	QP1
Character and Design of New Development	QP3
Sustainable Transport	IF2

Community Facilities	IF6
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7. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework Sections (NPPF) (2023)

Section 2	Achieving sustainable development
Section 4	Decision-making
Section 8	Promoting healthy and safe communities
Section 11	Making effective use of land
Section 12	Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Borough Wide Design Guide

Other Local Strategies or Publications

Other Strategies or publications material to the proposal are:

- RBWM Townscape Assessment
- RBWM Landscape Assessment
- RBWM Parking Strategy
- Corporate Strategy
- Environment and Climate Strategy

8. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

Comments from interested parties

The planning officer posted a notice advertising the application at the site on 26th January (on the basis of the amended site location plan). This consultation ends on the 16th February.

If further comments are received, this will be detailed in an Update Report ahead of the committee.

Fourteen neighbouring properties were directly notified of the application.

Two letters were received objecting to the application, summarised as:

Comment		Where in the report this is considered
1.	The revised plan shows that the red line now includes the car park area of the school.	The location plan has been amended to include all necessary land to carry out the proposed development. The size, scale or appearance of the proposed rear extension has not been amended from the original submission.

2.	Concerns that the development would result in increased traffic congestion in The Fairway and Fairlea.	See section 9.8 of the report.
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Consultees

Consultee	Comment	Where in the report this is considered
RBWM Environmental Protection	Conditions and informatives suggested for any approval relating to construction site working hours, collections during construction and demolition, smoke control and dust control.	Noted. However, this would be covered by other legislation.

Others (e.g. Parish and Amenity Groups)

Group	Comment	Where in the report this is considered
Cox Green Parish Council	No objection.	Noted.

9. EXPLANATION OF RECOMMENDATION

9.1 The key issues for consideration are:

- i. Principle of Development;
- ii. Design and Character;
- iii. Impact on amenity; and
- iv. Parking and highway safety.

Principle of Development

9.2 Paragraph 14.14.1 of the BLP defines schools as being a Community Facility. Policy IF6 (Community Facilities) of the BLP sets out that proposals for new or improved community facilities which meet the needs or aspirations of local residents and visitors will be supported. Further to this, Policy IF6 sets out that existing community facilities should be retained, improved and enhanced.

9.3 The application seeks to improve and enhance the existing facilities at Lowbrook Academy. The principle of the development is therefore acceptable, provided the development accords with the requirements of the BLP which will be addressed further below.

Design

9.4 The appearance of the development is a material planning consideration. Section 12 of the NPPF and BLP Policy QP3 sets out that all development should achieve a high quality of design that improves the character and quality of an area.

9.5 As existing, the location of the proposed extension comprises a flower bed, a storage shed, two AC units to the wall of the school building and a pedestrian walkway providing access to other parts of the school. The proposed extension, which would not be visible from the highway along the Ridgeway, would allow for an improved layout of both the existing classrooms, cloakroom, and WC. Both classrooms would also

benefit from individual external doors to the footpath to the north of the site, with the cloakroom and WC forming a central block between the two classrooms.

- 9.5 The proposed material would be suitable for the site, noting that there is timber cladding to other external surfaces of the main school building. Overall, given the modest size and scale of the proposed development, along with its location within the Lowbrook School site, the development complies with BLP Policy QP3. A condition is recommended to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the materials detailed within the submission.
- 9.6 It is noted that there are trees within the school to the rear of the building that are within 15m of the proposed rear extension. However, the trees are not protected by virtue of either a tree preservation order or conservation area location. Notwithstanding this, the trees are located behind existing heras fencing and are separated from the development by the existing concrete footpath. As such, the proposed development would not result in harm to trees on the site which contribute to the overall appearance of the area.

Amenity

- 9.7 BLP Policy QP3 requires development proposals to demonstrate that there would be no unacceptable effect on the amenities enjoyed by the occupants of adjoining properties. Given the modest size, scale and location of the proposed extension within an existing school complex, the development would not result in unacceptable harm to amenities of residents within the surrounding area over and above that of the existing situation. As such, the proposal complies with BLP Policy QP3.

Parking and highway safety

- 9.8 The application relates to an existing school site and the proposed extension would result in an additional 38 sqm of floor space to extend existing classrooms to enable compliance with (DfE) standards and requirements. The existing access to the site would be retained and there would be no loss of parking or additional staff requirements resulting from the proposed extension. As such, in this context, the proposals would not result in harm to parking and highway safety in the surrounding area. As such, the proposals complies with BLP Policy IF2.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 For the reasons set out in this report the proposals comply with relevant development plan policies. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the conditions listed below.

11. APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

- Appendix A - Site location plan and site layout
- Appendix B – plan and elevation drawings

12. CONDITIONS RECOMMENDED FOR INCLUSION IF PERMISSION IS GRANTED

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The materials to be used on the external surfaces of the development shall be in accordance with those specified in the application unless any different materials are first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area. Relevant Policies - Borough Local Plan QP3.

- 3 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed below.

23013-OA-B1-00-DR-A-2003 Rev. P4

23013-OA-B1-00-DR-A-3002 Rev. P6

23013-OA-B1-00-DR-A-5001 Rev. P6

23013-OA-B1-00-DR-A-2001 Rev. P3

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved particulars and plans.

