

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan. Ref Expiry Date
Mr Richard Gilbert 'A'	Extensions to college buildings NEW College, School Drive, Bromsgrove	Residential	10/0886-MT 15/12/10

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be **GRANTED**.

Consultations

WH	Comments received 25/10/10: No objection
PROW	Comments received 04/10/10: Object as the proposal would obstruct a Public Right of Way. Further comments received 22/11/10: Objection withdrawn.
Ramblers Association	Consulted 20/09/10: No comments received to date
West Mercia Constabulary	Consulted 16/11/10: No comments received to date
Tree Officer	Comments received 23/11/10 - No objection subject to a condition to secure replacement planting.
Publicity	One neighbour notification letters posted 11.10.10 expired 01.11.10 Site Notice posted 08.10.10 expires 29.10.10 No representations made

The site and its surroundings

The application site relates to the Bromsgrove campus of North East Worcestershire College; a further education establishment. The site is located within a modern development complex shared with David Lloyd leisure centre, the Artrix theatre, a public house and a hotel. There are a number of Public Rights of Way running through the site. The site is located in a Residential Area as defined in the BDLP.

Proposal

The application proposes to create additional teaching space at the site by extending two of the main college buildings. A single storey extension would be made to the existing Technology Block and a two storey extension to the existing Arts Block. The proposal would create an additional 979m² of internal floor space equating to a total external floor area of 1,168m². The proposal would therefore by definition be a major development. Both of the extensions would be at the front of the college close to its main entrance.

Relevant Policies

WMSS	QE3
WCSP	SD5, CTC1, CTC5, D43, T1, T4, T10, RST3
BDLP	DS13, S28, S29, S31, C17, TR10, TR11, RAT13, ES1, ES11
Others	PPS1, PPS4

Relevant Planning History

B/2005/0259	Demolition of existing teaching facility and erection of new single storey teaching facility - Granted 03/05/05
B/2003/0246	Erection of new build. Associated external works. Refurbishment of existing buildings - Granted 21/04/03

Notes

Policy S28 of the BDLP provides that the provision of new or enhanced community facilities will be supported providing there is no conflict with other policies of the plan. The proposal would involve the improvement of local education facilities and I am therefore of the view that the Council should support the principle of this development.

The submitted application form indicates that the development would result in the creation of 5 new full time jobs. The government's national planning policy advice for Economic Development set out in PPS4 would therefore be of relevance to the proposal. Policy EC10 of PPS4 provides that:

'Local planning authorities should adopt a positive and constructive approach towards planning applications for economic development. Planning applications that secure sustainable economic growth should be treated favourably.

All planning applications for economic development should be assessed against the following impact considerations:

- a. whether the proposal has been planned over the lifetime of the development to limit carbon dioxide emissions, and minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to, climate change;*
- b. the accessibility of the proposal by a choice of means of transport including walking, cycling, public transport and the car, the effect on local traffic levels and congestion (especially to the trunk road network) after public transport and traffic management measures have been secured;*
- c. whether the proposal secures a high quality and inclusive design which takes the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the area and the way it functions;*
- d. the impact on economic and physical regeneration in the area including the impact on deprived areas and social inclusion objectives;*
- e. the impact on local employment.'*

It is considered that the first three of the above criteria can be grouped together under the following headings; Sustainability, Accessibility and Design. The latter two criteria are not considered to be of specific relevance to the proposal. The development would not

represent a regeneration scheme and the level of job creation is not significant enough to provide any detailed discussion on local employment. I will address the design, accessibility and sustainability merits of the proposal under separate headings below. I am also mindful of the views of Worcestershire County Council in relation to Public Rights of Way and I will consider these below.

Sustainability

The submitted Design and Access Statement indicates that the extensions have been designed to achieve a BREEAM Excellent rating. BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) is the leading and most widely used environmental assessment method for buildings. It sets the standard for best practice in sustainable design and has become the de facto measure used to describe a building's environmental performance.

The extensions will incorporate the following features:

- A high performance façade with very low U values (a measure of heat loss)
- Roof mounted Photovoltaic panels (PV) to produce renewable electricity
- A 'free cool' high efficiency chiller with industry leading efficiencies
- Excellent levels of natural daylight in the Games Studio
- Daylight linked and occupancy sensing lighting controls.

It is evident that considerable efforts have been made to reduce the carbon footprint of the extensions and I am of the view that they represent a sustainable form of development.

Accessibility

It is understood that the college operates a free bus service that provides access to students living in Redditch and south Birmingham. The site is also located close to Bromsgrove Town Centre in which students can access numerous bus services providing links to locations in and around Bromsgrove and surrounding settlements.

The college currently provides 291 car parking spaces, 21 motorcycle spaces, 8 disability spaces and 12 cycle spaces. Members will note that 37 car parking spaces will be lost as a result of the development. It is however noted that there is currently an overprovision of parking spaces at the college and the proposed loss will not conflict with the relevant car parking standards. The County Council Highways Authority has been consulted on this matter and no objection has been raised. On the above basis I would not have any concerns over the loss of parking spaces. No changes will be made to the existing motorcycle, disability and cycle parking provisions and these will remain in accordance with the adopted parking standards.

It is clear that the development would be accessible by a choice of means of transport including walking, cycling, public transport and the car and I find it to be in accordance with the second criteria of Policy EC10.

The submitted Design and Access statement confirms that disabled access would be provided throughout the resulting buildings and the development will be in accordance with BS8300 (Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people) and Part M of the Building Regulations (Access to and use of buildings).

Design

Members are advised to refer to the photorealistic visual of the proposal development to gain a better appreciation of the appearance of the proposals.

The extensions would be situated in a recessed section of the college complex and they would have the effect of squaring off its footprint. I am of the view that the proposals would be well assimilated within the existing complex and they would not present as an obtrusive feature of the site.

The extension to the Technology Block would be of a very similar form and design to the host building but would involve new detailing including areas of exposed brick work, doors and openings, and coloured panelling and signage on the front and side elevations (plan details of signage are indicative only - actual details may be subject to a separate application for Advertisement Consent). These details would have the effect of adding interest to what is currently a very bland looking elevation and I am generally of the view that this extension would make a positive contribution to visual amenity of the site. I am however a little apprehensive about the coloured panelling on the technology block extension. I support the principle of adding interest to this building but I am of the view that other options should be explored. This detail can be subject to a condition requesting further details on the external materials and finish of the proposals thus it is not deemed to be an issue at this stage.

The extension to the Arts Block would be at two stories and it would be the tallest structure of the resulting building complex. This extension would inevitably be a prominent feature of the site thus it is important to ensure that it is of a good quality design and finish. It is noted that this extension would be of a very basic form but I am of the view that the detailing and choice of materials would serve to create a building of an interesting, futuristic appearance. It is considered that this building would make a positive contribution to the appearance of the college and I am of the view that it will become a landmark feature of the area.

The Public Right of Way

The proposed extension to the Technology Block would obstruct the route of public footpath number 545. Policy RST.3 of the Worcestershire County Structure Plan provides that development proposals which are judged to reduce the utility, convenience, recreational value, attractiveness or historic significance of a public right of way to the user will not be permitted unless an alternative route of at least equal value can be provided. Policy RAT13 of the BDLP provides that, where a proposed development would require stopping-up of a right of way a suitable alternative route will be provided to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

The applicant has provided a drawing (Drawing Number AR_910_003_B) demonstrating that the path can be appropriately diverted around the proposed extension. The views of Worcestershire County Council on this matter have been sought and no objection has been raised.

The proposed diversion is required to be formally diverted through a Public Path Diversion Order under Section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

I recommend that this requirement is imposed on the applicant through a condition attached to any planning permission granted.

It is normal practice to request that the diversion order is approved before any work on the development commences. However, it is understood that the college has to adhere to a strict development schedule in order to secure government funding for the extensions. Preventing the applicant from commencing development until the order is agreed could jeopardise this funding resulting in the abolition of the development. I therefore recommend that any condition imposed in relation to this matter is worded so the diversion order can be completed prior to the use of the extensions by the college. This will enable the development to commence on schedule. The applicant will be advised to apply to Worcestershire County Council for a temporary path closure prior to the commencement of development

Other matters

Members will note that the extension to the Arts block will involve the removal of one small tree. The Council's Tree Officer has been consulted on this matter and no objection has been raised subject to the tree being replaced elsewhere on the site. This can be secured through a landscaping scheme condition.

Conclusion

The proposal would involve the improvement of local education facilities and it would not conflict with any of the other relevant policies of the plan. The proposed development is found to be in accordance with the sustainability, accessibility and design objectives of Policy EC10 of PPS4. On this basis I find the proposal to be in accordance with the relevant policies of the adopted Development Plan and national planning policy guidance and I recommend that planning permission is approved.

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be **GRANTED**.

Conditions:

1. C001 (time limit for implementation)
2. C003 (materials to be submitted to the LPA for approval)
3. Prior to the use of the extensions hereby approved, the Public Right of Way number 545, as shown on the definitive Map for Worcestershire, shall be diverted or stopped up to confirmation stage, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
4. C007 (details of storm and foul drainage to be submitted to the LPA for approval)
5. C010 (landscaping scheme to be submitted to the LPA for approval)

Notes

1. The granting of planning consent does not authorise the obstruction or diversion of the public right of way running through the site.
2. The applicant is advised to apply to Worcestershire County Council for a temporary path closure prior to the commencement of development.

This decision has been taken having regard to the policies within the West Midlands Spatial Strategy Worcestershire County Structure Plan (WCSP) June 2001 and the Bromsgrove District Local Plan January 2004 (BDLP) and other material considerations as summarised below:

WMSS	QE3
WCSP	SD5, CTC1, CTC5, D43, T1, T4, T10, RST3
BDLP	DS13, S28, S29, S31, C17, TR10, TR11, RAT13, ES1, ES11
Others	PPS1, PPS4

It is the Council's view that the proposed development complies with the provisions of the development plan and that, on balance, there are no justifiable reasons to refuse planning permission.