Woodrush High School
New Sixth Form Block and Community Hub Building including teaching/meeting space, Social Area/Cafe, Gym, Dance Studio and New Community Library
The Woodrush High School, Shawhurst Lane, Wythall, Worcestershire, B47 5JW

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be Granted

Consultations

Strategic Planning- Consulted 05.08.2014
No Comments Received To Date

Highways Department- Worcestershire County Council Consulted 29.07.2014
No Objection – Subject to Condition

Education Department At Worcestershire- Sarah Smith Consulted 29.07.2014
No Comments Received To Date

Landscape & Tree Officer Consulted 29.07.2014
No objections – Subject to conditions

Community Safety Team Consulted 29.07.2014
No Comments Received To Date

Leisure Services Consulted 29.07.2014
No objections

Drainage Engineers Internal Planning Consultation Consulted 29.07.2014
No objections

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust Consulted 29.07.2014
No Comments Received

Wythall Parish Council Consulted 29.07.2014
No Objection but additional comments, from the Parish Council, were emailed to Bromsgrove District Council on 14th August for display on public access.

Neighbour Consultations response

33 signature petition received against the impact of increased traffic
Other objections include:
- potential non-compliance with planting within the landscape scheme
- noise
- floodlighting
- parking
- security
- loss of trees causing loss of privacy
- increase in traffic
- parking
- siting of the building
- storm drainage

2 letters of support received

**Relevant Policies**

**Bromsgrove District Local Plan 2004 (BDLP):**

DS13 Sustainable Development
S28 New and Enhanced Community Facilities
S31 Development at Educational Establishments
RAT3 Indoor Sport Development Criteria
RAT7 Sports Hall Standards
RAT8 Dual Use facilities
TR8 Off street parking requirements
TR11 Access and Off Street Parking
S29 Access for the disabled

**Others:**

National Planning Policy Framework

**Relevant Planning History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/0064</td>
<td>Proposed pre-fabricated metal workshop for educational use.</td>
<td>09.03.2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/0447</td>
<td>Pre-fabricated workshop for practical based education.</td>
<td>Approved 11.08.2011</td>
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**Assessment of Proposal**

**The site and its surroundings**

Woodrush School is located on Shawhurst Lane which lies centrally in the village of Wythall and runs east to west. The school is located on the south side of the lane and is
surrounded by predominantly residential properties. Coppice Primary School lies to the north-east of the site.

The school sits on a large 6.3 hectare site out of which 4 hectares is made up of the playing fields and playgrounds. The buildings are a mixture of styles including typical 1960's architecture and other styles including several recently constructed buildings. The main built structure of the school fronts onto Shawhurst Lane covering approximately one third of the site and the playing field and grounds lie to the rear of the buildings.

The Proposed Development

The proposal is for the demolition of a caretaker's bungalow and the construction of a modern part single storey and part two storey building. The new building will sit on the northern corner of the site, fronting onto Shawhurst Lane.

The building is proposed to provide sixth form learning accommodation and community facilities to include some teaching/meeting space, a social area including a café, a gym, a dance studio and a community library.

The pedestrian access to the building will be from Shawhurst Lane and an additional 16 car parking spaces are to be provided.

Principle of the development

The proposed development addresses the current shortfall of accommodation which is required for the Sixth Form to progress and improve. The development also includes additional teaching space and the school library. Also included within the proposal are community facilities such as a public library, a youth and community centre, a café, a gym, a dance studio and meeting space.

Policy S31 and Policy S28 of the BDLP support this type of proposal in principle.

The existing Wythall Public Library is set for closure as the building is in a poor state of repair. Worcestershire County Council has taken the opportunity to move the library into the proposed building. The proposal for the closure and relocation of the library were approved by the County Council Cabinet earlier this year.

The building is proposed to be located within the grounds of the school, which lies within a residential area as defined by the BDLP. The basic infrastructure is already in existence for this proposal which falls in favour of such a development and thus the proposal conforms to the requirements of Policy DS13 and Policy S28 of the BDLP. The NPPF provides strong support for the loss of valued facilities and services for the benefit of the local community and encourages community facilities to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable and beneficial to the community.

Having regard to the sustainable location, the existing school site and to the appropriate provision of shared community and school facilities, it is considered that the principle of this building on this site is well established and acceptable.
Design and Layout

The design and layout of the proposal has been assessed against Policy RAT8 and S19 of the BDLP.

Due to the nature of the use of the building, careful consideration has been given to the siting. The building is proposed to be used by both the students and the public; therefore, accessibility and security have played a major part in seeking the most appropriate location within the school grounds. The architect and applicant engaged in detailed discussions with the case officer in order to agree the most appropriate siting, design and layout of the building. The building is primarily designed for the school's use, but will be flexible space to maximise the learning and community based activities.

The footprint of the proposed building will be 50 metres x 17 metres. The building has been designed in a way so it appears to be split into two around the glass atrium which sits in the centre, on the front elevation. The floor to glass wall provides a visible break from the solid walls that flank either side. The series of windows on both the front elevation and the rear elevation also help to break up the facades of the building. This design has prevented the walls of the building becoming an oppressive mass as they have been broken up by several physical elements such as the windows and doors.

A key part of the design is the way the roofs interact. The rear of the building features a sloped roof, pitched to create a glazed clerestory level on the northern side. It slopes towards the ground, approaching the level of the existing buildings, providing a sympathetic junction. On the Western corner, a slanted roof lies over a plain white wall. This design has the effect of seemingly separating the block from the rest of the building. This corner is made into a prominent feature on the building, with a large window extruding from its corner.

The proposed walls will be of brick construction which will be in keeping with the style of construction of the existing school buildings. Grid based windows with white frames with both clear and green tinted glazing will be used to break up the large areas of glazing on the façade of the building.

The South-East corner will be rendered white as a feature, similar to many of the neighbouring houses. A bold window protrudes from its corner, emphasised by a thick grey extrusion surrounding the glazing. The glazed corner will face onto Shawhurst Lane, the first thing seen when arriving at the school. A simple grey standing seam roof applied across the whole building will match the colour of the window trim on the South-East corner.

The majority of the mature and semi-mature trees along the perimeter of the site are being retained for privacy between the residential development opposite the school and to preserve the natural landscape. Additional trees will be planted to replace the trees which are being removed. The applicants have submitted a satisfactory landscaping scheme.
Impact on the residential amenity

The set back of the building from Shawhurst Lane has been carefully considered in order to provide a facility which is useable and at the same time does not impact on the day to day living of the occupants of the residential properties on the opposite side of the lane. This part of the scheme has been assessed under Policies S28 and S31 of the BDLP. These policies require any developments of this nature to relate well to the locality and be easily accessible by private and public transport.

A number of objections have been received which raised concerns about the loss of some of the existing trees and vegetation. The vegetation which is being removed is a row of Lawson conifer trees and some Beech trees which are growing in the rear garden of the Caretakers bungalow. Further along in the northerly direction, along the perimeter of the site, there is a row of some semi mature and mature trees which are being retained.

The scheme has been designed to have a minimal impact on the residential occupants in terms of the locations of the windows and the two storey element of the structure. The distance from the nearest window of the proposal to the dwellings on the opposite side of the road is a minimum of 27 metres. A row of four Silver Birch trees will be planted to the front of the building to protect the residential amenity of the properties.

Given the nature of the area and the suitability of the site for such a development in terms of policy and guidance, I am satisfied that the proposal will adequately protect the amenity of the residential dwellings.

Access and parking considerations

A petition carrying 33 signatures has been received against the scheme in relation to the increase in traffic.

There is an access to the main school car park which is controlled by an automatic barrier which is controlled by secure access cards but this can be overridden at any time to allow access for the community parking during opening hours of the library and other community activities. The barrier will remain closed during school start time and school end time to help prevent congestion and highway issues. A number of dedicated community car parking spaces will be available for the visiting users of the building. 16 additional car parking spaces are being provided to support this scheme. Secure cycle parking will also be available to encourage the use of cycles. A traffic statement has been submitted as part of this application and the Highways Officer has raised no objections to the scheme as the scheme complies with policy TR8 and TR11 of the BDLP.

A lift has been incorporated into the new building to allow access for any disabled people, elderly persons, children in pushchairs, etc. in compliance with Policy S29 of the BDLP.

Conclusion

The proposal is for the improvement to the sixth form facilities for the school, to provide a space for the re-location of the Wythall Public Library, and also to incorporate a gym, a café, improved youth and community centre, a dance studio and a meeting space. The
building is proposed to be constructed within the school grounds which is easily accessible and is therefore regarded to be a sustainable form of development. It is considered that the principle of development of such a facility is well established and the design and layout is acceptable. Whilst the application has raised concerns amongst the local residents, I am satisfied that the applicant has taken appropriate steps to mitigate the impact of the development on the neighbouring properties and that a satisfactory standard of amenity has been achieved. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to the imposition of conditions and informatives as below:

**RECOMMENDATION:** That planning permission be Granted

**Conditions:**

1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

   Reason: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

2) The proposal shall be carried out as shown on the plans, schedules and other documents listed below;

   **Drawing Names and Numbers:**
   
   Site Location Plan: No 010  
   Existing Site Plan: No 012  
   Proposed Site Plan: No 040  
   Coloured Side Elevations: No 052  
   Coloured Front and Rear Elevations: No 051  
   Proposed Sections: No 060  
   Proposed Elevations: No 050  
   Soft Landscape Proposals: : No 1323-PL1-04  
   Proposed Floor and Roof Plans: No 042

   Reason: To make sure the development is carried out exactly as shown on the plans, to ensure that it relates to the area in which it is being built and protects how that area looks, in order to comply with policy DS13 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan January 2004.

3) Before any materials or machinery are brought on to the site or any development, demolition, installation of services or site clearance works of any kind are commenced the developer shall erect protective fencing as illustrated by BS 5837:2005 on a line concurrent with the tree protection distances given in BS 5837:2005 and to the specific approval of the local planning authority. The developer shall maintain such fences to the satisfaction of the local planning authority until all development, the subject of this permission, has been completed. No activities on the land within the fenced areas shall be permitted including
excavation, changing of levels or disturbance in any way from the passage or storage of vehicles and machinery unless such activity is given the specific prior permission of the local planning authority.

Reason: In order to protect the trees which form an important part of the amenity of the site in accordance with policies DS13 and C17 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan January 2004

4) Before the commencement on site of any works which are the subject of this permission, a scheme of landscaping and planting shall be submitted to, and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The scheme shall include the following:

   a) full details of all existing physical and landscape features on the site including the position, species and spread of all trees and major shrubs clearly distinguishing between those features to be retained and those to be removed;

   b) full details of all proposed fencing, screen walls, hedges, floorscape, earth moulding, tree and shrub planting where appropriate.

   The approved scheme shall be implemented within 12 months from the date when (any of the building(s) hereby permitted are first occupied) (change of use hereby permitted carried out).

   Any trees/shrubs/hedges removed, dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years of the date of the original planting shall be replaced by plants of similar size and species to those originally planted.

Reason: In order to protect the trees which form an important part of the amenity of the site in accordance with policies DS13 and C17 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan January 2004

5) The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the access, turning area, cycle parking and parking facilities shown on the approved plan have been properly consolidated, surfaced, drained and otherwise constructed in accordance with details to be submitted and approved in writing to the Local Planning Authority and these areas shall thereafter be retained and kept available for those users at all times.

REASON: In the interests of Highway safety and to ensure the free flow of traffic using the adjoining Highway.

6) Full storm water drainage details, incorporating porosity testing and sustainable drainage, are to be approved in writing by the LPA prior to any building work commencing.

Reason: To ensure proper drainage on site, and to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere as a result of the development.
Informatives:

1. In dealing with this application the local planning authority have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner, seeking solutions to problems arising from the application in accordance with the NPPF and Article 31 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010. The authority has helped the applicant resolve technical issues such as:

   - access and parking provision,
   - the impact of the development in the street scene,
   - impact of the development upon amenity of neighbours,
   - improving the design of the proposed development.
   - Others

The proposal is therefore considered to deliver a sustainable form of development that complies with development plan policy.

2. This permission does not authorise the laying of private apparatus within the confines of the public highway

   The applicant should apply to the Worcestershire County Council’s Network Control Manager, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP (telephone 0845 607 2005), for consent under the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 to install private apparatus within the confines of the public highway. Precise details of all works within the public highway must be agreed on site with the Highway Authority.

3. The applicant is advised to be aware of their obligations under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000) to avoid disturbance of nesting wild birds and protected species such as bats when carrying out these works.

**Case Officer:** Nina Chana Tel: 01527 548241
Email: nina.chana@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk