

TITLE: APPLICATION 2006/153

PROPOSAL: CONSTRUCTION OF 2-STOREY PERFORMING/EXPRESSIVE ARTS BLOCK, MUSIC, IT, MEDIA PERFORMING ARTS ACCOMMODATION WITH ANCILLARY TOILET AND STORAGE FACILITIES AND EXTERNAL LANDSCAPING

LOCATION: BACUP & RAWTENSTALL GRAMMAR SCHOOL, GLEN ROAD, WATERFOOT

TO/ON: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - 30 MAY 2006

BY: TEAM MANAGER DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

APPLICANT: Lancashire County Council Property Group

DETERMINATION EXPIRY DATE: 5 June 2006

Human Rights

The relevant provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights have been taken into account in the preparation of this report, particularly the implications arising from the following rights: -

Article 8

The right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

Article 1 of Protocol 1

The right of peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property.

Background

This Council's comments are sought by Lancashire County Council on an application which falls to it to determine.

Site

Bacup & Rawtenstall Grammar School occupies an extensive range of buildings that was most recently added to with the construction of a Sports Hall, for which permission was granted by Committee in October 2004 (2004/495). The Sports Hall building is situated on the south side of the cul-de-sac head at the east end of Mount Avenue. It comprises of a 2-3 storey high building, measuring approximately 19m x 41m, with a 1 storey lean-to, and is clad in re-constituted stone/grey tiles.

Immediately to the north of the Sports Hall (within the ownership of the school but beyond its perimeter fence) is an irregularly-shaped piece of land having an area of approx 0.15ha. This rather unkempt area is bounded on its east side by the cul-de-sac head of Mount Avenue and a tarmaced footpath leading to Booth Street, beyond

which are bungalows at a lower level; to the north side by the back-gardens of houses fronting Booth Road; and to the east/south-east by the side/back gardens of properties fronting Wolfenden Green.

Proposal

Permission is sought to erect on the site a 2-storey building that faces towards the cul-de-sac head of Mount Avenue/the tarmaced footpath leading from it to Booth Street, with a 1 and 2-storey element projecting to its rear.

As the building is approached up Mount Avenue that element of it containing the main entrance will be seen. From this 'modern' element (which is to be round-fronted and terracotta-coloured, with a flat-roof) will project two wings of more traditional design (the external walls of which will be of artificial-stone and cream-coloured render, with grey tiled-roofs).

The 2-storey wing will have:

- ground and first floor windows facing towards the blank gable and rear garden of 14 Mount Avenue at a distance of 15m and 10m, respectively;
- ground and first floor windows facing towards the back elevation of houses fronting Booth Road and their rear gardens at a distance of 11m and 4.5m, respectively; and
- ground and first floor fire-doors/windows facing doors/windows in the gable of another house fronting Booth Road and its garden at a distance of 10m and 4m, respectively.

This wing will measure 16.5m x 19m, with a gutter-height of approx 7m and ridge-height of approx 10m.

The 1 and 2-storey wing to the rear will measure 16.5m x 23m. By reason of the rising ground-levels towards the back of the site, this wing will have a gutter-height and ridge-height which are 1m higher than the other wing. This wing will have:

- a fire-door and couple of windows in that elevation facing towards the backs of houses fronting Booth Road and their gardens at a distance of 12m and 5m, respectively;
- the blank gable will face towards the rear elevation of a house fronting Wolfenden Green and its garden at a distance of 17m and 3m from its rear garden and that of another house.

The construction of this building will necessitate the felling of a number of trees and scrub that has grown-up on the site, but will not obstruct the footpath which runs between Booth Road and Wolfenden Green.

The Applicants Case

In a supporting statement accompanying the application it is said that:

1. This school has a capacity for 1,071 pupils, but the number of pupils presently enrolled is 1,276, an excess of more than 205 across the full age-range for its intake.
2. Haslingden High School and this school are the only two A-Level providers within the Borough. Given the Government's continuing encouragement for more pupils to stay-on beyond 16 years in age there is a particular need to address deficiencies in the school's accommodation for this age group.
3. A particular problem with the existing accommodation is that the present assembly hall is too small and, as so many other classrooms are accessed of it, it can neither be blacked-out nor used for noise-generating activities without unduly disturbing many classes.

4. The submitted scheme will provide an assembly hall with a seating capacity of up to 400, with other accommodation, suitably designed to enable arts/music/media studies to be developed. Space freed up within the existing buildings will enable the more efficient delivery of other elements of the curriculum to pupils.
5. School staff and pupil numbers will not increase as result of this proposal. The new building will enable the removal of temporary classrooms, thereby freeing space for additional car parking; car parking provision is currently being reviewed.
6. A review of the land/buildings belonging to the school has concluded that *“the site at the head of Mount Avenue is the only site to offer enough site area to provide adequate teaching accommodation to meet the school’s current shortfalls....The necessity for the new build block is clearly demonstrated and shows the school’s needs for education provision far outweighs the visual needs of the proposed development.”*

Consultation Responses

I am aware that LCC (Highways) has no objection to school use of the proposed development, but has expressed concern about the traffic/parking implications of use of the 400-seater assembly hall for the “large number of annual public events, performances and productions” referred to in the applicant’s Supporting Statement.

Notification Responses

I have received a copy of a petition of objection (bearing 12 names), and copies of a number of residents letters of objection, sent to the County Council. As these letters are continuing to trickle-in at the time of writing of this report their content will be reported to members via the Late Items Up-Date Report.

Development Plan Policies

Rossendale District Local Plan (Adopted 1995)

- DS1 - Urban Boundary
- E4 - Tree Preservation
- E7 - Contaminated Land
- E13 - Noise Sources
- DC1 - Development Control
- DC2 - Landscaping
- DC4 - Materials
- T6 - Pedestrians

Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (Adopted 2005)

- Policy 1 - General Policy
- Policy 2 - Main Development Locations
- Policy 7 - Parking
- Policy 21 - Lancashire’s Natural & Man-Made Heritage

Other Material Planning Considerations

- PPS1 - Sustainable Development
- PPG13 - Transport
- PPG 24 - Noise

LCC Parking Standards

PLANNING ISSUES

As previously indicated, this is an application to be determined by Lancashire County Council, upon which this Council's comments are sought.

I have no reason to doubt that there is currently a shortfall in the school's accommodation and that this will remain so for the foreseeable future unless remedied by further building. However, it is necessary for the County Council in assessing the application before it to consider the full implications of the proposal.

Below I comment on the main issues of which I am aware:

DESIGN AND APPEARANCE

The proposed building is quite bulky. However, being immediately adjacent to the Sports Hall, I do not consider that it will detract unacceptably from the street-scene.

NEIGHBOUR AMENITY

I am greatly concerned about the impact the proposed development will have on neighbours. Firstly, by reason of its siting and size I consider the building will unacceptably detract from the outlook from the windows and gardens of a significant number of the dwellings that bound the site. Secondly, the elevation of the building and windows proposed in its west and north sides of the 2-storey wing will cause an unacceptable loss of privacy for the residents of the neighbouring dwellings. Thirdly, the application is not accompanied by any information to show that the noise generated by the activities within the building will not cause disturbance to neighbours, most particularly through the door and window-openings that are proposed and by reason of the events that may take place outside normal school hours. Finally, I have a concern that the public events, performances and productions referred to in the applicant's Supporting Statement have the potential to attract addition traffic which may inconvenience local residents and cause them noise and disturbance.

TRAFFIC/PARKING

I concur with the view of the Highway Authority that the use of the proposed building for school use is unlikely to add to traffic, but its use for public events, performances and productions raises issues about the capacity of the local road network/adequacy of the school's off-street parking facilities that the submission does not answer.

Recommendation

That the Council County be advised that, on the basis of the information before it, this Council is not satisfied the proposed development will not cause an unacceptable loss of amenity for local residents and unacceptable obstruction/inconvenience for other road users.

