

REF: P0519



**PLANNING
INSIGHT**



PLANNING STATEMENT

Location: Kendrick School, London Road, Reading, RG1 5BN
Client: Darwin Group Ltd
Date: June 2019

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INTRODUCTION

PLANNING STATEMENT

Darwin Group Ltd

01. Introduction

1.1

This Planning Statement has been prepared by Planning Insight on behalf of Darwin Group Ltd (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') to accompany a planning application to the Reading Borough Council in respect of the proposed development at Kendrick School (the 'Application Site').

1.2

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a new building on the school premises. The description of development is as follows:

"The erection of a three storey building comprising of 9 classrooms and dining provision"

1.3

The overall objective of the scheme is to provide a high-quality development at this site, in order to accommodate the expansion of the school.

1.4

The Applicant has commissioned a consultant team to prepare a full planning application for the development of the application site. This statement describes the application proposal in more detail and in the context of the relevant policies. It should be read in conjunction with the following specialist reports which have been prepared in support of the application:

- Design and Access Statement (Darwin Group Limited)
- CIL Information form (Planning Insight)
- Archaeological/Heritage Assessment (Darwin Group Limited)
- Construction Logistics Management Plan (Darwin Group Limited)
- Background Noise Assessment (Darwin Group Limited)
- Energy and Sustainability (included in the Design and Access Statement).
- Transport Assessment (TPS)
- Contaminated Land Survey (Key GeoSolutions Limited)
- Utility Search Report (Prodar)
- UXO Risk Assessment (1st Line Defence)
- Drainage Survey (Happy Drains Limited)

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

02. Description of site and surroundings

2.1

The application site is situated in the Reading Borough Council administrative area. The school is located in central Reading and bound by London Road to the south, East Street to the West, Sidmouth Street to the east, and South Street to the north. The school has two access points, one off London Road and the other off East Street.

2.2

The proposed development would be located in the north-western corner of the site. It is bound by the sports hall to the west, the boundary wall to the north, existing school buildings and facilities to the south and east.

2.3

The school consists of a number of buildings which vary in size, mass and appearance. The largest buildings on site, which are three stories, are located southern and north western section of the site. The proposed teaching block would be constructed alongside the existing sports hall in the north-western corner of the site. This area is currently occupied by a single netball pitch and as a result of the proposed development this court and the adjacent pitch would be relocated. The relocated pitches will be built to the south of the remaining courts, and the remaining courts reconfigured.

2.4

The buildings on the southern side of the application site, which front onto London road, do fall within the Kendrick Conservation area. The western section of the application site is located on the boarder of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, but not within it.

2.5

There are five Grade II listed buildings along the northern frontage of London Road, two of which form part of the Kendrick School (The Cedars – directly south of where works are proposed – and Sidmouth House – which is further to the south east). The site is location outside, but adjacent to, Reading Borough's Local Development Framework Central Area Action Plan.

2.6

The surrounding area is mixed. The immediate neighbours to the north and south west are in use as offices. The residential dwellings are primarily located at areas to the south of the site. The neighbouring buildings which would be closest to the proposed development are in use as offices.



Figure 1 - Kendrick School - Aerial Photo



Figure 4 - Application Site



Figure 2 - Parking area to the rear of the site



Figure 5 - Courts and sports hall



Figure 3 - Offices to the rear

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

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03. Relevant planning history

3.1

A search of Reading Council's online planning database for the Application Site identified a number of relevant applications. These include the following:

- Application No: 151354
Description: *Pre-application for proposed extension to existing school to provide 9 new classrooms and dining provision.*
Decision date: 11.04.2019
- Application No: 151354
Description: *Erection of a conservatory on second floor terrace of Sixth Form Block.*
Decision date: 19.10.2015
Decision: Permitted.
- Application No: 180850
Description: *Single storey extension to the east elevation of the Sixth Form Block and Adjacent covered walkway to the north.*
Decision date: 23.07.2018
Decision: Permitted.
- Application No: 080020
Description: *Demolition of existing temporary classroom block and redevelopment to provide a new three storey Sixth Form Centre.*
Decision date: 09.10.2008
Decision: Permitted
- Application No: 080444
Description: *Construction of a new science laboratory block to replace an existing building.*
Decision date: 19.06.2008
Decision: Permitted
- Application No: 040082
Description: *Erection of four new classrooms in courtyard of main school building.*
Decision date: 07.05.2004
Decision: Permitted
- Application No: 030186
Description: *Extensions to single storey modular teaching block.*
Decision date: 15.12.2003
Decision: Permitted
- Application No: 020410
Description: *Extension to modular building to form new teaching areas. Existing mobiles to be demolished.*
Decision date: Permitted
Decision: 09.12.2002
- Application No: 021491
Description: *Amended: New sports hall with associated accommodation for 'dual use', and new eight classroom teaching block (Submitted in conjunction with application 03/01382/FUL for 33 residential units at the Addington Road Playing Field.*
Decision date: 27.04.2004
Decision: Permitted

PLANNING POLICY

PLANNING STATEMENT

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04. Planning policy

4.1

This section of the Statement provides an analysis of the planning policy context in which the proposed development should be considered in accordance with the relevant planning legislation and national policy guidance.

4.2

Planning decisions in England and Wales should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This statutory requirement is set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

4.3

The statutory development plan for Reading consists of:

- London Plan (2015)
- Core Strategy (2008, altered in 2015)
- Sites and Detailed Policies Documents 2012 (altered 2015)

4.4

While not forming part of the statutory development plan, the following documents remain important material considerations for the determination of planning applications in Ealing:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG);

- Draft New London Plan;
- Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents; and
- Local Plan Evidence Base.

4.5

The most relevant extracts of these documents are analysed in more detail below.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework

4.6

On 19th February 2019, the government adopted the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The document provides a consolidated framework of planning policy which replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012.

4.7

The NPPF outlines the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives: an economic objective, a social objective and environmental objective.

4.8

The framework indicates that proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.9

Where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

4.10

The setting of a heritage asset is defined as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

4.11

The significance (for heritage policy) of an asset is defined as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

4.12

The NPPF constitutes a material consideration in determining applications.

National Planning Practice Guidance

The Government launched the Planning Practice Guidance web-based resource in March 2014. The resource is continually updated, with the most recent update reflecting the revised National Planning Policy Framework adopted in February 2019.

4.13

Paragraph 001 of Design states that as a core planning principle, plan-makers and decision takers should always seek to secure high quality design.

4.14

Paragraph 007 of Design states that development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.

4.15

Paragraph 040 of Design states that well-designed housing should be functional, attractive and sustainable. It should also be adaptive to the changing needs of its occupants.

4.16

Paragraph 003 of Conserving the Historic Environment states that the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and effective conservation delivers wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits.

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY

London Plan (2015)

4.17

The London Plan forms part of the development plan for the site and was adopted in March 2015. The Plan was the subject of Minor Alterations in 2015 and these were adopted in April 2016. It provides the strategic direction for development in the Greater London area. The relevant policies are discussed below.

4.18

Policy 3.4 'optimising housing potential' stresses the importance of realising the optimum potential of sites for all new housing development.

4.19

Policy 3.5 'quality and design of housing developments' states that housing developments should be of the highest quality internally, externally and in relation to their context and wider environment, taking into account (among others) local character; density, and the needs of children, disabled and older people.

4.20

Policy 7.1 'lifetime neighbourhoods' states that development should be designed so that the layout, tenure and mix of uses interface with surrounding land.

4.21

Policy 7.4 'local character' states that development should have regard to the form, function of an area, place or street

and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings. In areas of poor or ill-defined character, development should build on the positive elements that can contribute to establishing an enhanced character.

4.22

Policy 7.6 'architecture' states that architecture should make a positive contribution to a coherent public realm, streetscape and wider cityscape. It should incorporate the highest quality materials and design appropriate to its context.

4.23

Policy 7.8 'heritage assets and archaeology' states that developments affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

Draft New London Plan

4.24

The Draft London Plan document was subject to public consultation from 1st December 2017, which concluded on the 2nd March 2018. The current 2016 London Plan is still the adopted Development Plan, but the Draft London Plan is a material consideration in planning decisions.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Reading Borough Core Strategy 2012 (Amended 2015)

4.25

The Council adopted the Core Strategy in April 2012 and it forms part of the

development plan for the area. The Strategy sets out the spatial vision which supports the overarching vision and goals for Ealing. The following policies are considered relevant to the determination of the application.

4.26

- Policy CS1 'Sustainable Construction and Design'
- Policy CS4 'Accessibility and Intensity of Development'
- Policy CS7 'Design and the Public Realm'
- Policy CS20 'Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy'
- Policy CS22 – 'Transport Assessment'
- Policy CS24 – 'Car/Cycle Parking'
- Policy CS31 'Additional and Existing Community Facilities'
- Policy CS33 'Protection and enhancement of the Historic Environment'

Site and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015)

4.27

The Council adopted the Site and Detailed Policies Document in October 2012 before being amended in January 2015. This document is intrinsically linked to Reading's adopted Core Strategy and must be read alongside it. The purpose of this document is to provide the detailed planning policies and identify the specific development sites and designations necessary to deliver the Core Strategy. The following policies are

considered relevant to the determination of the application.

- Policy SD1 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development'.
- Policy DM1 'Adaptation to climate change'.
- Policy DM4 'Safeguarding amenity'.
- Policy DM12 'Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters'.

Other guidance

Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Statement.

Kendrick Road Conservation Area Appraisal.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

PLANNING STATEMENT

Darwin Group Ltd

05. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

5.1

The development site is located within existing school ground which is surrounded by an area that comprises of a variety of uses. As this proposal is for a new building which would be ancillary to school, in this instance, the development will assimilate well into context of the surrounding area.

5.2

Policy CS31, Additional and Existing Community Facilities, of the Council's Adopted Core Strategy, states that proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where the development would involve co-location of facilities on a single site. Policy CS31 overarching target is to increase the overall amount of floorspace in use for, among others, educations.

5.3

The proposal aims to respond to the schools need to provide additional onsite floorspace to accommodate the intake of additional students. The proposal seeks to maximise potential development opportunities within the grounds whilst not compromising the other facilities on the school grounds.

5.4

The policy states that, subject to the preservation of the amenity and character of surrounding areas (which is address later in this statement), proposals would be encouraged which increase the range or

improve the quality of the facilities serving Reading's communities. This proposal would be achieving just that.

5.5

Policy 32, Impacts on Community Facilities, of the Adopted Core Strategy, whilst not directly relating to developments on schools, it does acknowledge the impact that the continued development within the Council puts on community facilities such as schools. It notes that new development, and the pupils resulting from it, puts increasing pressure to expand classroom and recreational space to meet educational needs.

Reduction/re-arrangement of the outdoor play grounds

5.6

The proposed development will result in the size of the existing sports courts being reduced/rearranged. The existing outdoor space consists of four tennis courts which can also be used as three netball courts. The development would be constructed on the western end of the courts, resulting in a rearrangement of the existing courts.

5.7

Schedule 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 states that Sport England are statutory consultees for *Development which –*

- (i) *Is likely to prejudice the use, or lead to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field; or*
- (ii) *Is on land which has been –*

(aa) used as a playing field at any time in the 5 years before the making of the relevant application and which remains undeveloped; or

(bb) allocated for use as a playing field in a development plan or in proposals for such a plan or its alteration or replacement; or

(iii) Involves the replacement of the grass surface of a playing pitch on a playing field with an artificial, man-made or composite surface.

5.8

The Schedule's definition of the term 'Playing Field' is "the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch" and 'playing pitch' means "delineated area which, together with any run-off area, is of 0.2 hectares or more, which is used for association football, American football, rugby, cricket, hockey, lacrosse, rounders, baseball, softball, Australian football, Gaelic football, shinty, hurling, polo or cycle polo".

5.9

The proposed development would not result in a significant reduction in the school outdoor sport area. The development would not result in the existing use being prejudiced as the re-arrangement would allow for sufficient space to support the sports/activities currently in use. The existing material of the surface will not be altered, nor will it be re-laid.

5.10

Furthermore, as previously highlighted in this statement, the sports grounds are tennis and netball courts.

5.11

The proposed development would not have a harmful impact or compromise the use of the schools' outdoor sport space/facilities. It would not constitute the need for the Council to consult Sports England as a statutory consultee under schedule 4 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

5.12

In light of the above the principle of development is therefore considered established at this site.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity.

5.13

Policy DM4, Safeguarding Amenity, of the Sites and Detailed Policies Documents, as Adopted (2015), aims to ensure that development does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

5.14

The proposed development would be located on the north western section of the applications site. The use of the immediate neighbours at this particular section of the site comprises predominantly as B1 office buildings of which one has recently been converted in flats. There is a large parking

bay separating offices (which front onto South Street and East Street) and where the proposed building would be. All of the other surrounding buildings are located within the application site and are either as classrooms or the indoor sport facilities

5.15

The policy notes that a back-to-back distance of 20 metres between dwellings is usually an appropriate enough distance to ensure that there would not be a detrimental effect on privacy. The nearest neighbouring property is approximately 25m away. This exceeds the distance recommended in Policy DM4. Furthermore, when taking into account that the use of the site will remain unchanged, it is not considered to give rise to any harmful levels of disturbance or impact to a level exceed what currently existing.

5.16

When acknowledging that the proposed development would be surrounded predominantly by non-residential uses, a daylight and sunlight assessment is not considered necessary. However, when accounting for the above-mentioned distance, the context of the site, and the proposed location of the development, it is considered that the three-storey development would only have an impact on the daylight and sunlight received at the schools indoor sports hall. Furthermore, the pre-application response did not consider daylight/sunlight to be an issue and confirmed that a daylight and sunlight report would not be necessary as part of the submission.

Design

5.17

Policy CS7, Design and the Public Realm, notes that development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.

5.18

One of the key components in achieving these expectations is the layout of the development. Two 'options' were submitted in the pre-application proposal with the main difference being the layout or the orientation of the building.

5.19

One of the options was to construct the building to the southern end of the courts, fronting onto the access route into the school and the parking area. The second option was be located in the north-western corner of the site, parallel to the sports hall.

5.20

The Council in the pre-application response preferred the option for the building to be located alongside the sports halls stating that this option would:

'would benefit from making use of the land directly adjacent to the blank eastern side elevation of the existing sports hall, whilst also maintaining the amount of south facing sunshine onto the netball courts.' ... 'would also focus a three-storey building into the north-western part of the site which

already benefits from a building of similar scale...’.

5.21

The applicant has elected to pursue the Council’s preferred option and consider that this is best location for the development given the context of the site and scale of development.

Heritage assessment

5.22

Core strategy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment, states that historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of historic environment, including their setting, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced.

5.23

The policy states that planning permission would only be granted where development would have no adverse impact on the historic assets and their settings. The nearest listed building to the proposed development would be, The Cedar. This grade II listed building would be separated from the proposal by an existing single storey maths building and roughly 45 meters away.

5.24

The proposed development sought a layout and orientation which would be sensitive to the setting of the listed buildings. By being located in the north-western periphery of the site and being directly adjacent to the sport hall, the proposed is considered to be less intrusive to the setting of the listed

buildings on the site. This assessment was shared in the pre-application advise with the report noting that this layout would, ‘work well in heritage terms’. The report concluded that the proposed options, of which one has now been pursued, would not be objected to by the council.

Scale

5.25

The proposed development would result in a three storey buildings project the full length of one of the courts. Given its location, the development would not be easily seen from prominent locations within the surrounding public realm. It would be set behind and partially obscured by the sports hall when viewed from the east street.

5.26

The only other location from where the development would be easily seen from the public realm would be from the car park located to the north of the site. Once against this would be partially obstructed due to the high boundary wall. However, the views from the car park are not considered to be of key aesthetic value.

5.27

The pre-application report did not raise any objection to the proposed height, stating that the building:

“would generally integrate well in this location with other large scale and functional buildings on the school campus.”

Materials

5.28

The more modern sports hall has a mixture of red architecture panelling, white architectural panelling and buff brickwork, finished with dark grey aluminium frame fenestrations. Some of the older buildings on site, like those located to the east of the proposed site are finished red facing brick, constructed with gable ends, with white frame fenestrations.

5.29

The proposed building has been designed to seamlessly integrate within the established built fabric within the site by incorporating the above-mentioned materials into account.

5.30

The elevational treatment of the proposed building would consist of a mixture of white render, architectural panels in red, white and grey, and anthracite grey aluminium frame fenestrations.

Access and parking

5.31

The school is located in an area that is very well connected with the surrounding residential catchment, and a short distance from the Town Centre. Thus, allowing student and staff member the opportunity to walk, cycle, and use public transportation to access the school.

5.32

As previously mentioned in this document, the proposal seeks to increase the capacity of the school by providing nine additional classrooms and ancillary uses. As a result of this extension the school would move from a three-form entry to four-form entry. The Transportation Assessment sets out the implications that this would have on the number of student and staff at the school, it is projected that there would be an overall uplift of 160 pupils by 2024. This would require an additional 10 full time equivalent (FTE) employees.

5.33

There are currently 76 parking spaces provided across the school. A total of 39 parking spaces are accessed via the main site entrance on East Street, 16 parking spaces provided on the south west of the school grounds, and 20 spaces in the south east.

5.34

As a result of the proposed development, a total of 15 parking spaces would be lost across the school site, reducing the quantum down to 61 spaces. The spaces that would be lost are from the central area of parking which is accessed off East Street. However, in order to compensate for the loss if the central parking area, 12 parking spaces will be provided on the western boundary of the school.

5.35

Reading Borough Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (adopted in 2011), state that 1x parking space is required per 2 FTE staff member. Taking

into consideration the number of projected FTE staff members and the number of parking spaces after development, the proposal would comply with the Council's Parking standards. This assessment, although representing slightly different figures, was acknowledged and supported in the pre-application response.

5.36

The Transportation Assessment, submitted with this application states that although the development is likely to result in a small increase in trips to/from the site, these can be accommodated on the local highway network with no negative material impact.

CONCLUSION

06. Conclusion

6.1

The proposed development comprises the development of a new three-storey school classroom building. The development would result in the existing outdoor netball courts and parking bays being rearranged.

6.2

The proposal is considered acceptable with regards to the relevant policies of the Development Plan and with regards to paragraph 92 of the NPPF. The Council expressed their support to the principle of development during the pre-application stage, as it was seen to be in accordance with Policy CS31 of their Core Strategy.

6.3

The proposal provides a high-quality design, drawing on design elements evident from other buildings on the school site and surrounding areas. It would be of a scale and bulk that is comparable to the size of the site and its surrounding context. In addition to this, the building would incorporate high quality external finished that would aim to be in keeping with those already established.

6.4

In terms of neighbouring amenity, given the orientation of the proposed development, the distance of the built form from the existing neighbouring properties, and the context of the surrounding areas, the proposal would not result in any substantial

harm caused to the neighbouring occupiers by reason of overlooking or loss of privacy.

6.5

The Transportation Assessment, submitted with this application states that although the development is likely to result in a small increase in trips to/from the site, these can be accommodated on the local highway network with no negative material impact. There would be a loss of onsite parking but the remain spaces would still meet the provision required in the Council's parking SPD. As such, the transport impacts are acceptable.

6.6

Overall, the proposed development will provide a high-quality education/community scheme and will in turn bring much needed additional floorspace to school. The proposal is considered acceptable with regards to the relevant policies of the Development Plan and The London Plan and therefore planning permission should be granted.