

Agenda Item 10

Supplementary Information

Planning Committee on 9 March, 2016

Case No.

15/4523

Location	Byron Court Primary School, Spencer Road, Wembley, HA0 3SF
Description	Demolition of eight existing buildings on site comprising 4x teaching blocks, 1x shelter, 1x shed, 1x storage/garage and 1x kitchen and dining facilities and construction of new part single and part two storey building (to accommodate expansion of the school from 3 form to 5 form entry primary school), all-weather MUGA to include the reconfiguration of the School's playing field and associated landscaping and parking, upgrading of the Nathans Road access and temporary permission for the erection of a single teaching block (2x classrooms) for use until July 2017.

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Members site visit

Members visited the site on Saturday 5 March 2016. Approximately 40 residents present and Councillor Perrin. The site was viewed from the Spencer Road entrance, Nathan's Road entrance and within the school site. Local roads viewed from the bus, including the roads around the school, the route to Northwick Park car park and the routes to East Lane and Watford Road;

Residents highlighted a number of issues including:

Highways

- **Narrow nature of streets**

This is acknowledged, particularly in the cases of Spencer Road and Abbots Drive.

- **Concern regarding traffic flows during the day and evening (up to 5 / 6 pm)**

Weekday traffic flows and speeds for Nathans Road and Spencer Road were surveyed by the applicant and are contained at tables 5.32 and 5.33 of the Transport Assessment. Peak two-way flows of 95 cars on Nathans Road in the morning peak (8-9am) and 105 cars on Spencer Road in the morning peak. Flows on both roads through the rest of the day are very light.

- **Inconsiderate parking in front of and in driveways, with residents abused by parents (one resident erected CCTV as the issues were so significant)**

Officers are aware of the inappropriate parking that is taking place as discussed above. This matter has been discussed within paragraphs 129 to 130 of the main committee report.

- **Hospital staff, visitors and commuters already park in the local streets**

Commuter parking has been discussed within paragraphs 135 to 139 of the main committee report.

- **The informal one-way system is not enforced**

This is noted. As it is informal, so there is no current means of enforcing it at present.

- **There is grid-lock at the slightest hiccup on the road network**

Difficulties have been observed, such as when vehicles travel against the prevailing flow, particularly in Spencer Road but also in Norval Road.

- **Emergency vehicles can't access the area during drop-off and pick-up times**

Emergency vehicles travelling with blue lights and sirens can still gain access, but it is acknowledged that

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they would be slowed in their response time when streets are congested.

- **Traffic has to go through the estate to get to the walking bus drop-off location**

This is acknowledged. Traffic from the west can use Norval Road as far as The Fairway.

- **The committee should walk the walking bus route;**

The committee members viewed the location of the walking bus route on the coach.

- **Not a sustainable development as people need to drive to the school;**

Public transport options are not plentiful, but there is a nearby station. Details of the proposed modal split has been provided within the School Travel Plan (refer to paragraphs 140 to 145 of the main committee report).

- **Visibility splays for Nathan's Road access have not provided;**

The access from Nathans Road is an existing access, but has not been used by the school for a number of years. Your officers in Transportation have advised the maximum visibility requirement is 2.4m x 23m for a 20mph road, which can be easily achieved without altering the boundary fence. There are speed cushions either side of the crossover which are within 30m of the site to keep speeds to about 20mph, thus reducing the stopping distance. Transportation have also requested a speed table outside the entrance which will extend to the adjoining properties and the opposite driveways and this will further help manage the speed outside the entrance.

A reduction in fence height to 600mm to improve pedestrian sightlines would be welcome, but is not essential.

The existing crossover extends to serve the adjoining two properties and therefore provides one long crossover. As such, kerb radii are not required as vehicles making a turn into the lightly trafficked site access would be using the crossover and not overrunning the footway.

Margins of 450mm width should be provided along both sides of the access to protect the adjoining fences. It is recommended that this is secured via a planning condition.

- **Construction traffic, service vehicles and coaches won't be able to use the Nathan's Road access, and the parking that takes place on Nathan's Road will also result in this access not working**

Tracking diagrams have been provided in the Construction Management Plan to demonstrate that access can be achieved from Nathans Road by tipper trucks, cement mixers and mobile cranes (no articulated lorries are proposed to access the site). The need for temporary waiting restrictions at bends and junctions has been identified in a number of areas to ease turning. These are shown on the tracking diagrams at the back of the Construction Management Plan.

For the permanent school, fire appliances and refuse vehicles would be able to turn into and out of the access without difficulty, but coaches would not unless waiting restrictions are installed opposite the access - thus removing an on-street parking space. However, coach visits are no likely to be frequent, so it may not be worthwhile to install waiting restrictions in this area. Officers in Transportation have advised that this can be considered further as part of the overall highway improvement works.

- **The condition of the local roads is already poor due to the impact of large vehicles;**

Officers in Transportation have advised that they are not aware of the roads being in a poor condition and there are therefore no major resurfacing planned for the area for the forthcoming year. If there are particular pothole problems, these can be reported on our website.

- **Accidents have already occurred due to the level of traffic for the existing school;**

The personal accident record has been examined in the TA and is covered in the committee report. There was only one personal injury accident recorded over five years - at the junction of Spencer Road and Abbotts Drive.

- **The Council ignored the resident's own surveys;**

All information provided by residents was taken into consideration.

- **Site visit should have taken place on a week day to see traffic issues**

Your officers in Transportation did carry out site visits during the school pick up and drop off times. The findings have been discussed within paragraph 129 of the main committee report

- **Not clear what changes to the local highways are proposed and these affect local residents;**

A list of the improvement works is set out within paragraph 146 of the main committee report. Further information is discussed below.

- **Distance for walking buses is excessive and not practical;**

Only one walking bus is proposed from Northwick Park Car Park. The use of a walking bus from this location is considered acceptable by officers in Transportation

General

- **School is no longer "Excellent" and shouldn't be expanded**

This matter has already been discussed within the main committee report. Please refer to pages 192 and 193.

- **Community functions will take place between 6:30 and 11pm and will impact on residents**

As discussed within the main committee report, community access is proposed to the MUGA , sports hall and the small hall. The MUGA will not be flood lit so that this will restrict its usage particularly during winter months. Community access will be managed through a Community Access Plan. The school currently does not have any conditions restricting the hours of use for community access. The proposed hours are comparable to other schools within the borough and it is not expected that this level of community use will result in significant levels of traffic or disturbance of local residents.

- **A single attenuation tank is proposed on one side of the school. This will not provide drainage for the other side of the school**

The Flood risk considerations of the proposal have been discussed within paragraphs 101 to 108 of the main committee report. The level of attenuation has been reviewed by the Local Lead Flood Authority and considered to be acceptable.

Character and impact on adjoining properties

- **Buildings will overshadow adjoining gardens**

The impact of the new school building and the temporary classroom has already been discussed within paragraphs 34 to 41 of the main committee report.

- **Buildings large and out of scale**

The design of the new school building has already been discussed within paragraphs 24 to 29 of the main committee report.

- **Structural impact of large vehicles (including construction traffic) on local houses**

Your officers in building control have advised that the road network is designed to accommodate larger vehicles so that they do not have a structural impact on neighbouring houses.

One parent attended in support

- **The school has been taking steps to improve things and these are working.**

Comments are noted.

Councillor Perrin raised the following issues:

- **The school cannot keep to their existing Travel Plan and won't keep to the proposed one -**

Officers in Transportation have advised that the School's Travel Plan is silver accredited, showing a good level of engagement. However, this will need to be improved for the expanded school.

- **The proposed Travel Plan is insufficient**

Officers in Transportation have advised that the Travel Plan generally meets standards. They have advised that more emphasis on the park and stride option, centred around Northwick Park, with more ambitious targets is required. This has already been discussed within the main committee report.

- **The Northwick Park car park will not be able to accommodate the large number of cars, getting them in and out in 20 minutes**

The car park has 96 marked spaces and Highways have advised that with a walking bus in operation and a 5-minute set down period, this could potentially turn over about 300 vehicles in 20 minutes (assuming practical peak occupancy of 80%).

- **The car park is only open from dawn to dusk and cannot serve throughout the year**

The car park is open at least from 8am-6pm, so can serve the school without difficulty

- **Construction traffic is to turn right onto Watford Road, but cannot do so as there is a no right turn sign**

There is indeed a "no right turn" restriction at the junction of Watford Road and The Green, preventing traffic turning from Watford Road (south) into The Green. Construction traffic would need to be directed to access The Green from the north. Alternatively, the direction of flow of construction traffic could be reversed. This needs further thought as part of the future sign off of the final Construction Management Plan. This has already been recommended to be secured as a condition.

Members queried a number of the points raised above. In addition to this, the following points were raised:

- **The Highways improvements should be clearly set out and shown on a plan**

The improvements are listed in a table at present within paragraph 146 of the main committee, and include:

- a raised table outside the access on to Nathans Road;
- a zebra crossing to enable safer pedestrian access to the Nathans Road entrance;
- a segregated footway alongside the access road to the Northwick Car Park; and
- a covered waiting area for the Northwick Car Park.

The table within paragraph 146 also refers to the "implementation of traffic measures". It was recognised that vehicles travelling against the flow of the voluntary one way system causes undue congestion which also impacts on other junctions. Highways accordingly recommended that a review is undertaken of vehicle movements on the surrounding streets and the existing one-way system is formalised. The traffic measures would involve the formalisation of the one-way system as a minimum.

- **Has a breakdown been provided of the wider routes for traffic be provided, including traffic numbers (i.e. from East Lane & Watford Road)**

The applicant has advised that the sphere of influence for surveys that was agreed with the Council's Transportation Department covered the parking survey area, as outlined in the Transport Assessment [Abbotts Drive east of The Fairway, Nathans Road north of Carlton Ave West, Norval Road east of The Fairway, Spencer Road and The Fairway north of Abbots Drive]. They advise that the Council's Transportation Department did not consider an assessment of the impact of traffic movements in the local or wider area to be necessary. The subsequent assignment of vehicular movements under various mitigation scenarios was based on the assumption of an even distribution of traffic between the south (Nathans Road, from East Lane) and the west (Norval Road, from Watford Road). The resulting peak hour traffic movements

are shown in Appendices B and C of the Transport Assessment, with this impact expected to disperse further outside the investigated area. The impact on East Lane and Watford Road is expected to be within existing daily variation.

- **What is the walking distance from the Northwick Park car park and the school?**

Just over 500m.

- **Has a remote drop-off location with shuttle bus to the school been considered?**

The applicant has advised that the use of shuttle school buses from a "park & ride" location was looked at but was not considered a suitable measure for a primary school, given the local catchment which provides suitable opportunities for walking and cycling / scooting. Instead park & stride measures are considered more suitable to reduce existing traffic impact, as proposed at Northwick Park car park, as well as walking bus proposals.

What types and sizes of construction vehicles will be used? Can these access the site?

Only rigid lorries are proposed to be used and tracking diagrams have been produced to show they can access the site. Some temporary waiting restrictions will be required.

- **Clarification on the wider routes for construction traffic.**

The Construction Management Plan shows indicative routes from the North Circular Road and the A40 to the site. The construction access routes will need to be reviewed given the right-turn ban at Watford Road/The Green. Further details are recommended to be conditioned.

- **Would the introduction of a CPZ in the local streets help?**

Your officers in Transportation have advised that a CPZ could help to remove some of the all-day commuter parking, thus helping to free up two-way traffic flow in the area. The impact will depend on the hours of operation. Alternatively, a one-hour restriction could be used (possibly 8-9am on one side of streets in the morning and 3-4pm on the other side in the afternoon), if residents aren't supportive of paying for permits.

- **Will the new school buildings result in significant noise for surrounding residents which could affect home workers and others**

Noisy construction works will be restricted to 08.00 to 18.00 Mondays to Fridays and 08.00 to 13.00 on Saturdays with no noisy works on Sundays and Bank Holidays. This is in line with Environmental Health legislation.

When the school buildings are occupied, there will be playgrounds for the younger year groups in close proximity to neighbouring gardens. However, the level of noise from this activity is considered typical for a school building and will only be for periods throughout the day. Likewise as the MUGA will not be flood lit, it will only be available for use during daylight hours. The houses surrounding the school have long rear gardens in the region of

A condition is secured for plant equipment to be below background noise level.

- **What screen planting is proposed along the northern and eastern boundaries?**

The proposal includes new screen planting and tree planting (13 trees) along the northern boundary and 7 trees around the MUGA on the eastern and southern boundary. Full details of the landscaping, including the screen planting, is to be secured through conditioning.

- **Can a covered walkway be provided between the school buildings?**

A covered walkway is proposed between the existing and new building. It is illustrated on the roof plan. It is positioned at the western end of the new playground adjacent to the car park to minimise disruption to the marked areas on the playground.

Additional comments from the Sudbury Court Residents Association (SCRA)

Cllr Perrin and the SCRA have advised that the list of signatories to the objection was not intended as a petition. It was a list of residents who object to the planned expansion, gave their views, and these were collated into one document. They have explained that those people who signed put many hours of work into reading the 60+ documents issued as part of the planning application, attending meetings to give their views, researching sections of the documentation, carrying out traffic surveys, counting cars, and writing huge sections of the objection letter, they were not merely signatories to a petition.

They have advised that the objective was to submit one objection letter, with supporting signatures, so that the Council could focus on the points raised, rather than spending time having to wade through many hundreds of letters saying similar things.

Officers confirm that the way the objections were raised has assisted in the clarity of local resident's concerns. The concerns raised by these objectors have been taken into account and considered within the main committee report which allows members to take these objections into account. The reference to it as a petition does not diminish the weight given to the objections or the fact that a very large number of people are objecting to the proposals on the grounds that have been raised. When considering this application, members will clearly be aware of the significant level of public objection to this application.

The Council's standard procedure when a petition is submitted or if a standard template letter from multiple contacts is received, is to record the comments as 'PETITION received', either against the contact details of the Head Petitioner / Original Author of standard template letter. As the letter was submitted by the SCRA, we recorded it under their name rather than sending it to individual signatories. However, the extent of the people signing to object is fully recognised.

Letter received from Barry Gardiner (Member of Parliament for Brent North)

A letter has been received from Barry Gardiner requested that members visit the site during a week day at peak times to allow members to under the severe traffic congestion that arise during this time. In response your officers can advise that while it is clearly important that the Planning Committee fully understands the nature of highway and traffic concerns, it is not considered necessary for the site visit to take place when these conditions are being experienced. The Council's Highways service visited the site on multiple instances to observe the traffic conditions and have provided information regarding this and taken these observations into account when providing their views on the proposal. The applicant has also submitted details of observations within the application submission. Traffic conditions have been raised in detail by local residents and the residents association. The observations are discussed within the main committee report.

Recommendation: Remains approval subject to the conditions as set out after paragraph 148 of the main committee report, and an additional condition relating to margins of 450mm width should be provided along both sides of the access from Nathans Road to protect the adjoining fences.