

## Committee Report

Planning Committee on 24 February, 2010

Case No.

09/2652

---

**RECEIVED:** 21 December, 2009

**WARD:** Welsh Harp

**PLANNING AREA:** Willesden Consultative Forum

**LOCATION:** Woodfield School, Wood Lane, London, NW9 7LY

**PROPOSAL:** Retention of and alterations to the external lighting of the school, including wall and soffit-mounted lights to main buildings, and column-mounted lights in car park adjacent to rear gardens of properties on Glenwood Avenue

**APPLICANT:** The Governing Body

**CONTACT:** Ian Caudell Architect

**PLAN NO'S:** Refer to Condition 2.

---

### RECOMMENDATION

Approval.

### EXISTING

The existing site is approximately 1.9ha in area, and is occupied by a part single-storey, part two-storey secondary school, with associated carparking and outdoor sports facilities. The site is bounded to the west by a nursery/ garden centre, by the Welsh Harp Open Space to the south, by the Borough boundary shared with Barnet to the east, and to residential properties on Glenwood Avenue to the north. The site is accessed via the north-east corner onto Wood Lane. The western part of the grounds, occupied by playing fields, is designated as Metropolitan Open Land. The site is not within a Conservation Area, and does not contain any listed buildings.

### PROPOSAL

Retention of and alterations to the external lighting of the school, including wall and soffit-mounted lights to main buildings, and column-mounted lights in carpark adjacent to rear gardens of properties on Glenwood Avenue

### HISTORY

Planning permission was granted in 1949 for the erection of a primary school on the site.

Planning permission was then granted in 2006 (ref 06/0143) for the erection of 2-storey extension comprising ground-floor 6th-form unit and first-floor mental-health resource for the school's educational use and relocation of car-parking area and associated landscaping buffer zone to adjoining properties. This permission was granted subject to various conditions. Several of these required submission of further details, such as landscaping and cycle parking, which were subsequently submitted and discharged. Several other conditions restricted various matters. Condition 8 stated:

*"There shall not be any installation of external lighting prior to the written approval from the*

*Local Planning Authority.*

*Reason: To minimise any undue impact to the neighbouring residence."*

External lighting was installed without due consent following this, and a planning enforcement investigation was undertaken to address this (reference E/07/0274). Officers have visited the site to inspect the existing lighting, and this application has been submitted on the basis of advice given by Officers following these visits.

An application relating to condition 9 (use by external organisations) of planning permission 06/0143, and a further application for a single storey extension to the existing buildings, comprising changing facilities, will also be considered concurrently with this application, under references 09/2699 and 09/2499 respectively.

## **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004

BE8 - Lighting and Light Pollution  
CF8 - School Extensions

### SPG

SPG17 - Design Guide for New Development

## **CONSULTATION**

Residents of 14 properties adjoining the application site were consulted on the 12th of January 2010, along with the Silver Jubilee Residents' Association. 5 letters of objection were received, in addition to a petition opposing the proposal. The concerns raised in letters of objection related to:

- That lights were initially erected without planning consent;
- Sustainability implications of running lights when school not in use;
- Implications of lighting if extensions allowed to be used by external organisations.

In addition, one objector replicates objections from application 09/2699, which relate to traffic, noise, crime, parking etc, which are not relevant to this particular application.

Ward Councillors were consulted. An objection was raised by Councillor Mary Farrell with regard to all three applications currently being considered for Woodfield School. The Councillor's concerns relating to lighting in particular were linked to proposed extended hours of the use of the school if used by external organisations.

The Council's Transportation Unit and Environmental Health department were consulted. No objection was raised.

## **REMARKS**

This application seeks permission for the retention and alteration of external lighting to Woodfield School. The key considerations relate to the need for such lighting, and the impact that this may have on the amenities of adjoining residents.

*Need for external lighting:*

The need for external lighting at the school is two-fold. Firstly, it is required for the security, or perceived security of users of the buildings and carpark (students, staff, parents etc.) during hours of use of the school. Secondly, it is required for security purposes outside of school use hours, in

conjunction with a CCTV system. It is considered acceptable and necessary to provide lighting for these purposes for facilities of this type, although the lighting scheme needs to be carefully designed in order to ensure that no undue harm to the amenities of neighbouring residents results.

#### *Existing lighting:*

The existing external lighting scheme has been installed without planning permission, and comprises wall and soffit-mounted ambient lighting to the 2-storey extension granted planning permission under reference 06/0143, column-mounted lighting for the carpark area included in the same scheme, and wall-mounted motion-activated security lighting at various points around the extension and main school buildings. This lighting has been viewed at night by Officers from Planning and Streetcare, both from the school grounds and from various properties on Glenwood Ave which are affected by the lighting. As a result of visits to the site, Officers took the view that the existing lighting scheme, whilst providing for the security needs of the school, was not suitable designed to minimise impact on neighbouring residential properties on Glenwood Avenue. Advice was given to the applicant as to how the existing scheme could be altered to rectify this.

The main concern with the existing lighting scheme is the type of lights that are mounted on 2 columns in the new car park area of the school, adjacent to the new 2-storey extension. The columns are positioned between the car park and the rear boundaries of the Glenwood Avenue properties. The type of lights currently mounted on these columns is floodlights. The angle that these lights project at can be varied, and are designed to spread light widely and evenly. This type of light is not often used in car park areas, where the intention is to direct light downwards. As a result, the existing lighting brightly illuminates the pale render finish of the new school extension, and light is reflected back toward the residential properties.

Motion-activated security lighting is required to accompany a CCTV system. The two entrances on the elevation facing the rear of Glenwood Avenue are covered by CCTV cameras, and have associated lighting visible from the neighbouring properties. Similar lights are positioned in various locations round the other school buildings, however these do not impact on residential properties.

The existing ambient wall and soffit-mounted lighting consists of polyester domes which provide a diffuse low-level light around the exterior of the extension and entrances. Hours of use of the existing lighting has varied, but at times has been kept on throughout the night.

#### *Proposed alterations:*

Two 'Centro' model luminaires are proposed to replace the existing column-mounted flood lights. These are designed specifically for car-parks/ streets etc where lateral and upward light spill is to be avoided. These will prevent the existing problem of illumination and reflection from the school extension.

The existing wall and soffit-mounted lighting is considered to be adequate and appropriate as existing, and by virtue of its diffuse nature is not considered to make a significant contribution to the existing issue of light spill to residential properties.

The existing motion-activated security lighting is to remain, although alterations to the direction of these lights is proposed in accordance with advice given by Council lighting specialists. This advice was to direct the lighting more specifically toward the required points such as building entrances. As with the wall-mounted lighting, this security lighting is not considered to be a major contributing factor in harm to residential amenity. Although these lights may sometimes be triggered by wildlife, the amount of time these would be operational in any given night is not significant. As this lighting is a necessary component of the security of both the school site and

the adjoining residential properties (which can be accessed from the school), the minor additional impact caused by this lighting is considered to be, on balance, acceptable.

With the exception of the motion-activated lighting, none of the other lighting proposed is required outside of school use hours. Therefore, any minor impact on residential amenity that remains following the proposed alterations would be removed after school use hours. Details provided by the applicant suggest that this would usually be no later than 7pm, however it is accepted that on occasion (such as parent-teacher nights etc) this may be later. The lighting system can be controlled by timer, and this would be the intention in future.

The applicant had proposed longer hours of use of lighting in the evenings and weekends, in accordance with hours proposed for the use of the school extensions by external organisations. The application relating to this is being considered by Members concurrently with this application (under reference 09/2699), and has been recommended for refusal. It is therefore proposed that a condition be attached to this application which restricts the use of external lighting to the extension and car park to those hours of use relating to normal school use.

#### *Impact on neighbouring residential properties:*

The properties on Glenwood Avenue are bungalows, and as a result, very few have first floor windows which face the school. There are a couple of exceptions in properties that have converted the loft space, however the impact of the lighting on the majority of the properties is reduced to some degree by existing boundary treatment and landscaping between the school and these properties. Officers consider that the changes proposed to the lighting scheme, in conjunction with the proposed restriction of the use of the external lighting for normal school use only, will result in a scheme which has a minimal impact on the amenities of residents of Glenwood Avenue. Any impacts that do occur would be considered acceptable, on balance, taking into account the need to provide a reasonable level of security for both the school and residents.

#### *Response to objections:*

The current application is to be determined on its merits, and the fact that the original lighting was installed without planning permission is not a material consideration in this respect. There is provision within planning law to apply for planning permission retrospectively.

The proposed condition relating to the hours of use of the proposed external lighting addresses the issue of sustainability. The resultant lighting scheme will not be in operation outside of school use hours. Objections relating to the additional impact of lighting if extensions were to be used by external organisations have been addressed above.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Grant Consent

#### **REASON FOR GRANTING**

(1) The proposed development is in general accordance with policies contained in the:-

Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004  
Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 17 - Design Guide For New  
Development

Relevant policies in the Adopted Unitary Development Plan are those in the following chapters:-

Built Environment: in terms of the protection and enhancement of the environment  
Housing: in terms of protecting residential amenities and guiding new development

**CONDITIONS/REASONS:**

- (1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning on the date of this permission.

Reason: To conform with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- (2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawing(s) and/or document(s):

Cover letter from Ian Caudell Architect dated 21 December 2009;  
(20) 104 Rev C;  
(20) 105 Rev B;  
(20) 106 Rev A;  
Specification document for 'Centro' light fittings;  
Specification document for 'B1' light fittings;  
(D) 01 Site Location Plan.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- (3) The external lighting to that part of the school granted planning permission under reference 06/0143 (6th form extension and associated carparking), being lighting marked 'B' and 'PF' on approved plan (D)01, but excluding lighting marked 'F' on the same plan, shall not be operated in relation to the use of the school premises for non-school related uses by external organisations.

Reason: In the interest of protecting the amenities of neighbouring residential properties during evening, weekend, and holiday use of the school for ancillary uses.

**INFORMATIVES:**

- (1) The applicant is advised to undertake the required alteration works hereby approved within 1 month of the date of this notice, in order to avoid further enforcement action being taken in respect of the existing unauthorised lighting scheme in place.

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:**

Brents Unitary Development Plan 2004;  
SPG17 - Design Guide for New Development.

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Hayden Taylor, The Planning Service, Brent House, 349 High Road, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 6BZ, Tel. No. 020 8937 5345



## Planning Committee Map

Site address: Woodfield School, Wood Lane, London, NW9 7LY

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping data with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. London Borough of Brent, DBRE201 2005



London Borough of Brent - Copyright (C)

This map is indicative only.