

**Committee Report**  
**Planning Committee on 24 February, 2010**

Case No. 09/2699

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**RECEIVED:** 21 December, 2009

**WARD:** Welsh Harp

**PLANNING AREA:** Willesden Consultative Forum

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

**PROPOSAL:** Details pursuant to condition 9 (relating to proposed out of hours use of premises by external organisations) of full planning permission reference 06/0143 granted on 02/03/2006 for erection of 2-storey extension to school with associated car parking and landscaping.

**APPLICANT:** The Governing Body

**CONTACT:** Ian Caudell Architect

**PLAN NO'S:** (D) 01;  
Letter from Ian Caudell Architect dated 21 December 2009.

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**RECOMMENDATION**

Refuse permission for the use of facilities approved under planning reference 06/0143, including 6th form extension and associated car parking, by external organisations not part of the school.

**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 car parking 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**

Details pursuant to condition 9 (relating to proposed out of hours use of premises by external organisations) of full planning permission reference 06/0143 granted on 02/03/2006 for erection of 2-storey extension to school with associated car parking and landscaping.

**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). An application to retain and alter this external lighting has been made, and will be considered by the Planning Committee concurrently with this application (under reference 09/2652).

Condition 9 of planning permission 06/0143 stated:

*"The use of the premises hereby approved by any external organisations that is not part of the school shall not commence unless further written approval is obtained from the Local Planning Authority. Any such proposal shall provide details of parking and hours of operation.*

*Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the neighbouring residents."*

This application has been made in respect of this condition. A further application for a single storey extension to the existing buildings, comprising changing facilities, will also be considered concurrently with these applications, under reference 09/2499.

## **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004

BE8 - Lighting and Light Pollution  
H22 - Protection of Residential Amenity  
CF8 - School Extensions

## SPG

SPG17 - Design Guide for New Development

## **CONSULTATION**

Residents of 14 properties adjoining the application site were consulted on the 11th of January 2010, along with the Silver Jubilee Residents' Association. 9 letters of objection were received, in addition to a petition opposing the proposal. The concerns raised in letters of objection related to:

- Impact on residential amenity in terms of noise and disturbance caused by congregation of people on the school site, additional vehicular traffic, playing of music etc, particularly during evenings and weekends;
- Reduced security of site with front gates left open for out of hours use;
- Additional traffic generated in vicinity of site.

Officers wish to note that residents of some properties other than those consulted made representations on the application. These objections related to the wider traffic impact of the use of the school by external organisations, and raised issue with the scope of the consultation undertaken. Officers believe that the scale of the proposal, which relates only to the use of the 2-storey extension and 22 parking spaces approved by the 2006 permission, is such that only the directly adjoining properties would be impacted, and that the scope of the consultation was appropriate.

Ward Councillors were consulted, and an objection raised by Councillor Mary Farrell. Councillor Farrell's reasons for objection related to the above issues of noise and disturbance, concerns that residents from further afield than those neighbouring the site would be affected, and that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the Welsh Harp Site of Special Scientific Interest.

## REMARKS

This application seeks permission for the use of existing extensions and associated car parking at Woodfield School by external organisations. The key consideration is considered to be the need to balance objectives to provide effective dual use of school facilities, with the resulting impacts on the amenities of neighbouring residents.

As outlined in the History section above, planning permission 06/0143 was granted for a 2-storey extension to the existing school, comprising various educational facilities. The location of this extension was to the west of the existing school buildings, on the site of an existing car-parking area (22 spaces). This parking area was separated from the northern boundary shared with the rear of residential properties on Glenwood Avenue by approximately 7-8 metres.

Development further west of this area was not possible, as it would have breached the Metropolitan Open Land boundary. As such, the displaced car-parking was re-provided (albeit a smaller number of spaces in order to bring the provision into line with Council parking standards) between the approved extension and the northern boundary. It was acknowledged that bringing this parking some 5 metres closer to the boundary, in addition to the visual impact of the extensions, would increase impacts on the amenities of adjoining residents. This impact was considered on balance to be acceptable in order to provide the necessary facilities for the school, and the landscaped buffer zone along the boundary was enhanced in order to mitigate the impacts.

It is acknowledged that school facilities are often used for activities not related directly to the school, and both national and local planning policy encourages this dual use of facilities where appropriate, in order to provide benefit to the wider community and make efficient use of existing buildings, sport facilities etc. Bearing this in mind, Officers attached a condition to the permission which would ensure that the additional impact of the extension and relocated parking area would be restricted to school-related activities only, unless otherwise approved by the Council. This was intended to reduce impacts late in the evening and on weekends. The wording of the condition was as follows:

*"The use of the premises hereby approved by any external organisations that is not part of the school shall not commence unless further written approval is obtained from the Local Planning Authority. Any such proposal shall provide details of parking and hours of operation.*

*Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the neighbouring residents."*

Officers wish to stress that this condition only relates to those developments granted permission under reference 06/0143 (2-storey extension and associated car-parking spaces), and was only intended to restrict additional impacts relating to the development approved. No such planning controls exist for the remainder of the school. The applicant has provided information relating to how the school is currently used by external organisations, which relate to private lets of the hall, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, dance studio and some classrooms. Most of these facilities are situated within the original part of the school, and are therefore not within the control of this condition. Similarly, the provision of overspill parking on existing hardstanding to the rear of the school cannot be controlled.

The part of the school site that comes within the control of the above condition is unquestionably the most sensitive in relation to impacts on neighbouring residential properties that may result from private lets of the school. While the hours that the remainder of the school is used by external organisations cannot be controlled, Officers consider that if the use of the approved extensions (carpark, additional entrance, and lighting) is controlled, the overall impacts on the amenities of neighbouring residents will be significantly reduced, in terms of noise and disturbance and light pollution. By refusing the current application, the existing restraint given by the above condition

will be retained and can be enforced if necessary. This course of action addresses the concerns of residents and Councillors to the greatest degree possible through the planning system, while any other impacts which are not able to be controlled would still be enforceable under statutory noise nuisance laws and so forth.

Refusal of this application will not compromise the use of the extension and parking area for any purpose relating to the normal use of the school. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the scale and frequency of non-school related use of the site remains ancillary to the primary use as an educational institution.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Refuse Consent

**CONDITIONS/REASONS:**

- (1) The use of the extensions and associated car parking granted planning permission under reference 06/0143, by external organisations not part of the school, would be likely to result in unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring residents at night and during weekends and holidays, in terms of noise and disturbance and light pollution. As such, the proposal would be contrary to policies BE8 and H22 of Brent's Unitary Development Plan 2004, and supplementary planning guidance given in SPG17 - Design Guide for New Development.

**INFORMATIVES:**

- (1) It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that use of the site by external organisations remains of a scale and frequency so as to be ancillary to the main use of the site as an educational institution.
- (2) It is the responsibility of the applicant to put in place suitable management measures to ensure that any use of the site by external organisations does not involve the use of the extensions or car park granted permission under reference 06/0143, in order to avoid enforcement action being taken.

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:**

Brent 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

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