

Committee Report
Planning Committee on 12 January, 2011

Item No. 11
Case No. 10/2767

RECEIVED: 29 October, 2010

WARD: Northwick Park

PLANNING AREA: Wembley Consultative Forum

LOCATION: University Of Westminster, Watford Road, Harrow, HA1 3TP

PROPOSAL: Hybrid planning application for the demolition of part of the University of Westminster's Harrow Campus and the erection of new buildings and refurbishment of existing buildings, comprising:

Full planning permission for the demolition of 6,980m² of existing floor space and the erection of 3,435m² of new educational floor space (Use Class D1) in new buildings ranging in height from one to two storeys, the refurbishment of existing buildings, including new external cladding, new hard and soft landscaping, improvements to the entrance adjacent to Northwick Park Underground Station and construction of a Multi-Use Games Area;

and

Outline planning permission for a further 3,545m² of new educational floor space (matters to be approved: land use, quantum of development and means of access, with layout, scale, appearance and landscaping reserved)

APPLICANT: University of Westminster

CONTACT: Hawkins\Brown LLP

PLAN NO'S:

Please see condition 2 for the list of approved drawings and other documents

RECOMMENDATION

Grant planning permission subject to the completion of a satisfactory Section 106 or other legal agreement and delegate authority to the Head of Planning to agree the exact terms thereof on advice from the Borough Solicitor.

SECTION 106 DETAILS

The application requires a Section 106 Agreement, in order to secure the following benefits:-

- Payment of the Council's legal and other professional costs in (a) preparing and completing the agreement and (b) monitoring and enforcing its performance.
- The implementation of a range of sustainability measures, the exact details of which are still to be agreed with the applicant and will be set out in a supplementary report to be presented to members prior to the committee meeting.
- Join and adhere to Considerate Contractors Scheme.

And, to authorise the Head of Planning, or other duly authorised person, to refuse planning permission if the applicant has failed to demonstrate the ability to provide for the above terms and meet the policies of the Unitary Development Plan and Section 106 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document by concluding an appropriate agreement.

It should be noted that as the proposal does not result in any net gain in floor space a financial contribution is not being sought.

EXISTING

The University of Westminster's Harrow Campus which despite its name is located wholly within the London Borough of Brent, although it does border the London Borough of Harrow which lies on the opposite side of Watford Road.

The campus is bordered by the Metropolitan London Underground Line to the north, Watford Road to the west, the Northwick Park Hospital complex to the south and the Northwick Park open space to the east. It benefits from good transport links to central London via the Metropolitan Line from Northwick Park Station and the Bakerloo and London Overground Lines from Kenton Station.

The Campus occupies an area of approximately 9.6 hectares and includes a number of teaching and administration blocks, a 620 student halls of residence and a 2.3 ha playing field. The blocks range in height from eight storeys down to one storey. The site has been extensively developed and added to over the years since the original campus was built in the 1950s. As a consequence a number of building styles and types are present within the site.

PROPOSAL

This is a 'hybrid' planning application seeking both full and outline planning permission for the refurbishment and part redevelopment of the University of Westminster's Harrow Road Campus. The application comprises:

- i. Full planning permission for the demolition of 6,980m² of existing floor space and the erection of 3,435m² of new educational floor space (Use Class D1) in new buildings ranging in height from one to two storeys, the refurbishment of existing buildings, including new external cladding, new hard and soft landscaping, improvements to the entrance adjacent to Northwick Park Underground Station and construction of a Multi-Use Games Area; and
- ii. Outline planning permission for a further 3,545m² of new educational floor space (matters to be approved: land use, quantum of development and means of access, with layout, scale, appearance and landscaping reserved).

HISTORY

The site was first developed in the 1950s as the Harrow Technical College. It later became part of the Polytechnic of Central London which eventually became in the 1990s the University of Westminster. The campus has been significantly altered and extended over the years. The last significant expansion of the site occurred in 1995 at which time the University's School of Media, Arts and Design moved to the campus. A number of specialist buildings were introduced and the student halls of residence were built. Since then a number of smaller developments have occurred including an extension to the halls of residence and the provision of temporary buildings to replace space lost as a result of a fire to one of the teaching blocks.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

London Borough of Brent Core Strategy 2010

The following policies in the recently adopted Core Strategy are considered relevant to the current application.

CP18 Protection and Enhancement of Open Space, Sports and Biodiversity

CP19 Brent Strategic Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Measures
CP23 Protection of existing and provision of new Community and Cultural Facilities

London Borough of Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004

The following saved policies contained in the Unitary Development Plan are considered relevant to the current application.

BE2 Townscape: Local Context & Character
BE3 Urban Structure
BE5 Urban Clarity & Safety
BE6 Public Realm: Landscape Design
BE7 Public Realm Streetscape
BE9 Architectural Quality
BE12 Sustainable Design Principles
EP2 Noise sensitive development
TRN1 Transport Assessment
TRN3 Environmental Impact of Traffic
TRN4 Measures to Make Transport Impact Acceptable
TRN10 New development should have safe walking routes
TRN11 Developments should comply with the minimum cycle parking standards
TRN22 Parking Standards - Non-Residential Developments
TRN35 Access to disabled parking
PS12 Parking Standards: Non-Residential Institutions (Use Class D1) and Hospitals (Use Class C2)
CF8 School Extensions
CF12 Within the Northwick Park Hospital/Further Education zone higher and further education uses will be supported

Supplementary Planning Guidance 17:- Design Guide For New Development

Supplementary Planning Guidance 19:- Sustainable Design, Construction & Pollution Control

Supplementary Planning Document:- s106 Planning Obligations

The London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations Since 2004)

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

The submitted application proposes a number of features to secure improvements in the sustainability of the retained buildings and to achieve a high level of sustainability in the new build element of the scheme. Proposed features include:

- Expected carbon savings across the redevelopment equivalent to 87% of the proposed new areas.
- On-site renewable/low carbon energy generation is proposed by the implementation of a carbon neutral biomass boiler system.
- Water efficient devices to achieve or exceed the mandatory BREEAM standards.
- Rainwater run-off attenuation will be provided by new green roofs, semi-permeable finishes to the new MUGA, off line storm water storage and local discharge control measures.
- Sustainable sourced, recycled or re-used building materials will be specified where possible.
- A commitment to produce a Site Waste Management Plan to monitor, sort and recycle construction waste on site.
- An aim to achieve a BREEAM 'Very Good' rating is targeted. The BREEAM pre-assessment process indicates that the predicted BREEAM ratings for both new-build and refurbished elements of the project will achieve this target.

A sustainability report and energy assessment has been submitted in support of the application. At the time of writing this report officers were still assessing this information. A full assessment of the

schemes sustainability credentials will be reported to members by way of a supplementary report before the committee meeting.

CONSULTATION

The site is separated from its nearest residential neighbours by the Metropolitan Railway Line, Because of its relative remoteness only a small number of direct consultations were carried out, in addition to site and press notices. No responses were received from local residents or from Northwick Park Hospital.

Responses were received from the following:

London Underground Ltd - No objection

London Borough of Harrow - No objection

Council's Landscape Officer - No objection to the landscape measures proposed in the full application and no objection to the outline planning permission subject to appropriate details being provided with any submission of reserved matters relating to landscaping.

Council's Transportation Officer - No objection. Welcomes the opportunity provided by this application to secure a Travel Plan for the site.

Environmental Health Officer - No objection.

The University itself have consulted extensively with students and staff over the proposed changes. As well as presentations student focus groups were set up to ensure that everyone affected by the changes have been kept up to date. The proposals have also been presented to the Chief executive of Northwick park Hospital which adjoins the campus and who has been reported as being supportive of the project.

REMARKS

Introduction

This is a '*hybrid*' planning application seeking both full and outline planning permission for the refurbishment and part redevelopment of the University of Westminster's Harrow Road Campus.

The University are seeking full planning approval for the redevelopment of the campus involving the demolition of a number of the older campus buildings; the refurbishment of some of those buildings to be retained; and the creation of new floorspace. As a result of these proposals the gross external floor area of the buildings that comprise the campus will be reduced overall – by approximately 3,545 sqm. The University area keen to retain the option of replacing this floor area sometime in the future should it be needed. Therefore this application also seeks outline planning permission for the construction of up to a further 3,545 sqm. of floor space. Matters to be considered in this application are the proposed land use, quantum of development and means of access with layout, scale, appearance and landscaping reserved.

Background

The University of Westminster delivers its courses from a number of locations in Central London and from its Harrow Campus at Northwick Park. The Harrow campus currently provides accommodation for the University's School of Media, Art and Design, its School of Electronics and Computer Science and its Business School. The University are currently undertaking a restructuring that will see the School of Electronics and Computer Science and the Business School relocated to its Central London sites. This will allow the Harrow campus to focus solely on providing accommodation for the School of Media, Art and Design which has a high academic reputation and is one of the University's more successful schools.

The Campus includes a number of buildings with a total floorspace of 38,890m², including halls of residence for 620 students and are used to teach 3,830 full-time and 920 part-time students. A total of 295 staff are currently employed at this site. The blocks range in height from eight storeys down to one storey. The site has been extensively developed and added to over the years since the original campus was built in the 1950s. As a consequence a number of building styles and types are present within the site. The site benefits from a substantial amount of open space including a 2.3 ha playing field. Given the rather ad hoc way in which the campus has developed over the years and the variety of building types and styles found on the site it is fair to say that architecturally the site lacks coherence. Many of the older buildings are nearing obsolescence and have a rather drab and rundown appearance. Furthermore one of the blocks was largely destroyed by fire three years ago.

The University proposes to substantially re-model the academic and supporting buildings as well as the external landscaping in order to create an environment that meets modern standards for teaching, learning and research as well as delivering substantial improvements to the sites sustainability.

Much of the project involves internal refurbishment works but significant changes are also proposed to the external appearance of the campus.

Principle of Development

The Council welcomes University's continuing commitment to Northwick Park represented by this proposed investment. While student numbers are proposed to fall to 3,292 full-time (currently 3,830) and 780 part-time students (currently 920) and staff numbers will fall to 250 (currently 295) this is a relatively modest drop. Furthermore the University's business plan anticipates significant growth in its School of Media, Art and Design which as has stated is one of its more highly regarded departments. The changes proposed are therefore welcomed in principle.

Design

The proposal will see the demolition of less suitable buildings in order to create a consolidated academic hub. New two storey buildings are proposed infilling some of the spaces between the retained blocks that as well as creating new teaching space will also create attractive enclosed double height linkages between buildings and attractive internal courtyards, unifying the rather disparate elements of the campus. This new linkage will also provide the university with attractive and more welcoming new entrances to Watford Road and to the playing field. Improvements are also proposed to the campus entrance adjacent to Northwick Park Station which is the main point of arrival for those coming from Central London via the Metropolitan Line. As well as improvements to the buildings' façade and landscaping a new café is proposed within the existing building which will bring activity and much needed natural surveillance to what is currently a rather neglected corner of the Northwick Park Open Space.

The refurbishment of some of the older buildings to be retained will not only refresh and improve their external appearance but will improve their sustainability through the introduction of external fins to reduce solar gain. Some of the more tired and unattractive elements of these buildings will be overclad with coloured panels.

Overall the proposed changes are considered a significant improvement to the design and appearance of the campus.

Landscaping

While a small number of relatively insignificant trees will be lost with the enclosure of the existing spaces between the buildings overall significant improvements are proposed to the campus's open spaces. New planting, including new trees, new pathways, new external lighting and a new

allotment area for students is proposed. A new MUGA is also proposed within the existing playingfield.

Impact on neighbours

The site is separated from its nearest residential neighbours by the Metropolitan Railway Line, and this together with the relatively modest two storey additions proposed means that the scheme will have little or no impact on neighbouring residential amenity. The scheme is not considered to have any significant impact on the adjoining Northwick Park Hospital.

Outline proposals

The outline proposals for the construction are considered acceptable. The quantum of floor space sought is considered acceptable as it simply replaces the net loss of floorspace resulting from the changes initially proposed. The site is considered to be able to accommodate this floorspace subject to a satisfactory layout, scale, appearance and landscaping which are all reserved matters.

Transport and Access

The immediate effect of these proposals will be to reduce the number of students and staff at this campus by about 14%. As such, the proposals should lead to a decrease in trips, traffic and parking for the campus, which is generally welcomed in highway terms and does not therefore require any further specific assessment

The outline proposals for future buildings, if implemented, would simply return the overall level of floorspace within the site to existing levels, whilst car parking provision is also proposed to remain unaltered. As such, it is reasonable to assume that staff and student numbers would also simply return to approximately the same levels as at present, with the overall transport impact of the two combined applications therefore being likely to be neutral in trip generation terms

In terms of car parking, allowances set out in standard PS12 permit up to one space per five staff, plus 20% for students and visitors. The intended fall in staffing on the site from 295 staff to 250 staff would therefore reduce the total parking allowance from 70 spaces to 60 spaces. The campus currently has 290 standard width spaces, which therefore greatly exceeds standards.

The designation of three additional disabled parking spaces would ensure that standard PS15 which requires 5% of all spaces to be widened and marked for disabled drivers is complied with. This is being sought by condition.

Standard PS16 requires at least one cycle space be provided per eight staff/students. The fall in attendance on the campus would therefore reduce the requirement from 574 spaces to 492 spaces. With only 164 spaces available, provision falls well short of standards and ought to be increased, although the fall in attendance will at least reduce this shortfall. It should however be noted that the Travel Plan surveys show only limited use of bicycles (2% of trips) to the site at present, so there is no immediate shortage of bicycle parking on the site.

The proposed provision of motorcycle parking bays is welcomed.

In terms of servicing, there are three existing loading areas around the campus site from which deliveries can be made and refuse collected. Access arrangements to these remain unaltered and AUTOTRACK runs have been submitted to show that each area will remain fully accessible by large refuse vehicles and wood pellet delivery vehicles to the proposed biomass boiler, which is fine. Tracking has also been provided for fire appliances accessing various parts of the site. The proposed new café unit at the eastern end of the site will require deliveries by transit sized vans and these can be accommodated at the end of the car park access road, with turning space also provided in this area.

The proposed landscaping improvements around the site will not alter access routes, so are non-contentious. They will improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists within the site which is welcomed. Similarly, improvements to lighting around the new courtyard areas are also welcomed, with the proposed the levels of luminance proposed considered appropriate.

Conclusion

The Council welcomes the University of Westminster's continuing commitment to Northwick Park and the enhancements to the local environment and visual amenity that will result from the proposed improvements to the campus.

RECOMMENDATION: Grant Consent subject to Legal agreement

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

Brent LDF Core Strategy adopted 2010
Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004
Central Government Guidance
Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance

CONDITIONS/REASONS:

- (1) In the case of any reserved matter, application for approval must be made not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission, and that the development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than whichever is the later of the following dates:-

(i) the expiration of three years from the date of this permission; or
(ii) the expiration of two years from the final approval of the reserved matters or, in the case of approval on different dates, the final approval of the last such matter to be approved.

Reason: To conform with the requirements of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- (2) The relevant parts of the development as hereby permitted shall not commence until layouts, plans/sections and elevations for that part of the development, detailing:

(a) Appearance
(b) Landscaping
(c) Scale
(d) Layout

otherwise known as the **reserved matters** have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The relevant part of the development shall in all aspects be carried out in accordance with the approved plans unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority:

Reason: In order that the Local Authority is satisfied with the details of the proposed development.

NOTE - Other conditions may provide further information concerning details required.

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings and/or documents:

1236 DWG PL001 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL100 Rev PL01	Plincke Proposed Landscape Masterplan
1236 DWG PL002 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL200 Rev PL01	
1236 DWG PL010 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL201 Rev PL01	DW-PL-101 Rev A
1236 DWG PL011 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL202 Rev PL01	DW-PL-102 Rev A
1236 DWG PL012 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL203 Rev PL01	DW-PL-105 Rev A
1236 DWG PL013 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL204 Rev PL01	DW-PL-106 Rev A
1236 DWG PL014 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL205 Rev PL01	DW-PL-107 Rev A
1236 DWG PL015 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL206 Rev PL01	DW-PL-108 Rev A
1236 DWG PL016 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL207 Rev PL01	DW-PL-109 Rev A
1236 DWG PL017 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL370 Rev PL01	DW-PL-111 Rev A
1236 DWG PL050 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL371 Rev PL01	DW-PL-112 Rev A
1236 DWG PL051 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL372 Rev PL01	DW-PL-113 Rev A
1236 DWG PL052 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL373 Rev PL01	DW-PL-114 Rev A
1236 DWG PL053 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL374 Rev PL01	DW-PL-121 Rev 00
1236 DWG PL054 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL375 Rev PL01	DW-PL-122 Rev A
1236 DWG PL055 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL376 Rev PL01	Pell Frischman External Lighting Layout
1236 DWG PL056 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL377 Rev PL01	
1236 DWG PL057 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL378 Rev PL01	
1236 DWG PL058 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL379 Rev PL01	
1236 DWG PL059 Rev PL01	1236 DWG PL380 Rev PL01	
1236 DWG PL060 Rev PL01		

Haskins Brown Design & Access Statement, (Reference: 1236 REP PL 001 - Rev P1)

Hoare Lea Acoustic Assessment of Plant Noise Emissions dated October 2010

Pell Frischmann Transport Statement dated 28 October 2010

Middlemarch Environmental Ltd Arboricultural Survey dated October 2010

Pell Frischmann Low/Zero Carbon Technology Feasibility Assessment Rev B dated 28 October 2010

Pell Frischmann Sustainability Statement dated 28 October 2010

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development.

(3)

- (4) The landscape works and planting shown on the approved plans shall be carried out within a year of the building works hereby approved being substantially completed or in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the Local Authority.

Any planting that is part of the approved scheme that within a period of *five* years after planting is removed, dies or becomes seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season and all planting shall be replaced with others of a similar size and species and in the same position, unless the Local Planning Authority first gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance and setting for the development and to ensure that the proposed development enhances the visual amenity of the area.

- (5) A further three additional disabled parking spaces shall be designated and provided within 6 months of the building works hereby approved being substantially completed and these spaces shall be permanently retained unless the Local Planning Authority agree otherwise in writing.

Reason: To ensure that the standard for disabled parking set out in Policy PS15 of the UDP is met.

- (6) Prior to commencement of development (save for demolition) a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro geological context of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason; to prevent flooding by ensuring satisfactory storage and disposal of surface water from the site

- (7) Details of materials for all external work, including samples, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any work is commenced. The work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development which does not prejudice the amenity of the locality.

INFORMATIVES:

None Specified

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Neil McClellan, The Planning Service, Brent House, 349 High Road, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 6BZ, Tel. No. 020 8937 5243



Planning Committee Map

Site address: University Of Westminster, Watford Road, Harrow, HA1 3TP

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