

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2017**

**REPORT BY:** **CHIEF OFFICER (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT)**

**SUBJECT:** **PART DEMOLITION TO FACILITATE INTERNAL RE-CONFIGURATION AND NEW EXTENSION TO EXISTING SCHOOL BUILDING, TOGETHER WITH EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS, ASSOCIATED EXTERNAL REALM, CAR PARKING AMENDMENTS, PROVISION OF TEMPORARY CLASSROOMS AND CONSTRUCTION STORAGE AREAS AT CONNAH'S QUAY HIGH SCHOOL, GOLFTYN LANE, CONNAH'S QUAY**

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** **056851**

**APPLICANT:** **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**SITE:** **YSGOL UWCHRADD CEI CONNAH/CONNAH'S QUAY HIGH SCHOOL**

**APPLICATION VALID DATE:** **12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2017**

**LOCAL MEMBERS:** **COUNCILLOR A. DUNBOBBIN**  
**COUNCILLOR P. SHOTTON**

**TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCIL:** **CONNAH'S QUAY TOWN COUNCIL**

**REASON FOR COMMITTEE:** **SCALE OF PROPOSAL**

**SITE VISIT:** **NO**

**1.00 SUMMARY**

- 1.01 This is a full planning application for the multi-faceted re-development of the current school complex at Ysgol Uwchradd Cei Connah/Connah's Quay High School, off Golftyn Lane, Connah's Quay. The scheme incorporates the demolition of existing unsuitable buildings, erection of new facilities, enhancement of the school

entrance realm and enhancement to the external appearance of both the school and the adjacent leisure centre. The scheme is submitted as a master plan with the various elements intended to be provided upon a phased basis.

- 1.02 The application has been submitted following the mandatory Pre-Application Consultation Process having been undertaken. The application is accompanied by a report detailing this process, the feedback received and how this has been addressed through the proposals or, if not addressed, provides the details for this.

**2.00 RECOMMENDATION: TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:-**

- 2.01 That conditional planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. 5 year time limit
2. In accordance with specified plans
3. No development until a scheme of Reasonable Avoidance Measures for bats and GCN has been submitted and agreed.
4. Ecological watching brief during trees works.
5. Samples of all proposed external finish materials and colours to be submitted and agreed prior to first use.
6. Final details of boundary treatments to be submitted and agreed prior to erection.
7. Final planting proposals and timings to be submitted and agreed.
8. Implementation of planting proposals.
9. Temporary Classrooms to be removed following the occupation of the new school facilities.
10. Final Travel Plan to be submitted with requirements for public transport access and cycle storage arising to be submitted and agreed prior to first use of extended school.

**3.00 CONSULTATIONS**

3.01 Local Members

**Councillor A. Dunbobbin**

Fully supportive of the scheme. Considers the proposals to be a positive development which accords with the latest guidance in respect of education provision.

**Councillor P. Shotton**

No response at time of writing.

Connah's Quay Town Council

No objections.

Highways DC

No objection. Requests that conditions be imposed.

Pollution Control

No adverse comments.

Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water

No adverse comments. Advises of the need for the imposition of conditions.

Natural Resources Wales

No adverse comments. Advises of the need for conditions requiring the submission, agreement and implementation of Reasonable Avoidance Measures in respect of Bats and Great Crested Newts.

**4.00 PUBLICITY**

- 4.01 The application has been publicised by means of site notices, press notices and neighbour notification letters. At the time of writing a single response has been received which requests that concerns in respect of traffic management, especially and pick up and drop off times, is noted.

**5.00 SITE HISTORY**

5.01 **96/313**

Siting of 2no. mobile double classroom units  
Permitted 12.8.1996

**97/745**

Temporary siting of a mobile double classroom unit  
Permitted 20.8.1997

**99/441**

Erection of a 2 storey extension and creation of access  
Permitted 28.7.1999

**99/858**

Alterations to vehicular access, new access road and car parking  
Permitted 5.10.1999

**6.00 PLANNING POLICIES**

6.01 Flintshire Unitary Development Plan

Policy STR1 - New Development

Policy STR8 - Built Environment

Policy GEN1 - General Requirements for Development

Policy D1 - Design Quality, Location & Layout

Policy D2 - Design

Policy D3 - Landscaping

Policy D4 - Outdoor Lighting  
Policy D5 - Crime Prevention  
Policy WB1 - Species Protection  
Policy TWH1 - Development Affecting Trees & Woodland  
Policy AC1 - Facilities for the Disabled  
Policy AC13 - Access and Traffic Impact  
Policy AC18 - Parking Provision and New Development  
Policy SR4 - Protecting Recreational Open Space  
Policy CF1 - Retention of Existing Facilities  
Policy CF2 - Development of New Facilities  
Policy EWP2 - Energy Efficiency in New Development  
Policy EWP3 - Renewable Energy in New Development

Planning Policy Wales  
TAN 12 – Design

## **7.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL**

### **7.01 Site and Surroundings**

The site comprises some 2.29 hectares of land is presently occupied by Ysgol Uwchradd Cei Connah/Connah's Quay High buildings, with the remainder of the site and other land within the school complex but outside of the planning application site, used for the recreation and sports facilities at the school.

7.02 The site is located within the Settlement Boundary of Connah's Quay, in an area of the town which is characterised mainly by existing large scale housing areas. However, the adjacent Sixth Form Campus and nearby Deeside College ensure that the western side of Golftyn Lane has a distinct character associated with these educational institutions.

7.03 The existing school building is laid out in a finger block plan form at the northernmost area of the school site slope. The building is arranged to provide a mixture of 2 and 3 storey accommodation. The impacts of the topography historically have been that the facilities appear arranged in 2 long linear blocks with interconnecting corridors linking the adjacent blocks. Land to the south of the school building is used a sports pitches and hard surfaces recreation/sports areas. It should be noted at this stage that these proposals do not involve any works to the existing 3G MUGA shared sports facility to the south of the school. Vehicle parking and turning facilities are located predominantly to the north of the school buildings although a small service and delivery area is located to the south of the school buildings.

7.04 The site boundaries are formed by a variety of forms, comprising metal fencing along the northern boundary of the site, abutting the adjacent Sixth Form Campus. The eastern fringe of the site to Golftyn Lane is also marked by metal fencing , although this is in combination with certain areas having mature and established associated

hedgerows interspersed with mature trees. The southern and western boundaries of the of the school site are marked by a belt of hedges and trees. A watercourse runs adjacent to the western boundary of the site. The site occupies a north facing slope which slopes downhill in this direction. This slope is gradual across the north - south axis of the site and is reflective of the general landform in the locality.

7.05 The site is currently accessed from 2 points in the north eastern corner of the site. Vehicular and pedestrian access is currently derived from the sole vehicular access point to Golftyn Lane. Pedestrian access presently exists via a gated link to the highway footway and pedestrian crossing on Golftyn Lane.

7.06 The Proposals

This application is submitted by the Council as Local Education Authority as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Band a programme and proposes the following;

- the demolition of the existing design, technology and art block at the rear of the school premises, and the demolition of the three storey administration block to the front of the school ;
- the construction of a new 2 storey Design, Technology and Art block which also includes the provision of a main hall and activity studio;
- the internal reconfiguration of existing built form upon the school site to provide for a new entrance and admin/staff hub and Learning Resource Centre;
- the improvement of external areas to provide external seating, recreation, dining and circulations spaces;
- the improvement of the school entrance approach and car parking/servicing areas;
- the improvement of the tired façade of both the school and the leisure centre through a new external finish treatment; and
- the provision of 3No. double classroom units on a temporary basis to enable the continued delivery of the curriculum whilst the redevelopment works are undertaken.

7.07 The Principle of Development

The proposed site is located within the Connah's Quay settlement boundary where the principle of development is generally accepted. Relevant UDP Policies are SR4 and CF2.

7.08 Policy SR4 of the UDP does not preclude per se the development of recreational open space however there needs to be adequate recreational open space in the surrounding area and the Council needs to be satisfied the land will not be required in the longer term for the school or community use. The land upon which the new extension is to be built is an overgrown area of ornamental trees and scrub and serves little function in terms of recreation. Furthermore, the associated demolitions encompassed within the scheme enable

the creation of new recreational space within the site which will be of far more beneficial use.

7.09 Policy CF2 is supportive of new educational facilities on suitable sites within development boundaries. When considering both policies there appears to be a reasonable case for the loss of recreational land and the redevelopment of the site for educational purposes and therefore the proposed development is considered acceptable in principle.

7.10 Design and Appearance

The design approach taken in respect of this scheme recognises that the objective behind the scheme is the need to improve the school facilities via the provisions of accommodation which is substandard and the replacement of unsuitable existing accommodation, together with improvements to the access and circulation arrangements within the school itself. The proposals are also designed to provide an increase in the school capacity to cater for up to 1280 students.

7.11 The design evolved to allow the levels changes within the school as existing to be resolved to address access issues for those with mobility issues and also ensure that the massing of the proposed 2 storey element upon a higher part of the site does not impact unacceptably upon either the landscape or the function of the existing parts of the school to the north of the extension site.

7.12 The scheme in relation to solely the school is proposed to be delivered such that the existing DTA block is demolished and temporary classroom accommodation sited. The works to create the new extension, new hall and activity studio and refurbishment of existing ground floor accommodation within the northernmost finger block at the school to provide the new admin and staff hub are then proposed to be undertaken. Once complete, this will allow the demolition of the existing admin/staff area and the creation of the external car park and plaza, together with the other external space arrangements. The external envelope arrangements to the façade of the school and the leisure centre form the last phase of the project, together with the removal of the temporary classrooms.

7.13 The extensions and façade improvements result in a design which has a contemporary feel and will produce a building which relates well to the modern Sixth Form Campus to the north. External materials are proposed to be coloured aluminium cassette panels in a range of colours which whilst striking in relation to the current tired 'flat' exterior of the school, have a robust simplicity to them which serve to have a minimalistic appearance from a distance but has greater warmth, depth and texture when viewed closer. These coloured panels will serve to break the mass of the elevations. The simple palette also comprises blue/black brickwork and grey window and door surrounds.

- 7.14 The extensions are also designed to meet the sustainability criteria required via BREEAM. The extension seeks to utilise passive house principles in terms of natural light and ventilation and solar PV arrangements are proposed to be sited upon the roof of the new extensions to further complement the existing energy generation contribution from PV arrangements already sited upon the school roofs. The scheme seeks to achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'.
- 7.15 I consider the design to be the most appropriate response to the site topography. Locating the extension in its proposed position serves the dual purpose of cleverly using the topography as part of the internal function space of the extension and wider school building but also allows the massing of the extension to not appear overstated in the landscape or overbearing in relation to the existing school.
- 7.16 Landscaping and Outdoor Spaces  
The proposals provide opportunities to develop and enhance the outdoor landscape associated with the school and those remaining external spaces within the site are proposed to be arranged as either landscaped spaces, spaces for outdoor education and play by school children or realm spaces leading up to the school entrances.
- 7.17 A wide area is created between the school and the adjacent Sixth Form Campus as a result of the demolition of the existing 3 storey extension which presently encloses the western end of the school approach realm. The design response to this opportunity seeks to create a plaza which serves not only to provide an increased visual impact of this area, but also creates a space through which the school can be seen as a distinctly separate entity to the Sixth Form Campus and allows both buildings to breathe. The area is proposed to be treated such that planting is introduced throughout the space, breaking up the impact of the car park. The apron outside the newly created school entrance is laid out with raised planting areas, seating and cycle racks. As part of the drainage solution for the site, an attenuation pond is created to the western end of this plaza which, whilst not open to unfettered access, will serve to reinforce the sense of progression from this site to adjacent open countryside in visual terms.
- 7.18 The redevelopment of the Technology, Design and Art (TDA) facilities, together with the creation of the new hall, activity studio and Learning Resource Centre has allowed for the current enclosed courtyard adjacent to the school dining facilities to be improved such that it now offers opportunities for outdoor dining for staff and pupils alike. In addition, the new TDA block creates a further courtyard abutting the western boundary of the site and lying between the new existing built form at the school. This space affords linkage opportunities between the adjacent school wings, provides formal and informal break out space and serves as an open way in which to enable the traversal of the levels difference across the site is this

area. The planting adjacent to this spaces serves to reinforce the links to the mature existing vegetation to the site boundaries. The western extreme of this area also houses the subterranean surface water drainage attenuation tank.

7.19 The area currently occupied by the existing TDA block is proposed to be transformed to create an outdoor hard surface recreational space for pupils. The steep levels difference of 1.9 metres which exists between the new area and the existing hard surfaced sports courts is utilised to create a stepped amphitheatre which not only provides a stepped link between the two areas, but also affords tiered sitting areas for pupils to congregate and socialise during break periods. This arrangement also affords opportunities for an outdoor performance space, with informal viewing facilitated by the grass 'seats' formed by the tiers.

7.20 The modelling of the topography in this area also allows for the creation of a ramped link to the upper sports areas and the grassed areas beyond. This area will be segregated by means of a secure fencing arrangements from the adjacent service and delivery turning areas in the interests of safety.

7.21 Highway and Access

The school is currently served by a 44No. space car park (inc. 2no. disabled spaces) across 2 locations along the schools northern façade. The community car park to the east of the site provides parking facilities in connection with the 'Quay Clubhouse' and the shared community/school 3G sports pitches to the south of the site. This car park is outside of the application site and therefore no alterations are proposed to this area.

7.22 The proposals provide for a consolidated car parking area in the northern part of the site, adjacent to the new entrance plaza. This car park is intended for both staff and visitors and provides 87No. spaces (inc. 4 disabled spaces) which is proposed to be barrier controlled. The proposals indicate a 40No. cycle storage area within the entrance plaza proposals, representing a 100% increase upon existing provision. However, the final proposals in respect of cycle storage will be informed by the required Travel Plan. Service areas are located to the south of the existing building and are also proposed as a barrier controlled access.

7.23 In response to consultation, the Local Highway Authority Has advised that there is no objection to the proposed scheme. It is noted that the proposals will result in no change to the existing vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements. The increase in pupil numbers will result in additional vehicular and pedestrian traffic but no direct adverse impact upon the public highway is envisaged.

The submitted transport assessment identified the need for a Travel



- 7.24 Plan to be submitted and agreed and this is proposed to be conditioned. The outcomes and recommendations of the Travel Plan will in turn inform the requirements in respect of access and turning for school bus transport and cycle storage requirements. This aspect is also recommended to be addressed via condition.

Impacts upon the Natural Environment

- 7.25 The site is not within any statutorily protected sites and there are no such sites within 1km of the site. The application is accompanied by both an ecological assessment report and an arboricultural report. The site is predominantly school buildings, hard surfaced areas and amenity grassland which is of little ecological value. Mature broad leaved trees and hedges within and upon the boundaries of the site are considered to have ecological value and these are to be retained and protected during the course of development.

- 7.26 The report concludes that the school buildings afford little suitable opportunity to support roosting sites for bats. The report advises that a scheme of Reasonable Avoidance Measures be developed to ensure that bats are adequately safeguarded should they be encountered during any demolition/construction work.

- 7.27 The only suitable sites for bat roosts were considered to be those mature trees which are to be retained. In these circumstances, no further bat surveys are required. Should any of those trees require work or removal, an ecologist will need to be present to oversee the work and ensure there is no compromise to any bats which may be found.

- 7.28 No evidence of Great Crested Newts within the site was found. It is noted that 3No. pools are located some 500 metres from the site and these have the potential to support GCN populations. The report advises that a scheme of Reasonable Avoidance Measures be developed to safeguard against adverse impacts upon GCN during construction works.

- 7.29 In respect of both issues, and in response to Consultation, NRW have confirmed that they concur with the need for the above suggested RAMs and ecology watching brief in respect of bats. I therefore propose to condition accordingly.

Drainage and Flood Risk

- 7.30 The site lies entirely within Zone A as defined within Welsh Governments Development Advice Map. Accordingly, the site is not considered to be at risk from tidal flooding. The application is accompanied by a Drainage Strategy which indicates the foul flows from the site will continue to discharge into the public sewer system. The Strategy indicates that surface water create from the newly created impermeable areas will be directed to the watercourse which runs to the west of the site and will discharge at greenfield rate. This

rate of discharge is to be achieved via the provisions of subterranean geo-cellular units and a surface water attenuation pond which will serve to regulate the flow of water to the watercourse.

7.31 The proposals have been the subject of consultation with Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water (DCWW), NRW and the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).

7.32 No objection to the drainage proposals are raised by NRW. DCWW raise no objection but request the imposition of conditions restricting surface water discharge to the public sewer system and requesting that a detailed scheme be submitted and agreed before works commencement.

7.33 I have considered the conditions requested by DCWW but note that in each case, these conditions seek to replicate the safeguards which exist or are provided via other regulatory functions and legislation, namely S.106 of the Water Industry Act 1991 and Building Regulations. Taking account of the guidance in Welsh Government Circular 016/2014 - The Use of Planning Conditions for Development Management, in respect of the duplication of other legislative powers, I conclude these conditions are neither reasonable, relevant or necessary and therefore I do not propose to impose them.

## **8.00 CONCLUSION**

8.01 I consider the proposal to acceptable as matter of planning policy principle. I am satisfied that the proposed development takes account of the applicable planning policies and represents the correct balance between the various issue which relate to this site. I am satisfied that with the application of appropriate conditions, the scheme is acceptable in all other respects.

### **8.02 Other Considerations**

The Council has had due regard to its duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable increase in crime and disorder as a result of the recommended decision.

8.03 The Council has acted in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998 including Article 8 of the Convention and in a manner which is necessary in a democratic society in furtherance of the legitimate aims of the Act and the Convention.

8.04 The Council has had due regard to its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

8.05 The Council has had due regard to its duty under Section 3 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the

achievement of wellbeing objectives as a result of the recommended decision.

**LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Planning Application & Supporting Documents

National & Local Planning Policy

Responses to Consultation

Responses to Publicity

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