

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

DATE: **5TH AUGUST 2020**

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

SUBJECT: **NEW 6 CLASSROOM EXTENSION, EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATION WORKS TO THE EXISTING SCHOOL BUILDING TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED EXTERNAL WORKS TO BUILDING PERIMETER, STAFF PARKING AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS AS AMENDED**

APPLICATION NUMBER: **061338**

APPLICANT: **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

SITE: **YSGOL GLANRAFON, BRYN COCH LANE, MOLD**

APPLICATION VALID DATE: **19TH MAY 2020**

LOCAL MEMBERS: **COUNCILLOR G COLLETT**
COUNCILLOR G H BATEMAN

TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCIL: **MOLD TOWN COUNCIL**

REASON FOR COMMITTEE: **MEMBER REQUEST DUE TO DEVELOPMENT IMPACT ON SUROUNDING RESIDENTS AND INCREASED TRAFFIC CONCERNS**

SITE VISIT: **NO**

1.00 SUMMARY

1.01 This is a full planning application for the alteration and extension of the existing school building, providing a gross internal floor area of 907m² of additional space, divided into 6 new classrooms, with associated external works. The application also includes a new 52 space car park with minibus parking and 5no. disabled parking bays, a new footpath link from Bryn Coch lane to the Early Years and a new secure perimeter fence to the facility at Ysgol Glanrafon, Bryn Coch Lane, Mold.

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

2.01 Conditions:

1. Time Commencement
2. In accordance with plans
3. Implementation of Landscaping
4. Detailed design of site accesses
5. Ecological mitigation/RAMS in accordance with details submitted

3.00 CONSULTATIONS

3.01 Local Member

Councillor G Collett

I request that this application be referred to the Planning Committee as I strongly object to these proposals. My reasons for this objection remain as in my previous email to you. These objections include my concern that the infrastructure around this school is not suitable for any increase of traffic and the proposed changes to The Park will only increase the, already unacceptable, traffic congestion in the area of this new development.

Councillor G H Bateman

I no longer have an objection to the proposal, now the amended scheme has removed the entrance and drop off zones on The Park and Parkway, Mold, in response to objections received. Also, I no longer require a site visit.

Mold Town Council

No objection.

Head of Assets and Transportation

In respect of the submission of amended/additional information in relation to the above proposal.

The revised submission significantly reduces the highway implications with alterations limited to improvements of the existing access and creation of a maintenance access; both issues can be covered by condition.

Any implications resulting from pupil drop off/pick up and management of existing parking concerns will be considered as part of a larger review of town centre parking that is being undertaken by Streetscene.

The contents of the submitted Construction Phase Plan are considered appropriate to address issues commonly covered by the construction traffic management plan and no further control is necessary.

There is therefore no objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of a condition relating to the detailed design of the site accesses.

Business & Community Protection

No adverse comments to make.

Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water

No objection.

Natural Resources Wales

Confirms no objection to the proposed development.

North Wales Fire Service

The Fire Authority does not have any observations with respect to access for emergency vehicles and/or water supplies at the application site.

Airbus

Confirms that there is no aerodrome safeguarding objection with respect to the proposed development.

Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT)

Confirms that there are no archaeological implications for the proposed development at this location.

SAB

The applicant is aware and has submitted a SAB application for the purposes of approving the surface water drainage arrangements at the above site with respect to the proposed works. Drainage arrangements for Foul Water are the responsibility of Welsh Water.

4.00 PUBLICITY

4.01 Press Notice, Site, Notice, Neighbour Notification

Total number of 60 representations, of which 5 were of support and 50 in opposition upon the following grounds:

- Significant number of concerns with respect to the proposed 'drop off zone' at 'The Park'
- Increased traffic volume resulting in congestion
- Insufficient parking

- Increase onstreet parking and cars parking along pedestrian walkways restricting use by those in wheelchairs or people with children prams
- Noise disturbance during construction phase
- Noise nuisance of children playing
- Negative impact upon elderly residents
- Increased surface water run off from new parking area
- Concerns for child safety
- Impact upon visual and residential amenity
- Loss of mature trees
- Modern design not in keeping with traditional design of existing building
- Lack of welsh slate being used

5.00 SITE HISTORY

5.01 **050951** Siting of 1 no. temporary single classroom. Approved 01.08.13

049465 Construction of fenced part hard surface area, ramp and new doorway. Approved 26.03.12

049372 Installation of solar panels (photovoltaics) onto roof of school. Approved 09.03.12

039878 Installation of a steal container. Approved 29.07.05

039260 Single storey extension to create additional resource unit. Approved 27.04.05

6.00 PLANNING POLICIES

6.01 Flintshire Unitary Development Plan

STR1 New Development

STR9 Welsh Language and Culture

GEN1 General Requirements for Development

GEN2 Development Inside Settlement Boundaries

D1 Design Quality, Location and Layout

D2 Design

D3 Landscaping

TWH1 Development Affecting Trees and Woodlands

WB1 Species Protection

AC1 Facilities for the Disabled

AC2 Pedestrian Provision and Public Rights of Way

AC3 Cycling Provision

AC13 Access and Traffic Impact

AC18 Parking Provision and New Development

CF2 Development of New Facilities

EWP13 Nuisance

EWP17 Flood Risk

SPGN no. 11 Parking Standards

Planning Policy Wales Ed. 10 (December 2018) (PPW10)

TAN 12 Design

TAN 20 Planning and the Welsh Language

7.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.01 Introduction

This is a full planning application for the alteration and extension of the existing school building, providing a gross internal floor area of 907m² of additional space, divided into 6 new classrooms, with associated external works. The application also includes a new 52 space car park with minibus parking and 5no. disabled parking bays, a new footpath link from Bryn Coch lane to the Early Years and a new secure perimeter fence to the facility at Ysgol Glanrafon, Bryn Coch Lane, Mold.

7.02 Site Description

The application site, Ysgol Glanrafon a Welsh Medium School, is located within the settlement of Mold, and extends for an area of 2.28 ha. The school site is nestled within a predominantly residential area, bound by residential properties along its north, southern and western boundaries with the remainder of the site bound by public highways Y Parc and Bryn Coch Lane.

7.03 There are two main entrance points onto the site: - A vehicular access point to the Eastern Boundary off Bryn Coch Lane, and a Pedestrian Entrance to the Southern boundary off Bryn Coch Lane. Both entrances are flanked on either side by residential properties.

7.04 The existing building favours simple repeatable forms; Square window openings, pre-cast headers and cills, with entrances defined using modern concrete window and door surrounds, and render feature panels. It retains traditional vernacular materials seen across rural welsh schools; slate roofs and masonry brickwork façades. It betrays its modern roots by only employing pitched roof forms to public façades and the main hall, with playground-side elevations featuring flat roofs clad with layered felt.

7.05 The building has been extended a number of times since it was opened, with infill flat roof forms to internal courtyards at the end of one wing which has resulted in dark and deep internal spaces with little character and awkward geometries.

7.06 The main extension proposed to increase the capacity of the school is to be sited on the existing playground and car parking arrangements located to the East of the existing school building.

7.07 Proposed Development

This full planning application seeks consent for a single storey, six classroom extension providing an addition of 907m² of internal floor area, connecting to the North Facade of the existing Ysgol Glanrafon Primary school building. In addition to the classrooms, the extension will contain a new entrance and administration hub, the school Learning Resource Centre and a shared specialist practical classroom resource for the whole school to utilise.

7.08 The proposal also includes a series of smaller alterations to the Southern and western façades of the existing school building, in order to provide better quality education environments, internally and externally to all Key Stages. As such, this comprises a series of single storey glazed extensions to the Foundation stage and Key Stage 1 classrooms to create dedicated practical teaching areas and storage areas for coats and bags in each classroom. A dedicated Early Years facility with its own entrance will also receive an external covered play space attached to the existing building's western facade, to enhance the school's wrap around care provision.

7.09 Finally consent is sought to open up the North façade of the existing main hall space and add double doors to improve its connection to the external play spaces.

7.10 Alterations and improvements are proposed to the existing access to the school and car park, making it a two way width allowing vehicles to exit and enter at the same time. The proposals also includes the expansion of the current 19 space car park, providing a total of 52 spaces with minibus provision and 5 no. spaces designated for disabled users.

7.11 A new access gate is proposed off Brook street to allow scheduled maintenance of the playing fields and associated landscaping, along with retaining the existing pedestrian footpaths into the site with the addition of a new footpath to the Early Years building from the path adjacent to the staff car park.

7.12 The proposal also includes a new perimeter fence as detailed in the landscaping proposals which also sees an improvement to the current play provision and space available to the school. These include:

- New multi-sport line marking to be located on the existing hard landscape play area;
- Adaptation of the hard landscape around the proposed extension to the existing building (KS1 area);
- Creation of a new covered and external play space for the Early Years element of the school
- New line marking to provide informal team games alongside other traditional sports i.e. football and netball

- Creation of new growing areas and raised planters at varied heights to allow use by a wide age range of pupil; and
- Retention of existing trees and introduction of new planting to compensate for any loss.

7.13 Principle of Development

The application site is located within the settlement of Mold as defined within the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan. The proposed development should therefore be considered within the context of GEN2 and CF2 Development of New Facilities.

7.14 Policy CF2 refers to the development of new education, health and community facilities, and makes clear for those proposals that are on suitable sites within settlement boundaries, proposals will be permitted provided there are no other material considerations or concerns that would warrant a refusal. As such, in accordance with policy CF2 the principle of development is considered to be acceptable subject to the assessment of relevant material planning considerations below.

7.15 Highways & Pedestrian Access

There is currently a single traffic entry and exit from Bryn Coch lane to the existing car park. It is proposed that the current access route be made two way allowing vehicles to exit and enter at the same time. The current parking capacity at the school is 19 spaces (line marked). To ensure that there is appropriate parking provision the car park has been remodelled. The increased capacity allows for in total 52 car park spaces. A guardrail is proposed around the car park extension to provide separation between the footpath and vehicle zone and guide pupils towards the main entrance. Line marking and flush drop kerbs indicate where access is provided to the car park to and from mobility standard spaces. A new access gate is proposed off Brook street to allow scheduled maintenance of the playing fields and the associated landscaping.

7.16 Pedestrian access is provided from Bryn Coch lane at two locations. Firstly, to the south of the site where a pedestrian footpath leads down to the existing main entrance. The second pedestrian point of entry is north east of the site again off Bryn Coch lane, however on a path that follows the edge of the existing playing fields. As part of the development is it proposed that both existing pedestrian entrances to the school will be retained. However, the main entrance be re-located to the new extension. The existing footpath of Bryn Coch lane to the north east will also be realigned to take pupils safely around the proposed car park extension.

7.17 A separate and new pedestrian footpath link to the Early Years building is also proposed from the path adjacent to the staff car park. This is dedicated for parents dropping off children at the Early Years element of the existing building. As parents approach the Early Years

area a dedicated buzzer on the boundary gate will allow for communication with staff and alerting them of a parent requesting entry.

- 7.18 As part of the proposed extension and where any modifications to the existing building are being undertaken, level access will be provided. This includes the main entrance and any doors leading onto the wider external play spaces. Any ramps that are needed to accommodate a level change have been designed to meet current building regulations and Equality Act legislation for ease of access and access for all. Where any mobility standard spaces are provided within the car park, drop kerbs have been positioned to allow ease of movement onto the adjacent footpath.
- 7.19 The original scheme submitted included the provision of a 'drop off zone' at 'The Park' to the west of the school complex. However as a result of the consultation of the application, a number of objections resulted with concerns of the impact a proposed drop off zone would have. In response to the objections raised, the applicant has sought to remove the drop off zone and therefore amended the scheme which is now before the council for determination. A further re-consultation exercise was carried out including 3rd party (residents), however only a small number of comments have returned, albeit now in support of the scheme.
- 7.20 The Highways Authority has been consulted accordingly and advises that the revised submission significantly reduces the highway implications with alterations limited to improvements of the existing access and creation of a maintenance access. Any implications resulting from pupil drop off/pick up and management of existing parking concerns will be considered as part of a larger review of town centre parking that is being undertaken by Streetscene. The application is supported by a Construction Phase Plan, which is considered appropriate to address issues commonly covered by the construction traffic management plan and no further control is necessary.
- 7.21 The Highways Authority therefore raises no objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of a condition relating to the detailed design of the site accesses.
- 7.22 Character & Appearance
The scale of this development is considered to be in keeping with what is usually expected from a suburban primary school site, this being a single storey construction.
- 7.23 The new build extension is flat roofed and overall demonstrably lower in height than the existing building. The mass of the building is effectively split in two, presenting a different face to public and private sides of the development site. There is a taller mass at the entrance

where the finished floor level and ceiling heights of the existing building need to be matched. This height runs the length of the public building face creating a strong street presence. To the Northern, playground (private) side all classrooms are at the lower floor level, allowing the scale of the building to be brought down considerably.

- 7.24 The form of the extension has been arranged at the junction with the existing building on the public elevation so as to appear to tuck under the existing roof-scape, with the high level “ribbon” facade receding into the background creating a soft transition from old to new. The height and massing of the small extensions to the existing building that extend existing classrooms are conceived in response to a specific function, and are therefore justified in being taller, but still below the apex of existing roofline.
- 7.25 By careful manipulation of the building’s form and a simple material palette with contemporary detailing, the external appearance aims to create additions to the school that set a high standard for architectural quality and establishes a new sense of place and visual identity.
- 7.26 The façade of the new 6-classroom extension is conceived as two large grounded masses or book-ends that manage the topographic challenges of the site, with linking lighter weight ribbon elements that are used to modify the perceived scale and massing of the building. The two distinct façade typologies have attributed fenestration patterns. On the lightweight façade facing the playground all window and door cills are at grade to create an open and transparent façade connecting the classrooms with the external realm.
- 7.27 The two bookend elements make use of their extra height, providing occupants playful picture windows with varying cill heights and deep reveals that frame key views, bring the taller elements of the building down to a human/child scale and internally create window seats in shared spaces such as in the Shared Practical Classroom. Window proportions and mullion patterns are conceived to subtly reflect the geometry of the existing building.
- 7.28 Despite the contemporary design approach, it is not considered that the proposed development would detract from the traditional built forms seen within the existing school building. This is not to say that the design of the proposed extension is not of quality, far from it, in fact it is a design that has been formulated through the involvement of the local children of Ysgol Glanrafon. Involving the children, clearly demonstrates how they associate with the school and how they want it to be an inviting, colourful and fun place of learning.
- 7.29 In response, the proposal acknowledges the existing building, and aims to provide additions that enhance the dated and quiet appearance, re-establishing the school as a centre for learning, that can be easily recognised by the children in attendance. The proposals

would provide a new lease of life that ultimately allows the existing building to continue to function, providing an attractive and comfortable environment for both education, play and a place of work. In this respect, the proposals would not harm the character and appearance of the school site and surrounding area, but instead enhance the immediate setting, redefining the school and allowing it to remain a strong feature within the townscape.

7.30 Ecology & Trees

As the proposal involves the refurbishment of an existing traditionally constructed slate roof school building a Preliminary Roost Assessment (Bat Survey) and a single emergence survey has been submitted in support of the planning application. The County Ecologist has confirmed that the Enfys Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment are acceptable and covers the key ecological issues associated with the site. In addition, NRW raise no objection to the proposals.

7.31 The application site is predominantly amenity grassland and hard standing of limited ecological interest with scattered broadleaved trees. Trees included rowan, cherry, birch, hawthorn and cypress along the northern boundary with clusters of cherries to the south east and west of the site. The extensions will be built on hard standing and a small area of amenity grassland. Approximately 15 broad leaved trees and 2 conifer trees may be removed, but none are mature enough to have potential for roosting bats and are considered to be of low value. The outdoor classroom and wildlife areas to the south of the site with scattered scrub and a small pond, are not affected by the works.

7.32 The buildings to be extended have low potential for roosting bats and no bats were observed emerging from the buildings; therefore no further surveys are recommended. The small pond within the Nature Area has potential for amphibians and tadpoles were recorded but while there is low potential for Great Crested Newts the nearest records are some 2km and the development area has no GCN potential.

7.33 The Enfys report provides mitigation/reasonable avoidance measures for nesting birds, amphibians and bats which includes lighting recommendations; the mitigation measures should be conditioned.

7.34 The ecological report proposes biodiversity enhancements including a selection of bird boxes to benefit House sparrows, Starlings and Swifts and bat boxes. The Soft Landscape plan has incorporated Enfys's enhancement proposals namely a proportion of native species within the proposed tree and shrub planting, spring bulbs and the use of flowering lawns (Emorsgate EM1). The Landscape

(General Arrangement) plan also includes a “bug hotel” for the Nature Area which is to be welcomed.

7.35 Other Matters

The matter of increased noise has been raised but there is no evidence to substantiate that the volume of noise from this development would be significantly greater than any other use in this urban location. In addition, whilst noise is expected during the construction phase, the submitted Construction Management Plan sets out the hours of site workings which will ensure that there is a break and nuisance to residents and their amenity is greatly reduced.

7.36 Furthermore, objections raised concerns of an impact on residential amenity and loss of privacy as a result of the development. However, with consideration to the school being a single storey, non-habitable building, with all classrooms and work areas set back from any boundary fence line with an average distance of 25m to the boundary limit to the rear gardens of adjacent properties, the instances of overlooking, invasion or a loss of privacy are significantly limited.

8.00 **CONCLUSION**

The proposed scheme would create a form of development both in layout and design terms which would lead to an overall betterment of the site and enhance the immediate setting. The fresh approach to re-establishing the existing school building with new modern and colourful additions creates a new identity and an attractive, comfortable and playful environment for both learning and work.

Ysgol Glanrafon is a Welsh Medium primary school, which is becoming an increasingly popular choice for parents who wish the Welsh language to be part of their children’s education. Planning Policy Wales (PPW10) stresses that the Welsh language is part of the social and cultural fabric and its future well-being depends upon a wide range of factors, particularly education. PPW10 therefore encourages proposals in Wales that involve the Welsh language and contribute to its use and survival as part of the Thriving Welsh Language well-being goal.

The vast number of objections raised in concern of the drop off zone have been acknowledged by the applicant, and in response the scheme has been amended. The amended scheme is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies. Accordingly, I recommend that planning permission is granted subject to conditions as set out within paragraph 2.01 of this report.

8.01 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.

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.

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

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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