

Item No.	Classification	Decision Level	Date
1	OPEN	PLANNING COMMITTEE	7/12/2004
From DEVELOPMENT & BUILDING CONTROL MANAGER		Title of Report DEVELOPMENT CONTROL	
Proposal (04-AP-1669) Construction of a three/four storey building on school grounds to provide a performing arts centre together with enhanced soft and hard landscaping to existing school grounds.		Address Alleyn's School, Townley Road SE22. Ward Village	

PURPOSE

1. To consider the above application

RECOMMENDATION

2. Refer to Government Office (GOL) with a resolution to grant planning permission. The application needs to be referred to GOL because it is a major application and a departure from the UDP.
3. The application is for Committee consideration because of the size of the scheme and the number of objections that have been received from surrounding residents.

BACKGROUND

4. Alleyn's School is located on a 10-hectare site, of which approximately 2 hectares are built upon. Apart from the cluster of buildings to the northwestern part of the site, the whole of the site is Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). The various school buildings have been erected overtime, and display a wide range of architectural styles, from late-Victorian to mid-90's.
5. Currently, there are 64 parking spaces on the site, some in the front of the main building, some with access from Hillsborough Road but most on the hardstanding behind the main building, with access from Townley Road.
6. Planning permission is sought for the erection of a performing arts building on school ground behind the main building, the creation of extensive hard and soft landscaping and the relocation of parking spaces.
7. The building would be located partly on the lawn and party on the existing squash court, which are now primarily being used for car parking. The building would effectively create a square, surrounded by the E-Block building, Old Gym, Library, Swimming Pool, Gymnasium and the new Performing Arts Centre.

8. This space would become a schoolyard and outside performance space. As such, no parking would be possible. Parking would be relocated to a paved area that is currently used as a kick about area facing Hillsborough Road. The existing parking spaces off Hillsborough Road would be rationalized. In total, 58 parking spaces would remain on site, with 45 additional spaces that could be made available on site during evening performances.
9. The building would be able to seat 300 people in the main hall, with most seats on the ground floor but with two balconies on first and second floor level. The ground floor would accommodate a foyer with bar/café, toilets and box-office to the southwestern end of the theatre, and green rooms/dressing rooms to both sides of the theatre.
10. The first floor would have the balcony and foyer, classrooms and a 6th Form Study Centre. The second floor would have, besides the balcony and foyer, two offices, a meeting room, a lecture room and the National Youth Theatre Studio. The third floor would only accommodate plant.
11. The building would be of a modern design with a large glass atrium to the foyer. The building would be brick clad. The main entrance would be being glazed over the full height, and would allow views through the building.
12. The applicant has submitted a Supporting Statement with this application, in which it was stated that:
13. The Independent Schools Inspectorate indeed states in a report following an inspection in February 2002 that the 'current accommodation for drama is inadequate'. St Barnabas Church is a well-used church and can only be rented on some occasions during the year. Also, the layout and acoustics are far from ideal.
14. The only other room that could be used is the Old Gym, however, the size of the building and safety regulations, as well as conflicting schedules with other lessons that are given here, this is not a viable option either.
15. The school allows significant use of its facilities to the local community, mainly other local school, on a not-for-profit basis. Although the proposed Performing Arts Centre would be primarily for school activities, use of the facility by community groups and local schools would be allowed whenever possible and appropriate.

FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

Main Issues

16. The main issues in this case are the loss of Metropolitan Open Land, the design of the building and the transport implications of the proposal.

Planning Policy

17. Southwark Unitary Development Plan 1995 [UDP]:
 E.2.1 (Layout and Building Line) – Complies; the building would define a square for the school.
 E.2.2 (Heights of Buildings) Complies; building is of same height as surroundings
 E.2.3 (Aesthetic Control) Complies; building is considered to be of a good design and suitable in its environment.
 E.2.4 (Access and Facilities for People with Disabilities) - Complies
 E.2.5 (External Space) – Complies; the proposal would see the introduction of well defined open spaces.
 C.2.2 (Health Social and Educational Facilities) - Complies
 C.5.6 (Metropolitan Open Land) - Does not comply, but considered to be acceptable due to location near other buildings and beneficial educational and community facilities.
 C.7.1 (Accessibility) - Complies
 T.6.3 (Parking Space in New Developments) – Complies; there will be no material increase in activity on the site.
18. The Southwark Plan [Revised Deposit Unitary Development Plan] March 2004
 2.2 (Provision of new Community Facilities) - Complies
 2.3 (Enhancement of Educational Establishments) - Complies
 3.2 (Protection of Amenity) - Complies
 3.11 (Quality in Design) - Complies
 3.13 (Urban Design) – Complies; the proposal would see the introduction of well defined open spaces.
 3.25 (Metropolitan Open Land) - Does not comply, but considered to be acceptable due to location near other buildings and beneficial educational and community facilities.
 5.2 (Transport Impacts) – Complies; the development would not have a significant impact on parking facilities.

Consultations

19. Site Notice: Press Notice:
 23-10-2004 21-10-2004
20. Consultees:
 Greater London Authority
 Conservation and Design
 Transport Group
 Education Department
 Neighbours:
 65-77, 81-99 (odd), 79A, 79B Carlton Avenue SE21 7DF
 1-11 (all), 11A flat A, 11A flat B, 12-24 (all), 50-58 (all), Townley Road SE22 8SX
 Charmouth, Townley Road SE22 8SR
 Townley Road Clinic, 121 Townley Road SE22 8SW
 Dulwich Town Centre, 121 Townley Road SE22 8SW
 15-21 (odd) Great Spilmans SE22 8SZ
 179, 181 East Dulwich Grove SE22 8SY
 James Dulles Girls School 144 East Dulwich Grove SE22 8SY

215, 217, 217A, 219, 221, 223, 225, 225A, 225B, 227, 229, 231A, 231B, 233, 235, 237, 239, 241, 243, 245, 247, 249 Lordship Lane SE22 8JF
 176-190 (even), 192 Ground floor front, 192 ground floor middle, 192 ground floor rear, 192 first floor front, 192 first floor middle, 192 first floor rear, 192 top floor front, 192 top floor middle, 192 top floor rear, 194-212 (even) Lordship Lane SE22 8LR
 1, 1a, 2, 2a Dulwich Rise Gardens SE22 8LS
 1-14 (all) 14A, 14B, 15, 16, 17A, 17B, 17C, 17D, 18-21 (all), 22A, 22B, 23-27 (all), 28 flat 1, 28 flat 2, 29-33 (all), 34A, 34B, 35A, 35B, 36-43 (all) Colwell Road SE22 8QP
 1-10 Dulwich Lane Close
 1, 1 flat1, 1 flat2, 2, 2 flat1, 2 flat2, 3, 3 flat1, 3 flat2, 4, 4 flat1, 4 flat2, 6, 6A, 8, 8A, 10, 10A, 12, 12A, 14, 14a, 16 flat 1, 16 flat 2, 18, 18A, 20, 22, 22A, 24, 26, 26A, 28-34 (even), 36 lower flat, 36 upper flat, 38 flat 1, 38 flat 2, 40 flat 1, 40 flat2, 42, 42A, 44, 44A, 5-57 (odd) Playfield Crescent, SE22 8QS
 1A, 1B, 3-29 (odd), 38, 38A, 38B, 40 Hillsboro Road, SE22 8QE
 91, 93, 95A, 95B, 97A, 97B, 99A, 99B, 101 GlenGarry Road SE22 8QA
 1-8 Terborch Way SE22 8TQ
 1-11 (all) Kempis Way SE22 8TU
 1-11 (odd) Isel Way SE22 8TT

Replies from:

21. Design: No Objections but before construction, samples of materials should be prepared of bricks and sections of fenestrations.

2 Dulwich Rise Gardens; 77 Carlton Avenue; 85 Carlton Avenue; 5 Isel Way; 9 Isel Way; 10 Playfield Crescent; 13 Playfield Crescent; 23 Playfield Crescent; 29 Playfield Crescent; 35 Playfield Crescent; 37 Playfield Crescent; 39 Playfield Crescent; 53 Playfield Crescent; 16 Townley Road; 19 Townley Road; 50 Townley Road: Fourteen letters of objection for neighbouring residents have been received as well as one letter of no objection.

Objections is made to:

- Increased parking stress in the vicinity
- Light pollution from the building
- Impact on views over the playing fields
- Loss of open space/ Metropolitan Open Land
- The proposal would increase the drainage problems to the terrace on Playfield Crescent.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Loss of Metropolitan Open Land (MOL)

22. The emerging Southwark Plan states that there is a presumption against building on MOL. Development may be permitted in exceptional circumstances, if the development would be:
- 1 - ancillary to the use of the open space,
 - 2 - small in scale,
 - 3 - does not detract from the open nature of the MOL,
 - 4 - the development is required to enhance the activities associated with the particular open space or existing institutions standing in extensive grounds,

and

5 - it positively contributes to the setting and quality of the open space.

23. With regards to the first point, it is considered that the Performing Arts Centre would be ancillary to the Alleyn's School would use, who is the owner and main user of the entire MOL.
24. The building is of a similar scale and bulk as the other buildings, and has the same height as the sports hall and Block E. Due to its positioning next to the other buildings, the impact on the open nature of the MOL is minimal.
25. It is considered that Alleyn's School is in need of improved facilities for performances. Drama is an important part of the curriculum, however the facilities for performances are inadequate at the moment. Currently, the Great Hall and St Barnabas Church are used for larger musical and drama productions. The Great Hall is used for assemblies, thereby making it hard to build the set. Furthermore, there are no backstage areas, the acoustics are insufficient and there are various concerns over fire and safety. Finally, due to its positioning in the heart of the old school building, with various class rooms next door and insufficient sound insulation, use of the Great Hall is disruptive to other pupils.
26. Extensive hard and soft landscaping would be carried out under this proposal. To the northwest of the building, a new square would be formed, that can be used as a playground or for outdoor performances. It is considered that this square would be a great improvement from the current use as car-park.
27. As part of this application, it is proposed to plant 3500 sq m of native shrubbery to the borders of the site and 200 trees. Also, a new footpath along the northern edge of the playing fields. Currently, there is little shrubbery along the edges of the playing fields apart from the south side. The new shrubbery would not only be a cosmetic improvement to the different private fences that currently mark the border of the MOL, but would also introduce an ecological corridor to the MOL.
28. Pre-application discussions have taken place, to see if other locations within the school grounds, but not on the MOL, could be located. It was then considered that there are no alternative locations that would meet the schools requirements.
29. It is considered that in this instance, given the benefits in terms of improved education facilities, community use and improved landscaping, the loss of MOL would be justifiable, especially given the location and design of the building.

Traffic and Parking Issues

- The development would not lead to an increase in numbers of pupils or staff.
30. There would be a decrease of available parking spaces on site of 6, a reduction of approximately 10%. This is not considered to have a significant affect on parking stress in the vicinity, since all newly appointed staff are not allowed to park on the site and are encouraged to use alternative methods of transport to travel to the school.

31. Also, it is not foreseen that more major plays (with audience numbers over 200) would be performed. The school currently has four to five major drama performances and six concerts per annum. Six or seven are currently held in the Great Hall, and four in the nearby St Barnabas Church. Additional parking spaces would be available during large evening performances on games areas. Furthermore, since the St Barnabas Church, where there is no control over parking, would no longer be used, it is considered that the parking stress in the evening would be diminished.

32. The Junior School drop-off point is currently on Hillsborough Road, but the school is concentrating its drop-off point to Townley road. This would alleviate traffic pressures on Hillsborough Road in the morning and afternoon.

Design

33. It is considered that the building would be of a good modern design. Given the wide variety of architectural styles of the Alleyn's School buildings, it is not considered that the building would be out of place, and in fact it would create a natural finish to a new square. As such the development would bring a positive addition to Alleyn's School in terms of urban design as well as architecture.

Residential amenities

34. The building would be 85m away from the nearest rear elevation of the terrace on Playfield Crescent. As such, it is not considered that the development would have a significant impact in terms of views or outlook. Also, it is considered that this distance would minimize any potential light pollution that the building might create. Any consent granted would have a condition stating that details of a lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved by the Council before building works commence.

35. Although drainage problems to the properties on Playfield Crescent, which were caused by the extreme rainfall this spring, are not directly considered to be a material planning consideration for this application. However, it is considered that the building would have its own drainage system and as such would alleviate the surface water run-off from the playing fields. Furthermore, the school is aware of the problem and has suggested measures such as a small earth bund or filtration beds.

Conclusion

36. The building is considered to be well designed and fitting in its surroundings. The extensive landscaping that is provided with the proposal would form an improvement to the appearance and the ecological functioning of the MOL. The Performing Arts Centre would represent a major improvement to the educational facilities of Alleyn's School, and would be open to the wider community. As such, it is considered that, on balance, the benefits to the school and the wider community would outweigh the loss of a small part of the MOL.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

37. Level access would be created throughout the building.

LOCAL AGENDA 21 [Sustainable Development] IMPLICATIONS

38. None apparent

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CASE FILE	TP/2300-A	
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