

PROPOSED NEW SADDLEWORTH SCHOOL

SITE: FORMER WH SHAW PALLET WORKS, HUDDERSFIELD ROAD, DIGGLE OL3 5NX

WARD: SADDLEWORTH NORTH

LATE LIST REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 28th February 2019

Application A (PA/337931/15)

A full planning application submitted by WRT Developments Ltd to demolish the existing buildings on the WH Shaw site within the red line boundary. It does not include the grade II listed office building and clock tower or link bridge.

Registration Date: 22/12/15

Agent: Mr Michael Brown, HNA Architects Ltd

Application B (LB/337929/15)

A listed building consent application submitted by WRT Developments Ltd to demolish the link bridge attached to the Grade II listed office building and clock tower.

Registration Date: 21/12/15

Agent: Mr Michael Brown, HNA Architects Ltd

Application C (PA/337301/15)

A full planning application submitted by Interserve Construction Ltd on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education to build a new secondary school and associated facilities.

Registration Date: 28/7/15

Agent: WYG

Application D (PA/337930/15)



A full planning application submitted by Oldham Council to provide a parental drop off facility plus residential car parking as part of the wider highways scheme on land off Huddersfield Road.

Registration Date: 21/12/15

Agent: Mr Paul Groves, Unity Partnership

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1. Change in Legislation

- 1.1. A revised National Planning Policy Framework was published on 19th February 2019.
- 1.2. As a consequence, paragraph 7.37 of the main report should be deleted and now read as follows:

“It adds in paragraph 177 that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where an application is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site”.

- 1.3. This change does not the consideration or conclusions contained in this report.

2. Further Comments

- 2.1. The following comments were received from statutory consultees and the local Parish Council.

Historic England

They confirmed they had nothing further to add on their previous position.

Saddleworth Parish Council

The Parish Council reconsidered the four school applications on 18th February 2019. They reached the following recommendations:

Application A

Proposal: Demolition of 5 buildings
Recommendation: APPROVE

Comment: Now that clarification on the Listed Building status of the factory has been received we are happy to support this proposal.

Application B

Proposal: Demolition of the link bridge connected to the listed office building
Recommendation: APPROVE

Comment: Now that the clarification on the Listed Building status of the link bridge has been received we are happy to support this proposal.

Application C:

Proposal: Construction of a new Saddleworth School (for ages 11 to 16) with associated sports fields and pitches, external recreation and teaching space together with parking, landscaping and associated works.
Recommendation: APPROVE

Comment: We believe that the very substantial educational advantages of the proposal justify support for this application and welcome the fact that the Listed Building will be retained and preserved.

Application D

Proposal: New car park drop-off facility, residents' parking area and associated highway works

Recommendation: APPROVE

Comment: We welcome the improvements from the previous proposal.

2.2. The following individual comments were received on the four applications:

Application A

No further comments.

Application B

One objection on the basis that:

- There is no land or curtilage being left with the listed office building which condemns it to dilapidation.
- The plans for the school explicitly exclude the use of the listed building. This means the applicant is "knowingly" condemns this grade 2 listed building to "ultimate collapse" and the applicant does not acknowledge this in their planning applications as required by the JR.

Officers do not believe that a reason for refusal on these grounds is sustainable, based on the argument set out in paragraphs 10.140 -10.145 in Application A.

Application C

Nine further comments have been received. Four supported the scheme and five objected to it.

The supporters of the scheme argue:

- This is a much needed facility and will benefit Diggle and the surrounding villages.
- The proposal will result in the regeneration of a brownfield site that is an eyesore and risk to public health and safety.

In summary, the objections were on the basis of the following:

Land Use

- The playing fields should be to the front of the school, to save problems creating new playing fields next to the canal and drainage issues.

- The front field should be used as a car park.

Design

- The Grade 2 listed building will be left with no curtilage and dilapidation.

Amenity

- Noise and light pollution from the sporting facilities.

Highways

- The road narrowing, footpath widening, traffic lights, drop-off area and site access to the school were all considered highways hazards. To address this, a new access road was suggested by the objector and CPO and demolition of “... *all existing property on the right hand side of Huddersfield Road at the entry from Oldham / Dobcross*” was also suggested.
- Highways safety issues will be created on Huddersfield Road.
- There are not enough parking spaces provided for staff.
- There is not enough space for event parking.
- The site has narrow roads with sub-standard or non-existing pavements, even counting any new pavements to be created out of green belt.
- The scheme doesn't address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility. In particular, only 5 disabled parking places are allocated and none to the original residents adjacent to the site. Long term parking has been ignored.
- Pavements are below minimum width standards and curb height for vast lengths of Saddleworth, yet broadband and other obstructions are allowed.
- A resident argues his traffic survey shows congestion on Huddersfield Road and subsequent traffic problems.
- No attempt has been made to aid charging vehicles.

Other

- The application ignores the Judicial Review.
- *“the balance between Oldham as an applicant and the independence of this committee must also be questioned as there is too much political influence ignoring obvious flaws”.*

Response to objections

Land Use

- 2.3. In relation to land use objections, the front of the site is allocated for business and industry uses (USP Policy B1.1.28). As such, its use as playing fields or a school car park would be contrary to this policy allocation. Furthermore, it is not agreed that the proposed new playing fields next to the canal will create drainage issues following the substantial modelling undertaken by the applicant and detailed consideration from the Environment Agency over a considerable length of time that resulted in them confirming that the scheme is acceptable in flooding terms. It should also be recognised that the “*front field*” is not currently part of the application site, barring the access road to the school.

Design

- 2.4 In relation to the Grade 2 listed office building being harmfully left with no curtilage and to dilapidation, Officers do not believe that a reason for refusal on dilapidation grounds is sustainable, based on the argument set out in paragraphs 10.140 -10.145 in Application A. The curtilage points are covered in Applications A and B extensively and in the “Heritage and Demolition Impact” section of Application C set out between paragraphs 12.222-12.259. Officer’s opinion remains that such an argument would not sustain a reason for refusal when the public benefits of the new school are weighed against the impact of demolition of the link bridge and industrial buildings.

Amenity

- 2.5. In relation to amenity matters, noise issues are dealt with in the “*Amenity*” section starting from 12.331. Light issues are set out in the “*Lighting*” section starting from paragraph 12.392 onwards. Again, Officer’s opinion remains that such arguments would not sustain a reason for refusal.

Highways

- 2.6 The highways concerns are dealt with in the “*Transport, Access and Highway Safety*” section of Application C from paragraph 12.272 and in Application D in relation to road narrowing, footpath widening, traffic lights, drop-off area and site access to the school.
- 2.7 In relation to highways safety issues on Huddersfield Road, Officers accept that congestion will occur during peak periods when the school is open. There will be an impact in particular on Huddersfield Road and the Huddersfield Road / Standedge Road junction. However, the short periods of time during which this will occur are outweighed by the benefits that the highway improvements will bring to the surrounding highway network at all other times and allowing the use of the site to function as a new school. Indeed, all users of the highway will benefit by being able to travel safely along Huddersfield Road. Moreover, the cumulative impact the scheme will have on the road network will not be ‘severe’ and it will not have an unacceptable impact on highways safety. As such, a reason for refusal could not be sustained against the required NPPF test.

- 2.8 In relation to not enough parking spaces provided for staff, 117 spaces plus 5 for disabled users plus 2 for minibuses will be provided. It is expected that there will be 189 members of staff. Not all members of staff will be present for the duration of the day. Notwithstanding this, the staff car park is configured so that staff arriving and leaving at the same time will be able to stack their vehicles because there will be no requirement for them to manoeuvre in and out of spaces during the day. This was suggested to the applicant during the original planning application period and they were happy to do this.

There are no national or local parking standards. Therefore, Officers have assessed the provision of car parking on the probability that there will be no detrimental impact caused by parked vehicles on the local highway network. The car park accessed from Huddersfield Road may also be available for short term staff and visitor parking outside of parent drop off hours if required.

- 2.9 In relation to not enough space for event parking, a condition has been attached which requires an event parking management plan to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This will be discharged if it includes details of how events will be managed by the school including the timing of events and the numbers of expected visitors and availability of on-site parking for parents and other visitors, including the parent drop off facility accessed from Huddersfield Road.
- 2.10 In relation to pavements, the highway on the approach to the school along Huddersfield Road will improve pedestrian and cycling links to the school and a footway will be provided to the school along Huddersfield Road. Bus stops will be relocated with improved pedestrian links to them.
- 2.11 In relation to addressing the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility, pedestrian links along Huddersfield Road along with improved access to public transport will result from the proposed highway scheme to improve the current situation. The parking spaces allocated to residents will be accessible to all users regardless of their ability and will be provided for their private use, so there is no need to have spaces especially allocated for less able users.
- 2.12 In relation to pavements, curb heights and obstructions, the highway in the vicinity of the proposed development is being improved. Footways are being widened and pedestrian crossings (dropped kerbs) are being provided in appropriate locations.
- 2.13 In relation to a resident's traffic survey showing congestion on Huddersfield Road and alleged subsequent traffic problems, any congestion that occurs now is a result of the high level of on-street parking over a long length of highway. The introduction of the traffic signals and the one-way system will improve this. Furthermore, traffic will be controlled which will reduce the risk of accidents and traffic will flow along Huddersfield Road safely.

2.14 In relation to charging points for electric vehicles, the drop-off zone is designed so that parents can park for short periods of time while they drop-off or collect their children. It is not designed for longer term parking of vehicles and subsequently as a charging point for vehicles.

Other

2.15 Officers have set out in detail the Judicial Reviews outcome and addressed its findings. Officers therefore do not consider the Judicial Review has been “*ignored*”.

2.16 The applicant for this scheme is not the Council as stated by objectors. Moreover, claims that the independence of the planning committee has to be questioned or that “*there is too much political influence ignoring obvious flaws*” has no evidence to support it.

Application D

2.17 One additional objection was received. This raised the issue that when disabled visitors arrived they would only be able to access the house from the rear. Unfortunately, due to the internal layout of the house in question, the stair case to the basement level is unable to support a stair lift. Therefore, these visitors would be confined to the basement of the house.

2.18 In this regard, clearly the changed arrangements would prove inconvenient to the occasional visitor to the house. However, it is not considered impossible to access the front of the house by parking in one of the parking spaces alternatively provided and then moving towards the house from there or parking a little further along the street and then going from there. Moreover, the visitor inconvenience has to be weighed against the benefits to other road users in the area and the significant benefits of the new school.