

Planning Statement

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Kirklees Council, Economy and Skills, Capital Delivery Team, in support of an application for improvements at King James's School, St Helen's Gate, Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD4 6SG.
- 1.2. Kirklees Council has general duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that there are sufficient schools *"in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education"* in its area. This duty includes providing sufficient dining places, and facilities that support students to learn a broad curriculum.
- 1.3. The works to the school include an additional science laboratory to support the needs of students to learn the sciences. After a review of the school premises and design development, the application includes the conversion of what is now a dining space to a science laboratory classroom for up to 32 students.
- 1.4. There is existing pressure on dining capacity at the school and the loss of dining space to accommodate the science classroom requires an expansion of the dining provision. The application therefore includes; modifications to the existing dining room, conversion of an adjoining classroom to dining space and construction of a covered paved area for external dining space.
- 1.5. Furthermore, the corridors and circulation spaces at King James's are congested resulting in queueing and crowding in areas. The application also includes improvements to circulation and additional circulation routes.
- 1.6. The Statement takes the following structure;
 - Introduction
 - Site Description and Context
 - Proposed Development
 - Planning Considerations

2. Site Description and Context

- 2.1. The application site is outlined in red on the site location plan below. The site forms part of the King James's School campus, located to the south east of Almondbury, Huddersfield. King James's School is a 5-form entry secondary school educating children aged 11-16.
- 2.2. Most of the school's buildings are located within the north east portion of the campus, with playing fields and sports facilities to the west and south. A car park with bus drop-off facility lies within the south east corner of the campus. The application covers the existing built up section of the site.

2.3. The original school buildings, which are listed, date back to the 18th century and face St. Helens Gate. Behind the historic frontage the school has expanded over time with buildings at varying levels and differing construction.

2.4. The wider school site is bound to the north and west by an area of dense tree cover, beyond which lies residential development. To the east is St. Helen's Gate beyond which lies a small cluster of dwellings. To the south is Arkenley Lane which is lined by residential properties.

Planning History

2.5. The following applications have previously been submitted for the school campus.

Reference	Description of Proposal	Decision/Date of Decision
2008/48/91773/W2	Erection of classrooms and provision of new parking	Permission granted 3 rd July 2008
2013/70/91392/W	Variation of condition 1 (timescale) on previous permission 2008/91773 for erection of classrooms and provision of new parking	Permission granted 26 th July which extended the permission to 26 th July 2018
2018/70/90957/W	Variation of condition 1 (timescale) on previous permission 2013/91392 for variation of condition 1 (timescale) on previous permission 2008/91773 for erection of classrooms and provision of new parking	Permission granted 16 th May which extends permission to 26 th July 2023
2018/62/90817/W	Formation of 3G sports pitch including 4m high rebound fencing (within a Conservation Area)	Permission granted 3 rd May 2019
2019/62/90685/W	Erection of first floor extension over existing school block, removal of two temporary classrooms and formation of car parking area (within a Conservation Area)	Withdrawn July 2019
2020/62/90986/W	Relocation of temporary modular buildings (within a Conservation Area)	Approved June 2020

Reference	Description of Proposal	Decision/Date of Decision
2020/62/92657/W	Erection of 10 classroom teaching block and formation of car parking area with associated engineering and landscape works (within a Conservation Area)	Target date for decision – 1 st December 2020

3. Proposed Development

Background

3.1. A review of the accommodation at King James's school was prompted by the expansion of its Published Admission Number (PAN) by 150 pupils. The review took place in late-2019 and identified a few existing capacity issues with the building. These are;

- Insufficient dining capacity
- Science laboratory shortfall
- Poor, narrow circulation routes

3.2. Following a feasibility study and design development the application now presents a solution that would address all these issues resulting in;

- Greater dining capacity in located in one place
- Sufficient science laboratory classrooms to support the curriculum
- Safer, more efficient circulation and emergency exit routes

Layout and Design

3.3. The site plan provided shows the areas of improvement, most of which are internal.

3.4. Near the entrance to the school in a wing known as the Stable block there is currently a Year 11 common room and café with a small kitchen. This wing is sunken in to the hillside to the rear. The proposal is to convert this space in to a fully equipped science classroom with laboratory store and offices. To the rear of the classroom a flight of stairs leading from a new opening will provide an additional circulation and emergency exit route which has been designed, as far as possible, to current Building Regulations standards. This route will relieve pressure on existing narrow corridors and formalise the emergency exit route from this wing. The existing external fire escape may require alteration to accommodate the new circulation route. There are no proposed changes to the front elevation of the Stable block which forms part of the Listed Buildings. The staircase to the rear is below ground and cannot be seen. Externally, the only visible change will be slight modifications to the existing, external emergency exit staircase.

3.5. On the other side of the school a classroom with adjacent offices and stores will be converted in to dining space. The works include removal of some walls

to open up the space to existing dining room, creating a single, larger dining space which meets the needs of the school and improves facilities for students.

- 3.6. Finally, outside the new dining space is currently a former science garden which is no longer used. This space is to be levelled, paved and covered with a new canopy to provide additional outdoor dining space. These works include 2 new openings to the building which will form a new circulation route, reducing pressure on other corridors. Steps down from the new dining space will create an additional emergency exit route which will improve the safety of the building for all users.

Planning

- 3.7. The application is in Green Belt and within the Almondbury Conservation Area. The site also lies within a mineral safeguarding area and part of the site has Listed status.
- 3.8. Due to the Green Belt designation, Very Special Circumstance must apply for the Planning Authority to grant permission. Equally, there is also policy, guidance and precedence for the Planning Authority to view applications for the development of schools favourably.
- 3.9. The protection of Green Belt is fundamentally to prevent urban sprawl, maintain openness and reduce the harm of any development that is granted.
- 3.10. All external works are in areas situated between existing buildings thereby not contributing to the expansion of urban sprawl. The proposals are also within the existing security perimeter of the school and visually screen by existing buildings and trees therefore do not impact on the use or enjoyment of the Green Belt by the public. The new stairs to the rear of the Stable block are below ground and amendments to the existing external staircase result in no harm to the Green Belt. The proposed canopy structure is light, transparent and unimposing therefore has negligible impact on openness. Alternatives to a canopy area would likely result in greater harm to Green Belt, therefore the proposals reduce the harm that would otherwise be caused.
- 3.11. The area is also within a Conservation Area and affects a Listed Building. In this regard, external alterations are minimal and not visible from public view points. The visible facades of the listed buildings are unchanged, and much of the works are internal.
- 3.12. In conclusion, the benefits to student's education that this development will bring outweighs the negligible harm to Green Belt and changes to the historic setting of the school. Allowing development of the school facilitates improved, safer educational facilities for the children of Kirklees and allows the continuation of education at one of the borough's oldest and most celebrated educational establishments.

