

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Location	Spen Valley High School, Roberttown Lane, Liversedge, West Yorkshire, WF15 7LX.
application	Extension and Alterations to Existing School Lodge Building and Erection of Detached Ancillary Office Building
client/applicant	Spen Valley School
job number	23/924-5-6
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Ltd
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INTRODUCTION

This design and access statement forms part of the planning application for the proposed Extension and Alterations to Existing School Lodge Building and Erection of Detached Ancillary Office Building at Spen Valley High School.

Spen Valley High School is a comprehensive school, a secondary school for pupils aged 11–16, that does not select its intake on the basis of academic achievement or aptitude, as opposed to a *selective school system* where admission is restricted on the basis of selection criteria, usually academic performance.

Spen Valley High School is underpinned by a shared set of core values, captured through five overarching principles:

Comprehensive ideals – an admission code that offers access to children from the school community regardless of background and fosters an inclusive atmosphere where students have an entitlement to a first class education and universally experience equality of opportunity.

Excellence – sign up to achieving the highest standards in all that we do.

Personal development – adoption of a broad ‘humanising’ curriculum in which young people become confident and rounded learners, gain high self esteem, and develop a rich understanding of themselves and empathy in relation to others.

A culture of achievement – an unshakeable recognition that this shapes our core purpose and is celebrated, valued and inclusive.

Lifelong Learning – an understanding of our responsibility to transition, to and beyond our school, that learning initially is to be inspired but become a lifelong desire and is best accomplished in partnership through the professional development of individuals and teams and in collaboration with others.

The work of Spen Valley High School is also in keeping with identified Fundamental British Values.

At Spen Valley High School, the curriculum is built so that for all students it is able to;

- **S**trengthen the development of skills and knowledge of our students which prepares them to meet our high expectations on accredited courses and satisfies their future economic needs
- **P**artner our students and provide opportunities for them to participate in a broad range of educational experiences on and beyond our school campus and in all areas of the National Curriculum
- **E**ngage our students such that they are appreciative of the values and traditions of a range of different cultures and so they become responsible citizens
- **N**urture our students so we are able to ensure their safety and support their personal development and welfare such that they are self-confident and are able to live a healthy and balanced life.

The school has ?? members of staff, ?? support pupils and ??? head of pupils.

The school is located in Liversedge just off the main Huddersfield Road.

The main school buildings, including the location of proposed development is classed as Urban Greenspace on the Kirklees Local Plan, the school fields are allocated as Greenbelt;



The schools site features a plethora of building types, indicating an evolvement over time.

Materials, design and layout indicate no particular pattern with natural stone, varying facing brickwork, timber cladding, render and glazed curtain walling all existing on site as external wall materials.

Roof designs include flat roofs, pitched roofs, mono-pitch roofs, gabled roofs and hip roofs. Roofing materials include, bitumen felt, profiled sheeting and blue slate.

The property does not fall within conservation area and has no listed buildings on or adjacent to the site. The nearest listed building is across the road, South East, Duxbury Hall and Cottage. Given the space and physical separation we contend these proposals present no issues or harm to this listed building.

PROPOSALS

The proposals do not involve a change of use. The site and buildings will remain in educational use, Class F1(a) – provision of education.

The proposals are;

- To change the office use of the current lodge building, the building directly adjacent to the entrance, to specialist teaching space. This involves a two storey extension to the South West, internal alterations and conversion of the lower ground floor storage space (originally a garage) to a gym.
- The loss of the lodge building as staff office space requires alternative staff space. The proposed office building provides this required replacement space.

This proposal results from the school having an ethos to not exclude children but to provide a more tailored teaching environment. To exclude children (permanently or temporarily) does very little good and only relocates issues/problems. It is intended the lodge building once adapted (internal alterations & garage conversion) the premises will be fit for purpose. The proposed extension will follow on soon after.

One may question the fragmented layout of the proposed extension for an educational building with regards to the gym and proposed lower ground floor classroom being externally accessed. This has been done intentionally to provide the best environment for the intended occupants.

Further details, provided by the school, in relation to the specialist facility can be found in Appendix A of this statement.

USE

This proposal does not include a change of use, the principle purpose of the site and buildings will still be educational and associated educational (staff office space).

MEANS OF ACCESS

There is no proposed change to the means of access to the site. The existing lodge building will retain its principle access. The accommodation of the lodge and new staff office building is arranged to provide for a flexible use and one that will easily accommodate for semi-ambulant or disabled should the need arise.

The proposed gym and lower ground floor class room to the extended lodge building are independent and enable an efficient and effective use of the building/classrooms without disturbing others.

PROPOSED EXTENSION/NEW BUILDING (Appearance)

The following materials are proposed (all to match existing found on the school premises):

Walls

Facing brickwork plinth to low level of proposed office building, render over.

Reclaimed Natural coursed stone corners to proposed lodge building with render elsewhere.

Roof

Profiled sheet composite panel to timber framed proposed office building.

Blue slate covering to new gabled roof over proposed lodge building extension. NB this includes for the removal of the existing flat roof and continuing the proposed pitched roof over.

Rainwater Goods

87mm galvanised steel fall pipes with 135mm gutters at eaves to proposed office building with Upvc guttering & downpipes to lodge building.

Windows & Doors

Windows to be Upvc/thermally broken powder coated aluminium with Low 'E' double glazed units.

Doors to be thermally broken powder coated aluminium.

MEANS OF ACCESS

There is no proposed change to the means of access to the site or building, the proposed 2m high V mesh fencing is to assist in containment and security as part of the overall proposals. This green fence is not dissimilar to the green combi-security palisade fencing that currently exists on the school premises.

LANDSCAPING

There is no proposed change to the landscaping to the site.

LAYOUT

The proposed new office building is set on some existing tarmac level ground adjacent to the other school buildings, set back from the street scene elevation.

The proposed two storey side extension to the existing lodge building utilises the topography of the site and enables a smaller footprint by being a two storey extension. The lower ground floor of the proposed extension will not be readily seen from the highway, due to the boundary wall. This

proposed extension is subservient to the existing building that clearly demonstrates some level of historical significance. Despite the current and only entrance into the building being on the North East side elevation, we contend the principle elevation is the one with the architectural features that faces directly to the highway, the South East elevation. We contend the original entrance to this lodge building will have been via what is currently office 3, the cill detailing clearly differs from the others.

As part of the proposed extension to the lodge building, opportunity is being taken to remove the blue painted cladding to the South West elevation, to replace the bitumen covered flat roof with a blue slate roof and to render the current facing brickwork. Considered as a whole, we contend this will provide a more aesthetically pleasing appearance in this dominant location.

SCALE

The proposed extension is set back from the principle, roadside elevation. Continuing the line of the former brick extension.

The original lodge will remain the dominant aspect visually with the topography and roadside boundary wall assisting in ensuring the proposed extension is not dominant in appearance/scale and massing.

Eaves heights are set to a lower level, with the roof apex also being at a lower level to the original lodge roof apex.

Window openings are in scale with the original openings with the proposed South West Elevation having an expanse of glass to provide adequate natural daylight and free up other internal wall areas for appropriate purposes (white boards, etc).

OTHER MATTERS

ECOLOGY

We contend the proposals have minimal impact on ecology and protected species. The existing lodge building (to be extended) is a relatively well sealed building and provides very limited scope for protected species such as bats.

The proposed new office building is on a tarmac area and has no impact on protected species.

TREES

Whilst there are some mature trees near to the proposed extension, previous tree works/tree maintenance has been carried out. With regards to the proposed staff office building we are currently assessing a pile foundation design for the solid concrete floor slab. This can be designed in such a way to reduce the impact on the nearby trees. Furthermore the area of trees, to the West of the proposed building, are a good distance away and based at a significantly lower level at the base of the steep grass embankment. As such we contend they will not be affected by the development,

either directly, through root disturbance, or indirectly, through overshadowing or other nuisance to users of the educational building. We therefore considered that the proposal complies with LP33 of the Kirklees local plan.

TRANSPORT/PARKING

The proposals will not impact on parking or highway safety.

It is intended that the existing educational and support staff will provide the required teaching/support for the specialist lodge teaching facilities.

There is a staff and visitors car park on site.

On days when additional parking is required, such as parents evenings, the bus bay is used as overflow parking. This is owned by the school and is never used for buses.

It is considered there will initially be one additional member of staff but specific parking is not designated. The school has adequate parking provision for staff and support staff.

The existing school staff that will work within the new lodge facility will also work within the main school.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate Change: On 12th November 2019, the Council adopted a target for achieving 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2038, with an accompanying carbon budget set by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research.

National Planning Policy includes a requirement to promote carbon reduction and enhance resilience to climate change through the planning system and these principles have been incorporated into the formulation of Local Plan policies. The Local Plan predates the declaration of a climate emergency and the net zero carbon target;

However, the Kirklees local plan includes a series of policies which are used to assess the suitability of planning applications in the context of climate change.

Accompanying this application is a climate change statement briefly outlining how the proposed development help to address and combat climate change effects.

We contend given the proposals are for a relatively modest extension to an existing school building and a small new office building that the proposals contribute to making more efficient use of land in a relatively sustainable location. We consider this to be in accordance with the aims set out above, and set out in NPPF Chapter 14.

NOISE

The office building will not present any unusual/unacceptable level of noise.

The extended lodge building, even given its differing educational use, will not present an unacceptable level of noise. The building is still well within the school premises and has a good degree of space separation to other unrelated buildings/nearby dwellings.

PLANNING POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory Development Plan for Kirklees is the Local Plan (adopted 27th February 2019).

Whilst part of the school premises, generally the open playing fields, fall within the greenbelt, the specific location of the proposed works is sited on land allocated as Urban Green Space on the Local Plan.

The relevant local plan policies relating to this application are;

LP 21: Highways and access

LP 24: Design

LP30: Biodiversity

LP 49: Educational and Health Needs

LP 30: Biodiversity and geodiversity

LP 61: Urban Green Space

National Policies and Guidance:

National planning policy and guidance is set out in National Policy Statements, primarily the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published 20th July 2021, the Planning Practice Guidance Suite (PPGS) first launched 6th March 2014 together with Circulars, Ministerial Statements and associated technical guidance.

The NPPF constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and is a material consideration in determining applications.

- Chapter 12 – Requiring good design
- Chapter 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

ASSESSMENT AGAINST PLANNING POLICY

Principle of development: The site is within Urban Green Space in the Local Plan Map.

Under Policy LP61, any proposal that would result in the 'loss' of Urban Green Space should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, as set out in clauses (a) to (c).

In this instance, the site of the proposals is;

- The staff office building - an area of tarmac hardstanding and as such would not result in the loss of any areas of turf or other soft landscaping.
- The proposed two storey lodge extension – Whilst this area does take up some grassed area it is currently underused, of little amenity value and offset by the removal of the three red, blue and green shipping containers that will be removed as part of the proposals. Furthermore the use of the proposed gym we contend should be deemed a sport/recreation use that also positively contributes to the loss of a small area of urban green space.

Following the approach that has been taken in other applications of this type, it is not deemed to result in a loss of Urban Green Space and, we consider, should not be treated as a departure from the Local Plan on the basis that the proposal would comply with the wording of LP61.

Considering the design of the proposals, Policy LP24 is applicable – this requires that development respects and enhances the character of the townscape and landscape, protects residential amenity, that extensions are subservient to the original building, and show levels of sustainability to a degree proportionate to the proposal.

We contend the design, materials and scale of the proposals should be deemed acceptable. An unsightly flat roof is being removed, the blue painted timber cladding is being encapsulated by the proposals and materials have been specified to be in-keeping with other materials in existence on site.

We contend there are no highway safety implications resulting from the proposals. This ensures compliance with Policies LP21-22 of the Kirklees Local Plan.

Considering the scale of development and neutral impact on ecology/protected species we consider ecology aims as set out in Policy LP30 and Chapter 15 of the NPPF are acceptable. We are however more than willing to discuss this with the KMC ecology officers if deemed necessary.

In principle, we contend an expansion to an existing educational establishment that results in improved scale, range, quality etc of facilities is supported and acceptable under Policy LP49 (Educational and health care needs) of the Local Plan and paragraph 95 of the NPPF.

Impact on visual amenity: The proposed extension is clearly subordinate to the host building, both in terms of footprint, height and dominance. The staff office building does not appear prominent when viewed from a distance, the lodge extension we contend supplements the original building and indeed enhances the aesthetics when considering the removal of the blue timber cladding, flat roof and facing brickwork. Furthermore, as noted previously, the lower ground floor of the proposed extension is shielded from the public highway view due to being bounded/screened by a high stone boundary wall.

The materials specified (natural stone, render and blue slate) and design details we consider are appropriate for the age and appearance of the building to which the extension would be attached. The rendered office building on a brickwork plinth is considered to replicate other design details and

material on site. Taking this into account we contend that the development would conserve the character of the townscape and visual amenity and would thereby accord with the aims of LP24(a).

Impact on residential amenity: The proposed development, owing to its location which is separated by a significant distance from any nearby residential properties, would not give rise to any adverse impacts on residential amenity and would thereby accord with the aims of Policy LP24(b).

Impact on highway safety: The proposed development would not affect any existing access, parking or servicing arrangements and would only result in a modest net increase in ground floor area. We consider that it does not represent a significant intensification of the site, and that as there is no evidence that existing parking facilities are inadequate, the proposal has no implications for highway safety and would comply with the aims of Policy LP21-22.

CONCLUSION

Whilst it is appreciated every application is considered on its own merits, there should be a consistent approach in all planning applications. Consistency in decision making is a well-established principle in planning, which has been supported in many court decisions. Previous appeal decisions are capable of being a material consideration. Like cases should be decided in a like manner.

Consistency is important to both applicants and agents along with Local Authority planning departments so they know where they stand. It also secures public confidence in the workings of the development control system.

We contend the proposals within this application provide for the local community and wider Kirklees district. In assessing against local and national planning policy we contend the proposals are acceptable.

Should any further information be required please don't hesitate to contact us.

It would be appreciated if you could contact Paul Matthews Architectural Ltd prior to drafting up your recommendation for determination.

APPENDIX A

FURTHER INFO FROM SCHOOL

We are proud to be a trauma informed school with a relational approach to behaviour management and we have been recognised for this both nationally (ARC Award, Nov 2021) and by Ofsted (March, 2022). It is our aim to keep students in school and help them genuinely improve their behaviour so they can be happy and successful adults, rather than excluding them, where they become disengaged with school and vulnerable to other external influences. However, a small minority of our students require additional, and more bespoke support in a smaller setting. With the planning permission we are submitting, our plan is to develop our personalised provision to provide this. This facility will be, in the short-term, for a maximum of 10 students and will be used for the following:

1. Responding to the need to remove a student from mainstream lessons for a day or two to undergo intervention and reflection, with the aim for them to return to their usual lessons once they have completed their time out.
2. Step-out placements – where students would spend approx. 6 weeks working through a bespoke programme that will provide both therapeutic intervention and re-regulation techniques with the aim to them successfully returning into mainstream lessons after this period.
3. Long term places (no more than 4 students) - for the students whose dysregulated behaviour in school means they face the risk of permanent exclusion.

We have an increasing need for this provision following the recent decommissioning of facilities in Kirklees.

If we do not provide this provision for students, a number are at risk of being permanently excluded. We are trying to prevent this not simply because this will impact on their education and long-term future but also to safeguard them; young people who are permanently excluded are more likely to disengage from education completely and are thus more vulnerable to being targeted by external forces such as gangs, county lines, child sexual exploitation etc.

Future plans may include being able to offer additional places to neighbouring schools (at a cost) but we will only be able to develop this provision if we have the space and resource to do this.

Hayley Clacy
Headteacher