

2014/0724

Reg Date 21/10/2014

West End

**LOCATION:** GORDONS SCHOOL, BAGSHOT ROAD, WEST END,  
WOKING, GU24 9PT

**PROPOSAL:** Extension to 'Louvain house' to form Girl's day house with study  
rooms, common rooms, kitchen, changing rooms, showers,  
sanitary accommodation, locker facilities and house office.  
(Amended plans rec'd 17/11/14)

**TYPE:** Full Planning Application

**APPLICANT:** Mrs S Meikle  
The Gordon Foundation (Gordon's School)

**OFFICER:** Chenge Taruvinga

**RECOMMENDATION: GRANT subject to conditions**

### 1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application proposes the erection of a two storey extension to an existing classroom building. The proposed extension would provide an additional 136 square metres of class room space.
- 1.2 The report concludes that the proposed development would represent limited infilling on a previously developed site and therefore represents appropriate development within the Green Belt. Moreover the benefits arising from the provision of improved educational facilities weigh in favour of granting planning permission. It is also noted the proposal would not have an adverse impact on residential amenity, highway safety or trees. On this basis the application is recommended for approval.

### 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site comprises Gordon's School which was originally established in 1885. The site is located within the Green Belt and is split by Bagshot Road, with a footbridge link over the road. The main school buildings (which are locally listed) are located on the south side of Bagshot Road.
- 2.2 Louvain House is located towards the north east of the southern part of the wider site, immediately adjacent to Bagshot Road and the school entrance to the west. The existing building currently forms two staff flats which will be moved to Bordein building which was previously occupied by the Bursar's House.

### 3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

- 3.1 SU/12/0133 Erection of a two storey extension to existing building.  
Approved 19/06/2012
- 3.2 SU/12/0134 Erection of a new classroom building.  
Refused 26/06/2012

- 3.3 SU/13/0137 Erection of a single storey building to serve as a maintenance store following demolition of existing storage buildings.  
Approved 10/05/2013
- 3.4 SU/13/0166 Erection of two single storey extensions to existing boarding house building.  
Approved 09/05/2013
- 3.5 SU/13/0201 Erection of a single storey building to serve as a pavilion and changing facility.  
Approved 09/05/2013

#### **4.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 This application proposes the erection of a two storey extension to the Louvain building. According to the planning statement all enrolled pupils of Gordon's School are part of a house and there are currently nine houses, four of which are residential with five being day houses. A third day house for girls is required to reduce overcrowding and provide extra study areas for sixth formers. The applicant advises that there is no intention to increase the number of pupils at the school.
- 4.2 The proposal for the extension and refurbishment of Louvain allows for the provision of two common rooms, together with two study rooms, a kitchen, house office, changing rooms and lockers. The proposed two storey extension will be positioned to the rear of the Louvain and occupy part of the footprint of the existing single storey elements to be demolished. The existing enclosed courtyard will also form part of the footprint of the extension.
- 4.3 The extension will measure 5.3 metres in depth and 13.2 metres in width with a ridge height of 8.3 metres. The two storey element would be characterised by similar rear facing gables as currently existing.

#### **5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

- 5.1 Surrey County Council Highways No objection.
- 5.2 West End Parish Council No objections.
- 5.3 Historic Buildings Officer Objection ( see para 7.4)

#### **6.0 REPRESENTATION**

- 6.1 At the time of writing of this report no representations had been received.

## **7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATION**

7.1 The application site is located within the Green Belt as defined on the Proposals Map of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012. Policies DM9 (Design Principles) and DM11 (Traffic Management and Highway Safety) of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document are applicable to the consideration of this application along with the NPPF.

7.2 It is considered that the main issues to be addressed by this report are:

- The impact on the Green Belt;
- The impact on the character of the area and the local listed building;
- The impact on neighbouring residential amenities; and,
- The impact on parking and highway safety.

### **7.3 The impact on the Green Belt**

7.3.1 The NPPF defines previously developed land as land which is, or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. The site can therefore be considered to constitute “previously developed land” within the Green Belt. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF advises that the limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development would be appropriate in the Green Belt.

7.3.2 In assessing the proposal’s impact on the openness of the Green Belt the primary indicator is the presence of built form. The proposed extension would be sited within the footprint of existing single storey elements and courtyard area. In addition, the development would be sited within a part of the site that is densely concentrated by school buildings and extensive areas of hardstanding. The dining hall building to the immediate south, the main entrance and China House to the east and Bagshot Road just beyond the boundary to the north all contribute to a hard urban landscape around this part of the site. Although the proposed extension accounts for an increase in floor area of approximately 46%, in the context of the larger site, the proposal is considered to be a limited infill development on previously developed land that would not detract from the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

7.3.4 The proposed development is therefore considered to be appropriate development in the Green Belt. Even if, notwithstanding this conclusion, this development is deemed to be harmful to openness then in the officer's opinion the identified need for the accommodation (as identified in paragraph 4.1 of this report) weighs significantly in favour of this proposal. There is a wider concern that over time incremental infill developments at the school may cumulatively be harmful to the Green Belt. Whilst officers do not consider this to be the case with this proposal, it is nevertheless considered that for future applications the applicant provides a comprehensive masterplan so that development can be treated holistically. An informative is proposed regarding this (see also paragraph 7.4.3 below).

### **7.4 The impact on the character of the area and the local listed building**

7.4.1 Policy DM17 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy advises that development that affects a Heritage Asset should first establish and take into account its individual significance and seek to promote the conservation and enhancement of the asset and setting.

- 7.4.2 The Council's Historic Buildings Officer has visited the site in order to assess the proposal and has expressed concern in respect of the dilution of the quality of the historic building over time. He acknowledges that although the building is one of the more publically visible buildings on the site, the proposal may not have a substantially harmful impact on the interest of the wider complex. He advises that the incremental and accumulative alteration of buildings on the wider site may further dilute the interest of the heritage asset.
- 7.4.3 Although the concerns raised by the Council's Historic Buildings Officer are noted, the current proposal relates to only a small part of the wider site. Given the modest impact on the locally listed building, it is considered that the benefits of improving facilities within the school contributes to its continued competitiveness in the local area and outweighs the limited harm to the locally listed building. However, noting the concerns raised in respect of the incremental extensions to the wider site, officers have included an informative advising the applicant to submit a comprehensive master plan as part of future planning applications on the wider site as a means of fostering a more holistic assessment of the impact of development on the heritage asset. On this basis, it is not considered that the current proposal would have an adverse impact on the locally listed building.

## **7.5 The impact on neighbouring residential amenities**

- 7.5.1 Policy DM9 of the Core Strategy advises that development will be acceptable where it provides sufficient private and public amenity space and respects the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring property and uses. The NPPG provides guidance in respect of noise considerations to be made in the delivery of new development.
- 7.5.2 The proposed extension would be set a significant distance away from residential neighbouring properties. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have a significant impact on the amenities of neighbouring residential properties.

## **7.6 The impact on parking and highway safety**

- 7.6.1 Policy DM11 of the Core Strategy advises that development which would adversely impact the safe and efficient flow of traffic movement on the highway network will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that measures to reduce and mitigate such impacts to acceptable levels can be implemented.
- 7.6.2 The County Highway Authority have undertaken an assessment in terms of the likely net additional traffic generation, access arrangements and parking provision and are satisfied that the application would not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway. The County Highway Authority therefore have no highway requirements.

## **7.7 The impact on trees**

- 7.7.1 Trees form an important part of the visual landscape whether in a rural or urban setting. Policy DM9 of the Core Strategy advises that trees and vegetation worthy of retention should be protected.
- 7.7.2 The Council's Tree Officer has assessed the proposal and advised that the proposed construction will be outside the root protection areas of trees on the site. As a safeguarding measure tree protection fencing as set out in the accompanying report by R W Green Limited dated 26 September 2014 will be requested by condition. Subject to compliance with relevant conditions, it is considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on trees and as such accords with Policy DM9 of the Core Strategy.

## **7.8 The impact on local infrastructure**

7.8.1 Surrey Heath's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule was adopted by Full Council on the 16th July 2014. As the CIL Charging Schedule will come into effect on the 1st December 2014 an assessment of CIL liability has been undertaken. Surrey Heath charges CIL on residential and retail developments where there is a net increase in floor area. However, as the proposals do not relate to development in Use Class C3, or A1 - A5, the development is not CIL liable.

## **8.0 ARTICLE 2(3) DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) ORDER 2012 WORKING IN A POSITIVE/PROACTIVE MANNER**

In assessing this application, officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner consistent with the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the NPPF. This included the following:

- a) Provided or made available pre application advice to seek to resolve problems before the application was submitted and to foster the delivery of sustainable development.
- b) Provided feedback through the validation process including information on the website, to correct identified problems to ensure that the application was correct and could be registered.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

9.1 In conclusion, the proposed development would represent a limited infill on previously developed and therefore represents appropriate development within the Green Belt. Moreover, the benefits arising from the provision of improved educational facilities weigh in favour of granting planning permission. It is also noted the proposal would not have an adverse impact on residential amenity, highway safety or trees. On this basis the application is recommended for approval.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATION**

GRANT subject to the following conditions:-

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions and in accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The building works, hereby approved, shall be constructed in external fascia materials; brick, tile, bonding and pointing, to match those of the existing building.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and to accord with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

3. The proposed development shall be built in accordance with the following approved plans: 106, 107, 108, 109(A), 110 (A), 111, 112, 113. , unless the prior written approval has been obtained from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning and as advised in ID.17a of the Planning Practice Guidance.

4. Before any equipment, materials or machinery are brought onto the site in connection with the development, protective fencing at least 2m high and comprising of a vertical and horizontal framework of scaffolding (well braced to resist impacts) and ground protection methods, in compliance with **BS5837:2012 – Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction**, shall be erected in accordance with the submitted and approved Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Such protection shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition nor shall any fires be started, no tipping, refuelling, disposal of solvents or cement mixing carried out and ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation or vehicular access be made, without the written consent of the borough council.

Reason: To preserve and enhance the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

5. A minimum of 7 working days before any development, including any works of demolition or site clearance, a pre-commencement meeting must be arranged with the Arboricultural Officer. The purpose of this meeting is to agree the extent of any facilitation or management tree works, tree and ground protection, demolition, storage of materials and the extent and frequency of Arboricultural site supervision. In all other regards the development shall proceed in accordance with the supplied **BS5837:2012 – Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction** compliant report prepared by RW Green Limited dated 26 September 2014.

Reason: To preserve and enhance the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

#### Informative(s)

1. Building Regs consent req'd DF5
2. Decision Notice to be kept DS1
3. The applicant is advised that any further applications for extensions or redevelopment of parts of Gordon's School should be submitted as part of a comprehensive master plan to enable a holistic assessment of the impact of development on the Green Belt and the heritage asset.