DECISION DELEGATED TO DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Application No:	**H09-0875-19**	**Applicant:**	**University Academy Holbeach**
Proposal:	Erection of a new two-storey, ten classroom block plus additional car parking.		
Location:	University Academy Holbeach Park Road Holbeach Spalding		
Terminal Date:	3rd December 2019		

Planning Policies

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan - Adopted: March 2019	
01	Spatial Strategy
02	Development Management
03	Design of New Development
04	Approach to Flood Risk
05	Meeting Physical Infrastructure and Service Needs
32	Community, Health and Well-being
36	Vehicle and Cycle Parking
APPENDIX 6	Parking Standards

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

Sections 2, 4, 8, 9, 12 and 14

Representations:

	Object	Support	No Obj.	Comments
PARISH COUNCIL	0	1	0	0
WARD MEMBER	0	1	0	0
PLANNING LIAISON OFFICER - FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT	0	0	0	1
HIGHWAYS & SUDS SUPPORT	0	0	0	1
SHDC INTERNAL	0	0	0	1

OTHER STATUTORY BODIES	0	0	0	3
RESIDENTS	2	1	0	0

CASE OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Proposal

Full planning permission is sought for a new two-storey, ten classroom maths block. It would be constructed in render and brickwork with composite roof sheeting to match existing school buildings nearby.

The application is one of two applications for additional classrooms, the other being for the erection of a 6 classroom science block (H09-0838-19), which was recently granted permission. Outline planning permission has previously been granted for a 16 classroom block (ref: H09-1226-18).

Site Description

The site is currently part of a grassed area within a group of existing school buildings. A number of trees are situated along the western perimeter. Tennis courts are located to the west and a residential estate (Manor Drive) further to the west beyond a playing field.

History

H09-1226-18 - O/A - Demolition of existing temporary classroom block and erection of a new 16 classroom block with associated car parking - Granted 6 March 2019.

H09-0838-19 - Full - Erection of a new two-storey, six classroom block - Granted 25 November 2019.

Consultation Responses

Holbeach Parish Council - Supported.

Cllr F Biggadike - Supported. An Academy delivering a first class education for children in the South Holland District.

LCC Highways/SUDS - No objections subject to the submission of a School Travel Plan prior to occupation given the critical time period and funding deadlines.

SHDC Environmental Protection - No comments with respect to land contamination.

Environment Agency - No objections subject to finished floor levels being set no lower than 3.60 metres AOD.

Anglian Water - Within the catchment of Holbeach Recycling Centre, which has available capacity for the proposed flows.

Lincolnshire Police - No objections.

Public - Objections received (summarised):
Market Rasen Way and Fakenham Close have become the school car park for 6th Form and some teachers. This situation is the result of the school's expansion. Parked cars are blocking roads and blocking emergency vehicles such as fire appliances and refuse lorries; No new parking has been provided; Accident waiting to happen; Drop off and pick up point required, as well as parking spaces

for 6th formers; Should be no more expansion until the parking and congestion issues have been properly evaluated and resolved - currently detrimental to highway safety.

A local resident has supported the proposal but considers that traffic and parking issues should be considered due to the increase in pupil numbers.

Information from Applicant (Summarised):
The University Academy Holbeach has been requested by Lincolnshire County Council to increase the Year 7 annual intake of students from 180-240 students from September 2020 to help meet a forecast shortfall of secondary school places in the South Holland area. Concurrent with this an existing temporary portakabin teaching block (Harrison House) has been Condition Assessed as being at end of life and must be urgently replaced. This project would seek to replace the lost teaching space in the condemned block.

Outline permission was sought in support of a CIF bid funding application which was ultimately unsuccessful, therefore the design has been revised to split the previously approved 16 classroom blocks into two separate buildings of distinct use, science and maths, of 6 classrooms and 10 classrooms respectively. Permission for the 6 classroom science block will be sought under a separate application.

The last LCC Suitability Survey (2018) states that there are currently 98 car park spaces with the academy needing a minimum of 129. Therefore it is proposed to include a new car park of 44 spaces which brings the total on-site parking to 142 allowing for an extra 10% future capacity.

The viability of the project is subject to further bid funding whereby the intent of this application will be used to demonstrate the scheme's practicality and deliverability as part of the bid process. The bid seeks to secure funding for the erection of the new 10 classroom block as a replacement of the existing temporary classroom block and construction of the new car park. Therefore, the details surrounding the car park, landscaping and overall use of the northern parcel of land will be finalised should the bid be successful.

Planning Considerations

The main issues are;
- Principle;
- Character/appearance;
- Amenity;
- Highway safety;
- Other material considerations such as flood risk, drainage and contamination.

Principle

Section 38 (6) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as amended by the 2004 Act, indicates that determination must be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site is inside Holbeach Settlement Boundary as defined in the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP), 2019. Policy 1 indicates that within the settlement boundaries of the Main Service Centres, including Holbeach, development will be permitted that supports their role as a service centre for the settlement itself, helps sustain existing facilities or helps meet the service needs of other local communities.

The site is inside Holbeach Settlement Boundary and the proposal would provide additional educational facilities that would help support Holbeach's role as a service centre and help sustain existing facilities. No objections are therefore raised in principle.

Character/appearance

The proposed classroom block would be sited on a grassed area within an existing group of buildings and next to the tennis courts. A number of existing trees would need to be removed, which is regrettable. However, their removal is outweighed by the community benefits that the new classroom would bring. Additional planting is recommended on the school premises to offset this loss.

The Design and Access Statement indicates that the scale and form of the new buildings has very much been driven by the existing established site aesthetics. It is 2 storey in nature and typically constructed as a wide fronted, shallow building with classrooms front and back. The density of the development has very much been dictated by the need for expansion, ancillary services have been kept to a minimum whilst still maintaining a functional education facility.

The main inspiration for the external appearance and overall aesthetic of the new classroom block has been heavily influenced by the recently constructed (circa 2012) large extension sited to the south of the proposed development. The external walls treatment will reflect a combination of the red brick older school buildings to the east and west and the blue brick and render treatment afforded to the newer adjacent development. Red bricks will be used up to the ground floor window cill height and above this the new building will be rendered with a white and blue finish to complement the general site aesthetic.

To minimise the overall mass of the building, whilst maintaining the geometry of the existing school buildings, the new classroom block is designed as a mono-pitched roof sloping away front to back. The roof material will take the form of a composite trapezoidal roofing panel, in-keeping with existing buildings on site. Large double height curtain walls are a big feature of the recent construction to the south, and these details have been replicated in the proposal to further reinforce the established site aesthetic.

It is considered that the external facade offers visually strong and pure aesthetics which are sympathetic with the surrounding area.

Amenity

The nearest residential properties are situated off Manor Drive some 100 metres to the west and also Market Rasen Way and Fakenham Close on the opposite side of Park Road. Background noise levels are relatively high due to the site's proximity to the A17. Complaints have been received that staff and 6th form pupils are parking vehicles on the estate opposite. Whilst such activity may cause some disturbance and inconvenience to nearby residents, the level is not considered to be such as to justify refusal and outweigh the benefits of the scheme; namely, the provision of additional educational facilities within the town.

Highway Safety

Concerns have been raised on grounds that staff and 6th form pupils park their cars on nearby streets due to inadequate car parking within the school grounds. In response, the school presently has 132 staff rising to 135 by 2022. There are currently 98 staff parking spaces, which will be increased to 142 by the construction of a new car park following completion of the new maths block. The number of car parking spaces complies with Policy 36 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, 2019, which requires 1 space per 2 staff for secondary schools.

Moreover, at the request of LCC Highways, the applicant has prepared a School Travel Plan setting out measures to promote healthy and safe travel to school and help reduce reliance on motor vehicles. Highways have requested a condition that the Academy be managed in accordance with the Travel Plan, which indicates that it will be reviewed annually. It should be noted, however, that the outline permission (ref: H09-1226-18) had no such requirement. This should be taken into consideration when wording the condition.

Flood Risk

The site is located within Flood Zone 3 of the Environment Agency's Flood Maps. A sequential test therefore needs to be undertaken.

The Environment Agency's Flood Maps have been created as a tool to raise awareness of flood risk with the public and partner organisations, such as Local Authorities, Emergency Services and Drainage Authorities. The Maps do not take into account any flood defences. Also, large parts of the South Holland District lie within Flood Zone 3. It is therefore necessary to use the refined flood risk information (Hazard and Depth maps) within the South East Lincolnshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017) as a basis to apply the sequential test

The SFRA indicates that the site is within an area identified as "Danger for Some". This is a less severe category and the proposal is an extension of an existing community facility. There are not

more suitable sites appropriate for the proposed development located in areas with a lower risk of flooding. In this respect, the Authority views reasonably available sites as those that are deliverable and developable (as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework) for the use proposed within the area, can accommodate the general requirements of the development and are, in principle, in conformity with the objectives and advice within the NPPF and its associated National Planning Practice Guidance relating to sustainable development and flood risk.

It is not possible, consistent with wider sustainability objectives, for the development to be located in zones with a lower probability of flooding. The exceptions test should therefore be applied. It is a method to demonstrate and help ensure that flood risk to people and property will be managed satisfactorily, while allowing necessary development to go ahead in situations where suitable sites at lower risk of flooding are not available. The NPPF and the PPG set out two elements to the Exceptions Test.

First, proposed development is required to show that it will provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, and second, that it will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall. This is aimed at allowing necessary development to go ahead in situations where suitable sites at lower risk of flooding are not available whilst helping ensure that flood risk to people and property will be managed satisfactorily.

In terms of the first element, sustainability issues within South East Lincolnshire are addressed within the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, 2019. In this respect, the site is within Holbeach Settlement Boundary and the proposal constitutes an extension of an existing educational facility. The development is required to sustain the existing community. The proposal scores positively against the aims and objectives of the Local Planning Authority's sustainability appraisal and would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk. This includes the provision of additional educational/community facilities, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework.

Concerning the second element, the Environment Agency has recommended that the development be carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment. Finished floor levels shall be set no lower than 3.60 metres above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Flood resilient construction shall be set no lower than 3.90 metres AOD. The applicants are advised to sign up to the Environment Agency's free Floodline Warnings Direct Service.

Drainage

Foul water would be disposed of to the mains sewer and surface water to soakaways. Anglian Water has indicated that the foul drainage from this development is in the catchment of Holbeach Water Recycling Centre, which will have capacity to treat the flows from the development site. They are duty bound to accept the foul flows from development with the benefit of planning consent in accordance with the Water Industry Act, 1991.

The applicant has indicated that there is no evidence to suggest any ground contamination based on existing reports of the recent development to the south. However, a Ground Investigation Report will be carried out prior to commencement on site to determine the existing ground conditions.

Conclusion

The site is inside Holbeach Settlement Boundary and the proposal would provide additional educational facilities that would help support Holbeach's role as a service centre and help sustain existing facilities. No objections are therefore raised in principle.

The building is sympathetic in terms of design and the proposal would not harm the amenity of nearby residents to such an extent as to justify refusal taking into consideration the community benefits of the scheme.

LCC Highways/SUDs raise no objections on highway safety grounds, subject to the Academy being managed in accordance with the submitted School Travel Plan. Additional car parking is to be provided. The proposal would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, subject to mitigation measures.

Additional Considerations

Public Sector Equality Duty

In making this decision the Authority must have regard to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under s.149 of the Equalities Act. This means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to:
A. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
B. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may include removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the special needs of those with a protected characteristic; encouraging participation in public life (or other areas where they are underrepresented) of people with a protected characteristic(s).
C. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The PSED must be considered as a relevant factor in making this decision but does not impose a duty to achieve the outcomes in s.149. It is only one factor that needs to be considered, and may be balanced against other relevant factors.

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case will have a disproportionately adverse impact on a protected characteristic.

Human Rights

In making a decision, the Authority should be aware of and take into account any implications that may arise from the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority such as South Holland District Council to act in a manner that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. The Authority is referred specifically to Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property).

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case interferes with local residents' right to respect for their private and family life, home and correspondence, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of the applicant). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general public interest and the recommendation is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.