

Minutes

NORTH PLANNING COMMITTEE

21 February 2012

Meeting held in Council Chamber - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



	<p>MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors: Eddie Lavery (Chairman) Allan Kauffman (Vice-Chairman) David Allam (Labour Lead) Jazz Dhillon Michael Markham Carol Melvin John Morgan David Payne</p>
	<p>LBH Officers Present: James Rodger, Meg Hirani, Syed Shah, Sarah White and Nav Johal</p> <p>Also Present: Councillors' John Hensley, Jonathon Bianco, Andrew Retter, Philip Corthorne, Richard Lewis, Scott Seaman-Digby</p>
127.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
128.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Richard Lewis declared an interest in relation to Item 8, St John's School, and remained in the room for the duration of this item.</p>
129.	<p>TO SIGN AND RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 2 FEBRUARY 2012 (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>These were agreed to be an accurate record.</p>
130.	<p>MATTERS THAT HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE OR URGENT (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
131.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Items marked part 1 were considered in public and items parked part 2 were considered in private. There were no part 2 items to consider.</p>

132. **ST JOHN'S SCHOOL, POTTER STREET HILL, NORTHWOOD - 10795/APP/2011/2627** (*Agenda Item 8*)

Retention of additional classroom and assembly area with library for pre-prep school, together with first aid room and staff toilet, without complying with condition 4 of planning permission ref: 10795/APP/2001/1600 dated 21/11/2001 (which limited pupil numbers at the school to 350 and staff to no more than 40 FTE) to allow for the retention of the current staff numbers (65 full-time equivalent staff).

The Chairman introduced the application and reminded all those present that the Council meeting on 12 January 2012 had approved a change to its petition procedures and speaking rights at Planning Committee meetings.

Where there were multiple petitions received in relation to a planning application, the Chairman of the Planning Committee had the discretion to amend speaking rights so that there was no duplication of presentations to the meeting. There would not be an automatic right that each organiser of a petition will get 5 minutes to speak. The Chairman may agree a maximum of 10 minutes speaking time for a representative to speak on behalf of the multiple petitions. The applicant or their agent also had the right to speak at the Committee meeting about the application for 5 minutes.

For this application the Council had received a total of 37 petitions in support of the application, this included an on-line petition. A total of 4 petitions had been received against the application. The Chairman had agreed that the petitioners in support of the application be granted 10 minutes to address Committee and two petitioners had been nominated to speak on the petitioners behalf. The Chairman had agreed that the petitioners against the application be granted 5 minutes to address Committee as the 4 petitions received had the same statement against the application and as the majority of the signatures on the petitions being the same.

It was noted that Members had considered the large volume correspondence and papers in relation to this application. This included a lengthy addendum which set out an additional statement from the petitioners in objection to the application. It was noted that all planning decisions were influenced by planning matters. The comments from residents, MP, Councillor's had all been noted by Committee.

An earlier application to retain a single storey extension to the school which was sited within the Green Belt without complying with condition 4 of the original permission dated 21st November 2001 which limited pupil and staff numbers at the school to 350 and 40 full time equivalent (FTE) respectively so as to allow current numbers of 405 pupils and 65 FTE staff to be retained was refused at the North Planning Committee on 29th April 2010.

A subsequent appeal was dismissed. The School had made a legal challenge to the Inspector's decision which was still pending. Before the appeal was due to be heard, a further application was submitted with updated information. This application was due to be considered at a special North Planning Committee meeting on the 9th March 2011, but the School withdrew the application before the committee could consider it.

A breach of condition notice was subsequently served on the 20th September 2011. This was also the subject of judicial review but this had been quashed. This application sought to retain the single storey extension to the school whilst allowing the School to retain the existing 65 FTE compliment of staff only at the School.

The School stated that plans were in hand to reduce existing pupil numbers. This application was therefore substantially different from the previous application. Furthermore, Counsel opinion had been obtained and advised that the determination of this application would not affect the continuing legal effect of the BCN.

The Inspector dismissed the previous appeal due to traffic queuing on Potter Street Hill, which was prejudicial to highway and pedestrian safety and the free flow of traffic.

The School was clear that 65FTE were employed at the School and that this number would not be exceeded. Car parking was now better managed at the School. It was considered that the School had adequately demonstrated that the 25 staff did not materially contribute to the congestion on Potter Street Hill to justify a refusal of permission. Traffic queues occurred during peak parent pick up and drop off times. It was also noted that there was significant support from the wider community that St John's should be allowed to retain existing staff numbers.

In considering the previous appeal to retain existing pupil and staff numbers, the Inspector, in May 2011, stated that the building would remain, so its impact upon its surroundings would be neutral so that in itself, the building would have no further effect on the openness of the Green Belt or the character and appearance of the area.

Since the Inspector's decision there had been no changes at the School to suggest that the on-site parking was no longer available. The issue that needed to be assessed was the contribution that the staff made to the formation of traffic queues which restricted the free flow of traffic on Potter Street Hill.

Based upon the recent travel plan survey, staff contributed a total of 118 vehicle movements a day (81% of 73 staff arriving and departing). If all staff traffic movements were assumed to use Potter Street Hill, staff accounted for only 6.6% of total traffic movements. A reduction of 25 staff or 34% would in turn represent a pro-rata reduction in traffic by approximately 2.2% reduction. A number of school staff did not use Potter Street Hill; therefore this figure would be lower.

The timings of staff movements and the implications for the queuing on Potter Street Hill reflected that very few staff vehicle movements took place at the same time as when traffic queues typically form on Potter Street Hill. Reducing staff numbers would therefore have little discernible impact on the traffic queues. A number of the teachers also made the point that they were contractually obliged to be present at the school before pupils arrived and after they departed.

This application only concerned staff numbers; it was therefore materially

different from the previous application considered at appeal. The application was recommended for approval.

In accordance with the Council's constitution representatives of the petitions received in support to the proposal were invited to address the meeting. Ms Suki Kalirai, Head of Special Educational Needs at St John's School, and Ms Naomi Vaughan, on behalf of parents of pupils at St John's School, spoke on behalf of the petitions submitted.

- The petitioners spoke on behalf of staff at St John's School, Hillingdon Residents, neighbours, parents, local businesses of Northwood and friends of the school.
- Ms Kalirai had worked as a teacher in The London Borough of Hillingdon for over 20 years. At schools such as Stockley Academy, for the language support service with children from ethnic minority backgrounds, Sunshine House School - school and home for children with visual and physical disabilities.
- Ms Kalirai stated it had been a fantastic borough to work for and she had been proud to be part of it. That she was proud to be at St Johns School, which was one of the most nurturing schools she had worked in.
- Staff were distressed at the situation the school was in and wanted their voice to be heard to ensure that the outstanding school could stay open.
- As staff, they regret the upset surrounding the approval and conditions laid down by the Committee in 2001.
- Current staff numbers were broadly the same now as they were then. The pupil numbers were being reduced by the school.
- This issue was about jobs and education, not traffic.
- Ms Kalirai stated it seemed that the 2001 Planning Committee Members laid down the original conditions because it wanted to limit the traffic on Potter Street Hill.
- This application would not affect the traffic flow or impact negatively on the safety of any individuals or residents using Potter Street Hill.
- Staff were bound by their contracts to arrive and leave at different times from the pupils. Teaching staff needed to be on site before and after the pupils. Cleaners and caterers arrived and left at completely different times to the pupils. Petitioners therefore felt that traffic volume would not be reduced by cutting staff numbers.
- The petitioner stated that the Committee had it in their power to keep 25 people in their jobs, with a local employer who wanted to keep them. Alternatively the Committee could add them to the unemployment figure by allowing redundancies. Staff would be made redundant in a tough economy.
- Ms Kalirai asked if it acceptable that staff may have to up root their own families and go somewhere else new to seek employment, when the traffic on Potter Street Hill would not be affected at all by any staff cuts.
- Staff were proud to work at St John's. It was a successful, thriving school, with excellent academic standards, the pastoral care and the high quality extra-curricular activities offered.
- Pupils were encouraged to become involved in the community and they provided musical entertainment for the children at Sunshine house school and for the elderly at Erskine hall. In the last 9 years the school had raised over £130,000 for good causes.
- Even with reduced pupil numbers, the school still needed all the teaching staff, as they would have the same number of classes and

sets.

- Teaching assistants were a vital part of staffing with younger children and they were found in every single school in the country.
- The school also needed all of the support staff. Petitioners felt they could not reduce the cleaning and maintenance staff. Appropriate health and safety standards needed to be maintained.
- Ms Kalirai stated that petitioners regretted that the breach had caused so much upset. Staff traffic was not the problem, maintaining a community asset was.
- Ms Vaughan had been nominated by the parent body at St John's to speak to the Committee on behalf of parents. She was a former Chair of the St John's Parents Association.
- Ms Vaughan had many conversations with other parents who were seriously worried about the impact of the Committee's decision on the future of their children's education. The Parents Association wanted the school to resolve its planning issues and to be able to focus on providing an outstanding education.
- It was stated that all of the school's parents supported the application and many of them were present.
- It was felt the staff at the school were of the highest quality and all were needed to continue to deliver a first class education. The impact of a refusal of this application would be on teaching staff, as all of the school's support staff were needed to maintain its grounds and buildings.
- If the number of teaching staff was reduced then fewer parents would apply to send their children to St John's School. There would be a decline in standards and was in competition, the school would eventually close.
- Over fifteen hundred Hillingdon residents, neighbours, staff, parents and friends of the school had signed the 36 petitions in support and there were nearly two thousand names on an on-line petition.
- That although a small number of local residents opposed the application, over 100 Gatehill Estate Residents and over 70 Pinner Hill Estate Residents had signed petitions supporting the school.
- Parents had been told by the School that it was committed to reducing pupil numbers. In terms of the impact on traffic, it was self-evident that teaching and support staff travel to and from school at different times to parents delivering and picking up their children.
- The school would continue to work with parents and the Council in reducing traffic journeys as it had done for some time through the efforts of the School Travel Plan, agreed with Hillingdon, and other initiatives.
- No Council or Councillor wanted to see 25 local people be made redundant, and the local MP had written to Councillors to this effect.
- Should the school close, it was a great concern for parents, because at this stage in the school year places at alternative schools would be limited and really opportunistic.
- Also, many children would have missed deadlines to apply for places elsewhere for September 2012. The disruption to the pupil's education would be disastrous.
- Any move to allow redundancy in this economy is wrong.

In accordance with the Council's constitution a representative of the petitions received in objection to the proposal was invited to address the meeting. Mr

Nick Raspin spoke on behalf of the petitioners.

- Mr Raspin stated that the academic record of St John's School was not up for discussion.
- That conditions were set to prevent additional traffic and this had safety implications.
- He stated that many of St John's School staff used Potter Street Hill to travel to and from the school.
- Many that were in favour of the application that had signed the petition lived outside the area.
- Mr Raspin stated that this was not a popularity contest; it was about what was right.
- He asked how many staff were employed at the site and that a condition had been set for 40fte staff.
- That the school had repeatedly increased staff and misled the Council on this.
- The petitioner felt that the application forms did not match the financial accounts.
- He stated that although it maybe tempting to replace the original condition or amend this, he did not advise Committee do this.
- There were daily parking issues and residents were forced to park on narrow roads. The parking issues faced went against policy.
- The tutor to staff ratio was improving, independent schools did operate with higher ratio's.
- Mr Raspin stated that accidents had increased in recent years and that there had been delays for emergency services using the road due to traffic.
- The road safety condition had been there for 10 years, this application, if approved, would weaken the safety issues.
- Mr Raspin asked the Committee to consider what a life was worth.

Mr Martin Robb, Governor of St John's School, spoke on behalf of the application submitted:

- On behalf of the Board of Governor's Mr Robb expressed his sincerest apologies for the need to be at the Committee meeting. As a Chartered Surveyor with around 20 years' experience; he understood the significance of a breach of planning condition.
- St John's wished to act as a constructive and legitimate member of the community at all times. He asked the Council to allow the School to retain 65FTE staff.
- Mr Robb confirmed that they now had systems in place at the School to ensure that planning conditions were complied with. The school was in the process of reducing pupil numbers to 350 by September 2012.
- The seriousness of the position that St John's found itself in could not be overstated. If the Committee's decision was to refuse planning consent they would have insufficient staff numbers to educate 350 boys and St John's would not be viable.
- The school had similar ratios of teaching staff to pupils to competitor schools. The school was not doing anything excessive in having these staff numbers, nor were they in 2001, when the total staff numbered around 70, including around 40 FTE teaching staff.
- It was noted that when the planning inspector reached her decision last May, it was considered that there was no adverse intensification of the use of the Green Belt.

- Mr Robb stated there was no adverse contribution to congestion in Potter Street Hill caused by staff. They provided evidence for this in their Planning, Design and Access Statement and it was agreed with in the officer report.
- The school required staff to arrive before pupils, to prepare for the school day. They left after the pupils had gone home. Any car journeys by staff were made well before, or after, the roads became busy.
- The movement of pupils was an issue, the school recognised that. They were reducing pupil numbers, as required and looking at a range of measures that would help to make life easier for the school and its neighbours. Discussions on specific proposals were underway with the Council's Highways Department.
- This application was about staff, not pupils travel arrangements. The impact of this application on congestion was nil, the impact on the green belt was considered by an independent expert to be nil.

The Chairman asked Mr Robb about the legal challenge that was outstanding; Mr Robb stated if the Council approved the application then the challenge would be withdrawn.

Ward Councillors were present and spoke on the application:

- There was a long history with this application. Most of this had revolved around the school being situation on Green Belt land. The Council put a lot of significance on Green Belt and the Council had a good record of protecting this for residents.
- There was a great deal of emotion on this application and this was understood and appreciated.
- It was important that Committee Members had to consider the planning issues, and these were dealt with by planning law and not emotions.
- The Ward Councillors had met a number of the staff at St John's School, and it was noted that Councillor John Morgan, as a Committee Member, had stayed away from any discussions with the school.
- Ward Councillors were pleased to hear the school was moving towards improving pupil numbers.
- It was important to ensure a line was drawn and going forward the Council was not faced with another application similar.
- The Green Belt needed to be protected.
- Looking to the future the Council and the school should be working together.
- The crux of matter was traffic; Ward Councillors had visited the area and observed the traffic to and from the school.
- Ward Councillors were disturbed by some of the antics of some of the residents who made it difficult to people to park on the nearby road.
- The Ward Councillor suggested that the school asked parents to car share, particularly those arriving in large vehicles. That this conversation should be continued to be discussed in the future.
- Ward Councillors felt that staff had a minimal effect on traffic and they did not want staff to lose their jobs. That as a Council they wished for employment levels to increase.
- The Ward Councillors supported the officer recommendation and asked that Committee approved the application with the conditions set out in the report.

Members asked the Council's Legal Officer to confirm the status of the BCN served on St John's School. The Legal Officer confirmed that the application being considered would have no effect on the BCN. It applied to the 2001 planning application and would be set alongside that.

Members commented on the emotion regarding this application and had enormous sympathy for all. It was stressed that the Committee had to consider planning issues and the key issue was traffic. The building on the Green belt would remain regardless of the decision. No other issues were being determined on the site.

Members stated that education was not being considered but the planning issues and that argument with regard to staff not being an issue to the traffic was well made. Members commented that all schools across the Country faced the issues regarding traffic during peak times, and that St John's was not in isolation. It was clear in this case that staff at St John's School did not cause the traffic at Potter Street Hill and that with the pupil reduction the situation should improve.

The recommendation for approval was moved, seconded and on being put to the vote was unanimously agreed.

Resolved –

That the application be approved as per the agenda and the changes set out in the addendum.

133. **39 HIGHFIELD DRIVE, ICKENHAM - 67201/APP/2010/1803** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Demolition of existing property and the erection of a two storey, with rooms in roofspace, six bedroom detached dwelling.

This application was deferred at the North Planning Committee of the 20th December 2011 for a site visit. Members visited the site on the 24th January 2012.

Planning permission was sought for the erection of a 6 bedroom detached house. The proposed house, would provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation for future occupiers and would not harm the amenities of nearby residents. With the proposed amendments, it was considered that the development would relate satisfactorily with the character and appearance of other houses in the street, the street scene and surrounding area generally.

A new petition, objecting to the application, with 23 signatures had been received. Concerns had been raised by adjoining residents relating to the accuracy of the plans and in particular the distance the new property would extend beyond the rear of the current building, which on the plans is shown to align with the rear of No.37 at a distance of 5.105m; and the discrepancy in the report between paragraph 3 and paragraph 5.

Officers had been to the site twice and measured this distance, there was a discrepancy of around 100mm. Paragraph 3 was correct. With regard to

paragraph 5 this particular sentence was referring to No.41 and should say 'house' as opposed to 'houses'.

In accordance with the Council's constitution a representative of the petition received in objection to the proposal was invited to address the meeting. Mr Jerry Hughes spoke on behaviour of the petitioners:

- Mr Hughes stated that the plans shown in the report did not reflect the application adequately. He felt there were discrepancies in the accuracy of the plans.
- The figures that were stated in the plans gave the planners the option to go further with the extension and closer into the neighbouring properties.
- The petitioner stated that the shadow plans shown were significantly different to what the current building at no.37 was currently like; the plans reflected what it was like in 1991.
- Petitioners did wish that no.39 be developed as it was an eyesore but would like it to be developed legally.
- Mr Hughes stressed that he felt the plans shown were incorrect.

The agent was not present.

A Ward Councillor was present and addressed Committee:

- The Ward Councillor stated that if the plans in the report were not correct than the information before Committee was inaccurate. Therefore the Committee would not be in a place where they could make a decision on the application before them.

The Council's Legal Officer confirmed that if the Committee made a decision on the application at the meeting then it would be on the plans submitted to them.

Officers confirmed that the addendum contained new plans and the discrepancy was very small. It was confirmed, again, that officers had been out twice to measure to site. It was also confirmed by officers that the overshadowing diagram was correct.

Members discussed the application and stated that the issues regarding the application was around the size and measurements. Members were happy that officers had the correct measurements.

Members stated that when the carried out the site visit it was looked at in detail and they felt the development would be an asset to the street scene.

The recommendation for approval was moved, seconded and on being put to the vote was unanimously agreed.

Resolved –

That the application be approved as per the agenda.

134. **OAKWOOD, CATLINS LANE, PINNER - 67139/APP/2011/2005** (*Agenda Item 7*)

Part two storey, part single storey rear/side extension and single

storey detached garage to side/rear involving demolition of existing detached garage to side.

This application was deferred at the committee of the 10th January 2012 for a site visit. Members visited the site on the 24th January 2012. Petitioners had addressed the Committee at the meeting on 10th January 2012 and a new petition had not been received, there was therefore no right to speak for petitioners at this meeting.

The application property was a distinctive, two storey, detached dwelling situated on the western side of Catlins Lane. The property dates from 1904, was locally listed and within the Eastcote Village Conservation Area. It was built in an Arts and Craft style, with elevations comprising rough cast render with a tiled roof with a circular bay to the front and a tiled roof turret.

The streetscene was verdant and semi-rural in nature. It was primarily residential with large two storey individually designed houses, generally set in large plots, with the buildings set well back from the road.

The application remained the same as previously presented to Committee with a minor amendment to the size of the patio, and width of the side extension, which were being reduced. The plans remained the same and additional information had been provided with the materials to be used.

An email had been received from a resident stating that the English Heritage had decided to protect the house with a Grade II listing and were expecting ratification of this from the Secretary of State by 29th February. Officers had received confirmation from English Heritage that the property was not recommended for a statutory listing.

It was also noted that an additional standard condition would be added, which was not included in the report or addendum, with regard to 'boundary treatment.'

As site was within the Eastcote Village Conservation Area, Mrs Lesley Crowcroft had indicated she would be speaking on their behalf:

- Mrs Crowcroft felt that the report, additional conditions and addendum did not show the protection across the ridge.
- She asked that the rough cast be retained and the application would be more acceptable.
- It was felt that the side extension would cause a terrace effect.
- The new revised drawings did not contain the dimension of the side extension, as detailed in the officer's report.
- Mrs Crowcroft asked that the conditions on the application contained a minimum distance. Neighbours and occupiers of Westcott had shown concern.
- There were problems with air vents to consider.
- The Conservation Panel felt the side extension would be over dominant and not in-keep with the street scene.

Officers confirmed that the conditions on the application required that the tiles and lights on the site be retained. Officers also confirmed that the plans set out in the addendum set out the distances. The rough cast was detailed in the conditions and was proposed to match.

Members commented that the property needed some work. The features of the property were being kept and the development would be a vast improvement.

Members had visited the site and thought it was an interesting development. It was noted that the urban and conservation officer stated in the report that the development was acceptable.

The recommendation for approval was moved, seconded and on being put to the vote was unanimously agreed.

Resolved –

That the application be approved as per the agenda and the changes set out in the addendum, and additional standard boundary treatment condition.

135. **5 POPLARS CLOSE, RUISLIP - 61775/APP/2011/1204** (*Agenda Item 9*)

Single storey side/rear extension.

The application related to a semi-detached house dating from the 1930's on the southwestern side of Poplar Close, a cul-de-sac serving eleven dwellings and a scout hall. Poplar Close was off Ickenham Road, near the junction of Ickenham Road with High Street.

The site was within the Developed Area as identified in the Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the Ruislip Village Conservation Area.

The proposal was for a side and rear extension that would wrap around the rear of the existing house. The house had been extended in the past with a hip to gable roof alteration for a loft conversion under Permitted Development rights. This was undertaken prior to the property being included within the Ruislip Village Conservation Area.

The main considerations were the design and impact of the extension on the house and wider locality, the impact on the amenities of adjoining occupiers and car parking considerations. With regard to any loss of privacy, it was considered that the proposal would not have an adverse affect on the amenity of adjoining residents. The proposal would involve no additional side facing windows.

In accordance with the Council's constitution a representative of the petition received in objection to the proposal was invited to address the meeting. Mr Trevor Browne spoke on behalf of the petitioners:

- Mr Browne explained to Members that before Christmas the officer recommendation was to refuse this application.
- That the plans previously submitted were similar to what was being presented in the report to Committee.
- The majority of the residents in the area were elderly and when amendments came out they did not have access to the updated plans.
- Mr Browne questioned why the recommendation had changed and that there were only small changes to the report.

- It was felt that the application was overdevelopment and would be over dominant.
- He felt the comments on the previous report were still relevant.
- Mr Browne asked Members to vote against the officer recommendation and refuse the application.

The agent was not present.

A Ward Councillor was present and addressed Committee:

- The Ward Councillor supported the objections of the residents.
- It was stressed that the was development in a Conservation Area.
- That the large roof extension was against policy B15, and it would impact on amenities.
- The Ward Councillor found it difficult to see how the application would enhance the area.
- It was urged that the Committee gave serious consideration to the points that were raised regarding the application.

Officers commented on the plans submitted with the application and stated that the Council had no control over who draws the plans. A number of minor revisions had been done on the plans due to some inaccuracies. Officers also commented that the proposal was a regular shape roof form. This was no different to a large amount of applications approved across the Borough, including in Conservation Areas.

Officers spoke about the flue and explained that for the application this would have to be taken down and that any new flue put back should have some control over by the Council. Therefore a condition would need to be added here.

Members agreed that they were not happy with the plans and felt that a site visit would be beneficial. It was also noted that the conservation officer comments in the report were not very detailed.

The recommendation for deferral was moved, seconded and on being put to the vote was unanimously agreed.

Resolved –

That the application be deferred for a site visit.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.41 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Nav Johal on 01895 250692. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.