

## **Epsom College Road Epsom Surrey KT17 4JQ**

Demolition of existing buildings and erection of Sixth Form Centre

<b>Ward:</b>	<b>College Ward</b>
<b>Contact:</b>	<b>John Robinson Planning Officer</b>

### **1 Plans and Representations**

- 1.1 The Council now holds this information electronically. Please click on the following link to access the plans and representations relating to this application via the Council's website, which is provided by way of background information to the report. Please note that the link is current at the time of publication, and will not be updated.

Link: <http://eplanning.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PB4JIQGYKBI00>

### **2 Summary**

- 2.1 This application seeks permission for the demolition of two separate buildings, including a garage block, and their replacement with a three storey building to accommodate a Sixth Form centre.
- 2.2 The proposed site is located within the Epsom College Major Developed Site in the Green Belt and the replacement building would meet the criteria set out in policy DM2, DM8, DM9 and DM10.
- 2.3 The application is not a departure from the Development Plan and therefore does not require submission to the Secretary of State for consideration under his call-in policy on planning applications.
- 2.4 **The application is therefore recommended for APPROVAL.**

### **3 Site description**

- 3.1 The application site falls within the wider Epsom College campus of around 29ha in total, and includes the Grade II listed Chapel and main college buildings. Dotted around the site are a number of protected trees and other structures relating to the school, including sports pavilions and boarding houses. The extensive school grounds, feature sport facilities for rugby, cricket, football, tennis, netball and hockey.
- 3.2 The site is a designated 'Major Developed Site' within the Green Belt, and the north western boundary abuts the College Road Conservation Area.

- 3.3 The main part of the site, featuring the visitor and vehicular entrance to the site off College Road (north), is enclosed by the historic buildings on the north and eastern sides, with the listed chapel and a further historic building located along the western side. The roadway around this main part of the site is dedicated as a one-way route around, with the additional carriageway width easily accommodating parked vehicles on one side. This roadway provides the main circulation route around this part of the campus, both for vehicles and pupils on foot. Site levels generally fall from south to north.
- 3.4 The existing Sixth Form building, the Philosophy and Theology building and the garage block, which are the subject of this application, are located to the southern end of the campus surrounded by existing College buildings to the west and north and College owned residential properties to the east. To the northern side is an existing central space formed of steps and tiered grass banks.
- 3.5 The existing Sixth Form building is a part single and part two storey building with a pitched roof constructed of red brick and render. The central core of the building is single storey and the elevations are punctuated by large uPVC windows. The Philosophy and Theology building is a two storey building with a pitched roof and is constructed largely of red brick.
- 3.6 There are no TPO trees on the proposed Sixth Form site. However, there are two trees with TPOs including a large pine tree to the eastern side of the site in the back gardens of the College residential properties.

#### **4 Proposal**

- 4.1 The application site is currently occupied by two separate buildings, Theology and Philosophy and also Classics and the Sixth Form with garages to the rear. To the northern side is an existing central space formed of steps and tiered grass banks.
- 4.2 This application seeks permission for these buildings to be demolished to allow the construction of a new sixth form centre. The proposed replacement building would be largely on the footprint of the existing buildings that it would replace, (Theology and Philosophy, Classics).
- 4.3 The building would be laid over three floors with the ground floor being set out to provide a café for sixth formers to eat and also to study/ learn in a modern setting either individually or in small groups. Smaller and larger meeting rooms/ 'discussion pods' are also proposed, accessed off the central café area. Dedicated offices for the Heads of Year are also proposed as well as a careers and resources room.

- 4.4 On the first and second floors, a number of teaching rooms are proposed of varying sizes.( For example, larger classrooms and seminar rooms are proposed, as well as smaller meeting rooms ('discussion pods') in addition to practice interview rooms. On each floor, a toilet block and lift are proposed as well as areas for plant.
- 4.5 The building form would comprise three separate zones separated by stair cores that have been pulled/pushed from the main building facade so as to articulate the building. The building would be predominately red brick with areas of the façade incorporating sections of render/stone panels to articulate the façade, with a metal standing seam roof.
- 4.6 To the north west and south east sides of the building, the details of the roof would mirror each other and would incorporate a concealed gutter.
- 4.7 The new building will serve the existing pupils attending the School and would not result in an increase in the number of pupils being taught at the College.
- 4.8 The garages being demolished as part of the proposal are used for storage by both staff and pupils and not used for parking as they are too small for modern cars. Therefore there would be no loss of existing on-site parking.

## **5 Comments from third parties**

- 5.1 The application was advertised by means of letters of notification to 14 neighbouring properties, a site and press notice. To date (18.09.2018) no letters of objection have been received.

## **6 Consultations**

- 6.1 Highways Officer: No objections. Condition to be imposed on any planning permission granted
- 6.2 Conservation Officer: While the proposal fails to contribute anything positive to the significance of the designated heritage assets, any harm resulting from the presence of the bulky new building is far from the level which justifies refusal in terms of paragraph 195 of the updated NPPF. The proposal is therefore condoned in terms of Policy DM8.
- 6.3 Policy Officer: No objection
- 6.4 Archaeology Officer: The proposed development is not in an Area of High Archaeological Potential and falls below the 0.4ha threshold above which archaeological assessment is required under Local Plan policy. As such, I have no archaeological concerns.

6.5 SurreyCC (SuDS): No objections. Should planning permission be granted, that suitably worded conditions are applied to ensure that the SuDS Scheme is properly implemented and maintained throughout the lifetime of the development.

6.6 Tree Officer: No objections

## 7 Relevant planning history

7.1 There is a long and detailed planning history to the College site, its sporting facilities and listed buildings. None are directly relevant to the current application apart from:

Application number	Decision date	Application detail	Decision
17/00248/PREAPP	25.10.2017	Demolition of two existing buildings and erection of new sixth Form Centre with new landscaping treatment	

## 8 Planning Policy

### National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) 2018

Chapter 13 Para 143-145

Protecting Green Belt Land

Chapter 8 Para 94

Promoting healthy and safe communities

Core Strategy 2007

Policy CS1 - General policy

Policy CS2 – Green Belt

Policy CS5 - The built environment

Policy CS6 - Sustainability in new developments

Policy CS13 – Community, Cultural and Built Sports Facilities

Development Management Policies Document 2015

Policy DM2 - Infilling within the boundaries of Major Developed Sites

Policy DM4 - Biodiversity and new development

Policy DM5 - Trees and landscape

Policy DM8 – Heritage assets

Policy DM9 - Townscape character and local distinctiveness

Policy DM10 - Design for new developments

D\_Policy M36 - Sustainable transport - new development

Policy DM37 - Parking standards

Supplementary Planning Document 2015

Parking Standards

## **9 Planning considerations**

The need for the redevelopment

- 9.1 Policy CS13 confirms that “new community, cultural and built sports facilities, and the upgrading of those existing, will be encouraged, particularly where they address a deficiency in current provision, and where they meet the identified needs”

Paragraph 94 of the NPPF 2018 confirms that “it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education, and they should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications”

- 9.2 The applicants have submitted convincing evidence in support of the need to redevelopment the current facilities.
- 9.3 In summary, the existing buildings are not 'fit for purpose' in terms of their layout or size to meet the needs and demands of the School and its pupils and therefore, a modern building for Sixth formers is required. It has been identified by the School as an aspiration and is needed to ensure the School can compete in the current market and, more importantly, offer its Sixth form pupils a modern teaching and learning environment
- 9.4 Officers are satisfied that the redevelopment is necessary and therefore the proposal would comply with Policy CS13.

Green Belt Policy

- 9.5 The proposed site is located within the Epsom College Major Developed Site (MDS) in the Green Belt. Policy DM2 sets out three criteria for confirming whether proposals can be supported within a MDS. These are summarised below, and followed by the applicants assessment of the proposal against them ;
  - i) *Have a greater impact on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt than the existing development*
- 9.6 The replacement building is located within the tightly defined boundary of Epsom College which is defined as a Major Developed Site (MDS) in the Green Belt. Therefore, it will have no impact on the growth or sprawl of the nearest built up area, namely Epsom.
- 9.7 Its location within the MDS within the existing built up part of the College, between existing buildings on previously developed land, will have no impact on this purpose and has no real relevance to any towns merging.
- 9.8 The location between the existing buildings such as Mackinder, Raven and the Mathematics blocks, all located within the existing built up part of the College, confirm that there is no encroachment into the countryside.
- 9.9 The proposal will have no impact on the historic parts of Epsom town centre.
- 9.10 There is no derelict land available to be recycled nearby either within or adjacent to the College campus.
  - ii) *Exceed the height of the existing buildings;*

- 9.11 The height of the proposed replacement building would be approximately 16m, compared to the existing building which is 10m. However, the wording of policy DM2 refers to the height of “existing buildings” (note that the plural is emphasised) which suggests that it is not just a comparison of the height of the proposed building against the existing building that needs to be assessed but all existing buildings within that MDS. Therefore, in terms of assessing proposals on the same basis, the assessment of the proposed height of the Sixth Form building should be on the basis of all buildings within the College.
- 9.12 The Height Assessment detailed within the submitted Design & Access Statement, clearly shows the predomination of buildings more than 3 storeys in height to the north and west of the application site.
- 9.13 A massing diagram in the submitted D&A Statement compares the height of the buildings surrounding the application site. The dominance of 3+ storey buildings is evident as is the style of buildings (namely buildings with a large footprint and pitched roof) and use of red brick. The location of the proposed building within the existing cluster of buildings is clear and the Massing diagram shows that the height of the proposed building does not appear higher than the neighbouring buildings, notably the nearby 3 storey MacKinder building
- iii) *Lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site.*
- 9.14 The existing buildings to be replaced are all located within the main built up area of the College. The location of this previously developed site in the MDS will not change the developed proportion of the site.
- 9.15 In view of the above, officers concur with the applicant’s submissions that the scheme would meet the criteria contained within policy DM2.

Very Special Circumstances

- 9.16 Officers consider that if the site did not fall within an MDS, the test would rely on whether the proposal would fall under one of the exceptions set out in Paragraph 145 of the NPPF and would therefore not be considered inappropriate development. The most relevant exception is bullet point (c) which refers to “*the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces*”.
- 9.17 The footprint of the building is 19.5% larger and, on this basis, could be considered appropriate. However, the volume and area are increasing by more than this 30%, due to the increase in the overall floor area and height of the new building.
- 9.18 Paragraph 144 confirms that inappropriate development should not be approved except in ‘very special circumstances’, which are considered below:

- The proposed location is on the footprint of the existing building it replaces and is therefore located on previously developed land.
- There are no alternative locations for the replacement building that would not be more visible or would have a lesser impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- In respect of the visual impact of the proposed building, the CGI's submitted with the application confirm that the replacement building would not be visible in views from other parts of the school or from the public highway (notably on Longdown Lane South). The CGI's confirm the existing and 'proposed' views and the site's location surrounded by existing buildings would help to reduce any views of it.
- The condition of the existing building, as described in the submitted Heritage Assessment confirms that it has passed its 'useful life' and needs redeveloping.

9.19 In conclusion, on Green Belt Policy, it is therefore considered that the submitted evidence to justify building within the Green Belt, in the form proposed, outweighs the principle of inappropriateness and would therefore constitute very special circumstances. The application is therefore in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS2.

#### Visual Amenity

- 9.20 Epsom College is a Grade II listed building of the mid-19th century, originally comprising a College and associated Almshouses, together with an adjacent Chapel, which is individually listed. The College buildings have been much altered and extended, and many new buildings of little interest have been constructed within the curtilage.
- 9.21 Paragraph 200 of the NPPF (2018) states that new development within the settings of listed buildings should 'enhance or better reveal' the significance of the designated heritage assets and the proposed new structure clearly does neither. However, it is located a considerable distance to the south of the listed buildings and other modern development intervenes.
- 9.22 Although of larger scale than the buildings it would replace, the new building would sit comfortably amidst other (taller) modern buildings on the site and it does not intrude into any important views to or from the designated heritage assets.



- 9.23 The new building would not be visible in the streetscene. It would be built in the same space currently occupied by the “Theology & Philosophy” and “Classics & the Sixth Form” buildings. The location and design of the new building has been informed by the character and constraints of the existing College campus building stock, which is predominately red brick of Victorian Gothic with later additions, as well the existing topography which slopes in two different directions.
- 9.24 The building form would comprise three separate zones separated by stair cores that have been pulled/pushed from the main building facade so as to articulate the building. The three storey building would be predominately red brick with areas of the façade incorporating sections of render/stone panels to articulate the façade, with a metal standing seam roof.
- 9.25 Given the location of the building within the site, the design, scale, massing and appearance are acceptable. When combined with the new landscaped forecourt, there would be a significant improvement, both in visual and “useability” of the immediate area.
- 9.26 The proposed scheme would therefore comply with Policy DM8, DM9 and DM10.

#### Residential Amenity

- 9.27 Policy DM10 requires development to consider issues relating to privacy, overlooking, daylight/ sunlight, the impact on outlook, noise and disturbance.
- 9.28 In respect of issues relating to daylight/ sunlight, a series of sun path diagrams have been submitted with the application that confirm the shadowing patterns and paths of the proposed development. During the spring and autumn equinox and winter, when shadowing is greatest, these would all be contained within the College grounds and there would be no impact on neighbouring dwellings.
- 9.29 The nearest (College) residential properties are located some 30m to the west and around 50m to the south east. Given that there would be no readily apparent views of the building from the public realm, coupled with the acceptable separation gap and intervening buildings, there would be no impact or harm to the overlooking, outlook and privacy of neighbouring residential occupiers, especially on Longdown Lane South.
- 9.30 The proposed building will replace the existing sixth form and is not intended to accommodate any additional pupils. As there would be no change to the use within the college, there would be no change to impact by virtue of noise.
- 9.31 The scheme would therefore comply with Policy DM10.

Parking/Access

- 9.32 The proposal would not result in any change to the number of pupils attending the Sixth Form or College, and there would be no change to the existing, lawful movements to and from the school. The nearest access to the site is off Longdown Lane South which provides vehicular access to the southern part of the College campus. The nearest car park to the proposed building is to the south, adjacent to the Mathematics block and the tennis courts. There would be no change to the access to this existing car park.
- 9.33 The applicants submit that the garages being demolished as part of the proposal are used for storage by both staff and pupils and not used for parking as they are too small for modern cars. Therefore there would be no loss of existing on-site parking. There are existing cycle parking dotted around the (overall college) site.
- 9.34 The scheme would therefore comply with Policy DM37

Trees and Landscape

- 9.35 The submitted Arboriculture and Planning Integration Report concludes that the existing trees to be lost are category C trees and all trees retained can be protected during the development. Compensatory planting for the trees to be removed will be secured by a suitably worded planning condition.
- 9.36 The new building would be orientated in the same axis as the existing "Theology and Philosophy" and "Classics" buildings. The submitted Landscape Statement indicates that to the north west, the tiered grassed borders are proposed to be removed and replaced by a simpler "sculpted" landscape form that would respond better to the existing levels. The northern side of the site has been designed to create a "quieter more contemplative" environment respectful of the existing College accommodation that surrounds it. To the south a new hard landscaped terrace is proposed that would provide the cafe with direct external access.

Sustainable construction and energy

- 9.37 The application is supported by an Energy Strategy and Sustainability Statement.
- 9.38 The Statement proposes a number of low energy initiatives that will be used in the scheme, amongst which are:
- Building fabric will exceed minimum requirements to reduce unwanted heat loss, solar control implemented to minimise mechanical cooling and overheating. This will include reduced uncontrolled infiltration.

- Openable windows are being assumed in classrooms areas which will allow natural conditioning outside the heating and cooling seasons.
- All primary plant will be high efficiency type.
- The use of low energy LED lighting and enhanced controls.
- Heat recovery to primary ventilation systems.
- Individual classrooms which would typically have natural ventilation will have high efficiency mechanical heat recovery. Classrooms have high fresh air requirements to control CO2 levels and this air would normally be heated via radiators under the window – and warm air wasted through open windows at high level.
- Air Source heating and cooling with heat recovery.

9.39 A condition securing these initiatives will be imposed should permission be granted.

#### Ecology and Biodiversity

9.40 A Bat emergence Survey has been prepared by the applicant's consultant to assess the presence or otherwise of bats within the existing building. No roosts were confirmed and therefore no further work or assessments were required.

9.41 The survey concluded that the developed site could be enhanced for the bat species observed to be foraging and commuting across the site during the surveys by the installation of a minimum of five bat boxes on mature trees around the site boundaries/retained buildings. The boxes could be secured by an appropriate condition.

#### Community Infrastructure Levy

9.42 The scheme would not be CIL liable

## **10 Conclusion**

10.1 The proposal would provide a new Sixth Form building to replace existing buildings which are not 'fit for purpose' in terms of their layout or size to meet the needs and demands of the School and its pupils. It is considered that the scheme would significantly improve the educational facilities available in the Borough in accordance with para 94 of the NPPF.

10.2 The proposed site is located within the Epsom College Major Developed Site in the Green Belt and the replacement building would meet the criteria set out in Policy DM2. The design scale and massing of the building is acceptable and would comply with Policy DM10

10.3 The scheme is therefore recommended for APPROVAL

## 11 Recommendation

11.1 Planning permission is **GRANTED** subject to the following

### Conditions:

- (1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

**Reason:** To comply with Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2005

- (2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Proposed Site Plan (drg ref: 00-DR-A-0900);

Proposed Ground Floor (drg ref: 00-DR-A-1021);

Proposed First & Second Floor (drg ref: 00-DR-A-1022);

Proposed Upper Roof Plan (drg ref: 00-DR-A-1004);

Proposed Site Elevation (drg ref: 00-DR-A-1209);

Proposed Section AA (drg ref: 00-DR-A-1300);

Proposed Section BB (drg ref: 00-DR-A-1301);

Proposed Section CC (drg ref: 00-DR-A-1302);

Proposed Section DD (drg ref: 00-DR-A-1303);

Proposed Elevations NW & SE (drg ref: 00-DR-A-1212 S2 P5)

Proposed Elevations NE & SW (drg ref: 00-DR-A-1213 S2 P5);

Landscape Plan (drg ref: 00-DR-L-1901);

**Reason:** For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans to comply with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007).

- (3) Prior to the commencement of development, details and samples of the external materials to be used for the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

**Reason:** To secure a satisfactory appearance in the interests of the visual amenities and character of the locality in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (4)** No development shall take place until full details, of both hard and soft landscape proposals, including a schedule of landscape maintenance for a minimum period of 5 years and the planting of three trees in front of the building, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved landscape scheme (with the exception of planting, seeding and turfing) shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved and thereafter retained.

**Reason:** To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of an appropriate landscape scheme in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM5 and DM9 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (5)** A report is to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority, within 6 months of the commencement of any use of any part of the building, to demonstrate that the low energy technologies (as detailed in the submitted Sustainability Statement) hereby approved have been fully implemented and are functioning.

**Reason:** In order to promote sustainable construction in accordance with Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy 2007.

- (6)** The applicant shall within a period of six months following the felling of the trees, the subject of this application, plant the same number of replacement trees of a species and maturity and in positions approved by the Local Planning Authority. In the event that any of these trees should die following planting, they shall be replaced with similar trees in similar positions within six months of the death of each specimen.

**Reason:** In the interest of amenity, and in accordance with policy and Policies DM5 and DM9 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (7)** No demolition, site clearance or building operations shall commence on site until the protective fencing and other protection measures as shown on Drawing Number Tree Protection Plan Sept 2017 in the Arboricultural Method Statement produced by GHA trees Ref: GHA/DS/13360:17 have been installed. At all times until the completion of the development, such fencing and protection measures shall be retained as approved. Within all fenced areas, soil levels shall remain unaltered and the land kept free of vehicles, plant, materials and debris.

**Reason: To protect the trees on site which are to be retained in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM5 and DM9 of the Development Management Policies 2015.**

- (8) Prior to the first occupation of the new building, a minimum of five “Schwegler” bat boxes shall be installed on mature trees around the site boundaries/retained buildings, in accordance with details submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The boxes shall be retained thereafter.**
- (9) No development shall commence until a Construction Transport Management Plan, to include details of:**
- (a) parking for vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors**
  - (b) loading and unloading of plant and materials**
  - (c) storage of plant and materials**
  - (d) programme of works (including measures for traffic management)**
  - (f) HGV deliveries and hours of operation (to minimise conflict and impact on pupils)**
  - (g) vehicle routing**
  - (h) measures to prevent the deposit of materials on the highway**
  - (i) before and after construction condition surveys of the highway and a commitment to fund the repair of any damage caused**
  - (j) no construction vehicle movements to or from the site shall take place at peak pupil arrival and departure times considered between the hours of 8.00 and 9.00 am and 3.00 and 4.00 pm nor shall the contractor permit any construction vehicles associated with the development at the site to be laid up, waiting, in Longdown Lane South and College Road during these times**
  - (k) on-site turning for construction vehicles**
- has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Only the approved details shall be implemented during the construction of the development.**

**Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users and to accord with the provisions of policy CS16 of the Core Strategy 2007**

- (10) The development hereby approved shall not be first occupied unless and until the following facilities have been provided in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for:

(a) The secure and covered storage for parking of bicycles within the development site,

(b) Facilities within the development site for cyclist to change into and out of cyclist equipment,

(c) Facilities within the development site for cyclists to store cyclist equipment,

and thereafter the said approved facilities shall be provided, retained and maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To promote sustainable transport in accordance with Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy 2007

- (11) The applicant shall be required to retain novation of the architects (Corde) , as a minimum as executive architects for the approved scheme.

Reason: To maintain architectural quality in accordance with Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

**Informatives:**

- (1) The Council confirms that in assessing this planning application it has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the requirements of paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.
- (2) The water efficiency standard required under condition 5 has been adopted by the local planning authority through the Development Management Policies 2015. This standard is the 'optional requirement' detailed in Building Regulations 2010, Part G Approved Document (AD) Buildings Regulations (2015), at Appendix A paragraph A1.

The applicant is advised that this standard can be achieved through either:

using the 'fittings approach' where water fittings are installed as per the table at 2.1 in the AD or

using the water efficiency calculation methodology detailed in the AD Part G Appendix A.

- (3) **No construction work shall be carried out in such a manner as to be audible at the site boundary before 07:30 hours or after 18:30 hours Monday to Friday; no construction work shall be audible at the site boundary before 08:00 or after 13:00 hours on Saturdays and no construction work of any nature shall be carried out on Sundays or Bank/Public Holidays.**