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Our ref: STH/SNE/HJH/U0013083

Your ref: PP-13328724

Dear Sir/Madam,

St. Anthony's School for Boys, 1 Arkwright Road, London, NW3 6AA
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Application for Full Planning Permission

On behalf of our client, Alpha Plus Group Limited, we enclose an application for full planning permission in respect of St. Anthony's School for Boys, 1 Arkwright Road, London, NW3 6AA (the "Site"). The proposed works involve the demolition of the existing school swimming pool enclosure and the infilling, and replacement, of the swimming pool with an astro-turf sports pitch and associated landscaping improvements.

As such, planning permission is being sought for:

"Demolition of existing swimming pool and enclosure, and replacement with astro-turf sports pitch and associated landscaping works"

Site & Surroundings

The Site is located towards the eastern end of Arkwright Road, near the junction of Fitzjohn's Avenue. The Site comprises a four-storey Victorian detached property, housing St. Anthony's School for Boys, an independent, all-boys Catholic preparatory school for pupils aged between 5 and 13. The school currently has two sites, 1 Arkwright Road used as the Junior House, and 90 Fitzjohn's Avenue used as the Senior House. To the rear of the Site, is a hard surfaced soft play area, an enclosed swimming pool and landscaping elements.

The Site has a PTAL rating of 6a, meaning it is highly accessible. In terms of flood risk, the site falls within Flood Zone 1, which has a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. The building is not listed; however, the Site is located within Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area. Within Camden's appraisal of the conservation area, 1 Arkwright Road is said to make positive contributions to the special character and appearance of the conservation area due to its imposing architectural features and detailing.

The wider area is predominantly residential, however in the immediate vicinity of the Site there are several education facilities, such as Devonshire House, a preparatory and pre-preparatory school located opposite the Site. In terms of nearby heritage assets, there is a single listed building located adjacently north-east to the Site (No. 75 Fitzjohn's Avenue – Grade II).

Relevant Planning History

A review of the Council's online planning register has been undertaken, with the relevant planning applications for the Site summarised below.

In November 1954, planning permission was granted (ref. TP617/110155) for the use of the Site as a day school. Alterations and extensions to the Site including the addition of a conservatory and erection of an external staircase to the rear elevation, and internal reconfigurations to provide two additional classrooms were permitted in July 1989 (ref. 8905551). In August 1990, planning permission was granted (ref. 9005472) for the erection of a clear glazed, polycarbonate structure enclosing the existing swimming pool.

Planning permission was granted on 15 June 2011 (ref. 2011/1613/P) for the Erection of single-storey rear extension to link the swimming pool to the existing rear classroom block (following removal of sheds) and erection of extension and canopy to link the swimming pool enclosure and main school building and associated landscaping (Class D1).

As has been shown above, various minor developments have been undertaken on the site to accommodate the ongoing needs and requirements of the existing school over the years.

Proposals

The proposals are for the removal of the out-dated, no longer fit-for-purpose swimming pool and enclosure, and replacement with an astro-turf pitch which will seek to enhance the sporting and daily recreational facilities at the school.

In association with the new astro-turf pitch, a new chain-link fence is proposed to surround the new pitch, similar to the enclosure already installed on Site around the existing pitch to contain sports balls when in use.

In addition, enhanced landscaping elements will be provided on the southern border of the Site in the form of enhanced planting. Along the eastern edge of the new sports pitch, a new, paved footpath is proposed to provide access to the classrooms located at the rear of the Site. There will be no change in the existing site levels to facilitate the new access routes and it has been designed to provide access to all, including less-able users.

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory development plan for the application site comprises: -

- The London Plan (2021); and
- London Borough of Camden's Local Plan (2017); and
- Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (2018).

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservations Act (1990), NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and Camden Supplementary Guidance Documents are also a material consideration.

In terms of emerging policy, Camden are currently in the process of reviewing the Local Plan. The updated

Local Plan is currently in the early stage of development and Camden consulted on the draft Local Plan (Regulation 18 consultation) between the 17 January to 13 March 2024. The fully reviewed new Local Plan is expected to be adopted in the summer of 2026. Therefore, at this stage, in line with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, limited weight should be applied to policies within the draft Local Plan. They have therefore not been considered in detail in this letter.

Statutory Legislation

Statute regarding the heritage environment is relevant to this application. Both the site's historic fabric and the surrounding environment have been carefully considered in the development of the proposals having regard to the statutory legislation below.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out that local planning authorities should pay special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of historic or architectural interest which it possesses when considering applications.

Section 72 of the same Act states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Planning Policy and Assessment

Design - Policy

London Plan Policy D5 (Inclusive Design) notes that development proposals should achieve the highest standards of accessible and inclusive design by considering London's diverse population and providing high-quality people focused spaces that are designed to facilitate social interaction and inclusion.

Camden Local Plan Policy D1 seeks to ensure development respects local context and character; preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets; is of sustainable and durable construction; is adaptable to different activities and land uses; comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character; and is inclusive and accessible for all. It goes on to state that the Council will resist development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.

Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan Policy DH1 states that Development proposals should demonstrate how they respect and enhance the character and local context of the relevant character area.

Design - Assessment

The proposal relates to the removal of the existing swimming pool and enclosure, and replacement with an astro-turf sports pitch.

The existing swimming pool and enclosure are out-dated, and no longer fit-for-purpose. The design of this facility is not of high-quality and provides nothing to the architectural context of the Site or wider area.

Careful consideration has been given to the proposals, both in terms of positioning and also the quality of material proposed. The proposals have respected the existing architectural context and do not impact negatively on the surrounding properties. The proposed astro-turf pitch and associated chain-link fence will

have little to no impact on the existing streetscape and setting within the conservation area as they will not be visible from Arkwright Road.

The proposals have led to enhanced landscaping, including the installation of new landscaping to the south of the Site boundary to provide an improved visual appearance for the neighbouring gardens to the south, whilst also installing a chain-link fence to maintain visual permeability, whilst providing an appropriate safety function.

The provision of a high-quality astro-turf pitch will allow the school to promote health, and enhance outdoor amenity space, for students through a variety of sport and recreational activities for students, with minimal maintenance requirements. Such a pitch is a sustainable and durable construction which is easily adaptable for a range of uses for the students throughout the year.

Furthermore, the proposed landscaping has been brought forward with consideration for accessibility for all users, including those less able.

As such, the proposal brings forward a high-quality design which enhances the health and outdoor amenity for students, whilst having little or no impact on the existing streetscape. Therefore, the proposal complies with London Plan Policy D5, Local Plan Policy D1, and Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan Policy DH1.

Heritage - Policy

London Plan Policy HC1 (Heritage Conservation and Growth) states that development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings.

Camden's Local Plan Policy D2 (Heritage) seeks to maintain the character of Camden's designated heritage assets and conservation areas, requiring development within these areas to preserve or, where possible, enhance the character or appearance.

Heritage - Assessment

The existing swimming pool and enclosure are out-dated, no longer fit-for-purpose, and do not provide a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. Although the Site is noted within the Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area Appraisal, this is in relation to the positive contribution the main building makes to the overall character and appearance of the conservation area due to its architectural features.

The proposed astro-turf pitch will be located to the rear of the site, will not be readily visible from the street scene, and has been designed to enhance visual permeability across the gardens to the rear. As such, the proposal is considered to maintain the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

It is noted that a Grade II building sits adjacent to the Site on the northern boundary. Based on the location of the proposals, and the extensive screening that exists along the northern boundary of the Site, it is concluded that the proposal will not have an impact on the setting of the adjacent listed building.

Overall, the proposals will maintain the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and will not cause harm to setting of the adjacent listed building. Therefore, the proposals comply with the relevant planning policies and statutory legislation.

Education - Policy

London Plan Policy S3 (Education and Childcare Facilities) states that development proposals that impact on education facilities should ensure facilities incorporate suitable and accessible outdoor space.

Camden's Local Plan Policy C2 (Community Facilities) relates to a wide range of facilities that provides a service to the community and included educational institutions. The policy seeks to ensure that community facilities are developed and modernised to meet the changing needs of the community it serves and reflect on new approaches to the delivery of these services. It notes that the Council will support plans of educational bodies to expand and enhance their operations, considering social and economic benefits they generate, whilst considering the impact proposals may have on both residential amenity and the local transport infrastructure.

Education - Assessment

It is proposed that the existing swimming pool and enclosure is to be demolished and replaced with a new astro-turf pitch. It has been deemed necessary to replace the existing swimming pool with a new astro-turf pitch as the school look to enhance their facilities to provide a wider range of physical and sporting opportunities for the pupils. The new pitch will provide pupils with a greater physical output and will help develop and enhance their gross motor skills and enrich their educational experience.

In accordance with Camden's principles as set out in Policy C2, the Applicant has been deemed the existing swimming pool surplus to requirements and now wish to provide a modern, multi-purpose sporting facility which further meets the needs of the school. The proposals will enhance the existing education facilities and therefore comply with London Plan Policy S3 and Local Plan Policy C2.

Amenity - Policy

Policy A1 of the Local Plan seeks to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. The Council will grant permission for development unless this causes unacceptable harm to amenity. The relevant factors the Policy considers are outlook, noise and vibration levels and odour, fumes and dust.

Amenity - Assessment

The proposals relate to the replacement of one sporting facility on-site, with another. The proposals do not relate to the increase in student numbers or further intensity of the use of the overall site. As such, the proposals are not considered to lead to an adverse impact on the amenity of the neighbours compared to the existing situation. Therefore, the proposals comply with Local Plan Policy A1.

Biodiversity Net Gain & Landscaping

As of February 2024, biodiversity net gain ('BNG') became a mandatory element of development proposals and requires developments to deliver a BNG of at least 10% resulting in a greater or better quality natural habitat than there was pre-development. Certain developments are exempt from providing the BNG and include developments that do not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 square metres of non-priority on-site habitat or 5 metres of non-priority on-site linear habitats.

The associated proposals are considered to be exempt from these requirements. Notwithstanding this, enhanced landscaping proposals have been included which will assist in improving the biodiversity on site.

Summary

The proposals seek the replacement of the existing swimming pool and enclosure, with a new astro-turf pitch and associated landscaping. The proposals will provide an enhanced facility for the students on-site, which will improve their range of sporting and recreational options throughout the year.

Careful consideration has been given to the adjacent listed building, and the Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area. Overall, the proposals will maintain the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and will not cause harm to the setting of the adjacent listed building.

In conclusion, the proposed development complies with the statutory tests, and Development Plan, and delivers educational benefits. Therefore, planning permission should be granted without delay.

Application documentation

In line with the London Borough of Camden's validation requirements, the following documents, along with this covering letter, have been submitted online via the Planning Portal (PP-13328724):

- Completed Application Form, prepared by Gerald Eve LLP;
- Covering Letter (this document), prepared by Gerald Eve LLP;
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by C-Space Architects; and
- Existing, Demolition & Proposed Plans and Elevations, prepared by C-Space Architects.

The requisite application fee of £586 (plus a £70 Planning Portal service charge) has been paid by the Applicant via the planning portal. We look forward to confirmation of the registration and subsequent validation of this planning application shortly.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this application, or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Sam Neal (020 3486 3312) or Harry Howat (020 3486 3724) of this office.

Yours sincerely,

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