

2026/0024

Mr Adam Knowles

Gooseacre Primary Academy, Gooseacre Avenue, Thurnscoe, S63 0NU.

Demolition of existing corridor link and the erection of a new corridor, incorporating a staffroom, classroom, cloakroom, WCs, and a resource room accessed from the corridor as well as new areas of soft and hard landscaping.

Site Description

Gooseacre Primary Academy is located on Gooseacre Avenue, off Merrill Road, Thurnscoe, within a predominantly residential area. The school occupies a parcel of land positioned within the built-up settlement of Thurnscoe, with access taken directly from Gooseacre Avenue. There are two main school buildings which are linked together via a corridor link in the middle. The buildings are set to the east of the site with the school playing fields extended further west. The buildings are mostly single storey with the school hall area being significantly taller. The majority of the buildings are finished in a light brown/buff brick with white windows. The site is set within an established urban area characterised by surrounding housing and community facilities.

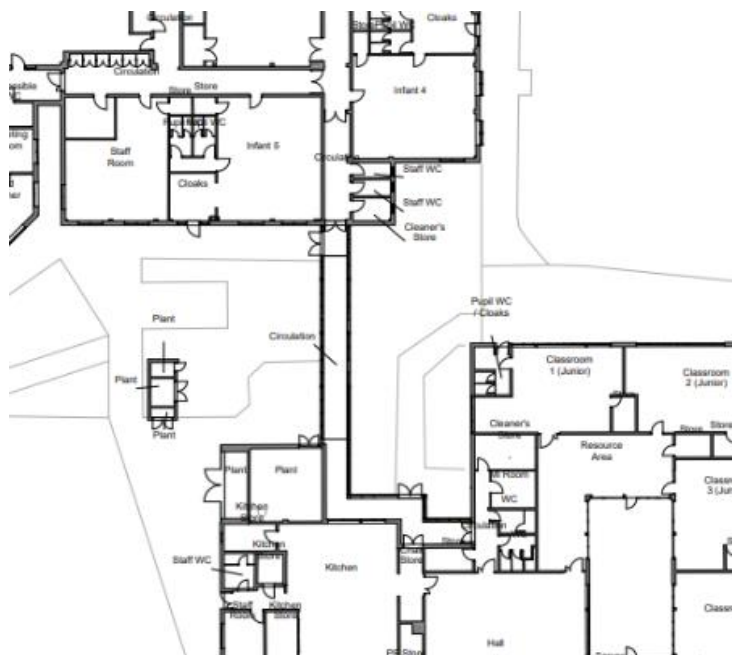
Planning History

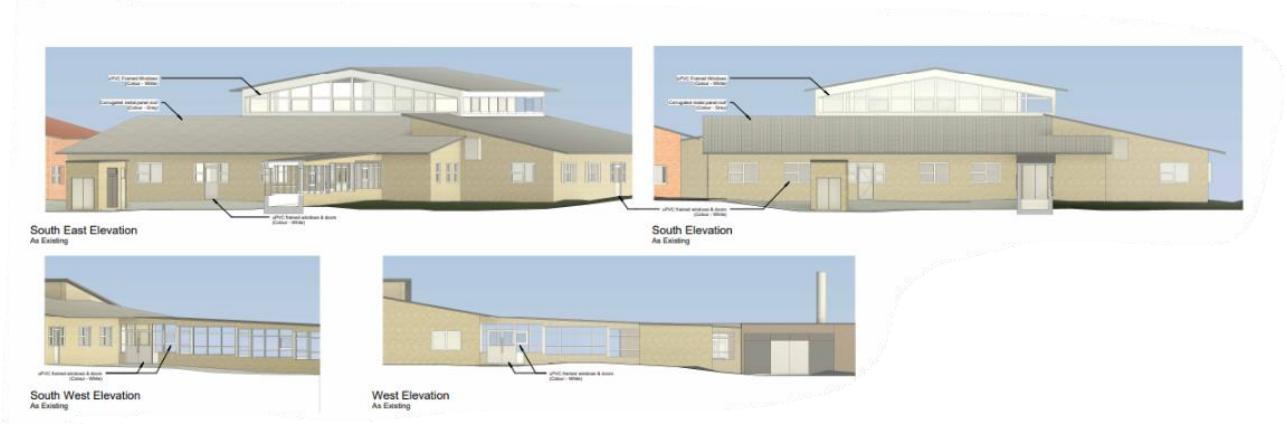
There is no planning history on the site.

Proposed Development

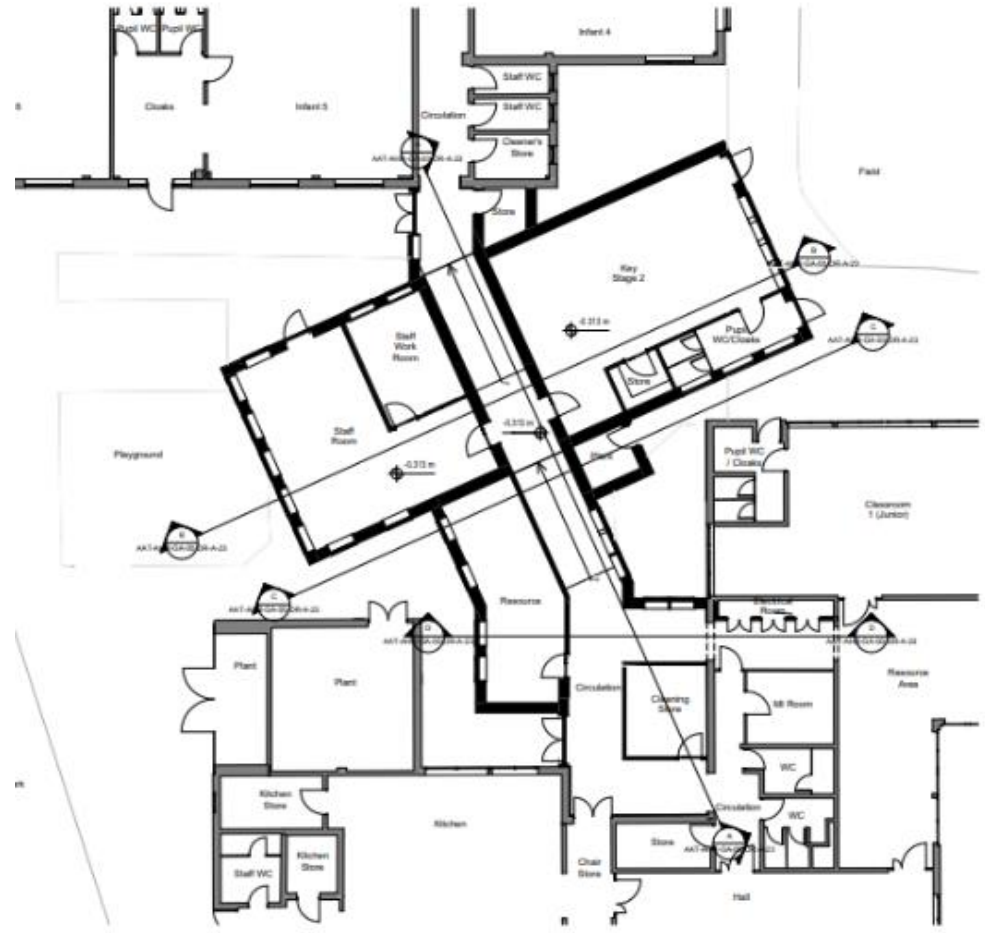
The proposal is to demolish the existing link corridor between the two blocks along with the redundant external plant room and erect a new 260sqm single storey extension between the two blocks. The new extension will provide one classroom with two WCs, a cloakroom, a store cupboard, a staff room, a staff workroom, a resource room, a plant room, and a cleaner's store. Below are extracts from the plans:

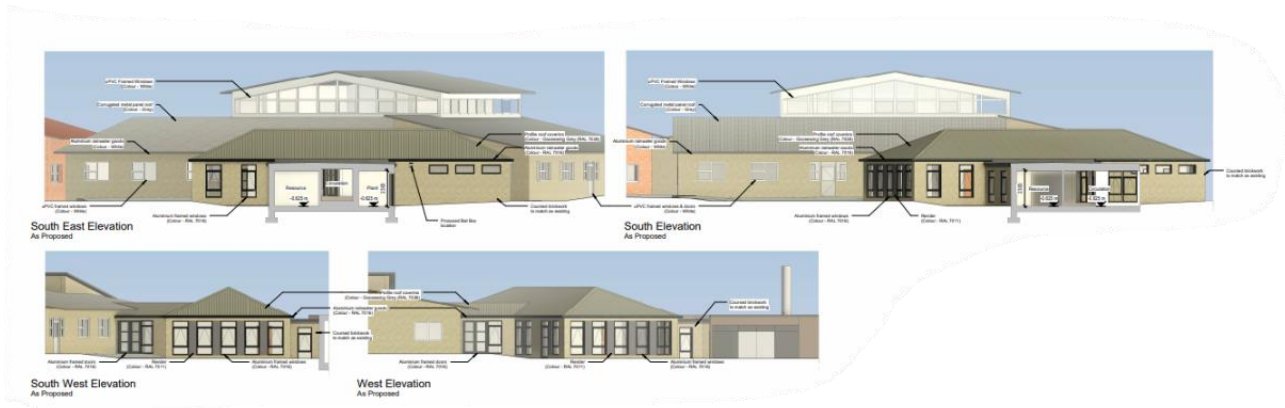
Existing Plans:





Proposed Plans:





Relevant Policies

The Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for Barnsley consists of the Barnsley Local Plan (adopted January 2019).

The Local Plan review was approved at the full Council meeting on 24th November 2022. The review determined that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering its objectives. This means no updates to the Local Plan, in whole or in part, are to be carried out ahead of a further review. The next review is due to take place in 2027 or earlier if circumstances, require it.

Local Plan Allocation – Urban Fabric - Land within the Settlement with no specific allocation.

To the extent that development plan policies are material to an application for planning permission the decision on the application must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). In reference to this application, the following policies are relevant:

Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development – . When considering development proposals we will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework

Policy GD1: General Development – Development will be approved if there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents. Development will be expected to be compatible with neighbouring land and will not significantly prejudice the current or future use of neighbouring land.

Policy D1: High quality design and place making – Development is expected to be of a high-quality design and will be expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive, local character and other features of Barnsley.

Policy CC1: Climate Change – Seeks to reduce the causes of and adapt to the future impacts of climate change.

Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction – aims to minimise resource and energy consumption through the inclusion of sustainable design and construction features in new developments.

Supplementary Planning Documents:

In line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Barnsley has adopted twenty eight Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) following the adoption of the Local Plan in January 2019.

The most pertinent SPD's in this case are:

- Residential amenity and the siting of buildings
- Sustainable construction and climate change adaptation

The adopted SPDs should be treated as material considerations in decision making and are afforded full weight.

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. The core of this is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Proposals that align with the Local Plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In respect of this application, relevant policies include:

- Section 12: Achieving well designed places

Consultations

The application has been advertised in accordance with Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning Development Management Procedure (England) Order 2015.

Consultee	Summary of response
Highways DC	No objection subject to conditions
Pollution Control	No objections
Biodiversity Officer	No objection subject to conditions

Representations

Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties. No comments have been received.

Assessment

The main issues for consideration are as follows:

- The acceptability of the alterations
- The impact on visual amenity and character
- The impact on neighbouring residential properties
- The impact on highways safety
- The impact on biodiversity/ecology

For the purposes of considering the balance in this application the following planning weight is referred to in this report using the following scale unless the NPPF establishes a specific weight:

- Substantial
- Considerable
- Significant
- Moderate
- Modest

- Limited
- Little or no

Principle of Development

The site lies within the Urban Fabric as defined by the Barnsley Local Plan, where Policy SD1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development applies. Schools are regarded as essential community uses, and extensions to educational establishments are acceptable in principle where they enhance capacity and improve operational functionality.

The proposed demolition of the existing corridor link and its replacement with a larger connecting extension to provide additional classroom space represents a logical and proportionate expansion of the established school site. The works are fully contained within the school's grounds, occupying an internal courtyard style area that is largely hardstanding. Although the planning policies map designates the wider site as green space associated with the school, the specific area affected is already part of the built-up footprint and does not function as well used green space. As such, its redevelopment is appropriate and consistent with its existing character and use.

Given the site's location within the operational school grounds, the nature of the proposal, and its alignment with relevant Local Plan policies supporting enhancements to education facilities, the principle of development is considered acceptable.

Residential Amenity

Policy GD1 requires proposals to avoid significant adverse effects on the amenities of neighbouring residents, including in relation to noise, overbearing impact, overshadowing, and overlooking. The proposed extension is positioned well within the school site and maintains a substantial separation distance from the nearest residential properties.

The scale and height of the extension are modest and comparable to existing school buildings. Due to the separation distances and existing boundary treatments, the development will not introduce harmful overlooking or overshadowing effects. The intensified use of the classrooms is unlikely to materially alter the established noise profile associated with the normal operation of a school during daytime hours.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to safeguard residential amenity in line with Policy GD1 which carries moderate weight in favour of the proposal.

Visual Amenity

Policy D1 requires development to respect and enhance the character, appearance, and setting of the surrounding area. The proposed extension has been designed to relate well to the existing built form of the school, using a scale, massing, and materials that complement the established buildings.

The building will replace an existing corridor link and will be visually read as part of the main school complex rather than introducing an incongruous or dominant feature. The proposal maintains the existing layout of the site and will have no harmful impact on the character of the surrounding urban area.

On this basis, the scheme is considered to accord with Local Plan Policy D1, and the visual amenity of the area will be preserved. This weighs moderately in favour of the proposal.

Highway Safety

As part of the submission, the school has indicated that the extension will result in an increase in full-time staffing numbers from 14 to 18, with part-time staff remaining at 33.

In assessing parking requirements, the Council's Parking SPD advises provision at a rate of one space per three teaching staff and one space per three non-teaching staff. The school currently provides approximately 36 off-street parking spaces, which exceeds the level required to accommodate the anticipated staff levels following the extension.

Highways officers therefore consider the existing parking provision to be sufficient, and the development would not give rise to any parking or highway safety concerns.

On this basis, the proposal is acceptable from a Highways perspective, subject to conditions. This carries moderate weight in favour of the proposals.

Ecology

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA), Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) and Biodiversity Metric have been submitted in support of the application, and the Council's Biodiversity Officer is broadly satisfied with the findings.

The assessments confirm that a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain can be achieved on site, with the proposed planting of four small trees accounted for within the post development metric. To secure this enhancement, a Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan will be required by condition to cover the first five years of establishment and maintenance.

The buildings on site were assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats, and the Biodiversity Officer agrees with this conclusion. The inclusion of bat, bird and invertebrate boxes recommended within the submitted ecology reports is welcomed and will contribute to the site's ecological value. Although no formal condition assessment of the modified grassland has been provided, the species list and accompanying photographs within the PEA and EclA are considered sufficient to support the condition classification used within the metric, and no further evidence is required.

Overall, the ecological impacts are acceptable, subject to the recommended conditions securing the proposed enhancements in accordance with policy BIO1 of the Local Plan. This carries moderate weight in favour of the proposal.

Conclusion

Having balanced all material planning considerations, the proposal will not be significantly harmful to residential or visual amenity, nor will it negatively impact upon highway safety or biodiversity. As a consequence, the positive aspects of the proposal outlined above are not outweighed by any other material planning considerations. The proposal is therefore, on balance, recommended for approval.

Recommendation

Approve with conditions