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**Report of the Chief Planning Officer**

**Plans Panel East**

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

**Subject: Full application – Demolition of Parklands Girls High School and proposed Leeds East Academy - South Parkway, Seacroft. Application number 11/03032/LA**

**APPLICANT**

Children's Services

**DATE VALID**

5<sup>th</sup> August 2011

**TARGET DATE**

4<sup>th</sup> November 2011

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**

Killingbeck & Seacroft.

☐ Yes

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity ☐

Community Cohesion ☐

Narrowing the Gap ☐

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**GRANT PERMISSION** subject to the following planning conditions (and any other conditions as deemed appropriate by the Chief Planning Officer).

1. Time Limit (3 years).
2. Development to accord with approved plans.
3. Details of Levels to be submitted and approved.
4. Materials details and samples of external walling and roofing to be submitted and approved.
5. Surface materials to be submitted and approved.
6. Details of the siting of boundary fences and treatments to be submitted and approved.
7. Landscape scheme to be submitted and implemented.
8. Landscape Maintenance Scheme.
9. Tree protection measures to be submitted and approved.
10. Scheme for replacement trees to submitted and approved.
11. Specification to be submitted to detail haul road specification / tree protection measures.
12. Scheme required to detail measures for the removal of haul road and restoration of such following the occupation of the new school.
13. Biodiversity protection and enhancement measures to be submitted and approved.
14. Area used by vehicles laid out, surfaced and drained.

15. Details of cycle parking and storage to be submitted and approved.
16. Implementation of travel plan measures.
17. Scheme to detail widening of footway up to 3.5m across site frontage.
18. Scheme to detail off site highway improvement and pedestrian safety measures.
19. Specified operating hours (construction); no Sunday / Bank Holiday operations.
20. Construction management plan to be submitted and approved.
21. Scheme to detail dust suppression.
22. Scheme to detail mud prevention
23. Bin storage details to be submitted and approved.
24. Separate systems of drainage for surface water and foul to be submitted and approved.
25. Details of works for dealing with surface water discharges to be submitted and approved.
26. No piped discharges of surface water until completion of drainage works.
27. Feasibility study into the use of infiltration drainage methods to be submitted and approved.
28. Scheme for surface water discharge from the development to be subject to balancing flows to achieve a maximum flow rate of 53 litres per second to be submitted and approved.
29. Sprinkler details and screening to be submitted and approved
30. Oil / grease Interceptor to be submitted and approved.
31. No development to take place with 3m of a sewer.
32. Details of external lighting to be submitted and approved.
33. Plans to require 1:20 typical detailing of door / window and eaves treatment to be submitted and approved.
34. Detailed design and specification of sports hall and sports facilities to be submitted and approved.
35. Community use agreement to be submitted and approved.
36. Temporary replacement sporting facilities to be provided during construction to be submitted and approved.
37. Amendment of remediation statement to be submitted and approved.
38. Submission of verification report to be submitted and approved.
39. Report on unexpected contamination
40. Litter control Action Plan to be submitted and approved.

In granting permission for this development the City Council has taken into account all material planning considerations including those arising from the comments of any statutory and other consultees, public representations about the application and Government Guidance and Policy as detailed in the Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Statements, and (as specified below) the content and policies within Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), the Regional Spatial Strategy 2008 (RSS) and the Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review 2006 (UDPR).

GP5, N6, N12, N13, T2, T5, T6, T7A and T24

On balance, the City Council considers the development would not give rise to any unacceptable consequences for the environment, community or other public interests of acknowledged importance.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This application is presented to Members for determination following two pre-application presentations held on the 14<sup>th</sup> April and 16<sup>th</sup> June respectively as well as a position statement reported to Panel Members on the 8<sup>th</sup> September covering the

latest issues and progress of the application for the proposed re-development of Parklands Girls High School to form the Leeds East Academy.

- 1.2 The proposed academy will be sponsored by EACT who already sponsor Leeds West Academy and nine other academies across the country. The proposal aims to deliver a new educational philosophy built within a large building envelope within which are a series of learning pods. This will provide a 6 form entry, mixed academy, providing a total of 1100 places including 200 post 16 places. In terms of timescales it is proposed that the academy will open in the existing Parklands buildings from September 2011 with the new build available from February 2013.

## 2.0 **Background and Member Consultation**

- 2.1 For the last 7 years, Children's Services in partnership with Leeds City Council through its Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, has undertaken a challenging timetable of rebuilding and / or refurbishing its schools estate using a combination of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and traditional design and build. Nine schools and one academy have to date been successfully delivered on time and within budget. Three further schemes are under construction on site and Leeds East Academy is the last school in the BSF Programme (Phase 5). It was originally offered funding of around £9 million for a refurbishment. This has been increased to £16m for a new building despite government funding reductions but this is significantly less than other equivalent BSF new build projects.
- 2.2 In 2008 outline planning consent was granted for part demolition and alterations and extensions to the school (07/05103/LA). This application sought to establish the principle of development and means of access only with all details reserved (to include layout, scale, appearance and landscaping) for future consideration.
- 2.3 The proposal however indicatively articulated a scheme involving alterations to the main entrance of the school and the provision of a new sport hall as well as refurbishment of the existing accommodation. The main teaching block, the science block, the dance and drama building and the technology/art and learning resource centre were shown as being retained.
- 2.4 In November 2010, the Government requested a 40% cut on the BSF projects that had not yet reached commercial and financial close. On 17 December 2010 the Secretary of State confirmed that Leeds East Academy could continue, on the basis of a new build facility but at a reduced build rate. In these circumstances, Children's Services in consultation with colleagues from the Public Private Partnership Unit (PPPU), have undertaken a review of the scheme and carried out an options appraisal to assess a cost effective way of delivering a new academy. Some of these options were wide ranging both in terms of the proposed siting of the main building and in terms of their respective design approaches.
- 2.5 A comprehensive options appraisal has been undertaken jointly with the sponsor E-ACT, DfE, PfS and Children's Services which recommended the construction of a New Build Roundhouse Style School to the rear of the site. The scheme has been jointly developed with E-ACT and the Leeds Local Education Partnership which is affordable within the budget and has been approved by E-ACT and Children's Services.
- 2.6 The first round of consultation with Exec Board Members and Ward Members took place in November 2010. This explained the change in Government policy and the Education Leeds response to these reductions in national funding for existing BSF

projects. In relation to Parklands, Members expressed a strong view in favour of the principle of a new build solution rather than retaining any of the existing building.

- 2.7 A second round of meetings was held with the same Members in February 2011 to show how progress had been made. At this time more details were available to explain the design approaches by providing sketch layouts. Members welcomed the fact that a new build option was available but asked for more information in relation to detailed drawings to help illustrate massing and external treatment proposals.
- 2.8 A further round of Local Member meetings, which also involved Members representing constituencies in the School's principal catchment areas, was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 2011. Generally Members were supportive of the principle of the scheme and welcomed the opportunity to build a new school. Some concern was expressed regarding the lack of animation in the proposed buildings external envelope. Comments were also made about the need to provide a physical link between the proposed academy and the existing primary school. These comments were verbally reported to East Plans Panel Members on the 14<sup>th</sup> April as part of the pre-app presentation.
- 2.9 A public consultation event (Pupils, Staff, Parents & Public) was held on 11 May 2011. Following this event, 166 feedback forms were received the vast majority providing positive and supportive comments. Negative comments have been considered and changes implemented where appropriate. Further consultation was undertaken on 07 July 2011 with staff and the shadow Governing Body.
- 2.10 Further consultation was undertaken on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2011 with the local MP George Mudie and Local Ward Members (Killingbeck and Seacroft, Temple Newsam and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill) and 28 July / 02 August 2011 with the Executive Member for Education and Local Ward Members. The scheme was also presented to the Inner East Area Committee and the Outer East Area Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> June and 05<sup>th</sup> July respectively. Members remained supportive of the scheme.
- 2.11 A further presentation was made to Plans Panel Members on the 16<sup>th</sup> June which built on this level of detail and sought to respond to issues raised at the earlier pre-app presentation. In terms of timescales, it is critical however that the scheme moves forward in a timely manner. Although the registration of the planning application was delayed, the planned timetable for construction is extremely tight with a planned completion date of February 2013 (half term break). If this were to be delayed it would mean that the school would not open until the main summer holiday. Effectively this would mean that the school would be substantially built and left empty until the summer recess. The phase 2 works to clear the existing school and to carry out remediation work would also be delayed as a consequence. This would add further costs to the project and introduce security issues for the new school.

### 3.0 **Site Description**

- 3.1 The site is approximately 5.5ha in size and is occupied by several school buildings of varying scale and styles. The school stands in extensive grounds and its buildings are clustered centrally to the northern portion of the site and comprise a range of linked flat roof buildings dating back to 1955. The main building is a 3 storey structure containing general teaching classrooms, admin offices and a dining area. The school building is set back from South Parkway with a large forecourt providing car parking accessed off the main school entrance. Over the last 6 years, 3 further blocks have been added to the school, the latest addition being a technology, art and library block built in 2005.

- 3.2 To the north lies a residential area, to the south is Parklands Primary School and to the east and west are recreational grounds. The site is relatively flat although there are changes in ground level, both from within the school buildings and the playing pitches to the west.

#### 4.0 **Relevant Planning History:**

11/02913/FU: Canopy and alterations to front of school, detached pre fabricated to rear. Approved 07/09/11. This is to facilitate the school becoming an academy from September 2011.

11/02914/ADV Four non illuminated signs to Academy- Approved 07/09/11.

07/05103/LA: Outline application for part demolition and alterations and extensions to school. Approved 18/3/2008.

32/201/05/FU: Link detached prefabricated classrooms to school - Approved (28/06/05).

32/116/04/FU: Single storey teaching accommodation - Approved (20/05/04).

32/412/03/FU: Detached prefabricated teaching accommodation - Approved (14/01/04).

32/360/03/FU: Two prefabricated temporary classroom units to school - Approved (07/010/03).

32/382/02/FU: Detached prefabricated building to school - Approved (15/11/02).

32/257/94/SN: Two sided non-illuminated free standing sign to school - Approved (09/12/94).

32/165/83: Alterations and extension to form corridor link to school - Approved (06/06/83).

32/13/83: Detached sports hall to side of school - Approved (02/02/83).

32/541/81: Alterations and extension for assembly hall and dining hall to school - Approved (01/12/81).

32/124/76: 2 prefabricated classroom units each with cloakroom and store to school premises - Approved (08/03/76).

32/506/75: Alterations, including new secretaries office, deputy head master's office, kiln, resources - Approved (18/08/75).

#### 5.0 **PUBLIC/LOCAL RESPONSE:**

- 5.1 At the time of writing this report one representation has been received from a surrounding resident. This is a letter of objection on the grounds that the notification of the application has been limited and people in the community are not aware of the scheme. The proposal will generate increased noise and disturbance to all surrounding residents. The traffic flow will increase in the area. The loss of public space and the loss of several significant trees should be resisted. The erosion of greenspace in the area which is a inner city 'green areas' and are few and far between should not be supported.

#### 6.0 **CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES:**

##### **Statutory:**

- 6.1 Sport England - No objection in principle subject to conditions.
- 6.2 Highways Development Control – No objection in principle subject to conditions.
- 6.3 Environment Agency No objections. There have been significant longstanding discussions regarding flood risk management. Subject to conditions to ensure

development is carried out in accordance with revised Flood Risk Assessment of 2009, no objections are raised.

**Non-statutory:**

- 6.4 Public Rights of Way – No objections in principle.
- 6.5 Metro – Metro have no objections to the development in principle subject to the provision of a new bus shelter and real time facilitates.
- 6.6 Land Contamination – No objection in principle subject to conditions.
- 6.7 Yorkshire Water – No objection in principle to revised plans subject to conditions.
- 6.8 Coal Authority – No objection
- 6.9 CABE – summary is covered in section 11 of this report.

**7.0 Policy Context:**

- 7.1 The existing school buildings and hard play areas are unallocated in the Adopted Leeds UDP (Review, 2006). The playing fields to the south are allocated as a Protected Playing Pitches. Moreover, the indicative plan shows the new build to be constructed on part of the allocated Protected Playing Pitch, Policy N6.

Other relevant policies are:

GP5 refers to development proposals should seek to avoid loss of amenity.

N12 refers to priorities for urban design to be respected.

N13 refers to the design of all new buildings should be of high quality and regard to character/appearance of surroundings.

T2 refers to development that should be adequately served by existing or proposed highways, capable of being served by public transport and have provision for safe and secure cycle use and parking.

T5 refers to safe and secure access for pedestrians and cyclists to new development.

T6 refers to satisfactory access to new development for disabled people and people with mobility problems.

T7A refers to secure cycle parking required in new developments.

T24 refers to car parking provision guidelines.

**7.2 National Planning Policy Guidance**

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development.

PPG13 Transport.

PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation.

Planning for New School Development – Policy Statement 15<sup>th</sup> August 2011

**8.0 Summary of issues and Member comments arising from the pre-application meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> April**

- 8.1 Members will recall that the original briefing paper included a number of development options, which have been considered as part of an affordability appraisal. This also indicated a preferred option, which is to develop a new build concept to the rear of the site that would create a 'learning village'.

- 8.2 This involves the construction of a new Academy based on a concept formulated for the Roundhouse at Derby College to provide a 6-form entry, mixed Academy, with 200 post-16 places and providing 8,442m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace. The building frame consisted of a steel trussed North Light frame on concrete pad foundations clad with steel panels set on a brick plinth at ground level. Large areas of powder coated aluminum curtain walling with some glass, particularly at low level but generally polycarbonate glazing were also shown. The roof, a built-up system incorporating at least 10% North Lights with perforated finished liner deck, was also presented.
- 8.3 Internally 40 'pod rooms' of varying sizes, which in the main will be teaching spaces, were presented. The pods consist of modular steel panels over clad with either glass or coated steel elevation were also presented to Members.
- 8.4 A new entrance off South Parkway was shown as a construction access to the site segregated from the academy itself. It was also explained to Members that the site compound would be located on the existing tennis courts.
- 8.5 Officer comments recognised that the existing buildings are dated and some, particularly those of modular form, are dilapidated and require extensive refurbishment. In this context, a development which facilitates the provision of improved education accommodation should be welcomed.
- 8.6 It was recognised that the development is isolated from the site frontage and introduces a development to the rear of the site close to the southern boundary. The scheme is rectilinear in form and of a considerable mass at approximately 115m in length and 55m wide. The scale is 3 story commercial and 4 storey's in domestic proportions. It was further observed that the design approach is radically different to any other school design across the City.
- 8.7 Member comments recognised that this is a once in a generation opportunity for pupils /parents and the wider community in this area to access first class educational and community facilities and to gain a sense of pride in their surroundings. Whilst Members supported the principle of development, it was emphasised that it was critical to ensure that all suitable options had been explored to assess not only affordability, but that the design of the building and its scale and massing can be satisfactorily integrated into the urban fabric. Members raised the issue of whether or not the development could be accommodated on the front of the site and in particular to the north west of the existing school.
- 8.8 Members, at the time, also commented on the lack of public consultation and the need to engage with the community. Members requested details of proposed student numbers and the amount of car parking to be provided as a consequence. Members emphasised the importance of ensuring that operational parking needs/ service arrangements, as well as a parking and a management strategy for the construction period, are properly considered and addressed at the outset.
- 8.9 Members recognised that the internal arrangements of the building were interesting as a new learning philosophy, but some concern was expressed about the design of the building as it resembled an 'aircraft hanger'. Further details were proposed in terms of a proposed materials palette and it was suggested that a model of the proposed building would also be beneficial and assist in Panel's deliberations. Comments were also made in respect of the potential for the use of solar panels. Internally observations were made about the open aspects of the school and whether or not that would be distracting for pupils. Related to this was the need to consider and mitigate against noise transference.

8.10 Further observations were made in terms of whether or not there would be any formal relationship between the academy and Parklands Primary School as well as whether or not there would be any provision for children with special educational needs.

## 9.0 **Pre app presentation 16<sup>th</sup> June**

9.1 The pre-application presentation held on the 16<sup>th</sup> June provided an opportunity to update Panel Members on the progress which had been made on the issues raised following the earlier pre-application meeting. These are summarised in section 9 of this report under the following headings:

### 9.2 Site options

9.3 It was accepted that a development of this nature, located to the rear of the site, would form a prominent feature in the landscape. It must therefore be clearly demonstrated that all alternative options, which may provide a better planning solution, have been considered and assessed in terms of their affordability. To this end two alternative options were put forward which required further exploration. The first is to the north west of the site on the playing pitches as suggested by Members (option A). The second is also to the front of the site (mainly on the footprint of the existing car park - option B). This is put forward as a further proposition after being reviewed by design colleagues. To carry out this appraisal Planning Services commissioned the Valuation Office to undertake a financial viability assessment. The purpose of this was to ensure that the viability testing of these options are further independently scrutinised and to provide Members with further knowledge and details on which to make a planning judgement.

9.4 In his report the District Valuer concluded that whilst some of the figures in the cost plan provided appeared excessive, and to some degree are challengeable, this was not to the extent that either option will suddenly become affordable without significant further investment. In summary this can be expressed as follows:

### 9.5 Option A - sports field

The information provided shows that an indicative comparative assessment has been concluded that identifies works required totaling £160,000. A further £860,000 of works has been identified as being required but a comparative cost assessment has not been made due to insufficient information being available, therefore this costs included in this part of the assessment are those submitted by the developer. On this basis the additional cost reposition the school on the sports field has been assessed at £1,020,000, this should be added to the sports field costs giving **a total amount to reposition the school to the sports field of £1,875,000** (£740,000 + £1,135,000)

### 9.6 Option B - Car Park

The table shows that an indicative comparative assessment has been concluded that identifies works required totaling £580,000. A further £275,000 of works has been identified as being required but a comparative cost assessment has not been made due to insufficient information being available, therefore the costs included in this part of the assessment are those submitted by the developer. Works totaling £155,000 are thought not to be required based on the information available. **On this**



**basis the cost reposition the school on the existing car park has been assessed at £855,000.**

9.7 Community Engagement

9.8 A public consultation took place at Parklands High School on 11 May 2011 which included consultation with the pupils, members of the local community, local residents, parents of local primary schools and staff. 166 feedback forms were completed, 119 from pupils, 41 from staff, 3 from parents and 3 from the public. The majority of the feedback was positive with the only negative comments from staff relating to internal layouts, which have now been resolved through detailed design meetings.

9.9 As indicated earlier in this report, a further consultation was held on the 05 June 2011 with the local MP George Mudie and Local Ward Members (Killingbeck and Seacroft, Temple Newsam and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill).

Further consultation has been carried out via:

- Pupils – Assembly and website.
- Governors and staff – feedback meeting.
- Inner East Area Committee meeting held on 23 June 2011.
- Outer East Area Committee meeting held on the 05 July 2011.

9.10 School numbers and car parking

9.11 The current capacity of the school is 918 (Current School Numbers On Roll: 667), which will continue until the new build is completed. From September 2011 the Academy will become co-educational. From September 2013 the capacity will be 6FE (900) + 200 sixth form, total 1,100.

9.12 Currently there are 87 parking spaces with the remainder of the car park used as a muster area for fire evacuations. The car parking arrangements cater for teaching and non-teaching staff with provisions also for visitor spaces.

9.13 In terms of the likely impact on the operational needs of the school during construction, car parking will remain at 87 spaces. There will be minimal increases in teaching and non-teaching staff during the 2011/12 and 2012/13 terms as the pupil numbers are expected to remain as existing. During the course of construction, a dedicated workers car park and compound will be provided as well as the need to produce a management plan to ensure that there is no conflict between pupil and construction movements

9.14 In terms of the proposed car parking arrangements for the new scheme, 124 spaces are to be provided. Dropping off/picking up at the existing school works well, as there is a bus drop off area on South Parkway and a public bus stop. The adjacent roads provide a natural turning circle. The only current problem is taxi's and parents sometimes entering the site to drop off. The new proposed arrangements will not affect the current provision, other than entry to the site will be prevented.

9.15 Cycle and motorcycle parking will also be provided, as will shower facilities and lockers. The travel plan will also be updated.

- 9.16 Solar panels
- 9.17 To meet the current 2010 building regulations photovoltaic panels will be used on the south face of the saw tooth roof to produce electricity, in conjunction with combined heat and power (CHP).
- 9.18 Acoustics / noise transference
- 9.19 Acoustic specialists (Arup) have been engaged as part of the design team and the standards required under the Building Regulations will be met. Computer modeling is being used to ensure that sound transfer will be attenuated by absorption close to the source and therefore potential disruption minimised. The lack of low ceilings and the high volume of the space will minimise reverberation and loudness. Development of the school's teaching practices will ensure that every space is used effectively and appropriately; and the range of spaces available will offer new possibilities to teachers to develop the learning experience.
- 9.20 Relationship between the Academy and Parklands Primary School
- 9.21 There is currently an access gate at the rear of the site between the high school and primary school. This will remain and a formal physical link provided as part of the development.
- 9.22 Provision for children with Special Educational Needs
- 9.23 There will be no specific SEN unit in the Academy albeit two SEN rooms will be provided: SEN behaviour and SEN general.
- 10.0 **Summary of issues and Member comments arising from the pre-application meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> June**
- 10.1 Panel Members accepted the findings of the District Valuer's report in terms of the cost summary and the resultant proposed siting of the building as well as the concept of its design.
- 10.2 Members did however express some concerns that the building could be articulated better in terms of its elemental components and further clarity was therefore sought as well as a simple palette of materials.
- 10.3 Members also asked whether or not part of South Parkway could be used as a one-way system to help regulate and control vehicle movements to and from the school.
- 11.0 **Summary of issues and Member comments arising from the position statement briefing held on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2011**
- 11.1 Members agreed with the approach set out at paragraphs 2.11 (report the application to 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011 for determination) and 11.4/11.5 (issues for ongoing dialogue – architectural treatment/roof profile/landscaping strategy) of the report.
- 11.2 Members raised the following comments:
- More could be done with roof form and colour of cladding to improve the appearance of the building.
  - A model of the building and improved illustrative material would help the Panel to understand the proposal.

- Natural light penetration into the building should be maximised. There was a concern that the proposed revisions to the treatment of the front elevation would reduce this.
- Members sought reassurance that the fenestration detailing along the southern elevation would enable both views into and out of the building.
- It was noted that the siting of the building was acceptable to ward Members and the local MP.

## 12.0 **CABE and internal design reviews**

- 12.1 Members were previously advised that following the receipt of the application, but prior to its registration, CABE contacted the Council with a view to undertaking a design review. The purpose of the review was due to the nature of the development and the fact that as a build solution it could potentially be rolled out across the country as a cost effective way of building new schools. CABE view this as a nationally important moment and felt that they should make a contribution to the design solution recognising however the budget constraints of the development.
- 12.2 CABE's formal response letter was received on the 30<sup>th</sup> August. CABE make it clear that their comments are made in the context of an economic climate which poses many challenges to both the design team and the applicant.
- 12.3 Overall CABE support the application subject to the following comments which are summarised as follows:
- 12.4 It is noted that the school stands on high ground and will be clearly visible for some distance from many directions; so, it is particularly important that the academy projects a strong civic identity out to the local area. CABE consider the iteration presented to the review panel to express itself only at a close range and at a distance will appear as a large, grey, uninspiring mass. They go on to suggest that a simpler and bolder use of massing and colour might project a more memorable building.
- 12.5 It is also stated that the school's location, in a hollow at the back of the site, dramatically diminishes its impact on the street; CABE feel that a bolder statement would also be appropriate to compensate for this lack of presence on arrival. CABE also consider it disappointing that the approach to the school is made through an unattractive car park and that the utilitarian palisade fencing has been retained.
- 12.6 The comments also indicated that the highway to the front of the school also requires further consideration. CABE consider the depth of pavement is not adequate to accommodate the increased number of students. Safety could be improved through a combination of reconsidering the road width, sensitive choice of materials and careful detailing. The design of the road should encourage traffic to take account of the school entrance; a slow-moving one-way street may offer a better solution than traffic moving quickly in both directions.
- 12.7 CABE support the provision of external teaching spaces. However, these areas would benefit from a more detailed and imaginative design; it is important to recognise and express the specific characteristics and demands of each Learning Village. The comments go on to suggest that the interior and exterior teaching spaces are poorly connected to each other through a single door and across an internal corridor. A more direct connection would encourage these spaces to be used on a regular basis and to be properly integrated with the teaching curriculum.

- 12.8 CABE also consider the layout of the school grounds does not take advantage of significant opportunities offered by the topography of the site. It is suggested that the landscape design might offer the children and staff a richer experience if it responded more sensitively to the rise and fall of the land, made more imaginative reuse of any cut and fill and explored the potential of keeping some legacy from the existing school buildings. Similarly the connection between the school and the playing fields to the west could be improved by taking account of the topography of the site and providing a more direct link.
- 12.9 The comments also indicate that the service road would benefit from being re-routed closer to the tennis courts where it would not separate the wildlife basin from the main school landscape. CABE consider that the detailed design and material treatment of the students' entrance path could better express the pedestrian priority. Furthermore it is likely to be safer for cyclists to share this route with pedestrians, rather than mix with the motor vehicles. The vehicular access road and service route would also benefit from having a less pronounced impact on the landscape
- 12.10 Other comments note that the classrooms do not have a direct connection to the outer walls of the building and the landscape beyond. There is a danger that the building will have an inward looking atmosphere and might promote an uncomfortable feeling of enclosure. CABE believe that there could be more opportunities to connect with the outdoor green spaces and to gain some benefit from the dramatic distant views. In particular the dining space could be located closer to the edge of the building, allowing students to spill out into the landscape at lunch break. With such an inward-looking space, it will be important to make the most of any opportunity to allow the students to go outside.
- 12.11 CABE go on to suggest that the design of the elevations could be simplified to deliver a stronger, elegant and more memorable building. The understated entrance would also benefit from a bolder expression: Poor detailing of a simple form would be detrimental to the overall character of the building; so care should be taken in the design and execution of high quality details that express the form in a suitably refined way.
- 12.12 The Learning Villages are laid out in a rational way and are likely to offer a diverse and exciting environment for study. However, CABE question the expansion strategy that proposes additional pods occupying the void above the ground floor Learning Villages. An alternative strategy would deliver the two-storey model in the first instance and then expand laterally if more space was required. The advantage to this approach would be a smaller initial building footprint and additional outdoor space for the students.
- 12.13 Members may recall that to help contribute to this process undertaken with CABE, the earlier position statement indicated that the Council's Internal Design Review Panel, chaired by John Thorp, had also appraised the scheme. This was not as a substitute process but to help complement the CABE process. The internal review was carried out on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August and this was followed by a design workshop session with the scheme architects on the 17<sup>th</sup> August. The workshop session essentially highlighted three areas where further clarity was required.
- 12.14 In summary it was felt that the building comprises of three different components these are articulated in the form of the regular pods (ground floor), the irregular accommodation which is contained in the mezzanine which covers part of the first floor and the large volume areas to the front of the building which house the main hall and the sports hall. These manifest themselves in a large volume building which

is rectilinear in nature but which has a complicated architectural language and no clear expression. This is covered by a saw tooth roof mass which covers part of the building but excludes the large volume component to the front and is therefore neither one thing or the other. Finally it was felt that the landscape approach was incorrect and introduces a curvilinear solution which firstly conflicts with both the existing and surrounding geometries of the area and secondly lacks a sufficient amount of space to express itself.

- 12.15 Three areas of action have therefore been identified as part of a on going dialogue with the architects / designers and workshop members these area:
1. To consider a clear architectural language for the building to express it's elemental components.
  2. To introduce a consistent roof profile.
  3. To change the language of the landscape to one which is more responsive to the existing site geometry.
- 12.16 With one exception Members unanimously agreed with these issues and the approach as set out in the earlier position statement. These issues will therefore be the focus for assessing the proposed design solution.

### 13.0 **Main issues**

Principle of development

Layout, scale and massing, design & external appearance

Highway issues

Landscape and tree issues

Other issues

Conclusion

### 14.0 **Appraisal**

#### 14.1 Principle of development

- 14.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, indicates that in considering planning applications the determination must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 14.3 The proposed development involves the loss of playing fields and has been advertised as a departure from the development plan. Sport England has been consulted as a statutory consultee in this instance.

- 14.4 The site forms part of, or constitutes a playing field as defined in Article 10(2) the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended by SI 1996/1817 and SI 2009/453), in that it is on land that has been used as a playing field within the last five years, and the field encompasses at least one playing pitch of 0.2 ha or more, or that it is on land that allocated for the use as a playing field in a development plan or in proposals for such a plan or its alteration or replacement.

- 14.5 Sport England has therefore considered the application in the light of its playing fields policy. The aim of this policy is to ensure that there is an adequate supply of quality pitches to satisfy the current and estimated future demand for pitch sports within the area. The policy seeks to protect all parts of the playing field from development and not just those which, for the time being, are laid out as pitches. The Policy states that;
- “Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, or land last used as a playing field or allocated for use as a playing field in an adopted or draft deposit local plan, unless, in the judgement of Sport England, one of the Specific circumstances applies.”*
- 14.6 The proposal is to redevelop an existing girls only secondary school and establish a co education academy on the same site. This will see the demolition of the current school buildings and the new school buildings built on an area of the site that previously contained pitches, including hockey. Based on this information Sport England have treated this as a statutory application as the development takes place on ‘the whole of a site that contains a playing pitch of 0.2ha or more’ sometime within the last five years.
- 14.7 Sport England has had the benefit of extensive pre application discussions in making their response and has been supplied with a range of information to ensure the proposal complies with our playing field policy.
- 14.8 From the initial discussions it was clear that in order to construct the new school building while the school was still using its current buildings would necessitate the loss of some playing field land. It is understood that the existing school has no significant indoor sports hall meaning school and community participation in indoor sport is limited by the lack of such a facility. The new school will include a new Sport England standard 4 court sports hall, new changing with showers and resurfaced hard court area to comply with Sport design guidance all of which can be secured for community use. Given this and the lack of existing facilities the proposal can in principle meet Sport England’s policy exception E5;
- E5 The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields.*
- 14.9 It is clear that the proposal will be in a deprived area of the city where there are only limited affordable sports halls in the vicinity that are available to community. The changing rooms planned will be made available to community users of the wider school playing fields not affected by this application, something that they do not currently have access to.
- 14.10 On this basis Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application, subject to conditions. These relate to ensuring that the design and specification of sporting facilities are to Sport England specifications, a community use agreement is put into place and to ensure that appropriate temporary replacement facilities are provided.
- 14.11 Members should also be mindful of a new policy statement issued jointly by the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2011. This sets out the Government’s commitment to support the development of state-funded schools and their delivery

through the planning system. It states that the Government is firmly committed to ensuring there is sufficient provision to meet growing demand for state-funded school places, increasing choice and opportunity in state-funded education and raising educational standards. It goes on to say that the Government believes that the planning system should operate in a positive manner when dealing with proposals for the creation, expansion and alteration of state-funded schools, and that the following principles should apply with immediate effect:

- 14.12 There should be a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools, as expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 14.13 Local authorities should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling the development of state-funded schools in their planning decisions. The Secretary of State will attach significant weight to the need to establish and develop state-funded schools when determining applications and appeals that come before him for decision.
- 14.14 Against this background it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable.
- 14.15 Layout, scale and massing, design & external appearance
- 14.16 The proposed layout and design concept of a large volume building has been reviewed and discussed with Members at both pre-application and through a position statement. Members have previously accepted the disposition of the proposed building and its concept following extensive investigations and the exploration of other site options.
- 14.17 Earlier sections of this report have identified issues raised by CABI, the Council's internal design review and Member issues following Plans Panel held on the 8<sup>th</sup> September. The remainder of this part of the assessment will focus upon those issues.
- 14.18 A common theme which emerged from all the engagement processes was the need to make the building more elemental and less like a factory. The latest design changes seek to do this in a number of ways. First, to articulate the 'bookends' of the building (the sports hall and assembly hall) by making these corners more expressive and bolder through the use of colour. Second, fenestration detailing along the assembly hall and the main entrance area has also been simplified. Third, the roof detailing in between the bookends introduces a canopy feature which helps articulate the building as well as serving as a beacon to guide people to the entrance of the building. This projection also helps create a rhythm to the roof pattern by echoing the saw tooth elements of the roofline which is a key feature across the general span of the building. Fourth, the staircase elements on each side elevation have been 'lifted' (previously these sat under the saw tooth roof) to assist in creating further animation in these facades.
- 14.19 All in all these proposed changes are considered to make the building more expressive and have helped simplify the architectural language which in turn assists in articulating the building and particularly so at a distance.
- 14.20 Members have also raised the issue of viewing a physical model of the proposal. Unfortunately due to budget constraints the applicant has been unable to do this but has commissioned 3D computer generated images to help assist in conveying these new architectural changes.

- 14.21 Concern was also expressed with regard to natural light penetration to ensure that the outlook into and out of the building is maximised. In terms of natural light entering the building ARUP, the environmental engineers for the project, have confirmed that the building as a whole will have a more than adequate natural daylight factor of ADF 4.9%, this is in excess of minimum standards for a school building. In terms of the actual classrooms or 'pods' the average daylight factor is reduced on average to 2%, however in some instances it is less. Where this is the case additional measures such as roof light glazing will be introduced to the pods.
- 14.22 In respect of how natural daylight penetration is maximised to the front of the building, high level windows are provided through the facade to assembly hall & activity studio. Windows are provided through facade to all staff rooms i.e., admin, head, reprographics etc. Openings have also been created through the facade to all specialist teaching rooms i.e., graphics & art etc. Circular dome roof lights will also be provided to circulation areas at front end of building Natural daylight penetration into Sports Hall avoided due to glare issues during game play as recommended by Sport England.
- 14.23 Fenestration changes to the southern elevation now show that the outlook to the surrounding landscape and views back into the school have been improved by lowering the window cills to a more human level. Again, images have been drawn to respond to this point and will be shared with Panel Members.
- 14.24 Against this background it is considered that the detailed design issues raised by Panel Members have now been satisfactory addressed.
- 14.25 Highway issues
- 14.26 The proposed vehicular access to the site is essentially from an existing secondary car park entrance from South Parkway Approach but this is to be modified to current standards. Cars will be able to enter by the same vehicular entrance as the service vehicles and will have access to 124 car parking spaces in the staff car park with 8 disabled parking spaces provided adjacent to the building. The current number of parking spaces is in the order of 88. This is only estimated as the current car park arrangement is not formally marked out. The proposed parking levels are therefore a significant increase in the parking numbers and parking ratios. Members should note that the level of parking proposed is approximately 52% above the normal parking requirements specified in the RUDP which indicates that a development of this nature should have 1 spaces for every 2 member of staff plus an element of visitor parking. A vehicular barrier will be put in place and set back a minimum of 10m from the kerb line to allow cars to pull of South Parkway Approach. Given that the proposed increase in student numbers will be modest, (current capacity 918 to a new co-educational capacity of 1100 ), it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will generate any additional significant traffic issues.
- 14.27 The current school entrance mixes pedestrian and vehicular traffic in a narrow bottleneck which has been identified as very undesirable. This conflict is to be removed. Improvements to the existing school entrance to provide a segregated pedestrian and vehicular accesses. The existing vehicular entrance will be dedicated to pedestrians and cyclists with the exception of access to the caretakers house. The existing bellmouth will be modified / removed to emphasise a pedestrian right of way and the footway along the site frontage is to widened within the site up to 3.5m
- 14.28 . Since the intention is to retain the main existing pedestrian approach to the school from South Parkway Approach, the scheme proposes a 4m wide corridor that can accommodate cyclist and the main pedestrian path. In terms of cycle storage, this



has been repositioned from the north east corner of the building to an area to the sandwiched between the car park and the 'square' to the front of the building. A total of 96 cycle parking spaces are proposed.

- 14.29 By making a more convenient, direct and attractive entrance to the site for pedestrians the proposal sets out to not just reduce the risk of pedestrian/vehicular conflict but also to enhance the walk to school. Pupils disembarking from the buses on the site road are on the correct side of the road to follow the path down to the entrance square and enter the school through the reception point. As detailed above, the highway to the front of the site is also to be widened to create a footway across the frontage of the site to up to 3.5m to help improve pedestrian safety and enhance walking routes.
- 14.29 Other highway measures include also the widening of off-site footways up to 3.5m wide between the site boundary and former depot to the east. An informal pedestrian link is to be provided at the south east of the site linking into existing informal routes that would facilitate pedestrian access from the south. The Traffic section have highlighted the need for traffic management measures including Bus Stop Clearways, School Keep Clear markings and waiting restrictions in the vicinity of the school. A formal pedestrian crossing is also considered necessary across South Parkway although its precise location is yet to be determined.
- 14.30 At previous Local Member meetings, Members have mentioned the possibility of creating a one way system around part of South Parkway, indeed this was also a point suggested by CABI, after detailed consideration of this issue it is not however supported by officers. Colleagues in the Traffic section have considered the suggestion but feel that such a proposal would be unnecessary and could lead to other traffic regulation issues to the detriment of road safety. In addition to the cost of implementing the one-way order alterations at the junction of South Parkway and South Parkway Approach maybe necessary. It is considered that such money would be better spent on the above measures.
- 14.31 The application is accompanied by a travel plan which assesses the transport needs of the school and sports hall uses at the site to improve the accessibility and safety for all modes of transport. The Travelwise section of the Council have accepted the Travel Plan. The delivery and implementation of the Travel Plan will be controlled by planning condition.
- 14.32 Site construction traffic during the construction phase will be directed through the tennis courts from a temporary access adjacent to the public footpath crossing from South Parkway. Issues to deal with construction management, hours of use, deliveries and construction workers car parking are to be controlled by planning condition.
- 14.33 Against this background and subject to the above conditions, no highway objections are raised.
- 14.34 Landscape and tree issues
- 14.35 Following the review of the scheme, it was also considered that the proposed landscape approach should also be revised. This has led to a complete change of thinking from a curvilinear proposal to one which is now rectilinear and aims to reconcile existing on site and surrounding geometries which includes the surrounding housing, highway alignment, the existing tennis courts, existing car park

and the proposed location of the new school. The landscape language is now clear and simple with good orientation for visitors and better use of space. The dining area to the east of the building is now better connected to the landscape and effectively wraps around this elevation which previously contained a sprinkler tank, bin storage and cycle parking. Some of these features are still present and are illustrated as a detached block but have been pulled further away from the main building.

- 14.36 As discussed earlier, the cycle parking has been repositioned to the front of the site. In summary this has created more space in this area and is a more positive arrangement both visually and functionally. An area of landscaping has also been introduced to the front of the bin / sprinkler tank area which will be used to help mask these elements of plant as well as the service turning area.
- 14.37 A full tree report has been submitted with the application to enable a detailed impact assessment to be undertaken this has also taken into account construction matters and the impact that this will have upon tree cover and their root protection areas. Members will be aware that previous presentations have highlighted the fact that the proposal does involve the loss of at least three mature trees (to the south of the site) elsewhere the scheme has been designed in such a way as to protect as much tree cover as possible.
- 14.38 The Councils landscape architect has commented on the proposal and whilst no objections have been raised in principle, comments have been made which requires more detailed work to be undertaken to ensure that the temporary access road does not damage tree cover. Engineering solutions will also be required are covered in the British Standard BS5837 Trees in Relation to Construction. Solutions must include the use of cellular containment systems which spread loads laterally and therefore do not cause compaction over tree root zones.
- 14.39 Further observations have been made in relation to the screening along the western elevation of the building. It is considered that further planting is required on the west side embankment due to the visual impact of the building and to views where the full uninterrupted elevation sits on top of an embankment.
- 14.40 Issues have also been raised in response to tree planting, biodiversity and the use of recreational space within the site. It is considered that these issues can be controlled by suitably imposed conditions.

## 15.0 **Other Issues**

- 15.1 One representation has been received in connection with this proposal. The objection raises a number of issues relating to loss of green space, removal of trees, increased noise and disruption and concern regarding increased traffic both as a result of the development and during the construction process. Concern has also been expressed in respect of the how the scheme has been advertised and that other residents would like to know more about the proposals. In response to these points, a public meeting, organised by Children's Services was held at Parklands Girls High School on the 5<sup>th</sup> September and all residents were invited to attend.
- 15.2 Residents were informed that there would be no loss of public open space as there was a misconception that the playing field to the east of the site were to be fenced off. All development would therefore be contained in the existing operational boundary of the school. In respect of perceived increased noise and disturbance it was stated that the school is to be set back further into the site than the existing school and essentially further away from the majority of dwellings that are adjacent

to the site. In respect of increased traffic, it was also indicated that the increase in student numbers would also be marginal compared to the existing number on the school roll and that measures to help promote green travel as well as highway safety improvements would help make the existing situation better. Assurances were also given that during the construction process, measures would be put in place to manage workers parking, site deliveries and hours of operation as to not conflict with the functioning of the school. The other matters raised in the objection are covered elsewhere in this report.

15.3 In summary the feedback from the meeting was positive and there was a recognition that the existing teaching environment was poor. Proposals for community use as well as improved sporting facilities were also discussed.

15.4 As part of the consultation process a representation has been received from Metro. This raises no objection to the development but indicates that a bus shelter should be provided close to the school as well as access to real time. It is considered that the number of pupils currently using or likely to use public transport is minimal. Currently the school has two dedicated bus services and these will continue. Importantly however the new academy will predominately serve its local catchment and added to this the increase in the roll number will be marginal. In this context it is considered that the impact upon the existing transport infrastructure will be limited. It is considered that this, combined with measures to promote walking and cycling to and from school, will not place further significant pressure on to public transport infrastructure or particularly so to the extent to reasonably warrant a financial contribution.

## 16.0 **Conclusion**

16.1 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in planning terms and lies within an area of sufficient size to accommodate such a use without having a detrimental impact upon both the visual and residential amenity of the area as well as its general character.

16.2 Overall, it is considered that the proposed scheme is of an acceptable quality in design terms and delivers essential new teaching accommodation. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposal will have no detrimental impact on the surrounding residential amenity. The new academy will predominately serve its local catchment and the increase in the roll number is marginal. In this context it is considered that the impact upon the existing transport infrastructure will be limited. Measures to improve both pedestrian safety and highway improvements as well as green travel arrangements will help mitigate against any potential traffic impacts should they arise. Significant weight should also be given to the fact that improved benefits to the local community will also arise from improved sports facilities as well as wider community use opportunities.

After careful consideration of all relevant planning matters it is recommended that the application is approved subject to conditions set out in this report.

## **Background papers:**

Planning application files:

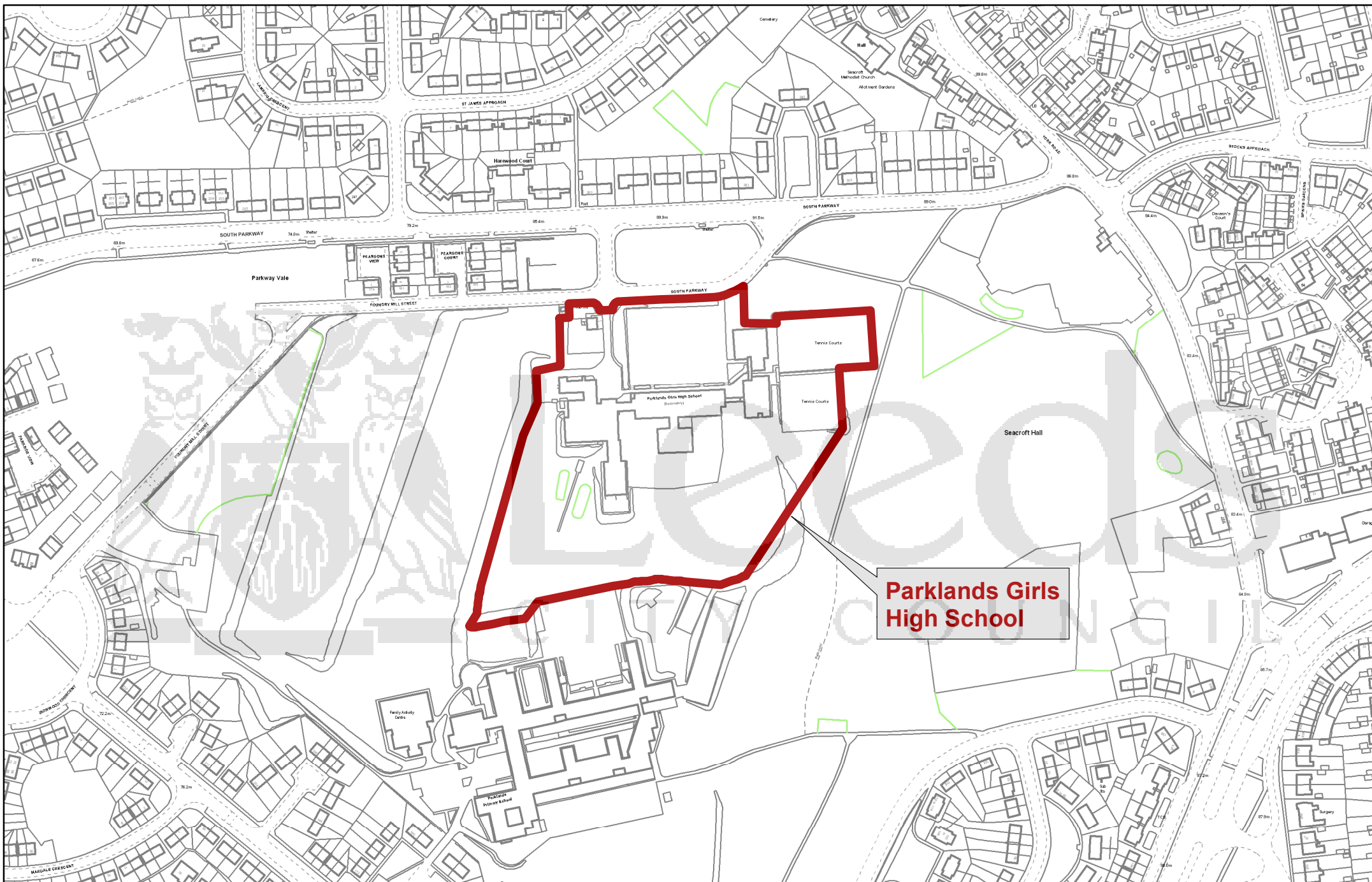




Revision notes 22.07.11:  
Entrance plaza revised to retain existing trees.  
Service road reduced in width to avoid root zone of existing trees.  
Breedon gravel path added along southern boundary.  
Chiller plant omitted, service area revised.  
Outdoor ding area reduced in area.  
Fire paths noted.  
Ground cover planting omitted, beech hedging & barrier planting in lieu.  
Drainage basin shown, wildlife area added.  
Existing trees to be removed noted.  
Root zones of existing trees added.

- KEY:
- Existing trees
  - Root zones
  - Trees to be removed
  - New trees (ex. hvy stds)
  - Existing hedge
  - Proposed hedge / shrubs
  - Grass: amenity ryegrass mix
  - Grass: wild flower mix
  - Block paving
  - Paving slabs
  - Breedon gravel
  - Tarmacadam: pedestrian areas
  - Tarmacadam: vehicular areas
  - Tarmacadam: refurbish existing
  - Pitches: existing
  - Pitches: proposed





# PLANS PANEL PRESENTATION

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SCALE 1:3000