

<b>Agenda Item</b> A17	<b>Committee Date</b> 27 July 2009	<b>Application Number</b> 09/00599/CCC
<b>Application Site</b> Heysham High School, Limes Avenue, Heysham		<b>Proposal</b> Erection of new sports hall
<b>Name of Applicant</b> Lancashire County Council		<b>Name of Agent</b> Graham Anthony Associates
<b>Decision Target Date</b> Observations due 14 July 2009		<b>Reason For Delay</b> Committee timetable
<b>Case Officer</b>	Peter Rivet	
<b>Departure</b>	No	
<b>Summary of Recommendation</b>	Objection	

## **1.0 The Site and its Surroundings**

- 1.1 Heysham High School occupies land to the rear of a housing estate on the east side of Balmoral Road, backing on to the Morecambe to Heysham railway line. The site is an extensive one, with playing fields in addition to the main complex of buildings at the end of Limes Avenue.
- 1.2 Until recently there was a row of mature trees along the boundary behind the houses and bungalows in Osborne Grove and Clevelands Avenue, but they were removed last year.
- 1.3 Members are advised that this is a County Council application, and therefore the City Council is a consultee.

## **2.0 The Proposal**

- 2.1 The school requires a new sports hall, which is proposed to site close to the northern site boundary. The area concerned was formerly occupied by temporary buildings which were removed some years ago. The building proposed would have be 8 metres high to eaves level (the equivalent of a two storey building) and would have a floorspace of 744 sq metres, sufficient for either one full size basketball court or four badminton courts. It would be similar in size and form to a modern industrial unit. The accommodation would include a plant room and storage facilities but no toilets or changing rooms. It would be available for use between 9:00am and 9:00pm daily.
- 2.2 The new hall would be finished externally in PVC cladding; the lower section would be terracotta coloured, and the upper part white. This material is considered by the architects responsible for the design to be environmentally friendly as it is capable of being recycled at the end of its expected life of 25 years. The roof will be constructed of translucent PVC sheeting, to minimise the need for the use of artificial light.
- 2.3 The supporting statement indicates that Heysham High School has obtained recognition as an outstanding sports college and the extra facilities are considered necessary for it to develop this role, in addition to the existing gymnasium. Although its appearance will be different from that of the existing school buildings it is argued that it will be in keeping with their general character. It states that the site has been selected as the most suitable because of its proximity to existing facilities, security and the need to retain existing sports pitches.

2.4 It also notes that the site is within an area considered to be at risk from flooding. It is proposed to address this issue by raising the floor level of the building 200mm above the existing ground level.

### **3.0 Site History**

3.1 Recent applications involving the school site are as follows:

<b>Application Number</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Decision</b>
03/00311/FUL	Construction of all weather sports pitch with floodlighting and erection of outdoor changing facilities	Approved
04/01572/CPA	Erection of a 2 storey building to provide 9 additional classrooms and ancillary accommodation together with relocation of car park to provide 7 spaces including disabled parking space	Approved
05/00253/CPA	Retrospective application for two steel containers for storage of outdoor sports equipment.	Approved

### **4.0 Consultation Responses**

4.1 The County Council is responsible for consultation. However the City Council has consulted its Environmental Health Service, and their observations are awaited.

### **5.0 Neighbour Representations**

5.1 As the application is one for the County Council to determine, they are responsible for carrying out neighbour consultations.

5.2 Notwithstanding this, one letter of objection has been received by the City Council on behalf of a neighbour, who objects on the following grounds:

- The building is too close to houses
- Its size and design are inappropriate for this location
- The intended times of use, 9:00-21:00 hours, will increase traffic to the area
- Insufficient information is available on the range of activities
- Possible problems from ventilation and/r air conditioning equipment.

### **6.0 Principal Development Plan Policies**

6.1 Policy SC8 of the District Core Strategy seeks to build sustainable communities by ensuring that existing and future residents and visitors have access to sports facilities, green spaces, and greenspace networks. Policy ER7 states that the City Council will promote renewable energy by, among other things, promoting micro-renewables through its development control policies.

6.2 The complex of school buildings on the site is not shown as allocated for any specific purpose in the Lancaster District Local Plan. However, the associated playing fields are identified as greenspace and are therefore covered by "saved" policy E29. This protects them from development, but the policy states that exceptionally, essential education or community related development or the limited expansion of existing uses will be permitted.

6.3 "Saved" Policy R21 requires that where appropriate, new development should be accessible to people with disabilities.

### **7.0 Comment and Analysis**

7.1 The principle of additional facilities for the school is to be welcomed, and the external appearance of the building would in itself be satisfactory. However its relationship with some of the adjoining houses is a matter of concern. The new building would be within 15 metres of the back of the two bungalows closest to the site, at 30 and 32 Clevelands Avenue. This distance would be acceptable for the two storey blank gable wall of a house, but the building proposed is significantly larger than this and would have a correspondingly greater impact on their light and aspect.

- 7.2 Policy R21 requires that the building should be accessible to people with disabilities. The Design and Access Statement claims that it will be, but it also states that the floor level will be 200mm above the existing ground level and the plans show stepped rather than ramped accesses.
- 7.3 There is no very obvious reason why a sporting facility of this kind needs to be sited so close to the main teaching complex. It would seem logical to find a location for it which relates better to the extensive open sports facilities on the site, where this problem of neighbouring amenity would not arise.
- 7.4 If, for operational reasons, it is considered essential to put a new building here rather than elsewhere on the school site, it is reasonable to require that the trees removed from the site last year should be replaced by new ones.
- 7.5 The Environmental Health Officers views are awaited to see if there is a concern regarding possible noise nuisance from the use.

## **8.0 Conclusions**

- 8.1 Taking these factors into consideration, it is recommended that the County Council be advised that the City Council does not feel able to support the proposal in its present form.

## **Recommendation**

That the County Council be advised that the City Council **OBJECTS** to the proposal in its present form, because:

1. The building would have an adverse impact on the light and aspect of the adjoining houses and bungalows in Cleveland Avenue, because of its size and position. Consideration should be given to an alternative location where it would relate better to the outdoor sports facilities on the site. If it is considered necessary, for operational reasons, to provide a new building on this part of the school site a programme of new boundary planting should be required as a condition of the consent.
2. The scheme as submitted is contrary to policy R21 of the Lancaster District Local Plan, as the floor would be 200mm above ground level and no provision has been made for a ramped access suitable for wheelchair users.
3. As requested by Environmental Health Officer.

## **Human Rights Act**

This recommendation has been reached after consideration of the provisions of the Human Rights Act. Unless otherwise stated in this report, the issues arising do not appear to be of such magnitude to override the responsibility of the City Council to regulate land use for the benefit of the community as a whole, in accordance with national law.

## **Background Papers**

1. None.