

**ITEM: 10**

**Application Number:** 08/00984/FUL

**Applicant:** Plymouth City Council

**Description of Application:** Two storey extension (to provide additional dining and class room accommodation) adjacent to Somerset Place frontage

**Type of Application:** Full Application

**Site Address:** STOKE DAMEREL COMMUNITY COLLEGE,  
SOMERSET PLACE PLYMOUTH

**Ward:** Stoke

**Valid Date of Application:** 19/05/2008

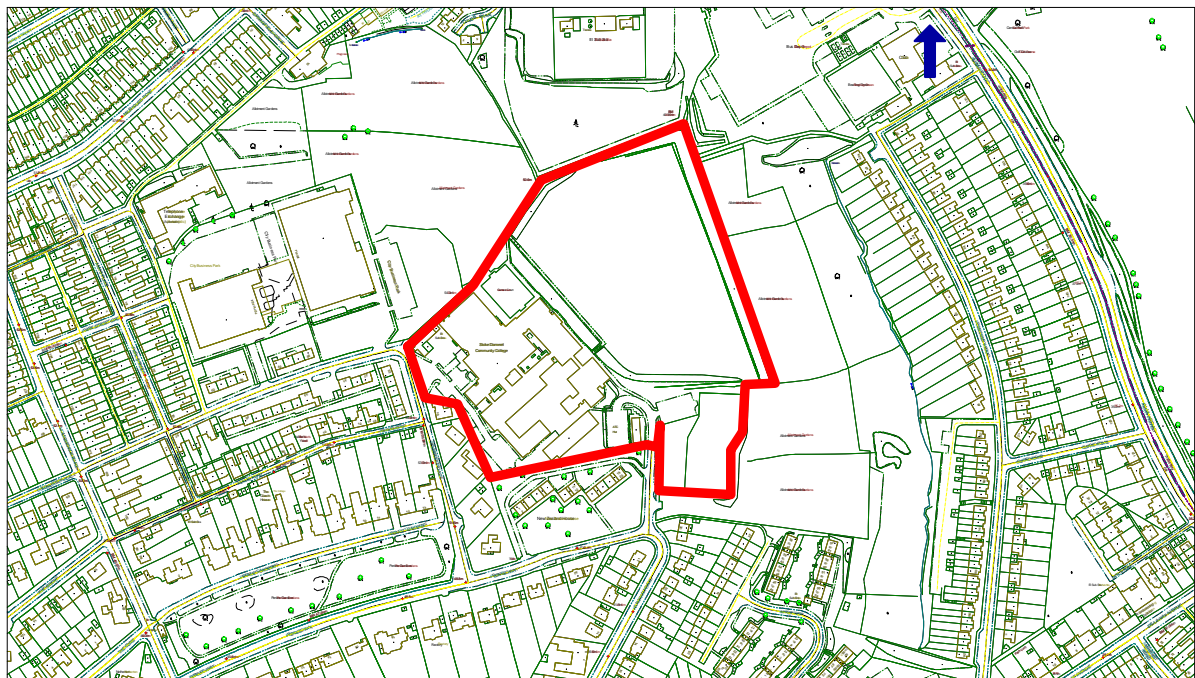
**8/13 Week Date:** **18/08/2008**

**Decision Category:** Major Application

**Case Officer :** Liz Maynard

**Recommendation:** Grant Conditionally

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## **OFFICERS REPORT**

### **Site Description**

Stoke Damerel Community College is a large site located within the Stoke area of Plymouth. The college site comprises an eclectic collection of modern linked single and two storey buildings (interspersed with internal courtyards) situated on the western part of the site and playing fields to the eastern part of the site.

This application relates to a small part of the school site close to the main school entrance on Somerset Place and in front of the existing sports hall in the far western corner of the school site. This area is currently used for staff car parking (8 marked spaces) and a planting bed.

Stoke Damerel Community College is located to the NE of the Somerset Place Conservation Area. It is boarded on the north western side by the City Business Park from which it is separated by a public footpath. The main entrance off Somerset Place abuts residential property (10 Somerset Place) and residential properties opposite the entrance appear to provide for sheltered accommodation. There is a second vehicular entrance off Raynham Road/Penlee Way towards the south east corner of the site which serves access to the main staff car park.

### **Proposal Description**

Two storey extension (to provide additional dining and class room accommodation and toilets) adjacent to Somerset Place frontage.

The proposal is located in front of the existing sports hall and will adjoin the single storey brick building which is understood to accommodate the school's current dining area and main kitchen facilities.

The proposed building is a modular design with PPC coated metal walls, a flat roof and UPVC or aluminium windows. A new feature 'art' screen is proposed along the Somerset Place frontage. Further details of the screen were received 22.09.08 showing perforated metal figures behind horizontal wooden slats. Further details were also provided on 22.09.08 regarding replacement of the parking spaces that will be lost in the area of the development.

### **Relevant Planning History**

There have been number of applications for extensions to the school during the 1990s, and three more recent applications (listed below). Although not directly relevant to this application, many residents referred to the previous application (07/02128/FUL) in their letters of representation so some details are provided below.

07/02128/FUL - Installation of temporary classroom sited on a former car park in the south-west corner of site. Confirmation was received that the proposed class room will not result in an increase in student numbers – GRANTED CONDITIONALLY. Conditions: advance/screening details, school travel plan, and temporary permission until 31/01/2013.

04/00982 - Erection of two storey classroom block, covered walkway and two storey glazed entrance – GRANTED CONDITIONALLY. Report noted that following initial concern from Highways for this application, the applicant confirmed that there will be no loss of car park numbers on site and that the number of pupil and staff movements to and from the site should not be affected; progress is also being made on the preparation/ updating of the Green Travel Plan. It was not considered that an objection on parking and highway grounds could be sustained.

03/01276 - Single storey extension to existing detached workshop/store building (adj to Somerset Place) to provide additional storage facilities) – GRANTED CONDITIONALLY.

### **Consultation Responses**

**Highway Authority** – a very detailed response taking into consideration concerns raised in the letters of representation (detailed below), the impact of the previous application (07/02128/FUL) and progress on the School and Staff Travel Plan, and experience of a site visit at time when the school was coming out. The consultation response concluded that Transport would support the proposal along with the introduction of certain limited and sensitive mitigation measures and recommended conditions for (i) an amended Staff Travel Plan and School Travel Plan; (ii) replacement elsewhere within the site of the car parking spaces lost; (iii) code of practice during construction; (iv) further details of pedestrian and vehicle management; and (v) measures to improve public safety via the funding of a traffic order and measures to prevent parking on the street near the Somerset Place entrance of the school.

A recent meeting with the school (31.07.08) allowed for discussion of the various issues that the Transport Officer raised in his comments and the recommended conditions. The school had previously met with some local residents and various actions agreed. The school agreed to the recommended conditions and demonstrated a proactive approach.

The Highways Authority has been consulted on the replacement car parking proposed (4 within the school site and 4 in the City Business Park car park) received 22.09.08. They have suggested that the proposed relocation of the car parking spaces as shown on drawing 08556 SD-01 Rev A is not appropriate; the two car parking spaces shown repositioned adjacent to the new development at the front of the school should be altogether removed from the front area of the school, to the rear car park, (further details to be submitted for approval). The school already experience severe problems with vehicle circulation and potential pedestrian vehicle/conflict within the area around the front of the school.

**Public Protection Service** – no objection but recommended condition for code of practice for construction and land quality investigation due to being on an area of potential land filled/filled ground.

**Crime Prevention Officer** – no objections.

## **Representations**

A total of 22 letters of representation have been received from local residents and local resident associations, all expressing concern with the parking situation and the loss of car-parking within the site that the application proposes. Letters raise issue with current high level of cars parking on surrounding residential roads and how the proposal will further impact on this, with the associated impact on the safety of children attending the school and nearby elderly residents using the pavements; and due to parked cars interfering with access to private drives. The majority of letters indicate that the car parking situation had worsened since the previous application in 2007 was permitted. Some letters suggest that the Travel Plan that was a condition to the previous application has not been implemented. Many letters expressed the opinion that additional/replacement parking should be provided for staff within the site. Several letters also draw attention to the recent changes in the parking arrangement at the City Business Park – by parking meters – and how this has also impacted on the surrounding streets. Some letters make suggestions as to how the parking situation could be approved – the letter from the Penlee Resident's Association is particularly proactive in this regard.

No letters object to the proposed building itself. One letter indicates that they are reluctant to oppose an improvement to the school.

Neighbours have been reconsulted on the additional information supplied 22.0908 and the committee will be updated on any further letters of representation received via addendum report.

## **Analysis**

This application was discussed at Planning Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2008, when members voted to defer the application for further information on the art screen and for the number of parking spaces to be checked. Further information has been supplied by the agent and further observations have been made by the case officer. To aid navigation of this analysis section, discussion of the further information is provided below, followed by the analysis previously presented but amended to reflect changes.

### **FURTHER ART SCREEN DETAILS**

Details of the art screen show the screen to be 7 metres in height (5 metres tall but raised 2 metres from the ground with defensive planting below) and 15 metres long, which will screen the south elevation of the proposed building. The screen pictures silhouettes of humans (approximately 2 metres high made of perforated steel or aluminium) behind horizontal slatted wood (cedar or similar). This demonstrates an innovative design solution to mask the modular building behind.

During discussion at the August Planning Committee Members queried the justification for the temporary nature of the building. The applicant has commented that the temporary nature of accommodation is covered in the Council's current Strategy for Change paper which was agreed by the Council on 2nd June 2008 and is the subject of a forward planning document to go to cabinet in October. The Strategy for Change project has been set up to pull

together a number of citywide strategies and to outline how capital investment in the services for children will shape a future of environments that will achieve the Government's objectives to "Creating schools equipped for 21st century learning, at the heart of the community, with a range of children's services in reach of every family". It takes into account the criteria for application of funding and dates that funding will be available, specifically Building Schools for the Future (BSF) funding.

#### FURTHER PARKING DETAILS

At the August Planning Committee there was some discussion about the loss of car parking, and following from the speaker's comments in objection to the proposal that the development area has been observed to accommodate up to 14 vehicles, the Members requested the Case Officer sought further information.

The Case Officer has established that the area has 8 marked car parking spaces. In addition, there is a hatched area labelled 'school mini bus only' but in discussion with a site manager, the minibuses now get parked near the school reception where they can be locked within the school gates. It is the case that there is space around the marked spaces – specifically, the two hatched areas and the area marked 'no parking' where further vehicles can park.

The car park was checked on two occasions during school hours, when 8 and 10 cars (respectively) were parked in this car park.

The recommended condition would require the car parking spaces lost as a result of the development to be replaced. As such, there would be no net loss in car parking spaces. It is considered reasonable to request 8 spaces to be re-provided, as this is the number of marked spaces.

Further details have been submitted to set out how 8 spaces could be provided. An amended site layout plan has been submitted showing the proposed site layout showing the creation of 2 new car parking spaces to the front of the school and 2 spaces added to the small car park to the west of the Raynham Road entrance, next to the ATC hut. Further to this, the school proposed to take on a further 4 car parking spaces in the adjacent City Business Park car park.

The Highways Authority response (detailed above) suggests that the 2 proposed spaces to the front of the school are not appropriate (since they could interfere with circulation of traffic). Given the large car park and grassed area to the rear of the school, it is likely that these spaces could be accommodated in that area. The Highways Authority raises no objection to the replacement of 4 spaces within the City Business Park which the school has justified by commenting: 'As a tenant of the business park with 2 units rented to the college we are entitled to do this. The business park car park is never full. The places will be allocated and will include the site staff at the college. These staff work a shift pattern and although there is cross over for short periods of time it is unlikely there are here at the same time during the

day. In short taking up some of the unutilised space in the business park will not displace other cars onto Somerset Place.

Local Residents have made the point several times that we should make more use of this resource as there are always spaces in the car park."

It is noted that the Business Park has recently starting charging for parking and signage suggests it is open to the public. Although this may also impact on the amount of car parking in Somerset Place, the issue is being investigated separately as to whether a material change of use has taken place (and hence whether planning permission is required for that change). However, the change in status of the Business Park is not a material consideration in this application given that the school have already outlined that they are entitled to spaces within the car park.

The issue with car parking, and specifically staff car parking is considered to be largely a management issue of staff parking. The Case Officer has discussed the School Travel Plan with the School Travel Plan Officer, who noted that progress was being made by the school on the staff aspect of the travel plan. The recommended condition requires the school to submit and have approved in writing a Staff Travel Plan (STP) in addition to a School Travel Plan amended to reflect the changes, prior to the development being occupied.

#### MAIN ANALYSIS SECTION (Amended)

This application turns on Policies CS02, CS14, CS28 & CS34 of the Core Strategy with the key considerations being impact on the public highway, neighbouring amenity and the character of the area

#### CS02 – Design

The proposed extension is relatively small (approximately 15m square and 6m in height), is contained wholly within the existing school site and its scale is generally in keeping with the scale of surrounding school buildings.

The building itself is not considered to represent a positive contribution to the school or area's identity due to its modular and utilitarian design. However, the accompanying design and access statement (DAS) gives justification for this design in terms of the school's requirement for the building restricting the timescale for construction by traditional methods, and offering flexibility to respond to future funding opportunities in connection with the national 'Building Schools for the Future' programme. The proposal also includes a proposed 'art screen' which does have the potential for a unique and exciting display of public art that could completely screen the modular building from the adjacent conservation area and offer a positive identity to the school entrance. In spite of the proposed art screen, the temporary nature of the proposed building, similar in design to the classrooms permitted by the previous application (07/02128/FUL), due to their contribution to the school and area's identity, are considered to warrant a temporary (rather than permanent) permission (5 years). This was supported by the school during a recent meeting, where their aspirations for a more permanent design solution for the building was discussed in the context of the school's future. A more

permanent design solution also appeared to be supported by Planning Committee members during discussion at the August committee.

With regards to equal access, the DAS indicates that the building will fully comply with relevant requirements.

#### CS28 – Local Transport Considerations

As already indicated above, the letters of representation received have raised strong objection to the loss of parking proposed and the impact this may have on the safety of the local highway network as a result of further on-street parking. These issues have been carefully considered in the Transport consultation response (and recommended conditions) and have been discussed in a recent meeting with the school. The school had already met with some local residents and have agreed actions to encourage staff and visitors to the school to use the off-street car parking facilities (both at the school and adjacent Business Park). The school indicated consideration had already been given to the provision of replacement car parking in site, although replacement spaces should be required by condition in accordance with the further details received 22.09.08.

Following discussion with the school, a suggested plan of measures to discourage indiscriminate parking on the street near the Somerset Place entrance during the working day by additional single yellow lines and zigzag lines has been drawn up and the school agreed to fund the Traffic Order which would be required to implement these. This suggested plan is referred to by informative but the detail of the lines cannot be required by condition as a Traffic Order will be subject to its own advertisement and consultation procedure.

As an additional point, it was noted that there was significant level of on-street car parking in the east-west section of Somerset Place at the time of the meeting which was held during the school holidays when no teaching staff were scheduled to be on site. This would suggest that the teaching staff are unlikely to be the sole cause of the on-street car parking in the area.

#### CS14 – New Educational Facilities

This application does not specifically provide for community use, however parts of the school already support community use. As such, this policy does not raise any new issues.

#### CS34 – Planning Application Considerations

The Public Protection Service recommends a condition for land quality investigation, however, since the land is already predominantly hard surfaced and the temporary nature of the proposed building is unlikely to warrant significant excavation work, it is considered an informative is adequate in this regard.

No further material planning consideration are raised by policy CS34 or the letters of representation.

## Human Rights Act

The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act, and in particular Article 1 of the First Protocol and Article 8 of the Act itself. This Act gives further effect to the rights included in the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests / the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance.

## Section 106 Obligations

Not applicable to this application. A negative condition is used to secure the funding for the Traffic Order.

## Conclusions

This application proposes a relatively small and functional extension to the existing college premises that will not have any detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity and will improve the facilities at the school. Whilst there is some concern about the impact on on-street car parking and associated highway safety, the conditions recommended are considered to address these concerns and seek a more permanent deterrent to indiscriminate parking in the area by way of a Traffic Order.

The appearance and temporary nature of the building warrants a temporary permission, whilst allowing for flexibility to respond to future funding opportunities. The proposed art screen offers a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, whilst screening the modular building from the adjacent conservation area.

The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

## Recommendation

In respect of the application dated **19/05/2008** and the submitted drawings, **Site layout plan showing existing and proposed carparking spaces on site 08556-EX02A and 08556\_SD01A and associated email setting out provision of replacement car parking spaces; Screen Rev A showing Art Screen elevation received 22.09.08**

**08556/EX/01, 08556/EX/03, 08556/SD/02, 08556/SD/03 and accompanying design and access statement received 19.05.08, it is recommended to:  
Grant Conditionally**

## Conditions

DEVELOPMENT TO COMMENCE WITHIN 3 YEARS

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

Reason:

To comply with Section 51 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.



## STAFF TRAVEL PLAN AND SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

(2) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until a Staff Travel Plan (STP) and an updated School Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The said STP shall include measures for monitoring and managing vehicular access and car parking at the main entrance to the school in Somerset Place in particular at the starting and finishing times of the school day when marshalling and restricting parental car parking and access to parts of the site may be required; and seek to encourage staff to use modes of transport other than the private car to get to and from the premises. It shall also include measures to control the use of the permitted car parking areas; arrangements for monitoring the use of provisions available through the operation of the STP; and the name, position and contact telephone number of the person responsible for its implementation. From the date of the commencement of the occupation the occupier shall operate the approved STP.

### Reason:

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, such measures need to be taken in order to reduce reliance on the use of private cars (particularly single occupancy journeys) and to assist in the promotion of more sustainable travel choices in accordance with Policy CS28 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

## FURTHER DETAILS: PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICLE MANAGEMENT

(3) No work shall commence on site until details of the following aspects of the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, viz:- Pedestrian routes and circulation; monitoring and management of vehicle access and movements at the main entrance in Somerset Place; Off-site highway safety measures: The works shall conform to the approved details.

### Reason:

To ensure that these further details are acceptable to the Local Planning Authority and that they are in keeping with the standards of the vicinity.

## CAR PARKING PROVISION

(4) Notwithstanding the detail of the submitted plan 08556SD-01Rev A showing the provision of 4 replacement car parking spaces and email dated 22.09.08 indicating that arrangement has been made to allocate a further 4 car parking spaces on the adjacent City Business Park land, the building hereby approved shall not be occupied until area(s) for car parking has been formed in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority for the replacement elsewhere within the application site or adjacent land of the 8 car parking spaces lost as a result of the development, and that area shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.

Reason:

To enable vehicles used by occupiers or visitors to be parked off the public highway so as to avoid damage to amenity and interference with the free flow of traffic on the highway, in accordance with policies CS34 and CS28 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

#### MEASURES TO IMPROVE HIGHWAY SAFETY

(5) The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until provision for the introduction of public safety improvements have been made to control indiscriminate and hazardous car parking in Somerset Place in the form of a Traffic Order and measures to prevent the parking of cars on the street, at the entrance to the school, on the junctions of Penlee Road and Penlee Way, and the footways within the streets.

Reason:

In the interest of public and highway safety.

#### TEMPORARY BUILDING

(6) The building hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition on or before 31/10/2013 in accordance with a scheme of work submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any works commence on site, unless a further permission has been granted for it to continue.

Reason:

Whilst it is accepted that there is a need to provide the building for a limited period, the building is unsuitable for permanent retention due to the nature of its construction and appearance. This condition is imposed to comply with Policies CS02 and CS34 of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

#### CODE OF PRACTICE DURING CONSTRUCTION

(7) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a detailed management plan for the construction phase of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be constructed in accordance with the management plan.

Reason:

In the interests of amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers and highway safety in accordance with policy CS22 and CS28 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007.

#### INFORMATIVE: CODE OF PRACTICE DURING CONSTRUCTION

(1) The management plan shall be based upon the Council's Code of Practice for Construction and Demolition Sites which can be viewed on the Council's web-pages, and shall include sections on the following;

1) Site management arrangements including site office, developer contact number in event of any construction/demolition related problems, and site security information.

2) Construction traffic routes, timing of lorry movements, weight limitations on routes, initial inspection of roads to assess rate of wear and extent of repairs required at end of construction/demolition stage, wheel wash facilities, access points, hours of deliveries, numbers and types of vehicles, construction traffic parking.

3) Hours of site operation, dust suppression measures, noise limitation measures.

#### INFORMATIVE: LAND QUALITY

(2) The Council's Environmental Protection Officer (Land Quality), Public Protection Service, advises that the site is close to an area of filled ground and there is the possibility of contamination of the site as a result. It is therefore recommended that appropriate assessments and site investigations are carried out and, depending on the results, appropriate measures put into place to remediate any contamination affecting the proposed development.

#### INFORMATIVE: CAR PARKING REPLACEMENT

(3) With reference to condition 4 and the detail of the re-provision of car parking spaces, the two car parking spaces shown repositioned adjacent to the new development at the front of the school should be altogether removed from the front area of the school, to the rear car park.

#### INFORMATIVE: MEASURES TO IMPROVE HIGHWAY SAFETY

(4) With reference to condition 5, a Traffic Order will be required in order to implement measures to improve highway safety and should include (i) zigzag lines near the main school entrance off Somerset Place, (ii) single yellow lines along the east side of Somerset Place and (iii) single yellow lines on small sections of the west side of Somerset Place by the junctions with Penlee Road and Penlee Way. A plan (dated 31/07/08) showing the additional road marking has been drawn up by PCC Highways department which is suggested to be used for this purpose.

The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that there is a fee associated with the application of a Traffic Order, and that it is subject to its own consultation process.

#### **Statement of Reasons for Approval and Relevant Policies**

Having regard to the main planning considerations, which in this case are considered to be: impact on the public highway, neighbouring amenity and the character of the area, the proposal is not considered to be demonstrably harmful. In the absence of any other overriding considerations, and with the imposition of the specified conditions, the proposed development is acceptable and complies with (1) policies of the Plymouth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2021) 2007 and supporting Development Plan Documents (the status of these documents is set out within the City of Plymouth Local Development Scheme) and the Regional Spatial Strategy, (b)

non-superseded site allocations, annex relating to definition of shopping centre boundaries and frontages and annex relating to greenscape schedule of the City of Plymouth Local Plan First Deposit (1995-2011) 2001, and (c) relevant Planning Guidance (SPG) Notes, Government Policy Statements and Government Circulars, as follows:

- CS28 - Local Transport Consideration
- CS32 - Designing out Crime
- CS34 - Planning Application Consideration
- CS22 - Pollution
- CS03 - Historic Environment
- CS01 - Sustainable Linked Communities
- CS02 - Design