

PART A	
Report of: Development Management Section Head	
Date of Committee:	23rd April 2015
Site address:	18, Colonial Way
Reference Number :	15/00371/VAR
Description of Development:	Variation of planning permission 14/00705/FULM for the Watford University Technical College to reduce the size of the western extension from 4 storeys to 2 storeys, amend the elevational treatment to the infilling of the undercroft car park, and re-siting of the main entrance.
Applicant:	Meller Educational Trust
Date Received:	6th March 2015
13 week date (major):	5th June 2015
Ward:	Tudor

SUMMARY

The application is for a material amendment to the previous planning permission ref. 14/00705/FULM for the extension of the existing office building and its use, in conjunction with the adjoining Axis 1 building, by the new Watford University Technical College (UTC) to provide secondary level education for 14-19 year old students. The amendment involves the reduction in height of the approved 4 storey extension at the western end of the building to 2 storeys, a change to the elevational treatment of the infilling of the undercroft car park (to form new floorspace) and the relocation of the main entrance to the building.

The principle of the use and all other aspects of the development have been

approved under ref. 14/00705/FULM and the only matters for consideration are the proposed amendments. These are all considered acceptable and will have no adverse impacts on the appearance of the building or the wider locality.

The Development Management Section Head therefore recommends planning permission be granted, subject to appropriate conditions, as set out in the report.

BACKGROUND

Site and surroundings

The site is located on the southern side of Colonial Way between the junctions with Rhodes Way to the west and Radlett Road to the east. To the south are the two storey commercial buildings of the Axis development. To the west and north are three storey commercial buildings in office, warehousing and industrial uses. To the east, on the opposite side of Radlett Road, are playing fields and allotments.

The site comprises a three storey office building of 2,702m² floorspace, formerly occupied by Sanyo, above an undercroft car park. Pedestrian access is currently from Colonial Way at the north-eastern corner of the site with vehicular access from Rhodes Way. The undercroft and surface level car parking, occupying the western part of the site, provides 58 spaces. The building was constructed in 2005 and is not listed or of local interest and is not within a conservation area.

Proposed development

The application seeks to amend planning permission ref.14/00705/FULM for the change of use of the building from office use (Class B1) to a university technical college (UTC) (Class D1) and an increase in floorspace to 4,256m² by infilling the undercroft parking area and the erection of a four storey extension to the western end of the building. This site, together with the adjoining Axis 1 site immediately to the south, will form the new Watford UTC which opened in September 2014 in the Axis 1 building. The Watford UTC will provide secondary level education for 14-19 year old students.

The proposed amendments can be summarised as follows:

- i) A reduction in the height of the approved extension at the western end of the building from 4 storeys to 2 storeys with minor elevational changes. The approved scheme proposed a 2 storey sports hall with a 2 storey lecture theatre above. Due to the need to reduce costs, the 2 storey sports hall will have a dual use as a lecture theatre with raked, demountable seating.
- ii) A change to the infilling of the undercroft car park and the introduction of coloured spandrel panels in the colours of the UTC. This reflects a change to the internal layout of the ground floor.
- iii) The relocation of the main entrance to the eastern end of the building. This will utilise the existing main entrance of the building. The approved main entrance was to be formed towards the western end of the building, which would have been less prominent.

Relevant planning history

03/00841/FUL – Planning permission granted in March 2004 for the erection of a four storey office building incorporating undercroft car parking.

The history of the adjoining Axis 1 unit to the south is also relevant as the two buildings will form the new Watford UTC. The Axis development, comprising seven units, was granted planning permission in 1985 (ref. 9/90/85).

14/00476/KPD – Prior approval not required for the change of use of the building to a state-funded school (Class D1).

14/00563/FUL – Planning permission granted in May 2014 for amendments to the existing Axis 1 building to allow use as a University Technical College, to include new entrances, covered canopy, fencing, rearrangement of parking area, new bin store

and new external fire escape.

14/00705/FULM – Planning permission granted for the change of use and extension of the existing office building to provide accommodation for the new Watford University Technical College (UTC).

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework

- Section 1 Building a strong, competitive economy
- Section 4 Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 7 Requiring good design
- Section 8 Promoting healthy communities
- Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies

Document 2011-2026

- 1 Strategy for the Provision for Waste Management Facilities
- 1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- 2 Waste Prevention and Reduction
- 12 Sustainable Design, Construction and Demolition

Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016

No relevant policies.

Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006 - 31

- WBC1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- SS1 Spatial Strategy
- SD1 Sustainable Design
- SD2 Water and Wastewater
- SD3 Climate Change
- SD4 Waste

EMP1	Economic Development
EMP2	Employment Land
T2	Location of New Development
T3	Improving Accessibility
T4	Transport Assessments
T5	Providing New Infrastructure
INF1	Infrastructure Delivery and Planning Obligations
UD1	Delivering High Quality Design

Watford District Plan 2000

SE7	Waste, Storage, Recovery and Recycling in new Development
SE24	Unstable and Contaminated Land
T10	Cycle Parking Standards
T21	Access and Servicing
T22	Car Parking Standards

CONSULTATIONS

Neighbour notifications

Letters were sent to the 4 properties in Eastfield Avenue who made comments on the original application. No replies have been received.

Advertisement in local paper/site notices

A public notice was published in the Watford Observer on 20th March 2015. Two site notices were also posted outside the site on 13th March 2015.

APPRAISAL

In accordance with s.38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Development Plan for Watford comprises:

- (a) the *Watford Local Plan Part 1 - Core Strategy 2006-31*;

- (b) the continuing “saved” policies of the *Watford District Plan 2000*;
- (c) the *Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2011-2026*; and
- (d) the *Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016*.

Land allocation

The use of the site for a university technical college has already been approved.

Transport assessment

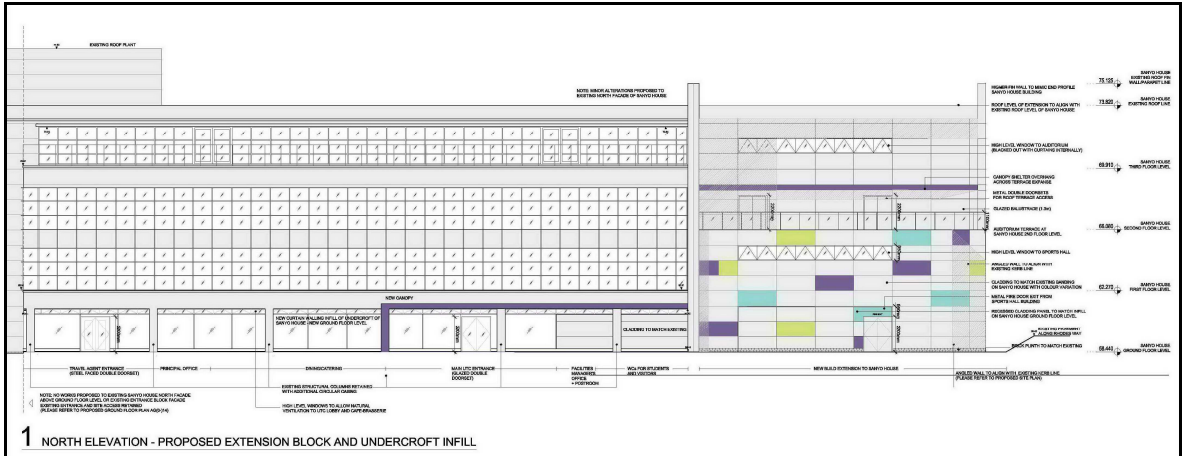
The original planning permission was subject to four conditions relating to off-site highway improvement works on Colonial Way, Rhodes Way and Radlett Road, the closing up of the existing vehicular junction on Colonial Way, the submission of a full travel plan for the UTC, and the provision of facilities for the dropping off and collection of pupils. Similar conditions should be imposed on any new permission granted. A Section 106 unilateral undertaking was also submitted to secure a financial payment to the Council of £15,000 towards a feasibility study, public consultation exercise and the design of a parking scheme for Radlett Road (north of the Colonial Way junction) and the residential roads to the north of the site (Carisbrooke Avenue, Eastfield Avenue, Devon Road, Byron Avenue and Tavistock Road) to prevent unrestricted on-street parking on these roads. This money has already been paid to the Council and no further Section 106 undertaking or deed of variation is therefore required.

Servicing, car parking and cycle parking

Servicing and car parking provision within the Axis 1 site from Rhodes Way remains unchanged. The previous permission was subject to a condition requiring the provision of cycle shelters and this can be imposed on any new permission.

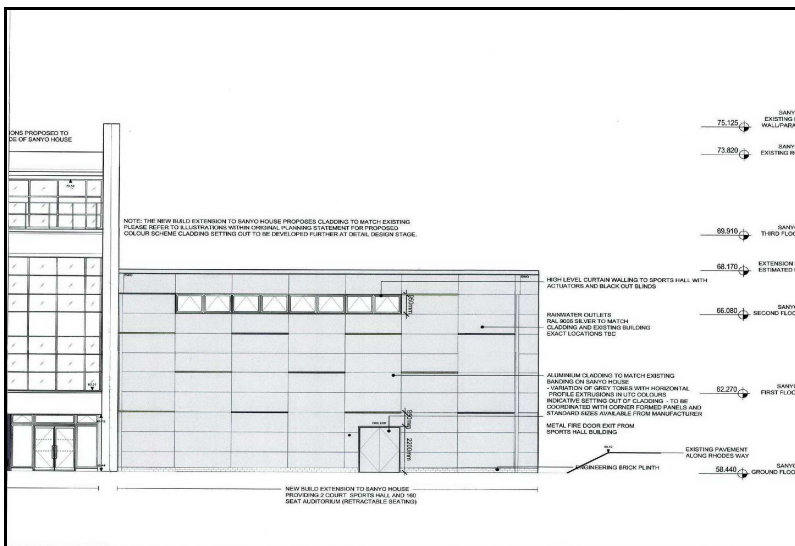
Design

The previous approved scheme incorporated a 4 storey extension at the western end of the building incorporating a flat roof and coloured panels (as shown below).



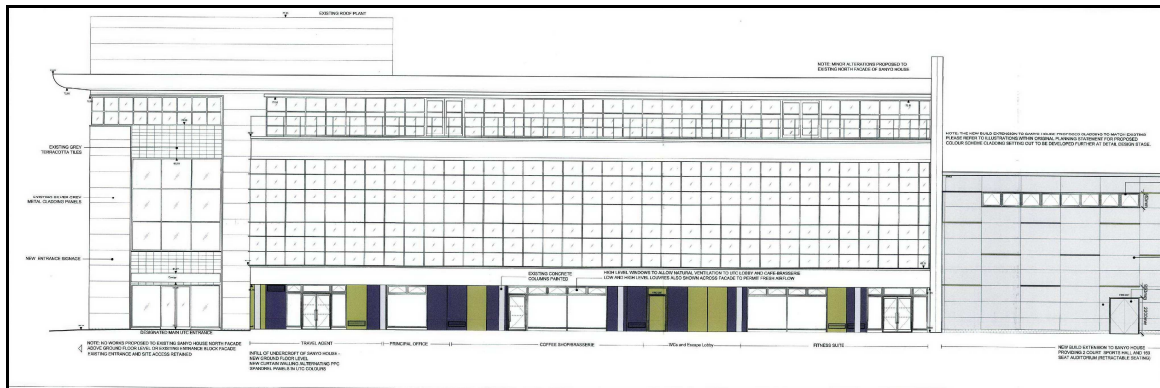
Approved north elevation

The proposed amendment is to reduce the height of this extension to 2 storeys with narrow coloured fins within the elevation.



Proposed amended extension

With regard to the infilling of the undercroft car park, this was originally proposed to comprise clear glazed curtain walling. The proposal now is to introduce coloured spandrel panels in the colours of the UTC in place of the panels that were originally proposed on the 4 storey extension. This will help visually to identify the UTC as the occupier of the building and is considered acceptable.



Amended north elevation

The approved scheme proposed the main entrance towards the western end of the existing building. The proposal now is to utilise and modify the existing main entrance at the north-eastern corner of the building. This is acceptable.

The previous permission was subject to conditions relating to external materials, and hard and soft landscaping and similar conditions can be imposed on any new permission. Overall, the proposed amendments maintain the scale, character and appearance of the existing building and are appropriate and acceptable in this commercial location. The proposed amendments will have no impact on adjoining commercial buildings.

Flood risk and drainage

The site itself is within Flood Zone 1 with a low risk of fluvial flooding. Immediately to the east of the site is the River Colne and its floodplain which falls within Flood Zones 3 (functional floodplain) and 2 (medium risk). However, the site is raised up on higher land above the level of the floodplain and the predicted flood levels. The site also has a low risk from surface water flooding. The Environment Agency previously had no objections to the proposal but recommended the imposition of four conditions relating to contaminated land. These can be imposed on any new permission.

Land contamination

Environmental Health originally requested a standard condition to secure a preliminary risk assessment for the works based upon the former use of the site. A

similar condition can be imposed on any new permission.

Conclusion

The proposed amendments to the western extension to the building, the infilling of the undercroft car park and the location of the main entrance are all considered to be appropriate in their scale, design and materials in relation to the existing building and the surrounding area and are acceptable. All other aspects of the scheme remain unchanged. A financial contribution has already been paid to the Council to undertake a consultation with local residents regarding the introduction of 'commuter' waiting restrictions on Radlett Road and the residential roads to the north of the site.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

The Local Planning Authority is justified in interfering with the applicant's Human Rights in order to alleviate any adverse effect on adjoining properties and their occupiers and on general public amenity. With regard to any infringement of third party Human Rights, these are not considered to be of such a nature and degree as to override the Human Rights of the applicant and therefore warrant refusal of planning permission.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions listed below:

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be commenced before 7th August 2017.

Reason: To accord with the time period for commencement of planning permission ref. 14/00705/FULM dated 7th August 2014.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:-

AE(0-)00, 01, 04, 05, 06, 08, 09

AG(0-)130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 140, 141

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. No demolition or construction works shall commence until a detailed scheme to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include:
 - i) a preliminary risk assessment (PRA) which has identified:
 - all previous uses;
 - potential contaminants associated with those uses;
 - a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors;
 - potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site;
 - ii) where the PRA in (i) above identifies the need for further investigation, a site investigation scheme to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off-site;
 - iii) where a site investigation scheme referred to in (ii) above is required, the results of the site investigation and risk assessment and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken;
 - iv) where a remediation strategy referred to in (iii) above is required, a verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy are

complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

No changes to these components shall be undertaken without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. All works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the health of the future occupiers of the site and to prevent pollution of controlled waters (the site is within Source Protection Zone 2) in accordance with Policies SE24 and SE28 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

4. Where a remediation strategy has been approved pursuant to Condition 3, no construction works shall commence until a verification report demonstrating completion of the works set out in the approved remediation strategy and the effectiveness of the remediation has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The report shall include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met. It shall also include a plan (a "long-term monitoring and maintenance plan") for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action, as identified in the verification plan, and for the reporting of this to the local planning authority. The long-term monitoring and maintenance plan shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To verify that all contamination has been successfully removed from site following all remediation works in the interests of the health of the future occupiers of the site and to prevent pollution of controlled waters (the site is within Source Protection Zone 2) in accordance with Policies SE24 and SE28 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

5. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development shall be carried out until the developer has submitted to, and obtained written approval from the Local Planning Authority for, a remediation strategy detailing how this unsuspected contamination is to be dealt with. All works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the health of the future occupiers of the site and to prevent pollution of controlled waters (the site is within Source Protection Zone 2), in accordance with Policies SE24 and SE28 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

6. The surface water drainage scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the details shown on drawing no. PS1373/31 (Pure Structures). There shall be no infiltration of surface water drainage into the ground other than with the express written approval of the Local Planning Authority, which may be given for those parts of the site where it has been demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to controlled waters. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect groundwater in accordance with Policy SD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

7. No development shall commence until details of the proposed external materials have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site and the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

8. No part of the development shall be occupied until the provision of cycle shelters has been undertaken in accordance with the following details:

Drawing nos. 1886 AG(0-) 01 B and 14 C2 (EWA)

Paving/Planting/Fencing/Site Furniture Specification (EWA)

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

9. No part of the development shall be occupied until the hard landscaping scheme has been undertaken in accordance with the following details:

Drawing nos. 1886 AG(0-) 01 B and 14 C2 (EWA)

Paving/Planting/Fencing/Site Furniture Specification (EWA)

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

10. No part of the development shall be occupied until a soft landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved soft landscaping works shall be carried out not later than the first available planting and seeding season after completion of the development. Any plants which within a period of five years die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, or in accordance with details approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

11. No part of the development shall be occupied until the following works within the public highway have been completed in full, as shown in principle on drawing no. 2376-GA-001A (WSP):

- i) the upgrade of the uncontrolled pedestrian crossing point on Radlett Road (90m to north of the junction with Colonial Way);
- ii) the upgrade of the uncontrolled pedestrian crossing point on the southern arm of the roundabout at the junction with Colonial Way;
- iii) a new Zebra crossing on Colonial Way;
- iv) new uncontrolled crossing points on Rhodes Way;

Reason: To ensure safe and adequate vehicular and pedestrian access to the development and in the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy T4 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

12. No part of the development shall be occupied until the existing vehicular junction on Colonial Way has been closed off and the adjacent footway and kerb reinstated.

Reason: To ensure safe and adequate vehicular and pedestrian access to the development and in the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy T4 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

13. No part of the development shall be occupied until a Full Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Plan shall be implemented at all times during the occupation of the building.

Reason: To ensure that the development offers a wide range of travel choices to reduce the impact of travel and transport on the environment.

Informatives

1. This planning permission is accompanied by a unilateral undertaking under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure financial contributions towards the consultation, design and implementation of a scheme for parking restrictions on part of Radlett Road and on the residential roads to the north of the site.
2. In dealing with this application, Watford Borough Council has considered the proposal in a positive and proactive manner having regard to the policies of the development plan as well as paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and other material considerations, and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, as amended.

Drawing numbers

AE(0-)00, 01, 04, 05, 06, 08, 09

AG(0-)130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 140, 141

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