

9 September 2015

Harris Invictus Academy, Former Site of Croydon Hospital, London Road

in the London Borough of Croydon

planning application no.15/03221/P

Strategic planning application stage 1 referral

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Greater London Authority Acts 1999 and 2007; Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008.

The proposal

Construction of Part-3/Part-4 storey secondary school buildings.

The applicant

The applicant is **Galliford Try** on behalf of **Harris Academies Federation**, and the architect is **Scott Brownrigg**.

Strategic issues

Principle of land use, school provision, community use, urban design, inclusive access, sustainable development/energy, flooding and transport are the key strategic issues relevant to this application.

Recommendation

That Croydon Council be advised that while the application is broadly acceptable in strategic terms it does not fully comply with the London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 60 of this report; but that the possible remedies set out in that paragraph of the report could address these deficiencies. The application does not need to be referred back to the Mayor if the Council resolves to refuse permission, but it must be referred back if the Council resolves to grant permission.

Context

1 On 5 August 2015 the Mayor of London received documents from Croydon Council notifying him of a planning application of potential strategic importance to develop the above site for the above uses. Under the provisions of The Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor has until 15 September 2015 to provide the Council with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking that view. The Mayor may also provide other comments. This report sets out information for the Mayor's use in deciding what decision to make.

2 The application is referable under Category 3E of the Schedule to the Order 2008: "Development — (a) which does not accord with one or more provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the application site is situated; and (b) comprises or includes the provision of more than 2,500 square metres of floorspace for a use falling within any of the following classes in the Use Classes Order - (xi) class D1 (non-residential institutions)."

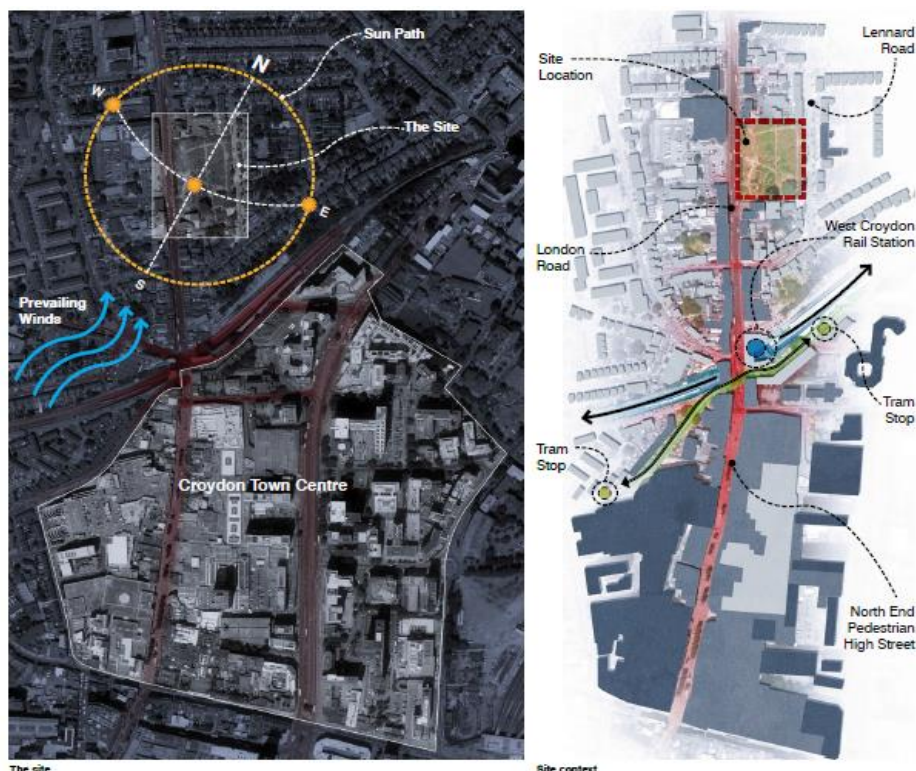
3 Once Croydon Council has resolved to determine the application, it is required to refer it back to the Mayor for his decision, as to whether to direct refusal or allow the Council to determine it itself, unless otherwise advised. In this instance if the Council resolves to refuse permission it need not refer the application back to the Mayor.

4 The Mayor of London’s statement on this case will be made available on the GLA website www.london.gov.uk.

Site description

5 The application site covers approximately 1.08 hectares and is located along London Road to West Croydon Station. It was previously the site of the former Croydon General Hospital. The buildings at the site were demolished approximately 10 years ago. Currently the site is occupied by temporary school buildings in the northern part of the site for Year 7 pupils at Harris Invictus Academy.

6 London Road runs parallel to the North Eastern Boundary of the application site and it is the Northern gateway to Croydon Metropolitan Town Centre. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of uses with retail and commercial uses fronting London Road, and residential uses to the north and east along Panton Close and Lennard Road, including four storey flats and two storey terraced houses. To the south is the Resource Centre and Enterprise Hub and flats within a five storey block fronting London Road.



The application site in context: Source – applicant’s design and access statement

7 London Road is currently the focus of a public realm improvement programme (‘Connected Croydon’) which, once implemented, will deliver improvements including the widening and repaving for footpaths, new cycle parking and seating, building front improvements and other landscaping improvements.

8 This site also falls within the wider Croydon Opportunity Area Planning Framework boundary within the ‘Northern Fringe’ area, where the aim is to provide 1,061 new homes within the 20 year Framework period. This site is outside of Croydon Metropolitan Centre.

9 The nearest section of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) is the A23 Purley Way located approximately 1.1km to the south of the site, whilst the nearest section of the Strategic Road

Network (SRN) is the A212 Wellesley Road, approximately 350m to the north of the site. All roads in the vicinity form part of the borough network and fall within “North Permit Zone” Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). The West Croydon transport interchange, providing access to the Tramlink and rail network, is located approximately 250m southeast from the site’s London Road entrance. Five bus services operate on London Road and can be accessed less than 50m from the site. This generates a public transport accessibility level (PTAL) of 6a (on a scale of 1 to 6b, where 6b is the most accessible).

Details of the proposal

10 The planning application seeks full planning permission for construction of a new free secondary school of approximately 10,306sqm (GEA) floor space, part 3/part 4 storey buildings, for up to 1,150 pupils (when fully operational) aged 11-18 and approximately 100 staff (full time equivalents).

11 The new building will include classrooms, a sports hall, main hall, activity studio, dining area, library, music room, reception area and other teaching and office space and store rooms. There will be two building entrances from London Road including one entrance for community access. The main pedestrian pupil entrance to site will be from Lennard Road.

Case history

12 A pre-planning application meeting was held at City Hall on 29 June 2014 between the applicant/agent, the Education Funding Agency (EFA), the Council and GLA/TfL planning officers. As a result, substantial advice report in regard to strategic planning matters was issued on 13 July 2015.

13 Planning permission was granted on 28 July 2014 for the siting of two temporary classroom buildings, associated hard play space and parking facilities for education use. (This has been implemented on site).

Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance

14 The relevant issues and corresponding policies are as follows:

- Principle of development *London Plan;*
- Education *London Plan; Mayor’s Social Infrastructure SPG;*
- Community use *London Plan;*
- Urban design *London Plan;*
- Access *London Plan; Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment SPG replacement;*
- Sustainable development *London Plan; Sustainable Design and Construction SPG; Mayor’s Climate Change Adaptation Strategy; Mayor’s Climate Change Mitigation and Energy Strategy; Mayor’s Water Strategy;*
- Flooding *London Plan;*
- Transport *London Plan; the Mayor’s Transport Strategy;*

15 For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the development plans in force for the area are the 2013 Croydon Local Plan Strategic Policies DPD and Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006 (as saved in 2009) and the London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations since 2011).

16 The National Planning Policy Framework and Technical Guide to the National Planning Policy Framework, the Mayor’s Social Infrastructure SPG (2015) and the Minor Alteration to the London Plan (MALP,2015), are also relevant material considerations.

Principle of land use: Provision of school on site designated for mixed use

17 The applicant is the Harris Academies Federation, a charity that has been running schools across London for over twenty years. Harris Invictus Academy Croydon opened in a temporary accommodation in September 2014 on the application site.

18 The application site identified as H67 (where Policy H3(ii) applies) is allocated for mixed use development for health facilities and residential development of up to 250 dwellings at the site, within Croydon's Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan) 2006, (Saved Policies, 2013). It is also within an identified High Density area (which relates to a policy requirement to provide amenity space provision in connection with new residential development, so is therefore not applicable in this instance).

19 The proposed redevelopment is for the replacement of the temporary buildings by permanent Academy building which has been designed to provide accommodation and specialist learning facilities for 1,150 students as a free secondary school.

20 In relation to the provision of educational facilities, policy 3.18 'Education facilities' of the London Plan states that "Development proposals which enhance education and skills provision will be supported, including new build, expansion of existing facilities or change of use to educational purposes".

21 The Mayor's Social Infrastructure SPG provides guidance on planning for social infrastructure provision at strategic level starting with the GLA's own demographic projections and the ways in which these can be used to understand need for health, education and sports facilities. It sets out that "the Mayor is keen to support the development of free schools in London, not only through increasing provision of places in areas where there is unmet demand but also in driving up the quality of provision."

22 As discussed at the pre-application meeting and accompanied with further planning documents, the applicant has demonstrated that there is pressing educational need and shortage of secondary school places in the area and that the proposal is part of the Free Schools Programme in order to meet the significant demand in the community for new, high-quality secondary school places. The EFA has identified the site and the Council, who is the landowner of the site has issued letter of comfort supporting the scheme. The applicant has contended that there is lack of alternative sites suitable for the proposed development in the area.

23 In light of the above, the proposed education use is supported in strategic planning terms.

Community use

24 The London Plan policy (3.18E) expects community use of educational facilities to be maximised. The planning statement confirms that community use of the facilities outside of school hours will be actively promoted and subject to an agreement being in place with appropriate organisations.

25 The building has been designed so that community accessible areas are clustered around the entrance of the building to ensure the building can be safely managed outside of school operating hours. A four-court sports hall and external MUGA will be able to be hired out in the evenings and weekends. Learning resource and IT provision will also be made available for the public to use. This is welcomed and needs to be secured by an appropriate condition.

Urban design

26 Good design is central to all objectives of the London Plan (2015) and is specifically promoted by the policies contained within chapter seven which address both general design principles and specific design issues. London Plan Policy 7.1 sets out a series of overarching design principles for development in London.

27 It is understood that the proposals have been developed through consultation with Croydon Council officers and this has resulted in a well thought out proposal that responds successfully to context.

28 In response to pre-application discussion, further clarity has been provided to demonstrate how the ground floor London Road frontage is designed to optimise passive surveillance to the street

through the use of glazed panels, which in turn are embedded into the architecture and run the full height of the building to define the sixth form entrance. This approach is supported.

29 Concern was raised at pre-application stage with regards to the architectural and massing treatment of the Lennard Road frontage as the building is over a hundred metres in length. The applicant was advised to ensure that this edge of the building did not appear to turn its back to the street. In response, the applicant has revisited this frontage and the choice of materials to the front elevation aims to introduce the three elements of the building concept. The building is divided into three simple massing elements and this fragmentation of the mass helps to visually break down the form and respond to the local context (see the figure on the right below). The three massing elements are further articulated through the use of different materials (clad with fibre cement boards). These provide a more sympathetic and higher quality appearance and enable each individual massing element to be articulated, as has been successfully achieved along the London Road frontage. This is welcomed and the latest amendments and clear intention to optimise the overall design quality of the building in the context of budget constraints is commended.

30 Notwithstanding the above, the Council is encouraged to secure key details of facing materials to ensure the highest possible quality of architecture is delivered.



Front elevation across London Road and rear elevation off Lennard Road: Source-applicant's design and access statement.

Inclusive access

31 The design and access statement confirms that the scheme will comply with relevant legislations such as Building Regulations 2000 ADM 2004, BS 8300-2009, DDA 1995, and Equality Act 2010. The statement states that the school will be fully accessible in its design.

32 The main level change happens across the site and will be dealt with through a gently sloping landscape scheme. The change in level across the site is dealt with by a gently sloping ground plane. To ensure the MUGA is flat, steps will need to be provided at the Southern end. Level access is provided at the Northern end of MUGA. Accessible changing is provided for the sports facilities.

33 Accessible toilets have been positioned throughout the scheme, on all floors and at the main entrance, ensuring that you will never have to travel far to access a toilet. These are generally located with pupil toilets. There is an additional accessible toilet adjacent to the entrance for visitors.

34 The proposed redevelopment will have external ramps no steeper than 1:21 and that 4 car parking spaces are proposed, 2 of these spaces (50%) will be accessible parking bays.

35 In light of the above, it is considered that the proposed redevelopment of the school meets the minimum requirements of inclusive design and complies with policy 7.2 of the London Plan.

Sustainable development/energy

Energy efficiency standards

36 A range of passive design features and demand reduction measures are proposed to reduce the carbon emissions of the proposed redevelopment. Both air permeability and heat loss parameters will be improved beyond the minimum backstop values required by building regulations. The redevelopment is estimated to achieve a reduction of 1.3 tonnes per annum (7%) in regulated CO₂ emissions compared to a 2013 Building Regulations compliant development. Modelling outputs have been provided to support the savings claimed.

District heating

37 The applicant has carried out an investigation and there are no existing or planned district heating networks within the vicinity of the proposed redevelopment. The site is located in an area of low density and very limited opportunity for district heating development so the building is not required to be future proofed for district heating.

Combined Heat and Power (CHP)

38 The applicant has investigated the feasibility of CHP. However, due to the intermittent nature of the heat load, CHP is not proposed. This is accepted in this instance.

Renewable energy technologies

39 The applicant has investigated the feasibility of a range of renewable energy technologies and is proposing to install 100sqm of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels. A reduction in regulated CO₂ emissions of 6 tonnes per annum (32%) will be achieved through this third element of the energy hierarchy.

Overall carbon savings

40 Based on the energy assessment submitted at stage I, the table below shows the residual CO₂ emissions after each stage of the energy hierarchy and the CO₂ emission reductions at each stage of the energy hierarchy.

Table: CO₂ emission reductions from application of the energy hierarchy.

	Total residual regulated CO ₂ emissions (tonnes per annum)	Regulated CO ₂ emissions reductions	
		(tonnes per annum)	(%)
Baseline i.e. 2013 Building Regulations	19.35		
Energy Efficiency	18.08	1	7%
CHP	18.08	0	0%
Renewable energy	12.37	6	32%
Total		7	36%

41 A reduction of 7 tonnes of CO₂ per year in regulated emissions compared to a 2013 Building Regulations compliant development is expected, equivalent to an overall saving of 36%.

42 The carbon dioxide savings exceed the target set within Policy 5.2 of the London Plan.

Flooding

43 Flood risk: The site is within flood risk zone 1 with low risk of surface water flooding and is therefore acceptable in principle.

44 Drainage: The Flood Risk Assessment states that proposed redevelopment will implement a new surface water drainage strategy. There is a risk of flooding on the site during intense rainfall events. Surface water drainage will be designed for both locations to collect and contain below ground the 30 year return period rainfall event and ensure no flooding of buildings or public areas during the 100 year return period rainfall event. The design will include an allowance for climate change over the design life

of the development. To ensure no internal flooding of buildings from shallow overland flood flows, or emerged groundwater, building thresholds will be raised above surrounding ground and/or ground levels around buildings will be designed such that rainfall is directed away from entrances.

45 The Flood Risk Assessment confirmed that ground conditions are not suitable for any form of infiltration-based rainwater management and that the relatively high level of the groundwater encountered at the site during the ground investigation, the use of surface controls is not recommended. Any attenuation storage must therefore be provided in the form of underground attenuation tanks.

46 Whilst the above investigation results are accepted, the proposed mitigation measures should be secured by appropriate conditions.

Transport for London comments

Car parking

47 The application proposes four on site car parking spaces, including two Blue Badge spaces. Considering the sites excellent 6a PTAL, TfL would expect the site to be car free other than the Blue Badge parking spaces. It is understood however that additional spaces are required for use by staff working on several sites and needing to travel throughout the day. At the pre-application stage, TfL requested this to be justified. This information has not been included within the submission material and should therefore be provided.

Cycle parking

48 The Transport Assessment (TA) states that it has been agreed with the Council that an upfront provision of 50% of the total FALP spaces will be provided, with an area 'safe-guarded' for provision of the additional spaces to meet full FALP requirements in the future. The redevelopment of the site thus proposes a total upfront provision of 85 cycle parking spaces, comprising 79 long-stay and 6 short-stay spaces, with a further 84 spaces to be provided at a later stage.

49 The level of provision be increased and in any event the application should seek permission for the full level of provision in line with FALP standards, and that this is secured by planning condition. TfL welcomes the plan which has been submitted illustrating the location of these spaces. A reduced or phased level of provision will only be acceptable on the basis that permission is sought for the full amount with an option not to provide the full amount straightaway subject to evidence of use after implementation, and controlled by a suitably worded condition.

Trip generation

50 TfL welcomes the multi-modal trip generation surveys which have been carried out. Given the density of bus and other public transport services in the area, it is unlikely that the development will have a negative impact on the transport network.

Pedestrian environment

51 TfL welcomes the Pedestrian Environment Review Survey (PERS) which has been provided with the application, as requested by TfL at the pre-application stage. Any identified improvements should be agreed with the Council and secured through the section 106 agreement.

Highway proposals

52 The applicant has confirmed that there is sufficient kerbside capacity to accommodate pick-up/drop-off arrangements for the start and end of the school day. However, TfL is concerned about the potential impact on bus routes of cars stopping on kerbs which could prevent buses from passing along London Road. TfL therefore welcomes the implementation of 200m pick-up/drop-off 'exclusion zone', which has been included in the current School Travel Plan. This requirement including details of enforcement should be secured either by condition or through the s106 agreement.

Travel planning

53 TfL welcomes the applicant's commitment to updating the school's existing travel plan to reflect the redevelopment and to achieve TfL STARS (Sustainable Travel: Active, Responsible, Safe) accreditation.

54 As stated above, TfL requests permission is sought for the full level of cycle parking in line with FALP standards, and the Travel Plan is updated to reflect this. The Travel Plan should include additional mechanisms to monitor the cycle parking and its level of usage. The final version of the Travel Plan, including all agreed measures therein, should be secured, enforced, monitored and reviewed as part of the section 106 agreement.

55 TfL welcomes the applicant's commitment to securing a delivery and servicing plan (DSP) by condition. A construction logistics plan (CLP) should be submitted and secured via condition, in accordance with TfL guidance. Guidance on the methodology and further information regarding construction routing has been sent to the Council. Maintaining cycle safety during construction and ensuring construction vehicles avoid key strategic routes and peak hour movements is essential.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

56 TfL understands the development will only be used for educational use of the free secondary school and therefore it should be noted that the Mayor's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will not apply, as defined in the Education Acts.

Local planning authority's position

57 Croydon Council planning officers have yet to confirm their position.

Legal considerations

58 Under the arrangements set out in Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor is required to provide the local planning authority with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking that view. Unless notified otherwise by the Mayor, the Council must consult the Mayor again under Article 5 of the Order if it subsequently resolves to make a draft decision on the application, in order that the Mayor may decide whether to allow the draft decision to proceed unchanged or direct the Council under Article 6 of the Order to refuse the application. There is no obligation at this present stage for the Mayor to indicate his intentions regarding a possible direction, and no such decision should be inferred from the Mayor's statement and comments.

Financial considerations

59 There are no financial considerations at this stage.

Conclusion

60 London Plan policies on **principle of land use, school provision, community use, urban design, inclusive access, sustainable development/energy, flooding and transport** are the key strategic issues relevant to this application. Whilst the application is broadly acceptable in strategic planning terms, it does not fully comply with the London Plan. The following changes might, however, remedy the above-mentioned deficiencies, and could possibly lead to the application becoming compliant with the London Plan:

- **Principle of land use/school provision:** The proposed redevelopment of the free secondary school is supported as it will contribute to address the shortage and quality of school places in London. Special considerations in particular educational need have been demonstrated to justify the free secondary school development on a site allocated for a mixed use.
- **Community use:** The applicant's commitment towards the promotion of community use of the school's facilities outside of school hours is welcomed. This should be secured through an appropriate condition.

- **Urban design:** No major concern and the Council is encouraged to secure key details of facing materials to ensure the highest possible quality of architecture is delivered.
- **Inclusive access:** The scheme meets the minimum requirements of inclusive design and complies with policy 7.2 of the London Plan. All the proposed measures should be secured.
- **Sustainable development/energy:** The carbon dioxide savings exceed the target set within Policy 5.2 of the London Plan. The proposed measures should be secured.
- **Flooding:** No major concern and the proposed mitigation measures should be secured.
- **Transport:** There are some strategic transport concerns as detailed in the report. These should be addressed and/or conditioned.

For further information, contact: GLA Planning Unit (Development & Projects Team):

Colin Wilson, Senior Manager – Development & Projects

020 7983 4783 email: colin.wilson@london.gov.uk

Justin Carr, Strategic Planning Manager (Development Decisions)

020 7983 4895 email: justin.carr@london.gov.uk

Tefera Tibebe, Case Officer

020 7983 4312 email: tefera.tibebe@london.gov.uk
