

Bower Ashton Residents Association

Seeking to improve and protect our local environment

South and East Area Planning Team
Bristol City Council
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Bristol
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Please reply to:
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For the attention of Daniel Stone, Principal Planning Officer

7 October 2008

BY EMAIL & POST

Dear Mr Stone

ASHTON PARK SCHOOL, BLACKMOORS LANE, BRISTOL, BS3 2JL APPLICATIONS 08/03528/F AND 08/03529/LC

Further to my earlier letter of today's date, which outlined our principal objection to the above applications, as submitted, on the grounds of public safety, please find below further objections and some of the other matters of concern to our members.

1. Public Safety and Alternative Access Routes for Construction Traffic

Public safety, particularly in relation to increased vehicular traffic on local roads, is easily the single greatest concern of the local residents. Since the first public consultation meeting organised by the project team in early June this year, we have consistently maintained that access off the B3128 Ashton Road is our preferred route for construction traffic.

I understand from speaking with Mr Frank Cashmore in the Highways Authority that the Applicant may be seriously considering this as a preferred route, rather than Blackmoors Lane, which currently appears within the application. We would cautiously be in favour of such this alternative, subject to the details being published and acceptable. If the Applicant is serious about this as an alternative construction access, we would politely request that the local residents be notified as we would regard this as a major departure from the submitted application.

2. Overlooking Windows in the Main School Building

During the public consultation process in June and July 2008, residents were assured that proposals for the main school building would include no windows in the aspect facing towards Rownham Close. Following objections raised in earlier meetings, revised plans were presented in public, indicating that the main building had been modified, repositioned further away from the north-eastern boundary wall, the roof line dropped and all rear windows repositioned, ensuring that the adjacent houses in Rownham Close would not be overlooked.

The submitted plans appear either to be those originally presented in public or very similar to them, to which there was such strong local feeling, with many windows now looking directly down on the properties of Rownham Close. This situation makes a mockery of the consultation process and residents, particularly those in Rownham Close, now feel that they have been misled. We object, in principle, to a situation where residents' privacy is now threatened when clear and, we were led to believe, mutually acceptable

alternatives had previously been presented in public. We trust that acceptable alternative arrangements can be made.

3. Position of Biomass Boiler

During the consultation process and following residents' concerns, plans were also presented that situated the bio-mass unit within the basement of the main school building, with secondary locations positioned a reasonable distance away from residential properties. Residents were assured that a basement location was being investigated seriously.

In the submitted plans the bio-mass unit is located directly adjacent to houses in Blackmoors Lane and Rownham Close. No reliable information is provided within the application of the potential noise or the potential impact of emissions the bio-mass unit may produce. The location submitted is strongly opposed by local residents, not least because of the omissions. We consider trust that an acceptable alternative can be agreed.

4. Position of All-Weather Sports Pitches

During the consultation process the local community were advised that a sports pitch in the north-east corner of the site would be sited away from residential properties. In the Master Plan Summary Board submitted as drawing no. ash-cub-a-dwg-nl-0026, however, the sports pitch is shown next to properties on Rownham Close and Parklands Road in Phase 3, despite alternative sites having been proposed by the Applicant at the opposite end of the site.

In addition, we note that further sports pitches/courts are shown in the north-west corner of the site on the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan (drawing no. S.LEP1.AP.L.04), which appear as 'ghosted' and unreferenced images in some of the other submitted drawings and which are absent on others. Insufficient information is provided within the application for residents to assess what is *actually* proposed or the resulting impacts, particularly in terms of noise and light. We therefore reserve judgement on these aspects until there is greater clarity and explanation submitted by the Applicant.

5. Temporary Buildings

There are also concerns about the siting and height of the temporary classroom buildings proposed adjacent to Parklands Road. At the last consultation meeting residents were advised that the temporary buildings to be used for lessons during the construction period would be single storey so as to avoid adjacent properties being overlooked.

In the context of some of the differences between plans presented in public consultation and those actually submitted within the planning applications, we seek reassurance from the Local Planning Authority that the temporary accommodation will indeed be single storey.

Summary

In summary, the application as submitted differs in a number of important areas from what residents were led to believe during the public consultation meetings. These are of real concern to local residents, who now feel that they were not consulted correctly and, in some cases, have been misled. This is regrettable, as we had been under the impression that the consultation process had been mutually beneficial.

The majority of these concerns can be overcome acceptably by relatively minor concessions, most of which have already been stated as being acceptable to the Applicant in public meetings. Early and unambiguous communication will be crucial, however.

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We would like to thank the Local Planning Authority for inviting local residents to comment on the applications referenced above and trust that you will keep us informed of any major changes.

Should you require clarification on any of the points raised in this letter, I and the other officers of the Residents Association would be pleased to assist you.

Yours sincerely

Alasdair Groves
Chairman

Cc Mr F Cashmore, BCC Highways