

**SOUTH TWICKENHAM WARD**  
**Contact Officer:**  
**J Brown**

**Proposal:**

**Applicant:**

**Application received:** 16 June 2003

**Consultations:**

**Main development plan policies:**

UDP. ENV 3, 8, 10, 12, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 41, HSG 10, HEP 9, TRN 22, 23; First Review ENV 1, 9, 10, BLT 2, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, HSG 10, CCE 8. TRN 2, 4.

**Present use:**

Educational Institution

**Site, history and proposal:**

The site comprises a roughly triangular area in the eastern corner of the college campus, and currently accommodates three 3-storey halls of residence arranged in a crescent facing the open playing fields to the west. To the east and south are the rear gardens of residential properties in Strawberry Vale and Clive Road. An unmarked hardstanding to the south of the halls can accommodate at least 12 cars.

The playing fields are designated as Metropolitan Open Land, the boundary being drawn so as to leave the halls just outside the designation. The south and east boundaries are fairly generously treed, with several specimens enjoying TPO protection.

An application submitted last year (03/1855/FUL) proposed two new halls of residence, interleaved with the three existing ones, and was recommended for approval at a Planning Committee meeting on 11 September 2003. Members on that occasion accepted most aspects of the scheme, but refused the application for the following reason:-

*"The proposed development by reason of its size and location close to the site boundary would be visually obtrusive and overbearing to the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties and would thereby be an unneighbourly form of development contrary to policies ENV 24 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan and BLT 16 of the emerging Unitary Development Plan – First Review."*

A full description of that proposal can be found in the Committee report, a copy of which is included as Appendix A. The current application seeks to overcome the above reason for refusal.

Members' chief concern was over the proximity of the southernmost hall to residential properties near the south-east corner of the site. The applicants have reduced the footprint of this hall so as to keep it further from the site boundary and the gardens beyond. The height in this corner has also been reduced from three storeys to two,

with the intention of making the building less prominent. The accommodation lost by this exercise has been regained by linking the two westernmost ends of the new blocks at first and second floor levels. This results in the creation of a courtyard, enclosed by the new and existing buildings, but open to view from the west through the gap below the linking element.

Again, 41 car parking spaces and 98 cycle spaces are proposed. Because of the rearrangement of footprint of the new buildings, 15 of the car spaces actually encroach onto the MOL, occupying a strip of land 37.2m by 5m along part of the eastern MOL boundary.

A landscaping scheme has been provided, whose main features are a 1.7m high hedge to screen the parking spaces on MOL, infill planting on the south and east boundaries to provide screening from residential properties, and a number of new trees on the west side of the halls.

The accommodation provided would include 172 student units (each one a bedsit and shower room), 6 slightly larger disabled units, 5 warden flats, offices, common rooms, communal kitchens, cleaners stores etc.

Walls would be brickwork and the roof concrete tiles to match the existing halls..

**Public and other representations:**

14 neighbour letters object:-

1. parking/congestion/safety problems due to insufficient parking provision
2. noise and disturbance arising from students
3. overbearing impact on adjoining residents
4. loss of privacy
5. loss of open space and detriment to MOL
6. loss of amenity to Clive Road arising from the proposed use of a currently locked and unused entrance at its western end
7. light pollution
8. loss of wildlife
9. noise and smells would arise from a bin enclosure close to the southern site boundary.

Strawberry Hill Residents' Association supports the residents' objections insofar as they relate to concerns over traffic and parking. They feel that a Highways Statement provided by the applicants is flawed and should be disregarded.

English Heritage make no observations.

**Professional comments:**

The current proposal differs from that refused under ref. 03/1855/FUL in one essential way – the shifting of proposed building bulk away from the site boundaries (and adjoining residents) to a position facing the playing fields; the rationale behind this amendment is to overcome the single reason for refusal of the earlier application, which centred on visual intrusion experienced by off-site residents. The overall amount of residential accommodation and the amount of associated car and cycle parking has not changed, screening landscaping is still proposed, and the overall design approach remains as before. Consideration of the application, therefore, is confined to (1) assessing whether or not this intrusion has been sufficiently reduced, and (2) whether or not the relocation of building bulk introduces any new problems.

(1) Visual intrusion on neighbours:

The rear gardens of the houses at 2 to 6 Clive Road vary in length from 23m to 26m and those in Strawberry Vale are 27-42m long: the proposed buildings stand at least 10.5m inside the site boundary and are thus a considerable distance (minimum 37.5m) from the houses. Much of the boundary has effective tree screening and the proposed extra boundary planting should provide an effective screen, preventing light pollution and overlooking of gardens from windows in the halls as well as avoiding visual intrusion from the bulk of the buildings. The proposed buildings in their amended form, having been reduced in height by one storey where they are closest to the boundary, and it is now considered that there would not be an intrusive or overbearing visual impact.

(2) Consequences of transfer of bulk:

None of the new buildings encroach onto Metropolitan Open Land. The linking of the two western ends of the new blocks would be seen from the west, across the MOL, but would have a backdrop of the existing halls of residence. It is not considered that there would be a detrimental impact on the setting of the MOL.

The introduction of car parking spaces onto the edge of the MOL would not have a significant impact on its visual character – the spaces would be given a Beech hedge screen to hide the cars from view.

Conclusion:

The provision of residential accommodation on campus is encouraged by Unitary Development Plan First Review policy HSG 10, which says "It is important that ... colleges and other institutions should help to provide accommodation for their staff and students who would otherwise increase pressure on the Borough's cheaper housing." Apart from contributing to the Borough's stock of low-cost housing, such on-site accommodation also reduces the need to travel, which is a recognised aim of both central government and the Council's policies. The proposal is therefore to be welcomed, provided there would not be significant harmful impact on local environmental conditions.

The previously submitted scheme was accepted by Members in all of its aspects except for the intrusive visual impact on a number of residential properties, and this issue has been addressed, successfully in my view, by reducing the footprint and height of those parts of the buildings closest to the neighbours. The adjustment to the built form and position of parking spaces which results from this rearrangement does not result in new harmful consequences.

I therefore recommend **PERMISSION** subject to the following conditions and informatives:-

**Standard conditions:**

- BD12 - Details to be approved
- DV28 - External illumination
- DV40 - Travel Plan
- LA02A - No felling/lopping
- LA03A - Existing trees which are to be retained
- LA04A - Protect trees – shown on plan
- LA09 - Screen planting approved and carried – "southern and eastern boundaries"  
"7 metres"
- LA16- Written notification to start work

PK02A - Parking/loading/turning construction - 'car and cycle parking spaces'  
'02644L(0)16A'

PK06A - Cycle parking

**Standard informatives:**

IE05A - Noise control - building sites

IH06 - Damage to public highway

IH08 - Transport Plan

IL10 - Building Regulations

IL12 - Approved drawing nos. - "02644/L(0)10A, 02644/L(0)11A, 02644/L(0)12A, 02644/L(0)15A, 02644/L(0)16A, 02644/L(0)17A and 02644/L(0)19 received on 16 June 2003; 02644/L(2)7B, 02644/L(2)8B, 02644/L(2)6C, 02644/L(2)18B, 02644/L(2)19B and 02644/L(2)38 received on 8 August 2003." *see disk*

IL16 - Relevant policies and proposals - "UDP. ENV 3, 8, 12, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 41, HSG 10, HEP 9, TRN 22, 23; First Review ENV 1, 9, 10, BLT 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, HSG 10, CCE 8. TRN 2, 4."

**Background papers:**

Application forms and drawings

Letters of representation

Letters from English Heritage

Application forms, drawings, Sub-committee reports and decision notices (as applicable) for previous applications (ref. 03/0963/FUL)

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