
Committee Date:	09/07/2015	Application Number:	2015/02634/PA
Accepted:	07/04/2015	Application Type:	Full Planning
Target Date:	07/07/2015		
Ward:	Sutton Trinity		

Plantsbrook School, Upper Holland Road, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, B72 1RB

Demolition of existing school and erection of new school, sports hall and multi-use games areas, energy centre and plant area with associated car parking and landscaping

Applicant: Carillion Construction Ltd
on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education, c/o Agent
Agent: Seymour Harris Architecture
26 Highfield Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 3DP

Recommendation

Approve Subject To Conditions

1. Proposal

- 1.1. The proposal is for the demolition of the existing school buildings at Plantsbrook Secondary School and the redevelopment of the site with a new purpose built educational facility and associated works. The proposal is part of the second phase of the Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP) for the redevelopment of secondary schools and sixth form colleges across England.
- 1.2. The proposal includes the total redevelopment of existing built elements within the site comprising the demolition of all of the existing school buildings and the erection of a new main building and a standalone sports hall (11,711sq.m). The existing playing fields will be unaffected by the proposals. Pupil numbers would increase from 1220 to 1580 as a result of the proposals (increase of 360). Staff numbers would increase from 155 to 180 (increase of 25).
- 1.3. The proposed main building would be situated along the south-western boundary of the site. The building would be 3 storeys in height and generally rectangular in shape with a spur extending out from the north-east elevation. The building would measure 102 metres in length, 38 metres in width and 12 metres in height. It would be of modern design with a flat roof and constructed of silver/grey facing brickwork, render, curtain walling and white render with aluminium framed windows. The main entrance with canopy above would be on the north-east elevation. The building would contain, classrooms, offices, studios, the main hall, dining hall and kitchen. All plant would be sited on the roof, partially concealed behind a parapet.
- 1.4. The proposed sports hall would be located to the north-east of the main school building within the centre of the site. It would be square in shape with a length and width of 37 metres and a height ranging from 6 metres to 9.6 metres. It would be of typical sports hall design and constructed of silver/grey facing brickwork with

polycarbonate cladding for the higher element above the sports hall. High level aluminium windows would serve the activity studios. The building would contain a 4 court sports hall, gym, studio, pupil changing rooms, community use lockers, office, store and entrance/reception. The sports hall would be available for community use outside of normal school hours.

- 1.5. A single storey energy centre/bin store/ recycling centre with a flat roof would be located close to the north-west corner of the main school building and would be constructed of grey/silver facing brickwork and timber cladding. A further single storey bin store/sub-station/pump house would be located to the south-west of the main building adjacent to the Plantsbrook.
- 1.6. It is proposed to retain and reuse existing vehicular access points, two on Upper Holland Road and one on Ebrook Road. The centrally located vehicular access on Upper Holland Road will remain as the principal entrance and the access to the north-western end of the site will remain as the exit. The vehicular access on Ebrook Road will continue to provide access to the parking area near to the new sports hall. A new pedestrian access point is proposed on Upper Holland Road just to the west of the vehicular entrance. The existing pedestrian access on Ebrook Road would be relocated further north. The pedestrian access points will also be for the use of cyclists.
- 1.7. 96 car parking spaces are proposed within the site boundary (4 will be accessible spaces). The car park is located on the northern end of the site. 50 cycle parking spaces are proposed for students/staff and 6 for visitors.
- 1.8. Two new, multi-use games areas (MUGA's) are proposed on the site. One 3 court MUGA on the south of the site, and a 2 court MUGA adjacent the sports hall on the north-eastern side. The MUGA's will be enclosed within 3 metre weldmesh fencing, but they will not be floodlit.
- 1.9. Landscaping would include the retention of the trees and landscaping on the site frontage to Upper Holland Road which would remain as a semi-private area. A new central landscaped area with tree and ornamental planting would be created to the front of the sports hall and an area for guide dogs and a sensory garden (the school caters for a number of partially sighted students) adjacent to the proposed main school building. Hard play/socialising areas are provided for different age groups within the school as well as external dining/teaching areas. Fencing would be retained as existing around the site boundaries. No changes are proposed to the playing fields.
- 1.10. The application is supported by a; Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, Transport Assessment, Travel Plan, Arboricultural Implications Assessment, Biodiversity Statement, Phase 1 Detailed Desk Top Study, Flood Risk and Outline Drainage Study, Energy Statement, Low & Zero Carbon Technology Feasibility Report, External Noise Survey Report, Site Waste Management Plan and Plantsbrook School Phasing Plans.
- 1.11. It has been indicated that the school will be redeveloped in 5 phases. Indicative plans have been submitted to show how school activities and sports provision would be maintained through the phases of construction.
- 1.12. An EIA Screening Opinion has been issued which confirms an EIA is not required.
- 1.13. [Link to Documents](#)

2. Site & Surroundings

- 2.1. The application site is located on the junction of Upper Holland Road and Ebrook Road and is approximately 3.85 hectares in area. The site is divided into two parts by the Plants Brook with the section to the north-east containing the school buildings which are a mix of single and two storey buildings dating from the 1930's, 60's and 90's including a standalone sports hall at the rear of the site. To the south-west of the brook are the playing fields.
- 2.2. There are two access points for vehicles from Upper Holland Road, an entrance and egress which are shared with pedestrians. On Ebrook Road there is a vehicular entrance/exit to a rear parking area and further along is a separate pedestrian entrance.
- 2.3. To the south-east of the school is Town Junior School with Sutton Coldfield Town Football Club to the south-west. There are residential dwellings opposite the school on Ebrook Road and Upper Holland Road with further residential adjacent to the site on Upper Holland Road and to the south-west of the school playing fields on Cole Lane.

[Site Location and Street View](#)

3. Planning History

- 3.1. 20/04/1998. 1998/01610/PA. Erection of single storey sports hall and changing facilities. Approved.
- 3.2. 10/01/2001. 2001/00151/PA. Erection of science and technology suite. Approved.
- 3.3. 14/04/2004. 2004/02399/PA. Construction of single storey extension to create 4 science classrooms. Approved.
- 3.4. 11/08/2006. 2006/05130/PA. Retention of mobile classroom. Approved.
- 3.5. 17/09/2008. 2008/04928/PA. Retention of temporary mobile classrooms. Approved.
- 3.6. 04/09/2009. 2009/00489/PA. Erection of new electrical housing enclosure. Approved.

4. Consultation/PP Responses

- 4.1. Transportation Development – no objections subject to conditions.
- 4.2. Regulatory Services – no objections subject to conditions.
- 4.3. West Midlands Police – no objections.
- 4.4. Sport England – no objections subject to conditions.
- 4.5. Severn Trent Water – no objections subject to condition.

- 4.6. Environment Agency – no objections subject to condition..
- 4.7. MP, Councillors, Residents Associations and nearby occupiers notified.
- 4.8. 2 letters of support have been received.
- 4.9. 4 letters have been received objecting to the proposal on the following grounds;
- Kathleen Road has been missed out of the transport analysis. It is a major cut through for parents and staff, sixth form students park there restricting access and resulting in congestion.
 - Junction at Kathleen Road, Upper Holland Road and Ebrook Road is a site of regular accidents and dangerous to young children.
 - New proposals do not significantly increase parking.
 - No safe cycle route around Plantsbrook Road
 - Traffic analysis makes no reference to accidents on the corner of Ebrook Road, Upper Holland Road and Kathleen Road.
 - Traffic analysis done over short period in March when traffic loads was light due to rainfall.
 - No account of increased traffic flow from new housing recently built on Upper Holland Road.
 - No provision for safe movement, parking, storage of materials and noise reduction during the build.
 - 2 metre security fence will alter the character of the school site and the local neighbourhood.
 - Increased number of vehicles will increase risk of accidents. There should be no left turn into Kathleen Road.
 - Increase in number of students will bring added congestion to the area.
- 4.10. 7 letters have received making the following comments on the application;
- Missed opportunity to provide a pedestrian link to Town and Holland House schools.
 - Hope when development is finished it will sort parking and dropping off at school.
 - Need to look at bus pick up points, existing pick up points in Ebrook Road are dangerous due to parked cars.
 - Council should allow free parking in car park opposite school for an hour in mornings to relieve congestion.
 - Proposal will increase cars using Kathleen Road, consideration needs to be given to parking and speed restrictions on this road.
 - Junction at Kathleen Road/Upper Holland Road and Ebrook Road needs amending with better road signage and line marking.
 - Concern that City Council car park on Upper Holland Road will become overused and it is used by the local community and people visiting local businesses.
 - Trees and landscaping around the site should be kept.
 - Where will construction workers park?
 - Traffic survey not carried out at busy times.
- 4.11. The application is supported by a Statement of Community Involvement. This states that the proposals were developed during a competitive design process involving the school, its Governors and representatives from the Education Funding Agency over a 12 week period. Further meetings were held with Councillors and stakeholders and proposals shared with staff and pupils. A community consultation event in the

form of a Public Exhibition was held in January 2015. Comments were generally supportive with concerns raised over type and height of boundary treatments, parking issues, children's safety, lack of sports provision and unimaginative design.

5. Policy Context

- 5.1. UDP (Adopted 2005), Draft Birmingham Development Plan, Places for All SPG (2001), Car Parking Guidelines SPD (2012), NPPF (2012).

6. Planning Considerations

- 6.1. **Background** – The application for the redevelopment of Plantsbrook School is made under the Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP) which is a Central Government initiative to renew secondary school facilities in England and was launched in 2011. The programme is administered by the Department for Education and managed by the Education Funding Authority to address the needs of schools most urgently in need of repair. The intention of the PSBP is to transform the provision of secondary educational facilities so they are fit for purpose in the 21st Century and can be enjoyed by the local community outside of normal school hours.
- 6.2. **Policy** – The Birmingham UDP requires proposals to improve the quality of the built environment in the City and encourages high standards of design through the use of good urban design principles. It encourages community use of school playing pitches, provision of all-weather pitches and improved changing facilities. The UDP emphasises the use of public transport as an alternative to the private car.
- 6.3. One of the key policies within the Draft Birmingham Development Plan is to make Birmingham a learning City with quality institutions. The aim is to ensure that opportunities are created for all to achieve the highest educational standards, to raise the City skill base and for the City's educational institutions to support innovation and growth in the local economy. This involves supporting the expansion of educational facilities including secondary schools and academies.
- 6.4. Places for All SPG is concerned with the delivery of good design in all types of development across the City.
- 6.5. Car Parking Guidelines SPD sets out maximum parking guidelines for new developments. The requirements relevant to higher and further education and schools in this area are 1 space per 2 staff and 1 space per 15 students. Disabled parking spaces should be 6% of total provision.
- 6.6. The NPPF encourages the provision of community facilities in creating sustainable communities. It emphasises the great importance of ensuring a sufficient choice of school places are available to meet the needs of new or expanding communities and Local Planning Authorities should take a positive, proactive and collaborative approach to meeting this choice and to development that will widen choice in education including new or expanding schools.
- 6.7. **Use** – The redevelopment of Plantsbrook School including updated school accommodation and sports facilities is welcomed and would comply with policies contained in the UDP, Draft Birmingham Development Plan. As well as providing a modern learning facility the proposal would include sports facilities that can be used by the local community.

- 6.8. **Design and Layout** – The design and layout of the proposed new school has been developed in conjunction with advice from officers. Although the existing buildings on the site are single and 2 storey, the increase in scale to 3 storeys is considered acceptable. The main school building would be set back from Upper Holland Road Road and the increase in scale and the general mass of the building would sit comfortably in the wider context and have no adverse impact on the visual amenities of the area. The layout includes the retention of the existing playing fields on the opposite side of Plants Brook and the retention of existing access points. The proposed layout would allow for the retention of the mature trees on the Upper Holland Road frontage and allow for the buildings, car parking and MUGA's to be sited within a coherent landscaped setting.
- 6.9. The detailed design and building form is modern in appearance with the use of high quality grey brick, aluminium windows, render and glass as the main materials for both the main school building and the sports hall. The entrance to the main school building is emphasised by a projecting element of contrasting render which would sit between the main school building and the sports hall. The sports block would be lower than the main school building and plant would be accommodated within the roof areas of both buildings and a single storey energy centre to the rear of these buildings. The City Design Officer raises no objections on design grounds.
- 6.10. **Residential Amenity** – The site lies within a residential area with a number of properties relatively close to the site, the nearest being 109 Upper Holland Road approximately 18.5 metres to the west of the proposed main school building and 10 metres to the west of the proposed bin store/substation on the opposite side of Plants Brook. There are also residential properties on the opposite sides of Upper Holland Road and Ebrook Road to the school site.
- 6.11. I do not consider the proposal would result in any significant loss of amenity to nearby residents. With regard to no. 109 Upper Holland Road, this property would be located to the west of the main school building and 18.5 m at its nearest point, therefore due to its orientation loss of light would be minimal. There are also tall mature trees within the Plants Brook corridor which would provide an effective screen and as the proposed main school building would be set at an oblique angle to no.109 any overlooking would be negligible.
- 6.12. In support of the current application an External Noise Survey Report was submitted which states that in order to minimise the potential for noise impacts on the surrounding residential properties it is important that the positioning of external noise sources such as hard play areas and external plant should be located away from noise sensitive uses. The report concludes that it is unlikely that any noise nuisance would occur to nearby residential properties as a result of the proposals. The applicants have confirmed the MUGA's will not be floodlit or used in the evening or weekends. Regulatory Services concur with this view and have recommended conditions to limit noise from any plant/machinery and for details of extraction from the school kitchen.
- 6.13. I consider that given the site is already used for school purposes that the potential impact upon nearby residents as a result of the proposals is limited and I raise no objections on residential amenity grounds.
- 6.14. **Transportation** – In support of the planning application, a Transport Assessment and School Travel Plan have been submitted. It notes that the school site and surrounding highways are currently subject to limitations in terms of their ability to

cope with school traffic and congestion is a problem at the beginning and end of the school day. At present there is inadequate parking available for staff and visitors, there is insufficient turning space for service vehicles and no designated area for parents to drop off and pick up within the school. There are bus stops along Ebrook Road and parked buses at the beginning and end of the school day together with parent drop off parking on Ebrook Road adds to the congestion.

- 6.15. The proposed scheme seeks to address a number of the difficulties currently being experienced both within the site boundary and also to reduce the impacts resulting from the school on the highways in the immediate area around the site. The proposal provides separate vehicular and pedestrian access points including 2 new pedestrian access points on Upper Holland Road, the more centrally located of these would follow a direct route from the pedestrian crossing on Upper Holland Road to the main school entrance. There would be a further pedestrian access on Ebrook Road.
- 6.16. A total of 96 (4 accessible spaces) car parking spaces would be provided within the application site as well as 50 cycle parking spaces which represents a significant increase on existing provision. The applicants are also proposing a drop off area at the front of the main school on Upper Holland Road specifically for parents bringing visually impaired students.
- 6.17. Transportation Development have raised no objections to the proposal on parking and highway safety grounds subject to conditions. They have noted that the Transport Assessment identifies there will additional pick-ups and drop-offs due to the proposal and associated parking is likely to take place on surrounding highways in the pick-up and drop off period. The District Engineer has also raised concern that additional trips associated with the additional number of students and staff at the school would add to traffic and parking issues in the area. To mitigate against this Transportation Development have recommended that traffic calming measures are secured as part of the application, specifically a 20mph zone with speed cushions along Ebrook Road/Upper Holland Road/Holland Road/Kathleen Road and Royal Road. I consider this is justifiable given the increase in student/staff numbers and evidence of a number of accidents in the vicinity of the school in the last 5 years. The traffic calming measures will be secured by condition at the applicants expense together with a review of TRO's in the area
- 6.18. The car parking provision of 96 spaces falls within the specified maximum provision for the total of 180 staff. Additional cycle storage and a requirement for an updated School Travel Plan will be secured by condition.
- 6.19. **Trees** – An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has submitted in support of the application. The majority of existing trees within the site and along the site boundaries are to be retained and protected during demolition and construction works. The landscaping proposals include a large number of additional trees to be planted around the site specifically on the Ebrook Road frontage, around the 2 MUGA's and within the central garden area. My Tree officer raises no objections subject to conditions to protect existing trees during demolition/construction.
- 6.20. **Ecology** - A Biodiversity Statement has been submitted with the application including an ecological appraisal of the site. It notes that the Plants Brook which runs through the site is designated as a Site of Local importance for Nature Conservation and concludes that; trees and shrubs around the site have potential for nesting birds, trees and buildings were identified as having negligible potential for roosting bats, no evidence of badgers was found and the flowing water of the Plants

Brook is not suitable for great crested newts. The Planning Ecologist agrees with the view that the proposal would have no adverse impact upon habitats or ecology subject to a condition requiring an ecological mitigation plan for demolition/construction.

- 6.21. **Flood Risk** - The applicants submitted a Flood Risk and Outline Drainage Strategy in support of the proposal. The Environment Agency have confirmed that part of the proposed school would be located in Flood Zone 2 of the Plants Brook. The Environment Agency raised concern that the proposed finished floor levels would not be set at a sufficient level in relation to the 1 in 100 year plus climate change flood level. Following further information submitted by the applicant, the Environment Agency have confirmed they have no objections subject to a condition showing finished floor levels.
- 6.22. In relation to the submitted surface water drainage strategy, The Lead Local Flood Authority (City Council) have raised no objections subject to a condition requiring the submission of a sustainable drainage scheme.
- 6.23. **Sports Provision** – In addition to the existing sports pitches and running track which would remain, the current application proposes a new sports hall with activity studio, fitness exercise studio and community use lockers. A new 3 court and 2 court MUGA would also be provided.
- 6.24. Sport England raise no objections to the proposal subject to conditions requiring details of how existing sports use will be accommodated during construction works, detailed design and specification for the layout of the sports hall and MUGA's, a community access agreement and playing fields reinstated following removal of temporary playground.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. I consider that the re-building of Plantsbrook School would have a positive impact on the area as a whole and is in accordance with both national and local planning policy. The proposal would provide updated school accommodation and sports facilities which can also be enjoyed by the local community. In addition the proposal would not result in harm to residential or visual amenity, highway safety and parking or have any ecological impacts. As such, I consider the proposal to be sustainable development and acceptable.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1. Approve Subject To Conditions.

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| 1 | Requires the prior submission of a contamination remediation scheme |
| 2 | Requires the prior submission of a contaminated land verification report |
| 3 | Requires the prior submission of a drainage scheme |
| 4 | Requires the prior submission of a Sustainable Drainage Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Operation and Maintenance Plan |
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- 5 Requires the prior submission of a construction ecological mitigation plan
 - 6 Requires the prior submission of extraction and odour control details
 - 7 Limits the noise levels for Plant and Machinery
 - 8 Requires the prior submission of hard and/or soft landscape details
 - 9 Requires the prior submission of hard surfacing materials
 - 10 Requires the prior submission of boundary treatment details
 - 11 Requires the prior submission of a construction method statement/management plan
 - 12 Requires the submission of an updated school travel plan
 - 13 Requires the provision of traffic calming measures and a review of existing TRO's
 - 14 Requires the prior submission of cycle storage details
 - 15 Requires the prior submission of sample materials
 - 16 Requires the prior submission of level details
 - 17 Requires the submission of details of sports provision during construction
 - 18 Requires the submission of detailed design and layout of sports hall and MUGA's.
 - 19 Requires the submission of a community use agreement
 - 20 Requires restoration of playing field following removal of temporary playground.
 - 21 Requires the prior submission of details of finished floor levels
 - 22 Requires the scheme to be in accordance with the listed approved plans
 - 23 Limits the approval to 3 years (Full)
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Case Officer: Bhupinder Thandi

Photo(s)

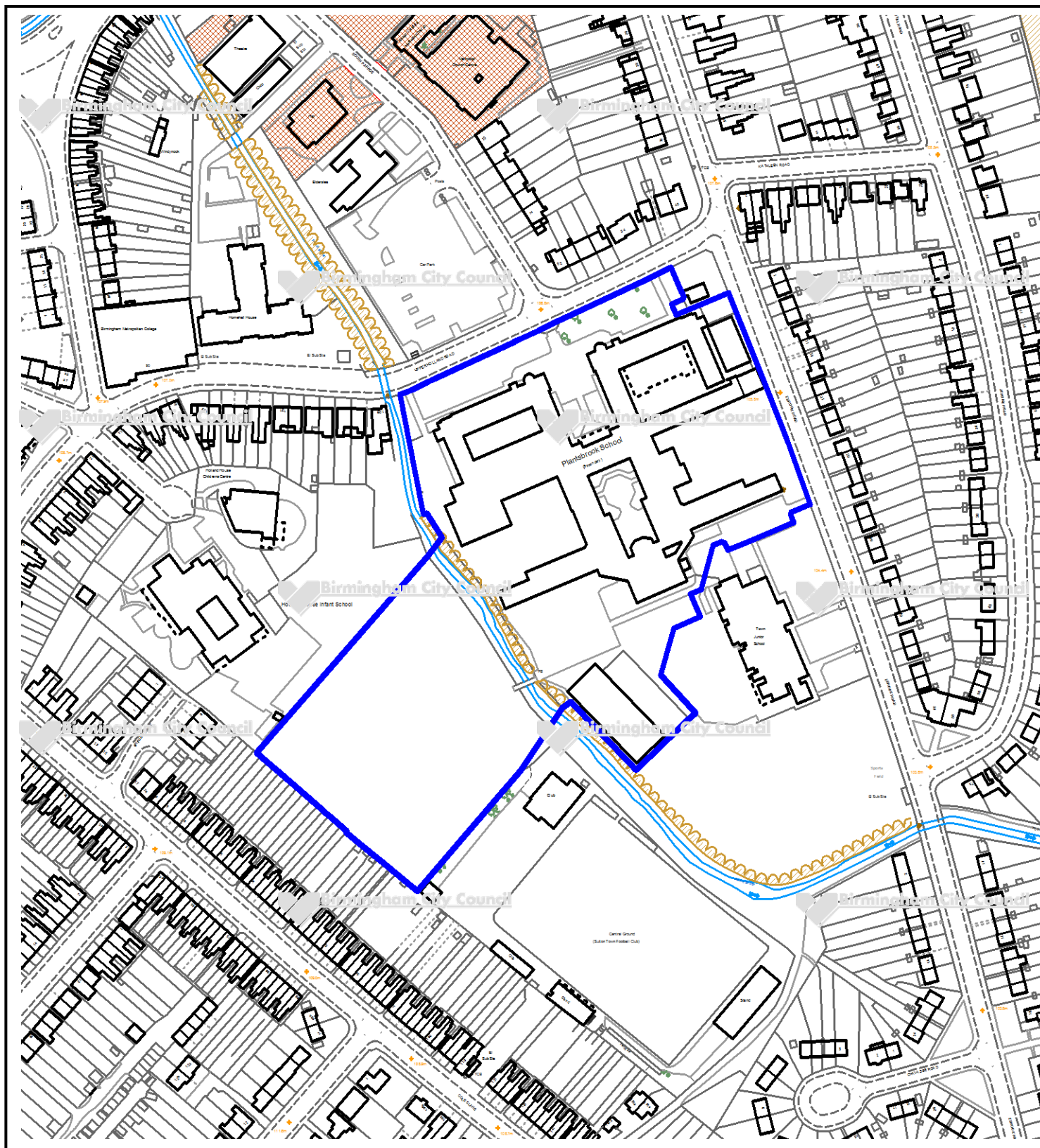


Figure 1 – Main school building



Figure 2 – Existing sports hall

Location Plan



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