

## **Item D3**

### **Single storey extension to provide replacement classroom accommodation, an activity hall, ITC room, library and associated facilities at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 20 January 2011.

Application by KCC Property Group for a single storey extension to Richmond Primary School to provide replacement classroom accommodation for existing mobile buildings, a small activity hall, ITC room, library and associated facilities at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 2QT - SW/10/1377

Recommendation: Permission be granted

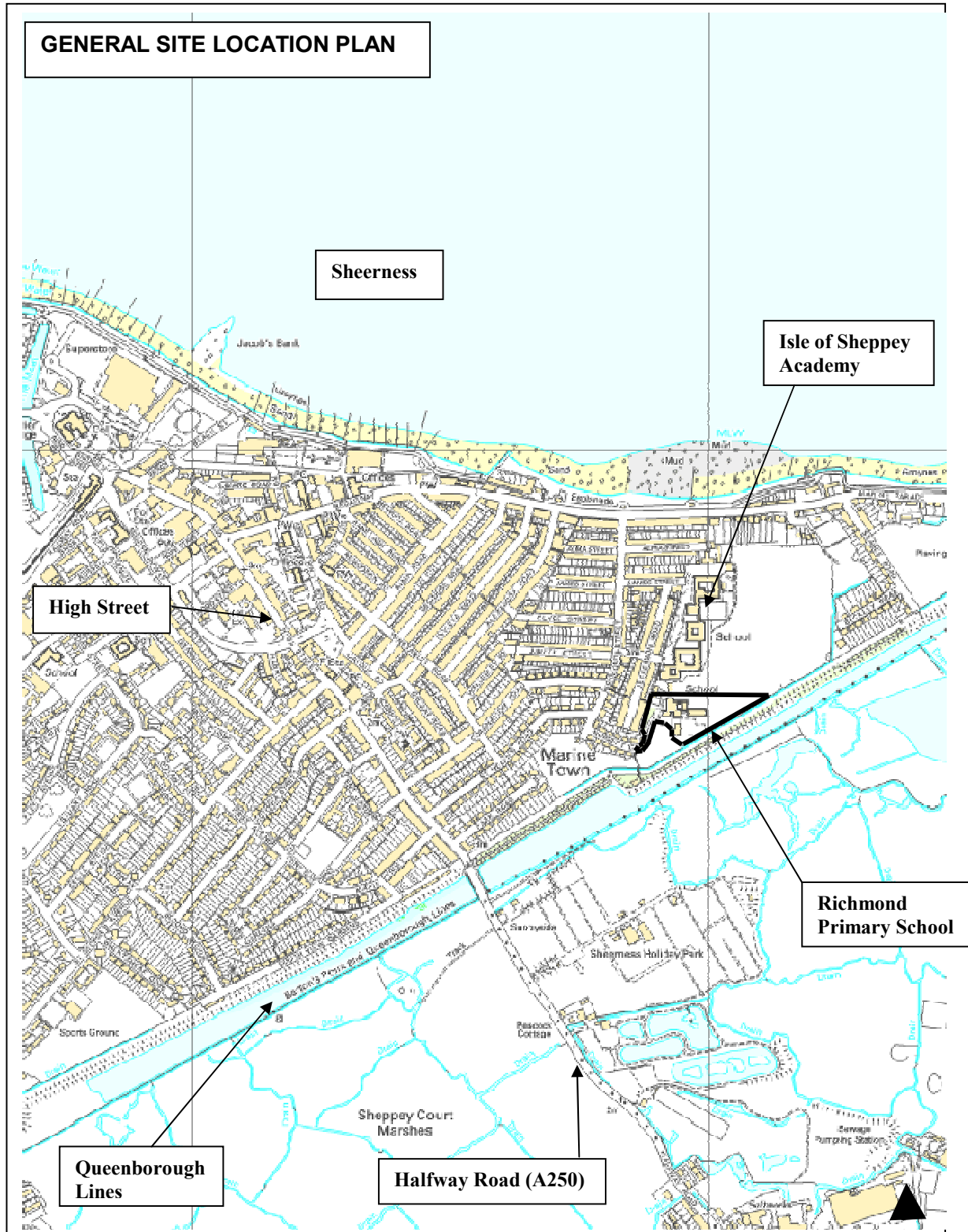
Local Member: Mr K. Pugh

Classification: Unrestricted

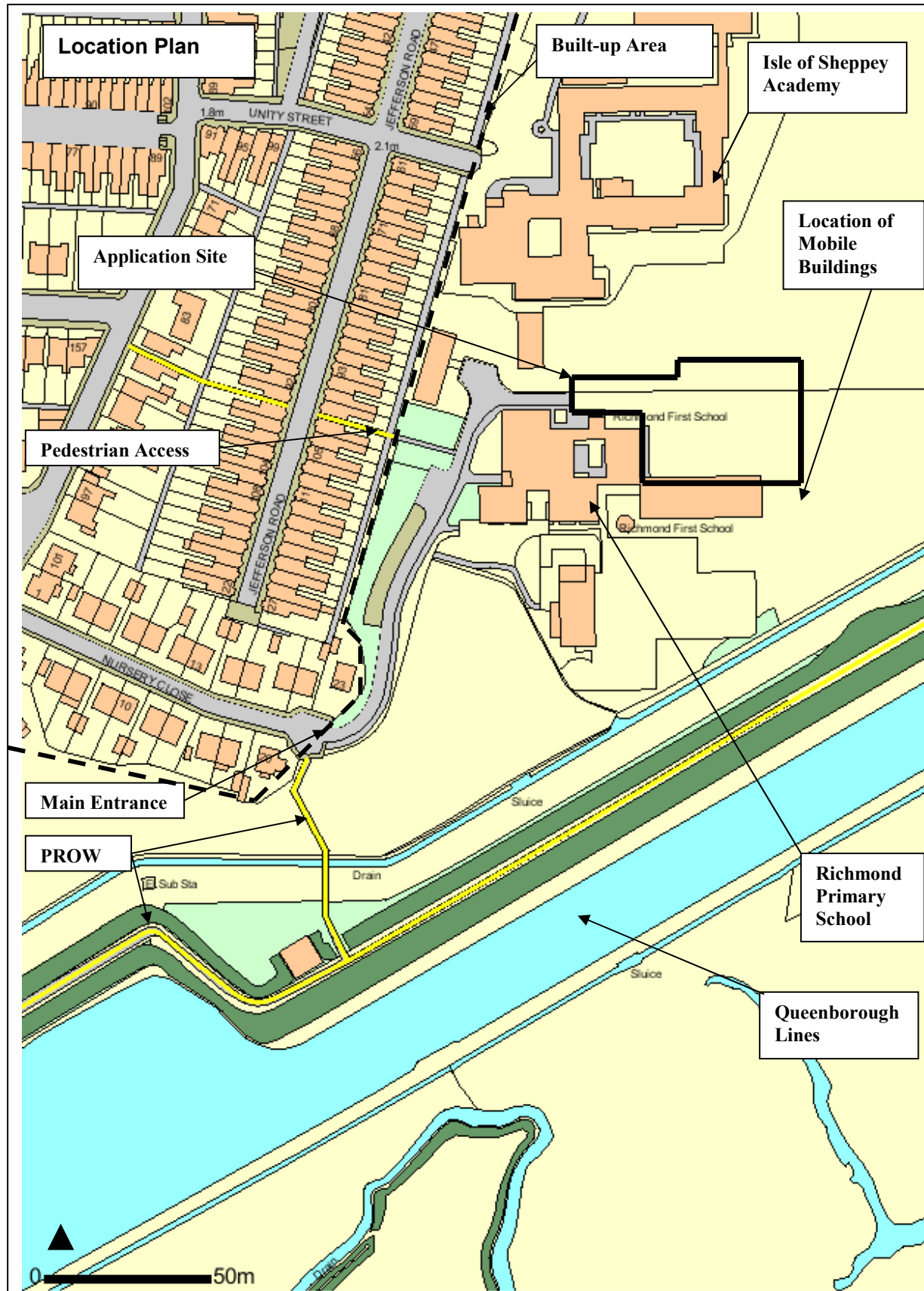
#### **Site**

1. The application site forms part of an existing school playing field within Richmond Primary School. The school grounds are located to the south east of Sheerness, outside the boundary of the built-up area, as defined in the Swale Borough Local 2008. The primary access is via Nursery Close, a small residential cul-de-sac; a second pedestrian access enters the site via a Public Right of Way off Jefferson Road. Residential streets flank the school grounds to the west. To the north of the application site is the Isle of Sheppey Academy, which is currently subject to a separate planning application seeking to redevelop the Academy under the Building Schools for the Future programme. To the south and east are the Queenborough Lines, a wide water-filled canal and earth works constructed in the 1860s to defend the dockyards at Sheerness. This landscape feature is currently being considered for statutory protection as a Scheduled Monument. Another Public Right of Way runs along the banks of the canal connecting with Nursery Close adjacent to the main school entrance. Beyond the canal is the Minster Marshes Local Wildlife site. Please see the attached site location plan.
2. The wider Sheerness area (north west of the Isle of Sheppey), including the school grounds, falls within an area of increased risk of flooding from the sea (Flood Zone 3 – 1 in 200 or greater annual probability) as defined by the Environment Agency.
3. The school grounds cover an area of 1.88 ha with the application site situated north of the footprint of the existing school buildings. The main school is largely a flat roofed building dating from the 1960's, with a single story pitched roof extension dating from 2003 and a separate nursery building built in 2006. East of the main school two large mobile buildings are sited on part of the school playing field.

**Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School,  
Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

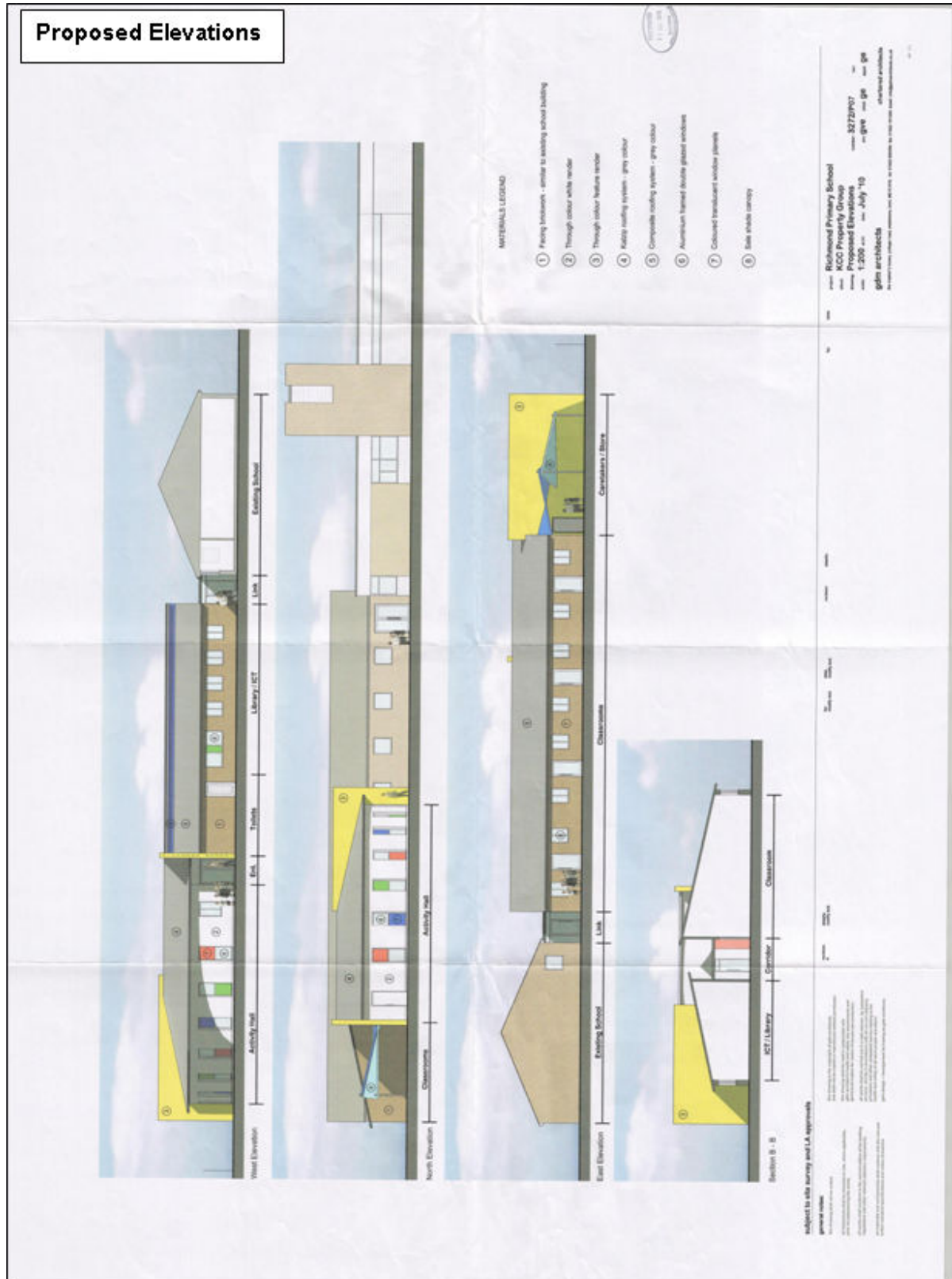


# **Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**





# **Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**





## **Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

---

### **Background**

4. Commencing in September 2008 the education system on the Isle of Sheppey changed from a three tier (First, Middle and Secondary Schools) to a two tier system (Primary and Secondary Schools). At this time the site (formerly Richmond First School) became Richmond Primary School; a two form entry Primary School accommodating 420 pupils aged 4 – 11 years. The changes to the education system resulted in 4 new classes being housed within the school; the school roll rose from approximately 280 pupils. In 2008 the two mobile buildings referred to above were permitted (under planning reference SW/08/351) for a temporary period ending 2013. This application enabled the school to accommodate the additional pupils. At the time the application made clear the School's aspirations to replace the mobile classrooms with permanent accommodation; the current application forms this proposal.
5. In addition to the mobile buildings referred to above, the recent planning history for the school site includes a small extension to the front elevation in 2007 (reference SW/07/1134), and construction of a nursery facility in 2004 (reference SW/04/1545).

### **Proposal**

6. The application seeks planning permission for the creation of a single storey extension to the north of the existing school buildings. The proposed extension would provide 4 replacement classrooms for those currently accommodated in mobile buildings, along with a small activity hall, an information communication and technology (ICT) room, library, small office and caretaker accommodation, storage and bathrooms. The footprint of the proposed development would cover approximately 600m<sup>2</sup>, which currently forms an unused part of the school playing field. The application also includes formation of a new tarmac play area and associated footways, along with the removal of existing mobile buildings on completion of the proposed extension. The area occupied by the mobile buildings would be restored to a grassed area as part of the main school playing field. The application also includes details of a plan for the internal refurbishment of part of the school. This element of the proposal does not require planning permission as there are no material changes to the exterior of the building.
7. The proposed extension is being made to improve the teaching accommodation currently provided within mobile classrooms and provide associated ancillary facilities for the existing school roll. The application would not result in an increase in the number of pupils attending the school.
8. The design of the proposed building is a single storey pitched roof construction reflecting an existing extension completed in 2003. The building would be constructed using a steel frame with brickwork to match existing materials. Feature walls (shown in yellow) divide the teaching block from the curved entrance and activity hall. This curved section of the building is shown with a white rendered finish. The roof would be constructed using a composite metal roofing system in grey; windows would be aluminium framed double glazed units. The extension is designed to ensure a high standard of sustainability; seeking to achieve a standard similar to a 'Very Good' BREEAM assessment rating. The proposal

## **Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

---

would also be designed to comply with Disabled Discrimination Act and building regulations ensuring inclusive access.

### **Additional Information Received From Applicant**

9. In response to representations received concerning the highways implications of the proposal the applicant's agent comments as follows:

*'Both the replacement classrooms and the new hall are to provide accommodation for existing student numbers. **It is not proposed, as a result of this development, to increase student or staffing numbers.***

*Accordingly, it is not necessary for this application to address parking issues outside of the school devise, as the proposals do not in any way affect current circumstances. They are considered neutral in this respect.*

*The School is a responsible neighbour in Nursery Close and it should be noted that the school is only a part contributor to the use of the road, and generally only at times of 'drop off' and 'pick up'. Parents are discouraged from driving up to the school gates, which are locked daily 30 minutes before pick up and drop off times. Staff who are unable to park within the school grounds park away from Nursery Close to avoid causing congestion.*

*The School, separate to this application, have actively considered ways in which to assist in easing their parking shortfall and the access problem on Nursery Close. Accordingly, a scheme to reorganise and extend the existing 'on grounds' parking has been designed to increase provision within the gated area, providing on site parking for staff and visitors.*

*This increased parking proposal does not require planning consent for it to be implemented and although not actually part of the extension application, the School is looking to go ahead with these works and for the parking to be available for use before the new extension is completed.'*

10. Further to the above statement the applicant's agent has confirmed there are 20 existing car parking spaces within the site delivered through the formal parking and informal arrangements. The proposed scheme is to provide a protective mesh to a grass area on site, extending the available car parking to approximately 47 spaces including dedicated disabled bays. This work is to be carried out under the School's Permitted Development Rights.
11. The County Planning Authority has recently received a second application on behalf of the School for improvements to the car parking provision. This application will be considered separately from the current proposal. The new application includes the resurfacing and formal layout of the existing car park, improvements to the access road and the formalization of part of the parking area identified to be covered with the protective mesh.

## **Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

---

12. In addition to the above, the Head Teacher has advised that the School's Travel Plan will be taken to School Governors for review early in 2011.

### **Planning Policy**

13. The most relevant Government Guidance and Development Plan Policies summarised below are pertinent to the consideration of this application:

- (i) **National Planning Policy and Guidance** – the most relevant National Planning Policies are set out in:

**PPS1** (Delivering Sustainable Development), **PPS5** (Planning for the Historic Environment), **PPS7** (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas), **PPG13** (Transport), **PPG17** (Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation), **PPS23** (Planning and Pollution Control) and **PPS25** (Development and Flood Risk).

- (ii) The adopted 2009 **South East Plan**:

**Policy CC1** Seeks to achieve and maintain sustainable development in the region.

**Policy CC6** Seeks sustainable and distinctive communities that respect the character of settlements and landscapes, and achieve a high quality built environment.

**Policy C4** Seeks to protect open countryside by ensuring all development respects and enhances local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage cannot be avoided.

**Policy BE5** Seeks new development in rural communities to be subject to design and sustainability criteria so that the distinctive character of the area is not damaged; seeks to protect or extend key local services and protect landscape setting.

**Policy S3** Seeks to ensure the adequate provision of pre-school, school, and community learning facilities.

Note that as a result of the judgement in the case brought by Cala Homes in the High Court, which held that the powers set out in section 79 [6] of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 could not be used to revoke all Regional Strategies in their entirety, Regional Strategies (the South East Plan in the case of Kent) were re-established as part of the Development Plan on 10 November 2010. Notwithstanding this, DCLG's Chief Planner Steve Quartermain advised Local Planning Authorities on 10 November 2010 that they should still have regard to the Secretary of State's letter to Local Planning Authorities and to the Planning Inspectorate dated 27 May 2010. In that letter he had informed them of the Government's intention to abolish Regional Strategies in the Localism Bill and that he expected them to have regard to this as a material consideration in any planning decisions. The 10th November 2010 Quartermain Letter is now being challenged in the High Court and must in my view carry very little weight until such time as the as the Court decision is known. This is currently expected in late January.

Department of Communities and Local Government advice on this matter reads



## **Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

---

'Local planning authorities and planning inspectors should be aware that the Secretary of State has received a judicial review challenge to his statement of 10 November 2010, the letter of the Chief Planner of the same date and to the Secretary of State's letter of 27 May 2010 on the ground that the Government's intended revocation of Regional Strategies by the promotion of legislation for that purpose in the forthcoming Localism Bill is legally immaterial to the determination of planning applications and appeals prior to the revocation of Regional Strategies.

The Secretary of State is defending the challenge and believes and is advised that it is ill founded. Nevertheless, pending determination of the challenge, decision makers in local planning authorities and at the Planning Inspectorate will in their determination of planning applications and appeals need to consider whether the existence of the challenge and the basis of it, affects the significance and weight which they judge may be given to the Secretary of State's statements and to the letter of the Chief Planner'.

### **(iii) Swale Borough Local Plan (2008) Policies:**

- Policy SP1** In meeting the development needs of the Borough, proposals should accord with principles of Sustainable Development, including minimising impact on the environment, ensuring provision of community infrastructure, supporting existing local services, and a high quality of design that respects local distinctiveness.
- Policy SP2** Requires development proposals to protect and enhance the special features of the visual, aural, ecological, historical, atmospheric and hydrological environments of the Borough and promote good design in its widest sense.
- Policy SP5** Development proposals within the countryside will seek to increase self sufficiency and satisfying local needs, whilst protecting the character of the wider countryside. Seeks high design standards that respond positively to the character and form of the countryside, protecting the countryside from unnecessary development, and permit innovative proposals that increase the viability of existing rural services.
- Policy SP7** Seeks the provision of new community facilities and services.
- Policy TG1** Within the Thames Gateway Planning Area, amongst other matters, development should seek to provide adequate community facilities as well as raising environmental standards through high quality design and the better management of environmental resources.
- Policy E1** Development proposals should, amongst other matters, seek to reflect the positive characteristics of the locality; protect and enhance the natural and built environments; be well sited and of a scale, design and appearance that is appropriate to its location; cause no demonstrable harm to residential amenity and other sensitive uses.
- Policy E4** Seeks to minimise the degree of risk of flooding, either to, or arising from, the development, presumes against development that would give rise to adverse impacts upon, or increased risk to, human life, ecosystems,

## **Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

---

- habitats and development.
- Policy E6** The quality, character and amenity value of the wider countryside of the Borough, will be protected and where possible enhanced. Development proposals will be developed where they provide a service/ necessary community infrastructure to meet the essential needs of the local community.
- Policy E7** At the edge of urban settlements with countryside land beyond, development will not be permitted which would result in encroachment or piecemeal erosion of land or its rural open and undeveloped character.
- Policy E9** Seeks to protect the quality, character and amenity of the wider landscape, through development that is sympathetic to, and minimises impact on local landscape character.
- Policy E13** Development proposals will protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the landscape, environmental quality, biodiversity and recreational opportunities of the coast, whilst respecting those natural processes such as flooding, erosion and sea level rise that influence this Zone.
- Policy E16** Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect a Scheduled Ancient Monument or its setting.
- Policy E19** Seeks development to be of high quality design that responds positively to creating safe, accessible, and attractive places; enriching the qualities of the existing environment by promoting local distinctiveness and strengthening the sense of place; appropriate to its context in respect of scale, height and massing; making best use of texture, colour, pattern and durability of materials; and achieving flexibility to respond to future changes in use, lifestyle and demography.
- Policy E20** The Borough Council expects proposals to integrate security and safety measures within their design and layout.
- Policy T3** Seeks new proposals to provide appropriate vehicle parking.
- Policy T4** Seeks new development to give special attention to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, including appropriate cycle parking facilities.
- Policy C1** Supports proposals for new or improved community facilities.

### **Consultations**

14. **Swale Borough Council:** raises no objection, subject to conditions covering the submission of a scheme of flood resilience measures, a scheme for the disposal of surface water, details of external materials, a landscaping scheme and measures to ensure the

## **Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

---

approved landscape scheme is successfully implemented.

**Divisional Transportation Manager:** raises no objection to the application in respect of highway matters, subject to conditions covering the submission of details of contractors parking and delivery space during construction, precautions to prevent the deposit of mud on the highway, and ensuring the provision of the cycle parking shown in the application.

The Divisional Transportation Manager notes *'that residents of Nursery Close have raised highway concerns over the proposals being considered, particularly in respect of an increase in traffic and on parking demand. However, this application does not increase the number of pupils or staff that will attend the school, as it merely replaces some of the undesirable temporary buildings with more appropriate permanent structures, and improves the range of facilities being provided to pupils within the school. With the same number of staff and pupils attending the school, vehicle movements and parking will remain as existing, so there will be no adverse impact upon the highway.'*

*Therefore, whilst residents may have issues with the amount of traffic and parking that currently takes place within the Close, it would be unreasonable to refuse this application on highway grounds.'*

**Kent Highway Services, School Travel Plan Team:** confirm that Richmond School has a Travel Plan in place, which was last reviewed in April 2009. The Plan seeks to improve highway safety, reduce car dependency and congestion around the school, and encourage more sustainable modes of transport. The School Travel Plan Team will continue to work with the School to help review and update the plan in the future.

**Sport England:** raises no objection to the application on the grounds that the proposed development would not result in the loss or affect the use of any playing pitches within the school's playing field.

**The Environment Agency:** raises no objection subject to conditions relating to the submission of a scheme of flood damage prevention measures and details of surface water drainage being imposed on any decision.

The Agency notes that the development lies within Flood Zone 3a; considered to be at high risk from tidal flooding and on this basis Planning Policy Statement 25 requires that any application for development in such area is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). However, given the site is already in use as a school and the proposals would not significantly increase the number of pupils in attendance, the Agency considers there would be no increase in the vulnerability of the users of the site from flooding (particularly as the building is intended to replace temporary structures) and are not insisting on the production of a FRA in this instance.

The Agency recommends all appropriate flood resilience measures are incorporated into the new extension to reduce the impact of any flood damage. Including raising floor levels as high as practicable, the electrical supply being brought in at a high level and water resistant surfaces used where possible. They recommend that a flood evacuation plan be prepared and is implemented.

## **Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

---

**County Archaeologist:** raises no objection; advising that in view of the scale of the proposal and the nature of the known archaeological potential in the area, no archaeological fieldwork measures would be necessary.

The County Archaeologist notes that the proposals involve works potentially within the setting of a nationally important monument, the Queenborough Lines, which is being considered for designation as a Scheduled Monument, and recommended consulting English Heritage.

**English Heritage:** raises no objection, subject to a recommendation that a more discreet colour (than the yellow shown in the drawings) is selected for the rendered feature walls, which are raised slightly above the existing roof line.

English Heritage note that the development site lies adjacent to the historic fortification of the Queenborough Lines. *'The Lines are a rare surviving example of a defence structure dating from the 1860s, built in order to defend the dockyard at Sheerness from landward attack. They are of national importance and area currently being considered for designation as a Scheduled Monument.'*

English Heritage considers that the proposed development would have minimal impact on the setting of the Queenborough Lines, subject to the above recommendation. Noting that the proposed extension lies north of the school site and should largely be shielded from views to and from the Queenborough Lines by the existing buildings to the south.

### **Local Member**

15. The local County Member for Sheerness, Mr K Pugh, was notified of the application on 21 October 2010.

### **Publicity**

16. The application was publicised by the posting of a site notice, and the notification of 35 individual residential properties.

### **Representations**

17. In response to the publicity 3 letters of representation and a petition with 25 signatories has been received; chiefly from addresses in Nursery Close. A copy of the letter covering the petition is included within Appendix A below.

In addition a letter has been received from the Member of Parliament for Sittingbourne and Sheppey, Mr Gordon Henderson MP, who registers support for the above mentioned petition and requests assurances that ways are sought *'to address the understandable concerns of local residents about parking in the immediate area surrounding Richmond Primary School.'*

The key points raised within all representations received can be summarised as follows:

**Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School,  
Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

---

- Raises concern that over the last few years Richmond Primary School has undergone a major re-organisation, becoming a two form entry primary school with an additional nursery facility, resulting in a significant growth in pupil numbers, and in turn the level of traffic associated with the site.
- Points out that a recent OFSTED report highlights that the school is larger than the averaged sized primary school.
- Notes the volume of traffic associated with the school using a small residential road has increased significantly. Considers that Nursery Close is unable to cope with the existing traffic levels. Points out that residents are unable to move their cars on or off their drives during peak school travel times due to the volume of traffic and inconsiderate parking. With vehicles parked down one side of the road and bollards on the pavement on the other side it has become difficult to manoeuvre vehicles in the road.
- Notes other traffic pressures on the Close and surrounding roads include people attending the adjacent allotments off Nursery Close, 'dog walkers' accessing the canal bank via the Public Right of Way, students attending the Academy parking their cars, alongside all other deliveries to the school grounds, potentially including construction traffic.
- Notes the parking facilities within the school are not adequate to meet the school's needs resulting in staff parking on the public highway, particularly in Nursery Close.
- Asks that before any work to extend Richmond Primary School is carried out adequate car parking should be provided.
- Considers that there is insufficient space within the grounds to provide adequate additional parking facilities.
- Asks whether any traffic surveys have been carried following the increase in the size of the school?
- Raises concern that emergency vehicles will not be able to access Nursery Close or the School during peak travel times.
- Raises no objection to the development; however has great concern about parking outside the school. Notes that parents ignore no parking signs and road markings; double parking outside the school gates. Considers that parking fines would make some difference to a difficult situation.

Other considerations

- Raises concern about dog walkers, using Public Right of Way that links the Nursery Close to the canal, leaving dog mess in the footways.

**Discussion**

18. The application seeks planning permission for the creation of a single storey extension to provide 4 replacement classrooms, a small activity hall, an ICT room, library, small office and caretaker accommodation, storage and bathrooms. The proposal is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee as a result of objections received from nearby residents, raising concern about the volume of traffic generated in association with the school and its impact on surrounding residential roads (please see paragraph 17).

**Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School,  
Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

---

19. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (13) above. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore the proposal needs to be considered in the context of the Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity.
20. In my opinion, the key material planning considerations in this case can be summarised by the following:
- location and design considerations;
  - highway considerations (including impacts on Public Rights of Way); and
  - flood protection.

**Location and design considerations**

21. The Richmond Primary School grounds are located outside of the built confines of Sheerness, as defined in the Swale Borough Local Plan Proposals Map. The grounds also fall within an area identified at the edge of the urban settlement that is subject Local Plan Policy E7, which seeks to prevent encroachment on the openness of the countryside. As such any development proposed is subject to a number of Development Plan Policies that seek to protect the character and open nature of the countryside. The broad thrust of these policies presumes against development and seeks to preserve and/or enhance the countryside for its own sake, subject to a limited number of exceptional circumstances.
22. Swale Borough Local Plan Policies SP5, E7 and E9 seek to protect the countryside from unnecessary development and preserve the open character of the landscape. Policies SP1, SP5, E6 and C1 seek to support the provision of new and enhanced community services that increase self sufficiency and support local needs, subject to a high standard of design that responds positively to local characteristics. Policy E6 seeks to protect the character of the countryside, setting out that development will only be permitted that enables communities to meet there essential needs or provides necessary community infrastructure.
23. The application proposes to develop an extension to an existing school building that seeks to improve the accommodation and facilities provided by the school. The proposal aims to meet an established need for permanent accommodation for classes that are currently held in temporary buildings. On this basis, I am satisfied that the application would support the provision of an important local community service and as such would meet the circumstances set out within Development Plan Policies that would enable the consideration of a development outside the designated urban area.
24. The single storey extension would replace 2 large temporary buildings, permitted by the County Planning Authority in 2008 (under reference SW/08/351). These buildings are sited in an open location on the school playing field, east of the footprint of the school buildings. The extension is proposed north of the existing school buildings and as such would be largely screened from wider views on 3 sides by existing development on site and within the grounds of the adjacent Isle of Sheppey Academy. The proposed footprint is closer to the



## **Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

---

existing main school building than the mobile buildings it would replace, therefore reducing the spread of the built footprint on site. The proposed extension would be visible to the east, however due to existing landscaping, views from the Public Right of Way and Queenborough Lines would be limited and at a distance. From this direction the extension would be viewed in the context of the existing built development on site. Taking the above considerations into account, I am satisfied that the proposed extension would not have a significant impact on the open character of the landscape. Through the removal of the mobile buildings the proposal would reduce encroachment on the playing field, and in turn land designated as open countryside.

25. Notwithstanding the above, I consider that the design of the proposed extension, that includes use of a variety of materials, feature walls and a curved built form, would enhance the overall appearance of the school, adding visual interest whilst complementing the existing built development. The mobile buildings that would be replaced, by the nature of their design, are not considered to be appropriate for long term retention in this location. I note Swale Borough Council comments including the recommendation that submission of a landscape scheme be a condition of any planning permission. I am happy to support this recommendation and consider that the provision of appropriate landscape works will help to integrate the building into the surrounding environment.
26. I note English Heritage's comment that the proposed use of a bright yellow render to the feature walls would potentially increase the buildings visibility in the context of the adjacent Queenborough Lines, and support the recommendation that a more subtle colour should be selected. The applicant's agent has stated that *'the colour of the feature wall has not yet been confirmed but is intended to be a primary colour, providing focus and identity to the new entrance.'* Should the application be formally approved a condition requiring details of all external materials for approval would allow control over the colour scheme, ensuring that an appropriate choice is reflected in the final design.
27. In my opinion the design of the building would be of a standard that would enhance the character of the existing school buildings. Consequently, I am satisfied that the proposal, in terms of its location and design, would accord with the provisions of the Development Plan Policies in place.

### **Highway considerations**

28. The key objections to the application, raised by local residents, relate to traffic problems on the local highway network, and in particular Nursery Close; a narrow residential cul-de-sac that forms the main vehicle access route to the school grounds. The highway issues raised include access and manoeuvring problems within the Close created by the volume of traffic attempting to travel on and park in a small residential street. It should be noted that whilst the school undoubtedly adds a number of vehicle movements onto the local highway, particularly at peak school travel times, the school is not the only contributor to the issues highlighted. Letters received from residents note that people accessing the adjacent allotments and public footpath network add to the day to day traffic associated with the houses within the Close.

## **Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

---

29. The objections received highlight the changes to the school that took place in 2008, when the site was adapted from a middle school to a two form entry primary school as part of the reorganisation of the education system on the Isle of Sheppey. This change increased the staff and pupil numbers by 4 classes. Whilst these changes will have impacted on the number of people attending the site and potentially the vehicle movements associated with the school, these changes have long since been accepted and do not form part of this proposal. Should the current application be refused there would no reduction in numbers of people attending the site, the additional classes would continue to be accommodated within the mobile buildings at least until 2013.
30. The proposed development seeks to replace these mobile classrooms with suitable permanent accommodation and ancillary facilities to support the educational use. The proposal would not result in an increase in the current school roll; with the mobile classrooms being removed from site on completion of the extension should planning permission be granted.
31. The Divisional Transportation Manager was consulted on the application, and provided with copies of all the representations received from nearby residents. I note that he raises no objection to the application, subject to conditions covering the submission of details of contractor's parking and associated facilities during construction, precautions to prevent the deposit of mud on the highway, and the provision of the cycle parking shown in the application. He concludes that, *'With the same number of staff and pupils attending the school, vehicle movements and parking will remain as existing, so there will be no adverse impact upon the highway. Therefore, whilst residents may have issues with the amount of traffic and parking that currently takes place within the Close, it would be unreasonable to refuse this application on highway grounds.'*
32. On the basis that the number of staff and pupils would remain the same it would be difficult to sustain a material planning objection to the application on highway grounds, or justify a requirement for any substantial contribution to improvements to the existing highway arrangements on the back of this proposal.
33. Notwithstanding this, the School were made aware of the concerns being raised and has replied on the highway issues (please see paragraphs 9-12). It is clear from the response that the School are aware of the problems experienced by local residents and are committed to help improve the traffic congestion connected to the site where practicable. The response sets out a planned expansion to the car parking within the school grounds that is due to take place independent from this application. The proposal is to provide additional overflow car parking for 27 vehicles in the near future; well in advance of the proposed extension should this be afforded planning permission. The additional capacity would be created by laying grass reinforcement mesh to provide additional parking spaces adjacent to the existing car park. This work would be carried out under the School's permitted development rights and as such does not require express planning permission. In addition to this the County Planning Authority has also recently received a separate planning application to resurface the existing car park and an adjacent area with tarmacadam to provide formal parking facilities. This application formalises 7 of the additional 27 spaces referred to above.

**Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School,  
Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

---

34. Swale Borough Local Plan Policy T3 seeks new development to provide appropriate off-street vehicle parking in accordance with Kent Vehicle Parking Standards. Whilst this guidance note fell away with the County Council's Structure Plan in 2009 the provisions are still widely accepted as good practice. The parking standards provide a clear steer on the maximum number of spaces that should be provided in connection with a Primary School, in line with Government guidance that parking should be kept to a minimum so as not to encourage unsustainable patterns of travel. In this particular instance the maximum provision for a site of this size would be approximately 55 spaces. The school currently provides approximately 20 parking spaces on site. The extended car parking facilities, to be provided under permitted development rights, would bring the total to 47 spaces within the school grounds.
35. In addition to the improvements to the vehicle parking on site, the Head Teacher has confirmed that the School's Travel Plan will be reviewed by the School's Governors in the New Year. The Plan aims to improve highway safety, reduce car dependency, reduce congestion around the school and encourage more sustainable modes of transport. The Travel Plan process represents the best option to influence peoples travel choices by helping to facilitate more sustainable travel options. The School is unable to control people's travel choices, however by raising awareness of the issues and problems created, and working towards set aims for the site, it can help to ease the conflicts.
36. In my opinion the proposed improvements to on site car parking coupled with a continued commitment to the School Travel Plan process will help to ease the traffic congestion highlighted by local residents. I wholly support the Divisional Transportation Manager's recommendation that, should permission be granted, conditions covering details of the contractor's parking and operational space are provided for approval, precautions to prevent mud on the highway are provided on site during construction and that the cycle parking indicated in the application is provided. On the basis of the above considerations, I would not raise a planning objection to the proposals on highway grounds.

**Flood protection**

37. The school grounds fall within an area of increased risk of flooding from the sea (Flood Zone 3 – 1 in 200 or greater annual probability). As the statutory consultee the Environment Agency raises no objection to the application, subject to conditions relating to the submission of a scheme of flood resilience measures and details of surface water drainage.
38. The Agency notes that the development lies within Flood Zone 3a, however, given the site is already in use as a school and the proposals would not significantly increase the number of pupils in attendance, the Agency considers there would be no increase in the vulnerability of the users of the site from flooding (particularly as the building is intended to replace temporary structures).
39. On the basis of the Agency's recommendations and subject to conditions recommended, I am satisfied that the proposed development would represent an opportunity to improve the flood resilience of the school through the removal of temporary structures.

## **Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

---

### **Conclusion**

40. In conclusion, I consider that the proposed extension would be an acceptable addition to the school buildings; the design is of a high standard that would enhance the visual appearance of the existing development on site. The footprint of the extension is close to the existing buildings and the proposal would replace existing mobile buildings that are sited further into the school's playing field. On this basis I am satisfied that the application would maintain the open character of the location and would be an acceptable development on land designated as countryside. The application would not result in an increase in the number of people attending the site and would therefore not materially change/ add to any highway congestion associated with the site.
41. I am satisfied that the application accords with the relevant Development Plan Policies in place, and therefore recommend that planning permission be granted subject to conditions set out below.

### **Recommendation**

42. I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO the imposition of conditions covering (amongst other matters) the following:
- submission of a scheme of flood resilience measures;
  - submission of a scheme for the disposal of surface waters;
  - submission of details of external materials;
  - submission of a landscaping scheme and measures to ensure the scheme is successfully implemented;
  - submission of details of contractors compound, parking and associated facilities during construction;
  - precautions to prevent the deposit of mud on the highway;
  - hours of operation during construction work;
  - provision of the cycle parking shown in the application; and
  - removal of the mobile buildings within 1 month of first occupation of the extension.

### Informatives

- that the school ensure that the flood evacuation plan for the site is adapted to include the extension;
- recommending that the School Travel Plan is subject to ongoing monitoring and review.

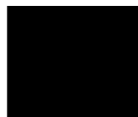
Case Officer: James Bickle	Tel. no: 01622 221068
----------------------------	-----------------------

Background Documents: see section heading
---

# **Single storey extension at Richmond Primary School, Nursery Close, Sheerness - SW/10/1377**

## **Appendix A – Letter covering petition received from residents of Nursery Close, including 25 signatures.**

2nd, November 2010



ACK	
LEAFLET SENT	

Dear Sir/Madam,

Reference your letter PAG/SW/10/TEMP/0038 dated 26<sup>th</sup>. October 2010 - a letter that only some in the neighbourhood were aware of.

Having lived in Nursery Close, Sheerness since before the school in question was built we have seen the ever increasing problems that are arriving.

Before any work to extend Richmond Primary School is carried out the first consideration must be to provide an adequate car park. At the moment Nursery Close is the recognised car park and there are already problems for us who live here. There has been the problem of parents parking across private drive ways whilst they go to the school to collect their children, add this to 'dog walkers' leaving cars in Nursery Close before taking the short cut to the Canal bank.

Nursery Close is a very small street embracing just 23 houses and is used by the gardeners who need to get on the adjoining allotments. The allotments are thriving which means a few more cars using up valuable space. Deliveries to the existing school have regularly churned up the pavement on one side and to combat this the council have set metal bollards into the pavement making it very difficult to reverse a car into one's own driveway.

Nursery Close is the main thoroughfare for not only its residents but for parents picking up their children, dog walkers, allotment holders, school teachers and delivery vehicles (often HGV) so if any extension or addition is to be made to the existing Primary School car parking must be made a priority.

Any increase in the size of the school must go hand in glove with an increase in traffic including the notable increase in students from the academy driving their own car adding further to the problem.

Nursery Close cannot cope now with the traffic. At times with cars already parked on one side of the road and the bollards on the other it becomes difficult to manoeuvre your own car on to your own drive way. Any further increase will surely have an affect on ambulances and fire engines should the need arise.

We are rate payers helping to finance the proposed work and because of this work we will probably be taking away the right to be able to park our cars in the vicinity of our home. If the planners deem it necessary to increase the size of Richmond Primary School then that is fine, but don't stop there, include an adequate car park to compliment the increase.

Yours faithfully  
Mr. and Mrs. B. Payne



For and on behalf of other residents. See attached.

Copy to Mr. Gordon Henderson MP.

