

**Hairdressing Unit for use by Pent Valley Technology College Students at Morehall Primary School, Folkestone – SH/09/440**

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 14 July 2009.

Application by Pent Valley Technology College for conversion of existing bicycle shed for vocational hairdressing unit for use of Pent Valley Technology College students studying hair and beauty at Morehall Primary School, Chart Road, Folkestone – SH/09/440

Recommendation: Planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Member: Mr T. Prater

Classification: Unrestricted

**Site**

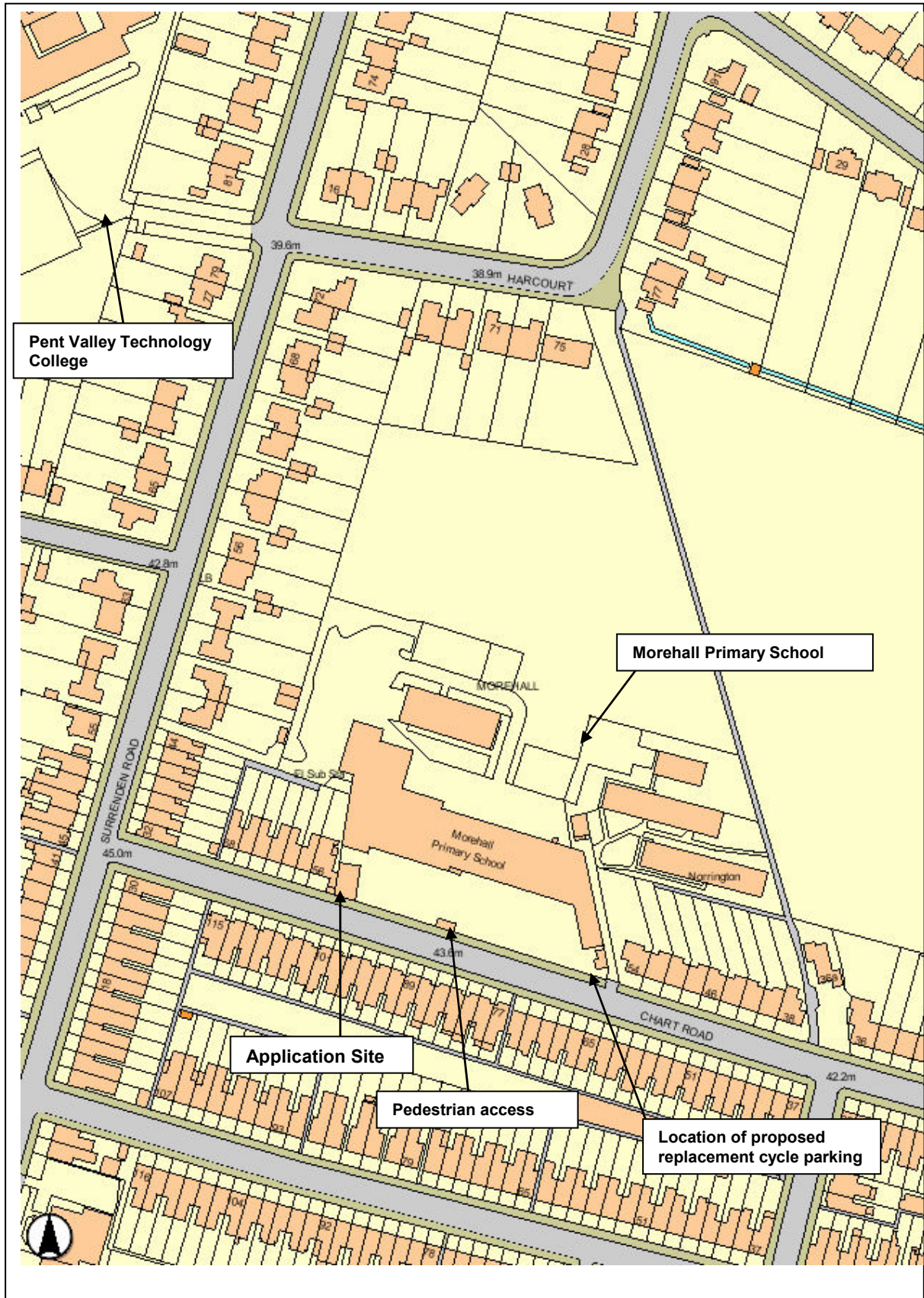
1. Morehall Primary School is located off Chart Road, within a residential area of Folkestone. The school is a community primary that caters for approximately 280 children aged 4 – 11 years. The application site forms a large single storey brick built cycle shelter, open on two sides with a pitched roof. The building is located within a playground directly adjoining Chart Road; pedestrian access is through the existing school gates across a playground. The western wall of the cycle shelter is attached to a garage serving the adjacent residential property. The main Morehall School building is set back from the public highway to the north of the application site; residential property on Chart Road adjoins and faces the site to the west and south. *A site location plan is attached below.*
2. There are no site-specific Development Plan Policies identified in connection with the application site.

**Background / Planning History**

3. The application has been made on behalf of Pent Valley Technology College, which is located approximately 200m to the north-west of the site on Surrenden Road. Pent Valley Technology College is a Foundation Secondary School for pupils aged 11-18 years and accommodates approximately 1300 children.
4. The recent planning history for the Morehall School site includes permission to site a new Children's Centre to the rear of the main school under planning reference SH/07/1646, and provision for canopies over the rear school playground under reference SH/08/477.

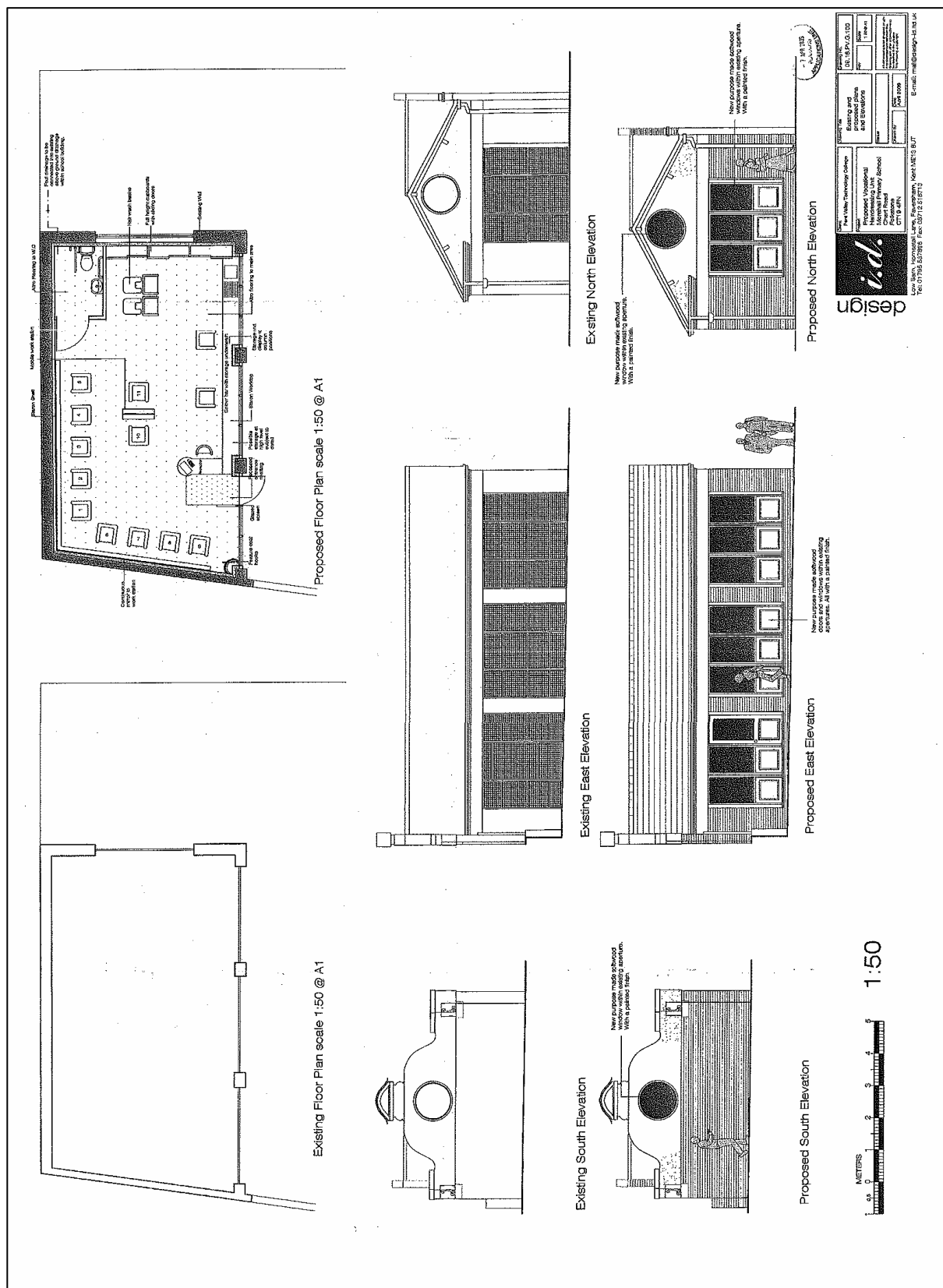
**Item D5**

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**Site Location Plan – Morehall Primary School**  
Scale 1:2500

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| <p><b>i.d.</b><br/>Low Burn, International Lane, Epsom, Surrey, Middlesex, Surrey, S18 7LQ<br/>Tel: 01753 650917 Fax: 01753 650910 Email: mail@idesign-uk.com</p> |  | <p>Client: Pent Valley Technology College<br/>Project: Hairdressing Unit<br/>Location: Morehall Primary School<br/>Folkestone, Kent<br/>CT19 4AN<br/>Date: 10/09/09<br/>Scale: 1:50<br/>Drawing: 1 of 1</p> |
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#### **Proposal**

5. The application has been submitted on behalf of Pent Valley Technology College and proposes the formation of a satellite teaching facility at Morehall Primary School. The proposed facility would be formed by conversion of an existing outbuilding within the Morehall School grounds. The single storey building is brick built with a pitched roof, open on two elevations, and measures approximately 6m by 10.5m by 5m high. The structure is located to the front of Morehall School and is currently used for cycle parking and general storage.
6. The proposal is to create a vocational hair and beauty training unit for use by Pent Valley Technical College students. This would support the College's aspirations to provide practical education to the local area. The training unit would offer facilities to accommodate a maximum of 11 students together with a staff member and hairdressing models as appropriate. There is no car parking provision proposed in association with the application. The applicant states that the facility would be within 2 minutes walk of the main Pent Valley Campus where car parking is available. The application confirms that the unit would be for the sole use of the College between the hours of 0830 and 1600.
7. The application states that the proposed conversion would prevent an attractive building from falling into a further state of disrepair and would prolong its effective life. The proposed work would not change the building structurally, only repair the damage and infill the existing openings with panelling and glazed units. The materials that would be used for the conversion and repair are proposed to be sympathetic to the character of the original building, including new purpose built softwood doors and windows with panel finish, and replacement of roof covering with natural slate.
8. The application also includes replacement cycle storage facilities capable of holding up to 10 bikes. This facility would cater for Morehall School along with the vocational hairdressing unit, and is to be located at the opposite end of the adjacent playground.  
*Please see attached location plan*

#### **Additional information provided by the applicant**

9. In response to comments raised during the consultation process the applicant has provided the following information in support of their application:

*'The vehicle generation would be negligible. Pent Valley students mostly walk to school and the age of the students that would attend the hairdressing unit are under driving age so are unlikely to be parking outside the site. In terms of the hairdressing models – they are likely to be local family members or other students all of whom live close by and would be unlikely to be driving in. We will advise students and models not to park locally.'*

#### **Planning Policy**

10. The Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to consideration of the application:
  - (i) The adopted 2009 **South East Plan**: the most relevant Regional Planning Policies are:

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**SP3** (Urban Focus and Urban Renaissance), **CC1** (Sustainable Development), **CC6** (Sustainable Communities and Character of the Environment), **T4** (Parking), **BE1** (Management for an Urban Renaissance), **S3** (Education and Skills) and **S6** (Community Infrastructure).

(ii) The adopted 2006 **Shepway District Local Plan – Saved Policies:**

**Policy SD1** – All development proposals should take account of the broad aim of sustainable development, including reducing the need to travel, especially by car, maintain and improve the character and vitality of the built environment, and safeguarding and enhance the amenity of residents.

**Policy BE1** – Seeks a high standard of layout, design and choice of materials that accords with existing development in the locality. Development with an element of public use will be assessed as to their provision for access for disabled persons in respect of site layout and the relationship between buildings and their car parking areas and other public access points.

**Policy SC2** – Supports new or improved social and community facilities where the proposal would be compatible with the surrounding land uses, are acceptable in highway, infrastructure and environmental terms, accessible by a range of transport alternatives, and adequate provision for access for disabled persons.

**Policy TR5** – Seeks provision of secure and practically located facilities for cyclists.

**Policy TR12** – New development will only be permitted if it makes provision for off street parking on or near the site. These standards may be varied where the location is well served by public transport and there would be no adverse effect on road safety or traffic management.

**Consultations**

11. **Shepway District Council** – No objection to the proposal.

**Divisional Transportation Manager** – No objection to the proposal and offers the following comment:

*'The proposed hairdressing unit is to train students in hairdressing and will not operate in the same manner as a retail shop. It is not clear if the models are to be taken from the existing college students or if models will visit the site from outside. I take on board the points relating to parking problems (received from a near by resident) but visitors to this unit are unlikely to coincide with parents picking up and dropping off to the school and the nursery. The site is a short walk from excellent public transport routes with up to 9 bus services using Cheriton Road. Chart Road is wide enough to accommodate on street parking along both sides of the carriageway whilst still maintaining a through way for traffic on both directions. Traffic regulation orders exist on the carriageway outside of the school preventing parking in the vicinity of the entrance. It is apparent that during the day some capacity exists on street for additional vehicles to park and that congestion only generally presents a problem at the start and end of the school day, as with most school sites.*

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*In view of the above I do not consider it necessary for further parking to be provided for the proposed use other than cycle parking and do not wish to recommend the application for refusal.'*

**Local Members**

12. Mr. T Prater, the local County Member for Folkestone West was notified of the application on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

**Publicity**

13. The application was publicised by the posting of a site notice and the notification of 34 neighbouring residential properties.

**Representations**

14. Two letters of representation commenting on the application has been received from local residents. One was subsequently withdrawn after further negotiation between the applicant and the local resident. The main points raised can be summarised as follows:

- Considers that the facilities are unnecessary as South Kent College offers a vocational hair dressing course;
- Considers that there is space available to provide the proposed facilities with an existing Pent Valley College annex;
- Considers the building would be repaired in due course and does not need converting to ensure its long term retention;
- Considers that the windows proposed should be UPVC to match the school, should not open out, should be smaller in size and tinted for privacy.
- Concerns that the security of Morehall Primary School would be compromised given the building would be accessed across a school playground;
- Considers Morehall Primary would lose facilities and play space if the building were to be converted, which would be to the detriment of the pupils.

**Discussion**

15. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, this 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. In considering this proposal the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (10) above are particularly relevant.

16. In my opinion, the main determining issues relate to the following points:

- location;
- design and visual appearance;
- highway related considerations;
- security; and
- the need for the development.

17. The application seeks planning permission to convert an existing brick built cycle store within the grounds of Morehall Primary to provide a new satellite vocational training

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facility for Pent Valley Technology College students, a secondary school located in the surrounding community. The application is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee as a result of the views expressed by a nearby local resident, as identified in paragraph (14) above.

**Location**

18. Comments received from nearby residents include concerns that the proposed location would not be the most appropriate for the teaching unit. The objections received note that the proposal would displace storage facilities available to the Primary School and potentially reduce the available play area, alongside concerns over site security and traffic generation, amongst other matters, which are dealt with in more detail below.
19. South East Plan Policy SP3 seeks proposals that are consistent with the principles of sustainable development; Policies BE1 and S3 seek to improve the built environment by ensuring the provision of community infrastructure in accessible locations, including learning facilities that encourage wider participation and mixed use. Shepway Local Plan Policy SD1 seeks sustainable development that reduces the need to travel, improves the built environment and safeguards local amenities. Local Plan Policy SC2 supports community facilities where compatible with surrounding land uses.
20. One letter of objection received from a local resident suggests that there is potentially space to provide the proposed facilities within an existing Pent Valley College site that would prevent the need to convert the cycle shelter. I note that the County Council is required to determine the application as proposed and would need to consider the merits or otherwise surrounding the location put forward in the application. Pent Valley College have noted the alternate location suggested by the resident, a former nursery building. The College comment that the building is an old modular structure (which includes asbestos) that would require substantial investment to bring it up to a usable state of repair and would not provide a permanent solution for the proposed facility.
21. The proposed location within an existing brick building would offer a permanent solution to provide for the facilities, albeit away from the main college campus. The distance between the two schools is several hundred metres, i.e. easy walking distance. In my opinion the proposed location would be acceptable; its close proximity to the college would not generate an increase need to travel allowing users' easy access to the facilities provided by the main campus.
22. It is noted that the building is in relatively close proximity to neighbouring residential properties; set within the Morehall School's playground, approximately 1 metre below the level of the adjacent public highway. The application would not extend the floorspace; purely change the use of the structure from storage to teaching space by upgrading the building. The windows proposed within the various elevations would not overlook residential property, primarily facing school grounds.
23. The proposed teaching unit would cater for approximately 11 pupils at any one time. Whilst the building is close to residential property, taking into account the nature of the proposed use, the building's location within an existing school site, and that the unit would be used only within normal school hours, in my opinion, this use would not result in unacceptable impacts on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.
24. I consider the proposed location would be acceptable for a new teaching unit. The facilities would be within an existing urban area on an established education site that is well served by public transport and within easy walking distance of a large catchment area.

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The facilities, whilst away from the main college campus, would be easily accessible from this site. I am satisfied that the development of this location for the proposed use would not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding land uses. Subject to further consideration of design, highways, security and need for the development below, I judge the application to be acceptable in terms of the relevant Development Plan Policies as set out above, and would not raise objection to its location.

**Design and appearance**

25. South East Plan Policies SP3, CC3 and BE1 all seek new development that is well designed, respects and/or enhances the character of the existing built environment. Shepway District Local Plan Policy BE1 seeks a high standard of design and quality of materials that takes account of existing built development in the surrounding area.
26. The application proposes relatively minor changes to the exterior of the cycle shelter; this includes the infill of open elevations to the north and east with wood panelling and glazed units, replacement of the roof materials with natural slate and the creation of high level circular windows within existing architecture features on the north and south elevations.
27. Whilst the building is not listed, the structure does have some architectural merit, and forms part of the character of the school within the street scene. The proposed alterations would use a high quality of materials allowing a natural finish. The materials proposed would, in my opinion, enhance the visual appearance of the building and surroundings. I note the comments received from a nearby resident concerning the type of windows proposed, I would not recommend the use of UPVC windows as they would look out of keeping with the building itself and would not enhance the character of the structure. The size and arrangement of the window openings proposed would, in my opinion, enhance the visual appearance of the elevations, and are acceptable in that they would not impact on privacy afforded to residential properties.
28. It is therefore considered that the proposed external alterations to the building would be appropriate in terms of the Development Plan Policies in place, enhancing the visual appearance of the building, and preserving the character of the surrounding built environment.

**Highway considerations**

29. Initially, concerns were raised by one local resident regarding the potential highway impacts of the redevelopment of the cycle shelter as a teaching unit. The comments raised note the traffic generated by Morehall Primary School and the car parking issues surrounding the site. I note that following further clarification of the proposals by the applicant these objections were subsequently withdrawn by the local resident.
30. The South East Plan seeks new development to adopt a constraint based maximum level of car parking for non-residential uses, encouraging integration with public transport and provision of cycle parking. Policies TR5 and TR12 of the Shepway Local Plan seek new development to include suitable cycle and off-street car parking on or near the site. Policy TR12 states that the car parking standards maybe varied where the location is well served by public transport and would have no impact on highway safety and traffic management.
31. It is noted that the application does not include provision for off-street car parking at the Morehall School site, which has its own car parking provision to the rear of the school



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grounds. The site is well served by public transport and the footpath network, positioned within the community it would serve. The applicant states that the new teaching unit would have easy access to car parking provided on the Pent Valley College site. The comments received from the applicant also note that the pupils that would be taught in the unit are below driving age, with the majority of pupils attending the college living in the local area and walking to school. The proposed facility would employ one member of staff and there would be an intermittent need for models for the pupils to practice their skills on. The College note that the models are likely to be members of pupils' families or volunteers from the community that live locally. The applicant has confirmed that they would advise visitors to avoid using private transport and not to park on the road outside Morehall Primary School if they do travel by car.

32. From officer observations when visiting the site, it is noted that whilst there are a number of vehicles parked on the public highway during a week day, which would be expected on a road with terraced housing, despite any parking associated with the school there would appear to be adequate space available to park in the immediate vicinity. It is appreciated that at the beginning and end of the school day, due to the number of people arriving at one time, there is bound to be congestion on the highway for limited periods, in a similar manner to most other schools in the County. However, I do not consider that the proposed development would have any discernable impact on the existing pattern of congestion.
33. The application includes cycle parking to replace that lost by the conversion of the existing shelter. This provision would allow for 10 replacement cycle parking spaces to serve the site provided at the opposite end of the school playground to the front of the site.
34. Taking into consideration the size of the teaching unit proposed (69m<sup>2</sup>), which due to the practical nature of the subject being taught would only accommodate approximately 11 pupils, I would not expect there to be any unacceptable increase in the levels of traffic arising from the application. The proposals state that off-street parking would be available within the Pent Valley Technology College within walking distance of the site. As a result, I am satisfied that the transport implications of the development of the site comply with the Development Plan Policies in place, and I raise no objection to the application on highway grounds.

**Site security**

35. One comment received from a nearby resident raises concern that the provision of a secondary school teaching facility within a primary school site would compromise security. Anyone attending the unit would require access to the school via a main pedestrian route off Chart Road; this passes across one of the School's playgrounds in front of the main building.
36. It is noted that the security implications of this arrangement is likely to be down to school management of the site. Morehall Primary School has not raised any specific concerns and has agreed to the use of the facility, subject to a planning permission. I note that the playground that would be affected is to the front of the site and is only used by pupils when under appropriate supervision. The situation would not materially change from the existing arrangements, in that the gates are kept unlocked and visitors to the school already access the school buildings from this direction. The location has good surveillance by the School, and staff in the proposed vocational unit would be able to monitor the entire route from within the building. In my opinion, the changes to the use of the site would not substantially change or compromise the existing security

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arrangements in place, and would not allow direct access to more sensitive areas of the school. I therefore do not raise an objection to the application on security grounds.

**Need for the development**

37. The objections received to the application from a local resident also raised the question of the need for the teaching facility, particularly given that South Kent College already offers a vocational hairdressing course in the area. The application states that the facility is being proposed to support the curriculum at Pent Valley in order to add to the practical education provide by the Technical College. The applicant has looked into the possibility of buying in external services to provide the training course. However, the applicant state that the courses available would not coincide with the training the School wishes to offer, nor are there sufficient places available to accommodate Pent Valley students. Any course would still need to accord with the School's timetables, as pupils taking the course(s) would still be required to attend lessons in the college in order to cover the essentials of the curriculum.
38. The application is supported by South East Plan Policy S3 that seeks to ensure adequate provision of learning facilities and widen participation through better accessibility. I also consider that the proposal accords with Shepway Local Plan Policy SC2 which supports new community facilities subject to being compatible with existing land uses, being acceptable in highway terms, with accessibility to a range of transport alternatives. In my opinion the applicant has established a need for the development which would not be unacceptable in the location proposed.

**Conclusion**

39. In weighing the considerations set out above, I consider that the proposed development would be a suitable use of the application site and would not result in an unacceptable impact on the surrounding residential properties, either through increase in activity within the Morehall School grounds or through any traffic generated by the proposal. The design of the proposed alterations to the building would enhance the built environment improving the visual impact of the school grounds on Chart Road. Therefore subject to the conditions set out below, I recommend that planning permission be granted for the development.

**Recommendation**

40. I RECOMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO conditions, including the following:
- the development to be commenced within 3 years;
  - the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
  - the development to be constructed using the materials detailed in the application; and
  - provision of replacement cycle parking;

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| Case officer – James Bickle | 01622 221068 |
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| Background documents - See section heading |
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