

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

The report by the Head of Planning Applications Unit to Planning Application Committee on 14 December 2004

TM/04/3340 – Application by Kent County Council and the Kent Education Partnership for the demolition of the existing school and provision of new school buildings together with car parking areas, landscaping and temporary mobile classrooms, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford.

Recommendation: Permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Member: Mr G Rowe

Classification: Unrestricted

1. This application was the subject of a Members' site meeting on 9 November 2004 and the Council Secretariat's minutes of that meeting are included in Appendix 1.

**Site**

2. The school has a site area of 5.7 hectares and a frontage of approximately 180m to Teapot Lane, Aylesford, from which it gains its vehicular and pedestrian access. It occupies a position within the residential areas of Aylesford and Ditton between M20 motorway, 100m to the north, and A20, 200m to the south. Aylesford County Primary School adjoins much of the southern boundary, otherwise the school is surrounded by residential development of largely semi-detached houses dating primarily from the 1930s to the 1960s. The western part of the site is largely open playing fields adjoined by the rear gardens of adjacent houses, while the school buildings currently occupy the eastern half of the site fronting Teapot Lane, with residential properties facing and adjoining. The site is included within the urban area confines on the adopted Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan Proposals Map. The nearest Conservation Area is Holt Wood south of A20.
3. Teapot Lane is a cul-de-sac with a junction to A20, but additional access routes are available through residential areas to the east via Elm Walk (currently traffic calmed). A footbridge over M20 connects pedestrians to Station Road at Aylesford rail station, and there is a pedestrian link westward through Robson Drive.
4. The topography of the area is flat and the site is not generally visible from surrounding roads and footpaths or in wider public views. Boundary trees and shrubs are visible in gaps through the houses.

**Background**

5. KCC has embarked on a programme of upgrading the range and quality of its secondary school accommodation over the next few years, on a scale not seen for several decades. It could ultimately involve over 100 schools. In most cases this will involve demolition of existing inadequate or unsuitable buildings and/or those incapable of cost-effective adaptation, and in some cases relocation to a new site.

**Item D2**

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school,  
Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

---

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

---

6. Six schools form the first tranche of this scheme of major building works, to be carried out under the KCC Private Finance Initiative Scheme (PFI). All six schools suffer from inadequate accommodation in ageing and outdated buildings. They will be largely redeveloped within their existing sites, although one or two of the more recent buildings will be retained and adapted. The aim is to provide in each case a high quality new/refurbished school to meet the needs of the modern curriculum, including any specialist status enjoyed or aspired to by the schools, and to promote Adult Education and Life Long Learning for the benefit of the community.
7. KCC is progressing this work with a private sector provider, known collectively as the Kent Education Partnership. Since KCC continues to have a significant interest in the short term provision, the medium term management and the long term inheritance of these schools, the planning applications are to be determined by the County Planning Authority.
8. Aylesford School is an 11-19 co-educational Foundation School with a capacity for up to 1000 pupils including up to 100 sixth form students. A total of 98 staff includes 69 teaching staff. The site was originally acquired by Kent Education Committee in the 1920's as a primary school but later became a secondary school, expanding in a piecemeal fashion. The existing sports hall was permitted in 1979, and the most recent permanent building, the technology block which is to be retained, in 1993. In 2003, mobile classrooms were permitted to replace several condemned huts.

**Proposal**

9. The proposal involves an almost complete replacement of the existing school buildings, many of which are in need of significant updating or replacement. The existing school has a mixture of buildings of various ages including a proliferation of hutted classrooms spread across the site. It is intended to retain and convert the existing, relatively modern, technology block (1176 sq m). All other buildings will be demolished except for the caretaker's house in the southeast corner of the site. The new 9243 sq m school would be built further back into the site, partly on an open part of the site currently a central grassed recreation area and partly on the site of mobiles.
10. Grass playing pitch areas occupying the western portion of the site would be retained. An indicative site, currently occupied by hard landscaping, is shown for further grassed playing pitch on land which is currently hard surface play areas. A new multi-use games area would be provided near the northern perimeter of the site, on the site of two former buildings. Proposed new buildings include a sports hall and gymnasium. No Artificial Turf Pitches or floodlighting are included in the application.

**Landscaping**

11. A landscaping plan has been submitted with the application. Most of the trees on the site are to be retained, with the exception of a small part of a group enclosed by the existing main buildings and a few on the site of the new sports hall. There are no existing Tree Preservation Orders. New planting is proposed in the spaces between the learning barns.
12. The applicant has also submitted separate assessments of archaeology, ecology and a report on the herpetofauna surveys that have been undertaken.

**Item D2**

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school,  
Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

---

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**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school,  
Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

---

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

---

13. The front part of the site on Teapot Lane is shown as an open green landscaped area to a depth of some 30m. This area is marked as 'Possible Enabling Development at a later stage'.

**Access, Parking and Circulation**

14. To the rear of this frontage area, a new internal access road is shown, with coach and car drop-off lay-by, parallel to Teapot Lane and close to the front of the new building complex. Entrance and egress to Teapot Lane remain at their present locations.
15. A new car parking area of approximately 50 spaces is to be located on the southern boundary, close to the main school entrance to reduce vehicular movements through the site. An additional car park of approximately 40 spaces is located to the rear of the retained technology block near the northern boundary. New car parking areas are thus set deeper into the site, replacing the current amorphous areas of tarmac, and allowing separation of pedestrian and vehicular circulation. A site is indicated for a cycle/motorcycle store, but details are not available as yet.
16. The applicants have submitted a Transport Assessment as part of the application. It is proposed that a School Travel Plan will be submitted prior to the completion of the new school. Teapot Lane already incorporates a segregated footway/cycleway connecting with on A20. Public transport links are nearby.

**Buildings**

17. The design of the new school follows the concept adopted for all six current PFI proposals, adapted to the particular requirements of the school and the constraints of the site. The stated aim of the design is to provide contemporary new buildings and a compact form, together with clearly defined circulation routes, which will reduce pupil movements between lessons and any associated disruption. The basic layout comprises three 'learning barns' linked at their western end by covered walkways to the sports halls, the assembly hall and main entrance. The latter is intended to provide an attractive entrance to the school. The learning barns will be oriented with gable ends of the buildings facing the street, which will minimise their impact from the surrounding areas.
18. Materials include a combination of brickwork, profiled aluminium cladding, and render, with aluminium windows. Detailed design features include a selected number of coloured window panes and the cladding line along the elevations will vary in level. Open canopies and walkways will be provided between the buildings. The roofs will be constructed with a shallow fall to minimise the building height and allow suitable drainage, and will not be generally visible from ground level or surrounding buildings. Fixed galvanised brises soleil above the windows provide shading. For activities best conducted outside but in connection with a classroom lesson, covered outdoor spaces are provided at the end of each learning barn, where an external staircase is located.
19. The applicants state that siting has been influenced by:
- phasing difficulties caused by the large number of temporary classrooms on the site;
  - background noise from M20 motorway;
  - traffic congestion due in part to proximity of the adjacent primary school;
  - a desire to retain some of the more attractive features of the existing site such as the courtyards between the huts, and to increase activity outside between lessons;

**Item D2**

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school,  
Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

---

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

---

- the intention to continue to provide and encourage the use of community facilities to respond to the needs of local businesses and the workforce;
- the school's Sports College status.

**Community use of the school**

20. The school has recently been accredited as a specialist sports college and it is desired to increase the prestige of Aylesford School as a venue for more regional competitions. The proposed layout has a new sports hall and gymnasium at the heart of the campus, visible from the main entrance, with easy access for third parties from the dedicated reception. A viewing terrace overlooking the playing fields has been incorporated above the changing rooms. This could be used for large sporting events including countywide competitions. The courtyard next to the gymnasium is intended to contain a 'show' tennis and netball court, with a covered walkway providing a grandstand-type viewing area.
21. A learning resource centre and conference room are located above the feature entrance area designed to attract local businesses to use the school facilities

**Phasing of construction**

22. The position of the new buildings partly on a greenfield recreation area and partly on the site of temporary classrooms etc. is evidently influenced by the need to allow continued functioning of the school during construction. It is intended to provide temporary accommodation within the western part of the site during Phase 1 of construction. An indicative site for this (on existing hard play areas) is shown on the site plan, but details of the number and precise location of classrooms are reserved for later approval. The phasing allows for the retention of the main school buildings until Phase 2 when demolition can be carried out on completion of the new buildings.

**Planning Policy**

23. The Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to consideration of the application:

(i) The adopted 1996 **Kent Structure Plan**:

Policy S1 Seeks sustainable patterns and forms of development.

Policy S2 Seeks to conserve and enhance the quality of Kent's environment.

Policy S9 Has regard for the need for community facilities and services, including education.

Policy ENV2 Seeks to conserve and enhance Kent's landscape and wildlife.

Policy ENV15 New development should be well designed and respect its setting.

Policy ENV16 Seeks to balance the best use of land in built-up areas against the objective of maintaining and where possible improving, urban environmental quality.

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

---

Policy ENV1 Important archaeological sites should be protected and where possible enhanced. Where development would affect an archaeological site preservation in situ or investigation and recording will normally be sought.

Policy ENV20 Requires development to be planned and designed so as to avoid or minimise pollution impacts.

Policy NR3/4 Governs development in relation to groundwater and surface water resources

Policy T17 Development will normally be required to provide for vehicle parking on site in accordance with Kent County Council's Vehicle Parking Standards.

ii) The Deposit 2003 **Kent Structure Plan:**

Policy SP1 Seeks to protect and enhance the environment and achieve a sustainable pattern and form of development.

Policy E3 Seeks to conserve and enhance Kent's landscape and wildlife habitats

Policy E8 Seeks to protect, maintain and enhance important wildlife habitats.

Policy QL1 Development should be well designed and respect its setting. It should also incorporate sustainable construction techniques.

Policy QL8 Seeks to protect and enhance important archaeological sites and their settings. Where important or potentially important archaeological remains may exist, developers will be required to arrange for archaeological assessment and/or field evaluation to be carried out in advance of determination of planning applications.

Policy QL12 Seeks to protect existing community services. Flexibility in the use of buildings for mixed community uses and the concentration of sports facilities at schools, will be encouraged.

Policy QL13 Seeks to accommodate local community services within new residential, commercial and mixed use developments.

Policy TP19 Development proposals must comply with the respective vehicle parking policies and standards adopted by Kent County Council.

Policy NR4 Requires development to be planned and designed so as to avoid or minimise pollution impacts.

Policy NR7 Development will not be permitted where it would give rise to an unacceptable impact on the quality or yield of Kent's watercourses, coastal waters and/or ground water resources.

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

---

iii) The adopted 1998 **Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan:**

Policy P3/8 Development in relation to the loss of trees and the provision of replacement planting

Policy 3/11 Seeks appropriate surveys to be undertaken and advice to be sought where land may be contaminated and where surface and groundwater resources may be at risk

Policy P3/14 Seeks to protect surface and groundwater resources

Policy 3/16 Development will not be permitted where outputs from the proposed use would have an unacceptable adverse effect on the air/land or water quality of the area.

Policy P3/17 Governs development in relation to noise – minimising impact through design and positioning of buildings.

Policy P3/18 Governs the impact of lighting in development.

Policy P3/19 Ensuring energy efficiency through building design

Policy P4/3 Governs development in relation to sites of archaeological significance.

Policy P4/11 New development should be of high quality design and appropriate in terms of density, scale, layout, siting, form, mass, and impact on the surrounding area. It should also provide for personal and vehicle security.

Policy P7/18 Expects new development to make satisfactory provision for the off-street parking of vehicles in accordance with the adopted Vehicle Parking Standards

Policy P8/1 Seeks to permit developments where it can be demonstrated that the service and community infrastructure necessary to the development is available.

**Consultations**

**24. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council:**

Raises no objections subject to the following matters being covered:

- Submission of a school travel plan;
- Submission of an archaeological programme of works;
- Submission of a programme of construction works, traffic movements and timings;
- Further studies and mitigation works to be carried out as detailed by the ecological survey and the herpetofauna survey;
- The football pitch and the all weather pitch being transposed;
- Involving the Borough Council's Director of Leisure in detailed discussions with regard to the community access for the sports facilities proposed;

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

---

- Full consideration to be given to construction traffic movements from the A20 with a long term study undertaken into traffic calming in the Teapot Lane area.

**Aylesford Parish Council** has no objections to the proposal.

**Environment Agency:** The requirements for detailed site investigation appear to have been met. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site, then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority), shall be carried out until the developer has submitted proposals, and obtained written approval from the LPA, showing how unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with. Safeguards are required regarding removal and disposal of waste materials and redundant drainage and services. The site is within a Source Protection Zone 3 for groundwater and precautions will be necessary during construction and use to avoid contamination.

**Sport England:** No objection, as the development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch, and involves no loss or reduction of any playing pitch or sporting facility. The proposal would appear to increase the size of the usable playing field area and provide a new 6 court Multi Use Games Area, and a 4 court sports hall and gymnasium. The precise internal dimensions of the sports hall are queried. At present there is insufficient information to compare the planned with current facilities, but if in compliance with Sport England's technical standards, the application could be supported.

**County Archaeologist:** Considers that the school site has considerable potential for important archaeological remains. Of particular importance may be the discovery of palaeolithic remains, but there is also potential for Iron Age, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon remains including possible Jutish burials. Important archaeological remains surviving on site may warrant preservation in situ and may have an impact on detailed groundworks/foundation design of the proposed school scheme.

A written archaeological strategy is being agreed in consultation with the applicant. It is proposed to undertake a programme of archaeological work comprising field evaluation (trial trenching and archaeological test pitting) followed by assessment of the findings and agreement of further mitigation measures. The latter could include preservation in situ of important remains, detailed excavation and/or monitoring of groundworks through a watching brief programme. It is intended to set out the details of the heritage requirements in Written Schemes of Investigation (WSIs) to be agreed with the County Archaeologist and the Local Planning Authority. All work, except any watching brief, will be implemented prior to development proceeding on site. Wording for the recommended planning conditions is suggested.

**Transportation Planning and Safety, West Kent Area Office:** advises that a drop off and pick up facility which is proposed within the new school is required by the County Council's car parking standards. Although much of the on-street parking at pick-up time is associated with the adjacent primary school, assurances are requested that the drop-off facility will be used to its maximum advantage so as to avoid undue interference with the operation of the public highway. School policies will need to be established to ensure this, including a one-way system and control of other parking, and agreed as part of the planning permission. Subject to these comments being taken on board, no objection is raised.

**County Biodiversity Officer:** No part of the site has a designation for nature conservation, and Kent Habitat Survey describes the site as built development and

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

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improved grassland, but whilst of little intrinsic value they have the potential to support a number of protected species. The existing buildings have potential to support bats, and no work should be undertaken until the results of further surveys are known. If found, mitigation proposals will be needed. An area of rough grassland to be developed as a car park has been identified as having a 'good to exceptional' population of slow worms, and detailed mitigation will be required before work is started. The information submitted with the landscaping scheme is limited, but, provided appropriate measures are incorporated for reptiles, it is acceptable and should result in a wildlife gain.

**Police Architectural Liaison Officer:** States that Aylesford School, like others in the current PFI scheme has suffered huge losses over the years in relation to growing crime and anti-social behaviour trends. Increased use of the school by the local community outside school hours may help to deter future problems. He expresses a number of concerns including:

- The openness of the school. Free movement throughout the site needs to be restricted in some way e.g using barriers/fencing/railing. External learning areas should be sealed off using loop-topped railing to define the space and restrict unauthorised access.
- Lighting is important and needs to be considered in accordance with CCTV cameras to ensure maximum benefit to the school and local residents.
- The shape of the buildings creates hiding places, so all doors and windows should be of a high security standard. Windows are needed on the ends of the wings (learning barns) for natural surveillance.
- The external staircases are vulnerable to out of hours use for anti-social behaviour.
- Planting in the area of the car parks and between building wings needs to ensure that the tree canopy is tall and thin to allow natural surveillance.
- Plastic coated paladin weld-mesh fencing is recommended for boundary treatment.
- Clear and efficient site management (e.g. signing, badges) is needed to make security recommendations effective.

**Jacobs Babbie (Landscape):** has no objection in principle to the proposals. There will be slight adverse impact on the landscape. Some established vegetation including mature birches, Acers, Prunus and Crataegus will be lost within the building curtilage. A more detailed landscape plan is recommended, including mitigation in accordance with Kent Design guidance by planting three heavy standards for each mature tree removed.

**Local Member**

25. The Local County Member for Malling Rural North East, Mr Rowe, was notified of the application on 22 September 2004. No written comments have been received to date. Mr Rowe attended the Members' site Visit on 9 November (meeting note appended).

**Publicity**

26. The application was advertised by a notice in a local newspaper, 4 site notices and notification of 144 neighbouring properties.

**Item D2**

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school,  
Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

---

**Item D2**

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school,  
Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

---

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

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**Representations**

27. Two letters have been received. One supports the development unconditionally. The second, from a resident of Priory Grove, supports the development, but expresses concern regarding the lack of maintenance of the boundary hedge, which residents maintain on their side, but which is beginning to die off. They fear that the developer will replace the hedge with unattractive security fencing, affecting their outlook and destroying its value as a habitat. Telephone enquiries from residents have also largely focussed on concerns over boundary treatment.

**Discussion**

28. The County Planning Authority, in considering this application will have to examine the proposal in the light of both national guidance and the appropriate Development Plan Policies which apply to this site, together with and any other material considerations that are brought to the County Council's attention or as a result of consultation and publicity.

29. Policy context

Development Plan policies and Government advice applying to this proposal are aimed at providing for community facilities in a way which helps towards achieving a sustainable pattern of development, making the best use of urban land whilst conserving and respecting Kent's environment. The latter includes landscape, wildlife, heritage, and pollution aspects, protecting natural resources, enhancing urban environmental quality through design, respect for local amenity and traffic safety. Whilst there are many policies which apply to the proposed development and site, the proposals are in general accordance with the main thrust of these policies and I therefore see no overriding policy objection to the application. There are however material considerations arising from the details which need to be considered.

30. Location

Whilst an almost completely new school is proposed, this proposal represents an effective re-use of the existing site, with minimal reduction of its greenfield portion, the existing grass playing pitches remaining in situ. The site occupies a sustainable location within the defined urban boundary and well related to potential catchments, pedestrian desire lines and public transport facilities. There is also a direct road connection to the primary road network, of acceptable standard. Congestion in Teapot Lane can occur at peak pick up and drop off times, largely in association with the adjacent primary school. However, the road is approximately 5.5 metres wide with wide footways and a segregated cycleway. There is some noise from the nearby M20 motorway, but as it is in a slight cutting at this point this is not dominant.

31. Therefore in locational terms, there are no basic planning policy objections to the redevelopment of the site for a new school, especially as the pupil capacity is not to be increased.

32. By providing two-storey learning accommodation in place of the existing plethora of huts and mobiles, internal space is improved without the necessity for increasing the built footprint. Major improvements in effectiveness and functionality of the school buildings could be achieved without losing the spaciousness which is perceived as a valuable feature by the School, or the 'green lung' function which is valuable in an urban area close to transport corridors and large scale industry. Many aspects including energy

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

---

efficiency, noise insulation, disability access and site security would be greatly enhanced by the new building.

**33. Appearance and Layout**

Development Plan policies seek well-designed buildings which respect their setting and enhance urban environmental quality. The existing school presents an unprepossessing appearance, with a mixture of buildings, many of which are severely outdated and difficult to maintain, and a predominance of single-storey huddled accommodation. This would be replaced by a set of linked buildings on a much tighter footprint, but retaining landscaped space between individual wings. In the central part of the site, a large rectangular grassed area and various buildings of one and two storeys would be replaced by a set of linked and co-ordinated large two-storey buildings. The sports hall would introduce a large new bulky element when seen from the rear gardens of adjoining properties (some 150 metres distant and viewed through boundary trees). However, as there are a number of two storey buildings existing on site (both pitched and flat-roofed), one of which will be retained, it is unlikely that the new buildings will appear unacceptably dominant or intrusive in views from nearby roads or properties. No objections have been received relating to the appearance of the buildings.

34. The external finish of the buildings is likely to be dominated by the profiled aluminium cladding and given the large massing of the buildings – averaging 50m long and 20-30m wide, the initial appearance might seem ‘high-tech’ and modern. However, the buildings are consciously modern and intended to be fit for their purpose, as a modern learning environment, so a departure from conventional building form is inevitable to a certain extent.

35. The overall effect avoids an industrial character as the cladding is pierced by regular fenestration and further punctuated with brise soliel over the windows, and the clear delineation of two storeys suggests more of a business or academic activity. The aluminium cladding is designed for longevity and to remain clean long-term, so the bright appearance will endure rather than fade to a drab grey. However, the applicants have indicated that this particular cladding would be non-reflective.

36. The appearance of the school from Teapot Lane would initially be much improved, as the present unharmonious collection of buildings and parking areas would be replaced by a landscaped area. However, this situation may not be permanent as the applicants have indicated that this could be the subject of a future planning application for development, which could possibly be residential. Nevertheless, that would be a matter for Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to determine and no planning application for any such development has been received to date. The applicants confirm that the proposed new school is not dependent on such development going ahead.

**37. Access and Parking**

The proposed car parking and internal vehicular circulation arrangements, with a dedicated pick-up and drop-off facility, represents a major improvement over the current arrangements, and could reduce traffic conflicts within and outside the site, provided that it is properly managed correctly for its purpose. The latter could be secured by condition and under the circumstances no objections are raised by the Area Transport Manager.

38. As regards Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's request for a long-term study of traffic calming in the Teapot lane area, the Area Transportation Manager advises that the roads in the Teapot Lane Area are subject to a speed limit of 30 mph, and adjacent roads have speed humps in place to maintain that speed. Whilst Teapot lane itself does not have humps, it is a short dead end road, and he is not aware of any speed

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

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related problems. He considers that the greater priority is ensuring that dropping-off and picking up of pupils takes place off the public highway and asks for all possible means of implementing this.

**39. Archaeology**

There is a strong possibility that finds of archaeological importance could be discovered during trial trenching or construction. It is important therefore that all work set out in the Written Schemes of Investigation as agreed between the applicant and the County Heritage Conservation Team be carried out prior to the commencement of development. Should planning permission be granted this should be secured by condition.

**40. Ecology**

The applicant has appointed a licensed bat surveyor to carry out surveys on all six school sites to determine whether a DEFRA licence is required before demolition work can commence. Results may be available in time for the meeting, in which case they will be reported orally. Should evidence of bats be found, then acceptable mitigating measures will need to be agreed before any consent could be implemented. Landscape measures could be designed to preserve the community of slow worms on the site and a landscaping condition could include mitigation measures as proposed in the applicant's Herpetofauna Survey.

**41. Sports facilities**

Whilst not objecting to the proposals, Sport England has queried the details of the provisions in relation to its own standards. These have been passed on to the applicant. It seems likely that any adjustments which might be needed could be dealt with as minor amendments.

**42. Impact on local amenity**

The school now has sports college status and aspirations for increased community use as well as wider use of the sport facilities. This has potential implications for the amenity of nearby residents in terms of possible nuisance from additional noise out of school hours and future lighting. However, the new school buildings would occupy the central part of the site where potential disturbance to residents is minimised. No floodlighting or Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) is included in the application. The School has confirmed that no ATP or floodlighting is envisaged at present, given the need to raise the necessary funds. If and when either becomes feasible, the intention would be to site the ATP on top of the proposed new grass pitch at the rear of the sports hall, which is centrally situated in the site and furthest away from any adjacent housing. It would be this pitch which would be most likely to be the priority for future floodlighting. The proposed 'show' tennis court is also in the centre of the site, and partially surrounded by buildings. In view of this, there would seem to be no argument for Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's request for transposing the Multi Use Games Area and the proposed new grassed pitch. Any proposed floodlighting in the future would require planning permission at that time.

**43. Security**

The concerns raised by Kent Police have been passed to the applicant who has provided a detailed response for further advice and discussion with the Police adviser. Matters covered include lighting details, CCTV cover, including coverage of the northern car park, boundary fencing and gate control, signage, window locks, and treatment of the external stairs, which it is proposed to change from spiral to straight. It is suggested that the learning barns having no windows within end elevation could be addressed by glazing the escape doors, subject to cost implications.

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

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44. Many of the other security concerns could be addressed via a detailed landscaping scheme.

45. Landscaping

Concerns of local residents have focussed on boundary treatment. The advice of Kent Police also raises issues of access control, lighting, natural surveillance and site management. A detailed scheme of landscaping should address these security issues, also strengthening the perimeter tree and hedge screen with new planting, mitigating the loss of other trees with replacement planting and other measures to preserve and enhance the wildlife value of the site. Should planning consent be given, a condition requiring full landscaping works could be imposed.

**Conclusion**

46. The proposed re-development represents the opportunity to replace the existing highly unsatisfactory buildings with a contemporary building which meets current standards, and satisfies many planning policy aims, in a cost-effective manner and with minimum impact on nearby residents. The layout within the site has clearly been influenced, among other matters, by the severe difficulties of phasing the construction whilst allowing the school to function with minimum disruption, but is also the optimum siting from the point of view of impact on surrounding residents and allow a for rationalisation of internal circulation. Despite the choice of a concept common to all six schools, the applicants have achieved a design which is tailored to the current needs of Aylesford School, with flexibility to respond to future changes. I consider that the resulting building is acceptable in planning terms, subject to the outcome of further archaeological investigations and a number of other detailed matters, all of which can be controlled by conditions.

**Recommendation**

47. SUBJECT TO the receipt of the findings of the bat surveys currently being undertaken and subsequent advice from English Nature, I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO conditions including:

- the standard time condition;
- submission of a satisfactory school travel plan;
- submission, approval and subsequent implementation of a scheme of landscaping to include details of planting, fencing, lighting, hard landscaping and the location of any all-weather pitches and CCTV cameras,
- submission of details of any proposed floodlighting for prior approval;
- details of changes to the submitted plans regarding the position of windows, external staircases, and fire escape doors;
- submission of materials to be used on the exterior of the building;
- submission of a Written Scheme of Investigations for approval by the County Archaeologist;
- submission of a programme of construction works, traffic movements and timings; and
- submission of the further studies and mitigation works to be carried out as specified by the ecological and herpetofauna surveys.

**Item D2**

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school,  
Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

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48.I FURTHER RECOMMEND that the Director of Leisure of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council be invited to take part in detailed discussions with regard to the community access for the sports facilities proposed;

Case officer – Sue Atkins	Ext. 1052
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Background documents - See section heading
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**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

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**APPENDIX 1**

**APPLICATION TM/04/3340 – DEMOLITION OF EXISTING SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND PROVISION OF NEW SCHOOL BUILDINGS TOGETHER WITH CAR PARKING AREAS, LANDSCAPING AND TEMPORARY MOBILE CLASSROOMS AT AYLESFORD SCHOOL, TEAPOT LANE, AYLESFORD**

NOTES of a site visit held at Aylesford School on Tuesday, 9 November 2004.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr J F London (Chairman), Mr F Wood-Brignall (Vice-Chairman), Mrs V J Dagger, Mr J A Davies, Mr J B O Fullarton, Mr A R Poole and Mr J H Tolputt. Mr G Rowe attended as the local Member.

OFFICERS: Mr J Crossley and Mrs S Atkins (Planning) and Mr A Tait (Legal and Secretariat).

AYLESFORD PARISH COUNCIL: Mrs J Gadd and Mr D Elvey

THE APPLICANT: Kent Education Partnership (represented by Mr J Parkin, Assistant Head Teacher – Aylesford School; Ms S Robson, Site Manager – Aylesford School; Mr P de Vale, Chair of Governors; Mr J Lattimore, KCC PFI Project Manager and Mr M Olliff – Project Architect).

- (1) The Chairman opened the visit by explaining that its purpose was to enable Members to familiarise themselves with the application site and to gather the views of the Officers present.
- (2) Mr Crossley explained that KCC Education and Libraries was aiming to eventually upgrade all of Kent's secondary schools. Aylesford School was one of six schools which formed part of KCC's PFI Scheme. This involved replacing redundant accommodation at these schools in conjunction with private sector providers, collectively known as the Kent Education Partnership. At the end of 25 years, the buildings would be handed back to KCC.
- (3) Mrs Atkins introduced the application which was for the nearly complete replacement of the existing school, with only the Technical Block and the Caretaker's house being retained. She said that the current access and egress at the front of the site would remain, with parking being provided in the south east corner and the north east of the site. Coaches and cars would be able to utilise a one way system with a drop off, pick up facility.
- (4) Mrs Atkins went on to say that the proposal was to put up the new buildings further away from the eastern boundary than the current array of old buildings, huts and mobiles. The front of the site would be landscaped. The area behind this landscaping would be left vacant and could possibly become the subject of a development proposal, for consideration by Tonbridge and Malling BC. *Mr Lattimore said that whilst there was a possibility of such a proposal coming forward to improve the project's affordability, the scheme itself did not depend on it.*
- (5) Mrs Atkins then explained that the grass playing fields to the west would remain. An indicative site, currently occupied by hard landscaping, had been shown in the plans for an all weather pitch (although this was not included in the application). A new multi-use games area (MUGA) would be provided in the northern part of the site, on the land currently occupied by the two westernmost buildings. She informed the

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

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Committee Members that this was in keeping with one of Aylesford School's priorities. The school had been accredited as a Specialist Sports College.

- (6) Mrs Atkins then turned to the policy issues that the Committee would need to consider. The school was situated in a defined urban area and the proposed development was affected by policies on sustainability, landscape, wildlife, parking, design, trees, noise, energy efficiency and pollution. Certainly, the school was in a sustainable location, well served by public transport.
- (7) Mrs Atkins went on to describe the views of statutory consultees. Sport England had raised no objection. The County Bio-diversity Officer had requested surveys for bats and slow worms before work started. The County Archaeologist had identified the site as having considerable potential for the discovery of archaeological remains from the Palaeolithic Era. A Jutish burial ground had been discovered to the south in Holt Wood. The Police Architectural Liaison Officer had security concerns, particularly over the scale of the design. Jacobs Babbie had no objections but wanted increased tree planting to compensate for those that would be lost. Transportation Planning had asked for the drop off and pick up facility to be monitored to ensure that it was used to its maximum advantage. The Environment Agency was satisfied with the proposal but had underlined the need to ensure that the groundwater supply was protected from contamination during the construction period.
- (8) Mrs Atkins then said that whilst Aylesford Parish Council had no objections to the proposal, Tonbridge and Malling BC had a number of concerns. These included the view that the football pitch and the all-weather pitch should swap locations (even though the all weather pitch was not part of the proposal). The Borough Council had also asked for traffic calming measures in Teapot Lane.
- (9) Mr Lattimore said that the number of pupils at Aylesford School would not increase as a result of the development. Mr Parkin said that there were currently 960 pupils on role out of a Planned Admission Number of 1000.
- (10) Mr Rowe (Local Member) said that the application had been well received locally and that the Parish Councils were generally in favour. Local residents had been invited to see and discuss the plans. Two concerns had emerged at that time. Firstly, that the land at the front of the site could be used for housing development at a later stage. Secondly, they had requested that the gaps in the hedging along Priory Grove to the west of the site, should be filled with further hedging rather than fencing.
- (11) In response to a question, Mr Parkin confirmed that Aylesford School and the neighbouring Primary School had staggered start and finishing times.
- (12) Mr Olliff said that there would be 90 spaces for car parking. It was unnecessary to swamp the site with tarmac for car parking because provision was being made for coaches to enter the site and drop pupils off. Parents would be able to park on site during the evenings. The small car park for staff and SEN pupils would reduce the amount of off-site parking in Teapot Lane.
- (13) Mr Elvey from Aylesford Parish Council said that his Parish Council had no objections to the proposal, although there was a concern over the timescales involved.
- (14) Mr Olliff replied to a question from Mr Tolputt by saying that the County Council had wanted KEP to have a dialogue with the Police for each of the applications. The

**Demolition of existing school buildings and replacement with a new school, Aylesford School, Teapot Lane, Aylesford – TM/04/3340**

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intention was that the design and layout of the buildings should assist in crime reduction.

- (15) In respect of the frontage, Mr Crossley said that following a request from Tonbridge and Malling BC, officers had asked the applicants to let them know what might happen to this land at a later stage, because it might become surplus. The applicants had said that there were no plans at present to sell it, but they had agreed, for the purposes of clarity, to include a reference to it being *potentially* surplus on the plans.
- (16) Members then inspected the site. They were shown the Technology Block, which was to be retained. They were also shown the temporary wooden buildings. Mr Parkin said that these buildings were, amongst other things very heat-inefficient. Consequently, energy costs were higher than they might otherwise be. He added that the temporary mobiles and the Science Block let in water, and that the ICT Suite was also energy-inefficient.
- (17) Members were then shown the playing fields, including the two football fields at the west end of the site. The hedging on the boundary with Priory Grove was to be retained and Mr Parkin said that the intention was to fill in the gaps with indigenous planting. Mr Olliff said that the amount of land for sport would be increased and that the hard areas west of the buildings would be grassed over.
- (18) Members were then shown the C Block. This would be retained as the northernmost building and the nearest one to local residents (in Robson Drive). Mr Olliff said that all the buildings would be nearer the middle of the site than was currently the case. Parents had said that they liked pupils walking outside the building during breaks between lessons. This would continue, although they would not now need to spend such a long time doing so. An environmental area would also be planted with wildlife. This would also act as a buffer between the buildings and neighbouring properties.
- (19) Mr Olliff explained that the buildings would be two storeys in height with flat roofs. This feature had arisen out of sustainability targets set by KCC. There would be heavy concrete roofs to retain energy. Cool air cones would release ventilation during the evenings. During the daytime, the air would cool the buildings naturally. Mr Parkin added that the technical specifications had been commended by CABI and the County Council's Property Manager.
- (20) In response to a question from Mr Fullarton, Mr Olliff said that the development would be constructed in two phases. The first would involve erecting temporary classrooms on the tennis courts. The development would take some ten months to complete.
- (21) The Chairman thanked everyone for attending. The notes of this visit would be appended to the Committee report in due course.