



AGENDA

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 11th December, 2007, at 10.00 am Ask for: **Andrew Tait**
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Telephone: **01622 694342**
Hall, Maidstone

Tea/Coffee will be available from 9:30 outside the meeting room

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

A. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Substitutes
2. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
3. Minutes - 6 November 2007 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Site Meetings and Other Meetings

B. GENERAL MATTERS

C. MINERALS AND WASTE DISPOSAL APPLICATIONS

D. DEVELOPMENTS TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL

1. Proposal MA/07/1191 - Two storey teaching block, assembly hall and entrance foyer at The Astor of Hever School, Oakwood Park, Maidstone; Governors of The Astor of Hever School and KCC Children, Families and Education. (Pages 7 - 26)
2. Proposal SE/07/2744 - Refurbishment and extension of existing nursery and office space to create a Children's Centre including erection of a canopy, buggy and toy store, and creation of an external impact absorbent play area at The Willows, Hilda May Avenue, Swanley; KCC Children, Families and Education. (Pages 27 - 38)
3. Proposal AS/07/1712 - Replacement of wooden palisade fencing with metal bow top railings at Rolvenden Primary School, Hastings Road, Rolvenden; Governors of Rolvenden Primary School and KCC Children, Families and Education. (Pages 39 - 50)

E. COUNTY MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

1. County matter applications (Pages 51 - 60)
2. Consultations on applications submitted by District Councils or Government Departments
3. County Council developments

4. Detailed submissions under Channel Tunnel Rail Link Act 1996 (None)
5. Screening opinions under Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 1999
6. Scoping opinions under Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 1999 (None)

F. OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership
(01622) 694002

(Please note that the background documents referred to in the accompanying papers may be inspected by arrangement with the Departments responsible for preparing the report. Draft conditions concerning applications being recommended for permission, reported in sections C and D, are available to Members in the Members' Lounge.)

Monday, 3 December 2007

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Planning Applications Committee held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 6 November 2007.

PRESENT: Mr R E King (Chairman), Mr A R Bassam (Vice-Chairman), Mrs V J Dagger, Mr J A Davies, Mr J B O Fullarton, Mr T Gates, Mrs E Green, Mr C Hibberd, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr G A Horne, MBE, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr J F London, Mr R A Marsh, Mr J I Muckle, Mr W V Newman, Mr A R Poole and Mr F Wood-Brignall.

OTHER MEMBERS: Mr R J Parry

OFFICERS: The Head of Planning Applications Group, Mrs S Thompson (with Mr M Clifton, Mr J Crossley and Mr J Wooldridge); the Development Planning Manager, Mr A Ash; and the Democratic Services Officer, Mr A Tait.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

86. Minutes
(Item A3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

87. Site Meetings and Other Meetings
(Item A5)

The Committee noted the arrangements for the site visit to Dungeness on 12 November 2007 and the training session on Heritage and Archaeology on 26 November 2007.

88. Planning Applications Group Business Plan 2007/08 – Half Year Progress Report
(Item B1 – Report by Head of Planning Applications Group)

RESOLVED that the half year progress against the current Business Plan be noted and that a further update report be given to the Committee in February.

89. Applications TM/07/512, TM/07/3001 and TM/07/3100 – (i) northern extension of existing quarry; (ii) additional time for duration of soil blending operations; and (iii) additional time for sand extraction and backfilling at Borough Green Sand Pit, Platt Industrial Estate, St Mary's Platt, Borough Green; Borough Green Sand Pits Ltd.
(Item C1 – Report by Head of Planning Applications Group)

(1) Mrs V J Dagger made a declaration of personal interest as she was representing the views of her constituents. She addressed the Committee in her capacity as local Member but took no part in the decision-making process.

(2) On being put to the vote, the recommendations of the Head of Planning Applications Group were carried by 12 votes to 2.

(3) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) subject to the prior satisfactory conclusion of a legal agreement to secure the Heads of Terms given in Appendix 7 of the report and the applicants meeting the County Council's reasonable legal costs associated with this agreement, permission be granted to Application TM/07/512 for the northern extension of the existing sand quarry and restoration to agriculture, amenity and woodland using imported inert waste materials, subject to conditions covering amongst other matters duration of the permission (until 31 December 2018); requirement for annual progress reports; maximum depth of extraction (68m AOD); wastes being restricted to those types set out in the application; hours of operation; noise limits; dust controls; lighting (to minimise visual impacts); vehicle movement restrictions (60 per day – 30 in/30 out); use of existing site access only; measures to minimise mud, dust and other debris being deposited on the highway (including vehicle sheeting); landscape planting and long term maintenance; protection of existing trees; removal of permitted development rights; more detailed working, restoration and aftercare schemes; surface water drainage; appropriate soil handling and storage; ecology; and archaeology and historic landscape;
- (b) in respect of Application TM/07/3101, permission be partially granted to vary Condition 1 of Permission TM/05/1672 to relax the time limit for soil blending operations to continue only in the final location on the site plan beyond 2008 to 31 August 2018 in order to meet the revised quarry restoration timescales proposed in Application TM/07/512 (above), subject to conditions covering amongst other matters a limit on operations until sand reserves are exhausted or the end of 2015 (whichever is the sooner); and existing conditions being replicated or amended as necessary;
- (c) permission be granted to part of Application TM/07/3100 to vary Condition 3 of Permission TM/98/1843/MR100, as amended by Permission TM/05/1173, to further relax the time limit for sand extraction and restoration by backfilling, to provide an amended timetable for implementation of restoration pursuant to Condition 2 of Permission TM/98/1843/MR100 subject to conditions covering amongst other matters duration of the Permission (until 31 December 2018); sand extraction being completed in the existing area before extraction commences in the proposed northern extension; and existing conditions being replicated or amended as necessary; and
- (d) permission be granted to part of Application TM/07/3100 to depart from the requirement of Condition 2 of Permission TM/98/1843/MR100 and for the amendment of the details of site buildings and associated facilities pursuant to Condition 21 of Permission TM/98/1843/MR100.

90. Application SH/06/1219 – Variation of Conditions 2, 3 and 13 and deletion of Condition 15 of Permission SH/98/332 for the extraction of sand and gravel at Allens Bank, off Dennes Lane, Lydd; Robert Brett and Sons Ltd.
(Item C2 – Report by Head of Planning Applications Group)

- (1) Mr F Wood-Brignall made a declaration of personal interest as he had previously given his views on the application. He addressed the Committee in his capacity as local Member but took no part in the decision-making process.
- (2) Correspondence from Lydd Town Council maintaining its objection was tabled.
- (3) The Committee agreed to the inclusion of an Informative to indicate that it would wish the operation to be concluded within 10 years of the granting of permission.
- (4) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) permission be granted to the variation of Conditions 2, 3 and 13 and to the deletion of Condition 15 of Permission SH/98/322 subject to extraction of sand and gravel from the site taking place over a period of 10 years; the Scheme of Work providing for extraction to take place over 10 separate phases together with their progressive restoration upon the completion of extraction in each successive phase using imported inert waste materials; there being no restriction on where the extracted materials are subsequently exported; and to conditions including conditions requiring the progressive working and restoration of the site being carried out strictly in accordance with the application details as indicated on drawing no. AB/200 rev A. submitted with the letter from Davies Planning dated 30 March 2007; operations ceasing within 10 years from the date of the recommencement of sand extraction, and the site being restored within a further 12 months in accordance with the 'Further Revised Restorations & Landscape Assessment' undertaken on behalf of Brett Aggregates Ltd by Keith Funnell Associates dated February 2007 which accompanied the letter from Davies Planning dated 30 March 2007; written notice being given to the County Planning Authority at least 14 days prior to the recommencement of sand extraction at the site; and details of the proposed tree planting and seed mixes including those areas of the site to be reinstated as acid grassland being submitted to the County Planning Authority for approval within 3 months of the date of this Permission; and
 - (b) the applicant be advised of the following Informatives:-
 - (i) attention is drawn to the requirements of EDF Energy, Natural England and Network Rail as set out in their letters attached to this Application;
 - (ii) all other Conditions imposed on Permission SH/98/322 remain in effect; and
 - (iii) the Committee would wish to see the completion of operations within 10 years of the granting of permission.

- 91. Proposal SE/07/2536 – Replacement of boundary fencing from chestnut paling fence to 1.8m high green weld-mesh fence at Seal CE Primary School and Zambra Way, Seal, Sevenoaks; Governors of Seal CE Primary School and KCC Children, Families and Education**
(Item D1 – Report by Head of Planning Applications Group)

RESOLVED that permission be granted to the proposal subject to conditions, including conditions covering the standard time limit; the development being carried out in accordance with the permitted details; and the development being carried out in such a way as to avoid the removal of existing trees and shrubs.

- 92. Proposal DO/07/994 – Retention and renewal of consent for a four classroom mobile building with library, toilet and staff facilities at The Downs CE Primary School, Owen Square, Walmer; Governors of The Downs CE Primary School and KCC Children, Families and Education**
(Item D2 – Report by Head of Planning Applications Group)

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) permission be granted to the proposal subject to conditions including conditions covering the removal of the mobile building by 30 November 2010 and reinstatement of the land to its former use; and the development being carried out in accordance with the permitted plans; and
- (b) the applicant be advised by Informative that:-
 - (i) the further period of retention of three years is on the proviso that urgent progress will be made with regard to the development of a scheme to provide appropriate permanent teaching accommodation at the earliest opportunity; and
 - (ii) the Managing Director of Children, Families and Education is strongly advised to include this school in the Modernisation Programme for replacement of temporary accommodation.

- 93. Proposal SW/07/1069 – Retrospective application to retain a 1.2m high fence on top of the existing boundary wall at Minster College, Minster Road, Minster-on-Sea, Sheerness; Governors of Minster College and KCC Children, Families and Education**
(Item D3 – Report by Head of Planning Applications Group)

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) permission be refused on the grounds that by virtue of its scale, massing and bulk, and the visual appearance of the chosen colour scheme, the fence would have an overbearing visual impact to the detriment of both the street scene and residential properties along Parsonage Chase, contrary to Structure Plan Policy QL1 and Local Plan Policy G1; and
- (b) given the retrospective nature of the application, urgent steps be taken to remove the timber boarded fence, and that this case be reported to Regulation Committee at the next available date.

94. Proposal SE/07/1914 – Demolition of Garage Cottages and erection of new two storey teaching block, extension to existing Knoll Block and erection of four new single storey residential blocks, plus associated hard landscaping works at Valence School, Westerham Road, Westerham; KCC Children, Families and Education.

(Item D4 – Report by Head of Planning Applications Group)

(Mr R J Parry was present for this item and spoke pursuant to Committee Procedure Rule 2.24).

- (1) The Head of Planning Applications Group reported correspondence from Sevenoaks District Council maintaining its objection to the proposal, and the views of Westerham Parish Council and Natural England raising no objections.
- (2) On being put to the vote the recommendations of the Head of the Planning Applications Group were carried unanimously.
- (3) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the application be referred to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and that subject to her decision and satisfactory resolution of the outstanding issues on contamination and ecology, permission be granted to the proposal subject to conditions, including conditions covering the standard time limit, the development being carried out in accordance with permitted details; external materials; submission for approval of details and implementation and subsequent maintenance of landscaping proposals; submission for approval of details and implementation of proposed woodland management; implementation of appropriate tree protection measures; external lighting specifications being agreed; submission for approval of specifications and implementation of programmes of archaeological work and building recording before development takes place; submission for approval of details of foul and surface water drainage; measures to deal with ground contamination; ecological/protected species mitigation, monitoring and management; biodiversity enhancement, monitoring and management, as appropriate; and measures to prevent mud and debris being taken onto the public highway; and
 - (b) the applicant be advised by Informative that account should be taken of the Environment Agency's advice relating to drainage, groundwater protection and in how to deal with contaminants.

95. Proposal DA/07/672 – Single storey modular building for use as a Children's Centre at Knockhall Community Primary School, Eynsford Road, Greenhithe; KCC Children, Families and Education.

(Item D5 – Report by Head of Planning Applications Group)

- (1) Correspondence from Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council was tabled maintaining its objection to the proposal and requesting a Members' site visit.
- (2) RESOLVED that permission be granted to the proposal subject to conditions, including conditions covering the standard time limit for implementation; sample of the render; the fencing being finished in green to match the existing fencing;

protection of trees during construction; replacement trees if any are removed; and the development being carried out in accordance with the permitted details.

- 96. Proposal AS/07/1395 – Single storey modular building for use as a Children’s Centre, car parking to existing school to be designated to Children’s Centre and spaces lost by development to be re-provided on school hard play; hard play to be re-provided on soft landscaping at East Stour Primary School, Earlsworth Road, Willesborough; KCC Children, Families and Education.**
(Item D6 – Report by Head of Planning Applications Group)

RESOLVED that permission be granted to the proposal subject to conditions, including conditions covering the standard time limit; the development being carried out in accordance with the permitted details, details of external materials being submitted; details of a scheme of landscaping being submitted; details of cycle parking; details confirming that the development will achieve a sustainable and energy efficient building; details of foul and surface water drainage; replacement car parking being provided prior to commencement of use of the Centre; details of anti-climb measures/ barriers being submitted and installed on the building; hours of use for the Children’s Centre being restricted to 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday; the use of the building being restricted specifically to use as a Children’s Centre only; and submission, implementation and ongoing review of a Travel Plan for the Children’s Centre.

- 97. County Matters dealt with under Delegated Powers**
(Items E1-E6 – Reports by Head of Planning Applications Group)

RESOLVED to note reports on items dealt with under delegated powers since the last meeting relating to:-

- (a) County matter applications;
- (b) consultations on applications submitted by District Councils or Government Departments;
- (c) County Council developments;
- (d) detailed submissions under Channel Tunnel Rail Link Act 1996 (None);
- (e) screening opinions under Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 1999; and
- (f) scoping opinions under Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 1999 (None).

SECTION D
DEVELOPMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL

Background Documents: the deposited documents; views and representations received as referred to in the reports and included in the development proposals dossier for each case; and other documents as might be additionally indicated.

Item D1

Two storey teaching block, assembly hall and entrance foyer. Astor of Hever School, Oakwood Park, Maidstone – MA/07/1191

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 11 December 2007.

MA/07/1191 – Application by Governors of The Astor of Hever School and Kent County Council Children, Families and Education for a new 2 storey teaching block containing 6 general teaching rooms, classroom stores and office space, a new assembly hall and entrance foyer within a single storey extension, replacement car parking, and temporary relocation of mobile classrooms and eventual removed from site at completion. The Astor of Hever School, Oakwood Park, Maidstone.

Recommendation: Permission be granted, subject to conditions.

Local Members: Mr D. Daley and Mr J. Curwood

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. The application site is located within the grounds of The Astor of Hever School. The school is positioned within the Oakwood Park estate along with a number of other educational facilities and a Kent County Council office/conference facility. Oakwood Park is located approximately 1 km west of Maidstone Town Centre. The school grounds are located on the south-east boundary of the estate adjoining Oakwood Road. Residential property is located to the north, south and east, with Kent Institute of Art and Design and the Westborough Sports Centre to the north and west (please see attached location plan). The boundary of the nearest residential property to the site proposed for development is located approximately 25 metres to the south-east across Oakwood Road.
2. A number of mobile classrooms, part of the school car park, and general open amenity space within the school grounds currently occupy the application site. A number of trees are located within or adjoining the proposed site. The main school building is laid out to the south-west of the site and consists mainly of a flat roofed block built in the 1970s. The application site generally slopes from the north-west toward the south-east, and is located in an elevated position in relation to Oakwood Road, being approximately 2.8 m above the height at the school boundary.
3. There are no site-specific land designations within the Development Plan in association with the site.

Teaching block, assembly hall and entrance foyer. Astor of Hever School, Oakwood Park, Maidstone – MA/07/1191

1. This plan shows the proposed layout of the site and the location of the proposed buildings. It is intended to provide a general impression of the proposed development and is not intended to be used as a basis for any detailed design or construction. The design and construction of the proposed buildings shall be in accordance with the relevant building regulations and standards. The design and construction of the proposed buildings shall be in accordance with the relevant building regulations and standards. The design and construction of the proposed buildings shall be in accordance with the relevant building regulations and standards.

Project Name:
The Astor of Hever School
Oakwood Park
Maidstone
Kent

Project Location:
New Teaching Block & Assembly Hall

Location Plan

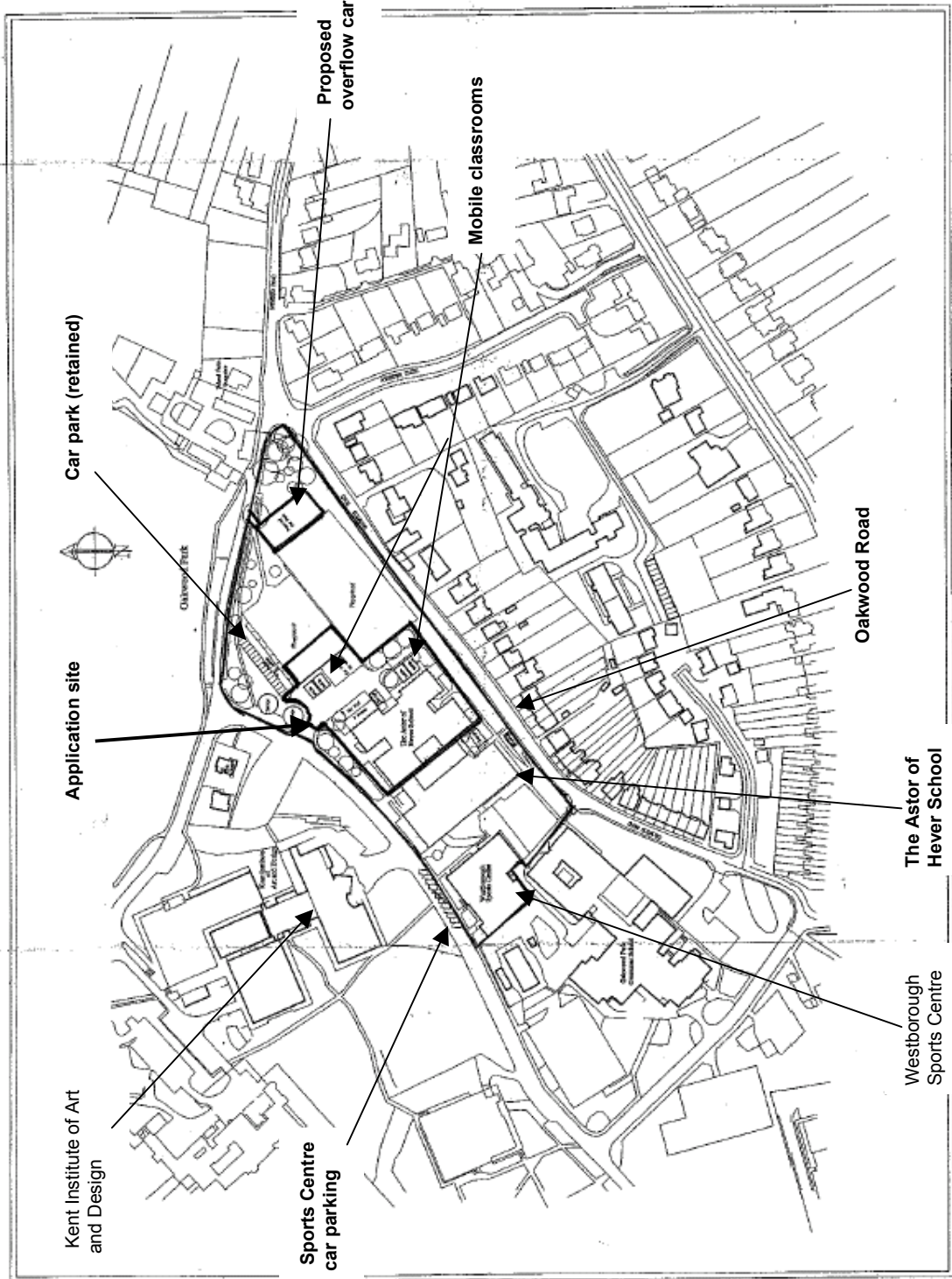
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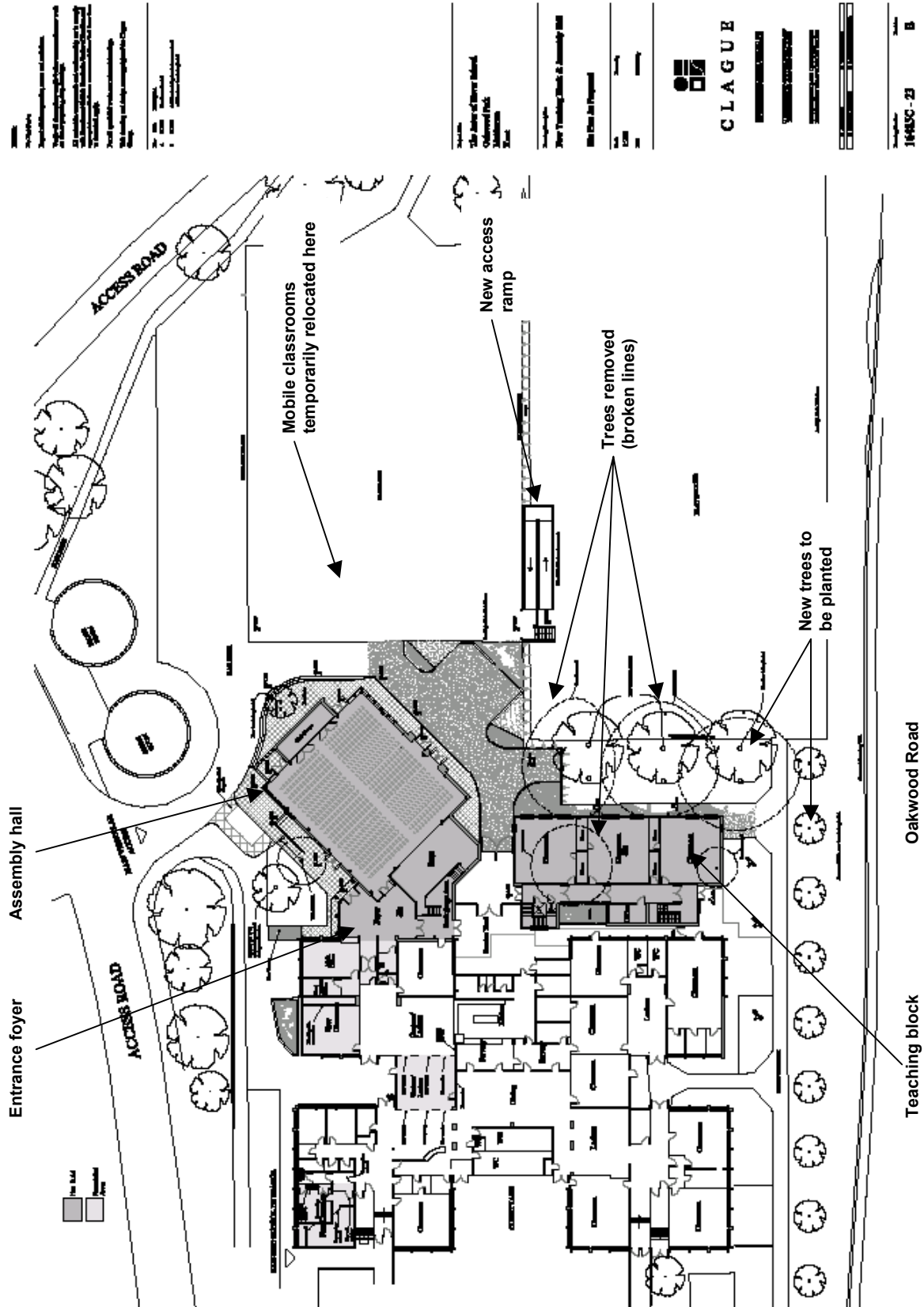
ARCHITECTS

100, THE SQUARE, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME16 9JL
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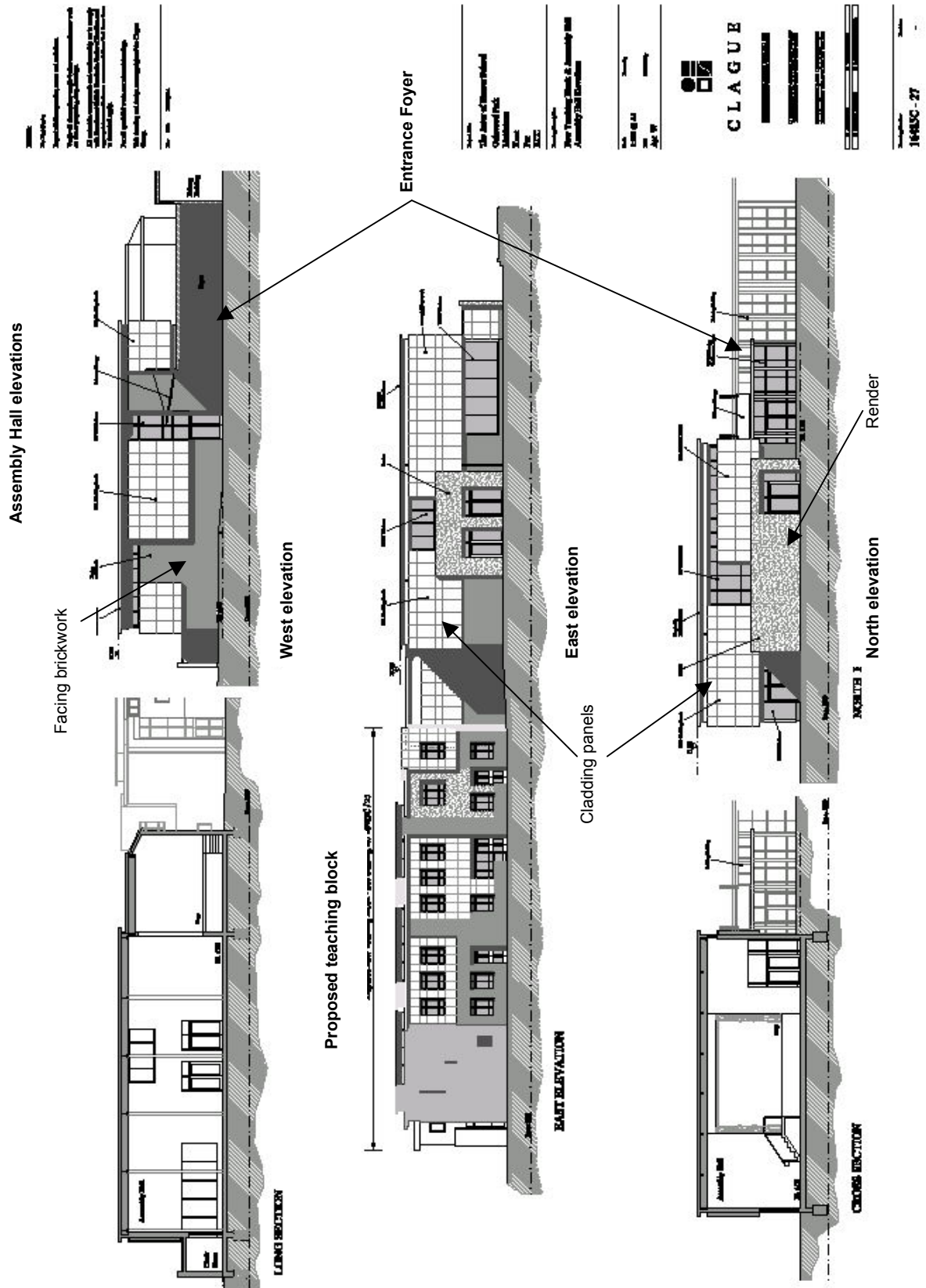
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Teaching block, assembly hall and entrance foyer. Astor of Hever School, Oakwood Park, Maidstone – MA/07/1191



Teaching block, assembly hall and entrance foyer. Astor of Hever School, Oakwood Park, Maidstone – MA/07/1191



Teaching block, assembly hall and entrance foyer. Astor of Hever School, Oakwood Park, Maidstone – MA/07/1191

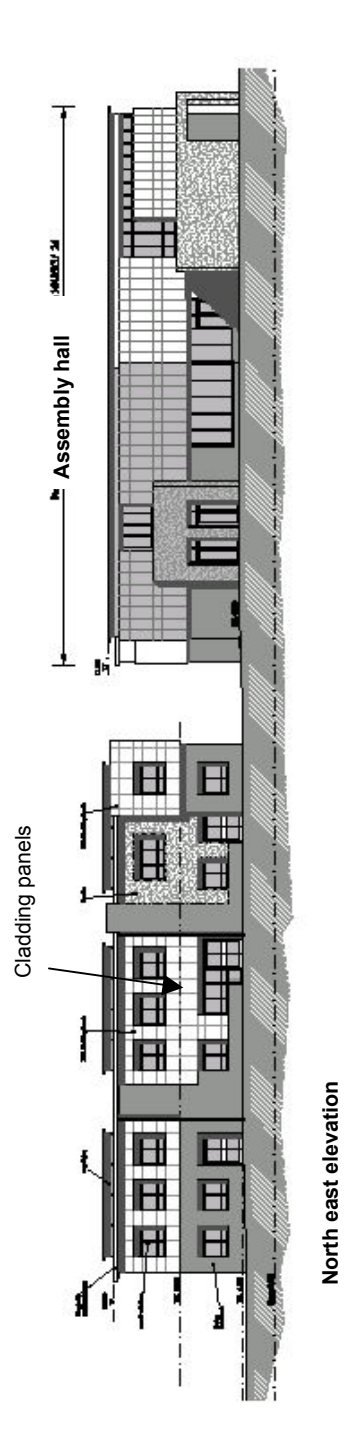
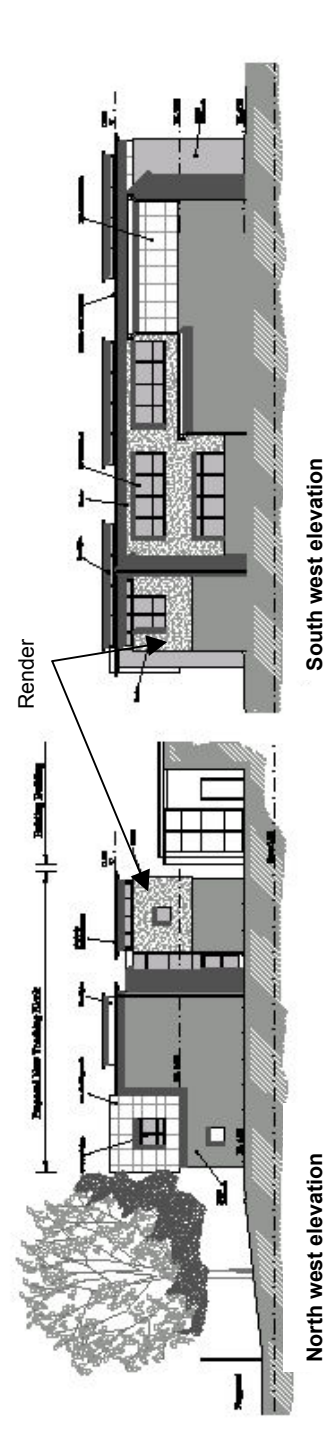
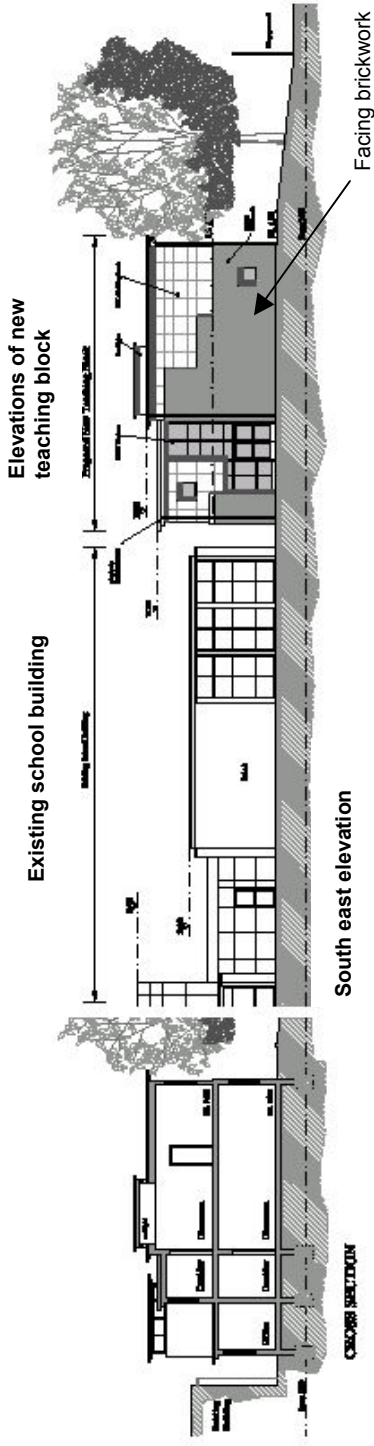
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Teaching block, assembly hall and entrance foyer. Astor of Hever School, Oakwood Park, Maidstone – MA/07/1191

Notes:
 To Not Scale.
 Report all discrepancies, errors and omissions.
 Verify all dimensions on site before commencing any work on site or preparing shop drawings.
 All materials, components and workmanship are to comply with the relevant British Standards, Codes of Practice, and appropriate manufacturers' instructions. All time to time shall apply.
 For all specialist work, see relevant drawings.
 This drawing and design are copyright of the Clague Group.

Project Site:
 The Astor of Hever School
 Oakwood Park
 Maidstone
 Kent

Project No:
 MA/07/1191

Client:
 The Clague Group

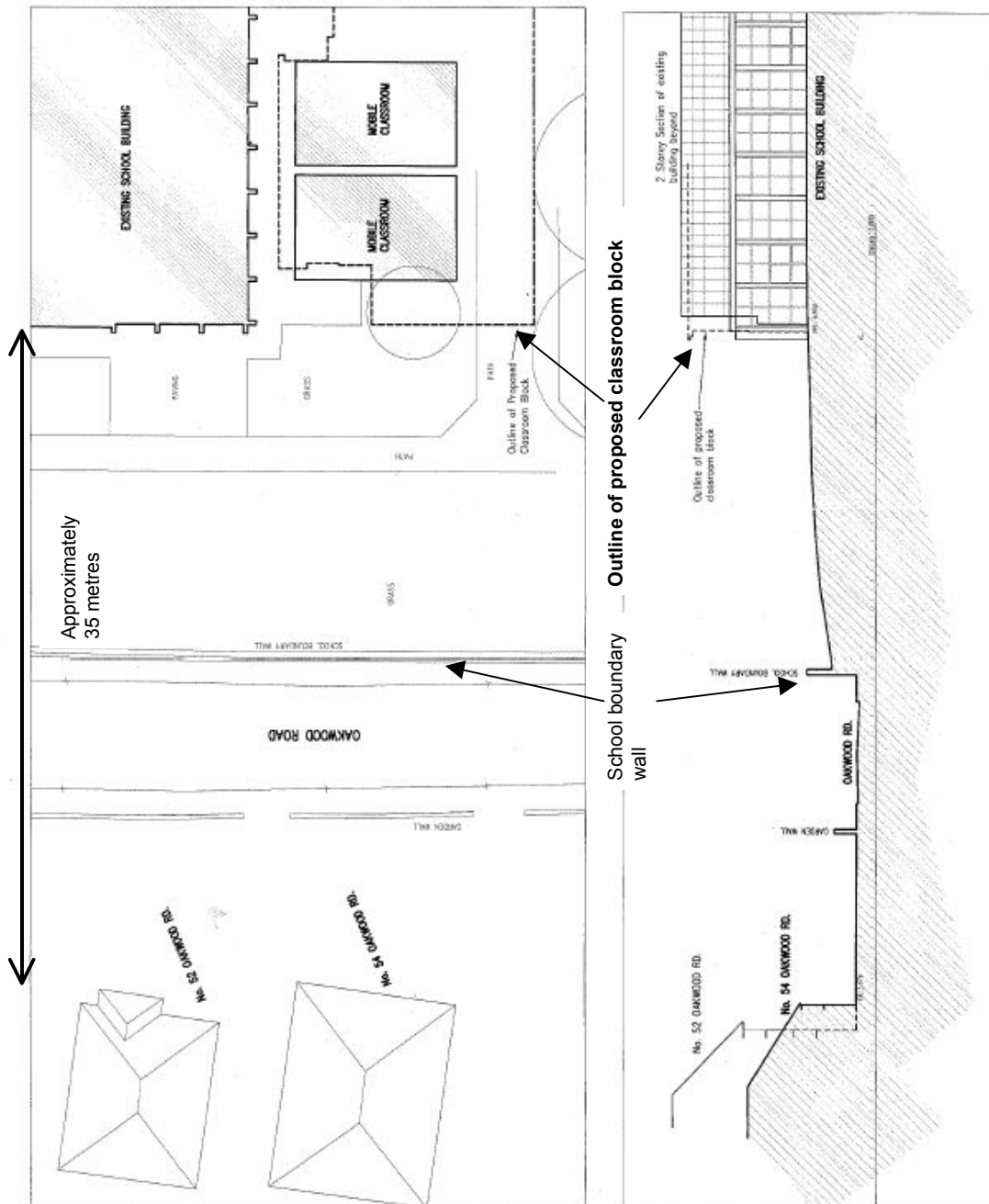
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Teaching block, assembly hall and entrance foyer. Astor of Hever School, Oakwood Park, Maidstone – MA/07/1191

Background

4. The Astor of Hever School is a 5-form entry secondary school that serves the western side of Maidstone. At present the School has 820 students registered on the school roll with 61 full time and 40 part time staff employed at the site. Alongside the main school building there are 5 mobile classrooms on site that allow space to deliver the curriculum. The school has no assembly hall and at present relies on the sports hall within the adjacent Westborough Sports Centre for assemblies, examinations, and as the main gymnasium for physical education. The Sports Centre is a joint use facility between the School and Maidstone Borough Council, and is available to the general public as a community facility after 1745 hours.
5. The recent planning history for the school site includes two applications for the provision of a number of mobile buildings (planning references MA/02/1220 and MA/03/1560). The County Planning Authority also permitted a new physical education teaching block in 2005 (reference MA/05/101). This development included 2 classrooms, office space, and ancillary accommodation.

Proposal

6. The application proposes the construction of an extension to create a new assembly hall, backstage facilities, and main school entrance foyer, along with a new detached two storey classroom block providing 6 new general teaching areas, associated storage and office space. The application also details the provision of replacement car parking spaces and hard standing, the removal of 6 trees, and the relocation and eventual removal of the existing mobile classroom buildings from the site. The proposed assembly hall extension and classroom block would create approximately 1036m² of new floor space, replacing the mobile accommodation on site and improving the facilities available to the school. The proposed development would not alter either the staff or pupil levels at the school as the scheme is proposed as a replacement and modernisation of the current facilities.
7. The proposed assembly hall and entrance foyer would extend the existing school building to the north-east. This arrangement would be built over part of the existing car park, access road, and the footprint of 2 existing mobile classrooms. The development would result in the loss of 28 formal car-parking spaces from site, and the removal of 1 tree. The assembly hall building and associated backstage area would measure approximately 25m by 17m by 6.5m high, and would create a double height single storey building. The hall would be positioned opposite the main access to the school site oriented at an angle to the existing school block, toward the north-east. The drawings attached show the building as a flat roofed brick built extension, finished with glazed sections, render, and cladding panels.
8. As a result of the positioning of the proposed school hall, the application includes adaptation of and revisions to the hard standing and access road on site. The extension compromises 28 car-parking spaces; a further 25 spaces would be retained within the existing car park. The application proposes 18-replacement spaces, 5 adjacent to the proposed development, and a further 13 within a new overflow car park to the north-east end of the lower playground. The overflow car park has been proposed in response to officers initial concerns over car parking provision set out in the original submission. Further to the replacement parking proposed, the application confirms that an additional 12 parking bays associated with the Westborough Sports Centre have recently been made available for dedicated use by the Astor of Hever School up to 1745 hours each

Teaching block, assembly hall and entrance foyer. Astor of Hever School, Oakwood Park, Maidstone – MA/07/1191

- day. The supporting information originally received also referenced further car parking in association with a proposed new all-weather sports pitch, however, that application has not yet been received and is not therefore part of the current considerations.
9. The new glazed entrance foyer is shown as a single storey extension on the north-west side of the proposed assembly hall, between the hall and the existing building. The foyer would relocate the existing entrance arrangements to a more prominent location. The changes would include the partial re-modelling of the internal layout of the existing building.
 10. The proposed classroom block would be located directly adjacent to the eastern corner of the main school building behind the proposed assembly hall. The building would be positioned, in part, over hard standing and the footprint of 2 mobile buildings, as well as a landscaped amenity space between the existing buildings and the school playground. The proposed classroom block would measure approximately 26m by 13.5m by 6.5m high. The building is shown over two storeys and would accommodate 6 classrooms, office space and storage facilities. The proposal would include a flat roof and facing brickwork, with panelling, render, and UPVC windows. This element of the development would require the removal of two trees within the footprint of the building.
 11. Following the completion of a tree survey in support of the application, a tree report identified that a further 3 trees directly adjacent to the proposed classroom building, that were initially intended to be retained as part of the development, would be compromised by the building. The report recommended that due to the general health of the trees in question and the close proximity of the development, the building, and hard landscaping, proposed would significantly compromise the Root Protection Area. In view of this recommendation, an amendment to the application detailing the removal of the additional 3 trees was submitted. This amendment included a landscape scheme, setting out replacement tree planting of advanced nursery stock (16 – 18cm girth) together with an avenue of trees planted along the boundary with Oakwood Road, proposed as mitigation.
 12. The proposed development would replace 5 existing mobile buildings on site with permanent accommodation. Four of these buildings would need to be relocated to the western end of the northern playground for the construction of the development. On first occupation of the proposed facilities the mobile buildings would be removed from the site.
 13. Further to the above, the proposal sets out a new pedestrian access ramp between the existing school playgrounds on site.
 14. The applicant, in support of the application, supplied a further statement on the removal of trees as part of the development. The tree survey report and supporting statement note that the 6 trees proposed for removal to facilitate the development are middle aged: 2 red oaks, 3 maples, and 1 whitebeam. Two of the trees are identified as having potential weaknesses and are in poor physiological condition. The report identifies that these trees should be removed for sound arboricultural reasons prior to any development. The further 4 trees proposed for removal are classified individually under the British Standard (BS5837) grades as having a moderate to low quality and amenity value. Two would be lost under the footprint of the proposed buildings; the remaining 2 would be located directly adjacent to the proposed classroom block. The information supplied identifies that the close proximity of the building would require a reduction in the crown of both trees in order to allow the physical structure of the building and the enabling construction works. The foundations of the building, scaffolding work and

Teaching block, assembly hall and entrance foyer. Astor of Hever School, Oakwood Park, Maidstone – MA/07/1191

associated hard standing would result in encroachment of over 45% on the Root Protection Areas for both trees which would be well beyond the recommended levels identified in the British Standard.

15. The applicant's agent has confirmed that the location of the proposed assembly hall and entrance foyer has been proposed for operational and access reasons. Confirming that the location is the only area large enough to accommodate the facilities and allow direct connection to the existing building. The options for the classroom block are further limited by the above, the only realistic options being either on part of the playground area or in the position proposed. Not wishing to unduly compromise the playground space available on site, or detach the teaching accommodation from the rest of the school, the School determined the optimum location as that proposed within the application.

Development Plan Policies

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

(i) **The adopted Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006:**

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Policy SP1 | Seeks to protect and enhance the environment and achieve a sustainable pattern and form of development. |
| Policy SS6 | Seeks to improve the built and natural environment, functioning and appearance of the suburbs of the major urban areas, including the provision of services and facilities that serve local needs. |
| Policy EN8 | Seeks to protect, conserve and enhance wildlife habitats and species, particularly where they are protected under wildlife legislation. |
| Policy EN9 | Seeks to maintain tree cover and provision of new habitat as part of development proposals. |
| Policy QL1 | Seeks all development be well designed and of high quality that respond positively to the local character. Development, which would be detrimental to the built environment, amenity, function and character of settlements or the countryside, will not be permitted. |
| Policy QL11 | Provision will be made for the development and improvement of local services in existing residential areas and in town and district centres particularly where services are deficient. |
| Policy TP3 | Local Planning Authorities should ensure that development sites are well served by public transport, walking and cycling. |
| Policy TP19 | Seeks development proposals to comply with the respective vehicle parking policies. |

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(ii) **The adopted Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000 (saved policies):**

- Policy ENV6 Seeks landscape schemes in appropriate cases incorporating retention of existing trees which contribute to the landscape character and providing appropriate new planting of native species.
- Policy T13 Parking standards will be adopted for new development, generally to ensure minimum provision.

Consultations

17. **Maidstone Borough Council** – raises no objection, subject to conditions covering the submission of external materials, details of the proposed slab levels, tree protection measures, a scheme of landscaping, including ongoing maintenance and protection.

The Borough Council was re-consulted on amendments to the application including proposals to remove a further 3 trees as part of the proposals and a landscape scheme. Any further views received prior to Committee Meeting shall be reported verbally.

18. **The Divisional Transportation Manager** – raises no objection to the proposals in respect of highway matters, subject a condition covering the provision of vehicle parking spaces shown on the submitted drawings before the use of the proposed facilities is commenced.

19. **The County Council's Landscape Advisers** – initially raised concerns and requested further survey work and a landscape scheme be submitted. Following receipt of additional supporting information and a landscape scheme, the final comments received raise no objection to the amended proposal and read as follows: *'the amended proposal which includes replacement planting for the trees to be lost due to development, and an avenue of trees along the footway by Oakwood Road, would have a positive impact on the existing landscape and visual amenity of the site and would satisfactorily mitigate the potential adverse landscape and visual effects of the development.'*

20. **The County Council's Archaeological Officer** – raises no objection, subject to a condition requiring an archaeological watching brief ensuring excavation work be observed and items of interest recorded.

The Officer comments *'the site lies on high ground overlooking the Medway Valley and sites nearby indicate it was favoured in Prehistory and the Roman period. Although there are no remains recorded on the site itself, there is potential for hitherto unknown features to be revealed during development.'*

Local Members

21. The Local County Members for Maidstone Central Mr. D. Daley and Mr J. Curwood were notified of the application on 8 June 2007.

Written comments have been received Mr Daley, which read as follows, *'no objection to this proposal. I have reservations about a possible problem with parking if the "all-weather" sports pitch comes forward in the future.'*

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Publicity

22. The application was publicised through a newspaper advert, the posting of 1 site notice and the notification of 30 neighbouring properties. The neighbouring properties were subsequently re-consulted on 2 further occasions concerning amendments to the scheme including the proposed overflow car park, and the removal of 3 additional trees adjacent to the proposed classroom block.

Representations

23. Initially, 2 letters of representation objecting to the proposal as originally submitted were received from local residents. The main points raised in relation to this application can be summarised as follows:

Siting, Design and Appearance

- Objects to the application as over-development of the Park and erosion of its character.
- Objections to the height of the classroom block, positioned on the elevated school grounds in relation to properties on Oakwood Road, including the bungalow opposite the site. Concerns that the building would tower above adjoining property by two storeys.
- Concerns that the south-east elevation proposes large windows to a corridor that would allow overlooking of adjoining property.
- Concerns that the existing double storey classroom block visible from Oakwood Road is in poor repair requiring maintenance, considers funding would be better spent upgrading the existing building.
- Asks why, if the School and Colleges are so short of space that they cannot provide proper facilities without damaging local amenity, did KCC sell off the Astor School Farm as ‘surplus’.

Highway and Parking

- Objects to the application on the grounds of loss of car parking spaces within Oakwood Park whilst expanding the school’s facilities.
- Advises Members of the severe parking problems caused to residents in Queen Road and Shaftesbury Drive caused by students who have been ousted from the Park seeking the nearest free unrestricted parking spaces, irrespective of the danger to other road users.
- Feels that no further development should take place in Oakwood Park until there is a co-ordinated strategy to deal with car parking issues, on which local residents and users have been properly consulted.
- Expresses alarm over references within the application documents to the future development of an all-weather sports pitch with an associated 100 car parking spaces, in justification for the loss of parking spaces involved in the current application.

Landscaping

- Is relieved that the 3 mature trees adjoining the application would be protected and retained, expresses dismay that 3 trees would be felled.

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- Considers that any replacement trees should be from large planting stock and that further trees and shrub planting should be included within the scheme to screen the existing and proposed buildings from Oakwood Road, similar to that achieved by other schools at Oakwood Park.

Proposed Use

- Has no objection to the use of the assembly hall included in the application for use as a school hall, however, objects to it being used by the general public, with late night noise from cars and revellers.

Following the re-consultation with neighbouring residents concerning the removal of trees on site and the proposed landscape scheme, 1 letter has been received. The main points raised can be summarised as follows:

- Asks why the row of 3 trees directly adjacent to the application site that are proposed to be removed could not be retained and cut back to facilitate the development proposed.
- Asks how mature the proposed replacement trees would be. Questions whether younger trees would survive the rigors of school life.
- Notes that the landscape work required under the planning permission for one of the mobile buildings was never completed. Questions whether the landscaping in this instance would be provided.
- Comments that one of the species of tree proposed in the landscape scheme, the Field Maple, are tolerant but unspectacular. Suggests that Purple Norway Maple would be more interesting.

Discussion

24. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (16) 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, 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.
25. This application seeks permission for the construction of an extension to the existing school building to form a new assembly hall and entrance foyer, along with a detached 2-storey teaching block to replace existing mobile buildings. The application includes amendments to existing hard-standing on site, the provision of replacement car parking spaces, and the removal of 6 trees. The proposal raises a number of issues related to siting, visual impact, local amenity considerations, transport and vehicle parking, landscaping, and ecology. As set out above these points need to be considered in the context of the Development Plan, along with any other material considerations raised.
26. The building work proposed is being brought forward to improve and enhance the existing facilities provided at the school. The development would replace existing classroom accommodation presently provided in mobile buildings, along with improving the main entrance to the school, and providing the school with a dedicated assembly hall. The development as proposed would not result in a change in the number of students or staff attending the site.

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Siting, Design and Appearance

27. The Astor of Hever School buildings are located on a confined plot of land on the south east boundary of the Oakwood Park estate, parallel with Oakwood Road. The application site shows the proposed building work located at north-east end of the main school block. The school site is situated on ground that slopes downwards toward Oakwood Road, as such the application site is in an elevated position in relation to property on Oakwood Road. The application proposes flat roofed buildings that would have an overall height of about 6.5m. The height of the classroom block proposed coupled with the ground level has caused concern for local residents, particularly the potential impact of the building on the amenities of the area in relation to issues of overlooking and the potential overbearing nature of the development. Kent and Medway Structure Plan Policy QL1 requires new development to be well designed, of high quality, to respond positively to the scale, layout and character of their local surroundings, including the amenity of local residents.
28. I note that it is largely the siting of the proposed classroom block, closest to Oakwood Road that is causing the most concern. This building as proposed would be located approximately 18m from the existing school boundary wall that fronts Oakwood Road, 26m from the boundary wall of the closest residential property, and 35m from the façade of the bungalow opposite the site. The ground level of the south-east elevation of the classroom block would sit 2.8m above the height of the land at the boundary, therefore increasing the potential perceived height of any building constructed in this locality. The applicant has provided a cross-section drawing through this area of the site and the property on Oakwood Road to demonstrate the proposed development in the context of the surrounding building; please see a copy of this drawing included on page (D1.6).
29. The applicant's agent has confirmed that the options available for the development within the main school grounds are limited by the space necessary to accommodate the buildings proposed. For operational and access reasons, the assembly hall and new entrance would need to be attached to the main school building and be located close to the main vehicular and pedestrian access points to the site. Similarly, I understand that the classroom block would need to be positioned close to the existing accommodation for operational reasons, and potentially to enable a future permanent link to the main building, should the funding become available. Taking account of the size of the development proposed, and the existing buildings on and around the school grounds, there would appear to be a limited number of options available to locate the development as proposed. The alternatives would involve building on the existing playground space, which would not necessarily overcome the concerns over the height of the building in relation to property on Oakwood Road, and would compromise the recreation space available to the school.
30. The proposed classroom block would be located north of property on Oakwood Road, and therefore would have no impact on the levels of sunlight reaching residential properties, irrespective of the distance involved. The building as proposed would be positioned in close proximity to the existing school building and as such would, in my opinion, limit the impact of the development on the openness of the site. The scale of the buildings proposed are similar to existing development at the school, and would not exceed the height of a 2-storey element of the existing school building that faces Oakwood Road. The classroom block would be oriented on a north-west south-east axis; this would limit the profile of the building visible from Oakwood Road, with the assembly hall building largely screened behind.

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31. The application purposefully incorporates flat roofs to the development to link the buildings in with the design, scale and mass of the existing school block, and to limit the overall height. The issue that should be noted, as set out above, is the difference in the height of the ground between the application site and Oakwood Road. The south end of the classroom block would adopt a line of development on school grounds, parallel to Oakwood Road, established by the existing school building. Therefore, the development, at its closest point, would not move the buildings at the school any closer to residential property than the established line of development.
32. In my opinion, given the distances involved between residential property and the closest element of the development proposed I do not consider the proposals would be incompatible with the existing pattern of development. I note that the house opposite the site is a bungalow and that the distance between this property and the proposed teaching block would be approximately 35m. Oakwood Road passes through the space that would be between the two buildings, and at this point in the road boundary walls flank both sides of the carriageway. Given that the development even accounting for the differences in ground level would be similar in height to neighbouring 2-storey residential properties, I do not consider that the scale and massing of the proposed teaching block would be unacceptable.
33. A neighbouring resident has raised concern over the potential for overlooking to occur from windows shown to the south elevation of the teaching block. I note that the applicant has attempted to minimise the number of windows to this elevation, and that the second floor windows shown are to a landing and hallway space within the building. The standard advice on distances between windows of habitable rooms in order to prevent loss of privacy is 21m. Given that the distance between the development and the front elevation of the closest residential building would be over 35m. I do not consider that the proposed development would result in any significant loss of privacy for the neighbouring properties.
34. The application details the proposed buildings as being finished using facing brickwork to complement the adjacent structures. The proposals would also incorporate the use of high-pressure laminate panelling, rendered sections and UPVC windows within the design. The existing school buildings on site were constructed in the 1970s and are not of any particular architectural merit. I note that the application draws from the existing building in terms of general form, scale and massing with materials proposed to complement rather than match the main building. In my opinion the adopted approach would have a positive impact on the existing arrangements, and would replace existing temporary buildings on site that are not considered appropriate for permanent retention. The configuration and variety of materials proposed, coupled with the varied roof lines and the use of glazing would help break up the mass of the buildings and enhance the appearance of the site.
35. Four of the mobile classrooms to be removed from the site would be relocated to the western end of the northern playground for the duration of the build. This location would keep the buildings to the centre of the site away from residential property, and their eventual removal would potentially improve the built environment in visual terms. A nearby resident has raised a question over the general maintenance of the main school building on site, I would note that this issue stretches beyond the context of the current application and is largely a site management issue.
36. Concern has been raised by a nearby resident about the cumulative impact of development within Oakwood Park on the character of the area and openness of the landscape. I accept that with a number of different organisations occupying space within

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the Park care needs to be taken not to unnecessarily encroach on the open space. However, in the context of the current application, in my opinion, the siting proposed would minimise the impact of the development on the openness of the Park. That would keep the footprint of the proposed building directly adjacent to the existing built compound at the school and result in the removal of existing temporary buildings from the site.

37. Therefore, subject to consideration of highway matters, landscaping and use below and the imposition of conditions covering final details of the external materials, and the proposed slab levels, I would consider that the design of the building accords with the appropriate Structure Plan Policies, including Policy QL1.

Highway and Parking

38. Oakwood Park accommodates a number of large educational establishments along with KCC office and conference facilities, and as such the Park generates a significant level of movement, and traffic, to and from the site on a daily basis. That has resulted in long standing car-parking problems within the Park that has migrated into the residential roads surrounding the area. Whilst the application as proposed would not result in an increase in people attending the Astor of Hever School, the proposed development would involve the loss of a number of existing car parking spaces under the footprint of the proposed assembly hall. Given the established car parking problems experienced in association with Oakwood Park, which is contributed to by students and staff attending the Astor of Hever School and other establishments, the potential loss of car parking from the site has understandably caused concern for local residents.
39. I note that the proposals as originally submitted potential did not mitigate fully for the number of spaces that would be compromised by the proposals - approximately 28 spaces. The School currently employs 61 full time staff and 40 part time staff and has an existing maximum car parking provision of 53 off-street spaces. Following further negotiation concerning the replacement car parking proposed, the applicant amended the proposals to include an additional overflow car park at the eastern end of the lower playground. The application now proposes to retain 25 existing spaces on-site unchanged, provide 5 replacement spaces adjacent to the assembly hall, and 13 spaces within the overflow car park. The applicant has also confirmed that the School has recently taken possession of the adjacent Westborough Sports Centre, allowing exclusive use of the facilities during the school day. This use includes the 12 dedicated car-parking spaces to the front of the building until 1745h, at which point the facilities within the Sport Centre are available to the general public. These 12 spaces plus the proposed arrangements set out above would allow the School access to a total of 55 spaces (a net increase of 2 spaces), should the proposed development be approved. The Divisional Transportation Manager has confirmed that he is satisfied with the revised arrangements, and subject to the replacement spaces being made available prior to first occupation of the development, would not raise an objection to the application on highway grounds.
40. The application, as original submitted, included reference to a forthcoming proposal for a new all-weather sports pitch and car park being promoted by the School. The current application documents confirmed that the associated car parking, should it be granted planning approval, would be available to the School during the day. However, that application has yet to be received and any measures proposed cannot be considered in the context of this current application. As set out above, other measures have been

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proposed and considered in mitigation for the car parking lost as part of the proposed development.

41. I note the concerns expressed by local residents about the overall car parking issues experienced around Oakwood Park in general, and the impact caused by recent changes to the car parking restrictions within the Park. These changes have potentially increased the use of surrounding streets for parking by visitors and students attending the facilities within the Park. However, it would be unreasonable to expect the Astor of Hever School to solve these problems individually, or specifically, given the scale of the proposals, as part of this application. I note the suggestion that no further development should be considered until a joined up approach to traffic and car parking issues is considered across the Oakwood Park campus. Nevertheless, in the context of this application, I would advise that the facilities are being brought forward to replace existing temporary accommodation and to meet the educational needs of the existing school roll, and not as a lead up to an expansion of the school. The application proposes adequate replacement car parking spaces for those that would be lost as part of the scheme. I would also note the central location and good accessibility to the school site, along with the access to a wide range of public transport options. Given the above and the Divisional Transportation Manager's comments, I consider that the application would accord with Kent and Medway Structure Plan Policies TP3 and TP19 and Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan Policy T13, and would not raise an objection to this application on highway grounds.

Landscaping

42. The application, as amended, proposes the removal of 6 semi-mature trees from the school grounds as detailed above. The original application proposed to remove only 3 of these trees, proposing to retain and protect the other 3 trees, that form a group to the east of the existing buildings on site. However, following concerns expressed by the County Council's Landscape Adviser, a tree survey was carried out in support of the application. This report concluded that given the footprint and proximity of the proposed classroom building to the 3 trees to be retained, these trees would be significantly compromised by the building, associated hard landscaping, and construction operations necessary to complete the proposals. The development as proposed would occupy a considerable proportion of the individual Root Protection Areas for the trees in question. The report further identifies that 1 of the 3 trees would need to be removed for sound arboricultural reasons, recommending that individually none of the trees identified are of significant arboricultural or aesthetic merit, and would not pose a significant constraint to the development, subject to mitigation through comprehensive replacement planting. On that basis, the application was amended to include the removal of the additional 3 trees, and a landscape scheme proposed in mitigation.
43. I note that both Officers and the County Council's Landscape Adviser had initial concerns over the impact of the amended proposals on the landscape of the area. Whilst individually the trees are not considered to be of significant value, as a group they are relatively prominent in the landscape, linking the Astor of Hever School grounds into the wider Oakwood Park campus, screening and softening the existing built development on site. However, the applicant has demonstrated that there are limited options and space available within the school grounds to achieve the development proposed. The survey work carried out in relation to the trees identifies that one of the trees has a defect and would need to be removed irrespective of the development, which in turn would influence the health and appearance of the group as a whole. The removal of the trees in question would be unfortunate but I consider that it would be better to

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accept their loss now and consider appropriate mitigation, rather than try to protect the trees and potentially lose them at a later date.

44. In mitigation for the loss of trees from the site, the applicant has provided details of a landscape scheme. This scheme would include the provision of a line of 3 replacement trees of large nursery stock adjacent to the proposed classroom block, along with a row of new trees planted parallel with Oakwood Road, between the existing, and proposed, school buildings and residential property opposite. Over time this replacement planting would further reduce any adverse visual impact the existing school building and the proposed development may have on nearby property, and within the wider landscape. I note the comments received following the re-consultation with neighbouring residents concerning the revised landscape arrangements proposed. I would recommend that should the application be granted planning permission the completion of the proposed landscape scheme within the first planting season following occupation of the development should be a condition of any decision. I note the comments made by a local resident about the value of one of the species of trees proposed, however, I understand that Field Maple has been selected because of their hardy nature. Given the Landscape Adviser's positive comments about the proposed landscape scheme, I would not raise an objection to the application on landscape grounds, subject to conditions covering, amongst other matters, the completion of the landscape scheme as proposed, replacement planting should there be any failures in the scheme, and tree protection measures during construction for the remaining trees on site.

Proposed Use

45. Local concern has also been raised over potential late night noise from cars and revellers. The application advises that for the most part the redevelopment would not change the existing pattern of use of the school site, but acknowledges that through the development of the proposed facilities the assembly hall may attract additional out-of-hours use for school purposes, or the local community. I would comment that this practice is in line with Government policies on Extended Schools, making the best use of the facilities available for the benefit of the wider community.
46. Furthermore, the assembly hall would be over 50m from the nearest residential property, with the main entrance located on the north side of the building. The hall would be largely screened from Oakwood Road by the existing building and proposed classroom block. Given the distance involved to residential property, I do not consider that potential intermittent use of this facility for the benefit of the wider community would have any significant detrimental impact on residential amenity through noise generated by associated activity.

Ecology

47. The original application included an ecological scoping survey carried out in January 2006 that identified a bat roost within the main school building, adjacent to the proposed classroom block. At that time of year bats are in hibernation and an emergence survey could not be carried out to identify whether the roost was in use. Further survey work was recommended between May and August inclusive.
48. A further bat survey report has recently been received, which confirms that no evidence of bats was found on site during an emergence survey carried out in June 2007. The report recommends that whilst the area of the building where the previously identified roost is located would be unaffected by the proposed works, building work would take

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place in close proximity that could constitute a disturbance. The report identifies that ground work could commence early next year, however, before erection of the steel frame a repeat survey should be undertaken to determine if any bats are present immediately prior to works commencing. In order to achieve this survey when bats emerge from hibernation, the report recommends deferring commencement of works to the steel frame until March 2008. If bats were confirmed to be present, further discussions would need to take place with Natural England. I am in the process of seeking further advice on these recommendations and expect to be able to deal with the recommendations by way of appropriate conditions.

Conclusion

49. The proposed development would provide permanent replacement accommodation for 5 mobile classrooms currently used by the school, and would provide for enhanced facilities that would improve educational function of the school. It would not result in an increase of existing staff or pupil numbers. I consider that the development respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area and is appropriate in terms of its siting, scale and design. Whilst any development would inevitably have some effect on surrounding land uses, I am satisfied that the development would be acceptable in the context of existing development and would not lead to an unacceptable loss of amenity in terms of noise, overlooking, overshadowing, or sense of enclosure. The loss of trees from the site would be unfortunate, however, I note that some of the trees would need to be removed regardless of the decision made on this application. I am satisfied that the replacement landscaping proposed would compensate over time for this loss. I therefore consider that the application accords with the relevant policies of the Structure Plan and Local Plan referred to in paragraph (16), and that any impacts from the proposal could be reasonably mitigated by the provisions set out in the application and the imposition of conditions set out below, and would recommend accordingly.

Recommendation

50. I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO the imposition of conditions, including the following:

- the standard time limit,
- the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details,
- details of external materials,
- tree protection measures,
- completion of the landscape scheme proposed within the first planting season following first occupation of the development,
- ongoing maintenance and protection of the landscape scheme,
- car parking area be provided prior commencement of use,
- details of final slab levels,
- details of external lighting,
- condition(s), as appropriate, to ensure any bats on site are safeguarded,
- hours of working during construction to be restricted to 0800 and 1800 Monday to Fridays, and 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays, and
- removal of temporary mobile classrooms on first occupation of the buildings hereby permitted.

Item D1

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Background documents - See section heading

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Item D2**Children's Centre at The Willows, Hilda May Avenue,
Swanley – SE/07/2744**

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 11 December 2007.

Application by Kent County Council Children, Families and Education for the refurbishment and extension of existing nursery and office space to create a Children's Centre, including the erection of a canopy, buggy and toy store, and creation of an external impact absorbent play area at The Willows, Hilda May Avenue, Swanley (SE/07/2744).

Recommendation: Planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.

Local Member(s): Mr. M. Fittock

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. The Willows is located to the north-west of the main town of Swanley, on Hilda May Avenue. The site is primarily occupied by Kent County Council Adult Services as an office base, with a smaller proportion of the building being used by The Willows Pre-School Nursery. Prior to 2001, the Willows site was occupied by White Oak Junior School, with Horizon School (formerly White Oak Infants School) lying directly southwards from the application site. The application site is bordered by school playing fields to the east, residential properties along Northview to the North and White Oak Leisure Centre to the West. The school playing fields are designated as important areas of green space in the Sevenoaks Local Plan. *A location plan is attached.*
2. The application site is located within, and adjacent to, the south-west corner of the main Office building, and adjacent to and within the existing White Oak Pre-School Nursery building.

Background

3. The County Planning Authority granted planning permission in 2001 for a change of use of the site from the former White Oak Junior School to Adult Services offices and a pre-school unit, with associated additional parking, under reference SE/01/1453.

Proposal

4. This application proposes the creation of a community Children's Centre through the adaptation, refurbishment and extension of part of the existing office accommodation currently occupied by both KCC Adult Services and the Willows Pre-School Nursery. In addition to changes to the internal layout, the proposed external alterations to the building would include three small-scale extensions, to create an additional floorspace of approximately 120 square metres and replacement uPVC windows and aluminium doors to match existing fenestration. External works proposed also include the provision of a buggy store, and a steel framed canopy above a new impact absorbent play area. The canopy is proposed to provide a covered play space to be used as part of the Children's Centre.
5. The application has been made on behalf of the County Council's Children, Families and Education Directorate. The scheme is one of a number of similar applications being proposed across the County as part of Central Government's National Sure Start

Children's Centre at The Willows, Hilda May Avenue, Swanley – SE/07/2744

Existing / Proposed Elevations

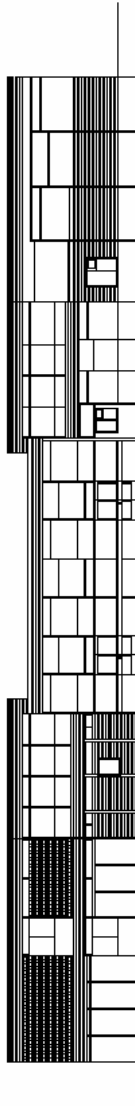
The drawing is copyright & the property of EC Harris & must not be copied in whole or in part without their written permission. Copyright is reserved. ©
 The drawing must not be altered. The Contractor is to report all dimensional discrepancies to the Architect immediately. It is essential that the drawing is used in conjunction with all specifications and contract works & that all works are included for.

Revision	1	EC Harris and North Architects added	15/02/2007
Comments			Date
Client	Kent County Council		
Drawn	J.C.		
Approved	J.C.		
Scale	1:200 (A3)		
Job No	2007/001		
Dwg. No.	207/4		

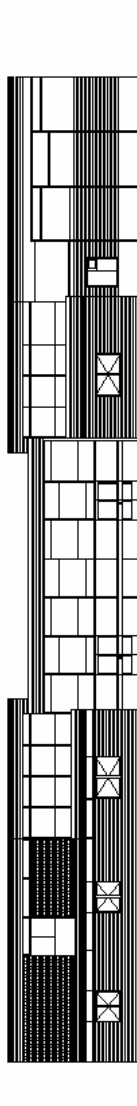


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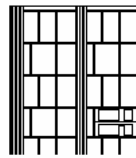
Existing South Elevation



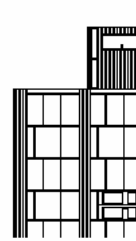
Proposed South Elevation

Dimension and level
 as shown

Dimension and level
 as shown

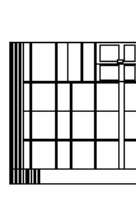


Existing West Elevation

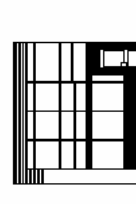


Proposed West Elevation

Dimension and level
 as shown

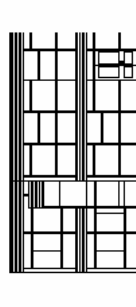


Existing North Elevation to new office

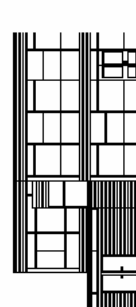


Proposed North Elevation to new Office

Dimension and level
 as shown



Existing East Elevation



Proposed East Elevation

Dimension and level
 as shown

Children's Centre at The Willows, Hilda May Avenue, Swanely – SE/07/2744

Programme, funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The main aim of the Sure Start Programme is to increase the availability of childcare for all children, improve health and emotional development for young children and support parents in their aspirations towards employment. The aim of the Children's Centre is to offer a range of health, adult education and family support services for the local community.

6. The application proposes a Children's Centre, which would contain a crèche / meeting room for use by parents who are using the Centre, as well as a second smaller multi-use room. Both rooms would provide flexible space for informal meetings through to formal seminar style learning. The arrangements also include an interview / medical room, an office area, staff room, kitchen and toilets.
7. The Children's Centre would operate as a separate community facility independent from the adjacent remaining office accommodation. The application proposes that the Centre would be open from 0800 to 1800 hours, Monday to Friday, 48 weeks of the year. The Centre would employ new 5 members of staff on a full time basis with the number rising for special events. The application states that the Centre is expected to generate up to 30 visitors across a normal day. The application sets out that the proposed nursery (which is currently on site and would be refurbishment by the current proposals) would have a roll of 52, with 26 pupils attending in the morning and 26 in the afternoon.
8. The application proposes that three parking spaces would be provided within the existing office car park for use by Centre staff. The Willows currently has a staff car park comprising of 42 car-parking spaces in total. The application states that the Centre has been located to minimise travel distances by being located within the community it is intended to serve, and visitors therefore would be encouraged to walk.
9. In addition, the application proposes a new section of 1.8m high green fencing to surround the external impact absorbent play area and proposed canopy structure.

Planning Policy

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

- (i) The adopted 2006 **Kent & Medway Structure Plan**:

Policy SP1 – The primary purpose of Kent's development and environmental strategy will be to protect and enhance the environment and achieve a sustainable pattern and form of development. This will be done principally by, amongst other matters:

- protecting the Kent countryside and its wildlife for future generations;
- protecting and enhancing features of importance in the natural and built environment;
- encouraging high quality development and innovative design that reflects Kent's identity and local distinctiveness and promoting healthy, safe and secure living and working environments;

Policy QL1 – All development should be well designed and be of high quality. Developments, individually or taken together, should respond positively to the scale, layout, pattern and character of their local surroundings. Development which would be detrimental to the built

Children's Centre at The Willows, Hilda May Avenue, Swanley – SE/07/2744

environment, amenity, functioning and character of settlements or the countryside will not be permitted.

Policy QL11 – Provision will be made for the development and improvement of local services in existing residential areas and in town and district centres, particularly where services are deficient. Flexibility in the use of buildings for mixed community uses, and the concentration of sports facilities at schools, will be encouraged.

Policy QL12 – Provision will be made to accommodate additional requirements for local community services in response to growth in demand from the community as a whole. The services will be located where they are accessible by walking, cycling and by public transport

Policy TP3 – Local Planning Authorities should ensure that development sites are well served by public transport, walking and cycling

Policy TP19 – Seeks development proposals comply with the respective vehicle parking policies and maximum standards adopted by Kent County Council and Medway Council.

(ii) The adopted 2000 **Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan**

Policy EN1 – Proposals for all forms of development and land use must comply with the policies set out in the Plan, unless there are overriding material considerations. The following criteria will be applied, amongst other matters, in the consideration of planning applications:

- the form of the development should be compatible in terms of scale, height and use of appropriate materials;
- the proposed development does not have an adverse impact on the amenities of a locality by reason of form, scale and height;
- the design of new development incorporates measures to deter crime;

Policy EN9 – The Local Planning Authority will safeguard important areas of green space within built confines.

Consultations

11. **Sevenoaks District Council:** has raised no objection to the application.

Swanley Town Council: was notified of the application on the 7 September 2007 and have expressed no comments to date.

Divisional Transportation Manager: has commented as follows:

“It would appear that the proposals enhance existing nursery facilities and provide additional community rooms by displacing some office floor space with some extension. I note that the project is aimed at a very local catchment area – with buggy pushing distance principles – and as such I would not seek to raise an objection”.

Environment Agency: has raised no objection to the proposal but offers the applicants advice on several issues, namely groundwater protection, foul drainage and the storage of fuel, oil and chemicals on the site. The site lies within a Source Protection Zone of a

Children's Centre at The Willows, Hilda May Avenue, Swanley – SE/07/2744

public water abstraction and care should be taken in the design of soakaways proposed for the site.

Local Member

12. The local County Member, Mr. M. Fittock, was notified of the application on the 7 September 2007. Mr Fittock commented as follows:

“Whilst I welcome the much needed Children’s Centre on the White Oak Ward, my first preference would be to make proper use of the redundant school site at Birchwood. If KCC Children, Families and Education will not consider any alternative site then I would reluctantly agree to this proposal, though would wish to go on record that my objections be noted as these Centres should not be placed in Social Services provision as they are intended to be servicing the whole community and not associated with Social Services provision.

The plans do not address the issue of drainage, as there are problems with water run off from the site, hence the willow trees. There have been reports of flooding in the past particularly when the gullies on the school site are not maintained.

The car parking allocation is also cause for concern. The assumption that users will not arrive in cars is totally wrong as anyone who visits the area when the school turns out will clearly see. The situation has been made worse this term with the closure of Birchwood School and all the parents from the West of the estate now using the Horizon School. The office space on the plans would indicate a higher use of professionals using the parking area. Two places are inadequate. You might be able to negotiate overflow usage in the White Oak Leisure Centre though they have often complained to the School about users’ unauthorised use. Parking in the street is limited because of the width of the estate roads. Maybe Swanley Town Council could be approached for overflow parking places in the nearby Woodlands complex?

There is an issue on the existing building about energy conservation. The old school was not double-glazed and the walls do not have insulation. If a refurbishment is going ahead then this needs to be brought up to standard.”

Publicity

13. The application was publicised by posting a site notice at the main entrance of the site with Hilda May Avenue, and the individual notification of 6 neighbouring residential properties.

Representations

14. I have received no letters of representation to date in connection to this application.

Discussion

Introduction

15. The application proposes to seek planning permission for a community Children’s Centre, comprising both internal remodelling works and several small-scale extensions. The application is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee as a result of

Children's Centre at The Willows, Hilda May Avenue, Swanely – SE/07/2744

an objection received from the local County Member. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (10) 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.

16. The proposed Centre is one of 52 similar facilities being applied for by KCC's Children, Families and Education Directorate across the County. The aim of the Children's Centre is to offer a range of health, adult education and family support services to provide for the needs of that particular local community.
17. The application proposes the adaptation, refurbishment and extension of part of the existing Willows Centre. In addition, the application proposes some further minor alterations to the exterior of the building, including replacement uPVC windows and aluminium doors, all of which would be covered by Permitted Development Rights. The application also includes the provision of an external buggy store, a toy store, and new steel framed canopy above a new area of impact absorbent play surface.

Location

18. The application site falls within most of existing built development, with only three small-scale extensions proposed for the north and south sides of The Willows building. It is worth noting that the school playing fields of the adjacent Horizon School (formerly White Oak Infants School) are designated as Important Areas of Green Space, under Policy EN9 of the Sevenoaks Local Plan. However, given that this proposal would not affect any of this area designated under Policy EN9, I cannot see a conflict with the development plan policy and would not raise an objection on these grounds.
19. Members will be aware of the views expressed by the local County Member, under paragraph (12), relating to an alternative site for this proposal at the former Birchwood School. Having investigated this suggestion further, the applicants have concluded that the Birchwood site has already been allocated within KCC as a potential capital receipt, and as such the site is to be sold for future redevelopment. Therefore, on the basis of these findings, I conclude that that site is no longer available for use as a Children's Centre.
20. In addition, it is also worth noting that the proposed development would involve the internal remodelling of the Willows Pre-School nursery, and the proposed Children's Centre would, if granted permission, work in connection with this existing function along with other nurseries within the surrounding area.
21. The proposal would not move the built development within the site towards residential properties, nor towards designated green space. Accordingly, I consider that the minor external changes and small-scale extensions would not be inappropriate in the context of Development Plan Policies or the local environment.

Traffic and Access

22. Another element of the application that requires consideration is the potential for the proposed use to generate additional traffic activity, including movements to and from the site, and whether any change in the use would result in an unacceptable impact on the surrounding area. The Children's Centre proposed would operate 'drop-in' style facilities

Children's Centre at The Willows, Hilda May Avenue, Swanely – SE/07/2744

to support young families in the immediate local community, provide a venue for occasional training events in support of this service, and provide a day nursery for 0-5 year olds.

23. The application proposes no new additional car parking facilities at The Willows centre, but instead proposes the delineation of 3 parking spaces, including one disabled bay, from the existing provision of 42 parking spaces on The Willows site. Whilst it is noted that there would be 5 full-time members of staff employed at the proposed Centre, the application sets out that staff would be employed from within a close proximity to the site. In addition, the application states that the proposed Centre would be taking over a large area of existing office space within the building, reducing the number of existing staff using the existing Willows car park.
24. There is no additional visitor car parking proposed apart from one disabled parking bay. The applicant states that all the Centres in Kent have been strategically located to minimise travel distances for the majority of the community it is intended to serve. The Sure Start scheme puts a great deal of emphasis on “buggy pushing distance” with the users of the centre encouraged to walk. It is estimated that the Centre would have up to 30 visitors in a day, over and above the existing number of visitors using the existing pre-school Nursery which would be relocated within the proposed Centre. However, the applicant advises that these visitors would be spread out over the 10 hours of operation and visiting primarily via an appointment system, rather than all on site at any one time. Only when a particular event, such as a seminar, is being provided would there be a number of people arriving at one time, who ought to be able to use the existing operational parking on the rest of the site by arrangement, bearing in mind the reduction in staffing at The Willows centre. I consider that if the proposal is approved, there is a potential risk that the congestion level might increase on some occasions but it is unlikely for this to be on a regular basis or to be sufficient enough to recommend refusal of the application on these grounds. Moreover, the Divisional Transportation Manager is satisfied that the surrounding highways have the capacity to accommodate those movements.
25. From a policy point of view, it is considered that the proposal meets the requirements of Policies TP3 and QL12 which require that community facilities be grouped together to reduce the need for travel, be easily accessible by walking and public transport. In the opinion of the Divisional Transportation Manager, the proposed development complies with vehicle parking policies and maximum standards adopted by the County Council as stated in Structure Plan Policy TP19. Bearing in mind the views expressed by the Divisional Transportation Manager, in paragraph (11) above, and the fact that some of the existing office staff would be displaced by new Children's Centre staff, I would not seek to raise an objection on highway and parking grounds.

Hours of Use

26. The proposed hours of use of the Centre have been stated by the applicants as being between 0800 to 1800 hours, 5 days a week, 48 weeks a year. In reality, these hours of operation would not be dissimilar from the hours of operation of the adjacent Adult Services Offices, or those of the existing pre-school nursery. Accordingly, I would not seek to raise an objection to the hours of use proposed by this application.

Design

27. The external changes and extension to the existing building in the application are relatively minor in nature. The proposed extensions are single storey, flat roofed and

Children's Centre at The Willows, Hilda May Avenue, Swanely – SE/07/2744

clad with white uPVC cladding to match the existing Willows building. In my opinion, given that the main building is of a similar nature to the proposed extensions, I would not raise an objection on design grounds. In addition to the proposed extensions, the other main element of the proposal is the steel-framed polycarbonate canopy located to the southern side of the Willows building. Taking account of the location and design of the structure, subject to a condition requiring the submission of materials to be used in construction of the canopy, I would not raise objection to the design of the canopy or the other minor external changes proposed in the application.

Drainage

28. Members will note the concerns relating to drainage and potential surface water run off from the site during periods of intense rainfall, as raised by the local County Member in paragraph (12). Bearing this issue in mind, the applicants have agreed that as a result of the new buildings a larger soakaway would be built to deal with surface water run off. In any case, should Members resolve to permit this application, a condition could be placed on any decision requiring the prior submission of a surface water drainage scheme to be approved by the County Planning Authority in consultation with the Environment Agency.
29. In addition, Members should note the advice given from the Environment Agency in relation to this application, as set out under paragraph (11) above. The Environment Agency states that *'the site lies within a Source Protection Zone III of a public water supply abstraction...[....]...and that care should be taken in the design of soakaways'*. Therefore, in my opinion I see no reason to raise an objection on these grounds, subject to an appropriate surface water drainage scheme being submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority.

Energy Conservation

30. It should be noted that the local County Member raised concerns relating to energy conservation of the existing Willows building. As part of this proposal, the application includes the replacement of all existing windows and doors within the Children's Centre to modern, energy efficient uPVC and aluminium replacements. As part of Building Regulations Approval, which would be needed for the works proposed in this case, there are strict controls for modern buildings requiring energy efficient techniques to be used within construction. With regards to the remaining Adult Service offices at the Willows Centre, it is not possible to control this building given that it falls outside of the application site.
31. In my opinion, given that the proposals include the replacement of existing windows and doors, and that the refurbishment and extension works will be required to be constructed using modern energy efficient techniques, I see no reason to raise an objection on these grounds.

Conclusion

32. Having regard to the Development Plan Policies, in addition to the material considerations raised by the local County Member in this case, I consider that the refurbishment and extension of the Willows Centre for use as a Community Children's Centre is in general conformity with the Development Plan. Whilst I note the views received from the local County Member, relating to an alternative site, surface water drainage, car parking and energy efficiency, I conclude that the majority of these issues have been addressed within the application, and where this is not the case could be

Children's Centre at The Willows, Hilda May Avenue, Swanely – SE/07/2744

secured by condition, and therefore I recommend that planning permission should be granted as set out in paragraph (33) below.

Recommendation

33.1 RECOMMEND that PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO conditions, including conditions to cover the following aspects:

- the standard time limit;
- the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
- surface water drainage scheme being submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority prior to any development commencing on site;
- details of materials of the canopy being submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority prior to any development commencing on site.

Case officer – Julian Moat	01622 696978
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Background documents - See section heading
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Item D3**Replacement of wooden palisade fencing with metal bow top railings – Rolvenden Primary School, Rolvenden – AS/07/1712.**

A report by the Head of Planning Applications Group to the Planning Applications Committee on 11 December 2007.

Application by the Governors of Rolvenden Primary School and KCC Children, Families and Education for the replacement of wooden palisade fencing with metal bow top railings, at Rolvenden Primary School, Hastings Road, Rolvenden.

Recommendation: Planning permission be permitted subject to conditions.

Local Member(s): Mr. M. Hill OBE

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. Rolvenden Primary School is situated on a small site to the south of the village centre of Rolvenden. The school is located on the edge of a predominantly residential area and on one side adjoins agricultural land. Vehicular access is via an access road to the north east of the site. The main school building is pitched roof Victorian style in construction, typical of many other village schools in the County. The school is situated on Hastings Road which is the main route through Rolvenden, north to Ashford and south towards East Sussex. The school is also situated in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a Special Landscape Area and the Rolvenden Village Conservation Area. A site location plan is attached.

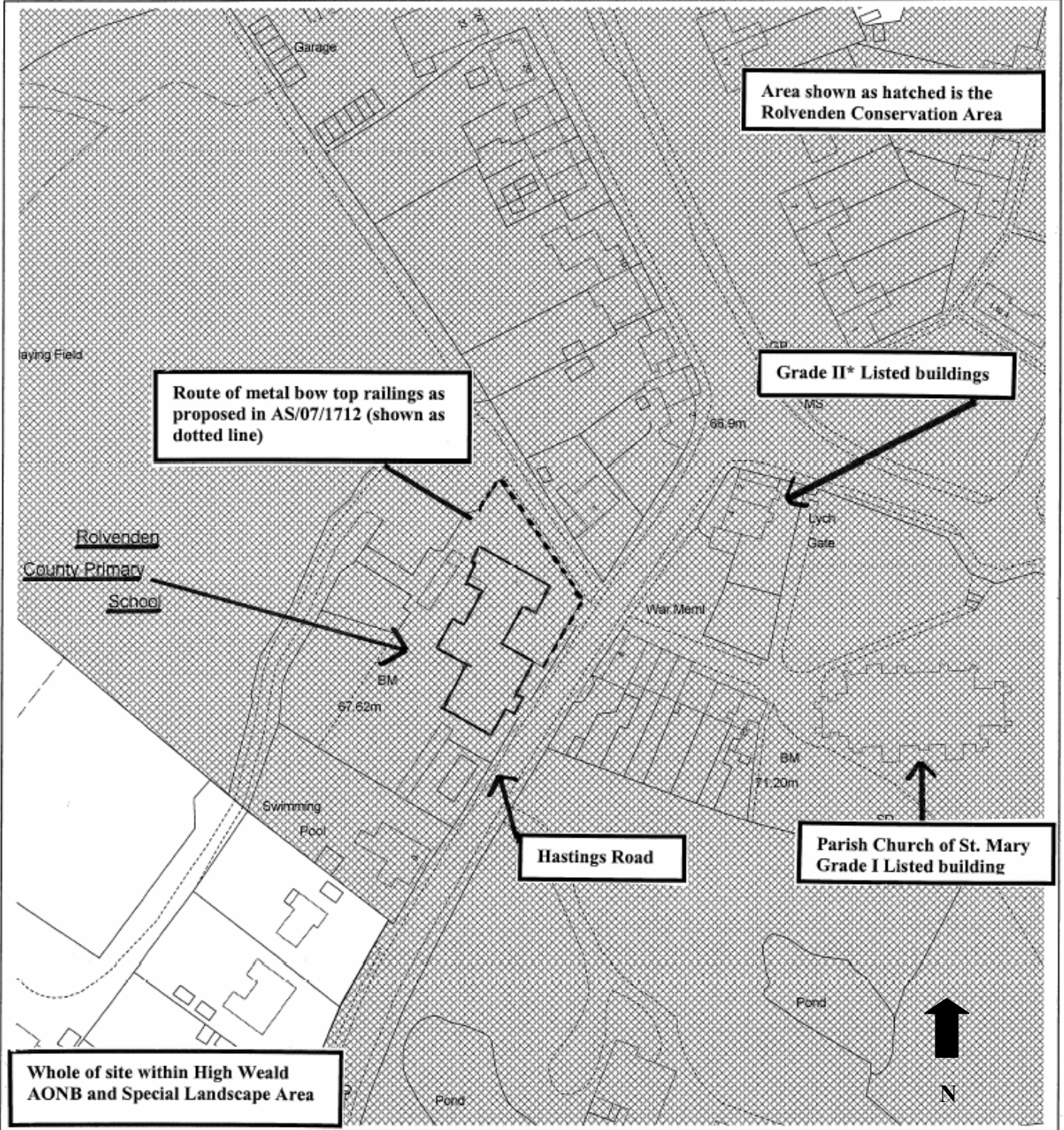
Proposal

2. The proposal seeks to replace the existing 900mm timber palisade fence with 1800mm metal bow top railings finished with a black paint treatment. The application when it was originally submitted proposed the replacement fence to be in the same style as the existing fence but measure 2m in height. That proposal was not acceptable in visual and design terms as it was considered by the KCC Conservation Architect that it would have had an overbearing and visually obtrusive impact on the setting of the Conservation Area. Following consultation with the KCC Conservation Architect, the applicant resubmitted the proposal in the form that it takes currently.
3. The proposal seeks to provide a stretch of approximately 60m of railings to replace the existing fence, extending from the original main school hall (as shown on drawing AL2 on page D3.3) adjacent to Hastings Road, along the north-east access road and would finish at the existing 1100mm gates which provide pedestrian access to the school's reception area. The overriding principle behind this proposal is to provide a safe and secure outdoor area for pupils to enjoy. Currently the area cannot be used to its full potential as the existing 900mm fence does not provide a sufficient level of security from intruders to the site, and it is also of a height which makes it possible for pupils to climb over the fence.

Item D3

Replacement of wooden palisade fencing with metal bow top railings – Rolvenden Primary School, Rolvenden – AS/07/1712.

Site Location Plan



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Replacement of wooden palisade fencing with metal bow top railings – Rolvenden Primary School, Rolvenden – AS/07/1712.

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Rev.	Description	Date	Check

Based upon the information provided by the client. Mouchelparkman, 23-25 Abbot Place, Maidstone, Kent ME14 6TS. Tel: +44 (0) 1622 772 800 Fax: +44 (0) 1622 772 801 E-mail: maidstone@mouchelparkman.com

mouchelparkman

Section: MAINTENANCE

Client: ROLVENDEN SCHOOL

Project: ROLVENDEN SCHOOL
HASTINGS ROAD,
ROLVENDEN, KENT TN17 4LS
PROPOSED BOUNDARY FENCE

Project No.: 730234/005

Drawing Title: PLANS AND ELEVATIONS

Drawn By: HWA **Checked:** TD

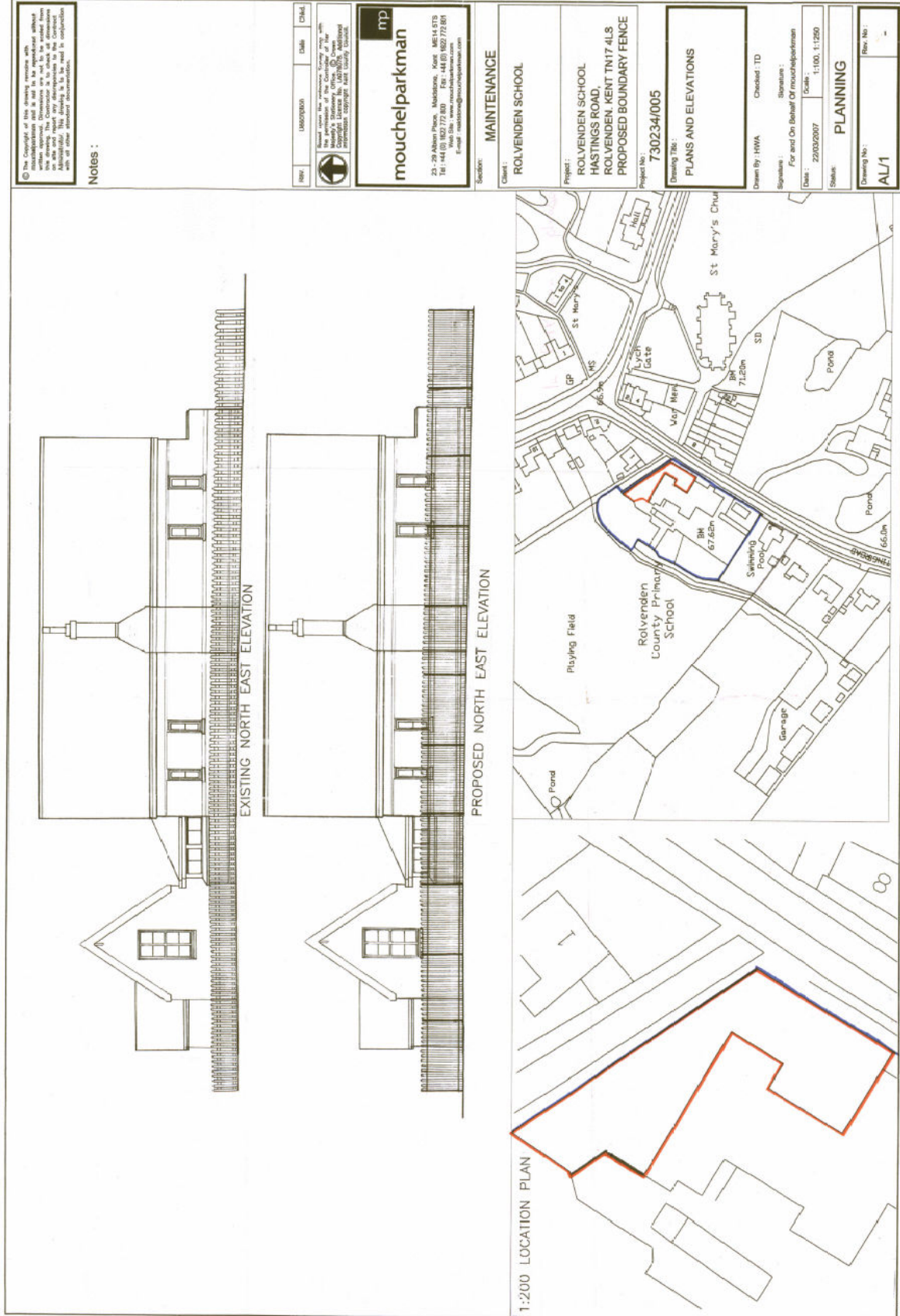
Signature: For and On Behalf Of mouchelparkman

Date: 22/03/2007 **Scale:** 1:100, 1:1250

Status: PLANNING

Drawing No.: AL/2 **Rev. No.:** -

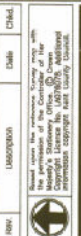
Replacement of wooden palisade fencing with metal bow top railings – Rolvenden Primary School, Rolvenden – AS/07/1712.



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DATE	UNDO/REVISION	DATE	DETAIL



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Section: MAINTENANCE

Client: ROLVENDEN SCHOOL

Project: ROLVENDEN SCHOOL
 HASTINGS ROAD
 ROLVENDEN, KENT TN17 4LS
 PROPOSED BOUNDARY FENCE

Project No: 730234/005

Drawing Title: PLANS AND ELEVATIONS

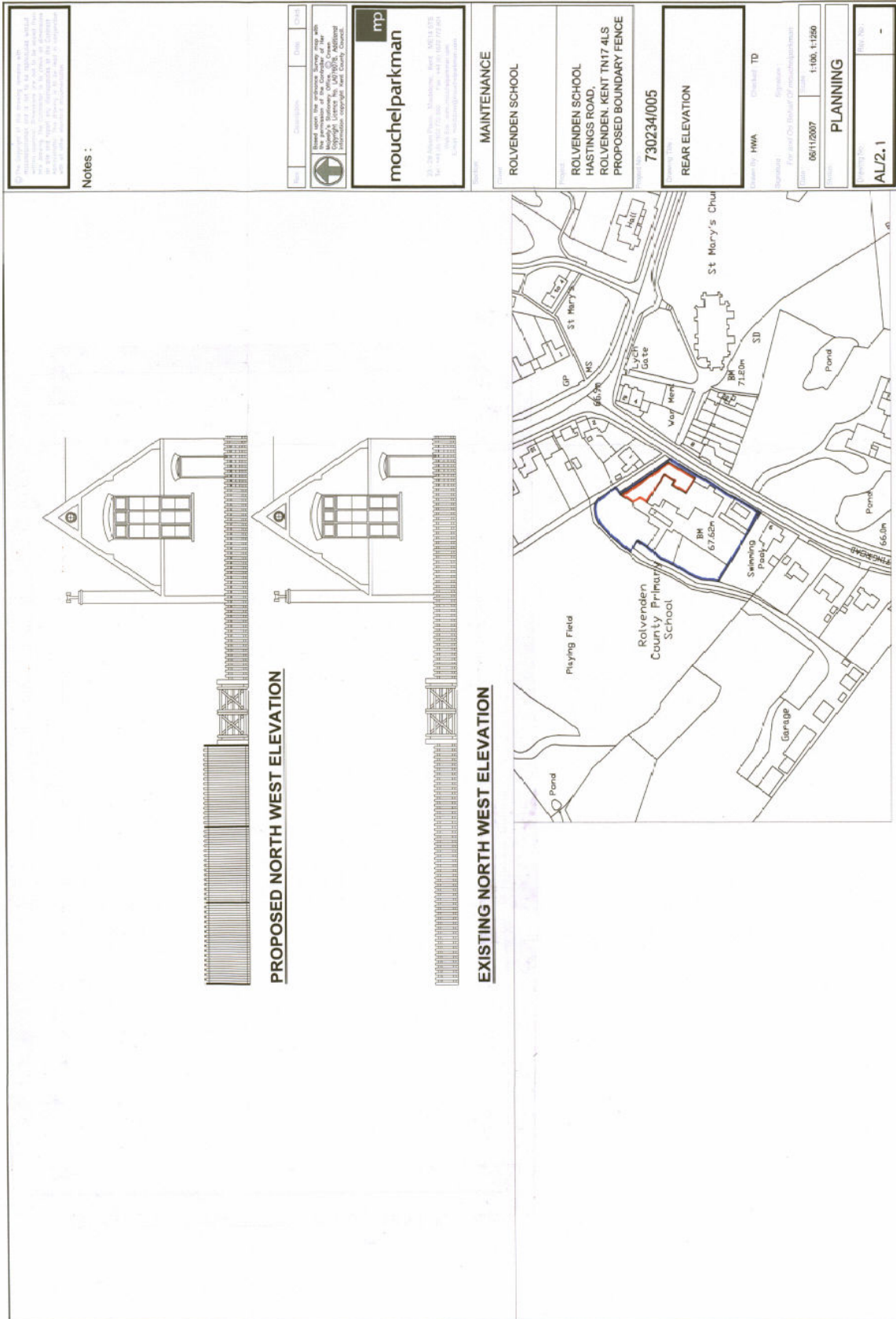
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 Signature: For and On Behalf Of mouchelparkman
 Date: 22/03/2007 Scale: 1:100, 1:1250
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 Drawing No: AL/1 Rev. No:

Item D3

Replacement of wooden palisade fencing with metal bow top railings – Rolvenden Primary School, Rolvenden – AS/07/1712.

Item D3

Replacement of wooden palisade fencing with metal bow top railings – Rolvenden Primary School, Rolvenden – AS/07/1712.



Notes :

Notes: Please refer to the site plan for the location of the proposed fence. The fence is to be installed along the boundary of the school grounds. The fence is to be made of metal bow top railings. The fence is to be installed along the boundary of the school grounds. The fence is to be made of metal bow top railings.

mp
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MAINTENANCE
ROLVENDEN SCHOOL
ROLVENDEN SCHOOL
HASTINGS ROAD,
ROLVENDEN, KENT TN17 4LS
PROPOSED BOUNDARY FENCE
730234/005

REAR ELEVATION

Project: HWA
Location: Rolvenden, TD
Date: 06/11/2007
Scale: 1:100, 1:1500

PLANNING
Drawing No: AL/2.1

Replacement of wooden palisade fencing with metal bow top railings – Rolvenden Primary School, Rolvenden – AS/07/1712.

Planning Policy

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

(i) **Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006**

Policy QL1 Quality of development and design – Developments, individually or taken together should respond positively to the scale, layout, pattern and character of their local surroundings.

Policy QL6 Development within Conservation Areas should preserve or enhance their character or appearance. Development, which would harm the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, will not be permitted

Policy QL11 Existing community services and recreation facilities will be protected as long as there is a demonstrable need for them

Policy SP1 Seeks to conserve and enhance Kent's environment ensuring a sustainable pattern of development and encourage high quality development and innovative design that reflects Kent's identity and local distinctiveness and promoting healthy, safe and secure living and working environments.

Policy EN4 Protection will be given to the nationally important landscape of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; the primary objective in this area will be to protect, conserve and enhance landscape character and natural beauty. Development, which would be detrimental to the natural beauty, quality and character of the landscape and quiet enjoyment of the area, will not be permitted. Development that is essential to meet local social or economic needs should be permitted provided that it is consistent with the purpose of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Policy EN5 The primary objective of designating Special Landscape Areas is the protection, conservation and enhancement of the quality of their landscapes, whilst having regard to the need to facilitate the social and economic well being of the communities situated within them.

(ii) **Ashford Borough Local Plan 2000**

Policy GP2 To protect and improve the quality of the Borough's urban, village and rural environments by safeguarding the setting and the character of settlements and buildings, and protecting the countryside for its landscape, heritage, nature conservation and recreational value.

Policy DP1 Planning permission will not be granted for development proposals, which are poorly designed in terms of their scale, density, height, layout, massing, landscaping, access or detailing.

Replacement of wooden palisade fencing with metal bow top railings – Rolvenden Primary School, Rolvenden – AS/07/1712.

Policy DP2 New development proposals must be designed in a way, which respects the character and appearance of the area around it, particularly in the countryside, in Conservation Areas and close to Listed Buildings.

Policy EN16 Development within Conservation Areas will be permitted, providing proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.

Policy EN27 Long-term protection will be given to Special Landscape Areas. Priority will be given over other planning considerations to the conservation or enhancement of natural beauty

(iii) **Ashford Borough Local Development Core Strategy (Submission Document) 2006. Examination in Public (EiP) stage - awaiting Inspectors Report February 2008.**

Policy CS1 Sustainable development and high quality design are at the centre of the Council's approach to plan making and deciding planning applications. Development must respect the environmental limits that protect the high quality built and natural environment of the Borough, the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and built heritage, protection for the countryside, landscape and villages from adverse impacts of growth and the promotion of strong rural communities.

Policy CS7 In considering development proposals in the countryside, priority will be given to the need to protect the quality and character of the area. All development proposals must respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape. In designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the conservation and enhancement of their natural beauty will be given priority.

Policy CS9 Development proposals must be of high quality design and demonstrate a positive response to each of the following design criteria: Character; Distinctiveness and Sense of Place; Permeability and Ease of Movement; Legibility; Mixed use and Diversity; Continuity and Enclosure; Quality of Public Spaces; Flexibility, Adaptability and Liveability; Richness in Detail.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

5. The County Council has a legal obligation under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which directs that the Council must have community safety embedded into its planning, policy and operational day to day activity. It requires authorities to assess crime and disorder considerations in their decision making.

Replacement of wooden palisade fencing with metal bow top railings – Rolvenden Primary School, Rolvenden – AS/07/1712.

Consultations

6. **Ashford Borough Council** – Raises objection on the grounds that the development by virtue of its scale and form and that it would be in a prominent position which would result in an incongruous, overbearing and unsympathetic feature in the Rolvenden Conservation Area. The development would also be detrimental to the setting of nearby Listed Buildings and the AONB and SLA.

Rolvenden Parish Council – No comments received to date.

English Heritage – Raises no objection.

KCC Conversation Architect - Raises no objection and confirms that the use of a hooped metal railing is an improvement on the original proposal to use a timber picket fence. The use of the metal hooped railing is far more appropriate for the frontage of a school in this location as it does not visually impact on the frontage as much as a timber fence.

Divisional Transportation Manager – Raises no objection.

Local Member

7. The local County Member Mr. M. Hill OBE was notified on 18 September 2007.

Publicity

8. The application was advertised by the posting of a site notice, notification of 16 neighbouring properties and by press advert in the Kent and Sussex Courier published on Friday 28 September 2007.

Representations

9. No letters of representation have been received.

Discussion

- 10 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 in considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (4), Government Guidance paragraph (5) and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity.

- 11 The planning application seeks to replace an existing 900mm wooden palisade fence with 1800mm metal bow top railings. The purpose of the increase in height is to provide improved security to the infants play ground and garden area and allow these spaces to be used more than is practically possible at the current time. The main issues to consider when determining the application are the impact the proposal has in terms of its

Replacement of wooden palisade fencing with metal bow top railings – Rolvenden Primary School, Rolvenden – AS/07/1712.

design and overall appearance on the Rolvenden Conservation Area, surrounding Listed Buildings, the AONB and SLA and the necessity for the development.

Design and Appearance

12. The school is bounded by agricultural land and residential properties, some of which are Listed Buildings, including two Grade II* properties and the Grade I Parish Church of St Mary's also in relatively close proximity. The school is sited directly on the busy thoroughfare of Hastings Road, it is therefore in a prominent position in the general landscape. There is in total an approximate length of 74 metres of new railings proposed, 30m of this is to be sited along the boundary with Hastings Road with the remaining length extending along the side access road to the rear of the school. That section of the railings would be adjacent to the school's garden area, which contains some well-established vegetation and trees. This area of vegetation would also help to reduce the impact of the development on the surrounding locality.
13. The replacement railings would measure 1800mm in height with each railing measuring 19mm in diameter with 100mm between each railing. The distance between each railing post would measure 3000mm and they would have domed post caps. The narrow widths of each individual railing would result in the overall scheme not appearing bulky and obtrusive in appearance. I would also suggest that visually the proposed scheme would be an improvement on that which is evident currently. Even though the proposed development is double the height of the existing fence, due to the narrow railing widths and gaps between railings and posts, I would consider it to be less visually obtrusive than the existing wooden fence. The existing wooden palisade sections measure around 100mm in width and appear as a dominant and obtrusive feature on the landscape especially when viewing the school from the Hastings Road aspect. Furthermore, it also provides a minimal level of security contrary to the requirements of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
14. In the opinion of the KCC Conservation Architect (paragraph 6) and myself, the latest choice of new railing design is not considered visually obtrusive or detrimental to the setting of the Conservation Area. I therefore regard it as being in accordance with Structure Plan Policies SP1 and QL1 relating to quality of design. Furthermore, I consider the proposed development to be in accordance with Structure Plan Policy QL6 as it would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and surrounding Listed Buildings. Moreover, it is worth considering that in other Conservation Areas around Kent secure boundary treatment has been provided in a similar style to the railings proposed in this planning application. Fig. 1 on page D3.10 below provides a good example of a similar scheme at another village School in a Kent Conservation Area.
- 15 Structure Plan Policies EN4 & EN5, Ashford Borough Local Plan Policies EN27 and Core Strategy Policy CS7 presumes against inappropriate development within the AONB and SLAs and afford long-term protection to the landscape over all other considerations. However, this particular application is for a minor development, and whilst it is situated in the AONB and a SLA, the nature of the proposed development is small scale, coupled with the design and materials to be used, I would consider there to be minimal impact on the landscape of the locality or the wider AONB and SLA. I do not consider, therefore, that the requirements of Structure Plan Policies EN4 & EN5 and Ashford Local Plan

Replacement of wooden palisade fencing with metal bow top railings – Rolvenden Primary School, Rolvenden – AS/07/1712.

Policy EN27 and Core Strategy Policy CS7 to be contravened as a result of this proposal. I accept that there would be some limited localised impact but do not consider there to be sufficient justification to warrant refusal, given that the impact would only be within the built confines of the settlement and not discernible within the wider AONB or SLA.

Fig.1



Need for the development

16. Whilst the need for the development is not strictly a determining factor in considering planning applications, the County Planning Authority has a legal obligation under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which directs that community safety be embedded into planning decisions, policy and our day to day living. Therefore when reaching a decision on this case, consideration should be given to the need by the applicant for improved secure boundary treatment. The existing fence is below 1m in height and clearly provides no realistic, secure deterrent to potential criminal activity, furthermore, fencing of this height provides no practical means to prevent pupils from climbing over the fence and potentially gaining access onto the busy Hastings Road.
17. A recent Ofsted inspection highlighted that the school's pupils needed to have increased access to the infant playground and garden area which was described in their report as uninviting and difficult to access, recommending that the area be made more accessible and stimulating. Issues regarding internal access and making the area more stimulating have been addressed which leaves the question of making the space a safe and secure working environment. The Inspector went on to explain the importance for children to work outside independently as part of their entitlement to learning. The proposed development would provide a visually attractive yet secure area that would allow the area behind the railings to be brought fully back into use after many years of only being able to be used at times when a considerable number of staff are on duty.

Replacement of wooden palisade fencing with metal bow top railings – Rolvenden Primary School, Rolvenden – AS/07/1712.

Conclusion

18. Whilst I am mindful that the proposed railings would be double the height of the existing wooden palisade fence, I am of the opinion that due to the materials and the design of the railings proposed the impact on the surrounding locality would be minimal. I consider that there is a strong rationale that metal railings of this style and size should not be considered as detrimental and I am of the opinion that they do indeed preserve and enhance the setting of the Conservation Area and surrounding Listed Buildings and are therefore in accordance with Structure Plan Policies SP1, QL1 and QL6, Ashford Local Plan Policies GP2, DP1, DP2, EN16 and Core Strategy Policy CS1. Furthermore, due to the small scale nature of the proposal and the minimal localised impact of the proposal, I do not consider the application to be contrary to Structure Plan Policies EN4 and EN5, Ashford Local Plan Policy EN27 and Core Strategy Policy CS7 to warrant refusal of the application. I therefore recommend that permission be granted subject to the conditions.

Recommendation

19. I RECOMMEND that PLANNING PERMISSION BE PERMITTED subject to conditions, including conditions covering:

- The standard time condition;
- The development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted plans.

Case officer – Adam Tomaszewski	01622 696923
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Background documents - See section heading
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E1 COUNTY MATTER APPLICATIONS AND DETAILS PURSUANT PERMITTED/APPROVED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS - MEMBERS' INFORMATION

Since the last meeting of the Committee, the following matters have been determined by me under delegated powers:-

Background Documents - The deposited documents.

MA/06/1397/R6 Details of an archaeological excavation and watching brief.
Syngenta Works, Hampstead Lane, Yalding, Maidstone

E2 CONSULTATIONS ON APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED BY DISTRICT COUNCILS OR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS - MEMBERS' INFORMATION

Since the last meeting of the Committee, I have considered the following applications and - decided not to submit any strategic planning objections:-

Background Documents - The deposited documents.

CA/07/1430 New access road off Sturry Road for park and ride.
Park & Ride Sturry, Sturry Road, Canterbury

DA/07/1122 Application for the Variation of Condition 32 to allow use of site from
0600 hours on any day.
Princes Park Stadium, Grassbanks, Dartford

DA/07/1067 Application for the Variation of Condition 31 of Planning Permission
DA/05/246/FUL in respect of extending closing hours 23.00 hours to
23.30 hours Monday to Thursday and 00.30 hours on Friday to
Sunday with the closing at 01.30 hours every Christmas Eve and New
Years Eve.
Princes Park Stadium, Grassbanks, Dartford

DA/07/1066 Application for the removal of Condition 24 of Planning Permission
DA/05/246/FUL with respect to amplified music/sound and the
Variation of Condition 28 to allow stadium, pitch, terracing and seating
to be used for other activities other than football matches/training.
Princes Park Stadium, Grassbanks, Dartford

DA/07/1065 Application for the removal of Condition 19 Part H of Planning
Permission DA/05/246/FUL in respect of limiting number of car
parking spaces to a maximum of 25 between 0600-0900 hours in
week days.
Princes Park Stadium, Grassbanks, Dartford

MA/07/2143 Advertisement consent for the installation of 1 Billboard style
advertisement.
Q S PLC, 10-11 High Street, Maidstone

- SW/07/1280 Outline planning application for one detached bungalow with detached garage.
Land adjacent 26 The Leas, Minster, Sheppey
- SW/07/1279 Outline planning application for one four bedroom detached house.
Land adjacent to The Willows, Minster Drive, Minster, Sheppey
- TH/07/1361 Erection of refreshment kiosk and provision of children's play area and multi-use games area.
Dane Park, Park road, Margate

E3 COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS AND DETAILS PURSUANT PERMITTED/APPROVED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS MEMBERS' INFORMATION

Since the last meeting of the Committee, the following matters have been determined by me under delegated powers:-

Background Documents – The deposited documents.

- AS/07/1496/R3 Reserved details – Details of surface water drainage pursuant to condition (3) of planning permission AS/07/1496 – Extension to the approved new One Form of Entry school.
Phoenix Community School, Belmont Road, Kennington, Ashford
- AS/07/1345/R3 Reserved fence details. Creation of Children's Centre.
Hothfield Village Primary School, School Road, Hothfield, Ashford
- AS/07/1401/R Amendment to plans permitted under AS/07/1401 to include the removal of two windows.
Godinton Primary School, Lockholt Close, Ashford
- AS/07/1731 New community liaison room alterations and extension to reception.
East Stour Primary School, Earlsworth Road, South Willesborough, Ashford
- AS/07/1793 To demolish a derelict and redundant outdoor toilet block, formerly an air raid shelter and construct a new single storey multi-purpose building for staff, and relay tarmac paving.
St Marys C of E Primary School, School Hill, Chilham, Canterbury
- CA/06/1392/R4/R Amendment to approved external materials; alternative brick.
King Edward Court, King Edward Avenue, Herne Bay
- CA/07/705/R16 Reserved details – Details of a scheme for the disposal of foul and surface waters – All weather sports pitch.
The Community College Whitstable, Bellevue Road, Whitstable

CA/07/921	Construction of a single storey modular building with a flat roof including canopies to the front and rear, plus the creation of three new parking spaces including one disabled within the existing school car park. Wincheap Foundation Primary School, Hollowmede, Canterbury
CA/07/1169	Demolition of existing centre and construction of new children and youth centre. Parkside Centre, Kings Road, Herne Bay
CA/07/1339	Conservatory extension. Whitstable & Seasalter Endowed Junior School, High Street, Whitstable
DO/07/1077	Single storey reception, library, quiet room, head teacher's room, and fully accessible toilet. Capel-le-Ferne Primary School, Capel Street, Capel-le-Ferne, Folkestone
DO/07/1150	Erection of fixed canopy and formation of new door opening. Goodnestone CE Primary School, The Street, Goodnestone
DO/05/1420/R	Amended details – Amendment to allow phasing of the construction of the new detached building. Castle Community School, Mill Road, Deal
DO/07/1093	Extension and refurbishment of an existing unused building to create a Children's Centre including the construction of 5 additional car parking spaces and associated fencing. Eythorne and Elvington Primary School, Adelaide Road, Eythorne, Dover
DO/07/939	Extension comprising two classrooms linked to original school building and demolition of old mobile classroom. Northbourne Church of England Primary School, Northbourne, Deal
DO/07/1208	Retention and renewal of consent for 2 mobile classrooms. Hornbeam Primary School, Mongeham Road, Great Mongeham, Deal
GR/07/673	Application for new building works for the refurbishment and extension of existing unused classrooms to create a Children's Centre, including the installation of a canopy. Plus the creation of an external impact absorbent play area. Kings Farm Primary School, Cedar Avenue, Gravesend
MA/05/2213/R7	Details of a scheme of landscaping. Boughton Monchelsea Primary School, Church Hill, Boughton Monchelsea
MA/06/859/R	Amended details – Minor amendments including the relocation of the sports hall entrance, changes to the school main entrance arrangements and an alteration to the arrangement of windows along the north elevation of the new administration extension. Bower Grove School, Fant Lane, Maidstone

MA/06/859/R11	Reserved details of the proposed slab levels of the extension. New administration block. Bower Grove School, Fant Lane, Maidstone
MA/06/859/R12	Reserved details of the design and construction of the foundations of the classroom block. Bower Grove School, Fant Lane, Maidstone
MA/06/859/R13	Reserved details of the re-grading of the playing field. Bower Grove School, Fant Lane, Maidstone
MA/06/859/R14	Reserved details of a scheme for the disposal of foul and surface waters. Bower Grove School, Fant Lane, Maidstone
MA/06/859/R18	Amended details – Request to vary the terms of condition 18 to allow construction vehicles to enter/leave the site between 08.30 and 9.30 and 15.00 and 16.00. New administration extension. Bower Grove School, Fant Lane, Maidstone
MA/07/15/R2	Construction details. Strategic Head Quarters, Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone
MA/07/952/R2	Archaeology Brief – Demolition of an existing conservatory and construction of a larger extension. West Borough Primary School, Green way, Maidstone
MA/07/1469/R8	Details of external lighting pursuant to condition (8) of planning permission reference MA/07/1469 for a Children’s Centre. South Borough Primary School, Stagshaw Close, Postley Road, Maidstone
MA/07/1530/R3	Reserved matters – Details of tree protection measures for additional disabled persons car parking bay spaces. Molehill Copse Primary School, Hereford Road, Maidstone
MA/07/2055	Installation of two new canopies. Thurnham Primary School, The Landway, Bearsted, Maidstone
MA/07/2080	Canopy and Shed. Park Way Primary School, Park Way, Maidstone
MA/07/2158	Retention of existing temporary classrooms. Greenfields Community Primary School, Oxford Road, Maidstone
MA/07/2157	Extension to form new lobby area to the main entrance of the school. North Borough Junior School, Peel Street, Maidstone
SE/07/2759	Single storey timber garden building to be used as an informal meeting room. Sundridge & Brasted C.E. Primary School, Church Road, Sundridge

- SH/06/1287/R5 & R7 Reserved details – Landscaping and external lighting details for block of care and supported apartments.
Whitegates, Whitegates Close, Hythe
- SH/06/1287/R12 Reserved details – Cycle parking details for block of care and supported apartments.
Whitegates, Whitegates Close, Hythe
- SH/07/1161 Creation of a Children’s Centre within existing redundant space and minor internal works.
Dymchurch Primary School, New Hall Close, Dymchurch
- SH/07/1361 Refurbishment of existing unused classrooms to create a Children’s Centre, including the installation of a canopy along with the creation of an external impact absorbent play area, additional entrance doors, fencing and buggy park.
Lydd Primary School, Skinner Road, Lydd, Romney Marsh
- SW/07/833 Application for the upgrade and permanent retention of existing mobile classroom and refurbishment of existing unused classroom spaces for use as a Children’s Centre, including the installation of a covered walkway, storage unit, fencing and external impact absorbent play area.
Murston Infants School, Church Road, Murston, Sittingbourne
- SW/07/1103 Provision of a mobile classroom to be used as a music room.
Lansdowne Primary School, Gladstone Drive, Sittingbourne
- SW/07/397/R5 Reserved details – Details of materials pursuant to condition (5) – Steel framed portal building.
The Westlands School, Westlands Avenue, Sittingbourne
- SW/05/1540/R6 Amended details – amendment to change the permitted hours of use for Newington Nursery.
Newington Primary School, School Lane, Newington
- SW/07/1175 Provision of a mobile classroom.
Bysing Wood Primary School, Lower Road, Faversham
- SW/07/1154 Provision of new mobile classroom.
Swale Speech & Language Unit, Minterne Primary School, Minterne Avenue, Sittingbourne
- SW/07/1226 Workshop with a short length of linked footpath.
St. Georges C of E (Aided) Middle School, Chequers Road, Minster-on-Sea, Isle of Sheppey
- TH/07/628/R7 Details of visibility splays to vehicular access – New Children’s Centre.
Newington Junior School, Princess Margaret Avenue, Ramsgate
- TH/07/628/R4 Reserved matters – Details of a scheme for the disposal of foul and surface water.
Newington Junior School, Princess Margaret Avenue, Ramsgate

TH/07/1348	Single storey extension to provide staff facilities and parents meeting room. St Mildreds Primary Infant School, St Mildreds Avenue, Broadstairs
TH/07/1358	Pedestrian gate and barrier to public footpath and new store to school hall. St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Nash Road, Margate
TH/07/1056	An application to vary the terms of condition 10 of planning permission TH/05/1341, which would enable the permitted sports hall to be used by existing pupils of Ursuline College, during school hours, prior to the construction of a right turn lane into the college from the A28. Ursuline College, 255 Canterbury Road, Westgate-on-Sea.
TH/07/75/R3	Details of materials pursuant to condition 3 of planning permission reference TH/07/75. Stone Bay School, 70 Stone Road, Broadstairs
TM/03/2958/R3	Construction of three storey teaching/administration block and sports hall, replacement netball/tennis courts, and ancillary works – Details of the levels for the development. Tonbridge Grammar School for Girls, Deakin Leas, Tonbridge
TM/03/2958/R6	Construction of three storey teaching/administration block and sports hall, replacement netball/tennis courts, and ancillary works – Details of external materials. Tonbridge Grammar School for Girls, Deakin Leas, Tonbridge
TM/03/2958/R9	Construction of three storey teaching/administration block and sports hall, replacement netball/tennis courts, and ancillary works – Access details. Tonbridge Grammar School for Girls, Deakin Leas, Tonbridge
TM/03/2958/R10	Construction of three storey teaching/administration block and sports hall, replacement netball/tennis courts, and ancillary works – Constructional details of emergency access. Tonbridge Grammar School for Girls, Deakin Leas, Tonbridge
TM/03/2958/R14	Construction of three storey teaching/administration block and sports hall, replacement netball/tennis courts, and ancillary works – Methodology statement for working in close proximity to trees. Tonbridge Grammar School for Girls, Deakin Leas, Tonbridge
TM/03/2958/R17	Construction of three storey teaching/administration block and sports hall, replacement netball/tennis courts, and ancillary works – Details of obscure glazing to west facing corridor windows and door. Tonbridge Grammar School for Girls, Deakin Leas, Tonbridge
TM/03/2958/R7	Construction of three storey teaching/administration block and sports hall, replacement netball/tennis courts, and ancillary works – Details of surface water drainage. Tonbridge Grammar School for Girls, Deakin Leas, Tonbridge

TM/03/2958/R8	Construction of three storey teaching/administration block and sports hall, replacement netball/tennis courts, and ancillary works – Details of external lighting. Tonbridge Grammar School for Girls, Deakin Leas, Tonbridge
TM/03/2958/R18	Construction of three storey teaching/administration block and sports hall, replacement netball/tennis courts, and ancillary works – School Travel Plan. Tonbridge Grammar School for Girls, Deakin Leas, Tonbridge
TM/06/2349/R	Amendments to site layout and to design of salt barn – Redevelopment of existing depot. Hayesden Depot, Upper Hayesden Lane, Tonbridge
TM/06/2349/R5 & R6	Details relating to tree protection, landscaping and boundary treatment and maintenance - Redevelopment of existing depot. Hayesden Depot, Upper Hayesden Lane, Tonbridge
TM/06/2349/R4, R8, R11, R13 & R14	Site and finished floor levels, foul and surface water drainage, contractor's site compound and vehicle parking - Redevelopment of existing depot. Hayesden Depot, Upper Hayesden Lane, Tonbridge
TM/07/3622	Two mobile classrooms at the back of the Sports Hall. The Judd School, Brook Street, Tonbridge
TM/07/3706	Erection of a 6 metre white flagpole. Woodlands Junior School, Hunt Road, Tonbridge
TM/07/199/R5	Details of foundation/ piling design and below ground works pursuant to condition (5) of planning permission TM/07/199 – Two storey classroom extension and entrance. Sussex Road School, Sussex Road, Tonbridge
TM/07/199/R6	Details of the final exterior finish to the entrance extension pursuant to condition (6) of planning permission TM/07/199 - Two storey classroom extension and entrance. Sussex Road School, Sussex Road, Tonbridge
TM/07/199/R7	Details of the branding proposed to the entrance extension pursuant to condition (7) of planning permission TM/07/199 - Two storey classroom extension and entrance. Sussex Road School, Sussex Road, Tonbridge
TM/07/199/R8	Details of external lighting pursuant to condition (8) of planning permission TM/07/199 - Two storey classroom extension and entrance. Sussex Road School, Sussex Road, Tonbridge
TM/07/187/R14	Details of a scheme for the disposal of foul and surface waters pursuant to condition 14 of planning permission TM/07/187. St James the Great Primary and Nursery School, Chapman Way, East Malling

TM/07/187/R

Amended positioning of pedestrian access.
St James the Great Primary and Nursery School, Chapman Way,
East Malling

**E4 DETAILED SUBMISSIONS UNDER CHANNEL TUNNEL RAIL LINK
ACT 1996**

Since the last meeting of the Committee, the following matters have been determined/responded to by me under delegated powers:-

Background Documents – The deposited documents.

None

**E5 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 1999 – SCREENING OPINIONS
ADOPTED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

Background Documents –

- *The deposited documents.*
- *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999.*
- *DETR Circular 02/99 – Environmental Impact Assessment.*

(a) Since the last meeting of the Committee the following screening opinions have been adopted under delegated powers that the proposed development does not constitute EIA development and the development proposal does not need to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement:-

DC29/07/SH/0002 Proposed anaerobic digestion plant and materials recycling facility at Otterpoole Quarry, Ashford Road, Sellindge.

TM/07/TEMP/0049 Variation of conditions 2 (importation of inert, soils and compost after December 2007), 3 (details of new wheel washing facility), 4 (amendment to drawings as approved under permission TM/03/3946), 7 (fencing details around existing pond and surface water attenuation feature), 10 (type of waste deposited at the site to allow 'clean water sludge' as well as compost), 28 (variation of approved landscaping restoration scheme), 30 (retention of access/maintenance track into the site) and condition 31 (revised restoration scheme) of planning permission TM/03/3946 dated 1 April 2004 at Offham Landfill Site, Teston Road, Offham.

- (b) Since the last meeting of the Committee the following screening opinions have been adopted under delegated powers that the proposed development does constitute EIA development and the development proposal does need to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement:-

None

E6 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 1999 – SCOPING OPINIONS ADOPTED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

- (b) Since the last meeting of the Committee the following scoping opinions have been adopted under delegated powers.

Background Documents -

- *The deposited documents.*
- *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999.*
- *DETR Circular 02/99 - Environmental Impact Assessment.*

None

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