

Proposed first floor extension to the sports pavilion, including a two-storey side extension for access and external emergency escape staircase at Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 7BT – MA/21/502002 (KCC/MA/0078/2021)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 10 November 2021.

Application by Maidstone Grammar School and Kent County Council for proposed first floor extension to the sports pavilion to allow for additional teaching space, including a two-storey side extension for access and toilets, together with an external emergency escape staircase – Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone, ME15 7BT (Ref: KCC/MA/0078/2021 and MA/21/502002).

Recommendation: Planning permission to be granted, subject to conditions.

Local Member: Mr T Cannon and Mr D Daley

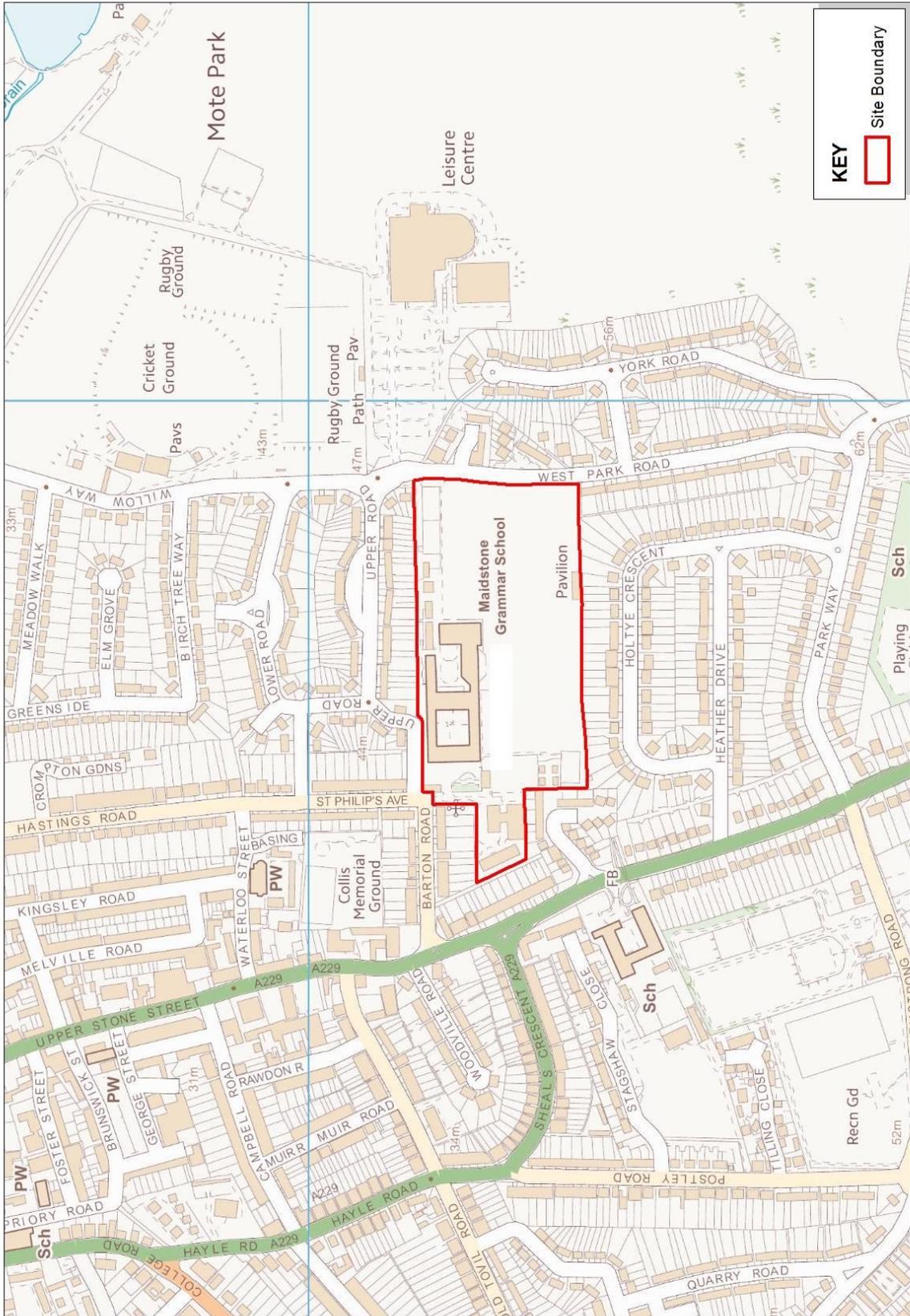
Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. Maidstone Grammar School is located off Barton Road, which is to the south east of Maidstone, in a predominantly residential area. These residential properties which surround the site are predominantly two-storey with a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced properties mainly originating from the twentieth century. Mote Park and Maidstone Leisure Centre are located to the east of the school site and are accessed off West Park Road which runs along the school's eastern boundary. The main vehicular and pedestrian entrances to the school are located off Barton Road/St Philips Avenue but there is also a pedestrian entrance from West Park Road. The school consists of buildings of varying size and age, the original building dating from the 1930's. The main school buildings are located on the north side of the campus adjacent to Upper Road. To the south of these buildings are the schools playing fields, consisting of grassed sports pitches, and a recently constructed floodlit 3G Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) located within the south western corner of the site and adjacent to the rear gardens of properties in Holtye Crescent. Also located on the playing field is the old pavilion building. A new single storey sports pavilion was granted planning permission in 2017 and completed in 2018 and is located in the south-west corner of the site.
2. The School has completed a variety of new buildings within the past few years which were commissioned to provide up to date facilities for the existing and proposed additional pupils. In addition to the new floodlit 3G Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP), the School has also recently erected a single storey pavilion, a new arts block to provide new music rooms, practice rooms and performing arts studio, which is located at the end of the row of school buildings along the northern boundary. The School has also demolished an existing single storey classroom block which was located close to the northern boundary of the school site and erected a two-storey block to provide new science laboratories and IT classrooms.

Proposed first floor extension to sports pavilion – Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone – MA/21/502002

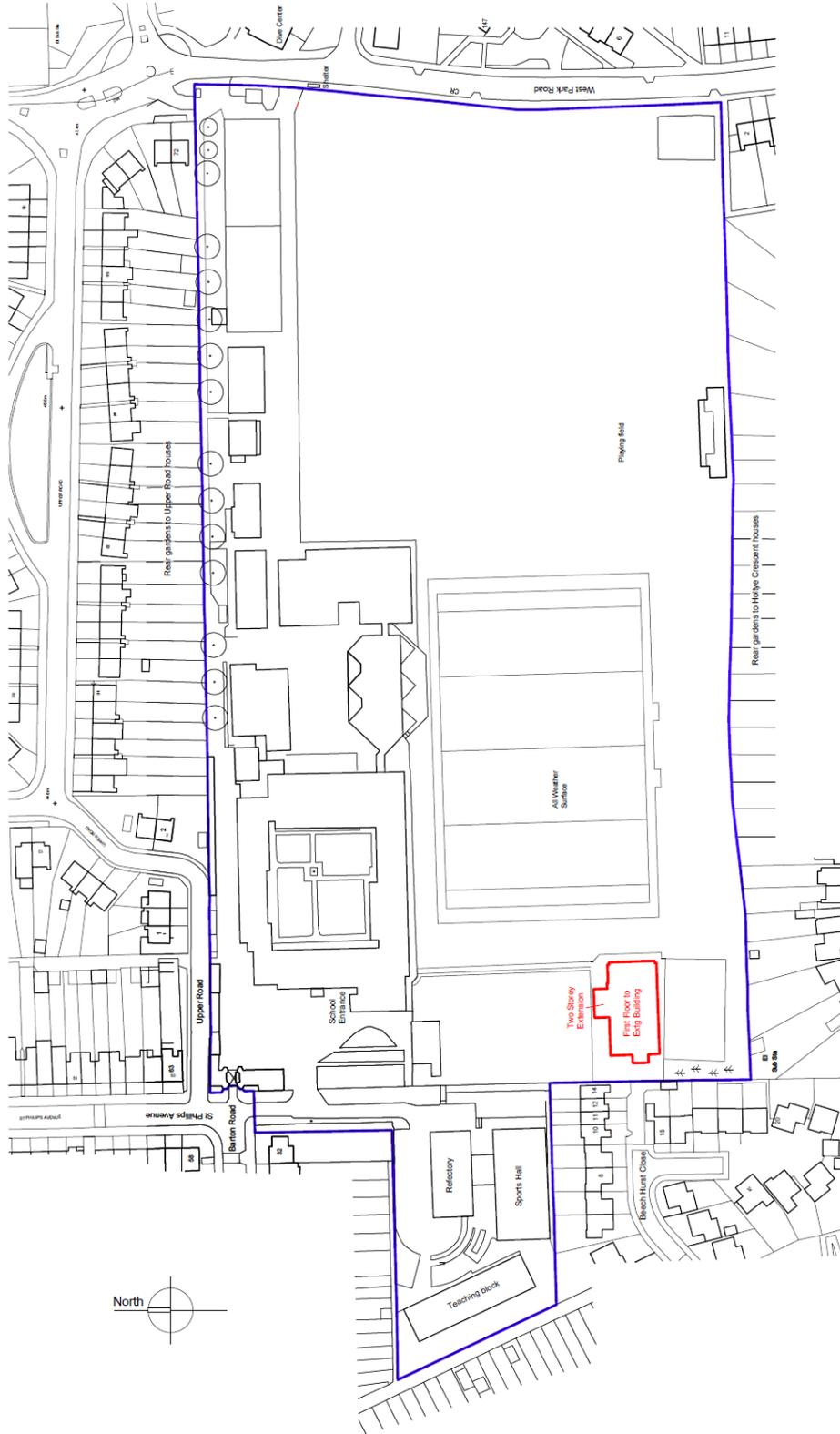
Site Location Plan



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Geomatics Survey, 1/50,000

Proposed first floor extension to sports pavilion – Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone – MA/21/502002

Site Location Plan



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| Drawing Title | 794 : P01 |
| LOCATION PLAN | |

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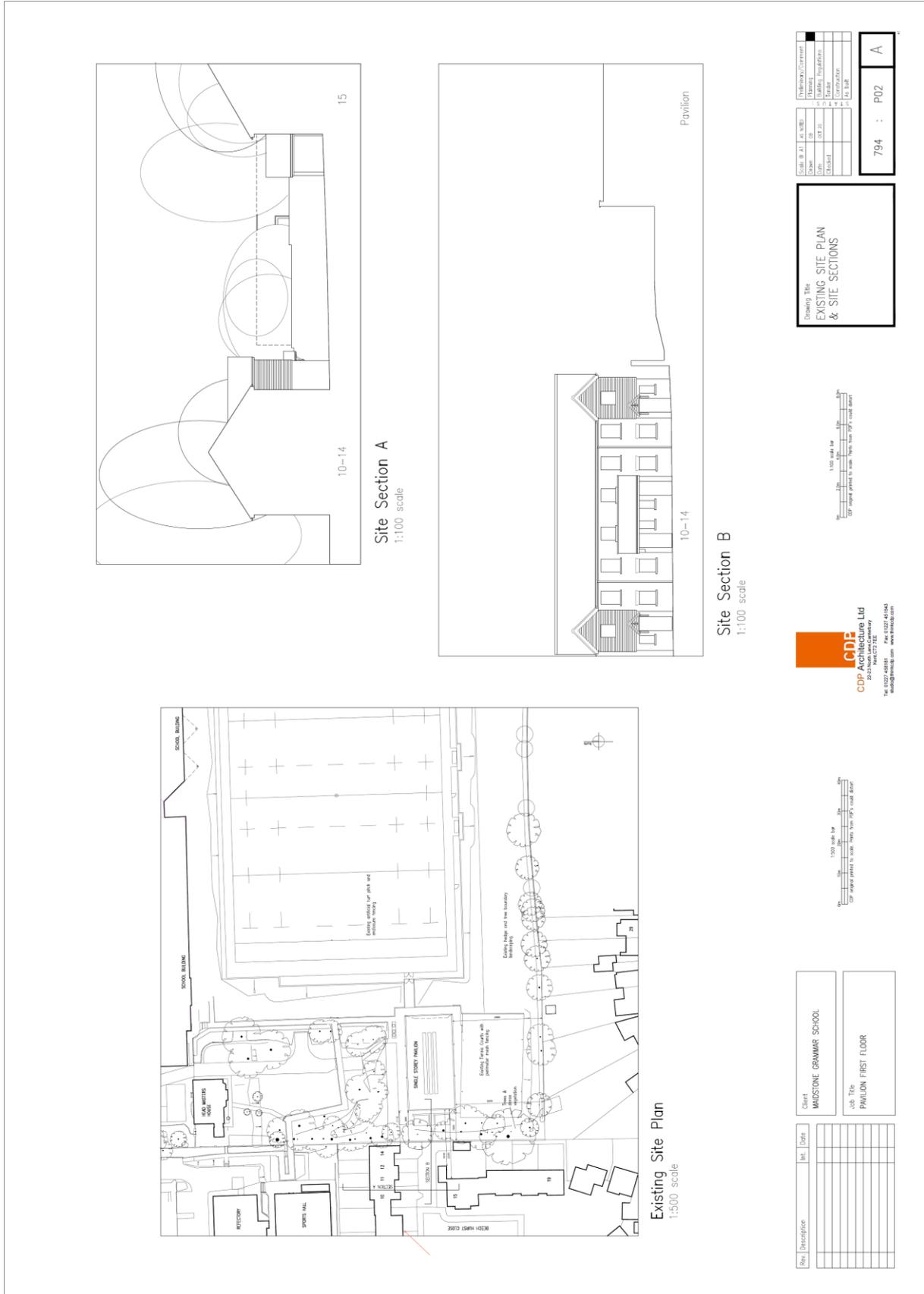


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| Client | MAIDSTONE GRAMMAR |
| Job Title | PROPOSED PAVILION EXTENSION |

| Rev | Description | Int. | Date |
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Proposed first floor extension to sports pavilion – Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone – MA/21/502002

Existing Site Plan and Site Sections



Proposed first floor extension to sports pavilion – Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone – MA/21/502002

Existing Floor Plans and Elevations

Existing South Elevation

Existing East Elevation – Front

Existing Ground Floor Plan

Existing Roof Plan

Existing North Elevation

Existing West Elevation – Rear

Existing Materials:
 Flat roof including PV solar panels: Weisberg Ltd, Warrington Red Stock
 External wall render: Weisberg Ltd, Warrington Red Stock
 External wall render: Weisberg Ltd, Warrington Red Stock
 S3502-3.
 Powder coated aluminium joinery
 Zinc magnesium colour metal rainwater goods.

1:100 scale for
 (For other parts to look from this roof plan)

Client: MAIDSTONE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Job Title: PAULDON FIRST FLOOR

Scale: A1 1:100

Date: 07/20

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794 : P03

Existing Title: EXISTING FLOOR PLANS & ELEVATIONS

CDP Architecture Ltd
 100-102, The Arcade, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 2JF
 Tel: 01752 448181 Fax: 01752 448182
 Email: info@cdparch.co.uk Website: www.cdparch.co.uk

Proposed first floor extension to sports pavilion – Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone – MA/21/502002

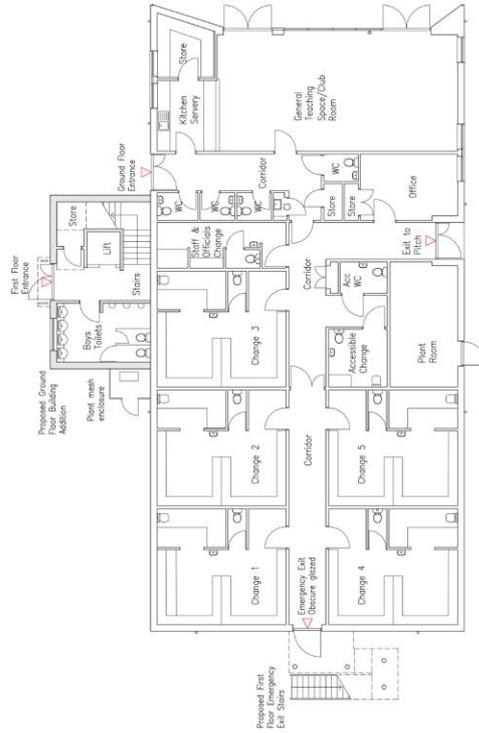
Proposed Ground Floor Plan and Elevations



Proposed East Elevation – Front



Proposed South Elevation



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

Proposed External Materials:
 Flat profile slate grey tiled pitched roof including
 Parapet
 Red stock face brickwork walls matching existing
 and pre-painted zinc wall cladding, existing
 Zinc magnesium colour metal rainwater goods.

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Drawing Title
**PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR
 PLAN & ELEVATIONS**

794 : P05 A



CDP
Architecture Ltd
 2015-2016
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| Client: | MAIDSTONE GRAMMAR SCHOOL |
| Job Title: | PAVILION FIRST FLOOR |

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Proposed first floor extension to sports pavilion – Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone – MA/21/502002

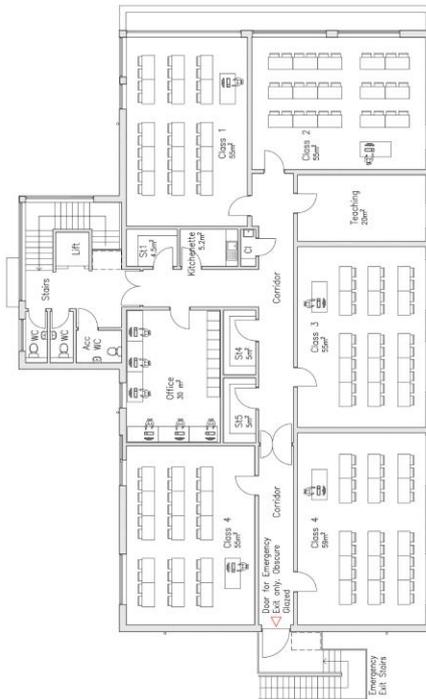
Proposed First Floor and Roof Plan and Elevations



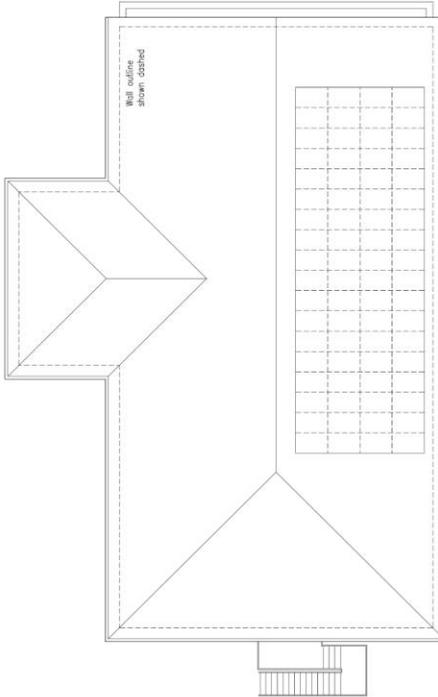
Proposed North Elevation



Proposed West Elevation – Rear



Proposed First Floor Plan



Proposed Roof Plan

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| Client: | MAIDSTONE GRAMMAR SCHOOL |
| Job Title: | PAVILION FIRST FLOOR |

CODE
CDP Architecture Ltd
 201-203, The Arcade, Maidstone, Kent ME14 2JF
 Tel: 01622 494400 Fax: 01622 494444
 www.cdparchitecture.com



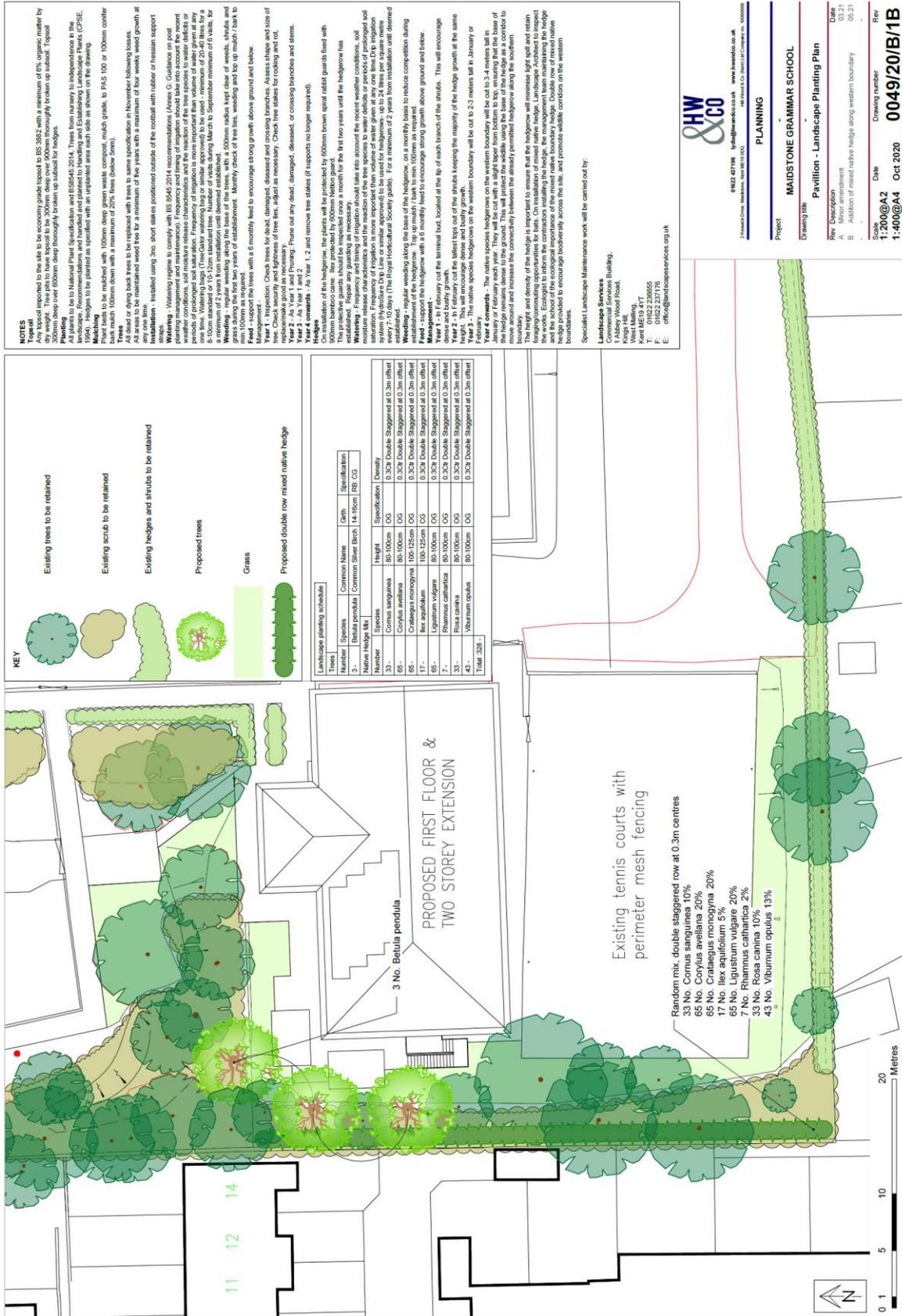
Drawing Title
**PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR
 ROOF PLAN & ELEVATIONS**

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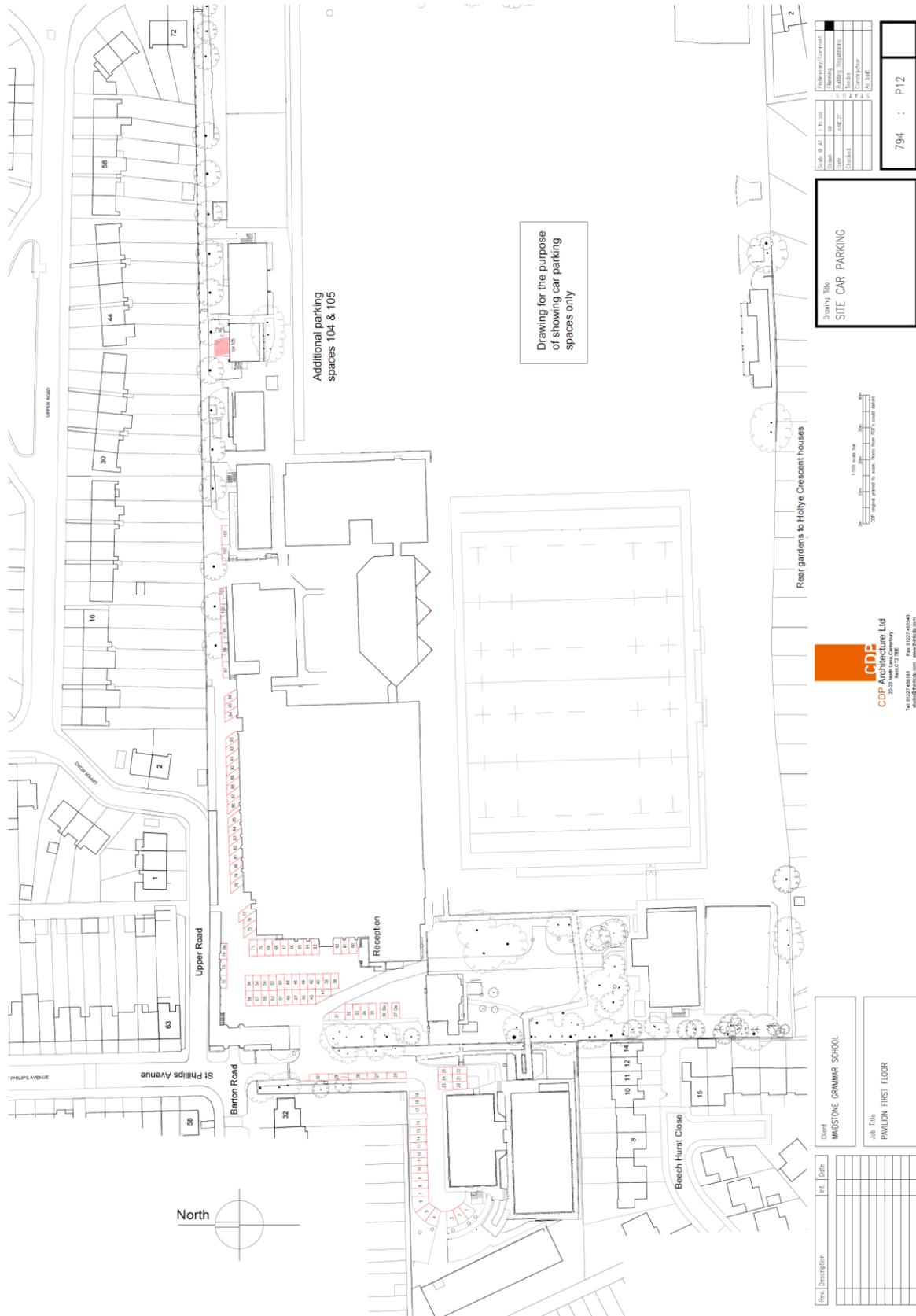
Proposed first floor extension to sports pavilion – Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone – MA/21/502002

Proposed Landscaping Planting Plan



Proposed first floor extension to sports pavilion – Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone – MA/21/502002

On-site Car Parking Location Plan



Proposed first floor extension to sports pavilion – Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone – MA/21/502002

3. To the west of the 3G ATP in the corner adjacent to the rear of the properties in Beech Hurst Close and Holtye Crescent is the single storey pavilion building. To the immediate south of the pavilion is a fenced multi use court and to the north stands the former School House, with further school buildings to the east, north of Beech Hurst Close. The western boundary between the pavilion and Beech Hurst Close is relatively well screened with mature trees, the boundary to the south of the school site adjacent to the rear gardens of the houses in Holtye Crescent is also marked by an established hedge and a line of trees.

Background

4. Maidstone Grammar School has a long history dating back to 1549 and earlier occupying various premises with the town and moved to its current site in 1930. In 1993 the School moved from taking pupils from age 13 to age 11 and the first of the new intake at the age 11 had to pass the 11+ exam to gain entry to the school. At that time the school had five forms of entry (5FE) with a Planned Admission Number (PAN) of 150 pupils per year group, giving a school roll of 750 pupils. However due to the demand for grammar school places, the school was required to move to a 6FE in the late 1990's and the PAN was increased to 175 pupils per year group with five additional school places available for appeals, so the school had 6 forms of 30 pupils. This was a school roll of 900 pupils. The PAN of 175 was always surpassed but not enough to have required an additional form of entry which could not be accommodated within the existing buildings and grounds provision. Some creative timetabling was already required to accommodate the existing students because of a lack of specialist accommodation and inadequate playing field provision, which was inadequate for the existing numbers.
5. The Education Committee endorsed the Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2016-2020, which identified the need for additional secondary school places in the Maidstone district. In September 2017 the number of students requiring grammar school places significantly surpassed the number of grammar school spaces available. As a consequence, Maidstone Grammar School was asked to expand by one more form of entry a year earlier than expected. 205 places were offered and after appeal's a further 4 places were allocated. Since 2017 the school has surpassed its PAN of 205 students after statutory appeals, peaking at 220 students in a year group. There is also no reason to believe that similar numbers of appeals will not successfully make it through the appeal process in forthcoming years.
6. The School's net capacity of 1326 students is calculated according to the existing accommodation. The school was built on its present site in 1930 and since then a mixture of buildings have been added over the years to cater for the growing needs for grammar school places. However, many of the classrooms are small and not able to accommodate classes of up to 32 or 33 children which the school has needed since becoming a 7FE school in 2017. Therefore, the School's net capacity does not rationalise nor support the problems the School is encountering in accommodating large numbers in classes throughout all year groups (7-13).
7. The School has suited departments, so that all students (years 7-13) move around the school to be taught in specialist areas. Pressure on accommodation has started to impact the School from this September when the current year 11 cohort of students have access to the sixth form. Students who enter the school in year 7 are able to access the sixth form if they make the necessary entry requirements so these students are already in the school. Some may not make the entry requirements whilst others opt to move to other sixth forms. However, the School does accept a number of transferees each year in line with parental choice. Sixth form classes use many of the same classrooms as the

Item D2

Proposed first floor extension to sports pavilion – Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone – MA/21/502002

students in years 7-11 because set sizes for sixth form classes are often as large as the set sizes in years 7-11.

8. The sixth form will increase in size again in 2022 when the first of the large cohorts' complete year 11 (September 2017 entry). This will put unsustainable pressure on the School's accommodation. Specialist accommodation will be overused creating possible health and safety issues and there will be pressure on the School to be able to offer all the students the courses of their choosing. From September 2023, the sixth form numbers will continue to increase.
9. The tables below demonstrates the projected student numbers in the School in September 2020 and an updated table received from the School with actual pupil numbers for September 2021. Thereafter, a prudent figure of 216 students has been included in year 7 to allow for appeals. The School has no control over the numbers of students allowed via the appeals process, but these additional students have an impact on the current building provision and the ability to be able to continue to fit these large classes into the existing accommodation.

| Year Group | September 2020 | September 2021 | September 2022 | September 2023 |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 7 | 218 | 216 | 216 | 216 |
| 8 | 220 | 218 | 216 | 216 |
| 9 | 214 | 220 | 218 | 216 |
| 10 | 209 | 214 | 220 | 218 |
| 11 | 183 | 209 | 214 | 220 |
| Total Years 7-11 | 1044 | 1077 | 1084 | 1086 |
| 12 | 189 | 183 | 209 | 214 |
| 13 | 149 | 189 | 183 | 209 |
| Total Sixth Form | 338 | 372 | 392 | 423 |
| Total Numbers | 1382 | 1449 | 1476 | 1509 |

(data from the Planning Statement showing the proposed pupil numbers– dated June 2021)

| Year Group | September 2020 | September 2021 | September 2022 | September 2023 |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 7 | 218 | 199 | 216 | 216 |
| 8 | 220 | 217 | 199 | 216 |
| 9 | 214 | 218 | 217 | 199 |
| 10 | 209 | 213 | 218 | 217 |
| 11 | 183 | 208 | 213 | 218 |
| Total Years 7-11 | 1044 | 1055 | 1063 | 1066 |
| 12 | 189 | 200 | 208 | 213 |
| 13 | 149 | 187 | 200 | 208 |
| Total Sixth Form | 338 | 387 | 408 | 421 |
| Total Numbers | 1382 | 1442 | 1471 | 1487 |

(updated actual school pupil numbers for September 2021 received from the School)

Proposed first floor extension to sports pavilion – Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone – MA/21/502002

10. From the two tables above, it is possible to see the predicted pupil numbers (from June 2021) and proposed pupil numbers, as taken in September 2021. The school has confirmed that the reason that in September 2021 they took in under their planned admission number was due to the number of students that did not pass the Kent Test, and that some pupils in Years 8, 10 and 11 have subsequently moved away from the area and no longer attend this school. The School has also confirmed that this will not be the norm in the future, now that face to face teaching has resumed and this is why the total numbers are slightly adrift from the figures that the School previously predicted (table from June 2021). The School's normal PAN is 205 but as is evident from the table above, the School is continuously oversubscribed and are substantially over their net capacity (of 1326 pupils). Accommodating the pupil numbers for September 2021 has been extremely difficult, due to having insufficient space to teach the pupils and that some of the current classrooms are bulging at the seams. The applicant has confirmed that this situation will only be eased by having the additional, large classroom capacity, which is needed to support the curriculum needs of the school.
11. In September 2020, the number of teaching staff was confirmed as 122 members of staff. Approximately 75% of staff are full time and the remainder are part time. As a result of this planning application, it is proposed to employ 2 new members of staff, thus bringing the total number of staff to 124. Furthermore, the school has confirmed that the school has 105 car parking spaces, including 3 disabled parking spaces and 2 visitor parking spaces, 6 motorcycle spaces and space for 189 bicycles. Current school hours are between 8.40am and 3.30pm Monday to Friday.
12. The existing single storey sports pavilion incorporates 5 changing rooms, a PE office, 1 clubroom, general teaching space and associated support facilities and is located in the south west corner of the site. The site was previously the location of four mobile classrooms which were removed as they were well beyond their design life and in a poor state of repair.

Supporting Statement from the County Council's Area Education Officer

13. "The County Council commissioned additional school places in Years 7 to 11 at Maidstone Grammar School in 2017 in order to meet the County Council's statutory duty in response to a Basic Need in the area. The first of the larger cohort will enter Year 11 in September 2021 after having progressed through the school and therefore the maximum number of students across Years 7 to 11 will be on roll. The configuration of the school's existing accommodation, with some classrooms being unable to accommodate 30 students, and the school's intention to increase the size of the Sixth Form in proportion to the increase in Years 7 to 11 to enable students to progress to Year 12 (subject to the school's admission criteria) means that the school requires additional classroom space to accommodate all students that will be on the roll of the school in future years.
14. The School has submitted this planning application which proposes to build an additional floor onto a single storey building to accommodate five additional classrooms. The application is fully supported by the Local Education Authority. In particular, we recognise the challenges related to the size of some of the school's existing classrooms and the pressure that places on both the total capacity of the school and the need for the school to configure classroom space to enable full access to specialist teaching settings. The Local Education Authority fully supports the application as the school's remedy to this".

Proposed first floor extension to sports pavilion – Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone – MA/21/502002

Recent Planning History

15. The most relevant recent site planning history is listed below;

| | |
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| MA/18/502822 | Creation of 3G Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) with fencing, floodlighting and associated features. Granted with conditions. |
| MA/18/504116 | Retrospective application for a new grasscrete fire appliance path for access to new pavilion. Removal of existing poor quality trees and creation of additional car parking spaces along boundary of current car park. Granted retrospective planning permission. |
| MA/17/502397 | Proposed new single storey pavilion changing facility with supporting club room/teaching space and office accommodation. Granted with conditions. |
| MA/16/507442 | Proposed new 2-storey performing arts block to provide new music classrooms, practice rooms and performing arts studio space with associated stores and offices. Granted with conditions. |
| MA/16/507463 | Demolition of existing single storey classroom block and erection of new 2-storey block to provide 3 additional science labs and 2 IT classrooms with additional storage and associated prep space. Granted with conditions. |
| MA/14/504889 | Proposed extension and refurbishment of the existing sports pavilion. Granted with conditions. |
| MA/13/796 | Proposed recladding of existing walls and roof to existing sports hall. Granted with conditions. |

Proposal

16. This planning application proposes to construct a first-floor extension onto the existing flat roof single storey pavilion, with a two-storey side extension for access and an external emergency staircase. The first-floor extension proposes 5 large teaching rooms (minimum 55m²), 1 smaller teaching room, 1 staff office together with associated support facilities, including stores, kitchenette, accessible toilet, female toilets, male toilets, staircase and platform lift. The provision of an additional 2 car parking spaces and associated landscaping is also proposed.
17. In order to meet the pressing demand for additional teaching space as outlined above, the applicant has given consideration to the limited alternatives available to the school and has identified the potential to extend the recently constructed single storey pavilion building upward as being the most appropriate solution to the school. The proposed design has been formulated to provide a suitable facility to address current and future growth of the school and to enhance the appearance of the existing single storey pavilion building.

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18. The existing flat roof single storey pavilion building is approximately 31 metres long by 15.5 metres wide and with a height of 3.7 metres. It is constructed in brickwork with a glazed elevation facing the sports pitches. The proposed first floor would have the same footprint as the existing pavilion but with a slight set back to the east facing the playing field. It is therefore proposed that the first-floor footprint would be 29.6 metres long by 15.5 metres wide. A small two storey extension some 8.5 metres across and 5 metres deep on the northern elevation is proposed to provide a ground floor entrance, toilets and stairs/lift to the first floor.
19. The proposed first floor with a low-pitched roof above would measure approximately 5.7 metres to the underside of the eaves, an increase of approximately 2.15 metres above the existing wall parapet and with a ridge height of approximately 8.6 metres. The eaves of the proposed two storey extension to the north of the existing pavilion building, which would house the first-floor access stairs, would align with the rest of the proposal, with its ridge 1.0 metres below that of the main ridge.
20. The proposed building would include a gable end roof to the eastern elevation facing the school playing field. The rest of the proposed building is designed with fully hipped roofs to the two-storey extension to the north and to the western end of the building facing Beech Hurst Close. This has been designed so that the roof hips would help to reduce the impact of the proposed building to the adjacent boundaries and properties beyond.
21. Externally it is proposed that the new first floor would be finished in a red stock brick to match the existing ground floor building and also to include zinc wall cladding and powder coated aluminium window and door joinery. The low-pitched roof is proposed to be finished with a flat profile, slate grey tiled roof and would include a PV solar panel array. At the western end of the building is proposed an external fire escape. It is proposed that the first-floor external door onto the stairs would have obscured glazing so that there would be no overlooking of adjacent properties. This proposed secondary means of escape from the building is a formal requirement and would only ever be used in an emergency. No other west elevations fenestration is proposed so that there would be no overlooking of this boundary or properties beyond. A large array of windows on the east elevation would provide views across the playing field, whilst the other room windows to the north (towards the existing school building) and to the south (towards Holtye Crescent) side elevations would give daylight and ventilation into the proposed classrooms.
22. The existing single storey pavilion is located approximately 10 metres from the school site boundary to the west with Beech Hurst Close, which is a development of two storey dwellings and associated garages. The area between the existing pavilion and boundary includes a series of mature trees and low-level soft landscaping. The site boundary between the school and Beech Hurst Close is a 2.2 metre to 2.4 metre high brick wall (measured on the Beech Hurst Close wall side). As part of this planning application, it is proposed to reinforce the existing tree belt on the western (Beech Hurst Close) boundary by further tree planting.

Planning Policy Context

23. The most relevant Government Guidance and Development Plan Policies summarised below are appropriate to the consideration of this application:
 - (i) **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2021** and the **National Planning Policy Guidance** (first published in March 2014), sets out the Government's planning policy guidance for England, at the heart of which is a presumption in favour of

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sustainable development. The guidance is a material consideration for the determination of planning applications but does not change the statutory status of the development plan which remains the starting point for decision making. However, the weight given to development plan policies will depend on their consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the development plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

In determining applications, the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decisions in a positive and creative way, and decision takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

In terms of delivering sustainable development in relation to this development proposal, the NPPF guidance and objectives covering the following matters are of particular relevance:

- Consideration of whether the opportunities for sustainable transport have been taken up and safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people;
- Achieving the requirement for high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- Taking a positive approach to applications that make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space and making decisions that promote an effective use of land while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions;
- Ensure that planning policies and decisions provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, by planning positively for the provision and use of shared spaces and community facilities such as sports venues or open spaces to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
- Planning policies and decisions should prevent unacceptable risks from pollution and land instability and should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location;

In addition, Paragraph 95 states that: *The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools.*

- (ii) **Policy Statement – Planning for Schools Development (15 August 2011)** which sets out the Government’s commitment to support the development of state-funded schools and their delivery through the planning system. In particular, the Policy states that the Government wants to enable new schools to open, good schools to expand and all schools to adapt and improve their facilities. This will allow for more

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provision and greater diversity of provision in the state funded school sector, to meet both demographic needs, provide increased choice and create higher standards.

(iii) Maidstone Borough-Local Plan 2017 – Adopted October 2017- Policies:

Policy SP1 **Maidstone Urban Area.** Defines the extent and form of development Maidstone urban area will be expected to accommodate over the plan period and the key infrastructure improvements this will require.

Criteria V (b) of this policy specifically identifies the need for additional secondary school capacity including a one form entry (1FE) expansion of Maidstone Grammar School.

Policy DM1 **Principles of Good Design.** Covers the principles of good design which proposed development should accord with, including reference to permeable layouts; responding to local natural or historic character and incorporating a high quality, modern design approach; high quality public realm; respecting the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties; respecting natural features such as trees and hedges; high quality design which responds to surrounding areas; maximising opportunities for sustainable development; protecting on-site biodiversity; safely accommodating vehicle and pedestrian movements; incorporating security measures to design out crime; avoiding areas at risk of flooding; incorporating adequate storage of waste and recycling; and providing adequate vehicle and cycle parking; and being flexible towards future adaptation in response to changing life needs.

Proposals need to respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties and uses and provide adequate residential amenities for future occupiers of the development by ensuring that development does not result in, or is exposed to, excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicular movements, overlooking or visual intrusion, and that the built form would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy or light enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby properties.

Policy DM2 **Sustainable Design.** Proposals need to ensure that buildings are constructed with sustainable design features incorporated into the build.

Policy DM3 **Natural Environment.** Proposals need to ensure that new development protects and enhances the natural environment by incorporating measures that retain a high quality of living and to be able to respond to the effects of climate change.

Policy DM8 **External Lighting.** Proposals must demonstrate that the minimum amount of lighting necessary to achieve its purpose is proposed, the design and specification of the lighting would minimise glare and light spillage, and the lighting scheme would not be visually detrimental to its immediate or wider setting particularly intrinsically dark landscapes.

Policy DM21 **Assessing the transport impacts of development.** Proposals must demonstrate that the impacts of trips generated to and from the development are accommodated, remedied or mitigated to prevent severe residual impacts; provide a satisfactory Transport Assessment and a satisfactory Travel Plan; and comply with the requirements for the

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policy for air quality.

Policy DM23 Parking Standards. Vehicle parking for non-residential uses will need to take into account the accessibility of the development and the availability of public transport; the type, mix and use of the development proposed; whether development proposals exacerbate on street car parking to an unacceptable degree; and the appropriate design and provision of cycle parking facilities.

Consultations

24. **Maidstone Borough Council:** Raises no objection and has the following comments:

“Following consideration, no objection is raised subject to any condition(s) or Informative(s) relating to loss of privacy, impact from noise and outdoor lighting, alleged anti-social behaviour and issues regarding parking in the area and highways impact”.

Kent Highways: Initially raised a holding objection to the planning application pending the submission of a parking beat survey of the surrounding streets near the school site.

Following receipt of additional information, Kent Highways raise no objection, subject to a condition. The following comments have been made:

Staff Parking

A new drawing has been provided demonstrating the location of the additional car parking spaces that have been created to support the proposed development. 2 additional parking spaces are required as a consequence of the development. This plan confirms the deliverability and usability of the spaces in question.

Parking Surveys

Parking surveys of the streets surrounding the school site have now been undertaken by the applicant in a traffic neutral month (September) following the commencement of the new school term and relaxing of Covid 19 restrictions. Consequently, KCC Highways consider them to be suitable for assessment purposes.

The surveys have been undertaken over three days to avoid the risks and limitations associated with a single days’ worth of surveys, thereby adding a further element of robustness to the applicant’s assessment.

As described within the TTN, the extent of the on-street surveys covers a walking distance of 400 metres from the main school entrance. KCC Highways consider this to be acceptable in how it reflects the maximum distance that parents are likely to park for the purpose of drop off and pick up.

An itinerary of the existing parking capacity within the survey area has been undertaken by the applicant. This confirms that there is parking capacity for up to 154 vehicles on the streets that surround the school.

The results of the applicant’s parking surveys indicate that the streets surrounding the school typically accommodate up to 139 parked vehicles before and after the school day. This excludes motorists parked on restricted sections of road.

To forecast the future parking demand that is likely to be generated by the school’s expansion the applicant has used data from the school’s recently updated travel plan

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(TP). This is reasonable given how the schools expansion is likely to continue to attract pupils from its existing catchment area. The proposals are anticipated to generate demand for an additional 15 cars, which could park on the existing streets that surround the school site.

These additional vehicles are projected to increase the overall parking demand to up to 152 vehicles within the survey area, with the peak in demand occurring at around 15:00hrs as parents congregate to pick-up students. Whilst this increases the likelihood of limited or no spare on-street parking capacity at the beginning or end of the school day, the evidence provided by the surveys does not indicate that the surrounding will become oversubscribed.

KCC Highways is also mindful of the ongoing availability of Maidstone Leisure Centre as an area for pick-up and drop-off, which will help to suppress the demand for on-street parking associated with the proposed school expansion.

This, coupled with the Controlled Parking Zone restrictions present on many of the streets, reduces the likelihood of errant parking that could be hazardous to the safe or free flow of traffic on the public highway.

Accordingly, KCC Highways is now satisfied that the proposed development will not result in an impact on the highway network that could be deemed severe in the context of paragraph 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

School Travel Plan (STP)

A revised STP has also been submitted in support of the proposals. Amended measures to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport have been proposed. These measures include the continued monitoring of cycle storage facilities, investigation of KCC cycle training and continued encouragement of park and stride facilities using Maidstone Leisure Centre car park.

KCC Highways regard it to be essential that the STP is effectively implemented in view of the additional travel demand associated with the proposed school expansion. It should therefore be secured as part of any planning permission.

Summary and Recommendation

Having considered the development proposals and the effect on the highway network, raise no objection on behalf of the local highway authority, subject to the following conditions:

Submission of a Construction Management Plan before the commencement of any development on site to include the following:

- (a) Routing of construction and delivery vehicles to / from site
- (b) Parking and turning areas for construction and delivery vehicles and site personnel
- (c) Timing of deliveries
- (d) Provision of wheel washing facilities
- (e) Temporary traffic management / signage".

School Travel Planner: Raises no objection and has no further comments to make as regards to the 3rd draft of the School Travel Plan.

Archaeology: Raises no objection subject to a condition and has the following comments:

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“In view of the new groundworks being limited to the extension, I suggest a watching brief condition would be sufficient”.

KCC’s Biodiversity Officer: Raises no objection subject to a condition and has the following comments:

“As a result of reviewing the data we have available (including aerial photos and biological records) and the information submitted with this planning application and other submissions for this site we advise that the proposed development has limited potential to result in ecological impacts and as such we are satisfied that there is no requirement for an ecological survey to be carried out.

We have taken this view because no trees are proposed for removal and the original building was only constructed during or after 2018 - photos provided by the planning officer highlight that the structure of the building has limited /no features that could be used by roosting bats.

From previous applications we are aware that bats are foraging / roosting within the wider site and therefore we advise that any lighting proposed is designed to be sensitive towards bats. If any lighting is required, we recommend that the site wide lighting condition requires the lighting plan to follow the recommendations within the Bats and artificial lighting in the UK document produced by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals”.

Local Member

25. The local County Members Mr Bird and Mr Daley and adjoining local Member, Mr Cooper were notified of the application on 12 April 2021. After the County Council elections in May, Mr Tom Cannon replaced Mr Bird, and he was notified of the planning application on 12 May 2021.

Publicity

26. This application was advertised by the posting of a total of 9 site notices in the roads that surrounded the school site (St Philips Avenue/Barton Road, Beech Hurst Close, Holtye Crescent and West Park Road).

Representations on the planning application

27. A total of 8 representations have been received from local residents objecting to the application. The main points of objection are summarised below:

- By adding such a significant amount of height on the original building, this will be very intrusive to the local residents and also create a substantial amount of increase in noise.
- Residents should expect rights to privacy and looking at the height of this building, the classrooms will be looking directly into the local residents’ rooms.
- From the plans it appears windows of the first-floor rooms facing south will allow the properties and gardens on the north side of Holtye Crescent to be overlooked.
- Somewhat disturbs me that the school is proposing to inflict the local residents with more building projects what will impact on their privacy and wellbeing.
- We are aware of the school’s requirements to use the pavilion for external social events.

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- Object due to the fact that the height and width of the extension will be intrusive for the immediate neighbours of the school.
- The school has a tendency to leave both the main school building and pavilion lights on until late (or all night at times, so another floor to the pavilion will exacerbate the level of light pollution.
- Believe its due to additional demand of pupils that this is being asked for, however there have been additional schools built in Maidstone area that should be able to take up the increase in population.
- Additional classrooms will have a detrimental impact on the environment, by further pollution and traffic.
- Additional pupils could lead to a further surge in unwanted anti-social behaviour.
- Understand the need for additional classrooms but there will inevitably be additional noise.
- I already suffer from increased noise from 8am when school commences.
- Why could additional classroom space not be erected on the hard tennis courts?
- Perhaps the school should just accept they have grown their capacity to the maximum and be content in that knowledge.
- If they are so desperate to provide additional teaching facilities, they should look to embracing this in the fabric of the existing structures, such as extending into the area adjacent to where cars are presently parked. I am sure there is adequate scope to provide parking elsewhere on the existing site.

Discussion

28. In considering this proposal regard must be had to Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (23) 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 Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity.
29. This application is being reported for determination by the Planning Applications Committee due to letters of representation received from local residents objecting to the planning application. In this case the key determining factors, in my view, are need and the principle of the development, design and location, amenity impacts (including loss of privacy and overlooking, visual impacts, lighting and noise), and traffic. In the Government's view, the development of schools is strongly in the national interest and planning authorities should support this objective, in a manner consistent with their statutory obligations. In considering proposals for the creation, expansion and alteration of schools, the Government considers that there is a strong presumption in favour of state funded schools, as expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework and reflected in the Policy Statement for Schools. Planning Authorities should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling such development, attaching significant weight to the need to develop state funded schools, and making full use of their planning powers to support such development, only imposing conditions that are absolutely necessary and that meet the tests set out in paragraph 56 of the NPPF.

Need and principle of development

30. As outlined in paragraph 23 of this report, the National Planning Policy Network (NPPF) supports the provision and retention of community facilities as a means of place making and promoting healthy and sustainable communities. Decisions should be made which

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guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs. It should also ensure that established facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable and retained for the benefit of the community.

31. Additionally, Paragraph 95 of the NPPF states that the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement and to development that would widen choice in education. They should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools, and work with school's promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted. There is similar strong policy support in the Government's Planning Policy Statement for Schools (2011).
32. Within the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017) there is policy support for additional secondary school places within the Maidstone Urban area, and Policy SP1, Criteria V (b), which specifically references the requirement for a 1FE expansion at Maidstone Grammar School.
33. As referred in the background section of the report, the proposal arises due to expansion of the school which is already taking place to meet the demand for selective secondary school places in the Maidstone area and which will continue until the September 2023 intake in Year 7. This 1FE expansion of the School has also resulted in an increase in the number of pupils accepted into the sixth form. Additional accommodation to meet curriculum requirements has previously been constructed on the site but there is still a need to address a shortfall in available classroom space that is large enough to accommodate class sizes of between 32 or 33 pupils.
34. As mentioned previously, the School's net capacity of 1326 students is calculated according to the existing accommodation. The school was built on its present site in 1930 and since then a mixture of buildings have been added over the years to cater for the growing needs for grammar school places. However, many of the classrooms are small and not able to accommodate large class sizes which the school has needed to have since becoming a 7FE school in 2017.
35. The School has suited departments, so that all students (years 7-13) move around the school to be taught in specialist areas. Pressure on accommodation has started to impact the School from this September when the current year 11 cohort of students have access to the sixth form. Furthermore, students who enter the school in year 7 are able to access the sixth form if they make the necessary entry requirements so these students are already in the school. Some may not make the entry requirements whilst others opt to move to other sixth forms. However, the School does accept a number of transferees each year in line with parental choice. Sixth form classes use many of the same classrooms as the students in year 7-11 because set sizes for sixth form classes are often as large as the set sizes in years 7-11. The School has confirmed that they intend to relocate the language department into the five classrooms that are being proposed as part of this planning application, should it be granted planning permission.
36. The Area Education Officer has also confirmed that the County Council commissioned additional school places in Years 7 to 11 at Maidstone Grammar School in 2017 in order to meet the County Council's statutory duty in response to a Basic Need in the area. However, it was noted at that time that the current configuration of the school's existing accommodation, with some classrooms being unable to accommodate 30 students, and the school's intention to increase the size of the sixth form in proportion to the increase

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in Years 7 to 11 to enable students to progress to Year 12 (subject to the school's admission criteria) meant that the school required additional classroom space. It should be noted that the Local Education Authority is fully supportive of this application and the school's proposed remedy to the lack of suitable and available classrooms.

37. Furthermore, within the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017) there is policy support for additional secondary school places within the Maidstone Urban area, and Policy SP1, Criteria V (b), which specifically references the requirement for a 1FE expansion at Maidstone Grammar School. Support for the provision of school places is also heavily embedded in the NPPF, and I consider that the education need for the proposed development should be given significant weight in this instance. There is considerable demand for selective secondary school places in Maidstone, as outlined in paragraph 5 above, and to ensure the future provision of secondary education in Maidstone. In considering the above, I accept the need for the proposed development.

Design and Siting

38. Objection has been received from local residents to the proposed addition of another floor onto the existing single storey sports pavilion. It is suggested that by adding to the height of the original building, this would be very intrusive to the local residents.
39. Due to the constrained nature of the existing school site, the applicant has confirmed that careful consideration has been given to the form, massing and location of the proposed additional storey to the existing pavilion. The school has limited areas it can develop and is also required to safeguard the playing field provision. Previous planning applications for new buildings have already used and built upon any available land and the majority of open land within the school grounds upon which new development could take place is either grassed, or hard surfaces/sports facilities. The existing single storey pavilion building has been identified as a building within the school grounds that could be extended upwards with limited impact on site coverage, without the loss of the playing field land, and with minimal impact on neighbouring land uses. It would also make efficient use of the available site.
40. The area of land where the original single storey pavilion had been built was unoccupied as the site was previously the location of four mobile classrooms which were removed as they were well beyond their design life and in a poor state of repair. This land was also not part of the school's open playing field being a part of an enclosed strip of land lying between the existing fenced multi-use court and the former Headmaster's House. This proposal to locate another storey on top of the existing single storey sports pavilion is therefore not considered to result in the unacceptable loss of any school playing field land.
41. The applicant has considered the immediate neighbouring residential properties by ensuring that the height of the proposed two-story building was kept to the minimum required. A low pitched roof is proposed, with hipped ends to the north and to the western end of the building facing Beech Hurst Close. This has been designed so that the roof hips would help to reduce the impact of the proposed building to the adjacent boundaries and properties beyond.
42. The proposed first floor of the pavilion has been designed to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the existing single storey pavilion building. The applicant confirmed that the design of the pavilion was in turn informed by the character and form of the main school buildings. The use of brickwork walls matching those on the existing ground floor together with pre-patinated zinc wall cladding panels with standing seams,

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powder coated aluminium glazed windows and doors all under a low-pitched smooth slate grey tiled roof and with metal rainwater goods would provide a cohesive and subtle design for the propose enlarged building.

43. The symmetry provided by the existing changing room window locations are also echoed in the first-floor fenestration proposals aligning with the pre-patinated zinc cladding panel layout. A large array of windows to the east elevation would provide generous views across the playing field and 3G Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP), whilst the other room windows would use the north (Holtye Crescent) and south (school facing) side elevations for daylight and ventilation.
44. The proposed two storey side extension, which would provide stair and lift access to the first floor, would be located on the north side of the building and thus away from the boundary. This would also utilise the existing access path with the external ground and extension ground floor at a slighter lower level to account for small changes in ground levels. The applicant has confirmed that facing the south, the building would be located a sufficient distance from the boundary and would be located at a lower level than the Holtye Crescent properties. The pavilion perimeter path is approximately 1.3 metres lower than the ground at the site perimeter (with Holtye Crescent) and the solid boundary fencing is approximately 2.2 metres high. This would mean that the first floor windowsills of the proposed development would approximately align with the top of the boundary fencing. Furthermore, hedging also been installed to the southern boundary as part of the increased landscaping scheme for the 3G ATP planning application.
45. For the west elevation facing Beech Hurst Close, the existing building includes a single obscure glazed exit door at ground floor level. It is proposed that the first floor would also have the same design arrangement with a single obscure glazed external door that is proposed to be used for emergency escape purposes only, within a face brickwork panel and with pre-patinated zinc cladding that would wrap around the building corners. The exit door would lead out onto an emergency escape staircase. It is proposed that there would be no other west elevation fenestration so that there would not be any overlooking of this boundary and the properties beyond.
46. The proposed design, choice of materials, and the location of the fenestration has been chosen to recreate the symmetry and design on the ground floor of the exiting pavilion. The proposed location of the single storey extension has been determined by the lack of any other suitable land within the school site and the need to safeguard playing field. In order to meet the pressing demand for additional teaching space, as outlined above, consideration of the limited alternative options available to the school, has identified the potential to extend the recently constructed pavilion building upward. I consider this to be the most appropriate solution available to the school.
47. In light of the above, I consider the overall appearance of the proposed first floor extension to the sports pavilion building to be suitable and compatible with the form and scale of the school site. I also consider the proposed location, creating a first-floor extension onto an existing single storey building on this constrained site as suitable and a sustainable form of development. I consider that the proposed development has considered and satisfies the requirements of the Local Plan Policies DM1, DM2 and DM3. I would not therefore raise a planning objection on this matter.

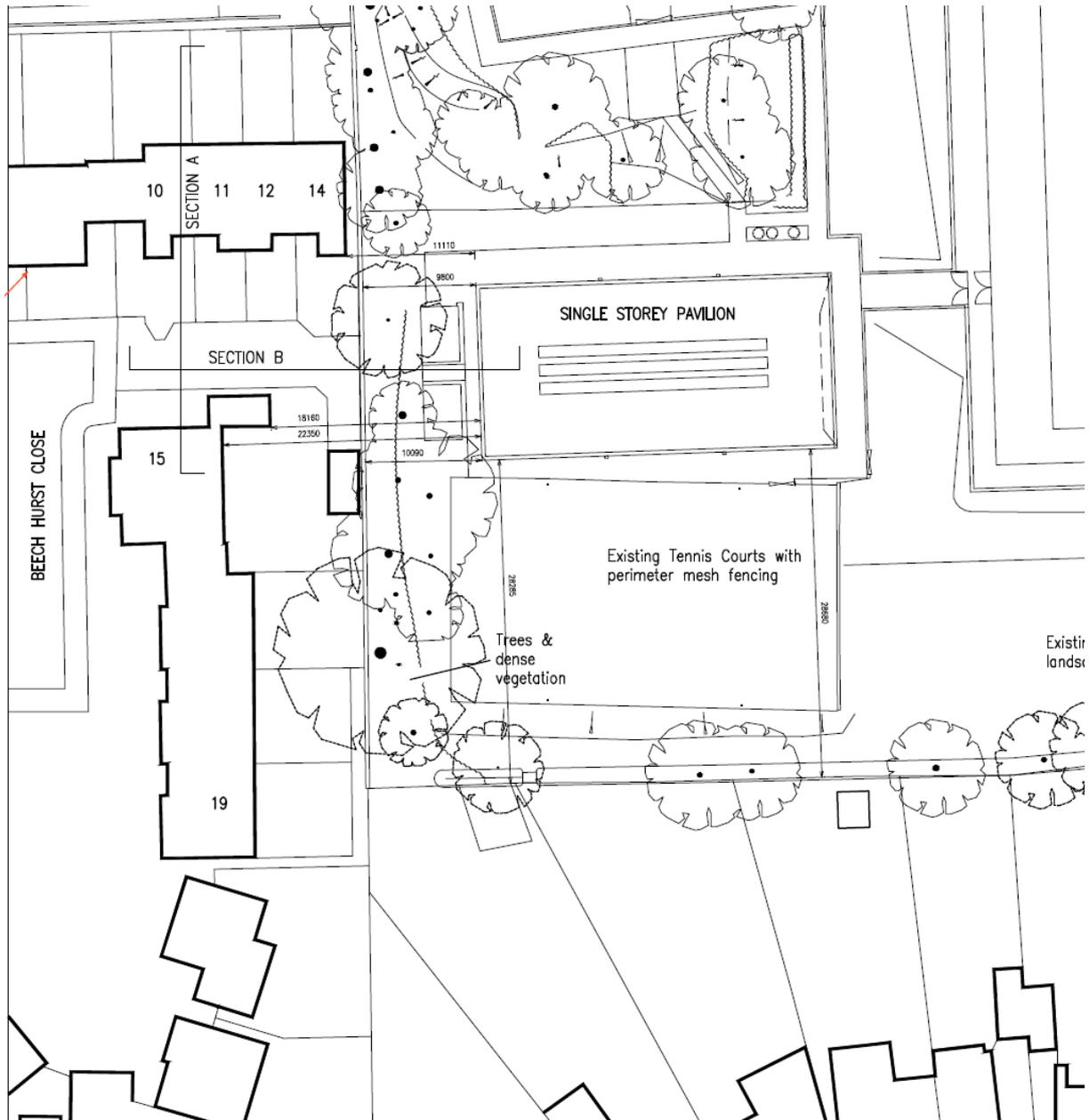
Amenity Impacts – loss of privacy and overlooking

48. Objection has been received from local residents to the proposed planning application concerning overlooking into residential gardens and windows from the proposed first

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- floor extension. It is claimed this would constitute a loss or an invasion of privacy for these residents.
49. The existing single storey pavilion building is located approximately 28 metres from the school boundary with the rear gardens in Holtye Crescent, and these properties have, on average, gardens that are approximately 23 metres in length. Therefore, the pavilion building is in excess of 50 metres away from the nearest property to the south. A series of mature trees are positioned along this southern boundary between the school and the properties in Holtye Crescent, which has recently been enhanced with continuous hedging as a part of the landscaping works for the recently constructed 3G ATP works. Furthermore, the ground rises from the building up to the boundary and the dwellings in Holtye Crescent beyond. It should be borne in mind that 21 metres is generally used as a guideline for positioning of adjacent dwellings with facing windows to avoid the loss of privacy or overshadowing.
50. The applicant has confirmed that the first-floor extension has been particularly carefully designed to provide an attractive addition to the existing single storey structure whilst also addressing potential neighbour issues. The windows are modestly sized and not excessive, and the main bulk of windows face east over the school field and away from the residential school boundaries. Where windows do face Holtye Crescent, the building is almost 30 metres to the school boundary and more than 50 metres to the dwellings. The internal operations of the classrooms have been configured so that the pupils would sit with their backs to the windows and with the teacher and the associated white board and equipment, being located towards the internal corridor. Pupils would only need to walk towards the windows to either sit down or to leave their desks.
51. I am satisfied that the distance between the first-floor extension and the rear of neighbouring properties in Holtye Crescent is in excess of 50 metres and with the boundary screening, I do not consider that the extension would have an unacceptable impact on the amenity, privacy, outlook or daylighting of the occupiers of any of residents of the dwellings in Holtye Crescent.
52. To the west of the school site, is the boundary with Beech Hurst Close, a development of two storey dwellings with associated garages. The distance from the rear of the existing sports pavilion to this site boundary is approximately 10 metres. The area between the existing pavilion and boundary includes a series of mature trees and low-level soft landscaping. The site boundary between the school and Beech Hurst Close is a 2.2 metre to 2.4 metre high brick wall (measured on the Beech Hurst Close wall side). As part of this planning application, it is proposed to reinforce the existing tree belt on the western (Beech Hurst Close) boundary by further tree planting. This would mitigate the visual impact of the resultant pavilion building when viewed from the west, ensuring that the form and mass of the building is extensively screened from view and would further assist in effectively assimilating the proposed building into its surroundings.
53. The relationship of the proposed extension to the properties in Beech Hurst Close needs to be particularly carefully considered as these are closer to the proposed development. In terms of the form and design of the extension, it should be noted that other than the emergency exit door there are no openings in the elevation of the pavilion facing westward. There should therefore be no unacceptable loss of privacy caused by overlooking. Also, the trees on the boundary between the proposed development and the neighbouring houses would provide further screening and reduce the visual impact of the proposed extension. In addition, the design of the roof of the pavilion building incorporates a hip on the western gable which would result in a reduction in the bulk of the building.

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Extract of plan showing the location of the existing single storey pavilion in relation to Beech Hurst Close (to the west) and Holtye Crescent (to the south).

54. The applicant has confirmed that although the upper part of the resultant extension would be apparent from Beech Hurst Close, it would be set sufficiently far off the common boundary as not to appear as an overbearing feature when viewed from this area. The impact of the building would be further mitigated by the existing and proposed trees that screen views into the site. An adjoining property in Beech Hurst Close is part of a terrace that is orientated north-south, with the principle daylight and outlook to the front and rear. The properties in this terrace do not look directly out toward the pavilion and it is considered that the proposed extension, due to its distance from these properties and their orientation would not be unacceptably affected by loss of outlook or by overbearing impact. It is not considered that the resulting building would cause any unacceptable overshadowing of these properties either. An assessment of the potential for any overshadowing to be caused to nearby houses has been undertaken as part of

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the design process by the architect and it is considered that the building would not cause any unacceptable worsening of the levels of sunlight currently received by the properties in Beech Hurst Close.

55. A further neighbouring property in Beech Hurst Close is part of a terrace and aligned to outlook east-west. The pavilion building is set in excess of 10 metres off the shared boundary and with the rear garden of the property included, the distance of separation is in excess of 21 metres. It is considered that there would be no unacceptable overlooking caused by the extension to the rear of the property. Due to the orientation of the pavilion and the property, I am also satisfied that the proposed development would not result in any unacceptable loss of daylight or general overshadowing of the house or its garden.
56. Overall, the impact of the proposed extension on the residential properties in Beech Hurst Close has been very carefully considered and measures have been taken to ensure that there would be no overlooking from inside the extended pavilion with no openings other than the emergency exit door in the elevation facing westward, that would overlook the properties in Beech Hurst Close. The nearest property in Beech Hurst Close to the school's western boundary is part of a terrace that is orientated in a north-south direction and with its principal daylight and outlook to the front and rear. It is also proposed to increase the tree planting and hedging along this boundary line to further reduce the neighbours perceived impact of the proposal. Subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the proposed landscaping scheme to be implemented as submitted within the first planting season, I am satisfied that the proposal would not have a significant impact on the amenity of the neighbouring residents with regard to overlooking.
57. Additionally, I am satisfied that the orientation of the pavilion building and distances of the first-floor extension to the rear of neighbouring properties in Holtye Crescent and Beech Hurst Close are acceptable, and the imposition of the proposed landscaping scheme, I do not consider that the extension would have an unacceptable impact on the amenity, privacy, outlook or daylighting of the occupiers of these dwellings. Overall, I consider that the proposed development to be acceptable and that it has considered and satisfies the requirements of the Local Plan Policies DM1, DM3 and DM8. I would not therefore raise a planning objection on this matter.

Amenity Impacts - Noise

58. Concern has been raised by local residents regarding the possible increased levels of noise as a result of the additional storey to the existing pavilion.
59. It should be noted that the school site already generates a level of noise during its day to day running of the school site. However, the applicant has considered the potential for any increase in noise levels as part of the planning application. To ensure adequate room ventilation, maintain a comfortable room environment and reduce external noise, a mechanical ventilation system is proposed. This would provide both supply and extract air, and not rely solely on the opening of windows. The nearest windows that would face any residential boundary, are the windows along the southern elevation, which would face towards the Holtye Crescent boundary, which is a distance of approximately 28 metres from the school grounds boundary with the rear gardens in Holtye Crescent. Access to the proposed first floor of the pavilion would be located on the opposite (northern) side of the pavilion, which is the side facing the existing school buildings, therefore there should not be any unacceptable increase in noise when pupils arrive or leave the classrooms in the proposed first floor extension.

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60. The applicant has considered the possible noise increase and has designed the first floor so that ventilation of these proposed classrooms is not solely reliable on opening windows. Furthermore, it should be noted that school sites tend to generate a level of noise associated with school children during school hours. I therefore consider that the proposed works would not provide unacceptable levels of external noise over and above existing background noise levels.

Amenity Impact - lighting

61. Concern has been raised by local residents about the possibility of any first-floor lighting exacerbating the level of light pollution. It has been stated that the school apparently has a tendency to leave both the main school and pavilion light on until late or all night long.
62. The applicant has confirmed that the external lighting to the existing ground floor is to be retained. First floor lighting would be limited to the west elevation escape door and staircase, which would be activated by suitably positioned PIRs to ensure that any increase in external lighting would be kept to a minimum, for a specific emergency escape need, and to also have a minimum impact on bats and birds, and on neighbouring properties. It is proposed that any external lighting would be directional and designed with a light spread facing downward. Subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the submission of any external lighting proposals which must adhere to the recommendations within lighting guidance produced by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals, I am satisfied that the proposal would not have a significantly adverse impact on residential amenities with regard to light pollution.
63. The County Council's Biodiversity Officer was consulted on the planning application and raised no objection. The Officer commented that they were aware that bats were foraging/roosting within the wider site and advised that any lighting proposal was to be designed to be sensitive towards bats and recommended that any lighting proposals followed the recommendations within the Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK document produced by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals. The requirement for any external lighting to be designed according to these guidelines will be secured by condition, if planning permission is granted.
64. Whilst there will be internal lighting provided to light the proposed first floor of the pavilion, it should be recognised that this internal lighting would be no more intrusive than the lighting coming from the rest of the school site or from neighbouring residential properties. The school boundary is also well shielded with a combination of fencing and vegetation, both in the form of hedging and trees. These will provide an element of screening of both the building and the lighting from within the building. Subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the submission of any external lighting details, I am satisfied that the proposal would not have a significantly adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents with regard to light pollution.

Highway Matters –Parking

65. The planning application proposes an additional 5 classrooms to be provided in order to meet the pressing demand for additional teaching space as a result of a required 1FE expansion of this school. This expansion started in 2017, when the school became become a 7FE school. As the school is 4 years into this expansion, a significant number of the additional school pupils and associated vehicular trips are already on the highway network.

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66. A Transport Statement accompanies this planning application which assessed the overall impact of the proposal on highway matters. This includes an assessment of the required additional parking. It is expected that two additional members of staff will be needed and so two additional parking spaces are being proposed as part of this application. Kent Highways are satisfied with this requirement.
67. An updated School Travel Plan has also been provided, which addresses the additional impact of the proposed development. It should also be noted that the School has an arrangement with Maidstone Leisure Centre for over 20 years, for sixth form students to park their cars in the Leisure Centre car park for a reasonable termly charge. The School has indicated that 35 sixth formers currently use this arrangement. Students are informed of this and asked not to park on the main streets.
68. Kent Highways initially raised a holding objection and requested further parking surveys to be undertaken in the vicinity of the school, to be able to assess the impact of the proposed increase in school pupils. Parking surveys of the surrounding streets were undertaken in September 2021, following the commencement of the new school term and relaxing of Covid 19 restrictions. The surveys have been undertaken over three days to avoid the risks and limitations associated with a single days' worth of surveys, thereby adding a further element of robustness to the applicant's assessment.
69. Kent Highways confirmed that to forecast the future parking demand that is likely to be generated by the school's expansion the applicant had used data from the school's recently updated travel plan (TP). This was considered reasonable given how the schools expansion was likely to continue to attract pupils from its existing catchment area. The proposals were anticipated to generate demand for an additional 15 cars, which could park on the existing streets that surround the school site. These additional vehicles were projected to increase the overall parking demand to up to 152 vehicles within the survey area, with the peak in demand occurring at around 15:00hrs as parents congregate to pick-up students. Whilst this increases the likelihood of limited or no spare on-street parking capacity at the beginning or end of the school day, the evidence provided by the surveys did not indicate that the surrounding roads would become oversubscribed.
70. Kent Highways were also mindful of the ongoing availability of Maidstone Leisure Centre as an area for pick-up and drop-off, which would also help to suppress the demand for on-street parking associated with the proposed school expansion. This, coupled with the Controlled Parking Zone restrictions present on many of the local streets, would reduce the likelihood of errant parking that could be hazardous to the safe or free flow of traffic on the public highway.
71. Accordingly, Kent Highways are now satisfied that the proposed development would not result in an unacceptable impact on the highway network that could be deemed severe in the context of paragraph 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework. No objection has been raised to this proposal, subject to the imposition of a Construction Management Plan (discussed further in paragraph no's 73 and 74 below) condition, if planning permission is to be granted.
72. Subject to the imposition of the condition outlined in the final Kent Highways comments as outlined in paragraph 24 above, I am satisfied that the development would not have a significantly detrimental impact on the local highway network. I also consider that the proposed development has considered and satisfies the requirements of the Local Plan Policies DM21 and DM23. I would not therefore raise a planning objection on this matter.

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Construction

73. Given that there are nearby residential properties, if planning permission is granted it would, in my view, be appropriate to impose a condition restricting hours of construction to protect residential amenity. I recommend that works should be undertaken only between the hours of 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays, with no operations on Sundays and Bank Holidays. It is also good practice on school sites for contractors to be required under the terms of their contract to manage construction traffic/deliveries to minimise conflict with traffic and pedestrians at the beginning and end of the school day.
74. I also consider it appropriate that details of a Construction Management Strategy be submitted for approval prior to the commencement of the development. That should include details of the location of site compounds and operative/visitors parking, details of site security and safety measures, lorry waiting and wheel washing facilities, details of how the site access would be managed to avoid peak school times, and details of any construction accesses. Such a strategy would also address the condition required by Kent Highways with regard to the construction of the development. Therefore, should permission be granted, a Construction Management Strategy would be required pursuant to condition and the development would thereafter have to be undertaken in accordance with the approved strategy.

Archaeology

75. An archaeological watching brief condition was requested by the County Archaeologist for the previous planning application for the single storey pavilion building. However, as part of this planning application the only additional ground floor building works proposed are for the western elevation two storey extension for the external staircase, associated drainage and ground works for the two storey extension. These works would not extend beyond the boundary of the existing single storey building or extend beyond the previously disturbed ground. The County Council's Archaeologist is satisfied that the proposed groundworks are minimal but there might be still some impact upon earlier archaeology, this could be addressed through fieldwork covered by a condition, should planning permission be granted. I therefore recommend that, should permission be granted, an archaeological watching brief is to be submitted. Subject to that condition, I am satisfied that the development would not have a detrimental impact upon archaeological interests.

Sustainability

76. The existing single storey pavilion already includes solar panels located on the flat roof. An array of solar panels is proposed on the south elevation of the new first floor pitched roof, to provide maximum solar energy benefit.

Conclusion

77. This proposal seeks to provide a first-floor extension onto the existing flat roof single storey pavilion, with a two-storey side extension for access and an external emergency staircase. The first-floor extension proposes 5 large teaching rooms (minimum 55m²), 1 smaller teaching room, 1 staff office together with associated support facilities, including stores, kitchenette, toilets, male toilets, staircase and platform lift. The provision of an additional 2 car parking spaces and associated landscaping is also proposed. The planning application would support the proposed 1FE expansion of the existing school

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which is already ongoing and providing selective secondary school places in the Maidstone urban area.

78. In my view, the development would not give rise to any significant material harm and is in accordance with the general aims and objectives of the relevant Development Plan Policies and the guidance contained in the NPPF. Subject to the conditions below, I do not consider that the development would result in any significant adverse impact in respect of visual, residential or local amenity, or on the local highway network. The development is in accordance with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework and has strong planning policy support in the Planning Policy Statement for Schools (2011) as well as strong policy support in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Policy SP1 Criteria V (b), which identifies the need for a 1FE expansion of the Grammar School. Subject to the imposition of the conditions as outlined throughout this report, I consider that the proposed development is acceptable. I therefore conclude that the development is sustainable and recommend that planning permission to be granted and subject to planning conditions.

Recommendation

79. I RECOMMEND that PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO conditions, including conditions covering:

- The standard 3 year time limit;
- The development carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
- No development shall take place until the applicant has secured an archaeological watching brief in accordance with a written programme and specification to be approved in writing by the County Planning Authority;
- Details of external lighting;
- Any lighting proposals must follow the recommendations within the Bats and artificial lighting in the UK document produced by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals;
- No development shall take place until a construction management plan, including lorry routing, access, parking, construction vehicle loading/unloading and circulation within the site for contractors and other vehicles related to construction operations, measures to prevent mud and debris being taken onto the public highway, has been submitted for approval and thereafter shall be implemented as approved;
- Measures to protect the existing trees during construction;
- Hours of working during construction to be restricted to between the hours of 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays, with no operations on Sundays and Bank Holidays;
- The provision and permanent retention of the 2 no vehicle parking spaces as shown on the submitted plans prior to the occupation of the building and their retention thereafter;
- Tree planting scheme to be implemented as submitted within first planting season and maintained for a period of not less than 5 years;
- No tree removal during the bird breeding season;

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| Case officer – Lidia Cook | Tel No.03000 413353 |
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| Background documents - See section heading |
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