

# **Erection of a covered link and awning, and the installation of fencing at Worth Primary School, The Street, Worth - DO/10/414**

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 27 July 2010

Application by Worth Primary School and Kent County Council, Children Families and Education for the erection of a covered link and awning, and the installation of 1.8 metre high black bow top fencing at Worth Primary School, The Street, Worth, Deal- DO/10/414

Recommendation: Permission be granted subject to conditions

Local Member: Mr. Leyland Ridings

Classification: Unrestricted

## **Site**

1. Worth Primary School is situated within a residential area in the rural village of Worth, between the towns of Deal and Sandwich. Part of the village, including the site, has been designated as a Conservation Area and there are a number of Listed Buildings in the vicinity, including Worth Farmhouse located north east of the school. The school site is located in the centre of the village with the main road through the village passing the school to the south and residential development adjoining the northern and eastern boundaries. A site plan is attached.

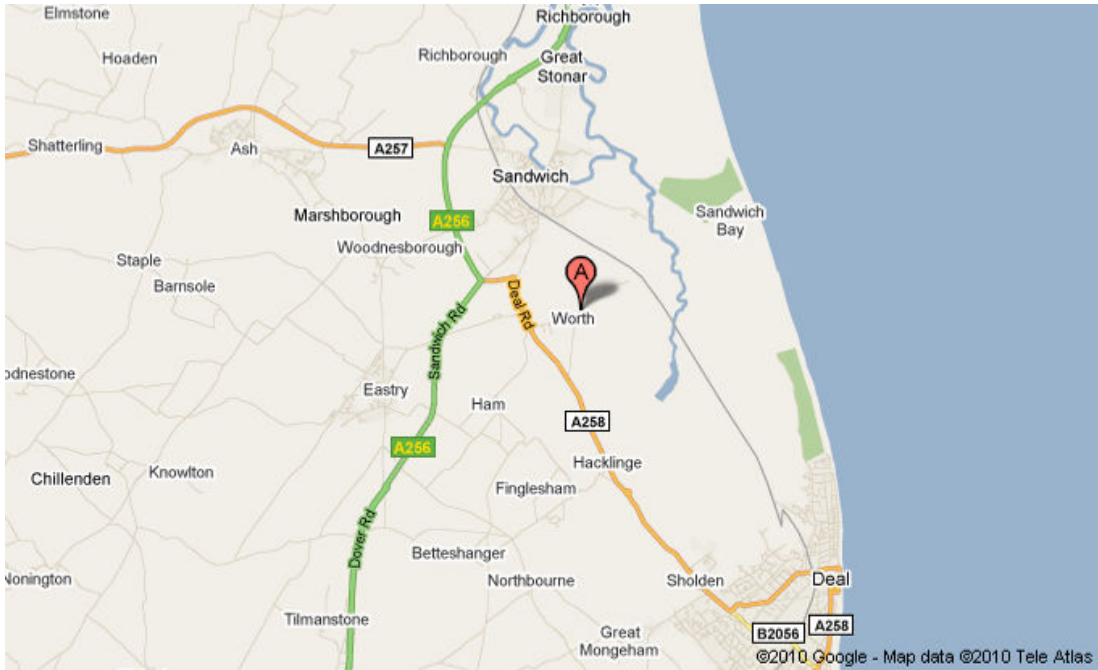
## **Background and proposal**

2. The proposal is to erect a covered link between the main school building and an outbuilding containing the secretary and headteacher's office, and to place an additional window on the south elevation of the secretary's office. The purpose of the scheme is to provide shelter when travelling between the two buildings and to allow visitors and parents to talk to staff without being exposed to the elements. The proposed works would also include the relocation of a door to the school building, directly opposite the office and installation of a retractable awning over the east facing window of one of the classrooms. As part of the scheme, the applicant also seeks to replace the existing chain-link fencing along the northern boundary with 1.8 metre high black metal bow-top fencing. The applicant states that the developments outlined above would significantly improve security on the site, securing the main entrance to the school, which has been identified by the school and Ofsted as a weakness.
3. Permission was granted in 2006 for a link corridor of brick construction under planning permission DO/06/517. Unlike the scheme being discussed in this report, the permission granted was for a fully enclosed link. The applicant found the construction cost of the former proposal to be too expensive and therefore has submitted the revised design for determination.

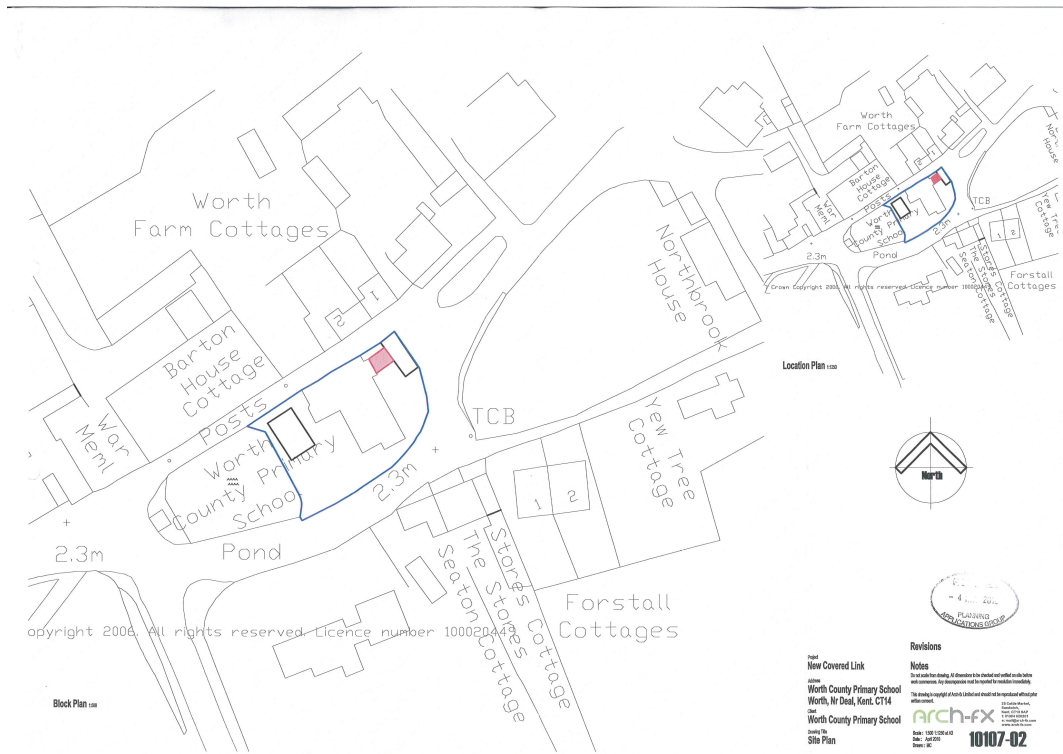
# Item D2

## Erection of a covered link and awning at Worth Primary School, The Street, Worth

### Site map



### Site plan



### Erection of a covered link and awning at Worth Primary School, The Street, Worth

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#### Planning Policy

#### 4. (i) Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment

**Policy HE7:** Takes into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. The consideration should include scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and use.

#### (ii) Dover District Adopted Core Strategy (February 2010)

**Policy CP1:** Seeks to ensure that the location and scale of development in the District is appropriate by complying with a settlement hierarchy and expects development in rural villages to reinforce its role as a provider of services to the immediate community.

**Policy CP6:** Expects both the applicant of infrastructure provision and the determining authority to consider if existing infrastructure can be used more efficiently, including capacity improvements for primary schools to support housing growth within the District.

**Policy DM16:** Development that would harm the character of the landscape will only be permitted if it incorporates any necessary avoidance measures, including measures to mitigate design elements to an acceptable level, or if developments can be sited to avoid or reduce harm.

#### Consultations

#### 5. Dover District Council raises no objection to the proposal.

**The County Council's Conservation & Design Architect** attended a site visit prior to submission of the application to offer guidance on the proposal. He raises no objection to the proposal.

**Worth Parish Council** was consulted on this application and has raised objection on the following grounds;

- The roof material would block or limit light to the neighbouring cottages. They felt this could be addressed using clear materials.
- The proposed development is within the Conservation Area of Worth Village. Members consider that the development would adversely affect and impact on the visual amenity of the Conservation Area of Worth, which they consider to be the most attractive part of the village.

#### Local Member(s)

#### 6. The local County Member, Mr L. Ridings, was notified of the application on the 10 May 2010.

### Erection of a covered link and awning at Worth Primary School, The Street, Worth

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#### Publicity

7. The application was publicised by the posting of a site notice and the individual notification of 7 nearby residential properties. The application was also advertised in the local press because the site is within a Conservation Area and there are Listed Buildings nearby.

#### Representations

8. There have been no representations received in response to the application.

#### Discussion

##### Introduction

9. This proposal has arisen out of the applicant's desire to provide a covered walkway between the school building and the additional building, which houses both the secretary and headteacher's office. The proposal is also partly governed by requirements from Ofsted to provide safe and secure learning environments for pupils. In a recent inspection of the School, the front entrance was identified by Ofsted as an area of concern and this has also been expressed by parents in official Ofsted questionnaires. Therefore, the measures proposed are integral to the School's compliance to meet several of Ofsted's requirements to ensure safeguarding. There are also issues relating to the material proposed for the roof of the link and its appropriateness for a Conservation Area and the effect on light for neighbouring properties.

##### Planning history

10. As briefly mentioned in paragraph (3), planning permission was granted in 2006 for a link corridor and extension forming a staff room. That scheme was a fully enclosed design and of brick construction. That application received no objections from either statutory consultees, including Worth Parish Council, or residents in neighbouring properties. Other recent applications at the school have included alterations to windows and doors.

##### Design, and impact on visual and residential amenity

11. Worth Primary School is situated within the Worth Conservation Area and therefore any development has to be carefully considered so as not to compromise its character and appearance. Planning policy supports development that conserves and enhances the special character of the Conservation Area. The school building dates back to the late to mid Victorian era and has undergone numerous conversions over time. The outbuilding was converted into its current form at the end of 1990's. The area is characterised by narrow streets and a number of historic buildings some of which are listed. There would be no direct impact from the development on the setting of any of the Listed Buildings but the development would affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, in general, and more particularly the views of the unlisted properties, known as Worth Farm Cottages, opposite the school to the north. The

## Item D2

### Erection of a covered link and awning at Worth Primary School, The Street, Worth

Parish Council has raised objection to the development as set out in paragraph (5) above including on the grounds that it considers the roof material would affect the daylight to the property opposite and that there would be an adverse impact on the Conservation Area.

12. The main component of the proposal is the covered link which measures 3.6 metres in length and 3.8 metres in width, with a ridge height of 3.9 metres. Use of a standing seam roofing system in a dark grey colour is proposed. This is intended to give the appearance of lead without the obvious expense and weight. Furthermore, the link has been engineered specifically to minimise the use of posts or legs down on to the floor, ensuring that the sides are left open. Whilst the roof would introduce some closing of the gap between the two school buildings, it is 850mm lower in height and would be less imposing than the brick design permitted previously which closed the gap completely. Although it would change views of Worth Farm Cottages when viewed between the two school buildings, and the outlook from these properties across the school site, I do not consider that this would justify refusing planning permission. Moreover, the southern boundary of the school is demarcated by a combination of chain-link fencing and railings, and there are various structures in the playground which interrupt the view, as demonstrated in the photograph above. Views of the covered link from elsewhere would be limited and therefore I do not consider that overall it would have an unacceptable visual impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

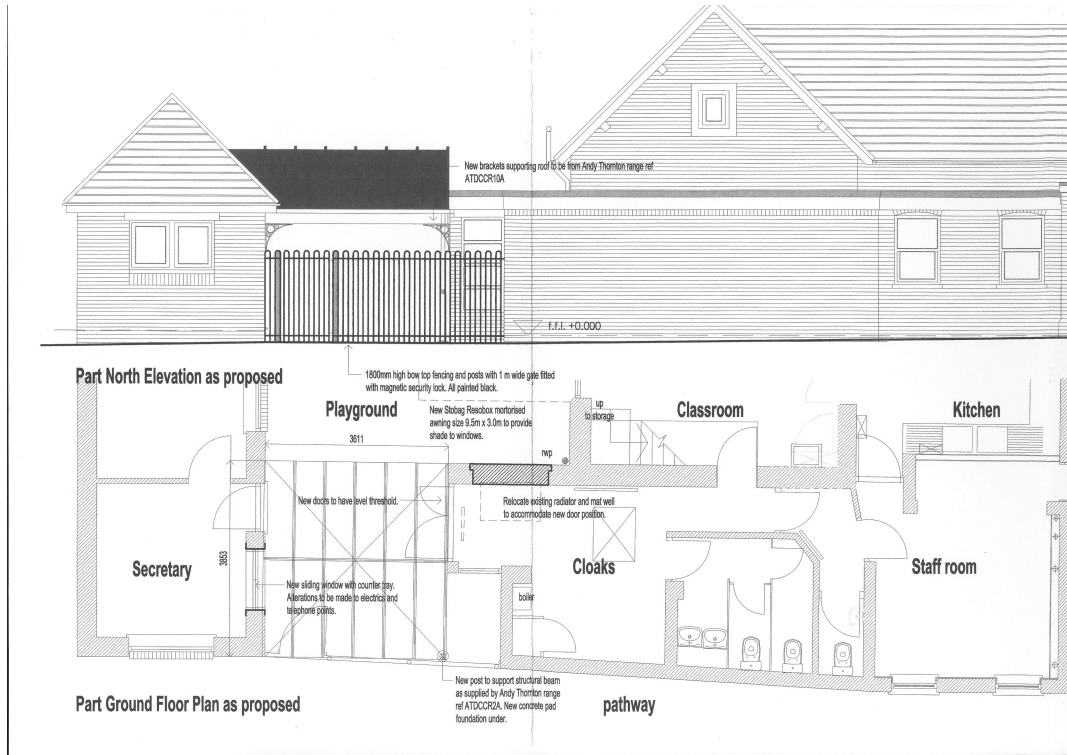
Photograph of School entrance



## Item D2

# Erection of a covered link and awning at Worth Primary School, The Street, Worth

## Proposed north elevation and ground floor plan



## Photograph of the southern School boundary



### Erection of a covered link and awning at Worth Primary School, The Street, Worth

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13. The suggestion of the Parish Council for the link roof to be constructed of glass or a transparent plastic will be noted. However whilst the Conservation and Design Architect has raised no objection to the roof covering proposed he considers that if covered in glass or transparent plastic it would be out of keeping with the school buildings and the Conservation Area. There have been no representations from the adjoining Worth Farm Cottages to the proposal. The applicant has stated that the use of glass or a translucent material was considered but these options were ruled out due to cleaning difficulties and potential light pollution. In the latter respect, the applicant's agent points out that any under canopy lighting may actually cause greater intrusion to the neighbouring cottages. In my view, the addition of the covered link is unlikely to have any significant impact on daylight to the adjoining cottages particularly bearing in mind that it does not project beyond the footprint of the existing school buildings, is lower in height and smaller in scale.
14. The other elements of the proposal include a motorised retractable awning over the east facing classroom windows measuring 9.5 metres by 3 metres, relocation of a doorway, a new sliding window to the secretary's office and erection of a replacement section of fencing between the two school buildings being linked. Only limited details of the awning have been provided and although no specific objections have been raised to this element of the proposal, I have requested additional details about its visual appearance to be satisfied that it is acceptable. I will report verbally on these at the Committee Meeting. The relocation of the doorway and new window are in my view acceptable and would not materially affect the external appearance of the building. The proposed fencing would replace existing railings and chain link fencing and a gate, that have an overall height of about 1.7 metres, with bow top railing type fencing of 1.8 metres in height. At the request of the Conservation and Design Architect, the School are intending to reuse the existing fence posts, which he has described as 'attractive and unusual', during installation of the new bow top fencing to ensure that the character of these is retained. Overall the new section of fence should provide a visual improvement over that which it would replace, and therefore I would not raise an objection in terms of its visual impact on the Conservation Area providing it is painted in black. That could be covered by condition.

### Conclusion

15. The applicant's reasons for the link and associated works will be noted. I am of the opinion that the erection of the proposed link would not have a detrimental impact on the setting of the school within the Worth Conservation Area, nor unduly impact on neighbouring properties and Listed Buildings in particular. Subject to the further details of the awning, I consider the other elements of the development would also be acceptable, and would therefore see no reason to raise a planning objection to the proposed scheme and consider that it would accord with the general aims and objectives of the Development Plan policies. Accordingly, I recommend that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

## Item D2

### Erection of a covered link and awning at Worth Primary School, The Street, Worth

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#### Recommendation

16. SUBJECT TO the further details of the awning being acceptable, I 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 submitted details, plans and specifications;
- control over the roofing material and colour; and
- the fencing to be finished in black.

Case officer – Jo Ritter	01622 696100
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Background documents - See section heading
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