

SECTION D
DEVELOPMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

Item D1

Construction of a new Archbishop Courtenay Primary School and nursery, Beaconsfield Road, Maidstone – MA/10/123

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 7 September 2010

Application by the Diocesan Board of Education and Kent County Council for construction of a new Archbishop Courtenay Primary School and Nursery Beaconsfield Road, Tovil, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6RU - MA/10/123

Recommendation: Planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Member: Mr A Chell

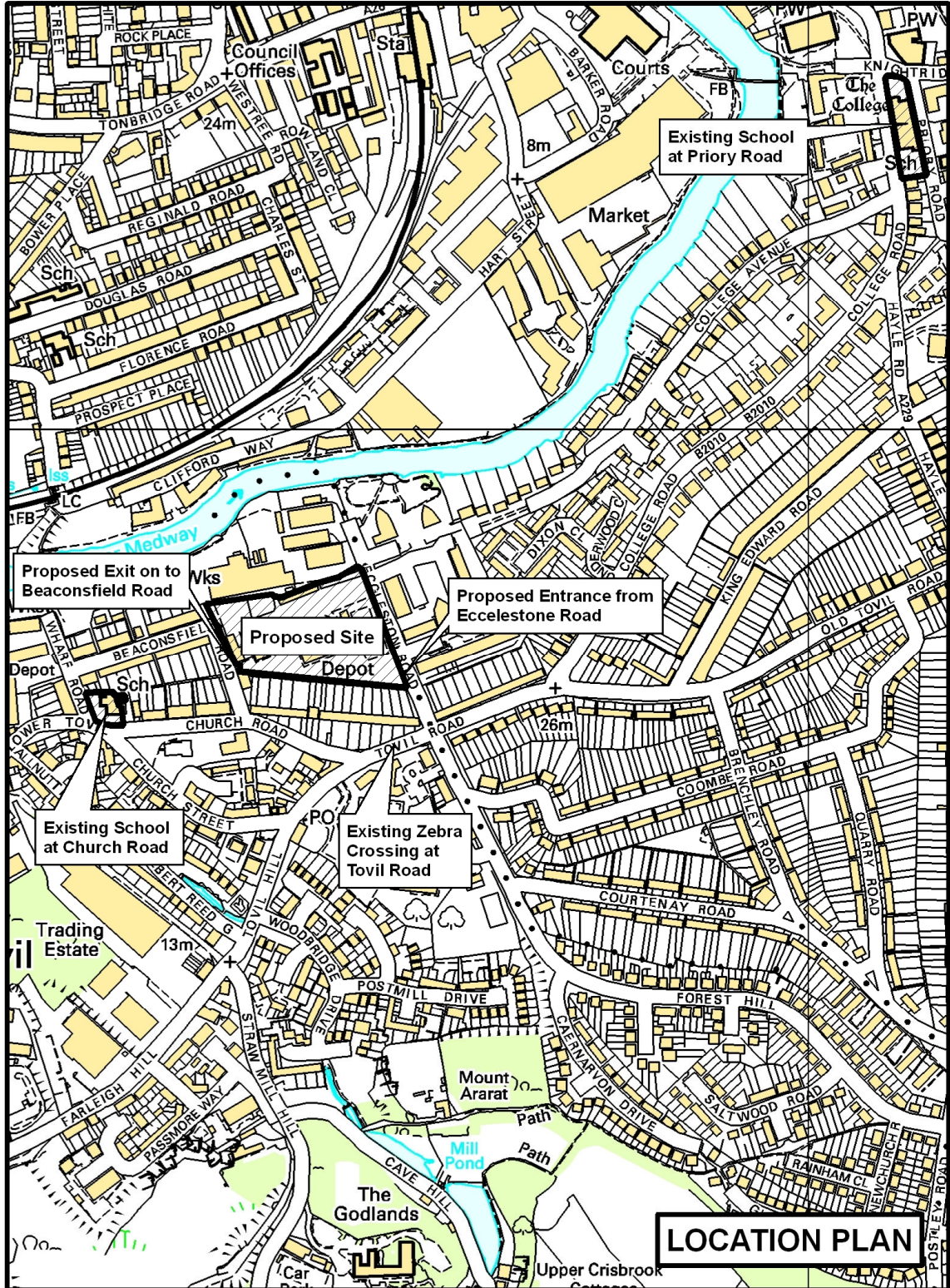
Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. The new school is proposed on a 'brown field' site to the south west of Maidstone Town Centre allocated for redevelopment in the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan as part of a larger area for housing. This 1.70 hectare site lies within a parcel of land between Eccleston Road and Beaconsfield Road, Tovil and was used previously by British Telecommunications PLC, as their vehicle and plant depot. Eccleston Road is accessed off the B2010 Tovil Road, whilst Beaconsfield Road is accessed off Church Road, which then joins the B2010 Tovil Road. A site location plan is attached. The site is now derelict and all the buildings that were on the site have now been demolished. Approximately half of the footprint of the site is concrete slab, flat or gently sloping down towards the north. The surrounding area is being redeveloped from industrial use to a high-rise residential use. The surrounding built development comprises some recent high-rise apartments to the east and northwest and some older terraced residential properties to the south and west. There are some flats in Eccleston Road, which are currently unoccupied, and there is a site below the school site, which is currently still used as an industrial site. However this industrial site is also shown within the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan as being allocated for housing use. Eccleston Road is 5.5 metres in width and has traffic calming measures along the road in the form of table top side road junctions into the new residential areas and a chicane feature located half way down the road. The road is a cul-de-sac with no other means of access for the residents and businesses, living and working off Eccleston Road.
2. There are acute level changes across the site, circa 5 metres plus, dropping from south to north. Due to the sloping topography of the site, the original buildings (which have been demolished) and hard standing areas had been constructed by cutting into the embankment, which in some places is 4 metres in height, to create useable flat areas. Other than the hard standing areas that remain following demolition, there are small pockets of grassland (mainly to the south of the site), mature tree belts along the southern and eastern boundaries and some individual trees in the south eastern part of the site, with 11 of the trees (10 Sycamores and 1 Ash tree) being made the subject of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) in 2009 by Maidstone Borough Council. The northern

Item D1

Construction of a new Archbishop Courtenay Primary School and nursery, Beaconsfield Road, Maidstone - MA/10/123



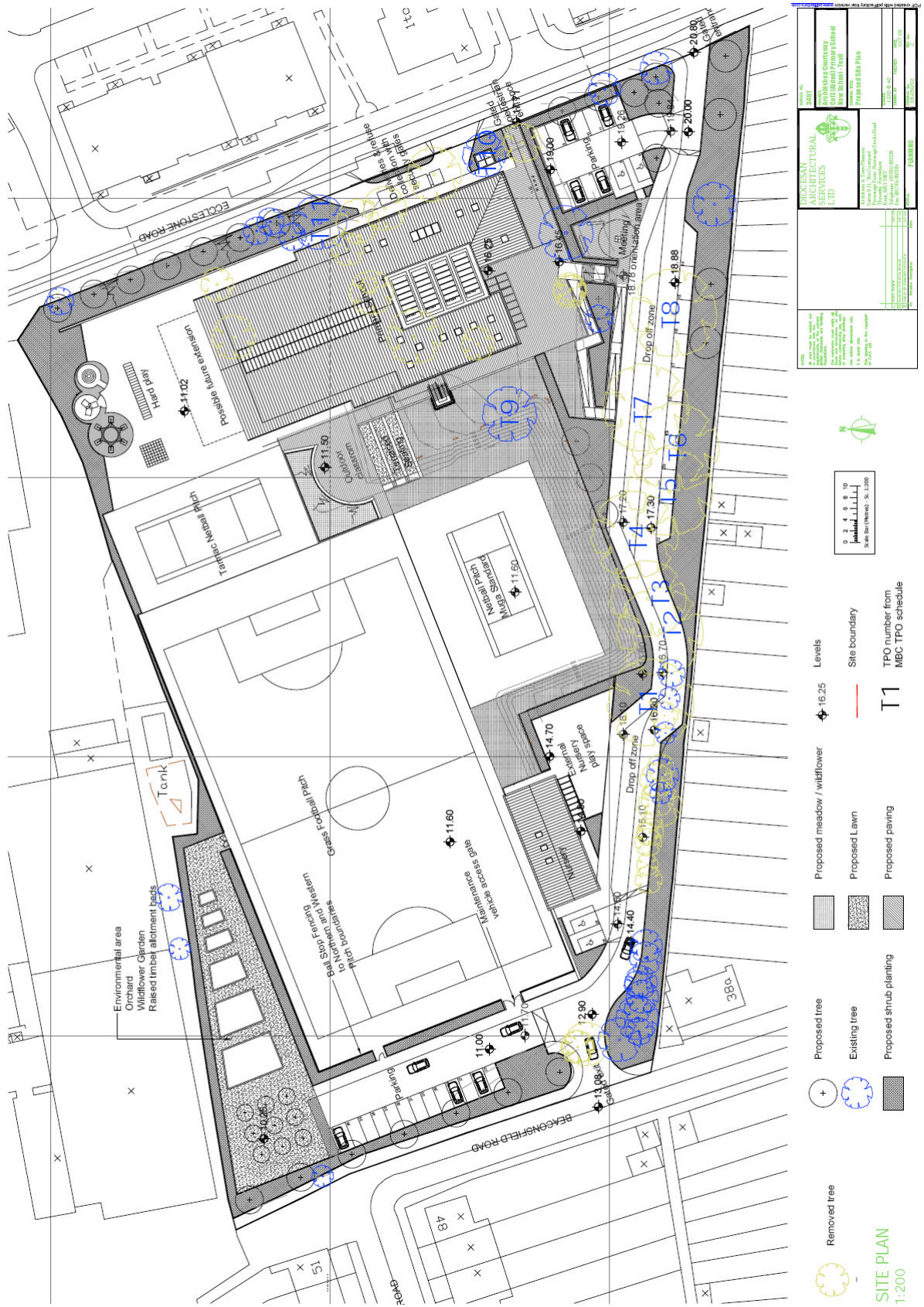
LOCATION PLAN



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Construction of a new Archbishop Courtenay Primary School and nursery, Beaconsfield Road, Maidstone - MA/10/123



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NOTES:
 1. All work must be carried out in accordance with the Building Regulations. Current BS8100 standards will apply to all work.
 2. The architect must verify all work and drawings are in accordance with the Building Regulations.
 3. See other documents only.
 4. This drawing is the copyright of D.A.S. Ltd.

NO.	REVISION	DATE	BY

Architect: D.A.S. Ltd.
 10, Market Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3JH
 Tel: 01622 832220
 Fax: 01622 832221

PROJECT:
 ARCHBISHOP COURTENAY
 C OF E CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
 NEW SCHOOL - 1001L

ISSUED FOR:
 ELEVATIONS - SHEET 1

SCALE:
 1:100

DATE:
 20/09/06

DRAWN BY:
 JAV

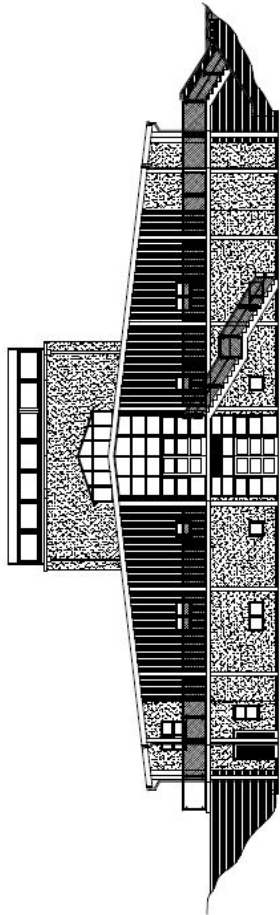
CHECKED BY:
 JAV

DATE OF ISSUE:
 20/09/06

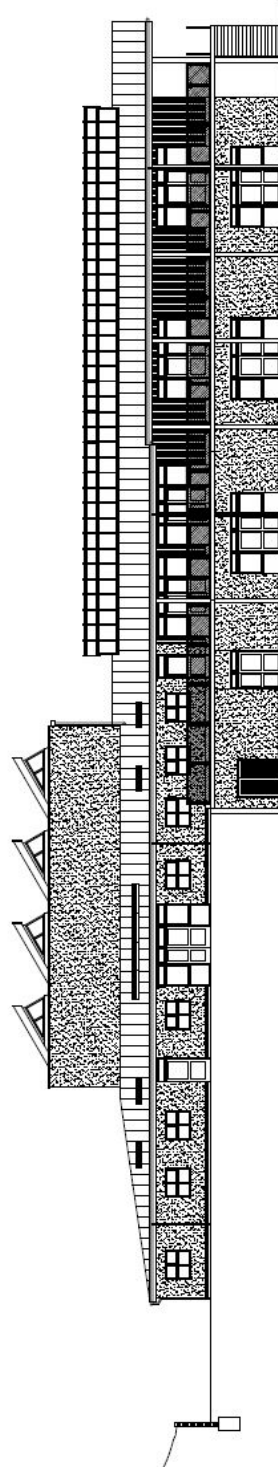
REF. NO.:

MATERIALS

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- GUTTERING: ZINC GUTTERING
- EACH AND SOLIT: ZINC SOFFIT AND FASCIA INCORPORATED INTO ROOF SYSTEM
- ROOF LINES: VELD - COLOUR DARK GREY
- RAIN WATER GOODS: ZINC
- COLOUR: WEATHERED BLUE GREY
- PAINT: BRICK: REDBROCK STAFFORDSHIRE SLATE BLUE
- BRICKS TO MAIN BUILDING: BRICKS COLOURED PERMAROCK - COLOUR: SAPHIR BLUE
- PERFOR TOHALL: THROUGH COLOURED PERMAROCK COLOUR: WHITE
- TIMBER CLADDING TO MAIN BUILDING: TYPE: IBA, NATURAL FINISH
- WINDOWS AND DOORS: COMPOSITE TIMBERPOWDER COATED ALUMINIUM - COLOUR: DUSKY BLUE. RAL: 5025



NORTH ELEVATION
 MAIN SCHOOL



EAST ELEVATION
 MAIN SCHOOL

0 1 2 3 4 5
 Scale Bar (Metres) - Sc: 1:100

Construction of a new Archbishop Courtenay Primary School and nursery, Beaconsfield Road, Maidstone - MA/10/123

NOTES:
 All work must be carried out in accordance with the Building Regulations.
 The contractor must verify all work and dimensions are correct, including the use of building levels.
 Use metric measurements only.
 All work to be completed by 31st Oct 09.

NO.	REVISION	DATE	BY

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Architect & Town Planner
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PROJECT NO. 3461

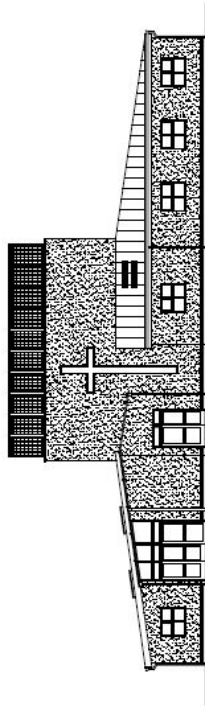
ARCHBISHOP COURTENAY C OF E Primary School NEW SCHOOL - TOWN

ISSUE TITLE: ELEVATIONS - SHEET 2

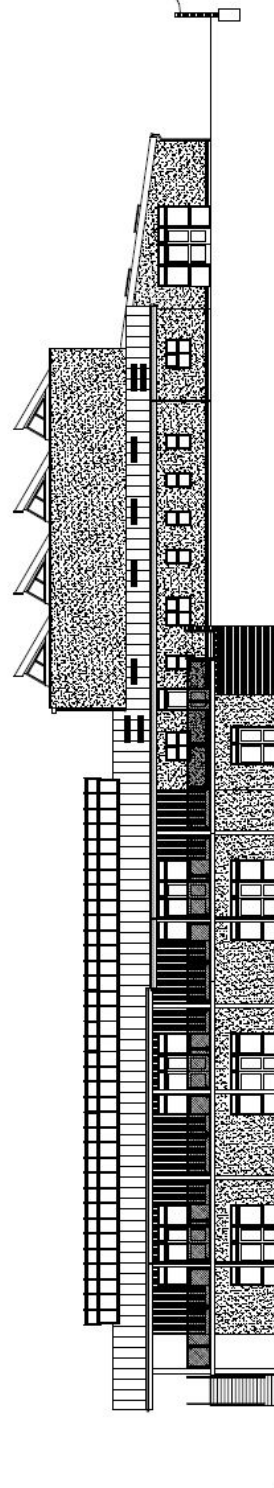
TOTAL: 1:100
 DRAWN BY: P. J. J. J.
 CHECKED BY: J. J. J.
 DATE: OCT 09
 DRAWN BY: P. J. J. J.
 CHECKED BY: J. J. J.
 DATE: OCT 09

MATERIALS

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- OUTSIDING: ZINC OUTSIDING
- FACIA AND SKELIT: ZINC SKELIT AND FACIA INCORPORATED INTO ROOF SYSTEM
- ROOF LIGHTS: VELUX - COLOUR DARK GREY
- BATH WATER GOODS: ZINC
- COLOUR: WEATHERED BLUE GRAY
- PAINT WORK: BESTOCK SERRAFORESHIRE SLATE BLUE
- BRICKS TO MAIN BUILDING: THROUGH COLOURED PERMAROCK - COLOUR SKIMP BLUE
- BRICKS TO HALL: THROUGH COLOURED PERMAROCK COLOUR WHITE
- TRIMMED CLADDING TO MAIN BUILDING TYPE 18A, NATURAL FINISH
- WINDOWS AND DOORS: COMPOSITE UNDERPOWER COATED ALUMINIUM - COLOUR DESIGNER BLUE PA. 5525



**SOUTH ELEVATION
 MAIN SCHOOL**



**WEST ELEVATION
 MAIN SCHOOL**



Item D1

Construction of a new Archbishop Courtenay Primary School and nursery, Beaconsfield Road, Maidstone - MA/10/123

NOTES:
 All work shall be carried out in accordance with the Building Regulations.
 The architect shall verify all work and dimensions and shall be responsible for the accuracy of all drawings.
 Use where dimensions vary.
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NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	CHECKED
1	10/10/12	ISSUED FOR TENDER	DAVID SHERWIN	DAVID SHERWIN

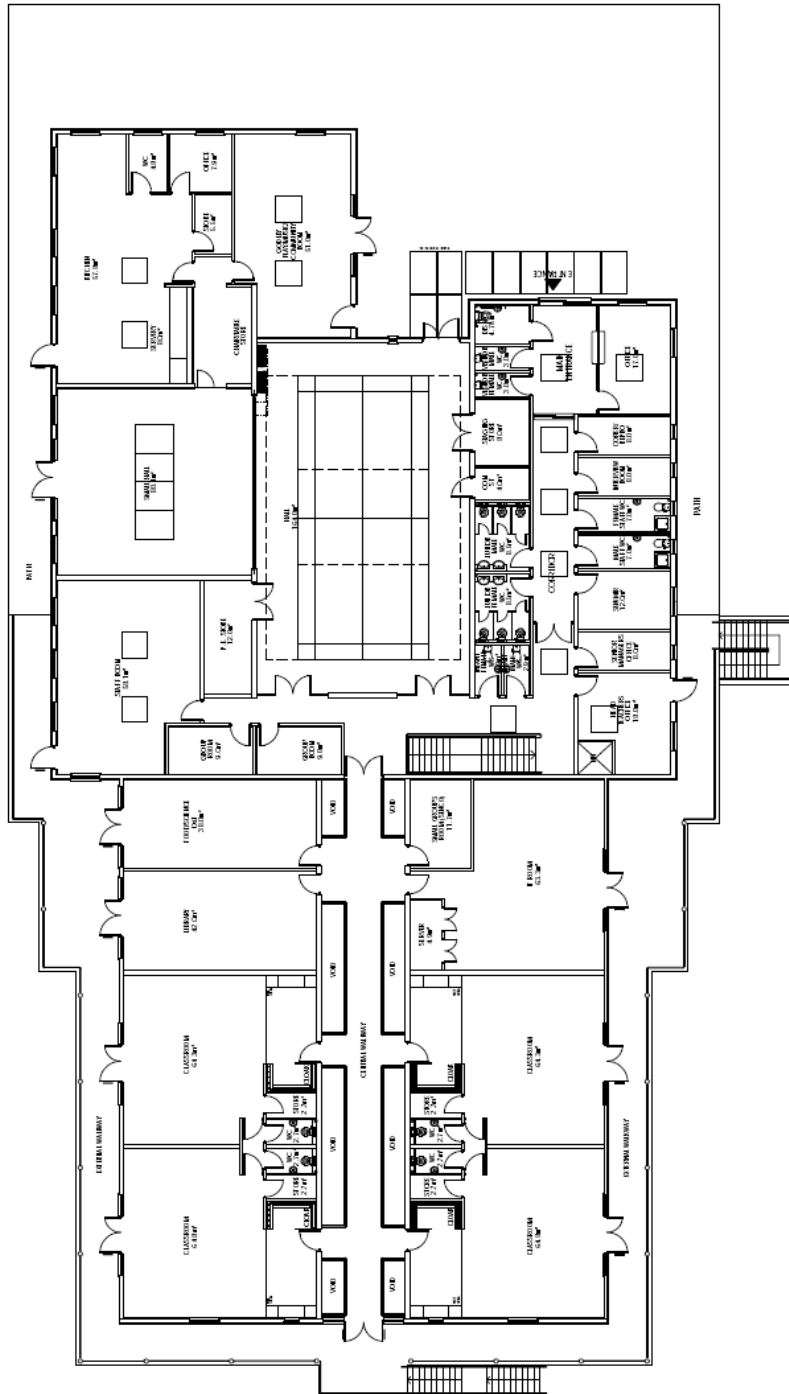
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 Canterbury, Kent, UK
 T: 01226 333333 F: 01226 333333
 E: info@das.co.uk W: www.das.co.uk

ARCHBISHOP COURTENAY C OF E AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL NEW SCHOOL - T101L

Client: TLE
 UPPER GROUND FLOOR PLAN


SCALE: 1:100
 DATE: 10/10/12
 DRAWN BY: J.V.
 CHECKED BY: D.S.
 DATE: 10/10/12

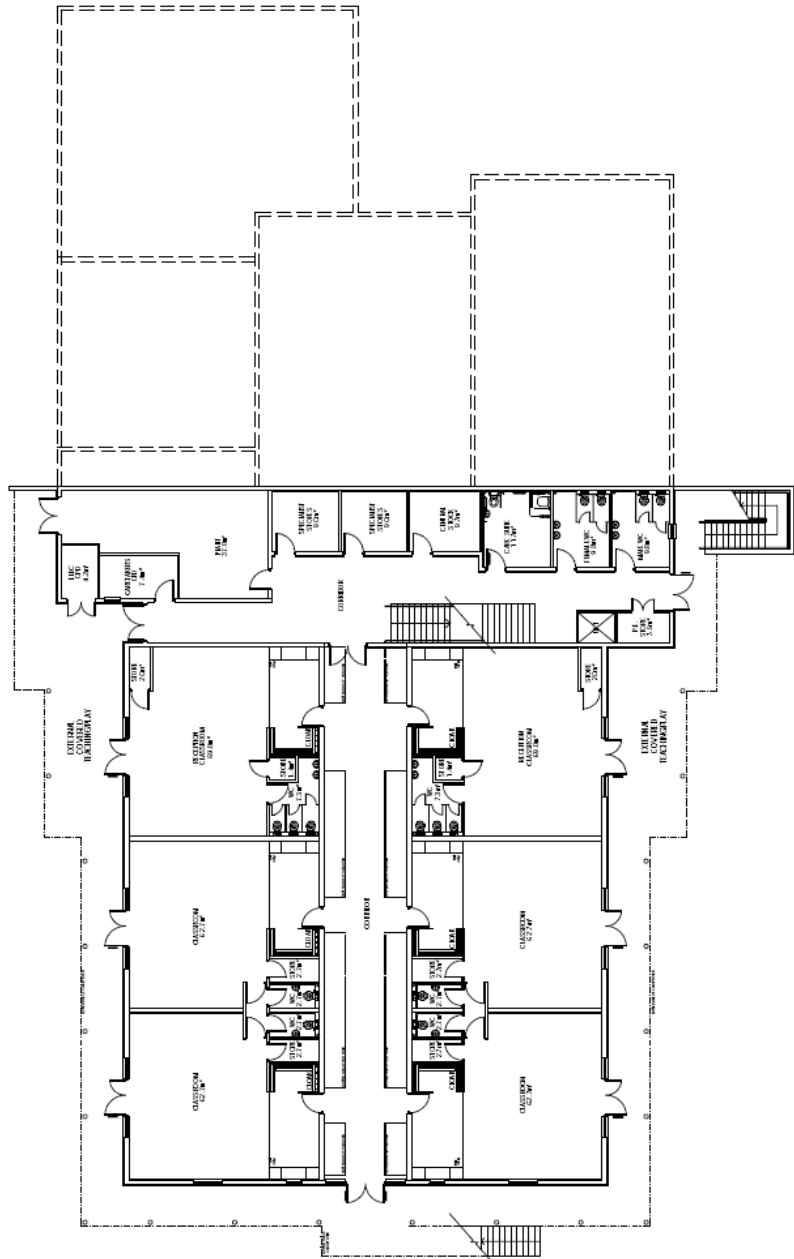


UPPER GROUND FLOOR PLAN
 MAIN SCHOOL

Item D1

Construction of a new Archbishop Courtenay Primary School and nursery, Beaconsfield Road, Maidstone - MA/10/123

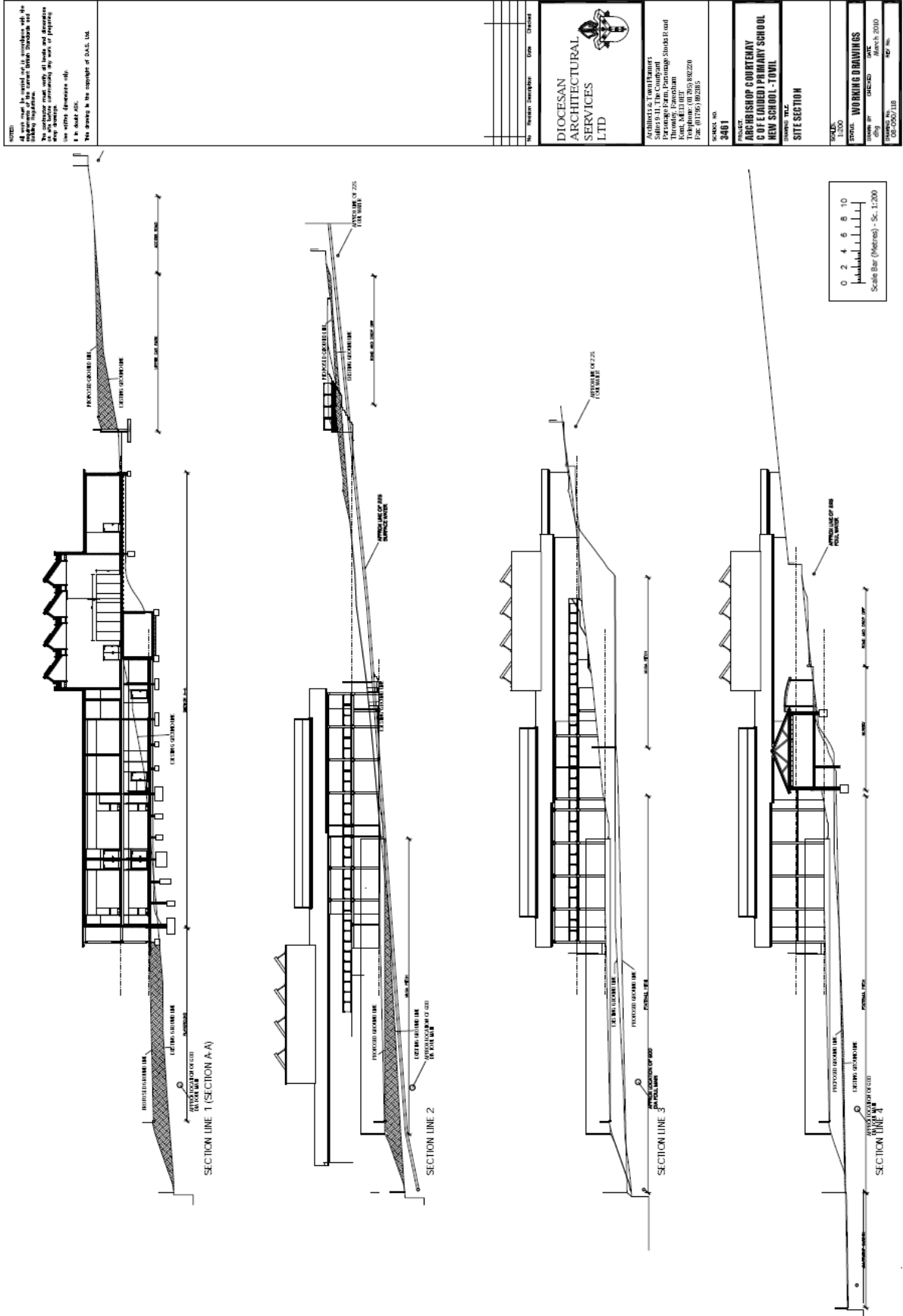
<p>NOTES:</p> <p>All work shall be carried out in accordance with the Building Regulations.</p> <p>The architect shall verify all work and dimensions before commencing any work.</p> <p>The contractor shall be responsible for obtaining all necessary permissions.</p> <p>This drawing is the copyright of D.A.S. Ltd.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>NO.</td> <td>DATE</td> <td>DESCRIPTION</td> <td>BY</td> <td>CHECKED</td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </table>	NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	CHECKED						 <p>DIOCESAN ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES LTD</p>	<p>ARCHITECT: D.A.S. LTD Suite 9.11, The Courtyard Paragon Park, Paragon Works Road KENT, ME13 9HT T: 01852 607363 / 602220 F: 01852 607365</p>	<p>SCHOOL NO: 2461</p>
NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	CHECKED										
<p>PROJECT: ARCHBISHOP COURTENAY C OF E CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL NEW SCHOOL - 100%</p>														
<p>LOWER GROUND FLOOR PLAN</p>														
<p>SCALE: 1:100</p>														
<p>DATE: 23/10/09</p>														
<p>PROJECT NO: 2461</p>														
<p>DATE: 23/10/09</p>														
<p>PROJECT NO: 2461</p>														



LOWER GROUND FLOOR PLAN
 MAIN SCHOOL

Item D1

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Construction of a new Archbishop Courtenay Primary School and nursery, Beaconsfield Road, Maidstone - MA/10/123

NOTES:
 All work must be carried out in accordance with the Building Regulations.
 The contractor must verify all loads and dimensions are correct and comply with the Building Regulations.
 Use common sense only.
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MATERIALS
 ROOF: ZINC ROOF - NATURAL FINISH
 GUTTERING: ZINC CUTTING
 FLOOR AND WALLS: ZINC SPALL AND AGGREGATE REINFORCED
 WIND ROOF SYSTEM
 BAR WATER GOODS:
 ZINC
 COLOUR: WHITE
 PUMPS IN BRICK
 BRICKWORK: STAFFORDSHIRE STATE BRICK
 LAGGING: ROCK WOOL INSULATION (FLOOR); POLYSTYRENE INSULATION (WALLS)
 GLAZING: STANLEY PATENT
 BRICKS: THROUGH COLOURED STRAWBERRY - 1000MM X 225MM X 75MM WINDOWS TO MATCH BRICKWORK COLOURS
 PERMABLOCK REF: JAG035133.01 616296
 BRICK COLOUR: PERMABLOCK REF: JAG035133.01 616296
 PERMABLOCK REF: JAG035133.01 616296
 TIMBER CLADDING: HYBRIDWOOD METALLIC TIMBER CLADDING
 WINDOWS AND DOORS: COMPOSITE TIMBER/UPPER GLAZED
 COMPOSITE TIMBER/UPPER GLAZED
 COMPOSITE TIMBER/UPPER GLAZED
 RAL: 5001 (LIGHT BLUE)

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SCHOOL NO. 3461

PROJECT: ARCHBISHOP COURTENAY C OF E LADIED PRIMARY SCHOOL NEW SCHOOL - TOWN

WORKS TITLE: NURSERY ELEVATIONS

SCALE: 1:50

TITLE: WORKING DRAWINGS

DATE: 10/10/13

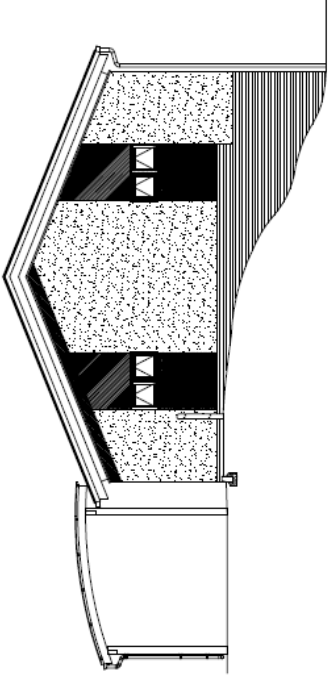
BY: D.A.S.

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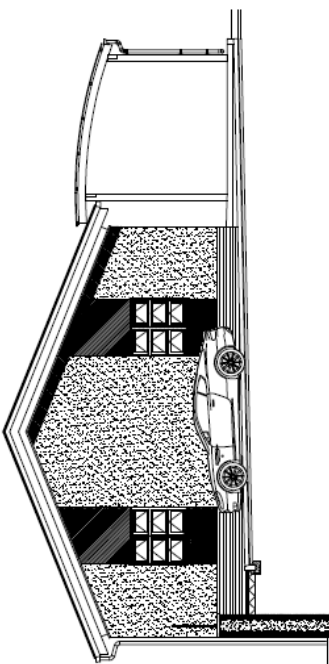
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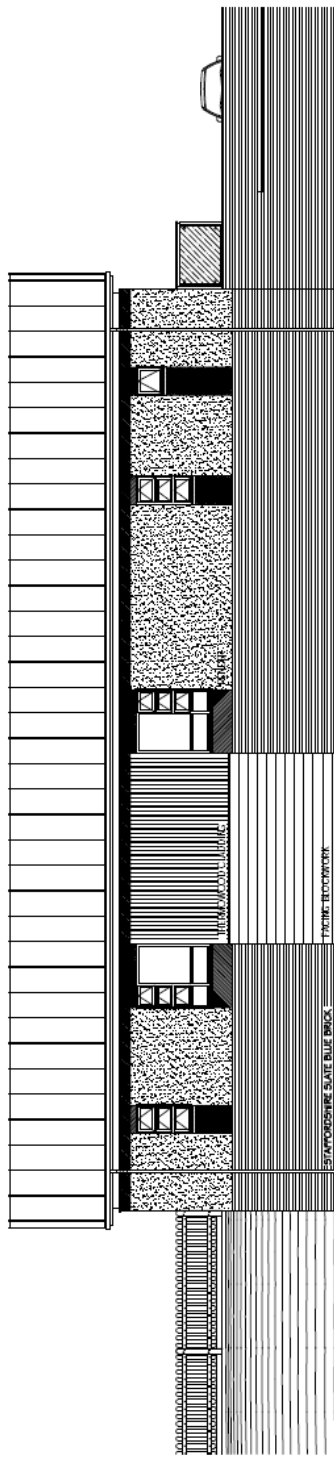
SCALE BAR (Metres) - Sc. 1:50



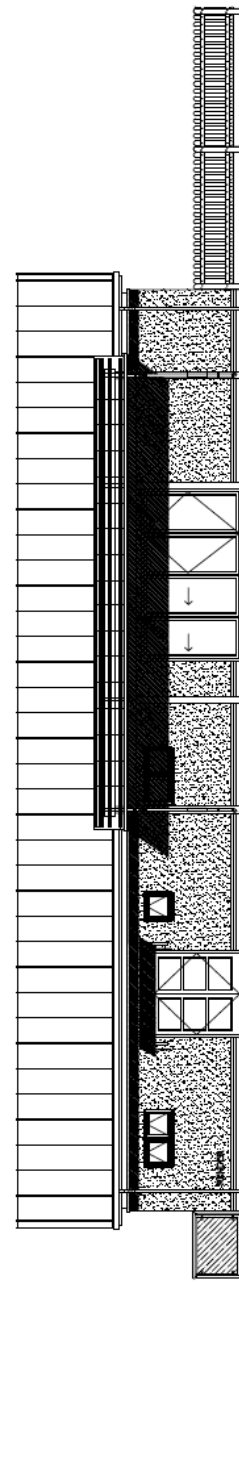
EAST ELEVATION



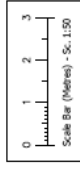
WEST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION
ELEVATIONS
NURSERY



Construction of a new Archbishop Courtenay Primary School and nursery, Beaconsfield Road, Maidstone - MA/10/123

and western boundaries have the occasional tree specimen but are on the whole defined by fencing and existing development.

3. Currently, the only vehicular access to the site is via Beaconsfield Road, which is towards the northern end of the site, where the land is more level. The part of Beaconsfield Road where the current vehicular access joins is an unadopted road. However this section of road is due to be made up to adoptable standards shortly by the developer of the housing site at the corner of Beaconsfield Road.

Background

4. Archbishop Courtenay Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a popular Maidstone town school, currently located on two sites. One site is in Church Road, Tovil (Tovil site) and the other is in Priory Road, Maidstone (town centre site). The school was established in September 2005 following the closure of two voluntary controlled schools, St Stephen's Infant School, which was located in Church Road and the All Saints Primary School, which was located in Priory Road. The school children are currently accommodated in outdated Victorian buildings and mobile classrooms which are below the areas and standards required for modern teaching. The applicant advises that, health and safety and security are particularly compromised, as children have to pass out of the main building to mobile classrooms throughout the day and there are also the difficulties of operating a school on two sites, which are over a mile apart.
5. External play hard areas are again well below the standards required for ball games and amenity play. The soft play areas are currently at a distance away from the school and are not within the ownership of the Local Authority or the School, therefore restricting the potential for school use of these facilities. The town centre site also has no parking facilities with only 4 vehicles being accommodated in the local vicarage for a fee and the use of parking permits, which have been bought from Maidstone Borough Council. Visitors to the town centre site have limited waiting time, if they can get a parking space on the road. Parking is also difficult at the Tovil site.
6. The school roll was 151 pupils in June 2009. The school has 36 members of staff. Currently the juniors are located in the town centre site and there are 95 pupils and they are split over 4 classes. The infants are located in the Tovil site and there are 56 pupils, split between 2 infant classes and a Foundation class. There is also a pre-school at the Tovil site. The school day starts at 9.00am and finishes at 3.00pm at the Tovil site and 3.15pm at the town centre site. The school is open on both sites from 8.00am for breakfast club and there are various after school clubs at both school sites most afternoons of the week. There is currently a mini bus service run by the school between the two school sites.
7. A previous outline planning application was submitted for the school in 2004 (planning reference MA/04/1595) and was considered by at the 14 December 2004 meeting of Planning Applications Committee, when Members resolved that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions. This outline planning permission has now expired, as it was not implemented within the 3 year time limit.

Construction of a new Archbishop Courtenay Primary School and nursery, Beaconsfield Road, Maidstone - MA/10/123

Proposal

8. The planning application is for a new 10 class primary school with a separate nursery building, a new one way vehicular access from Eccleston Road through to Beaconsfield Road with a drop off zone for parents, on-site operational car parking, separate service access and pedestrian access off Eccleston Road and sports pitches and play areas. It is proposed that the school will have an increased school roll of up to 300 pupils and 26 children at the nursery. An area has also been set aside for a future extension of the school, for 4 more classrooms, WC's and small group rooms. It is proposed that there would be a total number of 37 parking spaces on the site, which includes 4 disabled parking spaces; and 8 parking spaces within the school drop off area and a further 3 parking spaces within the nursery drop off area. The application is also proposing 20 cycle parking racks. The applicant indicates that the layout of the development has been influenced by the sloping nature of the site and the need to provide sporting facilities as well as an access road through the site, which means that most of the mature trees, including those subject to the Tree Preservation Order, cannot be retained. Proposals for new and replacement planting have been submitted with the application.
9. The school building has been designed taking the site considerations and surrounding areas into account. Particularly taking into account the contours of the site, the school has been designed as a single storey building at the front (and located on the highest part of the site), which then becomes a two-storey building due to the drop in land levels. The height of the roof therefore remains at a constant height, as one floor then drops down one storey following the slope.
10. The building has also been designed with sustainability in mind, using where possible maintenance free materials. The structure would be highly insulated and finished with sustainable timber panelling and Perma rock render. The design would also allow for a central lantern light running the length of the teaching block to facilitate natural ventilation and natural lighting to the classrooms below via a management system.
11. The school would have the statutory external spaces, namely an all weather football pitch, netball pitches, hard and soft play areas. This is a very restricted site especially due to the topography and much of the flat space needs to be retained for these functions, leaving the sloped area near to Eccleston Road for the building and the upper area for the access road. Normally a school of this size would require two full sized pitches but it has been accepted by Sport England that what is proposed is an improvement upon the current sporting provision. In addition to this, the existing site contours would be utilised to design an outdoor performance area/amphitheatre with informal/formal terraced play.
12. In relation to highway aspects of the application, a through road is proposed due to concerns about parking backing up towards Eccleston Road and Tovil Road junction, if there was only a single entrance and exit point off Eccleston Road. Also Eccleston Road is a cul-de-sac and so turning around within this road would have resulted in potentially dangerous manoeuvring movements within the existing road junctions. It was therefore decided that it would be more appropriate to separate the traffic flow to the site by creating an entrance in Eccleston Road and an exit in Beaconsfield Road. Due to the site topography, the only location where the road could be located was at the southern boundary. The access road through the site would be gated and parents would be allowed onto the site to use the drop off facility. There would also be

Construction of a new Archbishop Courtenay Primary School and nursery, Beaconsfield Road, Maidstone - MA/10/123

pedestrian routes into the site and a separate off road loading area is proposed off Eccleston Road due to the incline on the site, which was deemed too steep to safely load refuse bins.

13. The School intends to allow the wider community to use the school facilities, such as the hall and other communal spaces and the all weather play pitch, out of school hours. The applicant states that, the nursery would also provide a valuable facility for the local community by directly feeding pupils into the new school.
14. The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment including a School Travel Plan, Flood Risk Assessment, Ground Investigation Report, Ecological Scoping Report and a Full Bat Survey. Since it was originally submitted the application has been amended as a result of value engineering detailed design considerations. *Copies of drawings showing the site layout, site sections and elevations of the proposed buildings, as amended, are attached.*

Planning Policy**15. Planning Policy Statement 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2006):**

- Making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve people's quality of life.
- Contributing to sustainable economic development.
- Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside and existing communities.
- Ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design, and the efficient use of resources.
- Ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community.

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

Maidstone Borough – Wide Local Plan (2000):

Policy ENV6 Landscaping, surfacing and boundary treatment.

Policy T13 Parking standards.

Policy H9 Housing development will be permitted on land at Beaconsfield Road/Eccleston Road/ Wharf Road, Tovil.

Consultations

17. **Maidstone Borough Council** – raises **objection**, as the proposed development would not have adequate regard to landscaping. The position of the access road would require the removal of a number of trees, including those covered by TPO 10 of 2009, and the site layout has not been considered in accordance with a tree survey or the recommendations of BS5837:2005 'Trees in Relation to Construction'. The proposed landscaping is not comprehensive enough to mitigate for the loss of the trees or to

Construction of a new Archbishop Courtenay Primary School and nursery, Beaconsfield Road, Maidstone - MA/10/123

provide an adequate setting for the development. Therefore the proposal is contrary to policies ENV6 of the Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan (2000).

The Borough Council was subsequently consulted on the revised application details and confirmed that from a planning point of view in terms of scale, design and layout, the Borough Council had **no objections** to the scheme. However the Borough Council wishes to uphold its original **objection**, which was due to the proposed development not having adequate regard to landscaping.

The Borough Council's reasons are elaborated further, as follows:

"Having looked at the plans for this application (the revised application details) it would appear that it changes little from the previous scheme submitted under MA/10/123. Therefore from an arboricultural point of view our comments on the cramped nature of the development and loss of trees as explained previously remain unchanged.

Despite the landscape officer's previous advice there has been no attempt to try to retain any of the more prominent healthy tree within the scheme most of which are subject to TPO 10 of 2009. Therefore, our reasons for refusal under the previous scheme still stand.

Those trees have been shown for retention and protection toward the southwestern corner near the proposed exit onto Beaconsfield Road are all poor quality and not suitable for long-term retention. Consideration to their removal and replacement with better species should be seriously considered as part of a new landscaping for the site.

With regard to the new landscaping that is shown on the planting drawing, the scheme is much improved to that which was previously proposed although again due to the tight nature of the site, the planting space available will in no way mitigate the loss of the larger trees that are currently present. Nevertheless the Borough Council welcome the planting of native cultivars and would only add, that due again to the limited planting space the more fastigiated/compact form of Hornbeam (*Carpinus Betulus* 'Fastigiata') be planted along the southern boundary adjacent to the road/drop off zone."

18. **Tovil Parish Council** – recommends **approval** of this application.
19. **Divisional Transportation Manager** – raises **no objection** subject to the junction of Church Road and Tovil Road being 'squared off' to improve the safety of this junction and to allow better forward visibility for vehicles coming out of Church Road and into Tovil Road; the existing zebra crossing in Tovil Road being changed to a puffin crossing (the School have agreed to operate a School Crossing Patrol officer at the zebra crossing if the conversion does not go ahead, please refer to paragraph...for further discussion); the signing on the approach to the existing zebra crossing is regularised and that 'School Keep Clear' road markings are required by the school entrance in Eccleston Road and by the exit in Beaconsfield Road and parking restrictions are required in Eccleston Road around the service entrance.
20. **Environment Agency** – raises **no objection** to the proposed drainage details. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) Report was produced upon request from the Environment Agency as a result of the original consultation. The FRA Report required the drainage system for the site to take into account a 100-year 30% rainfall event. The EA were satisfied with the contents of the report and raised no objection to the planning application.

Construction of a new Archbishop Courtenay Primary School and nursery, Beaconsfield Road, Maidstone - MA/10/123

21. **Kent County Archaeologist** – raises **no objection**. Comments that the site has recently been archaeologically evaluated on behalf of the applicant and this work has demonstrated that modern terracing has disturbed the bulk of the site with only the southern edge retaining the original ground profile. Evidence of post-medieval activity was identified in the evaluation but the report suggests that the upper terrace of the site has remained undisturbed since before this period. This part of the site is mostly occupied by the proposed school access road and given the prehistoric potential of the site, it would be appropriate to maintain an archaeological watching brief on groundwork's taking place on the upper terrace.
22. **Natural England** – has suggested that Kent County Council's Biodiversity team is consulted.
23. **Kent County Council Biodiversity Team** – raises **no objection** subject to an assessment/report on the bat roost potential of the trees being conditioned. This assessment/report should include recommendations on the timing of works, the use of soft-felling techniques, provision for course of action should the workers come across any bats. Also a condition on the timing of shrub/tree removal needs to be attached which avoids the bird nesting season.
24. **Sport England** – wishes to lend its **support** in principle to this planning application, as it would appear that the proposed development would result in an improved level of sport and recreation provision in the area, subject to the pitch being constructed to the appropriate specification; the proposed MUGA being constructed in accordance with Sport England/NGB Technical Design Guidance Notes and that the School consider the opportunity of the use of the sporting facilities to the wider community.
25. **Jacobs Landscaping** – raises **no objection in principle**, subject to a condition detailing the extent of the native hedgerow along the northern boundary, which the applicant has agreed to extend but has not been illustrated to date on the Planting Plan, and confirmation of the steepest gradients of the planted slopes.

Jacobs Landscaping latest comments are as follows:

"The size of the proposed stock appears to be appropriate and I am pleased to acknowledge the details of the proposed native hedgerow mix, which are appropriate. I am also pleased to note that the native hedgerow will be extended along the southern and eastern boundaries, and I appreciate the impracticalities of extending it along the northern boundary. However the degree of extension has not been illustrated on the Planting Plan, and I suggest that this is amended accordingly. The External Works Specification considers the establishment and management of wildflower areas thoroughly.

I previously raised a query regarding excavation within root protection areas (RPAs) of retained trees and I suggested that the applicant sought confirmation from a qualified arboriculturalist regarding the acceptable extent of excavation within the RPAs. I acknowledge that for any root over 25mm, the arboriculturalist consultant would advise on whether it would be appropriate for the root to be cut. However I suggest an arboriculturalist is consulted prior to any planning permission being granted, on whether the proposed extent of excavation is acceptable before any construction begins. This is because if an arboriculturalist does not consider the trees are likely to survive the extent

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of excavation, more extensive tree loss may occur and the mitigation plans may not be adequate.”

26. **Jacobs – Street Lighting** – discussions are still ongoing, as the applicant has not provided details of what would happen to an existing lighting column in Eccleston Road that would be affected by the proposed service access. The outcome of these discussions will be reported verbally at the Committee meeting. The applicant has agreed to reduce the levels of lighting within the school site and the height of the lighting columns to 4m, which is the same of the surrounding roads.
27. **Kent Fire and Rescue** – has commented that the means of access is considered satisfactory.

Local Member(s)

28. The local County Member, Mr Chell, was notified of the application on the 25 January 2010 and revised application details on the 1 July 2010

Publicity

29. The application was advertised by the posting of a number of site notices and the notification of 304 neighbours of the original application and of the revised application details. A notice was also placed in the Kent Messenger on the 5 February 2010.

Representations

- 30 9 letters of representation have been received in response to the original application and 3 letters have been received in response to the revised application details. The main planning reasons for objection can be summarised as follows:
- Concern about the area being able to cope with the increased traffic and parking.
 - A section of Beaconsfield Road is an unadopted road and is in poor condition.
 - Concern about the provision of adequate parking for staff and visitors as well as the drop off area.
 - There is a lack of parking around the site and there is a lot of overspill parking which is already in existence in Eccleston Road due to inadequate parking provision at the flats in Eccleston Road.
 - Lack of road markings in the new housing development roads in Eccleston Road.
 - Concern that parents would drop school children off in Eccleston Road rather than driving into the site.
 - Current parking on both sides of Eccleston Road will need to be addressed.
 - Junction of Tovil Road is already very busy and concern about the extra traffic that will use it as a result of the new school.
 - The traffic calming in Eccleston Road would have to be removed and the road widened to accommodate all the extra school traffic.
 - There is not enough existing parking provision on the housing sites in Eccleston Road.
 - Should allow residents to park on the school site out of school hours.
 - Concern that parents would drop school children off in Tovil Road.
 - Residents currently park half on the footway and half in the carriageway in Eccleston Road.

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- At the junction of Tovil Road and Eccleston Road there needs to be a mini roundabout.
- The housing developments in Eccleston Road are not fully complete and when they are then the parking problem will be worse in Eccleston Road.
- Concern about large vehicles turning into the school site and using the whole road to turn.
- Concern about the loss of trees on the southern edge of the site, many of which are TPO.
- Using Beaconsfield Road as an entrance and exit to the school would solve the access and parking problems in Eccleston Road.
- Concerns about traffic turning from Tovil Road into Eccleston Road.
- Due to all the parking in Eccleston Road this road is usually only one vehicle wide.
- Should change existing zebra crossing to a pelican crossing.
- Introduce yellow lines on one side of Eccleston Road.
- Introduce a set of traffic lights at the junction of Tovil Road and Eccleston Road.
- Inconsiderate parking in Eccleston Road from the residents in the housing developments in Eccleston Road.
- Trees currently screen the school site and the industrial area around the site.
- Concern about the loss of wildlife living in the TPO trees if they are cut down.
- The trees are vital to the character of the area and to the visual amenity.
- The proposed revisions do not include any improvements to the original vehicular and pedestrian access proposals.
- The likely increase in traffic in Eccleston Road would jeopardise the safety of both pupils and residents alike.

Discussion

31. The application is required to be determined in accordance with the relevant Development Plan policies, unless other material considerations are of overriding importance. Therefore the proposal needs to be considered in the context of the Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan policies and Government Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes and other material considerations arising from consultation and neighbour notification responses. In this particular case, the determining issues would therefore include the relevant planning policies, design siting and layout, tree loss and landscaping issues, and transportation issues.

Policy Context

32. The site is identified for a housing use as part of the Borough Council's Local Plan, Policy H9 designation. The Local Plan also signalled the intention of preparing a development brief. The 'Lockmeadow and Eccleston Road Development Brief' was therefore subsequently prepared which included the Beaconsfield/Eccleston Road land, and stated that, '*Site F is allocated for the provision of community facilities. The Local Education Authority has identified a need for primary education facilities...*'. Whilst the Lockmeadow and Eccleston Road Development Brief is no longer an adopted document, as mentioned above outline planning permission was granted in 2005, which effectively established the principle of a new primary school and nursery on the application site. Although the outline permission expired in February 2008, it is still in my view, material to determination of this application. Nevertheless it is necessary to consider whether or not the details of the proposal that has now come forward are acceptable, as discussed below.

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Design, Siting and Layout

33. No objections have been raised to the actual design, siting and layout of the school and nursery and associated sport pitches and open spaces. The site is very challenging with significant level changes across the site, dropping from south to north as previously mentioned by 5 metres or more. The school building has been designed taking the sites contours into consideration, using the sloping nature of the site as part of the design of the building although necessarily involving some cutting and filling. The school has been designed as a single storey building at the front, which includes the school hall and ancillary accommodation (located on the highest part of the site), which then becomes a two-storey building providing the main classroom accommodation on the lower part of the site. The hall stands above the rest of the building and has large northern facing roof lights on a flat roof. The remainder of the building has shallow pitched roofs with a central atrium roof light over the two-storey part of the building. A playground area is to be provided to the north side of the building and would involve raising existing ground levels to be compatible with the building.
34. The form of the building, the elevational treatment including the arrangement of windows and doors will be noted from the attached drawings. In terms of external materials, a zinc roof is proposed and a mixture of render (blue to the main building and white to the hall) and timber cladding proposed to the walls on a brick plinth. Windows and doors would be blue powder coated aluminium. Final details could be reserved by condition.
35. There is the potential for overlooking the flatted developments on the opposite side of Eccleston Road, some of which have external balcony areas. However, the facades of these buildings would be between about 23 and 28 metres away which are slightly more than the widely recognised minimum separation distance of 21 metres for house to house windows of habitable rooms. In addition, landscaping is proposed to the eastern boundary of the site, which would provide some screening of the school building.
36. The nursery is a single storey building, with a shallow pitched roof and compatible elevational treatment and materials to the school building would be located at the western end of the site with a play area. It would be constructed at the higher level adjoining the access road. Although it is within 18 metres of no.38a Beaconsfield Road, given that it is single storey and that intervening boundary trees at this point are shown to be retained, I do not consider that there would be an issue of overlooking.
37. The site levels have also dictated the best location for the proposed access road through the site with adjoining drop off and parking areas. This is in the area immediately to the south of the site, which is also the highest part of the site, and is a relatively narrow strip of land, and was best used for the access road, so that the required sports pitches and play areas could be provided on the wider flat and/ or previously levelled areas of the site. The access road would be close to the boundary of the site and would involve removal of some of the boundary trees as discussed below. Immediately adjoining the boundary is a rear access path to the properties in Tovil Road. The rear gardens of these are between some 23 and 30 metres long and mostly enclosed at the end by fences, walls or sheds. No. 38a Beaconsfield Road to the western end is though within between about 3 and 9 metres of the access road although separated by trees to be retained and proposed shrub planting. Given its proximity it is likely that this property in particular would experience some disturbance from vehicles using the access road and exiting the site. However as the most

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significant and noticeable use would be at the beginning and end of the school day for a relatively short duration I do not consider that a planning objection would be justified on this particular issue per se.

38. Overall I consider that the siting and layout of the different elements of the proposed development are acceptable in planning terms taking into consideration the site levels, surrounding neighbours and adjacent roads. The layout of the school access road sports pitches and playgrounds together with the buildings is logical and makes best use of the land available. I also consider that proposed design of the buildings, including the scale, form, appearance and materials, would be appropriate and acceptable, bearing in mind the variety of building styles and materials throughout the surrounding townscape. I would not therefore raise a planning objection to the proposal on grounds of design, siting and layout subject to the considerations below.

Tree Loss and Landscaping Issues

39. There is currently limited vegetation across the site, with trees and shrubs focused mostly around the periphery of the site. Maidstone Borough Council has placed a Tree Preservation Order on 10 mature Sycamore trees and 1 Ash tree within the site, which are mostly concentrated along the southern boundary and adjacent to Eccleston Road. These trees are mostly assessed as being of high arboricultural value on the tree survey undertaken by the applicants Landscape Architect. These trees also filter views into the site from the south. There are also some other trees proposed to be removed, which are of lower arboricultural value, however collectively the vegetation belt provides a strong landscape feature within this urban context as well as visual buffering.
40. Discussions have taken place with the applicant to see whether any of the TPO trees could be retained as part of the proposal. That might have been achieved by moving the proposed access road or parking area(s), or by reviewing the ramped areas within the site. The applicant did review the possibility of retaining the TPO trees but, given the site levels and what needs to be accommodated within the site, has been unable to do so. Although it is regrettable, on balance, I accept that the trees in question, including those subject to the TPO, cannot be retained particularly as there is no other workable location for the one way access road without compromising other elements of the layout. The trees which are located along the eastern boundary including those subject to the TPO, along Eccleston Road, similarly cannot be retained as they are located in the area that is proposed for the service entrance to the school and/or affected by construction of the building. Again the applicant considered the possibility of retaining these trees but due to the proposed location of the school's kitchen, the gradient of the site and the location of the road narrowings in Eccleston Road, the service road could not be moved.
41. The applicant has proposed a landscaping scheme to compensate for the loss of trees including those subject to the TPO by the planting of over 60 trees as well as new soft landscaping including hedge and shrub planting on the site. That would improve the views from the site from the surrounding residential properties and improve the quality of the townscape. I consider therefore that these proposals are acceptable to compensate for the loss of the established trees and would generally increase the amount of vegetation that currently exists within the site.

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Transportation Issues

42. Concern has been raised by local residents over the lack of parking available in Eccleston Road and about whether the road would be able to cope with the increased traffic that the school would generate. The outline planning application for the school site indicated that the existing site access in Beaconsfield Road was likely to be retained. However no further details were given at that time and means of access was not dealt as a reserved matter at the outline planning application stage.
43. Mindful of the traffic levels that a primary school can generate, the applicants' current proposal is for a separate entrance off Eccleston Road and an exit into Beaconsfield Road with an internal one way access road, as a means of reducing the traffic numbers onto a single access point and to keep traffic moving. Also by providing an access road through the site, it would reduce the need for parents to park in either Eccleston Road or Beaconsfield Road as they could drive into the school site and use the parents drop off facility outside the school and nursery buildings.
44. Bearing this in mind, a Transportation Assessment was submitted with the planning application, giving information of the levels of traffic likely to be generated by the new school and its effect upon the surrounding highway. A capacity assessment has been completed on the Tovil Road/Eccleston Road/Courtenay Road junction and the results indicated that the junction would operate within capacity with the school traffic at peak times.
45. Eccleston Road is currently congested due to on-street parking that is occurring from the lack of car parking spaces within the flatted housing developments that are located off Eccleston Road. These developments have already been granted planning permission and have either already been constructed and are occupied, or some of the flats have been constructed but are still unoccupied. Unfortunately the school planning application cannot address the lack of parking that has been permitted as part of the flatted housing applications and whilst the applicant is sympathetic to the local residents, he has no duty to solve the parking issues that have been created by another developer. I do not therefore consider these existing problems would in themselves justify an objection to the proposed school or its access.
46. However the applicant is proposing 'School Keep Clear' road markings at both the entrance to the school in Eccleston Road and at the exit in Beaconsfield Road and parking restrictions around the school service access in Eccleston Road. A Traffic Regulation Order would have to be advertised and reported to the Joint Transportation Board. The 'School Keep Clear' road markings and parking restrictions would ensure that the school access points are kept clear of parked vehicles and ensure good visibility at these accesses. It would also create some much needed passing places for motorists travelling up and down Eccleston Road but it would probably push the overflow on-street parking that occurs in Eccleston Road onto other streets around the site. Kent Highway Services are aware of these parking problems and has confirmed that they would be looking into these issues at the same time as any work for the Traffic Regulation Order being pursued.
47. The issue of pedestrian safety has also been raised and the School has confirmed within its School Travel Plan, that currently the School has a higher than national level of pupils walking to school. This is something that would also be actively encouraged at the new joint school site. Also the high number of school pupils walking to school,

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should result in less vehicles travelling to the site, therefore the residents' concerns about increased number of traffic as a result of the new school should not actually materialise.

48. As mentioned in the paragraph above, the school currently experiences a high volume of pupils walking to the school. A Mosaic Profile (a social marketing tool which categorises people according to the areas in which they live in) has been produced that indicates that a significant number of school pupils live to the south west of the proposed new school site. A pedestrian count was undertaken at the existing zebra crossing in Tovil Road between 8.30am and 9.30am during term time. A total of 28 pedestrians crossed during this period. Given that the number of pupils would increase substantially and that a significant proportion live to the south of the school site and would therefore need to cross Tovil Road, it is clear that the pedestrian flows on the zebra crossing would increase significantly.
49. Traffic flows along Tovil Road are high, with 429 vehicles being recorded between 8.30am and 9.00am during a survey in 2008, along this section of road past the zebra crossing. It is estimated that this number would increase with traffic growth, committed development and the new school to 541 vehicles by the time the school opens. Kent Highway Services initially recommended that this zebra crossing be converted to a puffin crossing to help pupils cross the road safely. This conversion would be beneficial to pedestrian safety and would help to regularise the crossing movements, assisting traffic turning from the junctions of Tovil Road/Church Road and Tovil Road/Eccleston Road/Courtenay Road and allowing time for through traffic along Tovil Road and therefore reducing congestion during the peak periods.
50. However the cost of this conversion has been estimated at £40,000. As no design work has actually been carried out the final cost could be more than the estimate as a Safety Audit would be required for the work and there may be matters arising from this Audit, that are currently unforeseen. Neither the applicant nor the School has budgeted any money to carry out this work. However the School is concerned about the safety of its own pupils and has confirmed that it is willing to operate a School Crossing Patrol Officer at the zebra crossing, as an alternative to the recommended engineering measures. The Head Teacher currently employs personnel to operate the mini bus services between the existing two school sites and provide a chaperone service to the school pupils, and whom she would have to redeploy from their current roles. The School has offered to train up to 3 members of staff to ensure that there is enough people available to cover sickness and to ensure a continued level of service during school term time. This proposal would mean that the zebra crossing would stay as it currently is, apart from the regularisation of the signing on the approach to this crossing, which needs to go ahead regardless of whether the crossing is a zebra or a puffin crossing.
51. Kent Highway Services has acknowledged the School's offer to operate a School Crossing Patrol Officer at the crossing as an alternative to the recommended conversion to a puffin crossing, being the next best option if the conversion did not go ahead. However Kent Highway Services has expressed concern that whilst a puffin crossing is a permanent feature, which can be used at any time during the day, a School Crossing Patrol is subject to the availability of the post holder and there may be occasions when the post is not filled or the post holder is absent. Hence the School has offered to train up 3 members of staff to ensure that there is always cover. In addition to this, the School is to hold a breakfast club and after school clubs and the times of

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these clubs may not coincide with the working times of the School Crossing Patrol. It is also acknowledged that a School Crossing Patrol Officer is the safest way for pedestrians to cross a road as it only operates at the times when children are going to and from school. Whilst the Kent Highway Services has not raised a highway objection on the basis of the existing Zebra crossing being retained, subject to the School's proposals for a crossing patrol being implemented, Members should bear in mind the above disadvantages compared to it being converted to a puffin crossing.

52. Kent Highway Services have also expressed concern about the current road alignment of the Church Road/Tovil Road junction. This junction would be used by the majority of parents and staff leaving the school site. This junction is currently angled and the approach is not ideal for motorists exiting Church Road, as drivers need to look over their shoulders to see if their path is clear. The latest crash record indicates that there have been 2 personal injury crashes at this junction within the latest 3 year period, which both involved pedestrians. This is a cause for concern as the new school would increase pedestrian numbers at this junction and would also lead to an increase of traffic of approximately 51 movements during the morning peak hour. It is therefore proposed that this junction is 'squared up' to improve safety. The applicant has agreed to undertake this work and a condition could be attached to any planning permission, requiring that this work be carried out prior to the school opening.

Ecology.

53. An ecologist was employed by the applicant to assess the ecological potential of the site. The original surveys were carried out whilst there were still buildings on the site but did not discover any bats roosting in these buildings at the time of the survey. The ecologist noted the trees were checked for bat roost potential and whilst none were found, there is still some potential for impacts. That may not be in all trees, as some of the trees may be too young, however this would need to be checked out as soon as possible and prior to any work carried out to cutting down the trees on the site. Therefore the County Ecologist has requested conditions be included requiring the trees to be checked for bat roosting potential, and to include recommendations on timing of the works, the use of soft-felling techniques, and provision for course of action should the workers come across any bats. The County Ecologist also request a condition be imposed requiring that the timing of shrub/tree removal be carried out so that it avoids the bird-nesting season.

Construction.

54. The proposed new school is located in a residential area, and is surrounded by neighbours on all four boundaries of the site. Whilst no comments have been raised by the statutory consultees or neighbours about the proposed noise and general disturbance that the construction of the school and nursery and associated access road and school playground could generate, conditions could be attached to the planning consent that takes into consideration all these factors. Therefore a condition controlling hours and days of demolition and construction should ensure that any disturbance is kept to a minimum. In addition a condition could be included requiring measures to be taken to ensure that mud is not deposited on the public highway.

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Conclusion

55. Having regard to the relevant planning policies and guidance, in addition to material considerations raised by respondents, I consider that the creation of the new Archbishop Courtenay Primary School has been carefully considered and planned in accordance with the constraints and limitations of the site's layout and contours. It would provide much needed replacement accommodation and facilities for education within this locality and for the local community. The principle of a school has essentially already been established by the previous outline permission, and overall I consider that the detailed proposals for the school generally accords with planning policies and that the development would result in a significant enhancement to the site and locality. Objections have been raised to the impacts of various aspects of the proposed development, such as parking in Eccleston Road, increased traffic, the loss of trees including those subject to the TPO and landscaping, but having examined each of these aspects as discussed above, I am of the view that none would warrant a refusal of the application. I therefore see no overriding reason to raise an objection to the development and consider that it would generally accords with the aims and objectives of the relevant planning policies and guidance. I therefore recommend that planning permission is granted.

Recommendation

56. I RECOMMEND that PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS, including conditions to cover the following aspects:

- the standard time limit;
- the development is carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
- control on hours of construction and demolition;
- a report/assessment on the bat roost potential of the trees is prepared and timing of shrub/tree removal;
- a junction improvement scheme is progressed for Church Road/Tovil Road junction
- a Traffic Regulation Order is progressed and advertised for the School Keep Clear road markings in Eccleston Road and Beaconsfield Road and parking restrictions around the school service access in Eccleston Road;
- the regularisation of the signing on the approach to the existing zebra crossing;
- a condition attached for the conversion of the zebra crossing to a puffin crossing/School Crossing Patrol Officer to operate at the existing zebra crossing, depending on Members' recommendation;
- that no mud is deposited on the public highway;
- an archaeological watching brief on groundwork on the upper terrace of the site.
- the proposed hedgerow extension is included in the Planting Plan for the site.
- a condition is attached on arboriculture, depending on the subsequent discussions with the applicant and the County's Landscape Architect; and.
- a condition is attached on street lighting, depending on the subsequent discussions with the applicant and the County's Street Lighting Engineer.

Case officer – Lidia Cook	01622 221063
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Background documents - See section heading
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