

**Proposed Floodlit Synthetic Turf Pitch at The Abbey School, Faversham –SW/10/545**

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

Application by the Abbey School and Kent County Council Children, Families & Education for the construction of a synthetic training pitch with fencing and floodlights, dimensions 106 x 70m and goal storage recesses and extension to the car park to the front of the sports centre at The Abbey School, London Road, Faversham – SW/10/545

Recommendation: Subject to the views of Swale Borough Council, that permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Member: Mr Thomas Gates

Classification: Unrestricted

**Site**

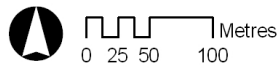
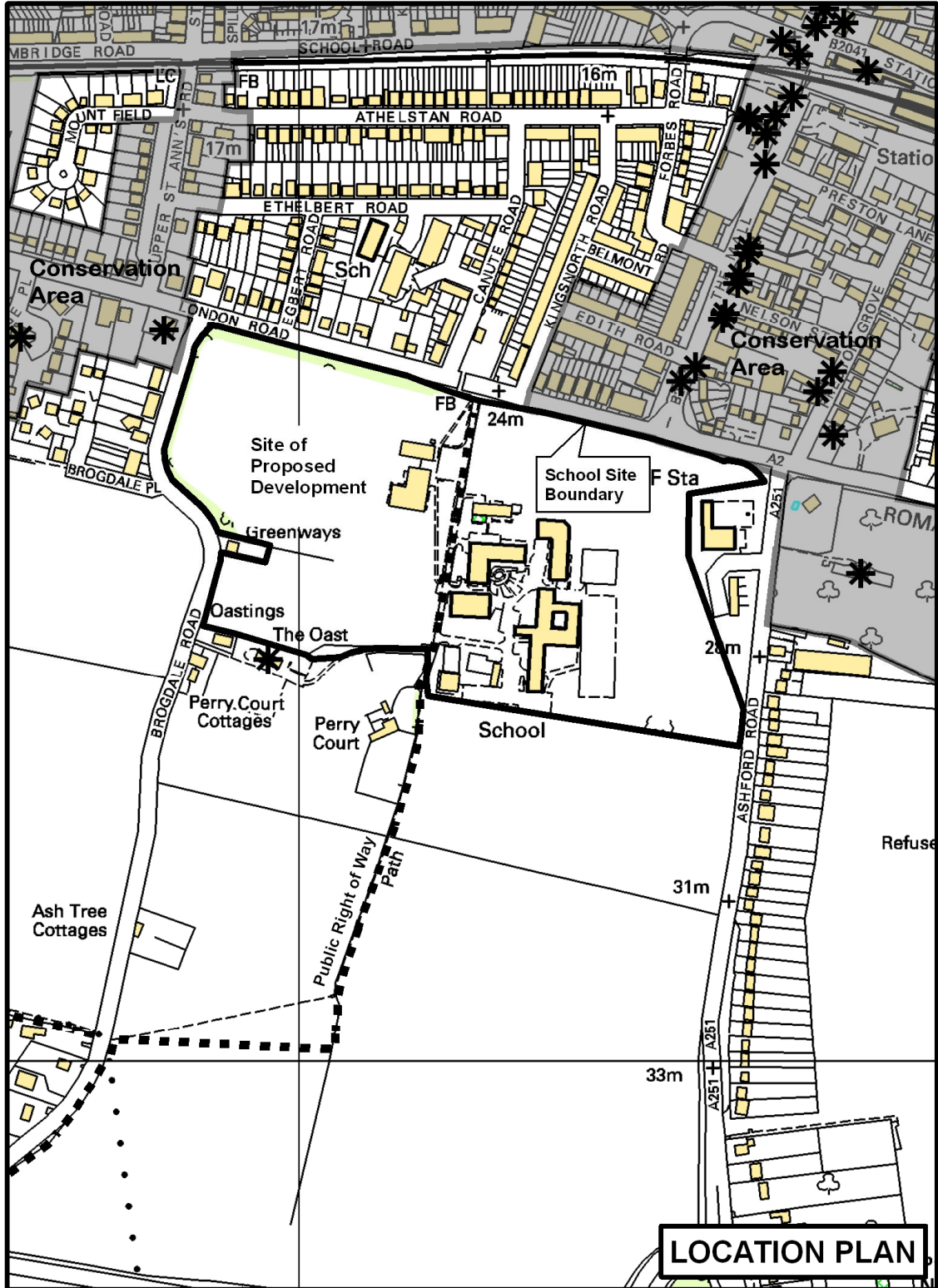
1. The Abbey School is categorised as a non-selective school, catering for students across a wide range of abilities. The school currently has over 1000 students and caters for boys and girls aged 11-19. The Abbey School is located in Faversham, to the South of the town and on the southern side of the A2. Built development associated with Faversham is primarily located to the north of the A2, and the southern side upon which the school is located is primarily rural in nature, with open fields extending to the south of the school site, beyond which lies the M2. The school site is bound by the A2 and facing residential properties to the north, the A251 (Ashford Road) and Beaumont Davy Close to the East, Brogdale Road and facing residential properties to the west and a small number of rural residential properties and open fields to the south. The school's access road also provides access to some of these properties to the south. The Faversham Conservation Area lies to the west of the site, incorporating a property on Brogdale Road, which is also Listed. A small number of Listed Buildings surround the site, as identified by asterisks on the plan on page D2.2. A Public Right of Way also runs through the site, from north to south, along the school access road which divides the site into two halves. Apart from the school's sports hall and fitness suite, all of the school's buildings are located to the east of the access road. The application site lies to the west of the access road, with the floodlit pitch proposed to the rear of the sports hall on an area of existing playing field, and an extension to the existing car park to the front of the sports hall. *A site location plan is attached.*

**Proposal**

2. This application has been submitted by Kent County Council Children, Families and Education, and The Abbey School and proposes the construction of a synthetic training pitch, with fencing and floodlights, the dimensions of which would be 106 metres by 70 metres, with goal storage recesses. An extension to the existing car park in front of the sports centre is also proposed, as is a macadam access path between the proposed pitch from the car parking area.
3. It is proposed to enclose the pitch with dark green (RAL 6005) weld mesh fencing, which would be 3 metres in height for the most part although, would increase in height to 5 metres behind the goal areas. The playing surface would be a sand and rubber filled synthetic carpet coloured green, and floodlighting would be located upon eight 15 metre high galvanised lighting columns. The proposed lighting would provide an average maintained horizontal illumination in excess of 200lux, in accordance with CIBSE Code of Practice for Sports Lighting.

# Item D2

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\* Listed Buildings

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ALL PERSONS SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN WHICH IS PROVIDED BY THE SITE MANAGER OFFICE

**HEALTH AND SAFETY NOTE**

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**MUGA UH**

**SPORTS PITCH CONSULTANTS**

1111 Park Hill Road, Faversham, Kent

LET 2 80P 0-446 (0) 1699 800888 F-446 (0) 1699 80666

PROJECT NO: **MUK055**

CLIENT: **THE ABBEY SCHOOL**

LOCATION: **FAVERSHAM, KENT**

TITLE: **MUK055**

**PROPOSED LAYOUT**

DATE: **15/01/2023**

SCALE: **1:500**

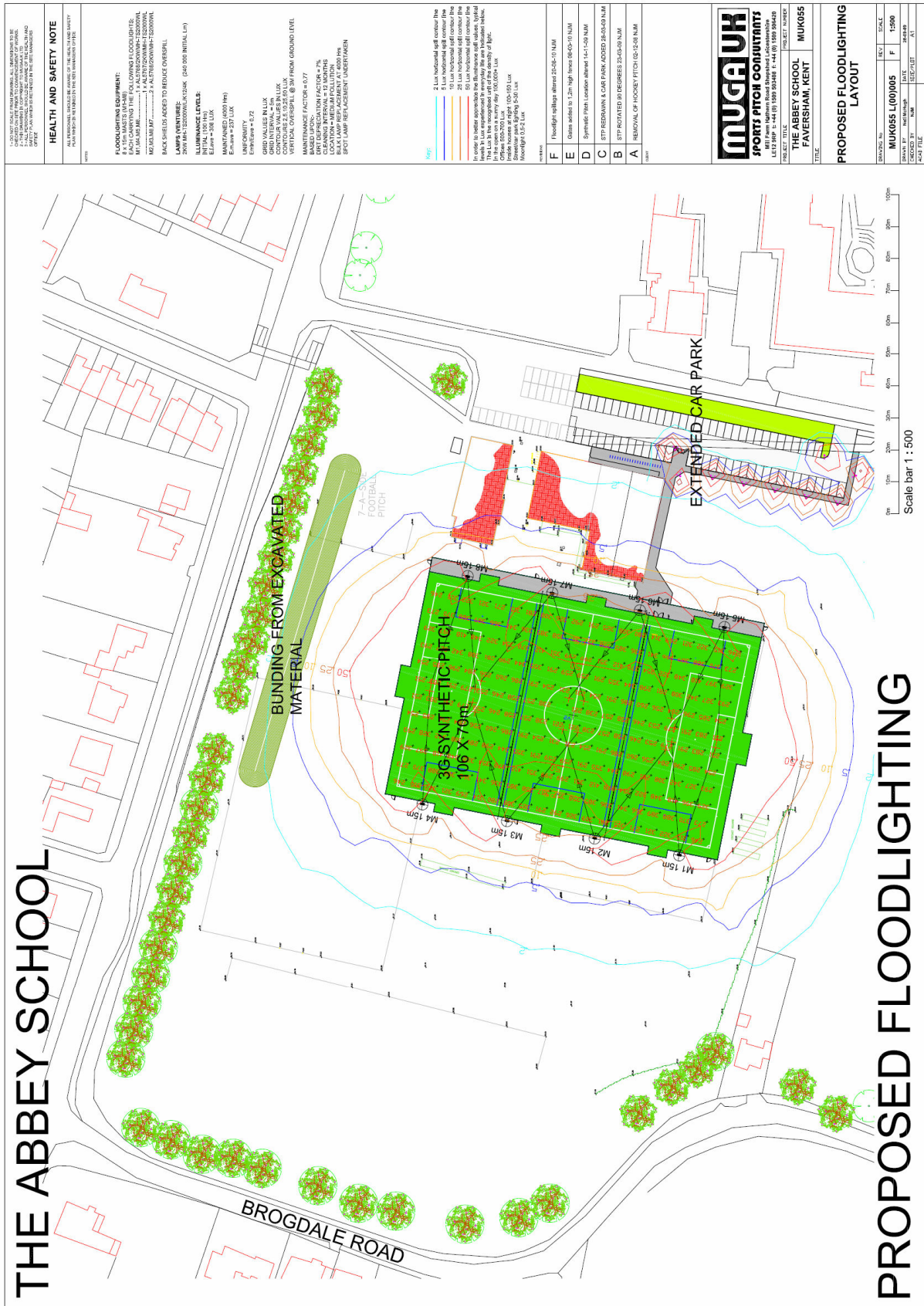
ISSUED BY: **AL**

DATE: **15/01/2023**

SCALE: **1:500**

ISSUED BY: **AL**

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4. The proposed site for the floodlit pitch is currently used for football, and is a grass area with pitch markings in place. The applicant intends to redesign the pitch positions so that playing pitches are not lost. The school currently has three grass pitches, and it is proposed that the School would maintain the three grass pitches and gain one synthetic pitch. The proposed pitch would be line marked for one full size football pitch and three 7-a-side cross court football pitches. The applicant advises that the proposed pitch would be the only facility of this type in Faversham and would allow the development of both rugby and football. The existing playing fields are not available for use during parts of the year due to inclement weather, and use outside of school hours is limited due to a lack of floodlighting. The proposed pitch would enable the P.E curriculum, for rugby and football, to be delivered to a higher standard and on a more regular basis without disruption, increasing attainment levels for the pupils. In addition, the School has also agreed that local primary schools could use the facility as many of them suffer similar problems with regard to limited use of grass pitches.
5. Lighting of the pitch is considered by the applicant to be essential as this application centres on increasing sports provision at the school, and outdoor evening sports pitches are the only facility that the School can currently not offer. The floodlighting consists of eight 15 metre high columns that sit at each corner of the pitch and either side of the half way line. The 15 metre high columns would be self coloured alloy, and the use of modern asymmetric flat glass lighting units would direct lighting downwards, and limit light spread. The applicant considers that the lighting would meet the appropriate lux fall-off without compromising on the light spread across the pitch, and to ensure that as little light escapes the pitch as possible, and to minimise glare, cowls would be installed on the back of the luminaires.
6. The proposed pitch would add to the School's portfolio of community use facilities, and would enable local people to participate in sports at a local level. The additional management and day to day running of the pitch would be incorporated into the management of the existing Sports Centre, which is already available for community use. The Sports Centre is open from 07.00 to 22.00 on weekdays and 09.00 to 18.00, and the applicant is proposing that the floodlit pitch be used between the following hours:  
  
Monday to Friday – 07.00 to 22.00  
Saturday - 09.00 to 18.00  
Sundays and Bank Holidays - 10.00 to 18.00
7. The applicant advises that the existing grass and top soil would be excavated to an average depth of 300mm, with topsoil retained on site where possible to create a bund with a maximum height of 1.5 metres. The proposed bund would run parallel to the sites northern boundary, between the A2 and the floodlit pitch, and is proposed to be 10 metres in width and 110 metres in length.
8. In order for community use of the proposed pitch to be successfully accommodated on site, the car park extension is considered by the applicant to be essential. Currently the car parking for the sports facilities on site is inadequate. The applicant advises that on a typical evening the existing sports centre has a fully attended fitness suite, and can have up to 3 sports clubs using the indoor facilities. When this happens, cars have to be directed into the main school car park some distance away, and cars also park along the access lane leading to Brogdale Road and private residential properties. The proposed site for the extended car park is a small section of grass that cannot be used for any type of sport or activity. The applicant advises that the area often becomes

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waterlogged because at the busiest times it is used as an overspill for the car park. The existing car park provides 26 car parking spaces, 2 disabled spaces and 6 cycle spaces. It is proposed to increase this provision to 90 car parking spaces, 7 disabled spaces and 10 cycle spaces in total. Low level bollard lighting would be provided to the car park and access path leading to the proposed pitch.

9. The applicant advises that the School is working in partnership with a local group, Transition Faversham, to specify native shrubbery and trees to plant along the boundary lines of the site. As a result of consultation responses, the applicant is also proposing to provide a 2.5 metre high natural timber acoustic barrier to the south west corner of the site, along the school's boundary with the closest residential property.

*The application is supported by a Statement from The Abbey School, Design and Access Statement, Specification of Works document, Travel Plan, Noise Assessment and Lighting Details.*

*Reduced drawings showing the site layout and sections are attached.*

**Planning Policy**

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

(i) **Planning Policy Guidance and Statements:**

<b>PPS1</b>	Delivering Sustainable Development
<b>PPS5</b>	Planning for the Historic Environment
<b>PPS7</b>	Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
<b>PPG13</b>	Transport
<b>PPG17</b>	Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
<b>PPS23</b>	Planning and Pollution Control
<b>PPG24</b>	Planning and Noise

(ii) The adopted **South East Plan 2009:**

<b>Policy CC1</b>	Seeks to achieve and maintain sustainable development in the region.
<b>Policy CC4</b>	Refers to sustainable design and construction.
<b>Policy CC6</b>	Refers to sustainable communities and character of the environment.
<b>Policy S3</b>	States that, local planning authorities, taking into account demographic projections, should work with partners to ensure

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the adequate provision of pre-school, school and community learning facilities.

**Policy S5** Refers to cultural and sporting activities.

**Policy NRM10** Requires measures to address and reduce noise pollution to be developed.

**Policy W2** Sustainable design, construction and demolition.

*Note that following the recent successful Cala Homes High Court challenge over the earlier abolition of the South East Plan, the South East Plan now forms part of the Development Plan again. In addition, Local Planning Authorities should have regard to the Department for Communities and Local Government Chief Planners advice that the Government intends to revoke the South East Plan via the Localism Bill. This advice is, however, subject to a further challenge and this advice must carry very little weight until such time as the court decision is known.*

(iii) The adopted **Swale Borough Local Plan 2008**:

**Policy SP1** Proposals should accord with principles of sustainable development.

**Policy SP2** Development proposals will protect and enhance the special features of the environment and promote good design in its widest sense.

**Policy FAV1** Within the Faversham and Rest of Swale Planning Area, conservation of the historic and natural environment is the prime and overriding consideration.

**Policy E2** All development proposals will minimise and mitigate pollution impacts.

**Policy E6** The quality, character and amenity value of the wider countryside of the Borough will be protected and, where possible, enhanced.

**Policy E14** Proposals affecting a Listed Building and/or its setting, will only be permitted if the buildings special architectural or historic interest, and its setting, are preserved.

**Policy E15** Development within, affecting the setting of, or views into and out of a conservation area, will preserve or enhance all features that contribute positively to the areas special character or appearance.

**Policy E19** The Borough Council expects development to be of a high quality design and appearance.

**Policy T3** The Borough Council will only permit development if appropriate vehicle parking is provided, in accordance with the adopted Kent County Council parking standards.

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**Policy C1** The Borough Council will grant planning permission for new or improved community facilities.

**Consultations**

11. **Swale Borough Council** initially raised objection to the application as the Borough Council considered that the application was absent of vital and necessary information to enable an assessment of the merits of the scheme. Additional information was requested with regard to lighting, noise and visual impact.

*The applicant has submitted additional information in an effort to address the objection raised by the Borough Council and, as a result, the Borough Council is considering this Planning Application at their Planning Committee Meeting on the 9 December 2010.*

*The officer recommendation is to raise no objection subject to conditions.*

**Faversham Town Council** are in strong favour of the proposed development, but consider that careful consideration should be given to investigating the effects of lighting and fencing, and to the inclusion of tree planting and land contouring (abrupt level changes must be avoided).

**The Area Transportation Manager** has no objection to the proposal in respect of highway matters subject to the imposition of conditions requiring the proposed parking to be provided prior to the first use of the facility and the submission of a revised travel plan.

**The Environment Agency** has no objection to the proposal subject to the imposition of conditions regarding land contamination and drainage.

**The County Council's Noise Advisor** comments as follows:

“The new sections of the acoustic report detail the noise calculations which show the effectiveness of the barrier in terms of noise reduction and describe the possible construction of the acoustic fence with the preferred option being a "Jakoustic" reflective noise barrier from Jackson Fencing.

This type of fencing, at a height of 2.5 metres and in the location specified would meet the required noise reduction and as such would not lead to a loss of amenity in the gardens of the property off Brogdale Road.”

**The County Council's Lighting Advisor** confirms that the lighting scheme submitted is acceptable in terms of light spill and impact upon surrounding residencies.

**The County Council's Public Rights of Way Officer** has not commented on the application.

**The County Council's Conservation Architect** has not commented on the application.

**Sport England** raises no objection to the application, subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the pitch to be constructed in accordance with the submitted details.



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**Kent Sports Facilities Development Manager** is “entirely in agreement with this application being approved” and supports the supplementary information provided by the applicant.

#### **Local Member**

12. The local County Member, Mr T. Gates, was notified of the application on the 23 April 2010.

#### **Publicity**

13. The application was publicised by an advertisement in a local newspaper, the posting of site notices and the individual notification of 42 neighbouring properties. In addition, 5 neighbouring properties, all of those whom made representations following the initial consultation and the closest residential property, were notified of further/amended details in respect of improvements to the proposed lighting setup, provision of acoustic fencing to the south west of the pitch, and a noise impact assessment.

#### **Representations**

14. Initially I received 4 letters of representation objecting to the proposals from local residents. To date, I have received 5 letters of representation following the second round of consultation, carried out on the 30 September 2010. I should point out that of the 5 recently received letters, only 2 are from residents who had previously objected to the application. A summary of the main issues raised/points made is set out below:

##### Light/Noise Pollution and amenity concerns

- The proposed lighting would be visually intrusive and would have a negative impact on local properties;
- The lighting must not intrude into neighbouring properties and must be angled downwards;
- The lighting should be removed from the proposal;
- The pitch would generate significant noise pollution, especially use in the evening and at weekends;
- The proposed acoustic fencing would only mitigate noise at one property;
- Residential properties are very close and increased use of the site at evenings and weekends would have an adverse impact on residential amenity, and reduce local residents enjoyment of their homes and gardens;

##### Landscape

- Fencing would be obtrusive and out of keeping with the site and would destroy views of the wider landscape;
- The development is devoid of landscaping and would be highly visible;
- The earth bund should be extended to screen the development from properties in Brogdale Road;
- Planting and landscaping should be provided, especially to the Brogdale Road boundary;

##### General Matters

- Community use out of school hours should not be permitted;
- The need for such a pitch is not justified as there is already a floodlit pitch in Faversham;

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- The proposal would result in an unacceptable increase in the intensity of use of the site, adding to existing problems with litter, trespass into neighbouring properties, broken boundaries, noise and disturbance from parties, spectators and participants in matches, and inconsiderate parking;
- A competent and coherent management plan should be prepared to manage the increased commercialisation of The Abbey School;
- The proposed hours of operation would lead to excessive and prolonged disturbance to neighbouring residential properties with light pollution, traffic and noise until late in the evening. Use should be limited to 8pm or 9pm;
- Alternative sites within the school grounds should be considered;
- The planning application should not be valid as it contains mistakes and insufficient information.

**Discussion**

15. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph 10 above. Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, this proposal needs to be considered in the context of the Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity. Members should note that the Policies of the South East Plan are once again a material planning consideration. Issues of particular relevance include noise and light pollution, hours of use and community use, and impacts upon the local landscape/street scene including the adjacent Conservation Area and Listed Buildings.

Residential Amenity Concerns

16. Local residents have expressed concern over potential light spill/pollution, noise pollution, hours of use and community use associated with the proposed pitch. It should be noted that, as a result of these concerns, the applicant has suggested that use of the pitch could cease at 21.30 Monday to Friday instead of 22.00, although the latter of the two is preferred by the applicant. The appropriateness of these hours will be discussed and considered in the context of residential amenity in the following paragraphs.

Light Pollution

17. Objection is raised to the proposed pitch on the grounds of the impact the lighting would have on the local landscape and on residential amenity. The landscape context will be discussed later in this report. However, the localised impact of the proposed lighting scheme on neighbouring residential amenity must be considered.
18. As detailed in paragraphs 3 & 5 of this report, the applicant is proposing to light the pitch to an average maintained horizontal illumination of 200 lux, suitable for football, rugby and other ball sports. Eight 15 metre high columns would accommodate modern asymmetric flat glass lighting units, which would direct lighting downwards, limiting light spread beyond the playing surface. In addition, the applicant is proposing to install cowls on the back of the luminaires to ensure that as little light escapes as possible, and to minimise glare and the appearance of the lighting when viewed from a distance.
19. It should be noted that the County Council's Lighting Advisor is satisfied that the lighting scheme submitted complies with the requirements of the Institute of Lighting Engineers' Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light, and is not objecting to the

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scheme. The applicant has provided a detailed lighting specification, and a lux level diagram which clearly shows that lux levels would fall away to below 2 lux within 45 metres of the pitch (see page D2.4). The closest property to the pitch is located in Brogdale Road, and is approximately 55 metres from the nearest corner of the pitch. However, facing properties in Brogdale Road are over 120 metres from the proposed pitch, and facing properties in London Road (which is already illuminated by street lighting) are over 75 metres from the pitch.

20. The light spill diagrams submitted with this application show that the proposed light level would drop rapidly outside of the pitch boundary to 2 lux at about 45 metres from the pitch. There is, therefore, no measurable light impacting on local residential properties. For information, the A2 London Road itself is lit to 10-15 lux. The County Council's Lighting Advisor confirms that the scheme as submitted is acceptable in terms of its minimal visual impact on surrounding properties.
21. Whilst the light spill would be satisfactorily contained well within the school grounds, there would still be a view of the illuminated area from some neighbouring properties, but I am satisfied that the technical specifications for the luminaires are such that there would be no glare impacting outside the pitch itself. Moreover, apart from one property, the nearest houses are over 75 metres from the lighting columns and the floodlighting would not, therefore, be unduly intrusive for neighbouring occupiers. Members will be aware that the protection of private views across neighbouring land is not a material planning consideration.
22. As detailed in paragraph 6 of this report, the proposed hours of use of the facility are 07.00 to 22.00 Monday to Friday, 09.00 to 18.00 on Saturdays, and 10.00 to 18.00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays. These hours have met with objection from neighbouring residents and, as a result of this, the applicant has suggested that the Monday to Friday end time could be reduced to 21.30. Although the applicant would prefer the 22.00 finish, as this time is in accordance with Football Foundations Regulations and is considered by the applicant to be comparable with nearby pitches and the demand from the community, I do not consider a 22.00 finish to be appropriate or acceptable in this instance. Swale Borough Council's report to their Planning Applications Committee suggests that a 21.30 end time should be imposed, and I agree with this recommendation. The proposed weekend hours of use are acceptable, and in reality would only require limited use of the floodlights during the winter months due to the proposed 18.00 end time. Therefore, should permission be granted, I consider it appropriate to limit weekday use to a 21.30 finish, and control weekend hours of use by conditioning use to the hours applied for. Further conditions of consent would ensure that lighting was extinguished when not in use, and/or within 15 minutes of last use, and that the lighting was set up in accordance with the submitted details, and thereafter maintained. Subject to the imposition of these conditions, I see no reason to refuse the application on the grounds of light pollution.

#### Noise Pollution

23. Local residents have also expressed concern over the noise implications of the proposed pitch, particularly with regard to evening and weekend use. It is important to note that the existing pitches can be used at any time by the School without any restrictions. However, the provision of a synthetic floodlit pitch would increase the intensity of use, enable use in inclement weather and extend the hours of use beyond those afforded by natural daylight. The applicant has undertaken a Noise Assessment which has been submitted in support of this application.

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24. The submitted Noise Assessment compares predicted noise levels from a typical sports game against existing noise levels established at nearby sensitive receptors. Predicted noise levels have been provided from a noise survey undertaken at an existing all-weather pitch, which is considered to be representative of the likely noise levels emanating from the proposed sports pitch. The Noise Assessment concludes that noise levels from traffic using the A2 London Road would dominate at the north of the site, and that noise from the pitch would be inaudible in properties facing the site in London Road. In addition, it is also considered that the facing properties in Brogdale Road would not be significantly adversely affected. However, the closest residential property, Greenways, located to the south west of the site, on the same side of Brogdale Road as The Abbey School could be adversely affected by noise generated by the use of the pitch.
25. As a result of this, the applicant is proposing to install an acoustic barrier adjacent to the boundary of the closest residential property, Greenways, within the school site. The Noise Assessment concludes that with the mitigation measure proposed, namely a 2.5 metre high acoustic barrier, it is considered that noise from use of the synthetic all-weather pitch would be reduced to acceptable levels such that there should be no demonstrable harm to residential amenity. The County Council's Noise Advisor agrees with this conclusion, and considers the fencing proposed, at a height of 2.5 metres, at the location specified, would meet the required noise reduction and, therefore, the development would not lead to a loss of amenity in the gardens of the property off Brogdale Road.
26. In light of the above, I do not consider that the use of the pitch within the hours specified by the applicant would have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents with regard to noise. This is on the basis that the proposed acoustic fence is provided and installed prior to first use of the pitch, and constructed in accordance with the submitted details. Should permission be granted, a condition of consent would ensure that that was the case.

Hours of Use/Community Use

27. As discussed throughout this report, the proposed hours of use (see paragraph 6) are considered to be acceptable subject to an earlier weekday end time of 21.30. As previously stated, should permission be granted, conditions of consent would restrict use of the floodlit pitch to between these hours.
28. As outlined in paragraphs 4 and 6 of this report, it is proposed that there would be community use of the floodlit pitch, a principle which is supported by Development Plan Policy and wider Government aspirations for extended school use and community activities. The School advises that community use would be managed by the management of the existing sports centre, a facility which, along with the existing turf pitches, is already available for community use. The School has also agreed that local primary schools could use the facility if required. The amenity of neighbouring residents must, in my view, be protected and community use controlled to ensure minimal disturbance to neighbours. In this instance, however, the school already has sports facilities, both indoor and outdoor, which are used extensively by the local community and are managed well by the School. Subject to the hours of use outlined above, and bearing in mind the conclusions made about the potential light and noise implications of the development, and extended car parking facilities, I do not consider that community use of the facility would have a significantly detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.

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Access and Highway Implications

29. As detailed within paragraph 8 of this report, part of this proposal is to extend the car park to provide a total of 90 car parking spaces, 7 disabled spaces and 10 cycle spaces. The existing car park is too small to accommodate users of the sports facilities on site, and parking regularly overflows onto the school access road and onto the grassed area within which it is proposed to extend the car park. For the avoidance of doubt, this car park is (and would be) for use associated with the sports facilities on site only, and not for general school parking. Residents have not expressed concern over the highway implications of the development, and Kent Highway Services raise no objection to the application subject to the imposition of conditions requiring the proposed car parking to be constructed and operational prior to first use of the floodlit pitch, and the submission of a revised School Travel Plan. Subject to the imposition of these conditions, I consider the proposal to be acceptable in terms of impact upon the local highway network and, if anything, the provision of additional car parking could alleviate existing problems of overflow/inconsiderate car parking on site. In addition, I do not consider that the development would have a negative impact on the Public Right of Way.

Landscape impacts

30. Objections have been raised to the impact of the development on the street scene and the private views from some residential properties as the development would alter views across the playing field. However, during daylight hours, when the proposed floodlighting would not be in use, the green synthetic turf surfacing and deep green weld mesh fencing would not be a significantly intrusive feature in the landscape. The galvanised lighting columns would blend with the sky and, although could be seen, would not be a dominant feature within the landscape. The development would also be viewed against the back drop of existing school buildings, and existing boundary planting would aid in breaking up views of the development. Although loss of views from a private property is not a material consideration in the determination of a planning application, I am satisfied that, as the development is over 55 metres from the rear elevation of the closest residential property, and over 120 metres from facing properties in Brogdale Road and over 75 metres from facing properties in London Road, the development would not be overbearing in nature and would not unreasonably intrude into the outlook of these properties.
31. When the floodlighting would be in use, the development's visual prominence would increase, not only in terms of its impact on the outlook from local properties, but its prominence within the street scene and wider landscape. The impact of the lighting in terms of these impacts therefore needs to be considered and addressed. The applicant has reduced the proposed hours of use of the pitch during the determination of this application to 07.00 to 21.30 Mondays to Fridays, 09.00 to 18.00 on Saturdays, and 10.00 to 18.00 Sundays and Bank Holidays. The reality of this is that the floodlighting would only be in operation for a limited period of time, mainly in winter months, and only for a few hours a day at the most. The lighting specification has also been carefully designed to ensure that light is carefully and accurately controlled, with the use of horizontally mounted flat glass luminaires, which eliminate light above the horizontal and minimise the view of the floodlights from a distance, limiting visual impact. In addition, when viewed from local roads and properties the floodlit pitch would be set against the backdrop of existing school buildings and not a dark rural landscape. The site is also screened by existing planting to the north, and tree planting to the site's perimeter, all of which would assist in mitigating the impact of the development on the

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street scene. However, I do consider that additional planting should be provided, as will be discussed later in the report. In addition, the applicant is proposing to create a bund to the north of the proposed pitch, which would not only reduce the export of spoil from the site, but would provide further screening of the development. However, I consider it important that the height and gradient of this bund, and the landscaping of it, be controlled to ensure a satisfactory appearance. Therefore, should permission be granted, I would wish to see further details provided pursuant to planning condition.

32. Although not raised by consultees or local residents, it is important to note that the school site borders a Conservation Area, and Listed Buildings are located nearby (as shown on the site location plan on page D2.2). However, bearing in mind the issues that have been discussed throughout this report, and the conclusions I have made, I do not consider that the development would have a negative impact on the setting of the Listed Buildings and/or the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
33. Under the circumstances, I do not consider that the proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on the street scene, local landscape, or views from local properties (although not a material consideration). I am of the opinion that the development accords with the general principles of relevant Development Plan Policies and Government Guidance, and advise, therefore, that the development should not be refused on these grounds. However, this is subject to the imposition of conditions with regard to the colour and specification of the fencing and surfacing of the pitch, the height and specification of the lighting columns and luminaires, control of hours of use and extinguishing of lighting when not in use, and the details of the bunding.

#### Trees and Ecology

34. The applicant advises that the proposed development would not result in the removal of any trees on site. The only element of the development that could have an implication on trees is the provision of the acoustic barrier to the south west corner of the site, adjacent to the boundary with the closest residential property. It is essential that any existing screening along this boundary is maintained and, therefore, should permission be granted, further details of the precise location of the acoustic barrier would be required pursuant to condition. The additional details would need to show the siting of the barrier in relation to existing trees and vegetation. In addition, in the event that permission is granted, conditions of consent would ensure that existing trees on site are protected from construction activities. Subject to the imposition of these conditions, I do not consider that the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on existing trees on site.
35. In addition to the protection of existing trees, I consider that further tree planting is required to aid in screening the development, particularly to the west of the site, along the boundary with Brogdale Road. As outlined in paragraph 9 of this report, the applicant has advised that the School is working in partnership with a local group, Transition Faversham, to specify native shrubbery and trees to plant along the boundaries of the site. I consider that the provision of additional planting would benefit the local area as a whole, in addition to mitigating the visual impacts of the development. However, additional details of the proposed planting are required to ensure that sufficient additional planting would be provided, to an adequate standard, and that new planting would be subject to a programme of ongoing maintenance. Therefore, should permission be granted, a condition of consent would require the submission of a detailed planting scheme, along with a programme of maintenance.

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36. The proposed floodlit pitch would be located upon the existing school playing field which is heavily used and mown on a regular basis. The potential for the site to be home to any protected species is therefore very low, and I am satisfied that the development would not directly impact upon protected species or their habitat.

Alternative sites

37. Local residents have suggested that alternative locations within the school grounds should be considered to accommodate the proposed pitch. However, the applicant has produced a detailed assessment of alternative sites, and given reasons as to why the proposed site is the most appropriate and suitable location for the pitch. Five locations were considered within the school site, but four of these were considered unsuitable due to lack of space, proximity to neighbouring properties, and access and security issues. From considering the information provided by the applicant, I agree with the conclusions of their alternative sites assessment, and conclude that within the school grounds the proposed site for the floodlit pitch is the most appropriate and suitable.

Construction

38. Given that there are neighbouring residential properties, if planning permission is granted it would, in my view, be appropriate to impose a condition restricting hours of construction in order to protect residential amenity. I would suggest 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.
39. In addition, I consider it appropriate that details of a Construction Management Strategy be submitted for approval prior to the commencement of development. That should include details of construction methods, location of site compounds and operative/visitors parking, details of site security and safety measures and details of any construction accesses. 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.
40. In addition to the above, should permission be granted, a condition of consent would ensure that mud on the local highway network would be mitigated as far as reasonably possible so as to minimise disruption to local residents.

**Conclusion**

41. In summary, I consider that, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, this proposal would not have a significantly detrimental effect on residential or local amenity, the street scene and character of the area, heritage considerations, or the local highway network. 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. There are no material planning considerations that indicate that the conclusion should be made otherwise. However, I recommend that various conditions be placed on any planning permission, including those outlined below.

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**Recommendation**

42. I RECOMMEND that, subject to the views of Swale Borough Council, PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO conditions, including conditions covering:

- A 3 year time limit for implementation;
- the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
- colour and specification of fencing and surfacing;
- precise details of the bunding, including its landscaped appearance;
- a detailed scheme of landscaping, including a maintenance programme;
- protection of trees to be retained;
- further details of the exact positioning of the acoustic barrier;
- acoustic barrier to be constructed in accordance with the specification provided and installed on site prior to first use of the floodlit pitch;
- hours of use to be restricted to be between 07.00 and 21.30 Monday to Friday, between 09.00 and 18.00 on Saturdays, and between 10.00 to 18.00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays;
- all lighting on site, except security lighting, to be extinguished by 21.30, or 15 minutes after last use of the facility if earlier;
- extinguishing of lighting when pitch not in use;
- level of use of the facilities to accord with submitted details;
- lighting to be installed in accordance with approved details, and checked on site;
- lighting levels not to exceed those specified within the application;
- no further lighting to be installed without planning permission;
- land contamination and drainage;
- car parking to be completed and operational prior to first use of the floodlit pitch;
- submission of a revised School Travel Plan;
- parking to be available out of school hours for community use;
- hours of working during construction to be restricted to 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday and 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays, with no operations on Sundays and Bank Holidays;
- measures to prevent mud and debris on the highway;
- construction code of practice;

Case officer – Mary Green	01622 221066
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Background documents - See Section heading
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