

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 proposal dossier for each case and also as might be additionally indicated.

**Item D1**

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 14 February 2006.

Application submitted by Ursuline College and Kent County Council Education and Libraries for a proposed 6 badminton court sports hall and climbing wall at Ursuline College, Canterbury Road, Westgate-On-Sea. (Ref: TH/05/1341)

Recommendation: Recommend that the application be referred to the First Secretary of State as a departure from the Development Plan, and that subject to his decision, planning permission be granted.

**Local Member(s): Mr Robert Burgess**

**Classification: Unrestricted**

**Site**

1. Ursuline College is located to the south of Canterbury Road in Westgate-On-Sea, and neighbours King Ethelbert School, which lies to its west. Playing fields within the curtilage of King Ethelbert School lie to the west of Ursuline College, separating the two schools. Residential roads lie to the south and east of the site, with properties in these roads either facing or directly backing onto Ursuline College. The proposed location for the 6 badminton court sports hall and climbing wall is to the south of the existing school buildings adjacent to the recently completed St Ursula's teaching block, on the western boundary of the site. The footprint of the sports hall would cover an existing orchard and a small part of the existing tennis courts. The adopted Isle of Thanet Local Plan and the deposit draft Thanet Local Plan show the site to be within the Green Wedge and the adopted Local Plan also identifies the site as a Local Landscape Area. A site plan is attached. A Members site visit was held on 30 January 2006 and the Committee Clerk's Notes of the site meeting are appended at the end of the report.

**Background**

2. In May 1999 planning permission was granted for the construction of a new teaching block, St Ursula's, which allowed the expansion of Ursuline College and increased the school roll by 220. In the interests of highway safety a planning condition was attached which required the construction of a dedicated right turn lane into the College from the A28.
3. Due to a funding shortfall during St Ursula's completion, this condition went unfulfilled. At the time the County Planning Authority agreed to allow occupancy of the development without the right turn lane on the ground that there was a reasonable expectation that the Highway Authority would be carrying out changes to the A28 which might affect the need for the right turn lane. Whilst some modest changes have since been made they have not overcome the need for the site access improvement, so the condition has remained on record. The College accepts that right turn manoeuvres into the school are a cause for concern, and that appropriate improvements need to be

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 proposal dossier for each case and also as might be additionally indicated.

---

**Item D1**

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 14 February 2006.

Application submitted by Ursuline College and Kent County Council Education and Libraries for a proposed 6 badminton court sports hall and climbing wall at Ursuline College, Canterbury Road, Westgate-On-Sea. (Ref: TH/05/1341)

Recommendation: Recommend that the application be referred to the First Secretary of State as a departure from the Development Plan, and that subject to his decision, planning permission be granted.

**Local Member(s): Mr Robert Burgess**

**Classification: Unrestricted**

## **Item D1**

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

**Item D1**

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

## **Item D1**

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

**Item D1**

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

**Item D1**

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

provided in the form of fulfilling the previous condition. A Transport Assessment, submitted with this application, suggests that this could be done through the provision of the right turn lane scheme as originally requested, or by the consideration of an alternative scheme, details of which are given in the submitted Transport Assessment.

**Proposal**

4. This application has been submitted by Ursuline College and Kent County Council Education and Libraries and proposes the erection of a 6 badminton court sports hall and climbing wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea. The two-storey sports hall would have a ridge height of 10 metres and would be approximately 28 metres wide and 34.5 metres in length allowing it to accommodate up to 6 badminton size courts. In addition to the main hall, ancillary accommodation i.e. changing rooms, storage and office space, would be provided to the north and east of the sports hall, which would be single storey. The footprint of the entire building would be 40.2 metres in length and 38.3 metres in width. An external climbing wall is proposed on the southern elevation of the building.
5. The applicant advises that the materials proposed are typical of similar structures, which by nature includes superstores, but the colours of the materials have been selected to be mellow and fit in with the identity of the existing school buildings. Signage is proposed on the exterior of the sports hall but has been kept to a minimum, especially on elevations facing nearby residential properties.
6. The applicant has supplied the following information in support of the application:

‘The only indoor space currently available for the delivery of Physical Education is a small gymnasium which is equivalent in size to one badminton court. This makes it extremely difficult to deliver the National Curriculum for Physical Education across all year groups. Currently the College has to transport students off-site to locations around Thanet which creates logistical problems, health and safety concerns, loss of lesson time and cost implications. Ursuline College is the only Specialist Sports College in Thanet, which puts an even greater responsibility on the College to deliver the Government’s Physical Education, School Sport, Club Links, National Strategy (PESSCL). The aim of the National Strategy is for 75% of all children aged 5-16 years to be involved in a minimum of 2 hours of PE and School Sport by 2006. Kent County Council has a local Public Service Agreement that 87% of children are involved in 2 hours or more, and 19% in 3 hours or more by April 2008’.
7. The applicant advises that the role of Ursuline College in contributing towards the achievement of these targets would be to act as a Regional Training Centre, using the classrooms in the new sports hall to deliver the programme to all teachers within Thanet. The proposed facility would not only meet the urgent needs of Ursuline College but it would support many other young people across Thanet.
8. In addition to the above, lies the College’s role as the ‘Hub’ of the Thanet Schools Sports Partnership. The applicant advises that part of this role is to provide appropriate facilities to enhance the work of the Partnership, i.e. the provision of a suitable venue for Sporting Festivals across the 36 Primary Schools, 6 Special Schools and the 10 Secondary Schools in Thanet. The applicant suggests that the proposed sports hall would be ideally suited to meet this demand.



**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

9. Ursuline College also has established links with Thanet and District Sports Association for those with disabilities. The Association has outgrown their existing facility and the College is keen to make the proposed sports hall available to them for a club night. The applicant believes that the proposed facility would allow the College to cater for the needs of a wide spectrum of abilities from fundamental movement skills right up to meeting the needs of talented young sports people. In addition to this, it is believed that the sports hall would support the work of the Kent County Council Community Warden with the provision of activities out of school hours.
10. The proposed facility is intended to be used out of school hours and at weekends. The indicative out of school hour uses are 6pm until 9pm in the evenings, 9am to 9pm at weekends and 9am to 9pm during school holidays. Opportunities to use the facility at weekends, evenings and during school holidays would be offered as part of an organised programme of activities, published and advertised through either the College or through clubs and organisations working in partnership with the College. The facility would not be available to the general public on a 'pay and play' basis.
11. The 70 car parking spaces within the College grounds would be made available for use out of school hours, and accessed off Canterbury Road (A28). The applicant does not envisage that at any stage the access off of Linkfield Road would be used for anything other than pedestrian access and access for emergency vehicles. The access off Linkfield Road would however be used as the construction access, as it has been for previous developments at the site.
12. The Transport Assessment submitted with this application concludes that the transport implications of this proposal are not significant. The report states that the expected 'trip' generation is relatively minor and could be accommodated within the existing access arrangements. A frequent bus service continues into the evening, and the local cycle and walking networks suggest that there would be considerable scope for users of the sports hall to access the facility using public transport, cycles or on foot.

*Reduced copies of the submitted drawings showing the site layout, elevations, and access are attached.*

**Planning Policy**

13. The Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to the consideration of the application:
  - (i) **The Adopted 1996 Kent County Structure Plan:**
    - Policy S2** – Seeks to conserve and enhance the quality of Kent's environment.
    - Policy S9** – In considering development proposals, local authorities will have regard to the need for community facilities, including education.
    - Policy ENV15** – New development should be well designed and respect its setting.

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

**Policy T17** - Development will normally be required to provide for vehicle parking on site in accordance with Kent County Council Vehicle Parking Standards.

**Policy SR2** - Development of an appropriate range and standard of facilities for sports and formal recreation will be provided for.

(ii) **The Kent & Medway Structure Plan: Deposit 2003:**

**Policy SP1** - Seeks to conserve and enhance Kent's environment and ensure a sustainable pattern of development.

**Policy QL1** – Seeks to conserve and enhance the environment through the quality of development and design.

**Policy QL12** -Community Services, including schools, will be provided as long as there is a demonstrable need for them.

**Policy QL16** – All major formal recreation and sports facilities should be accessible by choice of transport and designed to avoid nuisance from traffic, noise and lighting.

**Policy TP19** - Development proposals must comply with the respective vehicle parking policies and standards adopted by Kent County Council.

(iii) **The adopted (1998) Isle of Thanet Local Plan:**

**Policy CB1** - The District Council will seek to ensure that all development is of a high standard and design.

**Policy TR8** - Proposals for development will be required to make satisfactory provision for the parking of vehicles in accordance with Kent County Council's Vehicle Parking Standards.

**Policy SP4** - Proposals for the multiple use of existing facilities and new development which will create opportunities for recreational use by the public additional to the existing use of the facilities will normally be permitted.

**Policy SP6** – Proposals for the provision of new sports facilities, including those provided by schools, will be permitted subject to the location, intended use, relation to transportation network and satisfactory arrangements for vehicular access.

**Policy CF1** - Proposals for new community facilities will be supported and permission given if the proposals are not contrary to other Local Plan policies and the community use and location are demonstrated as appropriate.

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

**Policy CL5** - Development which would have an adverse impact on the character and amenity of Local Landscape Areas will not normally be permitted.

**Policy CL6** - Within the Green Wedge, new development would not be permitted if it would result in outward expansion and significant consolidation of the existing pockets of development, and/or be otherwise detrimental to the integrity, character and amenity and functioning of the Wedges.

(iv) Revised Deposit Draft (2003) **Thanet Local Plan:**

**Policy D1** – The District Council requires all new development to provide a high standard of design, layout, and materials and to take into account the principles of sustainable design.

**Policy TR17** -Proposals for development will be required to make satisfactory provision for the parking of vehicles in accordance with Kent County Council's Vehicle Parking Standards.

**Policy SR1** – Proposals for the provision of new sports facilities including those provided by Schools, particularly where these proposals are available to the public will be permitted provided the reasons given in Policy SP6 (Thanet District Local Plan, 1998) are followed.

**Policy SR3** - Proposals for the multiple use of existing facilities and new development which will create opportunities for recreational use by the public additional to the existing use of the facilities will normally be permitted.

**Policy CF1**- Proposals for new community facilities will be supported and permission given if the proposals are not contrary to other Local Plan policies and the community use and location are demonstrated as appropriate.

**Policy CC1** - Within the Countryside new development will not be permitted unless there is a need for the development that overrides the need to protect the countryside.

**Policy CC3** – New development proposals should respect local landscape features and their setting.

**Policy CC5**- Within the Green Wedge new development will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the development is not detrimental or contrary to the stated aims of the Policy. New development that is permitted should make a positive contribution to the area in terms of siting, design, scale and use of materials.

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

**Consultations**

14. **Thanet District Council:** considered this application at their Planning Committee Meeting on 14 December 2005 and resolved to raise objection, in accordance with the officer report.

“Essentially, the objection relates to a concern at the potential visual impact of the development upon the character of the ‘Green Wedge’. Notwithstanding the benefits that the scheme offers, it was not considered that the building design proposed appropriately addressed the character of the site.”

**The Divisional Transport Manager:** is aware of a history of applications being linked to the site. Previous applications required the provision and dedication of a right turn lane off the A28 Canterbury Road. A planning condition was attached to the previous consent on the site in this respect. For reasons justified in the submitted Transport Assessment by Jacobs Babtie, this scheme has not yet been implemented. It is now deemed necessary that prior to any further development of the Ursuline site, whether generating a significant increase in traffic movements to and from the site or not, that the right turn lane is constructed. This planning application therefore exacerbates the need for this to be implemented (prior to any works being carried out on site) in the event of the application being granted.

The Divisional Transport Manager confirms that they are happy for the right turn lane to be provided in accordance with the scheme which previously passed Stage 1 Safety Audit in 1997. It was established at that time that the right turn lane was slightly substandard for the Canterbury Road, but it was also noted that it would be very unlikely that the facility would be required to accommodate articulated lorries, and that it would be predominantly private cars accessing the site. The Divisional Transport Manager advises that the application proceeds on this basis.

A School Travel Plan is currently being worked on and is to be submitted shortly, the results of this will also impact upon the final determination of this application.

With regard to car parking provision within the site for the proposed sports facilities, the Divisional Transport Manager is satisfied that the existing car park has the capacity to accommodate the number of visitors to the site outside of school hours.

Construction access is shown from Lymington Road to the rear of the site. Drawing no. 16617A/05, received on the 16 December 2006, showing a 15m passing bay for construction vehicles is considered satisfactory and clarifies points raised.

**Jacobs Babtie Landscaping:** The proposed sports hall would involve the loss of a large number of fruit trees within a small walled garden. Orchards are a rare feature within the Thanet landscape and an assessment as to the age and significance of the trees has been undertaken by Jacobs Babtie’s arboricultural team who raise no concerns or objections to their removal. ‘Old’ orchards are generally considered important historical features worthy of retention. However, from a purely visual perspective the fruit trees, whilst mature, appear not to be of very great age and, in addition, are not generally visible in the wider landscape. It is proposed to retain about ten of the fruit trees within the development, which will at least give some link to the former use of the area.

Although within a designated Green Wedge and Local Landscape Area, the site is generally suburban in character. Jacobs Babtie consider that properties on the north side of Ursuline Drive are generally well screened by the tree belt which runs to the

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

north of Ursuline Drive, that hedge planting to the gardens abutting the western boundary largely screens the nearest properties, and that overall the visual impact upon Ursuline drive is regarded as only slightly adverse. Eight properties on the northern side of The Warren Drive would have some upper storey views of the building, but ground floor views are largely blocked by existing fencing and garden planting. Jacobs Babbie consider that these properties would suffer a moderate adverse visual impact. Properties elsewhere overlook the school grounds and may experience some views of the development. However, these views are at some distance across playing fields or over intervening buildings, and they are at least partially intercepted by trees. Such properties are regarded as suffering only a very slight adverse visual impact.

Additional tree planting near to the southern boundary, and extending partly along the western boundary would help to screen the sports building and largely mitigate the visual impact in the longer term from the properties on both Ursuline Drive and The Warren Drive. This tree planting would need to be submitted as part of a landscaping scheme, which would need to be agreed prior to commencement to mitigate the adverse visual impacts of the sports hall.

In addition, it is stated that 'the wall which forms the southern and western boundary of the orchard would appear to be an historic feature which is shown on the First Edition OS maps, whilst the surrounding area was largely undeveloped'. It is recommended that an archaeologist is consulted.

**The Environment Agency:** raises no objection but makes a number of detailed comments regarding surface water drainage, foul drainage, protection of Source Protection Zones, water conservation and storage of fuel, oil and chemicals.

**Kent International Airport:** raises no objection but requests that, should the height of the proposed development increase to over 10 metres, the airport is notified and allowed to reconsider its opinion.

**County Archaeologist:** requests that conditions are placed on any grant of planning permission requiring the securing of the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, and a programme of building recording, in accordance with written specifications and timetables.

**Local Member**

15. The local County Member, Mr Robert Burgess, was notified of the application on the 25 October 2005.

**Publicity**

16. The application was publicised by advertisement in a local newspaper, the posting of two site notices and the individual notification of 47 nearby properties.

**Representations**

17. To date 33 letters of representation have been received from 28 neighbouring properties. The main comments/points of concern and objection can be summarised as follows:

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

- Concerned that large construction vehicles would have difficulty getting to the site on the narrow local roads, which would lead to damage of the pavements and risk to pedestrians. The access route to the site is totally inadequate.
- Assurance is sought that the access on Linksfield Road would revert to emergency access only upon completion and that parents would be prevented from dropping off pupils at this gate.
- Linksfield Road and Warren Drive would be used as car parks to allow people to use the pedestrian access gate. This would block emergency vehicles and buses, and would exacerbate the risk of accidents.
- There should be no public access from Linksfield Road and all public parking should be within the school site.
- Deliveries to the site should be at off peak times only.
- The building would be too high and large, and located too close to neighbouring residential properties.
- The building would block out sunlight to neighbouring properties.
- External lighting would cause a nuisance to neighbouring properties.
- Portable floodlights are already being used, it appears the School want to floodlight external courts.
- It is understood the sports hall would be used until late in the evening after school hours, at weekends and during school holidays. That would cause increased noise disturbance and nuisance to neighbours.
- All practicable measures should be taken to achieve optimum sound insulation to the building.
- Extended opening hours and an increased volume of use would deprive residents of the quiet and peaceful use of their homes and gardens over a longer period of the year.
- Opening hours should be restricted and use should only be for sports activities and not social functions, meetings, parties, etc.
- It is understood 35 schools will be using the hall, this is unacceptable in a residential area.
- Concerned over the removal of trees, and requests that the building be screened by mature, tall and evergreen trees and the area landscaped.
- The proposed sports hall is more like a retail outlet in terms of its design and should be on an industrial estate.
- The logos make the building look like a superstore and should not be permitted.
- The building is not in keeping with other buildings within Ursuline College.
- The positioning of the climbing wall will be obvious and unwelcome. Could this not be moved to the north facing elevation?
- The school site is already overdeveloped.
- The Association for Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus object to any building near no. 12 The Warren Drive as this bungalow provides holidays for the disabled.

**Discussion**

18. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan policies outlined in paragraph (13) 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. Issues of particular relevance include impact upon residential and local amenity, need, visual impacts and possible effects on the local environment, particularly the Green Wedge.

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

19. Policies S2 and ENV15 of the Adopted Kent Structure Plan, SP1 and QL1 of the Deposit Kent and Medway Structure Plan, CB1, CL5 and CL6 of the adopted Isle of Thanet Local Plan and D1, CC1, CC3 and CC5 of the Revised Deposit Draft Thanet Local Plan, seek to conserve and enhance the environment and require development to be well designed and respect its setting. This is particularly relevant to this site which is within the Green wedge and a Local Landscape Area.
20. As previously mentioned the application site is included within the Green Wedge and a Local Landscape Area, as designated in the Adopted Isle of Thanet Local Plan under Policies CL6 and CL5 respectively. The Revised Deposit Draft Thanet Local Plan continues to include the site within the Green Wedge (Policy CC5) but removes the Local Landscape Area designation. However, within the Revised Deposit Draft the site is included within the 'Countryside' as designated under Policy CC1. All of these policies have a presumption against development and, therefore, this application has been advertised as a departure from the Development Plan and the matter would need to be referred to the Secretary of State for his consideration, should Members be minded to permit. In assessing the proposal the policies detailed above, particularly those concerning the Green Wedge, need to be considered more closely to establish whether or not there are special circumstances that would warrant setting aside the general presumption against development.

Siting and Design

21. Policy CL6 of the Adopted Isle of Thanet Local Plan states that within the Green Wedge new development would not be permitted if it would result in outward expansion and significant consolidation of the existing pockets of development, and/or be otherwise detrimental to the integrity, character, amenity and functioning of the Green Wedges. This is amplified by Policy CC5 of the Revised Deposit Draft Thanet Local Plan which adds that new development that is permitted should make a positive contribution to the area in terms of siting, design, scale and use of materials. In conjunction with other relevant landscape protection and design policies, these issues need to be considered in the determination of this application and will be discussed below.
22. First, the design of the building must be considered in conjunction with its scale and siting. The proposed sports hall is located within the built confines of the school, and although designated as a Green Wedge and Local Landscape Area, the site and its immediate surroundings are generally suburban in character. The proposed sports hall would be situated next to the recently completed St Ursula's teaching block, and would separate the block from the existing external sports courts to the south of the site. The sports hall would not lead to a significant outward expansion or consolidation of existing pockets of development and, therefore, would not have a detrimental effect on the functioning of the Green Wedge or be contrary to the initial principles of Policy CL6 of the Adopted Local Plan.
23. The footprint of the sports hall would cover an existing orchard, necessitating the removal of a number of mature fruit trees. From a visual perspective the fruit trees appear not to be of a great age, and in addition, are not generally visible in the wider landscape. Their removal would, therefore, not have a significant detrimental impact upon the local landscape. In addition, the proposed location of the building is one that effectively minimises the visual impact of the scheme as it would be viewed against the backdrop of existing school buildings, and is located as far as practicably possible from the open boundaries of the site. However, the siting of the sports hall does have implications regarding local residential amenity and these issues will be discussed later in this report.

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

24. The design of the proposed sports hall is an issue of concern raised by many local residents, and is the sole reason for the objection lodged by Thanet District Council. I also have concerns over the design of the building, which is uninspiring and similar in nature to a retail outlet. The sports hall would be visible from a number of residential properties, and from the boundary of the school on Linksfield Road, and its impact upon the character of the Green Wedge therefore needs to be considered.
25. The applicant has provided the following information in support of the design;  
“The structure is predominately 2 storey’s in height to facilitate the indoor activities that would take place, i.e. badminton and other ball games, and obviously a lower ceiling height would not allow this to happen (based on Sport England standards). The materials that are proposed are typical of similar type structures, which by nature will include superstores. That does not mean however, that every structure should be stereotyped into one user group. The colours of the materials have been chosen to be mellow and fit in with the identity of the school and tie the buildings together, rather than have a mish mash of clashes. Signage has been purposely avoided on the rear elevation facing Ursuline Drive, and the southern elevation which faces the Warren Drive has minimal signage upon it.”
26. The sports hall is included within the built confines of Ursuline College, which itself is bound by residential properties. The proposed site is essentially suburban in character and is not a wholly open part of the Green Wedge or Local Landscape Area, and therefore the siting of the building would not have a detrimental impact upon the Green Wedge. However, although the siting of the building is acceptable in principle, the design of the sports hall is not considered to be the most appropriate for the setting. The design would not make a positive contribution to the Green Wedge in terms of scale, massing and use of materials, and could be considered detrimental to the character and amenity of the Green Wedge.
27. The applicant advises that the design of the sports hall cannot be amended due to budget constraints, and therefore this application must be considered in its current form. Although the proposed design would introduce a potentially austere building compared to the “essentially rural” character that Local Plan Policy CL6 seeks to maintain, I consider that by ensuring appropriate external materials are used the development may not amount to the kind of “damaging” development that would be unacceptable under that policy. Details and samples of all materials to be used externally would be required under condition, should Members be minded to permit, and would be expected to be in keeping with the character of the area. Bright colours, metallic finishes and inappropriate materials would not be accepted and alternatives would be sought.

#### Amenity

28. The sports hall would have an impact on residential and local amenity, and the significance of this impact needs to be discussed. First, the mass of the building must be considered in relation to neighbouring properties. The closest residential property is only 19 metres away from the sports hall (at the closest point) and it is this property in Ursuline Drive that would be most affected by the development in terms of location of the building and its massing. However, the sports hall would be located to the side elevation of the property, and would not significantly impact upon their rear outlook. In addition, it is considered by Jacobs Babtie Landscape that the properties to the north of Ursuline Drive are well screened by the tree belt which runs to the north of these properties, and that existing hedge planting to the gardens abutting the western



**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

boundary largely screens these properties. Therefore the visual impact of the development upon Ursuline drive is considered only slightly adverse. The rear elevation of the building, the elevation that would face Ursuline Drive, does not contain any windows or access points (two fire exits only) and would therefore not generate any noise or disturbance to residents. In addition, this brick elevation is over 11 metres from the nearest residential window and therefore conforms with the guidance set out in the Kent Design Guide. The recently completed St Ursula's teaching block would still be visible over the roof line of the sports hall, which would be 10 metres in height. The loss of light to nearby properties and gardens would be minimal and would not have a significant adverse impact upon residential amenity.

29. The proposed sports hall would also be visible from residential properties in surrounding roads including The Warren Drive and Linksfield Road. The rear elevations of these properties are all over 60metres from the proposed sports hall, and would be separated from the hall by existing tennis courts and/or playing fields. Eight properties on the northern side of The Warren Drive would have views of the sports hall, but these would be intercepted by existing fencing and garden planting. Although it is considered by Jacobs Babbie that these properties would suffer a moderate adverse visual impact, a landscaping scheme would be required and mature tree planting to the southern elevation of the sports hall would aid in a reduction of this impact. Properties elsewhere overlook the school grounds and may get some views of the development. However, these views would be over some distance and would be partially intercepted by trees and vegetation. A landscaping scheme would be conditioned, should this application be permitted, which would aid in mitigating any adverse visual impacts of the development. Under the circumstances, I do not consider that the proposed development would be particularly conspicuous or have a significantly adverse impact on the landscape setting.
30. Secondly, concern is raised over the proposed use of the sports hall, particularly its use in the evenings, at weekends and over school holidays. Issues of concern include possible noise generation, nuisance and disturbance and additional external lighting. The applicant does intend that the facility would be used out of school hours and at the weekends. The indicative out of school hour uses are 6pm until 9pm on weekday evenings, 9am to 9pm on weekends and 9am to 9pm on school holidays. The facility would not be made available for use by the general public on a 'pay and play basis' and would be used for sports activities and children's holiday clubs only. Opportunities to use the facility at weekends, evenings and during the school holidays would be offered as part of an organised programme of activities, published and advertised through either the College or through clubs and organisations working in partnership with the College. This limitation on its use would be conditioned in an effort to alleviate the impact on surrounding properties and to minimise noise generation.
31. The applicant states that at present some 300 pupils enjoy the outside play space currently available at the school at various times throughout the day. Providing a new hall would reduce the number of students that are outside and therefore should reduce the associated noise. In addition, the main access to the sports hall is on the eastern elevation facing into the school grounds and therefore disruption from users arriving or leaving the hall would not be significantly adverse.
32. Concern is also expressed over the installation of a climbing wall on the southern elevation. This elevation contains only one access point and is otherwise free from windows and doors making it suitable for the climbing wall. The western elevation is the only other elevation that benefits from a lack of windows and doors, but this is adjacent to properties in Ursuline Drive. Therefore, locating the climbing wall here would create

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

unacceptable levels of overlooking, noise and disturbance to neighbouring properties. Locating the climbing wall on the southern elevation is the most suitable location given the design of the sports hall, and restricts the potential noise disturbance and overlooking to an level which is deemed acceptable.

33. The applicant confirms that the College has no plans to install permanent floodlighting, but should this change in the future this would be the subject to a separate application and therefore cannot be discussed at this time. However, there will be a need for lighting for pedestrian access and also for security, and details of this lighting would be required under condition. In addition, as the main access to the sports hall is on the eastern elevation, and the two elevations with windows, the northern and eastern, are oriented away from residential properties into the school grounds the impact of lighting should be minimal.

#### Highways

34. Traffic generation and impact upon the local highway network are further concerns expressed by local residents. However, use during the school day would be for existing pupils only and would in fact reduce use on the A28 as pupils currently have to be mini-bused off site. Out of school hours the 70 car parking spaces within the school grounds would be made available for use, and would be accessed off Canterbury Road (A28). The Divisional Transport manager is satisfied that the existing 70 car parking spaces has the capacity to accommodate the number of visitors expected out of school hours, and the development is therefore in accordance with Kent Structure Plan Policy T17, and Policy TR8 of the Isle of Thanet Local Plan. In addition, a frequent bus service continues into the evening, and local cycle and walking networks suggest that there would be considerable scope for users of the sports hall to access the facility using public transport, cycles or on foot.
35. The installation of the right turn lane, as detailed in the Transport Assessment submitted with this application and conditioned on a previous consent, would be required should Members be minded to permit this application. This would remove concern over the current right turn movements into the College, and would provide appropriate improvements to the access arrangements. Installation of the right turn lane which previously passed Stage 1 Safety Audit in 1997 is deemed appropriate and therefore its completion is required by the Divisional Transport Manager.
36. The applicant does not envisage that at any stage the access off Linksfield Road would be used for anything other than pedestrian access and access for emergency vehicles. The access off Linksfield Road would, however, be used as the construction access as it has been for previous developments at the site. First, concern is expressed that users of the sports hall would park in Linksfield Road and use the pedestrian access. This is a school management issue and cannot be controlled by condition. However, the applicant has demonstrated that sufficient car parking would be available on site, which in conjunction with improved access to the College through provision of the right turn lane, would not necessitate any off site car parking. Should Members be minded to permit, a School Travel Plan would be required under condition, and this would need to include the sports hall and details of how the hall is managed to ensure its users park within the school grounds.
37. Secondly, the use of the Linksfield Road access as a construction access has raised concern over large construction vehicles accessing the site, and the subsequent safety concerns and possible damage to highways and pavements. Previous developments within the site have used this access for construction purposes, and the applicant has

**Proposed 6 Badminton Court Sports Hall and Climbing Wall at Ursuline College, Westgate-On-Sea – TH/05/1341**

---

advised that it would be the main contractor's responsibility to make good any damage caused by construction vehicles. The applicant states that prior to commencement of any development, a condition survey would be carried out, in conjunction with Kent Highways, and this would be agreed with Kent Highways prior to works commencing. The Divisional Transport Manager considers that the use of this access is not a cause for concern, and that the provision of a passing bay, details of which have been approved, would remove any cause for vehicles to block the public highway.

Need

38. Policy SP6 of the adopted Isle of Thanet Local Plan states that proposals for the provision of new sports facilities, including those provided by Schools, will be permitted subject to the location, intended use, relation to the transportation network and satisfactory arrangements for vehicular access. This Policy is amplified by Policy SR1 of the Revised Deposit Draft Thanet Local Plan. The provision of the sports hall is therefore supported by Local Plan Policy, and in addition meets the requirements specified in Policy SP6 regarding location, use, and links to the transportation network. The applicant has demonstrated a case of need for the facility, as outlined in paragraphs 6-9 of this report. The sports hall would not only meet the urgent needs of Ursuline College, it would provide a facility that could be used by other local Schools and sports associations including the Thanet and District Sports Association. Therefore, I consider that the provision of the sports hall would meet the needs of many local people and the pupils of Ursuline College.

**Conclusion**

39. In summary, I consider that there are special circumstances to justify the proposed development within the Green Wedge. Subject to the imposition of conditions, I am of the opinion that the proposed development would not give rise to any material harm and is otherwise in accordance with the general principles of the relevant Development Plan Policies. Therefore, I recommend that the application be referred to the First Secretary of State as a departure from the Development Plan, and that subject to his decision, permission be granted subject to appropriate conditions.

**Recommendation**

40. I RECOMMEND that SUBJECT to no direction to the contrary by the First Secretary of State, PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO conditions, including conditions covering:
- the standard time limit,
  - the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details,
  - external materials to be submitted,
  - a scheme of landscaping, its implementation and maintenance,
  - external lighting,
  - a programme of archaeological work and building recording,
  - restrictions on hours of use and type of use,
  - the installation of the right turn lane from the A28 Canterbury Road,
  - preparation, implementation and ongoing review of a Revised School Travel Plan,
  - hours of working during construction,

Case officer – Mary Green	01622 221066
---------------------------	--------------

Background documents - See section heading
--