

Item D5

Details of site fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for the development on Site 2 pursuant to planning permission TW/10/4051 for the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Blackhurst Lane, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 14 February 2012.

Submission of details by Kent County Council Building Schools for the Future & Academies Team required by conditions imposed on planning permission TW/10/4051 for the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy. These details relate to: details of site fencing, gates and railings (condition 16 part c), details and specifications of hard surfaces (condition 16 part e) and details of acoustic fencing (condition 23) all on Site 2. The Skinners Kent Academy, Blackhurst Lane, Tunbridge Wells (TW/10/4051/R16&R23).

Recommendation: Approval be given for the submitted details relating to fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for the development on Site 2.

Local Member: Mr. K. Lynes

Classification: Unrestricted

Site Description and Background

1. Members of the County Council's Planning Applications Committee may recall that they resolved to grant planning permission for the redevelopment of Skinners Kent Academy (SKA), subject to conditions, at their Meeting on 15 March 2011. A decision notice granting planning permission was issued in accordance with Members' resolution on 30 March 2011. The planning consent contains some 41 planning conditions covering, amongst other matters, the control of development, the submission of details for prior approval of the County Planning Authority, the timing of works, off site highway junction improvement works and hours of use of Academy and community facilities. Members may also recall that they resolved to approve details relating to the heights of ground levels and a scheme of surface water drainage of the development on Site 2 at the Meeting of the Planning Applications Committee on 6 September 2011.
2. At present SKA comprises the existing buildings and grounds of the former Tunbridge Wells High School located to the east side of Tunbridge Wells. The site is situated just north of the Pembury Road (A264), the main arterial route connecting Tunbridge Wells town centre with the A21, Pembury Village and other outlying villages further east of the town centre. The site is accessed principally from Blackhurst Lane, with a secondary entrance off Sandown Park. Both are residential streets leading north from Pembury Road. The centre of Tunbridge Wells is located some 2.4km west where Tunbridge Wells railway station is located, whilst the suburban centre of High Brooms and its railway station are located some 2.7km north west. The A21 is situated approximately 1.6km to the east of the application site and provides the only direct road access to the M25 from Tunbridge Wells.
3. The SKA site, extending to approximately 5.3 hectares in total area, is split into two distinct areas, known as "Site 1" (the main campus containing Academy buildings

Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

and “Site 2” (an existing school sports field where it is proposed to construct a new non-floodlit All Weather Pitch under the Academy redevelopment). Additional land owned by the Academy is located to the south of Pembury Road (known as “Site 3”). The details which are the subject of this Committee Report relate to the specifications of site fencing, gates and railings; details and specifications of hard surfacing; and details of acoustic fencing, all relating to the development on Site 2.

4. The topography of Site 2 naturally rises approximately 2 metres in a gentle slope from the north adjacent to Sandown Park (approximately 150m AOD) to the south adjacent to Pembury Road (approximately 152.6m AOD). The site is bounded by Pembury Road along its southern boundary where a 2 metre high timber close-boarded fence is situated behind a hedgerow and linear tree planting adjacent to Pembury Road. The site is bounded by the rear garden of properties along Sandown Park along the south western side of the site where established tree and evergreen vegetation is present. On the north eastern side, rear gardens of properties in Sandown Close back onto the site, with the grounds of the Leonard Cheshire Disability Seven Springs care home adjoining most of this boundary. Site 2 is secured by a substantial hedge with a timber close-boarded access gate along the boundary with Sandown Park and significant screening along the south western and north eastern sides from trees and shrubs located along these boundaries. Access to the site is largely pedestrian (with limited emergency vehicle access) and is solely from Sandown Park. Site 2 is located within the urban area of Tunbridge Wells and is defined within the Limits of Built Development within the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan. The far southern edge of the site (nearest to Pembury Road) falls within the Pembury Road Conservation Area. Site 2 is also located adjacent to two Areas of Landscape Importance (defined by Local Plan Policy EN22) to the east and west, and an Important Landscape Approach to the south along Pembury Road (defined by Local Plan Policy EN23). The site does not contain any protected trees (other than those protected by the Conservation Area designation) and is not located in any other designated area of environmental or landscape importance.
5. As part of the redevelopment of SKA, planning permission was granted for the construction of a non-floodlit All Weather Pitch (AWP) on Site 2 measuring some 82 x 55 metres (plus runoff). There were a number of changes made to the AWP proposals during the processing of the planning application for the Academy redevelopment, including changes to its size, positioning within Site 2, the removal of floodlighting and alterations to its hours of use. Permission was granted for the installation of a non-floodlit third generation polyethylene sand and rubber filled synthetic grass pitch on the southern end of Site 2. The hours of use of the AWP were restricted by planning condition such that the pitch can only be used between the hours of 08:30-21:00 Monday to Thursday; 08:30-20:00 Friday; 10:00-16:00 Saturday; and no use on Sundays or Bank Holidays. Conditions were attached to the planning permission requiring the applicant to submit details of ground levels and a scheme for the disposal of surface waters in respect of Site 2 before any works in connection with that site were undertaken. As outlined above, these details were submitted to the County Planning Authority for consideration and were subsequently approved by Members at the Meeting of the Planning Applications Committee on 6 September 2011. Initial ground works have since been undertaken by the contractor to build up the formation levels of the AWP, above which the sub-base and pitch surface will be laid. Conditions were also attached to the planning permission requiring details of a scheme of landscaping and boundary treatment to be submitted within 12 months from the commencement of construction, together with details of acoustic fencing submitted for prior approval with its installation required to take place prior to the first use of the AWP.

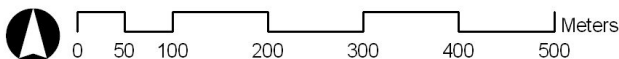
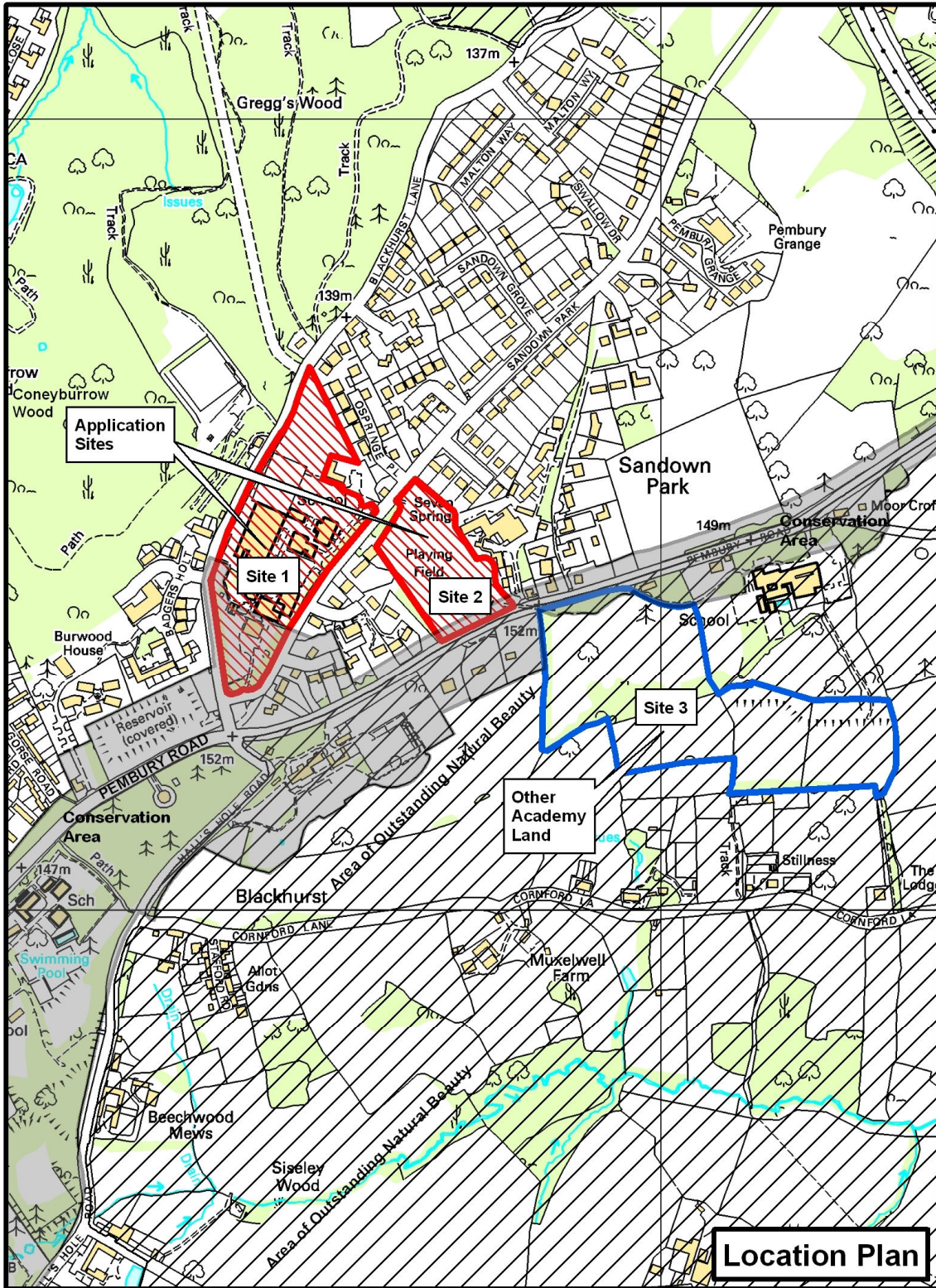
Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

6. Construction works on the Academy redevelopment are now well underway with the contractor, Willmott Dixon, having commenced activities at the site in late July 2011. Substantial ground works for the main Academy building have been undertaken with the largest part of the floor slab having now been laid. The floodlit Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA's) on Site 1 have now been completed, whilst ground works on Site 2 have been undertaken to create the formation levels of the All Weather Pitch (AWP) using a quantity of excavated spoil which arose from Site 1. The sub-base and pitch surface of the AWP is due to be constructed within the coming few months, following a decision on the matters considered within this report.
7. Prior to the start of construction activities on Site 1, the County Planning Authority received and considered (including a period of public consultation) details required by the planning permission relating to (amongst other matters) external materials for the new buildings, ground levels and finished floor levels of the development on Site 1, details of a foul and surface water drainage scheme, ground contamination, a Code of Construction Practice, details and specification of acoustic fencing surrounding the MUGA's on Site 1 and a programme for the implementation of off-site highway junction improvement works. Those details were formally approved under delegated powers on 14 July 2011 prior to the commencement of construction activities. Details of the ground levels and a scheme for the disposal of surface waters, both relating to Site 2, were approved at the Meeting of the Planning Applications Committee in September 2011.
8. Details of site fencing, gates and railings, specifications of hard surfaces and details of acoustic fencing were submitted by the applicant to the County Planning Authority for approval in November 2011. A consultation with key stakeholders (including the Borough Council and our own Noise Consultant) was undertaken on the submitted details, together with the notification of all properties which shared a common boundary with this site. These details have met with concerns from the Borough Council and local residents, specifically in relation to whether the acoustic fence proposed is fit for purpose, together with concerns relating to its height, location and general appearance. These details are therefore being reported to the Planning Applications Committee due to these objections.
9. Members should be aware that this Report considers only the merits of the submitted details (i.e. those matters relating to site fencing, gates and railings, the specification of hard surfaces and the details of acoustic fencing) relating to Site 2 in planning land use terms. It does not consider any other matters which were considered by this Committee under the main planning consent. These are not matters that Members can reconsider as part of this determination.
10. A site location plan identifying Sites 1, 2 and 3 together with the key landscape and heritage designations can be found on page D5.4. Plans showing the site fencing and hardstandings are also attached to this report. Copies of these plans will be available at a larger scale for Members to view at the Committee Meeting itself.

Item D5

Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

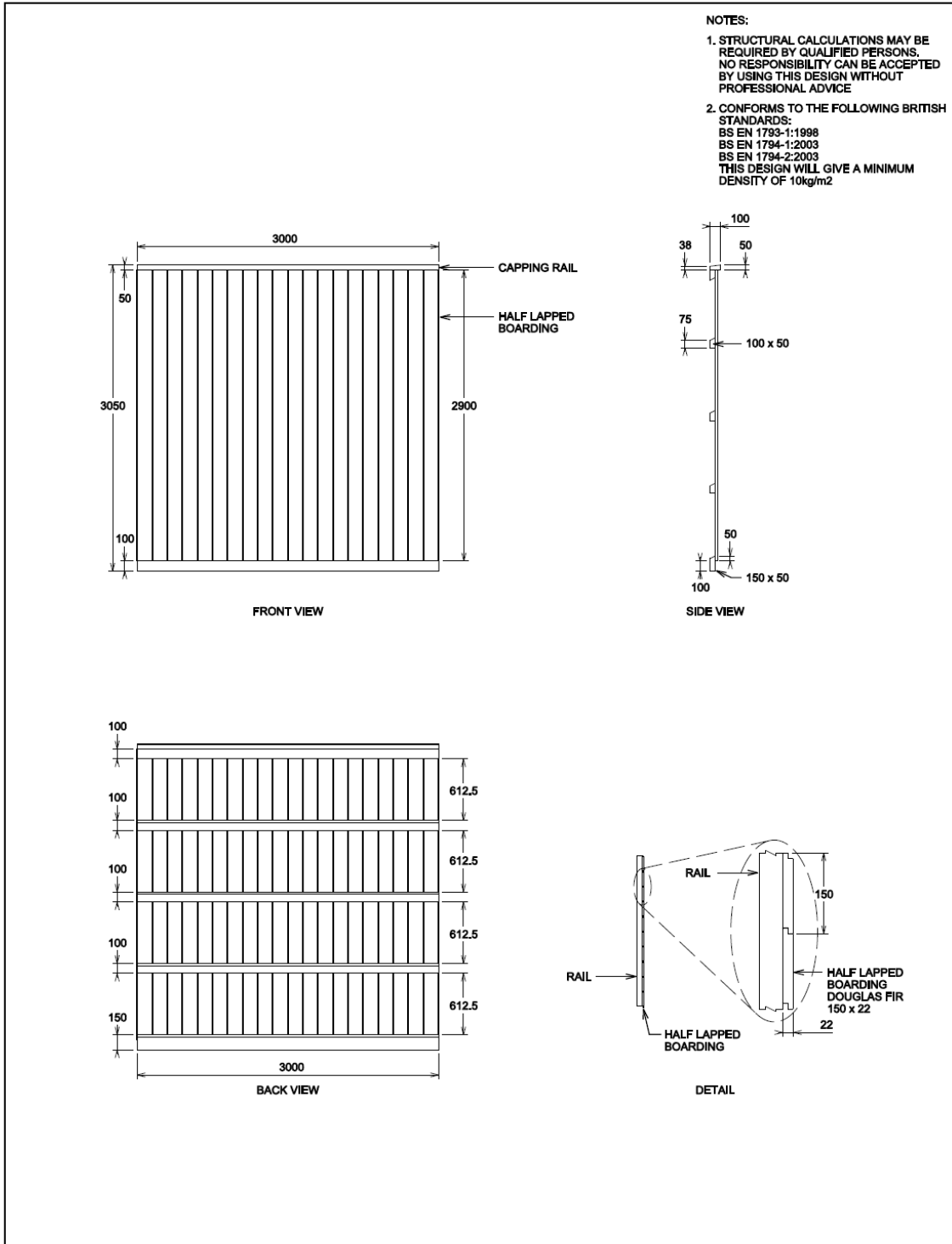
Site Location Plan



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Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

Site 2 Acoustic Fence Details



Title					Tel: (01630) 653359		E
HALF LAPPED BOARDING					Fax: (01630) 658859		
Made	P.I.P	Scale	1:50 @ A4	C'k'd.	P.I.P	Email: sales@halessawmills.co.uk	1
C.A.D.	M.P.W	Date	APR 11	App.	J.C.P	www.halessawmills.co.uk	
DRAWING NUMBER: HSM 110							
cm							A4

Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

Proposed Details

11. As set out above, this matter relates to the consideration of details of general Site 2 fencing, gates and railings; the details and specifications of hard surfaces within Site 2; and the details/specifications of the acoustic fencing surrounding the AWP and adjacent to the grass football pitch, as required under the terms of planning permission TW/10/4051 (granted in March 2011). This report considers the merits of the technical information submitted in respect of these conditions in planning land use terms and does not consider other matters relating to the wider redevelopment project, as previously considered in determining the main planning application. The principle of the AWP, site and acoustic fencing on Site 2 is already established within the base permission.

12. First, in terms of the details submitted in respect of site fencing, gates and railings the applicant proposes to maintain the fairly recently erected 2 metre high timber close boarded existing fence along the boundary of Site 2 with Pembury Road. A new section of matching 2 metre high timber close boarded fence would be erected along the Site 2 boundary to the west, running from the corner of the site boundary with Pembury Road to a point in line with the northern extent of the AWP. On the eastern boundary of Site 2 which adjoins the Leonard Cheshire Centre the applicant intends to install 1.5 metre high chain link fencing with a matching pedestrian gate, providing direct access in to Site 2 from the adjoining Centre (note that this pedestrian access is provided at the Centre's request). The chain link fencing would run along the eastern site boundary from the boundary with Pembury Road to a point in line with the northern extent of the AWP. The northern boundary of Site 2 (the boundary adjoining Sandown Park) would remain as existing, with the exception of new 2.4 metre wide double gates to match existing 2 metre high close boarded timber fencing. A new section of 2 metre high timber fencing would be installed along the vegetated north-western part of the northern boundary of Site 2. The remaining sections of the eastern and western boundaries of Site 2, adjacent to the grass football pitch, would be fenced with 3 metre high timber acoustic fencing. The details of the acoustic fencing I shall discuss separately below. The AWP itself is proposed to be fenced with 3 metre high black welded mesh sports fencing around the edges of the playing surface. To the eastern and western sides of the AWP 3 metre high timber acoustic fencing would be erected on the outside of the welded mesh sports fencing. The broad principles of the fencing details submitted here for consideration were accepted at the planning application stage.

13. The applicant has submitted details/specifications of hard surfaces within Site 2 for consideration, as is required by planning condition. This includes the provision of a black macadam level path leading from the pedestrian entrance to Site 2 with Sandown Park to the AWP entrance. This path is required to meet current Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements to provide safe and inclusive access to the AWP itself. A similar black macadam path is also proposed from the Leonard Cheshire Centre grounds to the south eastern corner of the AWP. It should be noted that the result of discussions with Centre Management Staff at the Leonard Cheshire Centre a spectators' viewing area, hard-surfaced path and direct gated access to the adjoining Centre has been included as part of the Site 2 development scheme. The spectators' viewing area would comprise a 3 metre wide black macadam strip on the eastern side of the AWP, between the 3 metre high sports mesh fencing and 3 metre high acoustic fence. An additional area of hard standing has been proposed on the northern boundary of the AWP to allow for an area to store sports equipment when not in use (e.g. football goals, posts, etc.).

Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

14. As outlined above, the applicant is required by condition to submit details of the proposed acoustic fence which would surround the eastern and western boundaries of the AWP and run along the eastern and western boundaries of Site 2, adjacent to the grass football pitch. The broad principle of installing timber acoustic fencing in these locations was agreed within the base permission, with the technical specification (in terms of the density, height, location and external appearance of the acoustic fence) reserved for later consideration by planning condition. The applicant has therefore provided details of the locations where the acoustic fencing would be installed – along the eastern and western boundaries of the AWP together with the boundaries of Site 2 adjoining the grass football pitch. They have detailed that the acoustic fence would be a 3 metre high half lapped timber boarding construction, achieving a minimum density of 10kg/sq. metre. The acoustic fencing to be installed on Site 2 would be the same specification as the 3 metre high timber acoustic fencing recently installed on Site 1 to surround the MUGA's. The technical specification for the acoustic fencing on Site 1 was accepted by the County Planning Authority, under delegated powers, prior to its installation on that site.
15. Prior to submitting details of the acoustic fencing to the County Planning Authority for formal consideration, the applicant undertook informal consultations with owners of properties surrounding Site 2 during September 2011. These informal consultations were undertaken to understand and take into account neighbours' views on the height, appearance and precise location of the Site 2 acoustic fencing.

Planning Policy

16. The key National and Development Plan Policies most relevant to the proposal are summarised below:
- (i) **National Planning Policies** – the most relevant National Planning Policies are set out in PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development), PPS5 (Planning for the Historic Environment), PPS9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation), PPS17 (Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation) and PPG24 (Planning and Noise).
 - (ii) **South East Plan (2009)** – the most relevant policies are:
 - Policy CC6** Promotes the creation of sustainable and distinctive communities that respect the character of settlements and landscapes, and achieve a high quality built environment.
 - Policy NRM10** Seeks to locate new, noise sensitive development away from existing or planned new sources of significant noise.
 - Policy BE6** Gives support to proposals which protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment and the contribution it makes to local and regional distinctiveness and sense of place.
 - Policy S1** Supports measures for developing and shaping healthy sustainable communities, including: community access to amenities such as open spaces and physical recreation activity; and healthier forms of transport.
 - Policy S6** Encourages the mixed use of community facilities in order to make effective use of resources and reduce travel and other impacts, and requires community facilities to be located and designed appropriately.

Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

Important note regarding the South East Plan:

Members will already be aware of the relevant South East Plan (SEP) policy considerations in relation to the proposed development, in that The Plan was revoked and later reinstated pending the enactment of the Localism Bill. Members will also be aware that they have to have regard to the policies in the SEP and the Government's intention to abolish the Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) as material considerations. However the weight to be accorded is a matter for the decision makers. Members will note that the Localism Bill has now been enacted; however the SEP remains in effect until such time as the Government complete the formal process of revoking the Plan.

(iii) The adopted Tunbridge Wells Borough Core Strategy (2010):

- Policy CP4** Seeks to conserve the locally distinctive character of the Borough's urban and rural landscapes, including the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Refers to the Borough Local Character Assessment 2002 being used to manage, conserve and enhance the landscape as a whole. Applies a hierarchical approach to nature conservation and biodiversity protection seeking to avoid net loss and states opportunities will be taken for biodiversity enhancement. Heritage assets, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Scheduled Ancient Monuments, will be conserved and enhanced with special regard had to their settings.
- Policy CP5** Requires all new development to employ sustainable design and construction standards and techniques and to make efficient use of water resources, comply with the sequential test set out in PPS25 in respect of reducing flood risk, have regard to and implement the renewable energy and energy efficiency targets sets out in the South East Plan, manage and seek to reduce air, light, soil and noise pollution and be designed to reduce waste creation and disposal. Developments should also be of high-quality design which will create safe, accessible, legible and adaptable environments, and conserve and enhance the public realm.
- Policy CP8** Seeks to maintain and enhance where appropriate the capacity, quality and accessibility of community facilities and importantly pledges specific support for the provision of additional facilities where there is a continuing demonstrable need and this will be provided on a single site or provide multi-use facilities.
- Policy CP9** Reaffirms the priority of conserving the towns built and natural heritage and landscape assets.

(iv) The adopted Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (Saved Policies):

- Policy EN1** Requires all proposals for development to satisfy certain criteria, including: no unacceptable loss of/affect on amenity; respect for the context of the site; no loss of significant buildings, related spaces, trees, shrubs, hedges or other features important to the character of the area; services for foul and surface water sewerage and water supply have sufficient capacity/can be improved; no significant adverse effect on any features of nature conservation importance;

Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

- and design, layout and landscaping take account of the security of people and property.
- Policy EN5** Sets out criteria for development within conservation areas including, amongst others: that the proposal would preserve or enhance the buildings, related spaces, vegetation and activities which combine to form the character and appearance of the area; the use, or intensity of use, would be in sympathy with the character and appearance of that part of the conservation area in which the proposal would be situated; the proposal would not result in the loss of trees, shrubs, hedges or other features important to the character of that part of the conservation area in which the proposal would be situated; and, in meeting the car parking and access requirements, the character and amenity of the area would not be adversely affected.
- Policy EN22** Small areas, to the west of the western end of site 1 and to the east and west of site 2, are identified on the Proposals Map as areas of landscape importance. Policy EN22 states that proposals for development will only be permitted where no significant harm would be caused to the appearance or landscape character of the designated area and the development would not materially detract from the contribution which that area makes to the locality.
- Policy EN23** Pembury Road is identified as an Important Landscape Approach characterised by being lined principally by mature hedges and native trees which partly conceal built development and give the impression of the countryside extending into the built up area. The policy seeks to protect this character and to prevent discordant elements of development.

(v) **Other relevant guidance/documents:**

1. **Royal Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Conservation Areas Appraisal (2000).**
This details the special character of the Borough's Conservation Areas.

Consultations

17. **Tunbridge Wells Borough Council:** makes the following representations, as listed under each specific matter –

Condition 16 (fencing, gates, railings and hard surfacing): Objects noting that the lack of adequate details of the proposals in relation to boundaries, levels and existing and proposed paths and planting mean that the submission would not be likely to safeguard existing residential and visual amenities to a sufficient extent. Considers the submitted details to be contrary to Local Plan Policies EN1 and EN5 and Core Strategy Policies CP4 and CP5.

Condition 23 (specification of acoustic fencing): Objects noting that the submission does not demonstrate satisfactory mitigation of noise from the use of the site. In addition, the appearance of the raised ground level and associated means of enclosures for the AWP would be harmful to the visual amenity and character of the area and render the pitch more difficult to screen from Pembury Road, which is in the Conservation Area. Considers the submitted details to be contrary to Local Plan Policies EN1 and EN5 and Core Strategy Policies CP4 and CP5.

Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

18. **County Council's Noise Consultant:** makes the following comments, as summarised below:

Paceconsult (the applicant's noise consultant) have provided noise contour plots and specific receptor noise levels of the sports pitches in use at Site 2 demonstrating the effect of installing the proposed acoustic fencing.

The original noise report submitted with the main planning permission (dated 28th February 2011) calculated noise levels, as a result of the use of the pitches, at the site boundaries adjacent to the properties in Sandown Close (52 dB) and the Pembury Road boundary (54 dB). The assessment stated that these noise levels would be reduced with the installation of the acoustic fencing, where that acoustic fence could provide a minimum attenuation of 7 dB.

The noise contour plots give free-field noise levels across the sports field and the surrounding area allowing a comparison with the previous submitted noise report.

Without the acoustic fencing the site boundary falls within the noise contour 51 – 54 dB at both the southern edge and northern boundaries of the site. With the acoustic fencing in place noise levels are significantly attenuated such that at 4 Thornfield Gardens and Seven Springs boundaries the noise levels fall to be within the 42 – 45 dB contour, consistent with the predicted minimum 7 dB attenuation stated in the noise report. Noise levels at the border with Sandown Close are similarly attenuated, with noise levels falling to be in the 42 - 45 dB contour. At the southern façade of 22 Sandown Park the noise levels fall from being in the 51 – 54 dB contour to the 45 – 48 dB contour.

The noise level plots also give façade noise levels at the surrounding residential properties both with and without the acoustic fencing. 7 Sandown Close experiences noise levels of 48.8 dB due to the pitches use, which is reduced to 44 dB with the installation of the fencing. Similarly noise levels at the Leonard Cheshire Centre fall from 54.1 dB to 46.2 dB and at the southern bungalow within the complex from 48.2 dB to 40.0 dB. Noise levels at the 4 Thornhill Gardens also fall from 46.8 dB to 43.4 with the installation of the fencing.

The noise contour plots and specific noise levels are therefore consistent with the original noise report, merely presenting the information in a visual manner for ease of interpretation rather than as previously detailed.

The 3 metre noise barrier constructed of half lapped timber panels as detailed in Hales Sawmills drawing (Drawing no. HSM 102) and the acoustic test report from the University of Salford, would provide the anticipated barrier performance and that noise levels would remain as detailed in the original noise report (PC-10-01-0168-RP1 Revision C).

Local Member

19. The local County Member, Mr. K. Lynes was notified of the submitted details on the 15 November 2011.

Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

Publicity

20. The submitted details were publicised by the posting of two site notices and the individual notification of 11 neighbouring properties (including Leonard Cheshire Centre) who share a common boundary with Site 2. A copy of the submitted details were sent to the Sandown Park and Blackhurst Lane Local Community Group, as well as being made accessible online for inspection via the County Council's website.

Representations

21. To date I have received 6 letters of objection to the submitted details. The main points of objection can be summarised as follows:

- the installation of the acoustic fence on its proposed alignment along the north-eastern boundary of the site would adversely affect trees located on the boundary of residential dwellings with Site 2;
- request that all of the acoustic fence is screened by hedge planting using native species;
- consider that a maximum height of 2 metres should be imposed on all Site 2 acoustic fencing;
- concerned that whilst the acoustic fencing immediately surrounding the eastern and western boundary of the AWP surface would be raised (in accordance with the level details previously permitted for the AWP) the height of the acoustic fence at the site boundaries would not be raised relative to the increase in the height of the pitch surface. This would result in noise carrying more easily over the 3 metre high acoustic fencing on the site boundaries;
- the 'acoustic' fencing is a token measure, the fence proposed is simply a tall wooden fence and is not proper noise absorptive acoustic fencing;
- why is the same acoustic fencing being proposed for Site 2 as has been installed surrounding the MUGA's on Site 1 – notes that noise complaints have been received from a local resident following the first usage of the MUGA's on Site 1;
- concerned that the north western and south eastern edges of the AWP would not be 'closed-in' with acoustic fencing – creating a noise 'funnelling' effect;
- lack of adequate noise protection for residents on the Sandown Park side of Site 2;
- concerned that users of Site 2 will create harmful noise by kicking balls directly against the acoustic fencing for training purposes – why is there no welded-mesh fence on the inside of the acoustic fence as there is surrounding the AWP;
- having defined the hours of use for Site 2 (within the base planning permission), cannot understand the need for 3 metre high acoustic fencing which is intrusive on a playing field which I would rather prefer to look out on;
- In over forty years of this site being used for school sports facilities the noise of sports, if any, has passed without comment;

Discussion

Introduction

22. The details of fencing, gates and railings, specifications of hard surfaces and details of acoustic fencing for the development on Site 2 submitted pursuant to planning permission TW/10/4051 are being reported to the Planning Applications Committee for determination as a result of the objections received from the Borough Council (see

Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

paragraph 17) and local residents (see paragraph 21). These primarily relate to an impact on tree roots through the installation of boundary fencing, the noise impact of ball strikes directly on the acoustic fence surface, a perceived concern that the proposed acoustic fencing/specification is not fit for purpose, concerns over the height of the acoustic fencing proposed and whether the acoustic fence can be screened with additional landscape planting.

23. In considering the proposed details pursuant to the base planning permission for the redevelopment of SKA, regard must be had to the most relevant Government Guidance/Statements and adopted Development Plan Policies as outlined in paragraph (16) and any other key material planning considerations relevant to take into consideration in the decision making process. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that applications (and submissions pursuant to planning permissions) must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Regard must also be had to the terms of the main planning consent for the SKA redevelopment in so far as the principle of site boundary and acoustic fencing has been established in planning terms and that these matters relate to the approval of technical details under that consent.
24. The details being considered here only relate to the technical specifications of site boundary and acoustic fencing (in terms of height, location, density and external appearance) and hard surfacing for the development on Site 2. As mentioned above, consideration of matters relating to the wider Academy redevelopment is not directly relevant for consideration within this report. Members will be aware that details reserved by condition pursuant to a planning permission are generally matters of a 'technical' nature which are, in most cases, agreed with relevant statutory consultees (such as the Borough Council and our own Technical Advisors) and approved under delegated powers.
25. The key planning land use considerations in this particular case can be categorised under the following headings:
 - consideration of the details submitted in respect of site boundary and acoustic fencing, in terms of its height, location, density and external appearance; and
 - consideration of the details submitted in respect of proposed Site 2 hard standing; and
 - an assessment of the landscape and visual impacts of the proposals arising from the particular detailed specification submitted.

Site boundary and acoustic fencing

26. As outlined above, the broad principle of boundary and acoustic fencing for Site 2 has already been established through the grant of planning consent for the Academy redevelopment. That consent was granted on the basis that the development was considered to accord with the general aims and objectives of Development Plan Policies. The technical specifications of boundary and acoustic fencing (in terms of height, location, density and external appearance) were reserved out for later consideration by planning conditions as the full details were not finalised at the main planning application stage and it was important to maintain planning control over these matters.

Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

27. Having considered the boundary fencing proposed for Site 2 (as described in paragraph 12 above) it is noted that that boundary treatments include a mix of timber close boarded 2 metre high fence, relatively (visually) 'open' 1.5 metre high chain link fence and 3 metre high timber acoustic fencing. It should be noted that Site 2 currently benefits from a 2 metre high close boarded fence along its boundary with Pembury Road, blocking any directly ground-levels views of the field from Pembury Road or vice-versa. Therefore additional 2 metre high close boarded timber fence along most of the western boundary and a large proportion of the northern site boundary, would not, in my opinion, seem out of place or inappropriate for this locality. I further note that this type of fencing is commonplace in delineating residential gardens in the general locality.
28. I understand from discussions which have taken place between the applicant, the applicant's construction contractor (Willmott Dixon) and the management of the adjacent Leonard Cheshire Centre that the Cheshire Centre are happy with the proposed visually 'open' style of chain link fencing proposed. I understand that the open appearance is of benefit to the residents of the Cheshire Centre, and the direct pedestrian access and macadam path being provided by the applicant between the AWP and the Centre would allow residents of the Cheshire Centre the opportunity to view sporting activities taking place within Site 2 as and when appropriate. Having notified the Leonard Cheshire Centre of these submitted details, I can confirm that no representations have been made directly to me on their behalf. I consider that the style and height of the fencing/gate proposed along this section of the boundary is acceptable in planning terms and would not appear out of context in this locality. I therefore do not raise any concerns to the proposed 1.5 metre high chain link fence and pedestrian gate shown to be installed along this section of the site boundary.
29. The positions of the acoustic fence were broadly established at the time of the original planning application. The acoustic fencing proposed comprises of a substantial construction of 3 metre high timber half-lapped fencing with a preservative applied with a natural finish. The details provided relating to the acoustic fence state that it would achieve a minimum density of 10kg/sq. metre. The specification of this acoustic fence is the same as that which has been recently installed on Site 1 around the new MUGA's, the technical specification of which was approved by the County Planning Authority in July 2011. The specification of the acoustic fencing proposed is considered to be acceptable by the County Council's Noise Consultant (see paragraph 18) where he concludes the overall height and density to be appropriate. Noise modelling plots have been produced by the applicant to demonstrate the noise reduction benefits of the acoustic fence on surrounding residential properties, a benefit which was fully considered at the time of the original planning application decision was taken.
30. Whilst I note that concerns have been raised regarding the overall height and positioning of the acoustic fence, I am satisfied that the locations where it is intended to be installed (as outlined in paragraph 14 above) are the most appropriate locations in this instance. The height of the fence at 3 metres was broadly agreed at the original planning application stage, with noise calculations submitted at that time demonstrating the acoustic benefits associated with the fence based on modelling undertaken with a 3 metre high fence. To consider a reduced height of acoustic fencing would reduce the effectiveness of the fence to deliver an overall noise reduction from Site 2 activities for adjoining residential occupiers.

Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

31. Concerns have been raised by a local resident to the effect that there is a lack of acoustic protection for residential dwellings located along Sandown Park, on the basis that there is no proposal to erect 3 metre high acoustic fencing along the site boundary with Sandown Park. This boundary currently benefits from well-established and dense hedge planting and is some considerable distance from the northern boundary of the AWP itself, located some 80 metres away. The nearest residential properties in this direction are those located on the opposite side of Sandown Park, separated by the highway itself. It is therefore not considered necessary to require noise attenuation fencing to be installed along this section of the boundary.
32. Questions have been raised about the effectiveness of the 3 metre high acoustic fencing located along the site boundaries of Site 2, noting that as part of the previously approved site level scheme the ground levels of the AWP would be raised by an average of 0.45 metres at the mid-points of the pitch. I note that the acoustic fencing situated along the eastern and western boundaries of the AWP would be raised accordingly, relative to the change in levels already approved, but the fencing at the boundary of the Site would be installed at a height of 3 metres from the existing ground levels. When considered against the relatively limited raise in levels of the AWP, compared to the overall height of the 3 metre acoustic fence at the site boundaries, I do not consider these concerns to be significant. In any case, the acoustic fencing located along the site boundaries of Site 2 would provide acoustic attenuation for the playing of sports on the adjacent grass football pitch, which I note would not be raised above and beyond previous (existing) ground levels. Based on the assessment above and the professional advice received from the County Council's Noise Consultant, I would not raise any objection to the specification of acoustic or site boundary fencing proposed for Site 2 in this instance. I further note that the broad principles of acoustic and boundary fencing were established at the time when the main planning permission was granted.

Site 2 hard standings

33. As outlined in paragraph 13 above, the details submitted include the specification of new hard standings proposed within Site 2. These new hard standing include a black macadam level path from the site pedestrian entrance with Sandown Park to the north eastern corner of the AWP, together with a similar path from the south eastern corner of the AWP directly into the adjacent Leonard Cheshire Centre grounds. An area of hard standing would also be created on the northern edge of the AWP to be used to store sports equipment, such as goal posts, associated with the AWP itself. On the basis of the requirement to provide an inclusive DDA compliant means of access to the AWP itself, together with the opportunity taken by the applicant to work with the adjacent Leonard Cheshire Centre to deliver some community benefit for its residents, I would not raise any objection to the hard standings proposed in this instance. I further note that the additional storage space created would seem appropriate for this location, noting that the site is physically separated from the main Academy site and it would therefore not be practical to insist on the storage of sports equipment within the main site itself.

Landscape and visual impacts

34. Members will note that the Borough Council has raised some concerns with the submitted details, to the effect that the proposed fencing and new hard standings would, in their opinion, be contrary to Local Plan and Core Strategy Development Plan

Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

Policies which seek to preserve residential amenity and the adjacent Conservation Area (located along Pembury Road). As discussed above, it should be borne in mind that the broad details of boundary and acoustic fencing were considered and accepted at the time when the main planning consent was granted. In my opinion I do not consider the height or external appearance of the fencing proposed to be unacceptable in this locality or to have an overbearing adverse effect on either residential amenity or the adjoining Conservation Area. I consider the current proposals to reflect an appropriate balance in terms of safeguarding adjacent residential amenity, both visually and in noise terms, from the development already consented for Site 2. I would therefore not seek to raise an objection to the fencing proposed for Site 2 on landscape or visual impact terms.

35. Members will note that residential concerns have been raised regarding the impact that the installation of boundary acoustic fencing could have on tree roots currently located on the boundary between Site 2 and adjoining properties. The applicant has undertaken some further investigations in this respect, in line with the current British Standards relating to construction works in close proximity to trees, and has concluded that the fencing does not need to be realigned. Instead, the foundation design of the fence in proximity to any existing trees would be reviewed and an arboriculturist prior to any installation works taking place. I note that the main planning permission requires existing trees around Site 2 to be retained, and all construction works to be carried out in strict accordance with the relevant British Standard. I therefore propose to remind the applicant of this requirement by informative on any approval notice given.
36. Concerns have been raised regarding potential noise nuisance created by users of Site 2 kicking balls against the acoustic fence proposed to be installed on the eastern and western site boundaries. This concern has arisen particularly given that these sections of fence run at the end of the grass football pitch and could frequently be struck by balls during the use of the site. Residents have requested that the applicant install welded-mesh sports fencing on the inside of the wooden acoustic fencing, like is proposed around the AWP itself, to minimise the potential for noise nuisance to be caused from striking balls on the wooden fence. The applicant has provided me with confirmation that whilst they do not consider the additional installation of welded-mesh fencing to be necessary, they have nevertheless agreed to plant climbing plants along the field side of the acoustic fencing on the eastern boundary of the site. The fencing proposed on the western side of the field would also be planted up to with a mix of pre-grown and native hedge plants. To this effect the applicant has provided me with an indicative landscape planting scheme for this site, although this would not be approved under the current details under consideration. Instead, I will ensure that this planting is included when the Site 2 landscaping scheme is formally submitted to the County Planning Authority by the applicant for approval. I consider that this measure would satisfactorily address the concerns expressed by adjoining residents in this instance. I also note that a landscaping scheme for this site is required, by condition, in July this year. Once that scheme is approved I will ensure that the applicant undertakes the required planting within the first planting season following the completion of Site 2 works (likely to be this Autumn).
37. A request for additional landscape planting has been made by a resident to help visually screen the proposed acoustic fencing running along the eastern and western boundaries of the AWP. As stated above, the landscaping scheme for Site 2 is currently not under consideration and therefore this point will be taken into account at

Item D5

Details of fencing, gates and railings, hard surfaces and acoustic fencing for Site 2 as part of the redevelopment of The Skinners Kent Academy, Tunbridge Wells – TW/10/4051/R16&R23

such time as this matter is considered in the future. I understand however that it is the applicant's intention to undertake some landscape planting, in the form of climbing plants, adjacent to the eastern side of the acoustic fencing facing adjoining properties.

Conclusion

38. The submitted details, primarily those relating to the acoustic fencing, have met with objection as summarised in paragraphs (17 and 21) above. Notwithstanding the concerns received, based on the professional technical advice received from my Noise Consultant, I consider the acoustic fencing to be fit for purpose, to be an appropriate height and located in suitable positions to deliver an overall acoustic reduction from the sports activities arising from the permitted use of Site 2 on adjoining residential occupiers. Furthermore, I do not consider the details submitted (relating to fencing and hard standings) to have any overbearing impact on residential amenity or in wider visual terms on the setting of the nearby Conservation Area. I also consider the technical details submitted, as considered above, to be consistent with the broad principles accepted at the time when the original planning permission was granted.
39. I also consider that the submitted details accord with the general thrust of key Development Plan Policies and therefore recommend that approval be given to the submitted details as set out in paragraphs (40) and (41) below.

Recommendation

40. I RECOMMEND that APPROVAL BE GIVEN to the fencing, gates and railings (condition 16 part c), details and specifications of hard surfaces (condition 16 part e) and details of acoustic fencing (condition 23) pursuant to planning permission TW/10/4051 for the redevelopment of SKA, as granted planning permission on 30 March 2011.
41. I FURTHER RECOMMEND that the applicant be advised by way of INFORMATIVES the following matters:
- the applicant's existing requirement, under the terms of condition (38) of the main planning permission (TW/10/4051), to carry out any works in proximity to existing trees strictly in accordance with the requirements of British Standard 5837:2005 'Trees in Relation to Construction'; and
 - the applicant notes the views received from residents relating to landscape planting, and be advised to take these into account when designing the landscaping and boundary treatment scheme for Site 2, as required by condition (16) of the main planning permission.

Case officer – Julian Moat 01622 696978
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Background documents - See section heading
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