

Mobile/Sectional Building, The Foreland School, Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs – TH/13/0104 (KCC/TH/0036/2013)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 10 April 2013

Application by Kent County Council (Property and Infrastructure Support) for provision of a mobile/sectional building, The Foreland School, Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs, CT10 3NX – TH/13/0104 (KCC/TH/0036/2013)

Recommendation: Permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Member: Mr. R. Bayford and Mr. B. Hayton

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

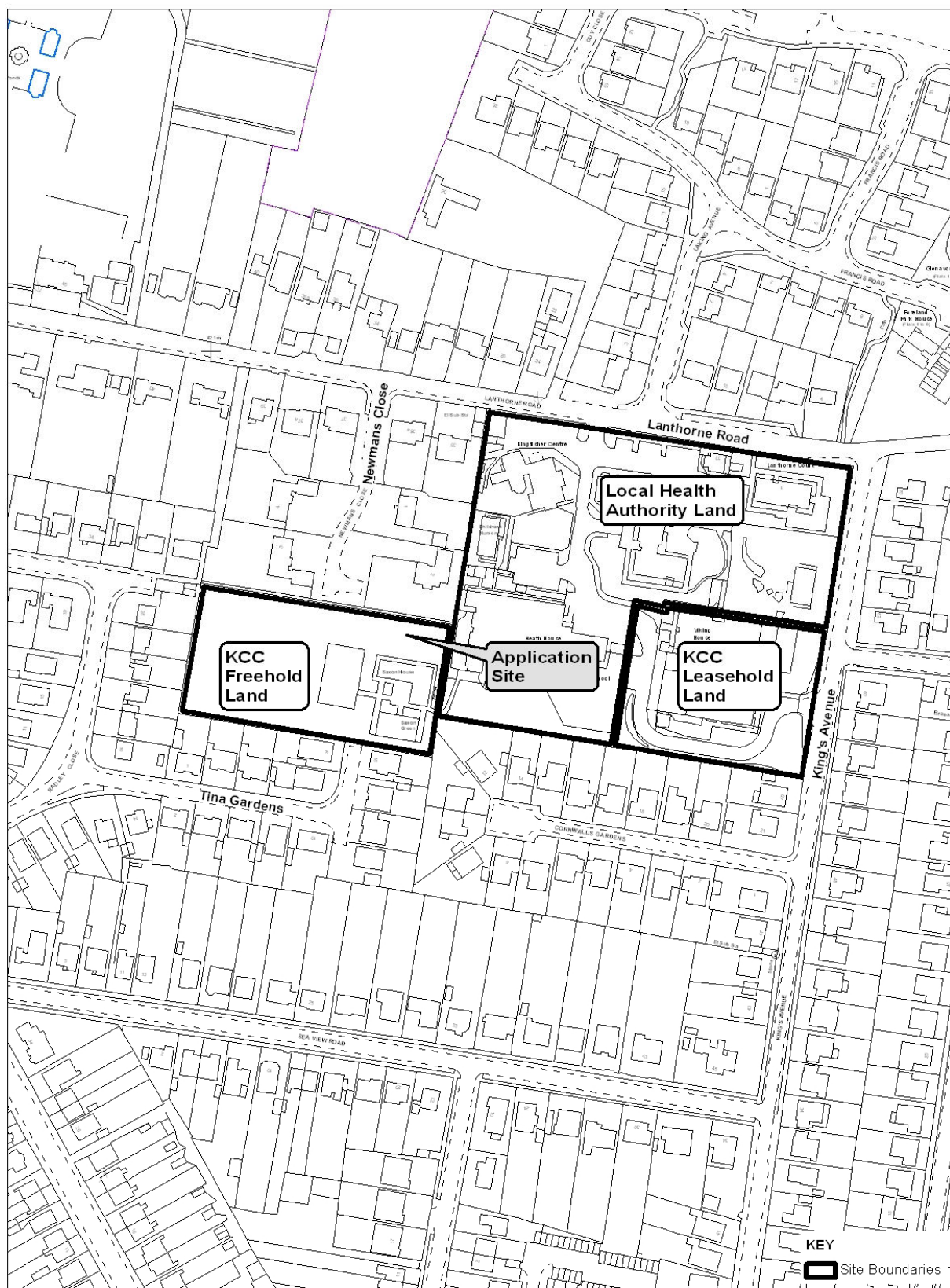
1. The Foreland School, Broadstairs is located to the south side of Lanthorne Road and to the west of King's Avenue within a predominantly residential area. Access to the school is via Lanthorne Road and egress is onto Kings Avenue as the School have a one way policy in place to avoid congestion at the busiest times of the day.
2. The school site is shared with the Local Health Authority with three parcels of land. The largest of these is owned and maintained by the Local Health Authority, the second to the south east of this is leased by the County Council from the Health Authority and the third to the west is in the ownership of the County Council. This application relates to the land in the County Council's ownership. This part of the site includes a single storey building of brick construction (Saxon House) at the eastern end, together with a modular classroom building, a fenced off play area, several sheds and garden areas, and an area of playing field to the west. With the exception of the main school site adjoining, this part of the school site otherwise shares its boundaries with residential properties. The boundaries comprise a mixture of timber fencing of approximately 1.8 metres high and mature boundary trees. There are gated access points onto the playing field land from Newman's Close to the north and Tina Gardens to the south. *A site location plan is attached.*

Background and Proposal

3. The Foreland School is a special school designated to meet a wide range of special needs, including the needs of children with profound, severe and complex/autistic spectrum disorder/communication and interaction difficulties. It caters for children/students between the ages of 2 and 19.
4. The applicant has stated that due to an increasing number of local students with statements of educational needs that can only be met at The Foreland School, the roll has increased in recent years. The school has been able to admit some additional pupils by imaginative use of existing space and internal adaptations. However, there is now no further capacity to create additional teaching space and specialist rooms are also being used for general teaching. As the need for places at the school is projected to increase further (from its current roll of 168 to 200 by 2014/15), additional accommodation will be needed.

Mobile/Sectional Building, The Foreland School, Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs – TH/13/0104 (KCC/TH/0036/2013)

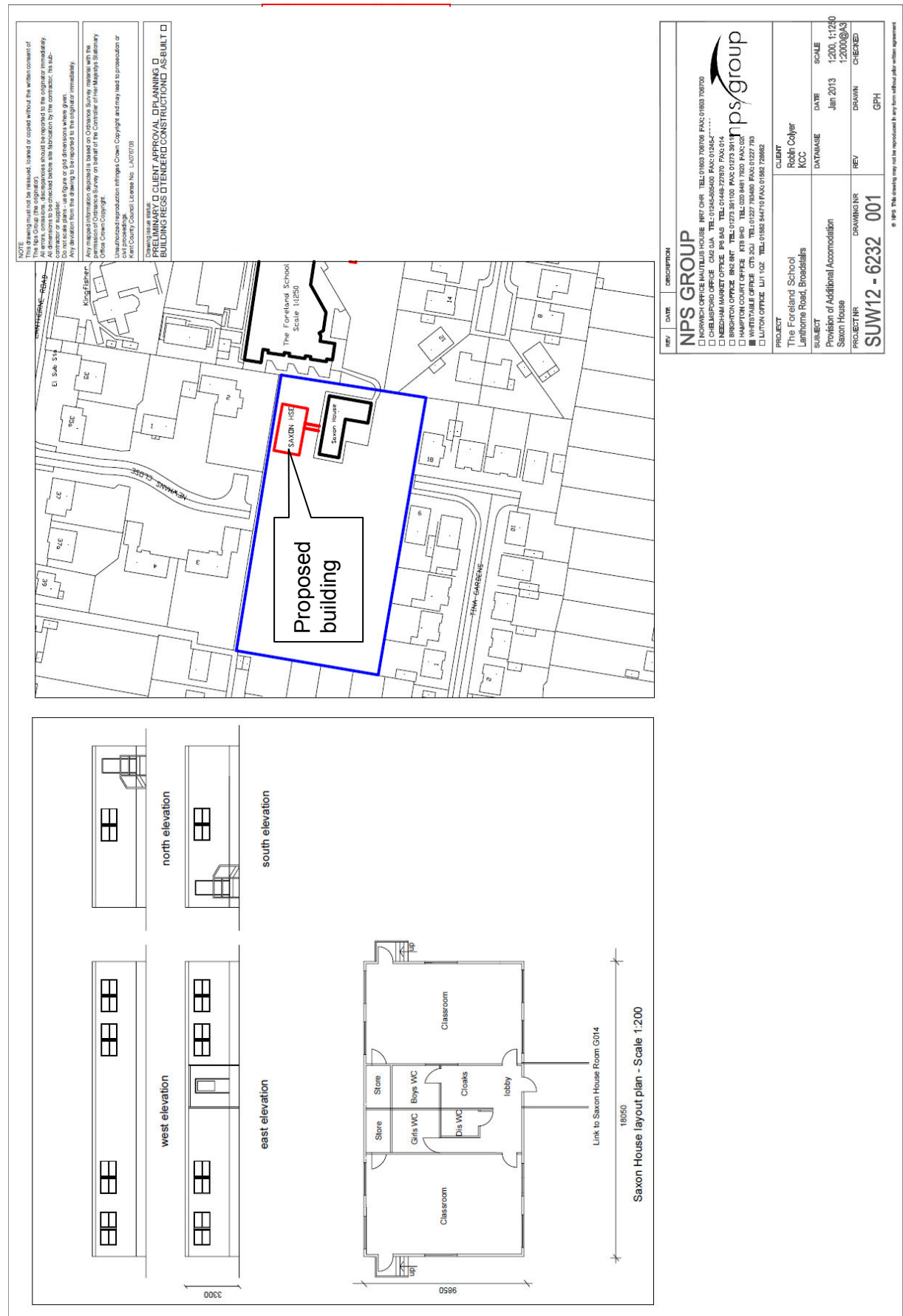
Site Location Plan



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Mobile/Sectional Building, The Foreland School, Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs – TH/13/0104 (KCC/TH/0036/2013)

Drawing originally submitted with the application



Mobile/Sectional Building, The Foreland School, Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs – TH/13/0104 (KCC/TH/0036/2013)

5. There is a proposal for the school to be rebuilt on a new site at Pysons Road, Ramsgate which already has outline planning permission for a new special school. Subject to (amongst other things) detailed planning permission being obtained, it is intended that the new school would be constructed and ready to open in 2015. In the meantime temporary accommodation is required to cater for the additional pupils that need to be admitted in September 2013 and 2014.
6. This application seeks permission for a mobile/sectional building to provide two additional classrooms with ancillary accommodation. A related application seeks permission for two similar buildings elsewhere in separate locations on the school site. [At the time of writing that application is expected to be determined under delegated powers.] The separate locations of the three buildings have been chosen to reflect the need to provide additional accommodation in both the primary and secondary phases which are located in different parts of the school site.
7. The proposed building the subject of this application would be located between the north side of the single storey brick building (Saxon House) and the site boundary with 2 Newman's Close. The proposed building is shown to be 18.05 metres by 9.85 metres wide and 3.3 metres in height. The drawing shows it to be of a standard design for this type of temporary building. It is indicated that it would have a flat/shallow pitch roof and that the walls would be clad in a steel/plastisol covered panel or a treated ply panel (depending on the supplier) with UPVC windows and timber doors, and that it would be finished in a colour to be confirmed. It is also indicated that it would have a covered/enclosed link to Saxon House, although full details are not shown. It has been indicated that the gateway from Tina Gardens would most likely be used for construction access. *A reduced copy of the drawing showing location of the proposed building on the site, floor plan and elevations is attached.*
8. No additional parking is proposed as part of this development even though it is expected that the numbers of staff would increase from 140 FTE by 12 FTE when pupil numbers go up in September. There are currently 30 on-site car parking spaces allocated for the school staff and many of the staff need to park on surrounding streets, although they are encouraged where possible to park along the boundaries of the school rather than outside neighbouring houses. Sustainable travel is encouraged where possible. Covered cycle parking is also provided for 10 cycles.
9. The majority of students are transported to school by minibus or taxi and their needs usually prevents them walking to school or using public transport. There are 6 drop off parking spaces available for parents and 9 parking bays for minibuses/taxis.

Planning Policy

10. The following National Planning Policy guidance and Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to the consideration of the application:
 - (i) **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** March 2012, sets out the Government's planning policy guidance for England at the heart of which is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The guidance is a material consideration for the determination of planning application but does not change the statutory status of the development plan which remains the starting point for decision making. However the weight given to development plan policies will depend on their consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the

Mobile/Sectional Building, The Foreland School, Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs – TH/13/0104 (KCC/TH/0036/2013)

development plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

In determining applications the NPPF states that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

In terms of delivering sustainable development in relation to this development proposal, the NPPF guidance and objectives covering the following matters are also relevant:

- consideration of whether the opportunities for sustainable transport have been taken up and safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people;
 - achieving the requirement for high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
 - the great importance that the Government attaches to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, and that great weight should be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and
 - the protection provided for open space, including playing fields.
- (ii) The **Policy Statement – Planning for Schools Development** August 2011 states that there should be a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools.
- (iii) **Thanet District Local Plan** adopted June 2006 – Saved Policies:
- Policy TR15** Seeks measures to encourage and facilitate walking, cycling and use of public transport in preference to private car travel through School Travel Plans.
- Policy TR16** Proposals for development will be required to make satisfactory provision for the parking of vehicles.
- Policy D1** Requires high quality and inclusive design, sustainability, layout and materials. Also sets out the need for compliance with certain criteria including (amongst other things) that proposals will only be permitted if they respect or enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area, are compatible with neighbouring buildings and spaces, and do not lead to unacceptable loss of amenity.
- Policy HE12** Seeks the preservation and protection of archaeological sites.
- Policy SR12** Seeks to protect playing fields from development.
- Policy CF1** States that planning permission will be granted for new community facilities if the proposals are not contrary to other local plan policies and the community use and location are demonstrated as appropriate.

Consultations

11. **Thanet District Council** raises no objection to the proposal, subject to no issues being raised in relation to highways or archaeology.

Mobile/Sectional Building, The Foreland School, Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs – TH/13/0104 (KCC/TH/0036/2013)

Broadstairs and St Peter's Town Council raises no objection.

Sport England does not wish to comment.

Environment Agency has no comments to make.

KCC Highways and Transportation raises no objections to the mobile building for a temporary period until the school relocates. In addition states that wheel washing facilities must be available on site during construction and that parking for contractor's vehicles must be contained within the site.

The County Archaeologist recommends that a condition be imposed requiring a programme of archaeological works to be implemented before any development takes place in accordance with a written specification and time table that has first been submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority.

Local Member

12. The local County Members, Mr. R. Bayford and Mr. B. Hayton, were notified of the application on the 5 February 2013.

Publicity

13. The application was publicised by the posting of a site notice and the individual notification of 26 neighbouring residential properties.

Representations

14. I have received one representation from a resident of the adjoining property to the north of the proposed building. An objection is raised for the following reasons:
- The building is very close to the boundary fence bordering his garden.
 - The building appears to have a number of windows close to and directly overlooking his house and garden which would have an adverse affect on privacy.
 - There is no indication of the proposed height of the building.
 - The resident is worried about the effect on outlook.

DiscussionIntroduction

15. This proposal has arisen as the result of an expected increase in the school roll from September 2013 and need for additional accommodation. Whilst the education use of the site is well established there are issues relating to the siting and design of the mobile classroom which are reflected in the representations that have been received, summarised in paragraph (14). The proposal needs to be considered in the context of the relevant Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity. In brief, the relevant planning policies, as well as strongly supporting provision of education facilities, protect playing field land, promote sustainable development, seek a high standard of design,

Mobile/Sectional Building, The Foreland School, Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs – TH/13/0104 (KCC/TH/0036/2013)

have regard to local context, the amenity of nearby properties and the surrounding area, require adequate access and parking, and seek protection of archaeology.

Siting and design

16. The site of the proposed building is an area of grass between an existing brick building and part of the wider open space/playing field area. A number of sheds of varying sizes have been placed in this and the adjoining area to the west on the playing field where some garden plots have also been dug for educational use. I regard four of these sheds as being unauthorised, not benefiting from permission or permitted development rights. Two would be displaced by the proposed building and would need to be relocated elsewhere subject to planning permission being obtained unless permitted development rights applied to the new location. A planning application is to be submitted for this relocation, as necessary, and for the retention of the remaining two in order to seek to regularise the position.
17. With regard to development of this particular location, arguably it is not an area of the site that is suitable for formal sport and recreation use, is not capable of forming, or forming part of a playing pitch. Furthermore it would not impact on the main part of the playing field. In addition, it will be noted that Sport England does not wish to comment and that the proposed building is intended only to be a temporary solution pending the school relocating to a new site, as referred to in paragraph (5) above. I would not therefore raise an objection on the basis of loss of open space or playing field land.
18. Positioning the building between the existing brick building and the boundary does provide a discreet location which minimises any impact on the character of the site and wider visual amenity. However it is in close proximity to the residential property immediately adjoining to the north and has given rise to an objection as referred to in paragraph (14) above. There is a close boarded fence along this boundary of about 1.8 metres in height. On the school side of this there is a row of hedgerow trees close together and well above the height of the fence. Whilst in general they provide a reasonable screen along the boundary, during the winter months when there are no leaves, views above/over the fence are more evident. Therefore, as the building would be 3.3 metres in height, it would be seen from the neighbouring property. Also, as the windows are above the height of the fence, there is the potential for some overlooking of that property, particularly of first floor windows. The drawing originally submitted with the application shows the proposed building approximately two metres from the boundary and therefore the nearest façade of the neighbouring property would be about 15 metres away.
19. In order to address the objection raised, the applicant has agreed to move the building further away so that it would be 5.7 metres from the boundary. In addition the applicant has agreed to apply an obscure film to the windows which face the boundary to ensure there is no possibility of overlooking. On this basis, I do not consider that the siting would result in an unacceptable impact on the visual amenity or would lead to loss of privacy from overlooking. *A copy of the amended drawing is attached.*
20. Given the type of building proposed, it would be rather utilitarian in appearance and therefore it could be argued that it does not meet all the planning policy objectives for a high standard of design. However, as it is intended to be temporary I do not consider an objection on these grounds would be justified in this particular case. It would nevertheless be appropriate if the building was finished in a similar light green colour as the modular classroom building located on the south side of the brick built building, and this could be covered by condition if permission is granted. No elevational details of the

**Mobile/Sectional Building, The Foreland School, Lanthorne Road,
Broadstairs – TH/13/0104 (KCC/TH/0036/2013)**

The figure contains several architectural drawings for 'Saxon House':

- Top Elevation:** A north elevation showing a long building with multiple window units. It is labeled 'north elevation'.
- Bottom Elevation:** A south elevation showing a long building with multiple window units. It is labeled 'south elevation'.
- Left Elevation:** A west elevation showing a long building with multiple window units. It is labeled 'west elevation'.
- Right Elevation:** An east elevation showing a long building with multiple window units. It is labeled 'east elevation'.
- Central Plan:** A detailed floor plan of the house. It includes two 'Classroom' areas, two 'Store' rooms, a 'Boys WC', a 'Girls WC', a 'Dis WC', a 'Cloaks' area, and a 'lobby'. A note 'OBSCURE WINDOW FILM TO WINDOWS ON NORTH ELEVATION' points to the top wall. A dimension line indicates a width of '10050'.
- Section:** A cross-section drawing showing the internal structure and roof profile. It is labeled 'Section'.
- Scale:** A scale bar indicating '10050' units.
- Caption:** 'Saxon House layout plan - Scale 1:200'.

Mobile/Sectional Building, The Foreland School, Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs – TH/13/0104 (KCC/TH/0036/2013)

link to the existing building have been provided but this is a relatively minor detail that could be reserved out by condition if permission is granted.

21. The siting of the proposed building could arguably bring an increased concentration of activity closer to the adjoining residential property. However, the general area of this part of the school site is already in use and the main access to the building would be from the south side of the building away from the boundary. I am also mindful of the relatively short duration of the school day, the break in activities at the site during weekends and school holidays, and of the intended temporary nature of the development and use proposed. On this basis I do not consider that residential amenity would be adversely affected.

Transport, access and parking issues

22. Following some initial concern about additional off street parking not being provided as part of the proposal the Development Planning Manager (Highways and Transportation) raises no objections to the mobile building on the basis of it being for a temporary period until the school relocates. This conclusion was reached following monitoring of the school in the morning and afternoon at the drop off and pick up times. It was confirmed that whilst some staff parking occurs on Lanthorne Road itself, it is not causing a problem. It was also noted that there is plenty of spare capacity on roads in the near vicinity of the site should on street parking be required, without causing disruption to neighbouring properties. With regard to the dropping off and picking up of pupils it was observed that it is largely by minibus and that the arrival and departure times are staggered. No conflicts were seen arising at the access point to delay free flowing traffic on Lanthorne Road. In these circumstances and bearing in mind the views of the Development Planning Manager (Highways and Transportation), I do not consider that there is any basis on which to raise a highway objection in this particular case.

Archaeology

23. The site of the proposed building lies within an area which has revealed extensive remains of prehistoric and later activity. A desk based assessment providing a description and analysis of the archaeological discoveries to date on and around the school site was submitted with the application. On the basis of the information provided the County Archaeologist has requested an appropriate condition to ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded.

Construction

24. As there are nearby residential properties, if planning permission is granted it would, in my view, be appropriate to impose a condition restricting hours of construction in order to protect their amenity. I would suggest that this should be between the hours of 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays, with no operations on Sundays or Bank Holidays. Similarly, the matters referred to by KCC Highways and Transportation relating to construction activity could be covered by appropriate conditions.

Conclusion

25. The applicant's reasons for the installation of the mobile building will be noted, together with the current intentions to relocate this school to another site. The principle of the

Mobile/Sectional Building, The Foreland School, Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs – TH/13/0104 (KCC/TH/0036/2013)

school expansion and development required would be in accordance with National Planning Policy and Policy CF1 of the Local Plan. Whilst the proposal does not fully accord with Development Plan Policies or the NPPF in respect of design, given the temporary nature of the building, I do not consider that an objection would be warranted in this particular case. Subject to imposition of appropriate conditions and on the basis of the amended position of the building, I am of the opinion that the proposed development would otherwise be in accordance with the general aims and objectives of the relevant Development Plan Policies and the NPPF and do not consider the proposal would have any significant detrimental impact on the local highway network or on local/residential amenity. I therefore recommend that planning permission be granted for a temporary period until 30 September 2015 subject to the further conditions set out below.

Recommendation

26. I RECOMMEND that PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT to conditions, including conditions covering:

- the mobile classroom to be removed from the site no later than 30 September 2015;
- the building being positioned 5.7 metres from the boundary;
- the building to be finished in light green;
- details of the covered link to be submitted for approval;
- obscure film to be applied to the windows on the northern elevation of the building;
- hours of working during construction being restricted to between the hours of 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays, with no operations on Sundays or Bank Holidays;
- provision for parking of contractor's vehicles within the site; and
- measures being taken to ensure that the public highway is kept clean of mud and debris occasioned by the works.

Case officer - Paul Hopkins	01622 221051
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Background documents - See section heading
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