

Single storey extension to provide two classrooms at St John's CEP School, Sevenoaks – SE/13/1206 (KCC/SE/0137/2013)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 7 June 2013.

Application by Kent County Council Property and Infrastructure and Support for a single storey extension to provide two classrooms, office and toilet accommodation at St John's Church of England Primary School, Bayham Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3XD – SE/13/1206 (KCC/SE/0137/2013).

Recommendation: Permission be granted, subject to conditions.

Local Member: Mrs M. Crabtree

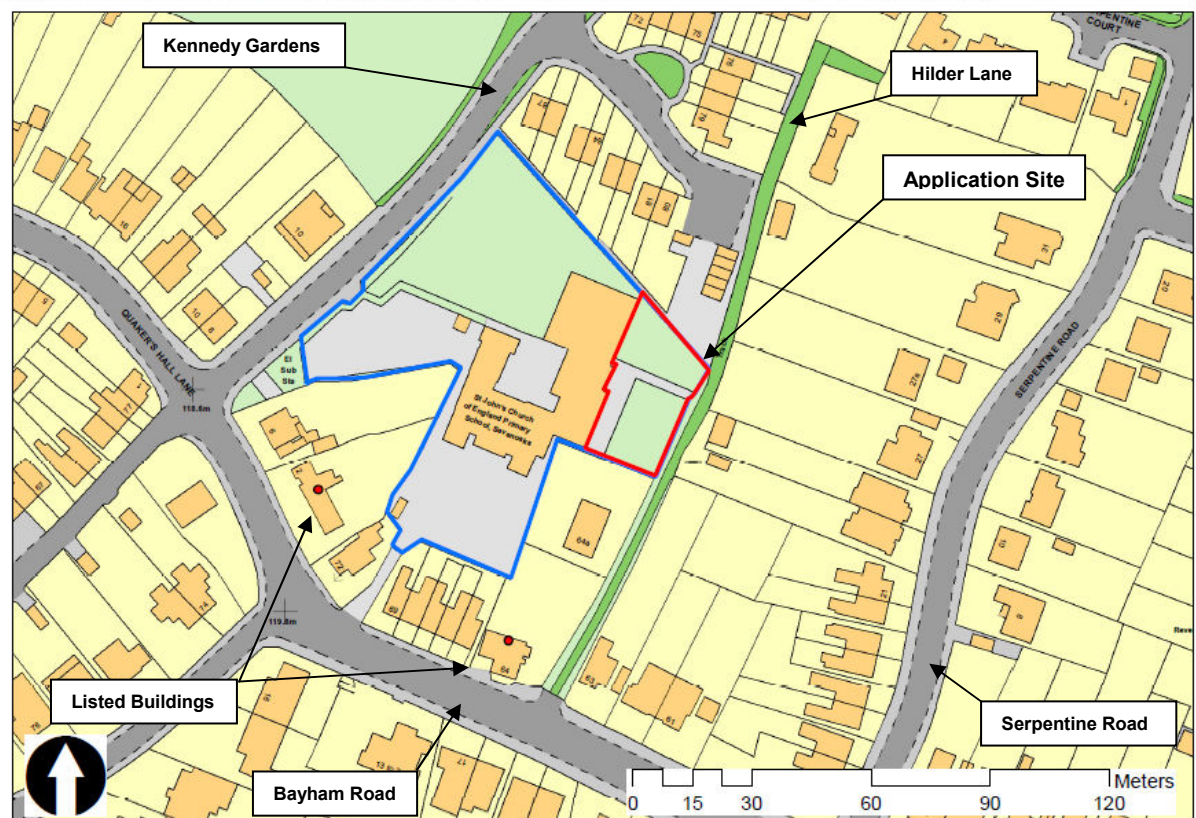
Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. The application site falls within the grounds of St John's CE Primary School, Bayham Road, Sevenoaks. The school grounds are located within the built confines of Sevenoaks town, approximately 1km north north-east of the town centre. The school is positioned on a relatively small plot of land (approximately 0.59ha) surrounded by residential properties. The original school house forms a pitched roofed brick building set back from Bayham Road to the rear of residential properties that front the highway. A large part of the School's existing accommodation consists of extensive single storey flat roof extensions, mainly to the north and north-east. The primary vehicular access and dedicated car park (26 spaces) are located off Kennedy Gardens to the west. Pedestrians are able to access the grounds from Kennedy Gardens and Bayham Road to the south. The School's playing fields are located off site to the north-east and can be accessed via Hilder Lane immediately to the east, an informal track that provides rear access to a number of properties, including the School. St John's Primary School currently accommodates 185 pupils aged 5-11 years with approximately 50 full time and part time staff.
2. The application site forms a small open space between the main single storey classroom extensions on site and the south-eastern boundary with Hilder Lane. The location is not visible from the public highway, and currently consists of a mixed paved and grassed amenity area. The space is enclosed by closeboard fencing, which is supplemented by a mixed hedgerow to the south-eastern boundary and approximately 7 trees of varying ages.
3. The closest residential property is immediately to the south of the application site, located off Bayham Road. Further residential properties on Kennedy Gardens to the north-west and Serpentine Road to the east (on the far side of Hilder Lane) back onto the site. The area immediately to the north forms a garage block that serves the properties on Kennedy Gardens. A mature English Oak tree is growing within the rear garden of a property on Serpentine Road to the east, the root zone of which is likely to extend under part of the proposed site. The wider surrounding area includes two listed buildings that front on to Bayham Road to the south, neither of which are visible from the application site (please see the attached location plan). The school grounds are positioned within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 2 overlying

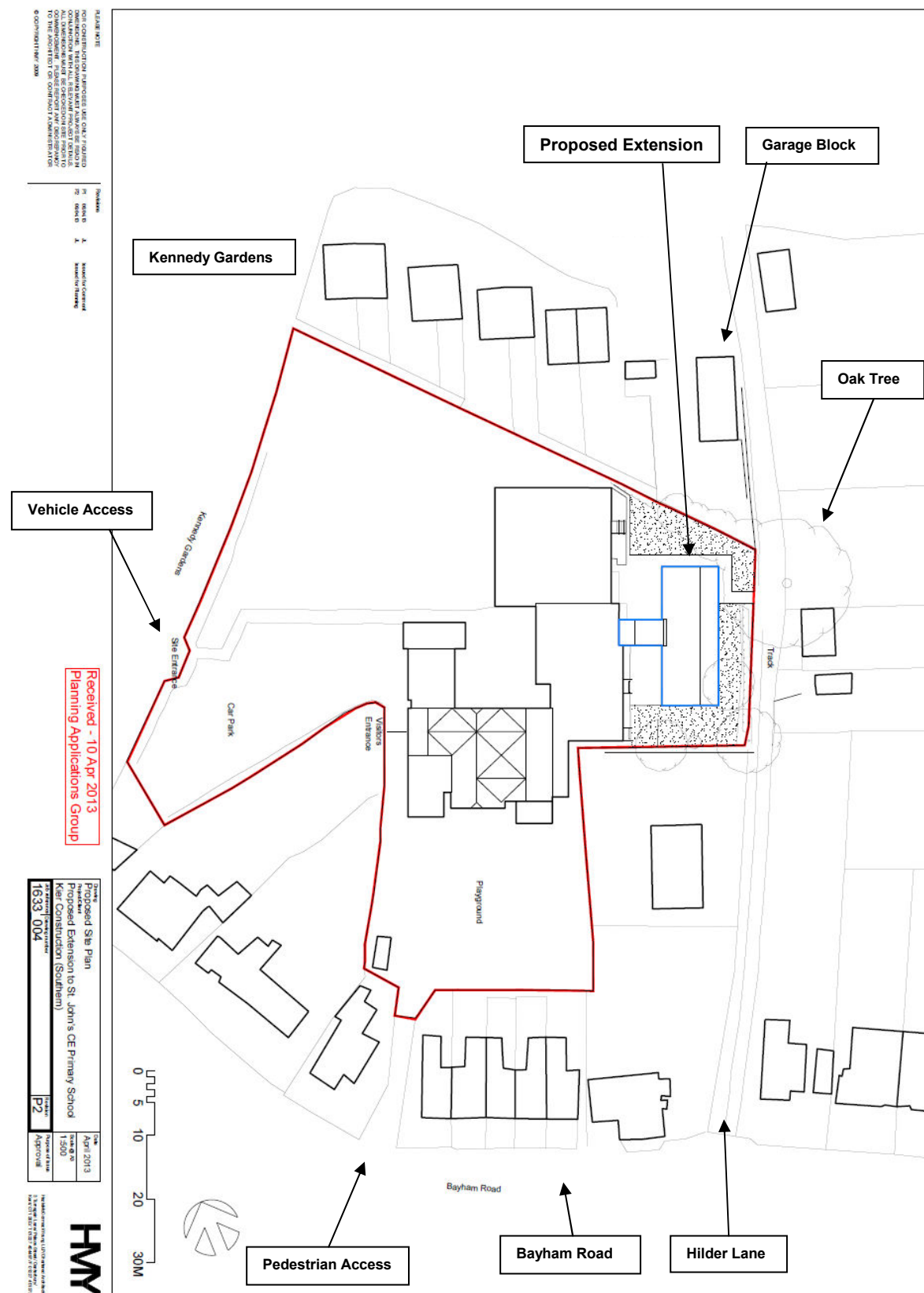
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General Location Plan



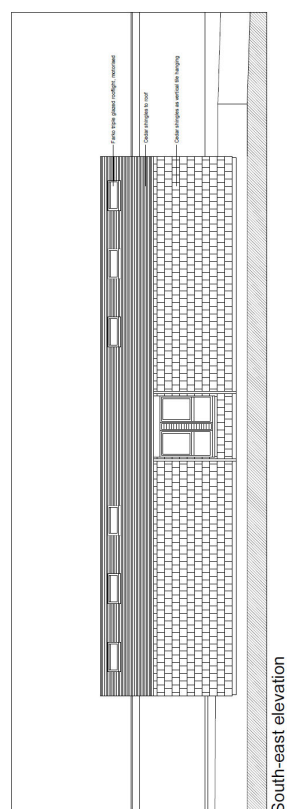
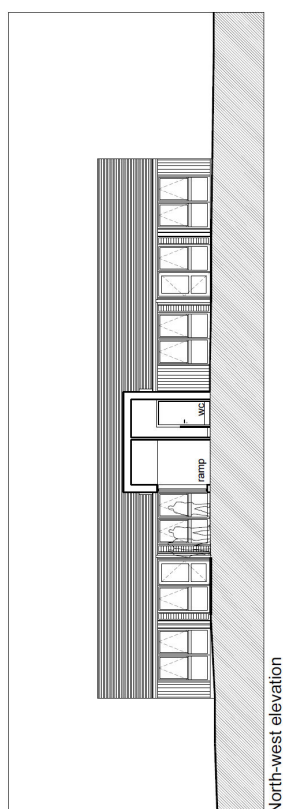
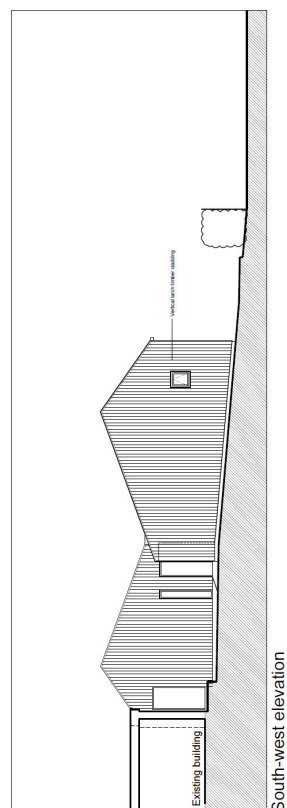
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Site Location Plan



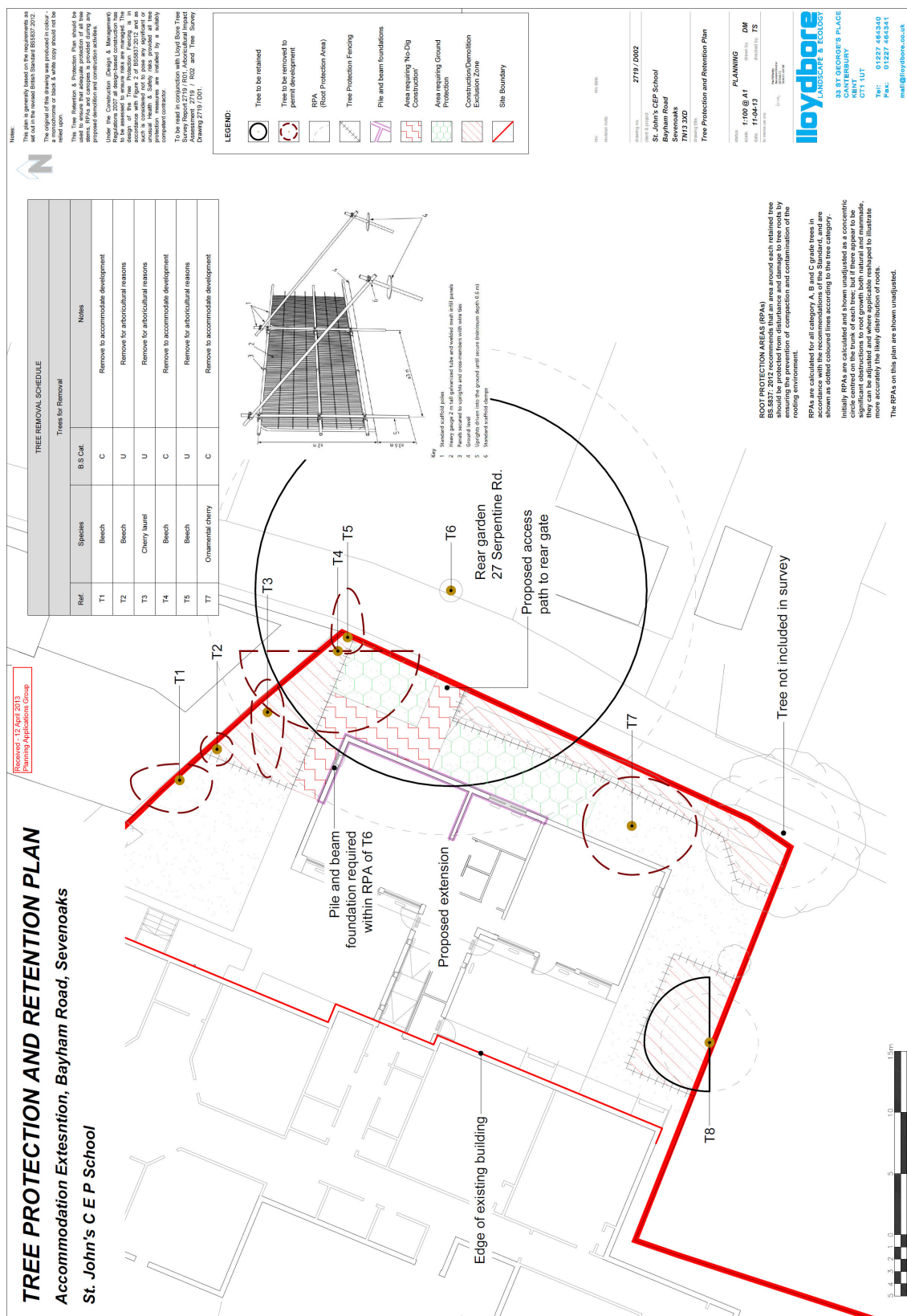
Architectural floor plan of the proposed ground floor for John O'Brien Primary School. The plan shows a central corridor connecting various rooms including Classrooms, a Library, a Music room, a Computer room, a Kitchen, and several Class Stairs. The building is surrounded by landscaping with trees and a path. A scale bar at the bottom indicates dimensions from 0 to 100m. A north arrow is also present.

- Cedar shingles to roof (min pitch 20-);
- Triple glazed rooflights;
- Zinc gutters and downpipes;
- Cedar shingles as vertical tile hanging to SE wall;
- Larch vertical timber cladding to sides;



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Tree Protection and Retention Plan



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a Major Aquifer, as defined by the Environment Agency. There are no other site specific designations, although more general development plan policies are set out in paragraph (9) below.

Background

4. The recent planning history for the school site includes a planning permission granted in March 2012 to demolish an existing kitchen, store and 'mobile' library unit and to construct a new detached multi-purpose hall and kitchen plus boys and girls changing areas (under reference SE/11/196). The proposed building is permitted on land to the north of the main school adjacent to the car park. To date the development has yet to be implemented, the permission runs until in March 2015 and could be implemented at any point up until this date.

Proposal

5. The application proposes the construction of a single storey extension that comprises two 60m² classrooms, three toilets (including full accessible facilities), a storage room, and an office for a Special Educational Needs teacher. The proposed extension would be linked to an existing single storey classroom building by a new link corridor, with a shallow ramped access to allow a fully accessible route down into the proposed building. The extension (including the link) would create approximately 184m² of new floorspace and would be located to the rear of the school within an open area which falls to the eastern boundary.
6. The new classrooms would ease pressure within the existing school by providing new accommodation to meet the needs of the current group of pupils (185 children) and would enable the school roll to expand to 220 pupils to help meet a local increase in need for primary school places. The proposed increase in pupil numbers would result in the employment of one additional full time teacher and one classroom assistant.
7. The design of the proposed extension would adopt a timber frame construction providing a shallow pitched roof with a low eaves height. This built form would be mirrored by the link to the main school building. The classroom building would measure approximately 21.5m by 8.85m, and about 5m in height (when measured in line) to the ridgeline. Due to a general fall in the site from west to east, the eastern section of the extension would be built up to achieve a level floor height within the extension. This change in level would add about a metre to the overall height from ground level on the east side. The roof and rear (east) wall would be clad in western red cedar shingles, with the side gable elevations clad in vertical larch boarding (approximately 125mm wide). The timber finish would be allowed to weather naturally to achieve a sympathetic finish that seeks to reflect the surrounding gardens and trees, whilst screening the existing single storey classroom building. The windows would be white double glazed upvc units to match the adjacent school building with powder coated aluminium doors. The classrooms would face back towards the main school allowing the design to incorporate fewer windows in the side and rear elevations. Six roof lights would provide increased light to the interior. The applicant states that the lightweight materials and construction would enable a faster build time, superior thermal performance and reduce loads onto the foundations.
8. The application proposes to retain the existing boundary hedge (to the east) and closeboard fencing that surrounds the site. Seven trees fall within the application site

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with a further oak tree close by within a neighbouring garden. The application includes a tree survey as well as an arboricultural impact assessment and method statement. The reports identify six trees that should be removed either to accommodate the development or for arboricultural reasons and that none of them are considered to be of particularly high value, three of which are considered to have a limited remaining lifespan. The remaining tree and mixed hedge long the south-east would be protected during construction. The attached 'tree protection and retention plan' shows that a small area of the footprint of the building and associated footpath falls within the predicted root protection zone of the mature oak tree located within a neighbouring garden. The application proposes a number of protection measures for this area in accordance with the British Standard 5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction'.

Planning Policy

9. The most relevant Government Guidance and Development Plan Policies summarised below are appropriate to the consideration of this application:

- (i) **National Planning Policy and Guidance** – the most relevant National planning policies and policy guidance are set out in:

National Planning Policy Framework (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 development plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

The NPPF contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development, identifying 3 overarching roles in the planning system - economic, social and environmental, which are considered mutually dependent. Within the over-arching roles there are 12 core principles that planning should achieve. These can be summarised as:

- be genuinely plan-led;
- a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places people live their lives;
- proactively drive and support sustainable economic development;
- secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity;
- take account of the different roles and character of different areas, including protecting Green Belts, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities;
- support the transition to a low carbon future, taking account of flood risk and coastal change and encourage the reuse of existing resources and the development of renewable energy;
- contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution
- encourage the effective use of land by reusing brownfield land, providing that it is not of high environmental value;
- promote mixed use developments;

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- conserve heritage assets;
- manage patterns of growth to make fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling; and focus significant development in locations which can be made sustainable; and
- take account of strategies to improve health, social and cultural well being, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

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

- consideration of whether 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
- conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

The NPPF also requires that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems. It states that those determining applications should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

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.

(ii) Development Plan Policies

Sevenoaks Local Development Framework: Saved Local Plan Policies Compendium (2008) Policies:

Policy EN1 Seeks all new development to respect, conserve and enhance the surrounding environment, including the privacy and amenities of a locality, the topography, important trees, hedgerows and shrubs. Ensuring highway safety, a satisfactory means of access and provides appropriate parking facilities.

Policy EN4A Proposals for all forms of new non-residential development must make provision for the safe and easy access of those with disabilities.

Policy NR10 Proposals for all forms of development should minimise pollution of the environment through careful design and layout of any buildings or land uses.

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Policy VP1 Vehicle parking provision in new developments will be made in accordance with KCC adopted vehicle parking standards.

Sevenoaks Local Development Framework: Core Strategy (2011) Policies:

Policy LO1 Seeks to focus development within the built confines of existing settlements.

Policy LO2 Seeks to protect the setting of the urban area and the distinctive character of the local environment.

Policy SP1 Seeks new development to be designed to a high quality and respond to the distinctive local character of the area. New development should create safe, inclusive and attractive environments that meet the needs of users, incorporate principles of sustainable development and maintain and enhance biodiversity. The District's heritage assets and their settings, including listed buildings, will be protected and enhanced.

Policy SP2 Sets out standards for sustainable design and construction. New institutional development will be required to achieve a BREEAM rating of at least 'very good'. Achievement of this standard is expected to include 10% energy savings through renewable sources.

Policy SP11 Seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Sevenoaks Local Development Framework: Supplementary Planning Document: Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment (April 2012)

This document seeks to identify particular residential areas within the urban area of Sevenoaks (excluding Conservation Areas and non-residential development) and the distinctive features that define their local character and sets out appropriate design guidance.

Consultations

10. **Sevenoaks District Council** raises no objection providing that that the proposed works are carried out in full accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement and Tree Protection and Retention Plan, and provided that the County Highways Engineer is satisfied with the proposals.

Sevenoaks Town Council raises no objection and welcomes the investment, subject to conditions:

- *'The impacts on Hilder Lane House, immediately to the south, is mitigated by suitable evergreen planting along the boundary, and landscaping, and if possible by reducing the height of the floor slab which in the current plan is significantly above ground level.*
- *Action is taken to improve safety of Children attending the school, by reducing the speed of passing traffic and encouraging more students to walk to school; the Town*

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Council would strongly support the provision of a formal pedestrian crossing to ensure safe access'.

Environment Agency has no comments to make, assessing the application as having a low environmental risk.

Kent Highways and Transportation raises no objection. Comments received read as follows:

'The adjoining roads to St John's School noticeably have little parking restriction present indicating relatively low levels of parking stress in the area. Whilst the school is in a residential area, the main entrance is off Kennedy Gardens where there are few nearby residential accesses. There are allotments on the northern side and adjacent properties are principally 'side on' to the road limiting conflicting points with school activity. Kennedy Gardens is also a cul-de-sac limiting the amount of passing traffic.

I have studied the injury crash record for the area and there have been no injury crashes on Kennedy Gardens for at least the last 10 years. The proposals comprise an expansion which amounts to a 19% increase in pupil numbers and an increase in staff of one additional full time teacher and one classroom assistant. I consider that in transport terms this expansion can be accommodated in this area without undue detriment or need for remedial measures. I write to confirm therefore that I have no objection to this application'.

Local Member

11. The previous local County Member for Sevenoaks Central, Mr J. London was notified of the application on 18 April 2013. Mr London responded on 2 May 2013 as follows:

'This is a very congested site with a lot of parents waiting to collect their children at the end of the school day. Bayham Road is also a commuter "rat run" in the morning and with cars parked along Bayham Road making safety an issue. Is it possible to put in force planning restrictions re waiting and parking at the end of the school day?'

12. Following the elections the new County Member, Mrs M Crabtree was notified of the application on 9 May 2013.

Publicity

13. The application was publicised by the posting of a site notice and the individual notification of 36 neighbouring properties.

Representations

14. In response to the publicity, 5 letters of representation have been received raising concerns about the proposals. The key points raised can be summarised as follows:

- Objects to the application due to the potential impact of the construction of foundations (and pile driving) within the root zone of a large Oak tree (within the garden of a nearby property on Serpentine Road). Notes that the tree is potentially several hundred years old, in good condition and forms a major landscape feature in

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the local area.

- Considers that the removal of trees from the site would result in a loss of local amenity and should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. Notes that it is not clear how some of the trees on the northern boundary proposed for removal would interfere with the development.
- Requests consideration be given to the provision of suitable planting to help screen / soften the visual impact of the development.
- Seeks the removal of the single tree to be retained on the south-west boundary as the species is considered too large for the position in which it grows and its retention would potentially inhibit more suitable screen planting.
- Appreciates the consideration that has been given to the design, particularly the use of materials. Considers that the good quality materials and the asymmetric roof profile would go some way to mitigate the visual impact.
- Considers that the 6 metre separation between the development and the boundary of residential property is the minimum that would be acceptable.
- Asks whether the building could be sunk into the ground to reduce the overall height of the roof.
- Seeks reassurances that the detailed design of the junction between the gable walls and roof would continue to use similar materials and would not be visually disruptive.
- Seeks reassurances that should any attachments be installed on the roof (aerials, satellite dishes or security equipment, PV arrays, for example) consideration should be given to local visual amenity so as not to spoil the original design concept.
- Notes that the building has been designed to avoid issues of overlooking. Asks that light spill from the development either from windows or any external lighting be minimised and suitably controlled.
- Requests that should the existing boiler plant within the main school building need to be upgraded as a result of the proposed development attention be given to measures to minimise the transmission of noise, as the provisions are in close proximity to a residential property.
- Objects to the potential for noise to be generated during the construction period, considers this to be highly invasive to a large number of nearby houses.
- Seeks construction noise associated with the building be kept to a minimum at reasonable hours of the day, avoiding work at weekends.
- Raises concern should Hilder Lane to the rear of the school, between the application site and properties on Serpentine Road, be used for construction access. The access track is narrow and unsuitable for HGVs and heavy equipment as there is nowhere to turn of park vehicles, or store materials, without blocking the lane. Notes that a number of properties have a continuous right of way and own land directly to the rear of the gardens, which include a garage that opens onto the track. Raises concern that any construction use would churn up the unmade surface of the lane making it unusable for ordinary vehicles.
- Seeks reassurances that the access to the site during construction and following the development would not change, including no change to the future use of Hilder Lane as a result of the development.
- Considers that permission should not be granted until extensive road safety measures around the junctions, and along stretches, of Bayham Road, Quaker's Hall Road and Kennedy Gardens have been implemented. Considers that the children attending the site face extreme danger from traffic when arriving, and leaving, school.
- Raises concern that this is the second application to expand the built development at the school in a relatively short period of time. Seeks confirmation whether the

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previous application to construct a sizeable structure (new school hall and kitchens) has been abandoned or whether it is intended to proceed with both developments. Considers both developments would represent a major redevelopment and expansion of the school and be a significant nuisance during construction work.

DiscussionIntroduction

15. The application seeks planning permission to construct a new single storey classroom extension at St Johns CEP School. The proposals would provide two new classroom spaces to support existing pupil numbers and enable up to an additional 35 pupils to attend the site. The application is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee as a result of objections and concerns received from neighbouring residents primarily relating to the design of the development, tree protection and highway safety considerations as outlined in paragraph (14) above.
16. In considering this proposal, regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies and Government Guidance outlined in paragraph (9) above. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that applications are 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, National Planning Policy Framework, other Government Guidance and any other material planning considerations arising during the consideration of the application. In brief, the relevant planning policies, as well as strongly supporting provision of education facilities, promote sustainable development, seek a high standard of design, have regard to local context, the amenity of nearby properties and the surrounding area, and require adequate access and parking.
17. In my opinion, the key material planning considerations in this case can be summarised by the following:
 - siting and design considerations;
 - impact on local and residential amenity;
 - impact on trees; and
 - highways considerations.

Siting and design considerations

18. Policies EN1 of the Saved Local Plan Policies and SP1 of the adopted Core Strategy require development that respects, conserves and enhances the surrounding environment, and of a high quality design that responds to the character of the area. The proposed single storey extension would be located to the rear of the school buildings on what is mainly an area of grass with a concrete paved area along the edge of the existing building, and a path to a gate in the rear boundary. This is a separate area of the school site, enclosed by the existing buildings to the west, fencing, a length of hedgerow to the east, and boundary trees, and is similar in character to nearby gardens.
19. The applicant states that the location of the extension in this part of the site means that it can be easily linked to adjacent teaching areas. The main part of the extension would stand 6 metres away from the existing building. This allows room for the link to have a

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ramped access to the extension, as site levels mean that it would be at a lower finished floor level than the existing building.

20. The extension would be between about 5.5 and 4 metres away from the boundary fence and hedgerow on the eastern boundary which adjoins the access track known as Hilder Lane. Although the properties in Serpentine Road also back onto the track where there are several garages adjoining it, the houses would be some 50 metres away from the extension. To the south, the extension would be about 6 metres from the boundary with the nearest residential property and about 18.5 metres from the facing gable end of the house. To the north, the extension would be between 5.5 and 9.5 metres from the boundary with the adjoining garage block in Kennedy Gardens. The size and position of the extension would allow a reasonable space surrounding it which (with the exception of paving between the buildings and the diverted path) the applicant states will be retained as mown grass with the possibility of the School developing it as a nature area at some time in the future. It would however be appropriate to require a landscaping scheme should permission be granted to ensure that some tree planting is included as part of the development to compensate for those that would be removed.
21. It is proposed that the extension would have a shallow pitched roof of 20 degrees with a low eaves height. The overall height from ground levels immediately around the building would vary due to the fall in ground levels from west to east, as referred to in paragraph (7) above. However in terms of its relationship with the adjacent flat roof of the existing school building, the ridge line would only be 1.2 metres above it. To lower the building, as requested by the Town Council and a resident from the adjoining property, would cause difficulty in achieving an acceptable ramped access between the buildings without moving the extension further towards the eastern boundary. In my view, taking account of its location within the site, the space around it and the intervening boundaries, the extension would not be significantly taller, nor would it be out of scale with the existing school buildings and surrounding residential properties. Furthermore, even though views of the site would change from adjoining properties including the nearest property to the south, I do not consider that the height of the extension would have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of that property. Moreover the choice of cedar shingles and larch boarding would help to soften the appearance of the building, would weather naturally and be sympathetic to the garden character of the area. With regard to the point made by a resident about the detailed design of the junction between the gable walls and roof (i.e. the roof verge), the applicant has confirmed that the cedar shingles would form the verge and the top of the vertical larch cladding to the gable ends under the verge would be finished with a larch trim to protect the end grain.
22. In respect of sustainable design and construction, it will be noted that Policy SP2 of the adopted Core Strategy requires new institutional development to achieve a BREEAM rating of at least 'very good'. The applicant has commented that the proposed development is a small extension to the existing school and as such BREEAM accreditation would not be applicable. However the design would insulate the building fabric with U values above Building Regulations requirements in line with PassiveHaus levels to minimise the heating energy required. Specification of natural sustainably sourced cladding materials and a timber frame construction would also assist in providing a sustainable development.
23. In the light of the above considerations, I am of the view that overall, both the siting and design of the proposed extension are acceptable and accord with the policy objectives for high quality sustainable design that respects the local context.

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Impact on local and residential amenity

24. A number of matters have been raised that might have a bearing on residential amenity of the nearest property to the south as well as more generally. Amongst other criteria in Policy EN1 of the Local Plan there is a requirement that development does not have an adverse impact on the privacy and amenities of the locality. The issue about the height of the building is already considered in paragraph (21) above, the matters relating to trees are considered in paragraph (27) below and those relating to construction in paragraph (28) below.
25. With regard to the possibility of attachments being made to the roof such as aerials, satellite dishes and security equipment, photo voltaic panels, the applicant has stated that none are envisaged as part of the current proposal. These types of equipment are normally treated either as being de minimus or are covered by permitted development rights. Although I accept such paraphernalia could detract from the design concept, I do not consider that there are special reasons in this particular case either to take away permitted development rights or to impose any further controls in perpetuity.
26. The main windows for the classrooms of the extension face the existing building to the west and to the east side of the classrooms roof lights are proposed, windows in the link are on the north side. There is otherwise a window facing east for the office between the two classrooms and one small window in the north and one in the south elevation. The latter elevation faces the nearest property but given the size of the window, the intervening fence and the distance of the house itself, which has one small window in the gable end at first floor level, I do not consider that there would be any loss of privacy from overlooking. A resident from this property has however raised concerns about light spillage from the windows, suggests the fitting of blinds and presence detecting lighting controls to reduce unnecessary usage. In my view, this is initially a matter for consideration at the detailed design stage and subsequently for the School to manage, but not something I consider appropriate to control by condition or for which a planning objection could be justified.
27. In respect of external lighting, the applicant states that low level emergency lighting would need to be provided externally to the footpaths around the building for means of escape and would not illuminate directly onto the boundaries. It is also stated that lighting would be controlled by sensors to switch off lights when not in use, a CO2 reduction requirement of Building Regulations.
28. A further concern raised by a resident of the nearest property relates to potential noise from any mechanical plant associated with the extension including the possibility of upgrading the existing boiler which is in close proximity to the other boundary of the school with his property. He requests that measures are taken to minimise the transmission of noise from such plant. The applicant states that the requirements for new plant have not yet been finalised but would only be required to heat the extension and ventilate the toilet areas. Also, that any new plant would be located away from boundaries and its noise levels would meet with relevant environmental standards.

Construction

29. A number of concerns have been raised about noise and disturbance during the construction period. If planning permission is granted, it would be appropriate to

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impose a condition restricting hours of construction in order to protect the amenity of the nearby residential properties. 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. The applicant has confirmed that the site would be registered with the Considerate Constructors Scheme. A condition could also be included requiring measures to be implemented to prevent mud and other debris being taken onto the highway.

30. With regard to concerns about the use of Hilder Lane for the construction access, the applicant is currently considering options but has commented that this track is limited in width and would only be considered for use by occasional transit type van deliveries, would only be used occasionally and between the hours of 9.30am and 2.30pm. The applicant states that a condition survey would be carried out prior to the works commencing and discussions with the immediate neighbours would be held about their proposals. Also, that protection to trees would be afforded as set out in the recommendations of the arboriculturalist report.

Impact on trees

31. As referred to in paragraph (8) above a number of trees are affected by the proposed development. Significantly, the north east corner of the extension falls within the predicted root protection zone of a mature oak tree within a neighbouring garden. Measures proposed to minimise any damage and adverse impact to the health of the tree include a pile and beam foundation for this particular part of the building, ground protection boarding and 'no dig' construction methods for the access path around the building. Tree protection fencing is proposed for other trees that it is intended to retain. Providing the measures outlined in the Arboricultural Assessment and Method Statement, and shown on the Tree Protection and Retention Plan are implemented, I do not see any reason to raise an objection in respect of the potential impact on the retained trees.
32. With regard to the trees identified for removal questions have been raised by a resident from Kennedy Gardens to the north as to why certain trees on the northern boundary would have to be removed. The applicant has reconsidered the position and confirmed that they are happy to retain these trees but state that future maintenance may require their removal for the reasons cited in the arboricultural report. On the contrary a resident from the nearest property to the south would like to see a tree intended to be retained adjoining his boundary removed. In response the applicant has confirmed that they would be willing to remove this tree and replace with a similar species set away from the fence.

Highways considerations

33. The Development Planning Manager (Highways and Transportation) has raised no objection and considers that in transport terms the expansion can be accommodated in this area without undue detriment or need for remedial measures. However, a number of concerns have been raised about pedestrian safety, traffic speeds and congestion at school peak times along with suggestions that road safety measures and parking and waiting restrictions be introduced. In response to these concerns the Development Planning Manager (Highways and Transportation) has commented that in view of the good crash record there would be no justification for a lower speed limit or reducing the speed of traffic through traffic calming measures. He also considers that parking

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restrictions in the area could be a detrimental step and comments that, reference to congestion is indicative of slow speeds and freeing road space by removing parked cars tends to increase traffic speeds and the potential for injury crashes. He further comments that if there is a demand for parking, that need would not disappear and parking is likely to simply relocate somewhere else nearby.

34. However to assist with awareness of pedestrians crossing in the vicinity of the school, he considers that an appropriate enhancement may be to add flashing beacons to the school signs on Bayham Road at the junction with Serpentine Road and on Quaker's Hall Lane prior to Kennedy Gardens. He therefore considers that, in view of local concerns, the addition of beacon lights would be a desirable and proportional enhancement to the scale of development proposed but given the good crash record does not consider they are essential. The applicant has agreed to commit up to £5000 to fund this provision based on the estimate of cost provided by the Development Planning Manager (Highways and Transportation).
35. The Development Planning Manager (Highways and Transportation) has further commented that encouraging more students to walk to school is a widely recognised objective offering multiple benefits. I understand that the School is currently updating its Travel Plan and have set up a working group 'Safety Around St John's'. If planning permission is granted a condition could be imposed requiring an updated School Travel Plan to be submitted for approval within an appropriate period of time. Subject to this and the applicant funding the provision of beacon lights to the school signs, I do not consider that there is any basis on which to raise a highway objection to the proposed extension.

Other matters

36. Concerns have been raised by a resident about both this proposal and the proposal for a new detached multi-purpose hall (in a different part of the site) granted permission in 2012 resulting in a major redevelopment and expansion of the school site. In response to this, the applicant has confirmed that they will not be proceeding with the hall project as the School's priorities have now changed and are prepared to relinquish the planning approval previously given. However the current application must be determined on its merits and I do not consider that the existence of the permission and the possibility of the hall being built would be a justifiable reason to preclude permission being granted for the extension to provide the additional classrooms.

Conclusion

37. In conclusion, I consider that the proposed extension would be an acceptable addition to the school buildings. The design is considered to be of a high standard that would preserve the appearance and character of the surrounding area. I am satisfied that the application accords with the relevant Development Plan Policies in place and the relevant Government guidance, including the strong support for the provision of education facilities, would be consistent with sustainable development, and consider that planning permission should be granted subject to conditions as set out below.

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Recommendation

38. I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO the imposition of conditions covering (amongst other matters) the following:

- the standard time limit,
- materials controlled to those proposed,
- tree protection measures to be implemented as proposed,
- landscape scheme to be submitted,
- hours of construction,
- measures to prevent mud on the highway,
- provision of beacon light to the 'school signs', and
- a revised School Travel Plan.

Case Officer(s): James Bickle / Paul Hopkins

Tel. no: 01622 221068

Background Documents: see section heading
