

SECTION D
DEVELOPMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL

Background Documents: the deposited documents; views and representations received as referred to in the reports and included in the development proposals dossier for each case; and other documents as might be additionally indicated.

Item D1

**Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School,
Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)**

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 9 April 2014.

Application by Kent County Council Property & Infrastructure Support for a revised application for the proposed erection of a new teaching building and revised parking layout including an additional 9 car parking spaces and other external alterations at Southborough Primary School, Broomhill Park Road, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014).

Recommendation: The application be referred to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and subject to his decision planning permission to be granted, subject to conditions.

Local Member: Mr Peter Oakford

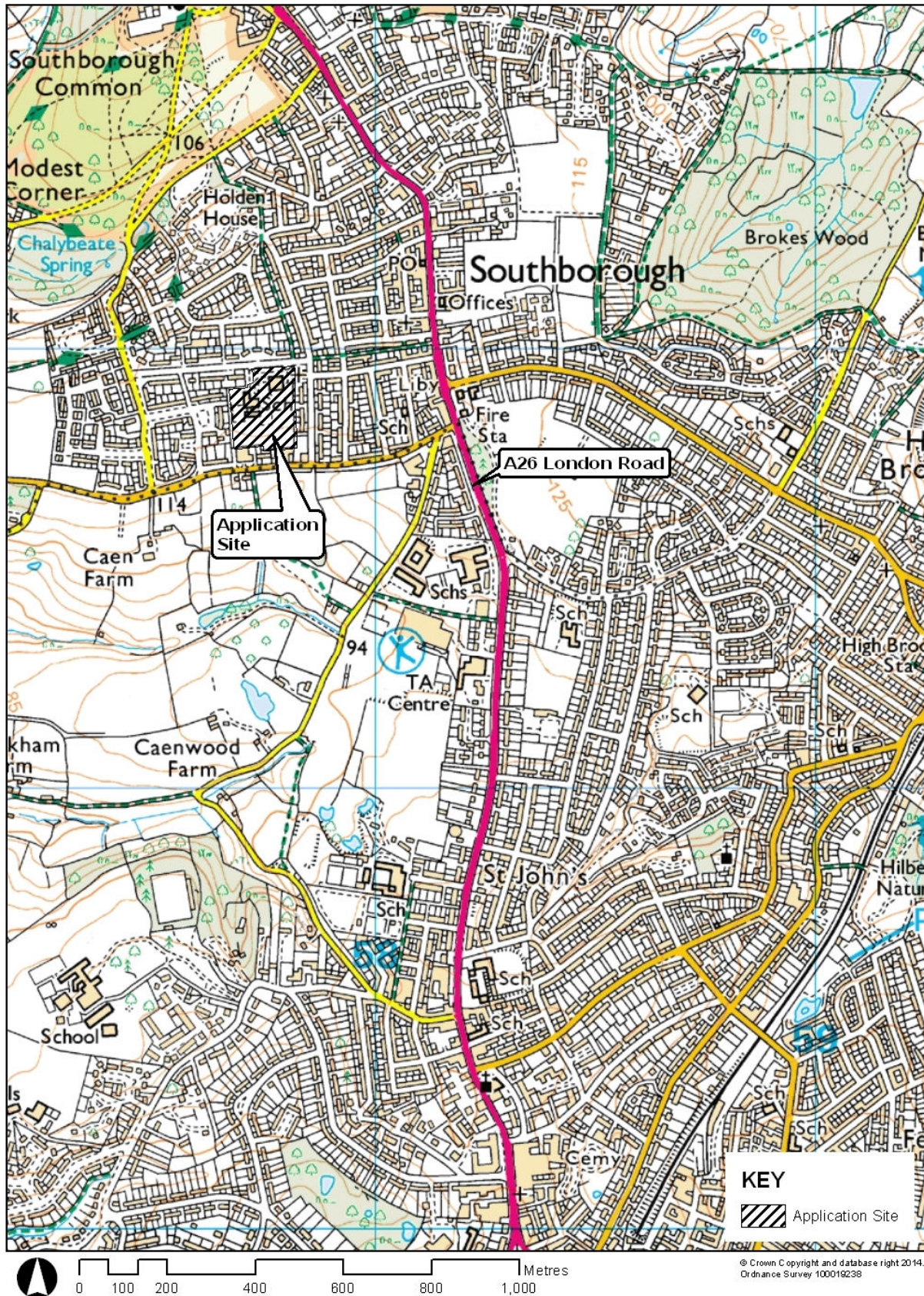
Classification: Unrestricted

Site

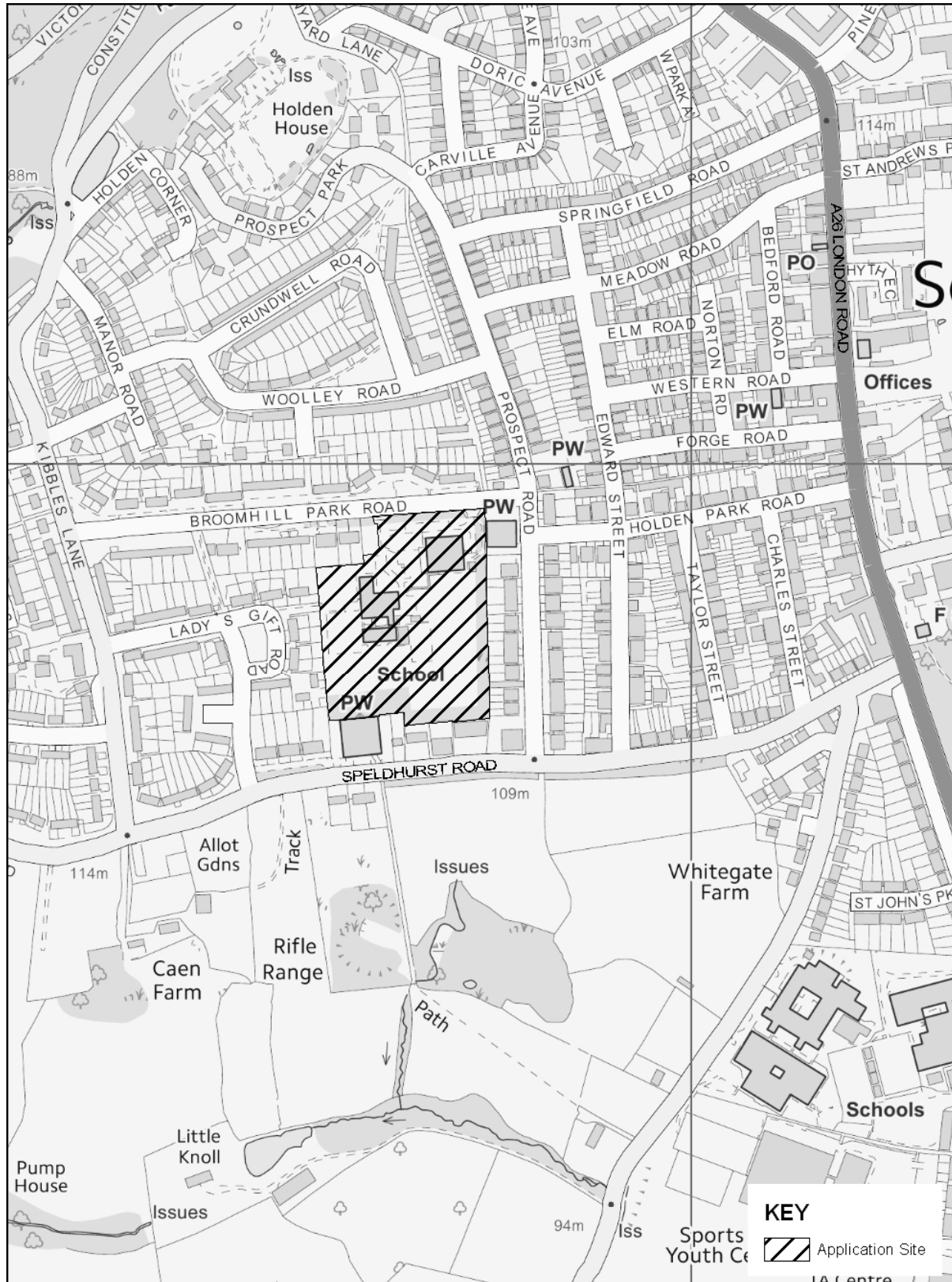
1. Southborough Primary School is located in the town of Southborough, which is a civil parish of Tunbridge Wells located to the north of the town centre, bisected by the A26. Southborough Primary School is located to the south west of Southborough, to the west of the A26 London Road, and to the north of Speldhurst Road. The school site is bounded by residential properties in Speldhurst Road to the south, Prospect Road to the East, Lady's Gift Road to the West, and facing properties in Broomhill Park Road to the north. The school is accessed via pedestrian and vehicular accesses on Broomhill Park Road, and a pedestrian only gate on the western site boundary, linking with Lady's Gift Road. An independent children's centre is located to the west of the school, on Broomhill Park Road. The children's centre has its own pedestrian access, and two parking spaces (including an accessible space) allocated within the Primary School site.
2. The existing Primary School accommodation on site is split between two buildings; an infant block and a junior block. The two buildings are distinctly separate, with the infant block located to the north east of the site and the larger junior block more centrally located but to the west, with an access road, some car parking and a playground separating the two. The junior block contains the Primary School main entrance and reception, the majority of the administrative spaces and the main hall, although the infant block also has a hall and library facilities. Both buildings are single storey. The Primary School has two vehicular accesses on Broomhill Park Road, with an area of car parking running along the sites northern boundary between the two access points. That area of car parking is separated from Broomhill Park Road by an existing tree belt, and the whole of the school site is surrounded by mature trees and planting on all boundaries. Hard play areas are located to the west of the infant block and to the west of the junior block, with further hard surfaced courts located to the east of the junior block. 'L' shaped playing fields lie to the east of the hard courts, to the south of the infant block, extending down the eastern side of the site, and across the southern half of the site. The site is not subject to any local, historical or landscape designations.

A site location plan is attached.

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)



Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)



0 50 100 200 300 400 500 Metres

© Crown Copyright and database right 2014. Ordnance Survey 100019238


Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

Existing Site Plan

notes

- Site Boundary
- Existing Buildings
- Existing canopies
- Hard Play Areas
- Grass / Playing Field
- Paths
- Roads
- Existing Fence Line
- Trees to be removed
- Pedestrian Entrance
- Vehicular Entrance

N




PLANNING Existing Site Plan

Bond Bryan Architects
 1500 @11 0512 13 VN JB revision
 13-057 G01 002 PL0
 13-057 G01 002 PL0

Kent County Council
 Southborough Primary School
 Broomhill Park Road
 Royal Tunbridge Wells
 Existing Site Plan

13-057 G01 002 PL0

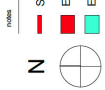
The drawing is © Bond Bryan Architects Ltd. It is a professional drawing prepared for the purpose of submission to the local planning authority for consideration with a view to obtaining planning permission. It is not to be used for any other purpose without the written consent of Bond Bryan Architects Ltd.

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

Proposed Site Plan

- Site Boundary
■ Existing Building
■ Existing Canopy
■ Proposed Building
■ Proposed Refurbishment
■ Proposed Canopies
■ Hard Play Areas
■ Grass / Playing Field
■ Pedestrian Paths
■ Vehicular Access
■ Proposed Additional Parking Spaces
▲ Pedestrian Entrance
▲ Vehicular Entrance
— Proposed Fence Line

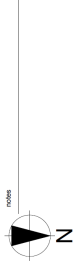
Reviewed - 15 Dec 2013
Planning Applications Group



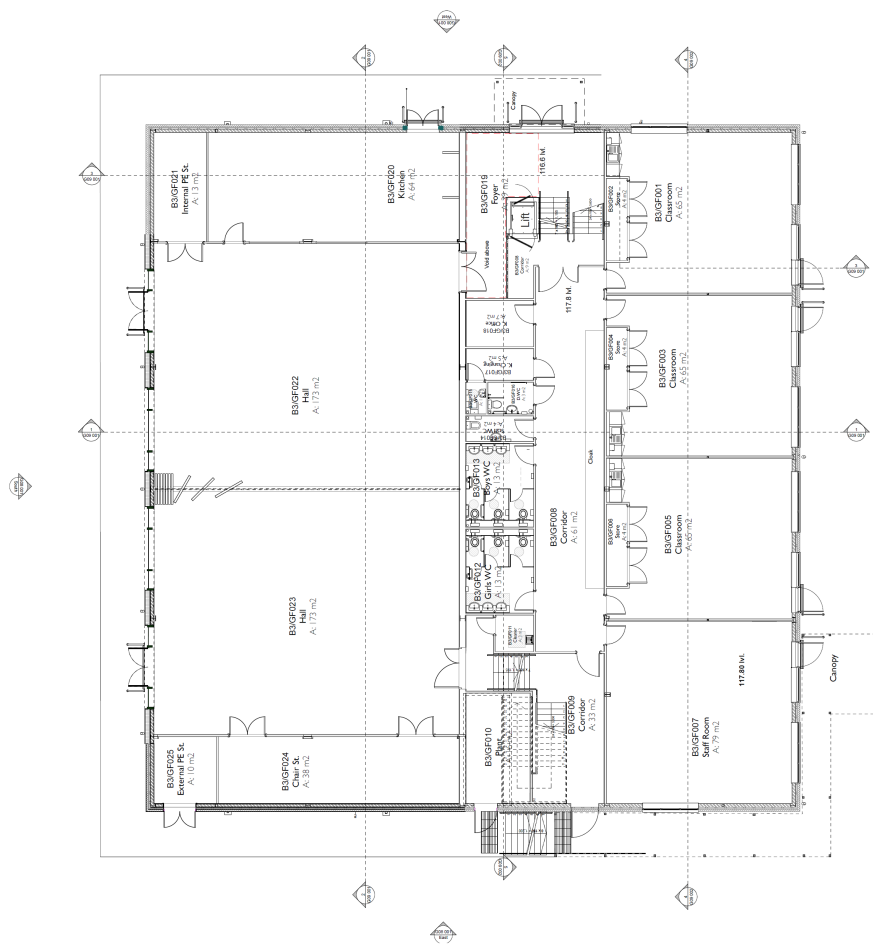
PLANNING Proposed Site Plan
Bond Bryan Architects
 15008 11 061213 VN 25
 13-057 G06 001 PL 0
 Kent County Council
 Southborough Primary School
 Broomhill Park Road
 Royal Tunbridge Wells
 Proposed Site Plan


Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Received - 16 Dec 2013
Planning Applications Group



PLANNING

Bond Bryan Architects
 veralls house 85 High Street, Westgate, Tunbridge Wells TN11 1BE
 T +44 (0)1892 867 300 E info@bondbryan.co.uk
 www.bondbryan.co.uk
 D - design R - Refuse P - preliminary PT - pre-tender
 T - tender P - preliminary R - record
 C - completion

Kent County Council
Southborough Primary School
 Broomhill Park Road
 Tunbridge Wells

Proposed Ground Floor GA Plan
 New Teaching Block

scale 1:50 @ A1 date 07.12.2013 drawn checked
 13-057 G07 001 PLO
 The drawings © Bond Bryan Architects Ltd 2013. All Design Information shall be the property of Bond Bryan Architects and shall not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior written consent of Bond Bryan Architects.


Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

Proposed First Floor Plan

00000

Received - 16 Dec 2013
Planning Applications Group



| | | | | | |
|--|--|---|----|---|----|
| PLD Planning Issue | | PLD | 00 | 12 | 13 |
| revisions | | | | | |
|  Bond Bryan Architects veralls house 55 High Street, Tunbridge Wells TN11 9RE T +44 (0)1892 597 300 E info@bondbryan.co.uk A: 01892 597 301 F: 01892 597 302 P: 01892 597 303 | | PLANNING Proposed First Floor GA Plan 13-057 G07 002 | | | |
| D - design V - revise C - construction R - record | | PL - plan P - preliminary R - record | | Kent County Council Southborough Primary School Broomhill Park Road Tunbridge Wells | |
| Proposed First Floor GA Plan New Teaching Block | | scale: 1:100 @ A1 date: 05/12/2013 drawn: VN checked: JS | | revision: PLD 13-057 G07 002 This drawing shall not be used for construction purposes without the written approval of the architect. The drawing shall be used in conjunction with the architect's specifications and related construction documents. | |

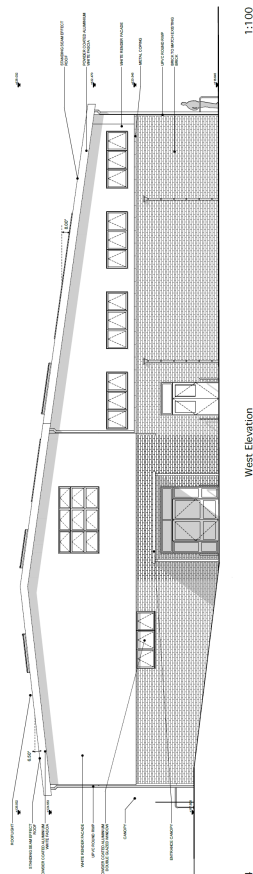
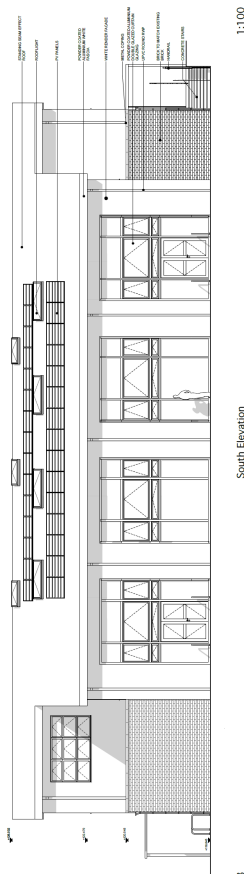
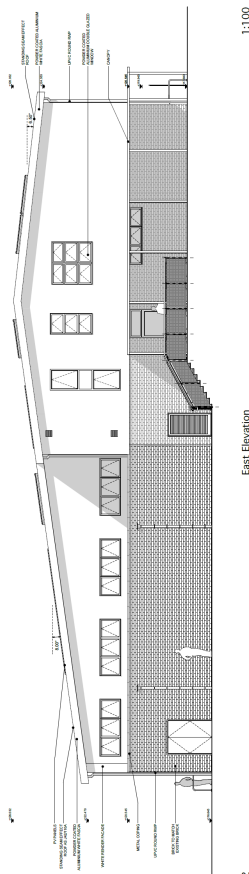
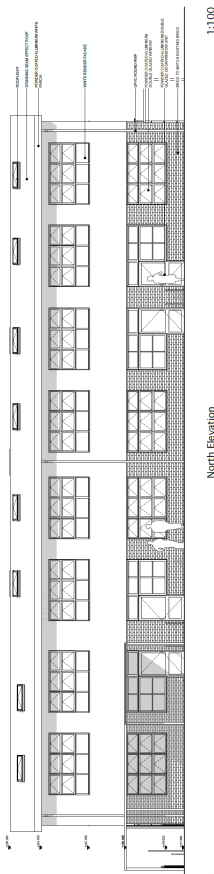
Item D1

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

Proposed Elevations

PLD Planning Issues VN 06.12.13

Received - 16 Dec 2013
Planning Applications Group



| <p>PLD Planning Issues VN 06.12.13</p> <p>revisions</p> | <p>PLANNING</p> <p>Bond Bryan Architects</p> <p>verrills house 55 high street westonham kent TN11 8BE T +44 (0)1898 597 300 E info@bondbryan.co.uk W www.bondbryan.com</p> <p> A - design T - tender C - construction R - record P - preliminary P1 - pre tender </p> <p>Kent County Council</p> <p>Southborough Primary School Broomhill Park Road Tunbridge Wells</p> | <p>Proposed Elevations</p> <p>New Block</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th>scale</th> <th>date</th> <th>drawn</th> <th>checked</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1:100 @ A1</td> <td>06.12.2013</td> <td>VN</td> <td>JS</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p> JB no 13-057 G08 001 PLD </p> <p>The drawing is the property of Bond Bryan Architects Ltd. It is not to be used for any other purpose without the written consent of Bond Bryan Architects Ltd. It is not to be used for any other purpose without the written consent of Bond Bryan Architects Ltd. It is not to be used for any other purpose without the written consent of Bond Bryan Architects Ltd.</p> | scale | date | drawn | checked | 1:100 @ A1 | 06.12.2013 | VN | JS |
|---|--|--|---------|------|-------|---------|------------|------------|----|----|
| scale | date | drawn | checked | | | | | | | |
| 1:100 @ A1 | 06.12.2013 | VN | JS | | | | | | | |

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

Relevant Planning History/Background

3. This application has been submitted by Kent County Council Property and Infrastructure Support and is part of the county wide Basic Needs Programme, and is seeking to expand Southborough Primary School from 2 forms of entry (FE), to 3 FE. Application reference KCC/TW/0279/2013 was submitted in September 2013 and proposed a single storey teaching block containing 3 classrooms and a hall, and internal refurbishment to the existing accommodation to provide a further additional 3 classrooms. That application was withdrawn by the applicant in November 2013. It should be noted that that application proposed the same access, car parking and external landscaping as the application to be considered in this report, and that the single storey teaching block was proposed on the same footprint as the teaching block now proposed. That previous application was withdrawn due to school operational issues, phasing matters and costs associated with the internal conversions required to provide the further three classrooms. In light of this, the applicant has redesigned the scheme to provide the required accommodation for a 3FE Primary School within a two storey teaching block, accommodating six classrooms and a hall, negating the need for internal alterations. This proposal will be outlined below.

Proposal

4. This proposal would provide the accommodation required to expand Southborough Primary School from 2 forms of entry to 3 forms of entry (FE). This would take the proposed total capacity of the school from 420 to 630 pupil places, and would result in an increase in full time equivalent staff from 49 to 60. The applicant advises that there is an identified need for additional primary school places within the Borough of Tunbridge Wells, in part due to housing development within the town and neighbouring villages, and in part due to inward migration, which has been a contributory factor to the indigenous growth. This growth and in-migration is bringing new families to the area, requiring enhancements to the infrastructure to meet the future needs of the town and its residents.
5. The proposed new teaching block would be located towards the centre of the site, and would be a stand-alone building connected to the existing school buildings by covered canopy walkways only. The teaching block would be sited upon an area of hard surfacing used for circulation/access/car parking, and an area of amenity grass used for informal play and allotments. The applicant advises that the teaching block has been carefully positioned on the site to respond to its topography, to take advantage of its slope to the south. The double height hall is proposed to the south of the building, with double height glazing affording views across the sports pitches. 6 classrooms would be located within the northern side of the building, spread over two floors, separated from the hall by a corridor, toilets, offices and stores.
6. Externally, the main hall and classrooms would have a low pitched roof, finished with a grey standing seam effect material, whereas ancillary areas such as kitchen, plant room, stores and toilets would have a flat roof with parapet. The design of the exterior facades aims to be 'cutting edge yet timeless' through the juxtaposition of traditional and contemporary materials. Brickwork is proposed at ground level in the most part, with white render at the upper level and render to the hall, with white powder coated aluminium glazing and doors. The building has been designed to facilitate community use.

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

7. The school currently has 31 car parking spaces, spread out in different locations around the school site. 6 spaces would be removed as a result of this development, but a further 15 would be provided, an increase in 9 spaces over the existing (40 in total). A new one way pupil drop-off system is also proposed within the site, using the existing vehicle access to the school (to the north west of the site) as the point of entry, and the disused access towards the north east of the site as an exit. Pedestrian access would remain as existing.
8. In order to accommodate the proposed new teaching block and associated additional car parking spaces, a small number of centrally located trees would require removal. However, boundary trees and planting would remain unaffected by the proposals. In addition, in order to compensate for the loss of grass playing space (179m²) due to the proposed siting of the teaching block, the applicant is proposing to relocate the 'sensory garden' currently located in the south east corner of the site to the north west of the junior block. This would enable the area currently used as a 'sensory garden' to be returned to playing field, increasing the playing field area within the site by 167m² over the existing.

The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement, Sport England Note, Statement of Community Involvement, Transport Statement, Updated School Travel Plan, Ecological Appraisal, Flood Risk Assessment, Ground Investigation Report, Stage 1 Desktop Study and Topographical Survey.

Planning Policy

9. The following Guidance/Statements 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 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 of particular relevance:

- 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

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

communities, and that great weight should be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and

- (ii) **Policy Statement – Planning for Schools Development** (15 August 2011) which sets out the Government's commitment to support the development of state-funded schools and their delivery through the planning system.

(iii) **Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (2006)**

Policy EN1 - Seeks all proposals to be compatible in nature and intensity with neighboring uses and not cause significant harm to character and amenities of the area in terms of daylight, sunlight, privacy, noise or excessive traffic generation. Seeks the design of the proposal to respect the context of the site and not cause significant harm to residential amenities.

Policy TP1 – Requires a transport assessment and travel plan to accompany proposals for new or significantly expanded schools. These documents may also be required in support of development which would otherwise be unacceptable due to the level of traffic that would be generated.

Policy TP5 - Vehicle parking in connection with development proposals will be restricted to the maximum necessary having regard to local highway conditions. Kent County Council's Vehicle Parking Standards, adopted by the Council, will be applied to such development proposals.

(iv) **Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy (July 2010):**

Core Policy 3 – Promotes sustainable modes of transport, and requires development proposals which would have significant transport implications to be accompanied by a transport assessment and travel plan showing how car based travel can be minimised.

Core Policy 4 – The Borough's built and natural environments will be conserved and enhanced.

Core Policy 5 – The Borough Council will apply and encourage sustainable design and construction principles and best practice. Developments should also be of high quality design, creating safe, accessible, and adaptable environments, whilst conserving and enhancing the public realm.

Core Policy 8 – Supports the provision of leisure and community facilities.

Core Policy 9 – Development must conserve and enhance the landscape, heritage and biodiversity assets of Royal Tunbridge Wells, to secure its special character in the long term.

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

Consultations

10. **Tunbridge Wells Borough Council** raises no objection, subject to standard conditions in respect of tree protection and the production of renewable energy.

Southborough Town Council recommends that permission be granted.

Kent County Council Highways and Transportation raises no objection but comment as follows:

“I would reiterate concerns regarding future parking levels at the site for although the level of additional staff parking has been justified in terms of existing trip patterns to the school, the level of provision does fall short of maximum provision recommended in Kent Vehicle Parking Standards. Therefore with a change in staff the site may experience additional parking demand and it may be prudent for the development to retain some flexibility to address changing demand in the future.”

Sport England objects to the application and comments as follows:

Additional 9 parking spaces

While Sport England has not visited the site, these proposed aspects of the proposed development would appear to be sited on areas incapable of accommodating a playing pitch or part thereof. Sport England is therefore satisfied that these aspects of the proposed development would meet exception E3 of Sport England’s playing fields policy, in that these aspects of the development only affect land incapable of forming a playing pitch or part thereof and do not adversely affect existing pitch provision on the site.

New teaching building

The proposed new teaching building would appear to be sited predominantly on an existing area of playing field, currently marked out for part of a playing pitch. Although the existing pitch is proposed to be relocated, locating the proposed development towards the north eastern side of the existing playing field would prejudice the use of this part of the playing field. The impact on the playing field of the proposed development is therefore the area of the playing field to be lost where the building is to be sited and also the area of the playing field to be prejudiced by the proposed development.

The proposed replacement playing field was taken into account as part of the original assessment of this scheme, however, unfortunately the proposal does not meet exception E4 of Sport England’s playing fields policy.

Furthermore, the information provided does not constitute a robust assessment of need and therefore does not meet E1 of Sport England’s playing fields policy (in line with the NPPF).

In light of the above, Sport England objects to the proposal because is not considered to accord with any of the exceptions in Sport England’s playing fields policy.

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

Should your Council be minded to grant planning permission for the development then in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, and the DCLG letter of 10 March 2011, the application should be referred to the National Planning Casework Unit.”

The County Council’s Biodiversity Officer is satisfied with the ecological information provided, but recommends conditions of consent regarding the submission of a precautionary working method statement to minimise the potential of badgers (or their sett) being impacted, clearance of the site using a precautionary mitigation approach to minimise the potential of reptiles being impacted, protection of nesting birds and inclusion of ecological enhancements.

Environment Agency raises no objection to the application subject to the imposition of conditions regarding contaminated land and sustainable urban drainage.

The County Council’s School Travel Plan Advisor has requested that the School adds an additional sentence into the Monitoring and Review section of the Travel Plan, but confirms that the Travel Plan meets Kent County Council’s criteria.

Local Member

11. The local County Member, Mr Peter Oakford, was notified of the application on the 4 February 2014.

Publicity

12. The application was publicised by the posting of 3 site notices, advertisement in a local newspaper, and the individual notification of 96 neighbouring properties.

Representations

13. To date, I have received 2 individual letters of representation from local residents. A summary of the main issues raised/points of objection is set out below:
 - Fully supports any improvements to the school, but hopes that better planning will go into the removal of surface water at the school;
 - Gardens in Speldhurst Road has been flooded 3 times in 18 months, damaging gardens and property;
 - Seeks reassurance that there would be as little noise as possible when the development is built – moved to the area for peace and quiet.

Discussion

14. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph 9 above. Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, this proposal needs to be considered in the context of Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance, including the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity. Issues of particular relevance include impact upon playing field provision, general amenity matters, and whether the development is sustainable in light of the NPPF.

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

15. In this case the key determining factors, in my view, are the impact upon playing field provision, general amenity and design matters, highway and access considerations, and the policy support for the development of schools to ensure that there is sufficient provision to meet growing demand, increased choice and raised educational standards, subject to being satisfied on amenity and other material considerations. In the Government's view the creation and development of schools is strongly in the national interest and planning authorities should support this objective, in a manner consistent with their statutory obligations. In considering proposals for the creation, expansion and alteration of schools, the Government considers that there is a strong presumption in favour of state funded schools, as expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework and reflected in the Policy Statement for Schools. Planning Authorities should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling such development, attaching significant weight to the need to establish and develop state funded schools, and making full use of their planning powers to support such development, only imposing conditions that are absolutely necessary and that meet the tests set out in Circular 11/95.

Siting and Design, including Playing Field matters

16. Development Plan policies promote high quality design, sustainable development, and significant improvements to the built environment. Although no objections to the design and general principle of the proposed development have been received, it is important to discuss these matters to ensure that the proposal is in accordance with the general design principles expressed in Development Plan policies. The proposed teaching block would be located centrally in the site, separated from the site boundaries by existing school buildings and existing playing fields and amenity space. In addition, it is important to note that the boundary trees offer significant screening between the school and local properties. Although two storey, the building height would be the equivalent of a double height hall, and due to levels on site, and the context in which the building would be viewed, two storey development here would not, in my opinion be out of character with the local area. I consider that the proposed location of the teaching block would not be particularly prominent from surrounding residential properties and the scale and massing as proposed is, in my opinion, appropriate and acceptable, complementing the existing school buildings. The location of the teaching block also links well with the existing buildings on site.
17. The teaching block has been designed to respect the features of the existing school buildings whilst providing a modern design solution. The main hall and classrooms would have a low pitched roof, finished with a grey standing seam effect material, whereas ancillary areas such as kitchen, plant room, stores and toilets would have a flat roof with parapet. Brickwork is proposed at ground level in the most part, with white render at the upper level and render to the hall, with white powder coated aluminium glazing and doors. In my view, the teaching block would complement the existing school, enhancing existing facilities on site and lifting the design of the school in general. Subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the submission and approval of all materials to be used externally, I consider the design of the building to be acceptable and in accordance with Development Plan policies.
18. Having accepted the siting and design of the teaching block in general terms, the siting must also be considered in terms of loss of playing field, and the subsequent Sport England objection. First, it is important to note that Sport England is only raising objection to the teaching block element of this proposal, all other matters are not considered to affect playing field provision on site.

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

19. Sport England states that the proposed new teaching building would appear to be sited predominantly on an existing area of playing field, currently marked out for part of a playing pitch. Sport England further states that although the existing pitch is proposed to be relocated, locating the proposed teaching building towards the north eastern side of the existing playing field would prejudice the use of this part of the playing field in the future. First, I consider it important to note that the proposed teaching building would be sited upon an area which is currently being used for several purposes, including hardstanding/car parking, an area of amenity grass space/allotment, and a small area of playing field. The allotment/amenity grass space is, I consider, on land incapable of forming playing field due to level changes on site. However, an area of 179m² of the existing playing field would be lost as a result of this application, hence the objection from Sport England.
20. To compensate for this loss of playing field provision on site, the applicant is proposing to relocate the existing sensory garden, located in the south east corner of the site, to an area to the north west of the existing junior building. That would enable the existing sensory garden area to be converted into playing field. The applicant advises that 346m² of playing field would be created by relocating the sensory garden, an increase of 167m² over the existing when considering the loss of 179m² due to the siting of the teaching block. In addition, the applicant advises that the 'newly created playing field' would be constructed and maintained to an equivalent standard as the existing playing field. The newly created area would also be in a location which is adjacent to existing playing field, and in my view represents a suitable location for replacement provision.
21. Sport England has confirmed that the proposed replacement playing field was taken into account as part of the assessment of this scheme but considers that the proposal does not meet exception E4 of Sport England's playing fields policy. Furthermore, Sport England considers that the information provided does not constitute a robust assessment of need and therefore does not meet E1 of Sport England's playing fields policy. Sport England Policies E1 and E4 are as follows:
- E1* A carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs has been demonstrated that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment, and the site has no special significance to sport;
- E4* The playing field which would be lost would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements prior to commencement of development.
22. First, with regard to Policy E1, the applicant has submitted a case of need for the development, as outlined in paragraphs 4 & 15 of this report. I accept the need for expansion of the school as part of the County Wide Basic Need Programme, and I am of the opinion that this is a relatively minor encroachment onto the usable part of the playing field and should be balanced against the need for the development and wider benefits to the community of this education facility. The applicant has considered alternative options for providing the accommodation required for the expansion, and indeed an application has previously been submitted and withdrawn due to inability to deliver that scheme. It is not possible to accommodate the teaching block elsewhere within the school site without prejudicing other planning requirements and objectives such as retaining trees, maintaining adequate access and car parking, and general amenity impacts on surrounding amenity and privacy. Accordingly, I consider the development as proposed represents the most suitable and practicable option for the site. The school playing fields are also not considered to be of 'significance to sport';

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

they are not used by the local community/sporting groups. I am of the opinion therefore, that the small loss of playing field as a result of the siting of the teaching block, is not sufficient to outweigh the need for the development.

23. Notwithstanding this, as detailed in paragraph 20 above, the applicant is providing replacement playing field which is of an area over and above that being lost. Sport England does not consider that the replacement playing field meets the requirements of Policy E4, but I cannot agree with that. In my view, the replacement playing field provided would be of an area over and above that being lost, would be of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent, in a suitable location and would be subject to equivalent management arrangements by the School. Policy E4 does state that the replacement playing field should be provided prior to commencement of development, but I consider is appropriate, due to phasing and time constraints, that the replacement playing field should be provided prior to the occupation of the teaching block. Should permission be granted, a condition of consent would stipulate that.
24. In considering the above, I am of the opinion that this is a relatively minor encroachment onto the usable part of the playing field that has to be balanced against the need for the development, the wider benefits to the community of this education facility, and the replacement facilities proposed. In my view, the use of the playing field would not be adversely affected either for formal sports or indeed more informal recreation, and upon completion of the development the school would actually have 167m² more playing field than existing. I do not therefore consider there is any basis for a planning objection on the grounds that the development would lead to unacceptable loss of playing field land or would affect the ability of the School to use the playing field. Whilst I understand Sport England's objection in principle to the loss of any playing field land, it is important to view that in the wider context of needs other than just sport. I am satisfied that adequate mitigation has been proposed by the applicant, and in any case, the loss of such a small area of playing field is greatly outweighed by the more pressing need to provide internal accommodation for curricular activities. However, should permission be granted, a condition of consent should be imposed requiring the replacement playing field to be provided prior to the occupation of the teaching block.
25. Should Members be minded to agree with the recommendation of this report and grant planning permission subject to conditions, then in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, and the DCLG letter of 10 March 2011, the application should be referred to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for his consideration

Noise

26. A local resident has requested assurance that there would be as little noise as possible when the development is built as they moved to the area for peace and quiet. With regard to noise during construction, I recognise that this can be a nuisance to local residents, but conditions of consent would limit hours of construction and other activities at the site. Construction matters will be discussed at the end of this report. With regard to noise generated by use of the development itself, and the school expansion, the proposal would not have any unacceptable impact in this regard as the new building would be positioned centrally within the site away from neighbouring properties. To the north, west and south there are sufficient separation distances and screening afforded by school buildings, soft landscaping and playing fields to ensure that there would be no adverse impact from noise. To the east, again there is a sufficient separation distance coupled with soft landscaping to avoid any negative impact on local residential amenity.

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

In addition, it is important to note that the new teaching block would be constructed to appropriate noise insulation standards to avoid any substantial noise leakage.

27. Use of the building would therefore not, in my view, result in a loss of amenity with regard to noise. With regard to outdoor play, it should be noted that outside play is only for short periods throughout the day, on weekdays only, and for limited months of the year, and is not therefore a constant source of noise. In addition, the number of pupils at the school would increase incrementally year on year not in one go. The annual increase in pupils, and the noise associated with that would, in my view, not be detectable over and above the existing. In light of this, I do not consider that the proposals would generate additional noise sufficient enough to have a detrimental impact of the amenity of local residents. I therefore see no reason to refuse this application on the grounds of noise.

Drainage and Land Contamination

28. A local resident expresses full support for improvements to the school, but hopes that better planning would go into removal of surface water at the site as gardens of properties in Speldhurst Road have been flooded 3 times in the last 18 months. A Flood Risk Assessment was submitted with this application, and the Environment Agency has raised no objection to the proposals, subject to conditions which include a condition to control the infiltration of surface water drainage. However, the applicant has further assessed drainage on-site specifically in relation to flooding of gardens in Speldhurst Road, which lie to the south of the site adjacent to the main area of playing field. The applicant's drainage consultants have advised that the proposed development would not increase the risk of flooding within or adjacent to the site as the proposed classroom block would include its own drainage scheme to serve the amount of additional hardstanding it would generate. It is also recognised by the applicant that the playing field's permeability credentials are not as good as elsewhere due to the underlying geology. Notwithstanding that, the applicant advises that the project team made best endeavours to explore ways of improving the overall drainage across the site. Two 'Gravel Fill' drain options were developed as potentially feasible mitigation measures.
29. The first option gravel fill drain practically ran across the entire southern length of the playing field. The second option was smaller in length but still protruded out into the playing field. Both options were dismissed given the extent of playing field that would be lost by implementing either of these measures (i.e. at least circa 1,000m²). Both the School and Sport England would resist the loss of such a substantial amount of playing field. This led the applicant to assess whether the drainage scheme could be accommodated in the southernmost part of the site, confined adjacent to rear curtilages of neighbouring dwellings. Given the gradient/slope in this part of the site, any mitigation scheme would firstly require building a retaining wall, introducing earth fill to match levels and then providing a connection to manhole, all of which represents significant work and resourcing. As such, this last attempt option was also discounted by the applicant.
30. On the above basis, the applicant has concluded that it has not been possible to identify a feasible mitigation scheme to improve the overall drainage credentials of the site. Accordingly, it is important to reiterate and emphasise some of the conclusions made within the original planning submission and its FRA, which are: the proposal would not increase the risk of flooding at this site and the proposal would actually improve surface water run-off, as an area of about 1100m² would now be served by its own drainage facility. In light of this, and the lack of objection from the Environment Agency, I consider that subject to the imposition of the Agency's required condition regarding the control of

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

infiltration of surface water, the development would not give rise to undue surface water flooding, and that the provision of a drainage facility for the new building could improve the existing situation. I therefore see no reason to refuse this application on this ground.

31. The Environment Agency also requires the submission of various components of a scheme to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site and the submission of a verification report demonstrating completion of the remediation strategy regarding contamination of the site. Therefore, should permission be granted, conditions would be imposed covering the matters raised above. That would ensure that the development would not result in an unacceptable level of pollution, in accordance with the principles of Development Plan Policy.

Access, parking and highway issues

32. Although no objections have been raised by the local community with regard to access and highway matters, it is important to discuss the access arrangements proposed. The school currently has 31 car parking spaces, spread out in different locations around the school site. 6 spaces would be removed as a result of this development, but a further 15 would be provided, an increase in 9 spaces over the existing (40 in total). A new one way pupil drop-off system is also proposed within the site, using the existing vehicle access to the school (to the north west of the site) as the point of entry, and the disused access towards the north east of the site as an exit. Pedestrian access would remain as existing.
33. Kent County Council Highways and Transportation raise no objection to the application, but express concern that the future provision of car parking, should that be deemed necessary, would be difficult as buildings would block access to the southern area of the site (with the north being fully developed). However, the southern area of the site is playing field, as discussed above, and provision of car parking here would meet with objection from Sport England. In addition, the applicant has provided justification for the level of parking proposed, which is deemed by Highways and Transportation to be sufficient to accommodate the requirements of a 3 FE Primary School, in this instance. However, I consider that should permission be granted, a condition of consent should ensure that the car parking and drop-off area be completed and fully operational prior to occupation of the new teaching block. In addition, the School Travel Plan should be subject to ongoing monitoring and review, as required by the Travel Plan approval process, undertaken by the County Council's School Travel Plan Advisor.

Construction matters

34. Given that there are neighbouring residential properties, if planning permission is granted it would, in my view, be appropriate to impose a condition restricting hours of construction to protect residential amenity. I would suggest that works should be undertaken only between the hours of 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays, with no operations on Sundays and Bank Holidays. It is also good practice on school sites for contractors to be required under the terms of their contract to manage construction traffic/deliveries to minimise conflict with traffic and pedestrians at the beginning and end of the school day. I consider it appropriate that details of how the site access would be managed to avoid peak school times should also be included within the Construction Management Strategy.
35. I consider it appropriate that details of a full Construction Management Strategy be submitted for approval prior to the commencement of development. That should include details of the methods and hours of working, location of site compounds and

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

operative/visitors parking, details of site security and safety measures, lorry waiting and wheel washing facilities, details of how the site access would be managed to avoid peak school times and details of any construction accesses. Therefore, should permission be granted, a Construction Management Strategy would be required pursuant to condition and the development would thereafter have to be undertaken in accordance with the approved strategy.

36. In addition to the above, should permission be granted, conditions of consent would ensure that dust, mud on the local highway network, and other matters associated with construction, would be mitigated as far as reasonably possible so as to minimise disruption to local residents.

Conclusion

37. In summary, I consider that, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, this proposed development constitutes sustainable development, with an appropriate standard of design and layout, which would not have significantly detrimental effects on the sporting facilities at the school, landscaping, residential amenity or upon the local highway. In my view, the development would not give rise to any significant material harm and is in accordance with the general aims and objectives of the relevant Development Plan Policies, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework. I am aware of no material planning considerations that indicate that the conclusion should be made otherwise.
38. However I recommend that various conditions be placed on any planning permission, including those outlined below. However, given the Sport England objection, should Members support my views expressed in paragraphs 19 to 25 above and decide against refusal of this application, the County Planning Authority is required to consult the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government at the National Planning Casework Unit and not grant planning permission until the Secretary of State has first had opportunity to consider the application. The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, requires that the Authority may only proceed to determine an application once the Secretary Of State has had an opportunity to consider whether or not to call in the application for his own determination.

Recommendation

39. I RECOMMEND that the application BE REFERRED to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and SUBJECT TO his decision, PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO the imposition of conditions covering (amongst other matters) the following:
- the standard time limit;
 - the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
 - the submission of details of all materials to be used externally;
 - the provision and permanent retention of the car parking, drop-off and turning/loading/unloading areas as shown on the submitted plans;
 - tree protection measures and the development to be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the Tree Survey;
 - the development to be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the Ecological Scoping Survey;
 - submission of a precautionary working method statement with regard to badgers prior to the commencement of the development;
 - control of surface water drainage and infiltration to ground;

Proposed expansion of Southborough Primary School, Tunbridge Wells – TW/14/288 (KCC/TW/0002/2014)

- submission of further details with regard to land contamination;
- provision of the replacement playing field prior to occupation of the teaching block;
- hours of working during construction and demolition to be restricted to between 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays, with no operations on Sundays and Bank Holidays;
- the submission of a Construction Management Strategy, including the location of site compounds and operative/visitors parking, details of site security and safety measures, lorry waiting and wheel washing facilities, and details of any construction accesses & management of the site access to avoid peak school times;
- measures to prevent mud and debris being taken onto the public highway.

40. I FURTHER RECOMMEND THAT the applicant BE ADVISED of the following informative:

- the potential for biodiversity enhancement opportunities should be further explored.

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

| |
|--|
| Background documents - See section heading |
|--|