

**Four Classroom extension, additional parking and remodelling of existing school building, Bapchild & Tonge Primary School, Bapchild – SW/08/733**

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 17 February 2009.

SW/08/733 – Application by the Governors of Bapchild & Tonge Primary School and Kent County Council Children, Families and Education for the construction of a four classroom extension block, construction of additional parking at the front of the school, repositioning of two temporary classrooms onto the playing field during construction works and internal remodelling and roof adaptations within the existing school building to provide pre-school facilities within the main school at Bapchild & Tonge CEP School, School Lane, Bapchild, Sittingbourne.

Recommendation: Planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

**Local Member:** Mr K. Ferrin

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Site**

1. The application site forms part of the Bapchild & Tonge Primary School complex. The school grounds are within the confines of the village of Bapchild, approximately 0.5-km east of Sittingbourne. The School is located on a plot of land that fronts onto School Lane, to the south of the junction with London Road (A2). The Primary School has a dedicated vehicle and pedestrian access point off School Lane and a pedestrian access off Ashtead Drive. *A site location plan is attached on page D4.2.*
2. The application site comprises the existing school buildings, an area of land to the south between the school and residential properties on School Lane and Ashtead Drive, and part of the school playing field to the east. Two mobile classrooms currently occupy the area of land to the south of the site where the main classroom extension is proposed. The closest residential properties are located immediately to the south and east and front School Lane and Ashtead Drive.
3. The application site, together with the surrounding area, is located within a Groundwater Source Protection Area. There are no other site-specific policies set out in the Development Plan in connection with this site.

**Background**

4. The County Planning Authority granted temporary planning permission in November 2007 for the continued retention of two mobile classroom units, located to the south of the main school buildings, for a further 3 year period under reference SW/07/1303. Temporary planning permission was granted in February 2008 for an additional mobile classroom to the north of the site to provide accommodation for a children's pre-school nursery for a 3 year period under reference SW/07/1304.

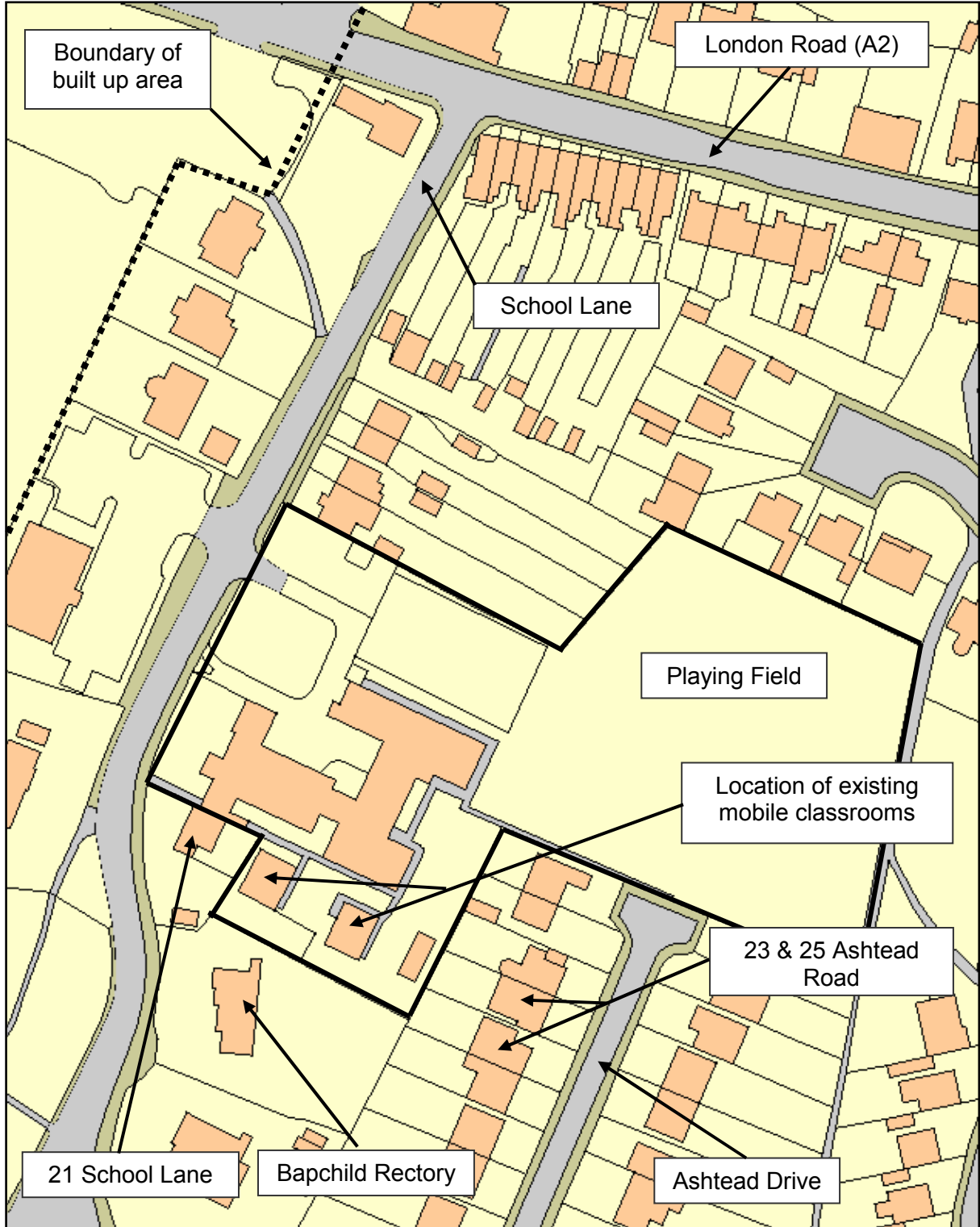
**Proposal**

5. The application has been submitted on behalf of the Governors of Bapchild & Tonge Primary School and KCC Children, Families & Education Directorate and proposes the construction of a four classroom extension, construction of additional parking at the front of the school, repositioning of two temporary classrooms onto the playing field during construction works and the internal remodelling and roof adaptations within the existing

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**Existing Site Location Plan**



**Site Location Plan – Bapchild & Tonge Primary School**  
Scale 1:1250

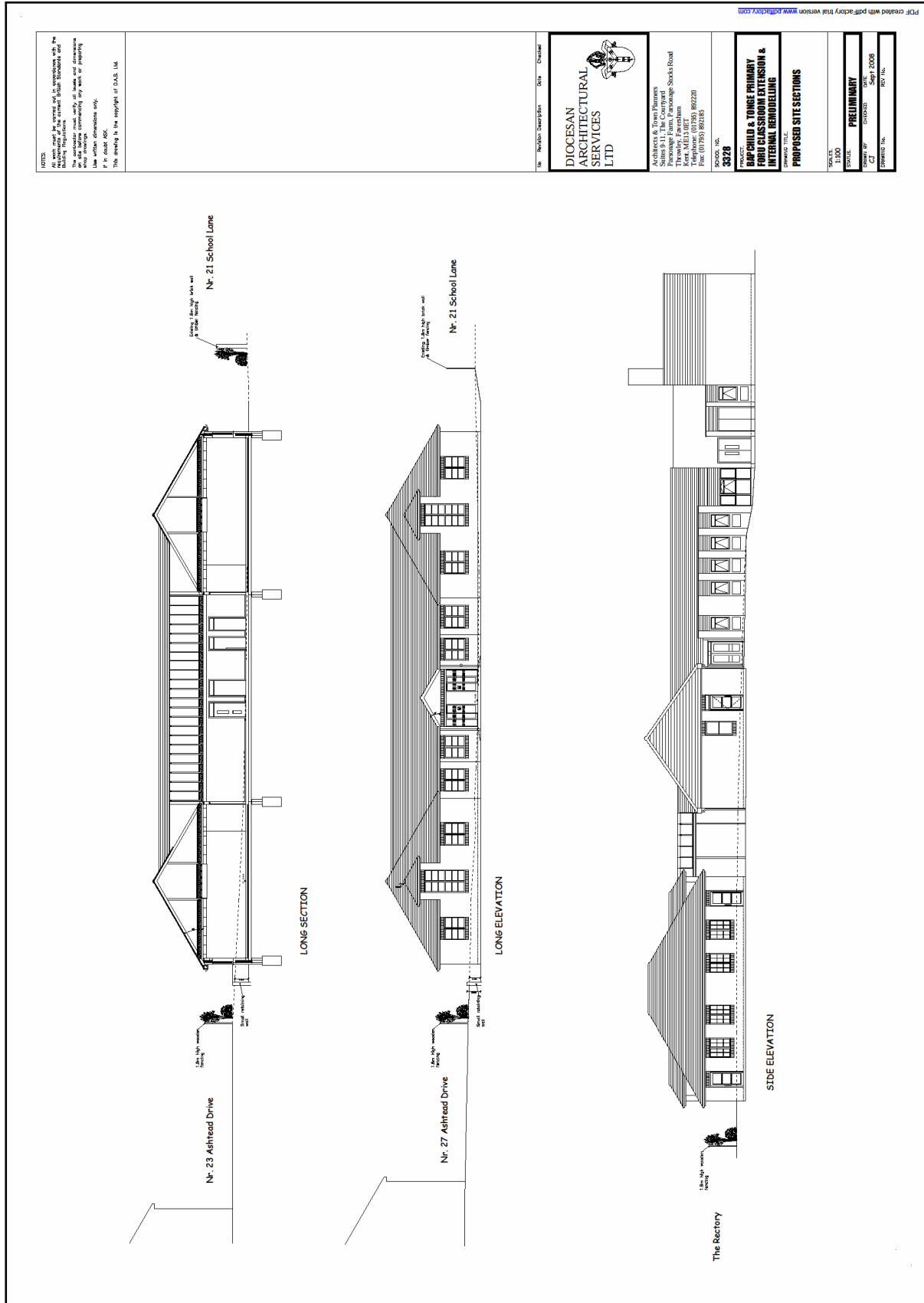




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### Proposed New Classroom Block - Site Sections



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school building to provide pre-school facilities within the main school.

6. Bapchild & Tonge Primary School currently has six teaching bases, two of which are located in mobile classrooms and a pre-school which is also located within a mobile unit at the front of the school [granted temporary planning permission by the County Planning Authority in February 2008]. The pre-school function has been operational since September 2008, transferring from an off-site location within Bapchild Village Hall. The addition of the pre-school involved the transferring of 25 pre-school pupils together with an additional 8 teaching members of staff to the site. The current application involves the addition of one further member of staff for administration purposes, but does not propose an increase in either pupil numbers or additional teaching staff at the site.
7. The purpose of the application is to remove all temporary mobile accommodation from the site, which is nearing the end of its useful life, and replace it with permanent purpose-built classroom and pre-school accommodation. The additional accommodation would provide facilities for a higher provision in music, drama and art for all pupils at the school as well as to allow all four key stage two classes to be located together in one building instead of three separate ones. The new facilities are also proposed to benefit the local community by providing a venue for adult education classes, as and when required.
8. The proposed four classroom building has been designed as a single storey stand-alone structure with the materials palette chosen to provide the school with a low maintenance building, as well as blending in with the surrounding built environment. The building would be physically detached from the existing school buildings, but would be accessed via a glazed walkway canopy leading from the main school. The proposed building has been designed to be environmentally friendly, and includes the use of natural ventilation, rainwater harvesting and photovoltaic cells within the design.
9. The application has been accompanied by a Tree Survey which indicates three mature trees would need to be removed in order to facilitate the proposed development. It is noted that two of these trees are located on the southern boundary of the proposed new classroom site, and comprise an Elder (5 metres high) and an Ash (11 metres high). In addition, the removal of a mix of smaller shrubs and trees (with a stem diameter below 150mm) would also be required along the southern boundary to facilitate the new classroom block. The third tree for removal is identified as an Ash (14 metres high) and is situated within a raised planter adjacent to the main entrance of the school. It has been considered that this particular tree has outgrown its location and the proximity of the tree to the school entrance now presents an unacceptable risk. The accompanying tree survey identifies other trees within the site which should be afforded protection, in accordance with the current British Standard, during construction operations.
10. The application proposes an increase and formalisation in the number and layout of on-site parking spaces for staff to 13 bays, including two disabled parking spaces. At present there is space on-site for between 7-10 cars, but this is on an informal basis with no marked out parking bays. As a result of the current informal layout, staff often double park where there is available space. As part of the temporary works to provide sufficient classroom accommodation during the construction phase, the application seeks permission to re-site two mobile classrooms on the southern boundary of the school's playing field. On completion of the construction works, all mobile classrooms would be removed from the site (two currently in school use and one occupied by the pre-school

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facility).

11. In addition, the application proposes the remodelling of the existing school building to provide a breakfast club, disabled toilet, two classrooms, group room, and pre-school facility within the main school, which would consequently lead to the removal of the temporary pre-school mobile unit from the front of the site. The existing flat roofs above the proposed breakfast club and main admin area are proposed to be changed to pitched roofs to provide a more aesthetically pleasing elevation as well as to reduce the future roof maintenance requirements.

#### **Amended Proposal**

12. The applicants have amended the proposal to take account of the concerns raised relating to the 'bulk' of the new classroom block being proposed within its chosen location, and the proximity of the building to nearby residential properties. The main changes to the proposal are summarised below and form the basis of the discussion contained within this report. All residents who originally expressed views, together with any relevant consultees were notified of the changes, and further views are considered in the report below.
  - Reduction in the roof pitch of the proposed classroom block from 35 degrees to 30 degrees to reduce the bulk of the roof; and
  - Lowering the building to below ground level to reduce the building's overall height. This has been achieved by excavating the classroom block approximately 750mm into the eastern end of an existing gentle incline across the site (west to east).

#### **Development Plan Policies**

13. The Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to consideration of the application:

##### **(i) The adopted 2006 Kent & Medway Structure Plan:**

**Policy SP1** – The primary purpose of Kent's development and environmental strategy will be to protect and enhance the environment and achieve a sustainable pattern and form of development. This will be done principally by, amongst other matters:

- protecting the Kent countryside and its wildlife for future generations;
- protecting and enhancing features of importance in the natural and built environment;
- encouraging high quality development and innovative design that reflects Kent's identity and local distinctiveness and promoting healthy, safe and secure living and working environments;

**Policy QL1** – All development should be well designed and be of high quality. Developments, individually or taken together, should respond positively to the scale, layout, pattern and character of their local surroundings. Development which would be detrimental to the built environment, amenity, functioning and character of settlements or the countryside will not be permitted.

**Policy QL11** – Provision will be made for the development and improvement of local services in existing residential areas and in town and district centres, particularly

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where services are deficient. Flexibility in the use of buildings for mixed community uses, and the concentration of sports facilities at schools, will be encouraged.

**Policy TP19** – Seeks development proposals to comply with the respective vehicle parking policies and maximum standards adopted by Kent County Council and Medway Council.

**Policy NR1** – Seeks development to incorporate sustainable construction techniques and prudent use of natural resources.

**Policy NR3** – Provision of renewable and sustainable energy production as an integral component of new development and in small-scale and community projects will be supported.

**Policy NR8** – Seeks to protect the quality and yield of Kent's groundwater resources.

(ii) The adopted **Swale Borough Local Plan (2008)**:

**Policy SP1** – In meeting the development needs of the Borough, proposals should accord with principles of Sustainable Development.

**Policy SP2** – Development proposals will protect and enhance the special features of the visual, aural, ecological, historical, atmospheric and hydrological environments of the Borough and promote good design in its widest sense.

**Policy SP5** – Within the Borough's rural communities and countryside, development proposals will seek to increase local self-sufficiency and satisfy local needs, whilst protecting, and where possible, enhancing the quality and character of the wider countryside.

**Policy SP7** – To satisfy the social needs of the Borough's communities, development proposals will promote safe environments and a sense of community providing new community services and facilities, increased use of local facilities or innovative ways of providing or continuing existing services, including improving access to them;

**Policy SH1** – Development proposals within the minor development settlement of Bapchild, will be limited to infill or redevelopment proposals within the defined built-up areas, or, exceptionally, for other development considered essential to meet the needs of the local community that cannot be located elsewhere. Development proposals should maintain or enhance the character of the village.

**Policy E1** – Development proposals should, amongst others, respond positively by reflecting the positive characteristics of the features of the site and locality; protect and enhance the natural and built environments; well sited and of a scale, design and appearance that is appropriate to its location; cause no demonstratable harm to residential amenity and other sensitive uses.

**Policy E19** – The Borough Council expects all development proposals to be of high quality design.

**Policy C1** – The Borough Council will permit proposals for new or improved



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community facilities.

#### **Consultations**

14. **Swale Borough Council:** raises no objection, subject to conditions covering a temporary time limit for the relocated mobile classrooms, the recommendations set out in the Tree Impact Assessment Report to be adhered to, and a landscaping scheme to be agreed.

**Bapchild Parish Council:** raises no objection to the application. Following receipt of a tree survey the Parish Council request that the school considers regular maintenance to the large trees on site and the hedgerow to eastern boundary of the playing field.

**The Divisional Transportation Manager:** raises no objections to the proposals in respect of highway matters subject to a condition seeking a Travel Plan be prepared prior to the development being brought into use.

**The Environment Agency:** has no objection to the proposal, however offers the following advice. The site lies within a Source Protection Zone II (SPZ) of a public water supply abstraction. SPZs are designated by the Environment Agency and are delineated to protect potable water supplies against the polluting effects of human activity. The Agency recommends appropriate groundwater protection measures including all precautions should be taken to avoid discharges and spillages to ground both during construction and subsequent operations.

**Sport England:** raises no objection to the application subject to a condition requiring the removal of all temporary buildings once any development work is completed and the land reinstated as part of the school playing field.

**The County Council's Landscape Advisers:** comments that the proposed building would be in close proximity to residential properties along Ashtead Drive (approximately 13 m), which would appear slightly imposing within views from windows overlooking the school site. They note that the reduced roof pitch together with the lowering of the building to below ground level would lessen the visual impacts on nearby residential properties. They recommend that landscape proposals, including proposed planting, species, number and sizes be submitted. They also recommend that a tree protection plan to BS5837:2005 is submitted, to ensure the protection of retained vegetation within the site.

**Kent Police Architectural Liaison Officer:** strongly recommends the use of Home Office Secured by Design award scheme. The comments received note the Police and Justice Bill 2006 and section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which states that it is the duty of all authorities to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder. The comments offer recommendations to improve the resilience of the proposed extension.

#### **Local Member**

15. The Local County Member for Swale West, Mr. K. Ferrin was notified of the application on 30 June 2008. He was notified of the amended proposal, as outlined in paragraph

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(11), on 8 January 2009.

#### **Publicity**

16. The application was publicised by the posting of several site notices on School Road and Ashtead Drive and the individual notification of 39 neighbouring residential properties.

#### **Representations**

17. I have received 3 letters of representation objecting to the original application. The main observations and objections raised to the proposal can be summarised as follows:

- Objection to the siting of the building, 3 metres from residential property, on the grounds of loss of amenity through potential overshadowing, loss of sunlight and sense of enclosure;
- Concerns that nearby residential properties have been omitted from the proposed site plan;
- Concerns that the construction of additional classrooms would result in an expansion of the school impacting on traffic levels;
- Concerns about highway safety at peak school travel times associated with existing school travel pattern, particularly on Ashtead Drive which is a narrow residential road;
- Considers that as a result of the increase in parking proposed the vehicle access arrangements to the site should be improved; and
- Raises concern that the application could not be viewed online.

The residents who originally expressed concerns were individually notified of the amended proposal, as set out in paragraph (12) on 19 January 2009. No further views have been expressed to date, but any views received ahead of the Committee Meeting will be reported verbally to Members.

#### **Discussion**

18. The application seeks planning permission for the construction of a four classroom extension, construction of additional parking at the front of the school, repositioning of two temporary classrooms onto the playing field and the internal remodelling and roof adaptations within the existing school building to provide pre-school facilities within the main school at Bapchild & Tonge Primary School. The application is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee as a result of the representations received, as summarised in paragraph (17) above.

19. 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, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity. In considering this proposal the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (13) above are particularly relevant.

20. In my opinion, the main determining issues relate to the following points:

- the siting, design and appearance of the proposed buildings;
- local amenity impacts;

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- the potential highway impacts;
- tree removal and landscaping issues;
- impact on playing fields;
- the need for the development; and
- other material considerations.

Siting, Design and Appearance

21. The proposed four classroom teaching block has been designed to complement the existing built development within the school site through the use of yellow stock bricks to match the main school building and an artificial slate pitch roof. I consider that the appearance of the proposed classroom block is appropriate in this location. As discussed in paragraph (12) above, the applicants have amended the proposal to reduce the proposed classroom block's roof pitch to 30 degrees (from the original 35 degrees) in an attempt to address some of the residential concerns relating to overshadowing and the 'bulk' of the proposed new building. The classroom block has been designed as a stand-alone building as opposed to a physically connected extension in an attempt to minimise the loss of light within the existing school and to keep any construction related disruption to a minimum level on the continued functioning of the school. The new block would provide purpose-built accommodation for Key Stage 2 pupils and would be accessed from the existing school building via a glazed walkway canopy leading directly off a corridor within the main school.
22. The location of the new classroom block is proposed on a relatively small plot of land to the south of the school site, measuring approximately 42m by 20 metres. The land is currently a grassed area with most of its space being occupied by two temporary mobile classrooms, which would be temporarily relocated onto the edge of the playing field during construction operations. The site is bordered by residential properties to the east (23 & 25 Ashtead Drive), south (Bapchild Rectory), and the west (21 School Lane). The site boundary between these residential properties is currently delineated by an existing close boarded wooden fence (varying in height from 1 to 1.8m in parts) and several mature trees and hedge vegetation. Photographs of the existing classroom block proposed site can be identified in Appendix 1.
23. The proposed new classroom block would be approximately 35 metres by 15 metres and would form a 'U' shape around a central courtyard facing towards the main school buildings, as can be identified on page (D4.3). From the courtyard a glazed canopy would connect the new building to the main school. It is noted that the proposed building would be located close to the boundary of the nearest residential properties, notably Bapchild Rectory (1 metre at the closest point), 23 & 25 Ashtead Drive (3.5 metres) and 21 School Road (3.9 metres). As a result of the proximity of the proposed building to residential properties, Members will note that concerns have been expressed by local residents with regard to the scale of the building being proposed in this particular location, as summarised in paragraph (17) above.
24. In order to fit the proposed new classroom block into the available space, several trees would need to be removed from the southern boundary of the site with Bapchild Rectory. The issues surrounding landscaping, tree removal and tree retention are discussed in paragraphs (38) to (39) below. The application proposes the replacement of the existing boundary fence around the proposed new classroom block site with 1.8m high wooden close-boarded fence.

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25. As set out in paragraph (12), Members will note that the applicants have amended their proposal to excavate the proposed new classroom block into below-ground level by approximately 750mm at the eastern end. In effect, the proposed building would be cut into an existing incline in the site level, which currently rises gently from west to east. The current change of level across the site (west to east) is approximately a 1 metre increase. When considering the implications of the proposed building being lowered into below ground level, it is noted that the eaves height of the proposed new classroom block would be approximately at the same level as the proposed 1.8m high replacement boundary fence at the eastern end of the site (nearest to 23 & 25 Ashtead Drive) and approximately 0.5m higher than the fence height at the western end of the site (nearest to 21 School Lane).
26. From a visual perspective, the proposed classroom's roof would be visible from surrounding residential properties, and would range from approximately 5.5 metres above ground level in the east (nearest 23 & 25 Ashtead Drive) to approximately 6 metres above ground level in the west (nearest 21 School Road and Bapchild Rectory). As a result of the proposed classroom's reduction in its roof pitch to 30 degrees (from 35 degrees) the overall height of the roof (from eaves to maximum ridge height) has been reduced by approximately 400 mm. This, and the reductions in ground levels (referred to above), would certainly be of benefit in addressing local amenity impacts on surrounding residential properties which are discussed more particularly in paragraphs (33) to (34) below.
27. The proposed new classroom block has been designed in such a way to incorporate sustainable construction methods and environmentally friendly design features including the use of natural ventilation and rainwater harvesting, and the use of renewable energy technology with the addition of photovoltaic cells on the south-facing roof slope. Members will note that the use of sustainable construction techniques is supported by Policy NR1 of the Kent & Medway Structure Plan, whilst the use of renewable energy technology within new community projects is supported by Policy NR3 of the Structure Plan. I therefore support these particular elements of the proposal. I further consider that design of the proposed classroom block is acceptable, and consider that it accords with the aims of Policy QL1 of the Structure Plan and E1 of the Local Plan.
28. Members will note that part of the proposal involves the remodelling of the existing school building to include the transformation of two felt flat roofs to pitched roof alternatives. The upgrade of two existing flat roofs is encouraged in design terms, particularly through Policy QL1 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan and E19 of the Swale Borough Local Plan which both seek to encourage design proposals that reflect the pattern and character of existing built development. In this case, the main school building comprises an original Victorian school building (fronting the principle elevation with School Lane) which has been considerably extended in the 1960s with several flat roof extensions to the rear. In my opinion, the upgrade of several of the existing flat roofs within the site would be beneficial from a good design perspective.
29. The proposal also involves the creation of additional vehicle parking bays to the front of the school site. It is proposed that these parking bays would be surfaced with a 'GrassCrete' style system as they are within close proximity to the root protection area of a mature oak tree to the front of the site. I support the use of GrassCrete in this location, but in order to safeguard the nearby oak tree throughout construction operations, in accordance with the objectives of Policy EN9 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan, I recommend that a condition be placed on any decision to ensure that the exact

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specification of the car parking surface, together with a construction method statement be agreed beforehand with the County Planning Authority. The issue of vehicle parking is discussed further in paragraphs (35) to (37) below.

30. In conclusion, I consider that the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed classroom block is acceptable and is in general conformity with the Development Plan. I consider that the remodelling works to the existing school are acceptable, and support the upgrade of existing flat roofs to pitched roofs in design terms. I also consider that subject to the protection of the existing oak tree to the front of the site, and additional landscaping measures, the proposed formalised parking arrangements are acceptable in Policy terms. I further support the applicants desire to incorporate environmentally friendly technology within the proposed scheme.

#### Local Amenity Impacts

31. Members will note from the concerns received, as summarised in paragraph (17) above, together with the discussions in paragraph (21) to (30) above, that there is the potential for the proposed new classroom block to have a detrimental impact on surrounding residential amenity. Concerns have been expressed that the building is too big for its proposed site and that it would lead to the overshadowing and loss of sunlight on nearby properties due to the proximity to residential boundaries (1 metre at the closest point with Bapchild Rectory). It has been further stated that the proposed classroom block would create a sense of enclosure on nearby properties.
32. I note that the distance from the proposed classroom block to the nearest residential property façade (Bapchild Rectory) would be 4 metres. However, it is located on an oblique angle to the south of the proposed classroom block and is separated through existing boundary vegetation and several mature trees. The distance to the closest façade of 21 School Lane would be approximately 10 metres, and approximately 14 metres to the closest façade of properties in Ashtead Drive. I consider that the overall impact on 21 School Lane and properties in Ashtead Drive would not be significant on the basis that any views experienced would be those of the shortest eastern and western 'end' elevations, as opposed to the longer north and south 'side' elevations. I further note that the proposed classroom block comprises a single storey extension, whilst the closest residential properties (Bapchild Rectory, 23/25 Ashtead Drive & 21 School Lane) are all two storey dwellings. I do not therefore consider that the proposed development would have a significant detrimental impact on the nearest residential dwelling (Bapchild Rectory) or those dwellings located in School Lane and Ashtead Drive.
33. Furthermore, as discussed in paragraphs (25) and (26) above, whilst the classroom block would be visible from the ground level within adjacent residential properties, I note that the visible part of the building above the proposed fence height would be the pitched roof. It is noted that the eaves height of the classroom block would be on a level similar to that of the proposed 1.8m high boundary fence height, and therefore I do not consider overlooking from within the school site to surrounding properties would be an issue in this instance. Similarly, whilst the building would be visible from the upper storeys of surrounding residential properties, I do not consider that there would be an overlooking issue from out of the proposed new classroom building on the basis that the extension would be single storey and sight-lines out of the windows would not allow for direct views across to nearby properties.

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34. Whilst I recognise the concerns which have been raised with regards to a loss of amenity, having carefully considered the issues, I am of the opinion that the proposed building would not cause a significant detrimental impact on surrounding amenity through the loss of sunlight or through potential overlooking. I therefore consider that the proposal would broadly accord with the objectives of Policy QL1 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan and Policy E1 of the Swale Borough Local Plan.

#### Highway Impacts

35. Members will note that concerns have been expressed by local residents, as set out in paragraph (17) above, relating to highway matters, particularly in the event of any increase in the school roll. I can confirm that as part of this proposal, there would be no proposed increase in pupil numbers and only the addition of one further member of the school staff administration team. Whilst I note that the number of pupils and staff have recently increased at the site, in connection with the recent move of the pre-school facilities to within the school grounds, the proposal seeks to provide accommodation for this function as opposed to increasing either the school or pre-school rolls further.
36. Concerns have been raised relating to the provision of additional car parking at the site, in particular with the need to improve vehicle access arrangements to the site. Whilst I note these views, the school currently operates parking facilities for staff and disabled users, but like many other country schools, does not have a dedicated drop-off or pick-up zone for parents due to the lack of space within the available grounds. I am of the opinion that the increased number of vehicle parking spaces would provide essential parking for staff vehicles, in line with Policy TP19 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan, but consider that new facilities for parents collecting or dropping-off pupils would not be possible in this location, as is often the case with small village schools with limited space.
37. I note that the Divisional Transportation Manager has raised no objection to this proposal in relation to highway matters, but instead has requested that the school prepare and submit a School Travel Plan prior to the classroom block being brought into first occupation. I support this view and would not seek to raise an objection to the current proposal in relation to highway matters.

#### Tree Removal and Landscaping

38. As noted in paragraph (9) above, the proposal involves the loss of two trees and a group of small shrubs/trees along the southern boundary of the site in order to facilitate the construction of the proposed classroom block. Whilst the loss of trees in this location is unfortunate, particularly given that they provide a visual means of screening between Bapchild Rectory and the School, I consider that the imposition of a condition requiring the prior approval and subsequent implementation of a landscaping scheme within the first planting season following the completion of the classroom block would go some way towards off-setting the impact of such tree loss. Whilst it is noted that the distances between the proposed classroom block and the boundary fence would be tight, I consider that there would be scope for small-scale tree and hedge planting along parts of this boundary where space allows.
39. I note that there is the potential for further landscaping to take place at the front of the school site, most notably through additional hedge planting along the front boundary with School Lane. I consider that such measures could be required through the imposition of

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an appropriately worded landscaping condition. I consider that this approach would be consistent with the objectives of Policy EN9 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan.

#### Impact on Playing Fields

40. Part of the proposals involves the temporary stationing of two mobile classrooms on the southern boundary of the existing school playing field during the construction phase in order to maintain essential teaching facilities for the school. During this period, the mobile units would be located on part of the school playing field which ordinarily would be presumed against in planning policy terms. However, given the lack of alternative available space within the site, this location has been chosen as the only suitable location for the short-term stationing of these mobile classrooms.
41. Members will note that Sport England, a statutory consultee on planning applications which affect playing field provision, has raised no objection to the short-term stationing of these mobiles on the edge of the playing field. They have requested that a condition be placed on any decision requiring the removal of the mobiles at the end of the construction phase, and the restoration of the land back to playing field specification. I support this approach, and recommend that a condition be placed on any decision requiring the removal of all three mobile classrooms from the site prior to the first occupation of the new classroom block.

#### Need

42. The main objectives behind the proposed development are to provide purpose-built accommodation for pupils of Bapchild and Tonge Primary School and the on-site pre school facility, with a view to removing all mobile classroom accommodation from the site. In my opinion, the overall objectives for the scheme are have the support of Policies QL1 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan and E1 of the Swale Local Plan in design terms and Policy QL11 of the Structure Plan and C1 of the Local Plan which seek to permit proposals for new and/or improved community facilities. I consider that the need for the proposals have clearly been demonstrated in this particular case, and consider that the scheme offers an opportunity to remove all temporary accommodation which is nearing the end of its useful life.

#### Other Issues

43. The County Council has a responsibility to consider crime prevention as part of development proposals, and to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder under Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. It is noted that the Police Architectural Liaison Officer has raised various issues relating to design measures to prevent crime with regards to this particular proposal. Accordingly, I have passed the details of the suggested crime prevention details onto the applicants as a large number of the suggestions relate to specific building design issues as opposed to planning matters which could be controlled through planning conditions.
44. It is noted that residents have expressed concerns that adjacent residential properties have been omitted from the proposed plans. Whilst this has been an error on the applicant's part, the exact location of nearby residential properties has been carefully considered as part of the assessment of the proposal, and in any case were included on the general location plan contained within the application documents.

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#### **Conclusion**

45. In conclusion, I consider that the proposals would bring a significant improvement to local community facilities at Bapchild & Tonge Primary School for both primary and pre-school pupils. The removal of three mobile classrooms and the construction of purpose-built accommodation is widely supported by the Development Plan. Whilst I note the concerns expressed by local residents in this case, particularly with regards to amenity issues, I consider that on balance the reduction of the roof pitch and the lowering of the building into below-ground level, together with the imposition of the conditions as set out in paragraph (46) below, would be sufficient to outweigh the objections in this particular case. Accordingly, I recommend that planning permission be granted, subject to the recommendation set out in paragraph (46) below.

#### **Recommendation**

46. I RECOMMEND that PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO conditions, including conditions to cover the following aspects:

- the standard time limit;
- the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
- groundwater protection condition;
- removal of all mobile classrooms prior to the first occupation of the development;
- the recommendations set out in the Tree Impact Assessment Report to be adhered to;
- foundation design
- external materials;
- landscaping scheme;
- tree protection measures;
- details of car parking surface treatment and construction method statement;
- details of construction access and temporary accommodation;
- School Travel Plan prior to first occupation of new classroom block

Case officer – Julian Moat
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Background documents - See section heading
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## **Item D4**

**Four classroom extension, parking and remodelling of school building, Bapchild & Tonge Primary School, Bapchild, Sittingbourne – SW/08/733.**

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### **Appendix 1 – Photographs of Site**



**View looking east along rear of proposed classroom block site towards 23 & 25 Ashtead Drive**



**View looking west along proposed classroom block site towards 21 School Lane**

## **Item D4**

**Four classroom extension, parking and remodelling of school building, Bapchild & Tonge Primary School, Bapchild, Sittingbourne – SW/08/733.**

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**View looking south from rear of proposed classroom block site towards Bapchild Rectory**