

Demolition of existing school buildings and erection of a new academy at Cornwallis Academy, Hubbards Lane, Maidstone – MA/08/2186

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

Demolition of existing school buildings, erection of a new academy, re-provision of outdoor playing pitches, new 4 court MUGA, 220 car parking spaces, 13 disabled spaces, 150 bicycle spaces, strategic landscaping works and associated circulatory access roads at the Cornwallis Academy, Hubbards Lane, Maidstone - MA/08/2186

Recommendation: permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Members: Mr E Hotson

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. The Cornwallis Academy, formerly Cornwallis School, is located approximately 4.2km to the south/south-east of Maidstone Town Centre. The site actually falls outside of the Urban Area of Maidstone and, as such, is located within the rural fringes of Maidstone and within the 'southern anti-coalescence belt,' a designation that seeks to maintain the separation of the rural settlements around Maidstone with the urban area and with each other. The surrounding area is characterised by low density suburban residential development. It falls very much within the green rural landscape beyond the urban area of Maidstone. Linton Road (A229) forms the western boundary of the site, and Heath Road (B2163) forms the southern boundary, beyond which lies the Linton Park Estate, a Grade II* Listed Historic Park & Garden, and a Special Landscape Area. In addition, the gate house to the park is Grade II Listed, and is located on the Heath Road frontage of the Historic Park & Garden. A minor road, Hubbards Lane, forms the eastern boundary to the site and the vehicular access to the site is via this lane. Beyond Hubbards Lane lies a large orchard, and extensive open farmland. The northern boundary is formed by residential back gardens from properties in Salts Avenue. Residential properties in Hubbards Lane, Holmesdale Close and Hanson Drive also bound part of the site's eastern and western boundaries. *A site location plan is attached.*
2. Vehicular access to the school is from Hubbards Lane, which connects onto Heath Road. This access to the site is laid out with a separate entrance and exit for vehicles. There is a separate pedestrian access via a gate at the south western corner of the site from Linton Road.
3. The school site is partly rural in character and the existing buildings are located approximately 250m from Linton Road. The site is approximately 10.75 hectares in area and is mainly amenity grassland, with a mixture of mature deciduous and coniferous trees around the site's periphery. The school site accommodates a variety of buildings in terms of scale, design and age. The existing buildings vary in height from one to three storeys and are located in the south eastern section of the site, with the western and northern areas of the site accommodating playing fields and amenity grassland. There are also several tarmac playground areas, mostly marked out as tennis courts. Some existing buildings extend to three storeys, with the highest building approximately 15m above ground level. The school was first occupied in 1958 and the school currently occupies a cluster of buildings constructed in the 1950's and 70's, which are characteristic of the period and similarly characteristic in terms of their state of disrepair and dilapidation.

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 DATE: 15/08/2017
 DRAWN BY: J. WILSON
 CHECKED BY: J. WILSON
 PROJECT NO: MA/08/2186
 DRAWING NO: 2270-0001

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 RE: APPLICATION BOUNDARY
 RULE ADJACENT LAND WITHIN ICC
 OWNERSHIP

NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	CHKD
1	15/08/2017	ISSUED FOR PERMIT	JW	JW
2	15/08/2017	ISSUED FOR PERMIT	JW	JW

JESTICO + WHILES
 1 Coleridge Street, London NW1 2HP
 Tel: +44 (0) 20 7380 0390
 Fax: +44 (0) 20 7380 0511
 E-mail: jw@jesticowhiles.com
 ARCHITECTS, LONDON + PRAGUE

PROJECT
 CORNWALLIS ACADEMY
 HUBBARDS LANE, MAIDSTONE, KENT ME17
 CLIENT
 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
 DRAWING TITLE
 LOCATION PLAN
 SCALE: 1:12500
 DRAWING NO.
 2270-0001
 REF.
 P02

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 LOCATION PLAN
 15/08/17

Item D2

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Background

4. KCC Children, Families and Education were granted planning permission to construct a new Academy on the Oldborough Manor Community School site in November 2008, following the granting of outline permission in 2007. This formed part of DfES proposals to make Oldborough Manor Community School/Senacre Technology College and Cornwallis School sites a 'double academy' post July 2007. The designs for the two academies are intended to be similar and complementary so that students, parents, staff and visitors moving between the two would feel they are both part of the same family. Each Academy's design would, however, reflect and reinforce their respective specialism's and site context.
5. The Cornwallis Academy building would cater for 1,765 students aged 11-19 and would provide circa 14,000m² of accommodation. It is intended that Cornwallis Academy, alongside its sister academy at the Oldborough site, would share a sixth form (up to 550 students), of which the majority would be located at Cornwallis. The federated nature of the relationship between the Cornwallis Academy and the New Line Learning Academy means that one governing body would oversee the commitments to raising standards on both sites. Cornwallis Academy has been operating as an Academy since September 2007 in the buildings of the former Cornwallis School, and they will continue to occupy and use these buildings until new Academy buildings are completed. The Cornwallis Academy's specialism is Technology and Science.
6. The New Line Learning Academy, at the Oldborough Manor Community School site, is currently being constructed by Carillion, who are the preferred bidder for Kent County Council's New Line Learning Academy and the Kent Batched Academies Programme. Carillion is a framework contractor for the Government's Academies programme, which forms part of the wider Building Schools for the Future Programme (BSF). It is intended that the new Academy buildings would be constructed by Autumn 2010, with the demolition of the existing buildings and associated external works to follow on after the new buildings are occupied.
7. Members of the Planning Applications Committee visited the site on the 9 December 2008 (minutes appended). Following the site visit, and in response to consultee responses and neighbour objections, the applicant has submitted further information in support of the application and has amended the proposal. The number of car parking spaces proposed was reduced from 247 to 220 to provide additional space in the south east corner of the site for landscaping and screening. In addition, following a further review of the construction logistics and required safety zones, the applicant has moved the building 1 metre further east, away from the closest residential properties in Hanson Drive. *The following section of this report will detail the proposal as currently submitted.*

Proposal

8. This application has been submitted by Kent County Council Children, Families, Health and Education, and proposes the demolition of the existing school buildings and the erection of a new academy and associated facilities. The new school proposals comprise:
 - Demolition of the existing school;

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- A new academy of 14,013 sq m (gross internal area) for up to 1,765 pupils;
 - A new 4 court Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) – the application does not include floodlighting;
 - New grass playing pitch provision to meet DfES and Sport England Standards, including community use;
 - New car parking provision, circulatory access and pedestrian access points;
 - New strategic landscaping;
9. The main objective of this project is to provide a transformed education experience for the young people of South Maidstone through the provision of completely new facilities. The applicant seeks to integrate buildings with service delivery, a new Information and Communication Technology infrastructure, a new model of learning, and more efficient and effective use of public resources. The principal component of the Design Brief is to create Learning Plazas, which are intended to ‘deliver the innovative and highly personalised curriculum on offer...which will promote and enhance the ethos and culture of learning, and also facilitate pastoral engagement.’ These spaces are learning environments for up to 128 students in 8.5FE year groups. For most non-practical subjects such as English, Maths, and Humanities, learning would take place in these year based learning plazas, where students would spend around 60-70% of their time. The plazas need to be large flexible spaces, having large, small and individual work spaces, areas where staff can work with small groups and prepare lessons, and would serve as a ‘home base’ for each year group of 255 students. The plazas are designed to act as learning areas during lesson time and social areas at break times. The intention is that the learning Plazas, food court and adjoining interaction zones should not look or feel institutional, nor like a traditional school.
10. A key characteristic of the site’s development masterplan is the requirement to work around the existing school buildings and to maintain operation of the Academy within the entirety of these premises. No transitional or temporary accommodation arrangements are proposed as part of this application. The need to work around the existing school, and the residential nature of the boundaries to the northern portion of the site, has influenced the location of the proposed built development, to the south west of the site. The applicant advises that the proposed buildings have, however, been located as close as possible to the existing school buildings and Heath Road (whilst maintaining suitable construction zones) in order to maintain suitable distances to the residential properties in Hanson Drive and Holmesdale Close. In this location, the applicant considers that the new Academy buildings would be separated from the majority of properties by the proposed sports facilities and playing fields, as is the current situation. The applicant advises that many of the residential properties to the west and north of the site are also screened by an existing row of sizeable trees, which would be retained. However, the applicant is proposing additional planting along the site boundary to reinforce the existing.
11. There is a significant fall across the site from the South to North, and this has been formalised into 3 large plateau as part of this application. This has affected car parking layouts, pitch location and orientation, and the siting of the building (the majority of the new Academy buildings would be located upon the highest plateau). The sports accommodation within the building has been located at a lower level internally to facilitate a positive relationship with external sports facilities and, at the same time, reducing its bulk.

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Access

12. The masterplan for the site has been developed to accommodate two potential pedestrian entrances into the site, one from Hubbards Lane and the other from Linton Road, as existing. A central spine would run across the site from east to west to bring the two pedestrian flows together at the Academy's main entrance. A large proportion of students would arrive from the east, either by coach, car or on foot, and car parking and the primary pedestrian access would remain from Hubbards Lane. With the Academy building pushed towards the western side of the site, an avenue is proposed to bring pedestrians from the parking area into a forecourt area at the entrance. This forecourt has the potential to become a civic style entrance plaza. The avenue would be continued on the west side of the building where the play plaza provides a gathering area outside of the secondary entrance, linking the building with Linton Road.
13. Vehicular access to the site would remain as existing, via Hubbards Lane, which connects with Heath Road to the south. The existing 'in and out' one way system would be retained, and a new internal access road would be provided, which would serve the coach & car parking, and accommodate service and emergency vehicles. It is proposed to provide 220 car parking spaces, 13 car disabled car parking spaces and a school bus drop off and pick up zone designed to accommodate a minimum of 12 buses. A dedicated bus entrance point from Heath Road has been included on the plans, which would half the number of bus movements on Hubbards Lane, and the Hubbards Lane/Heath Road junction. Pedestrians would enter and exit the site from the Hubbards Lane main entrance and the pedestrian only access gate to the west of the site, via Linton Road. Bicycles entering the school site would be directed to one of two cycle storage areas, accommodating 150 bicycles at the eastern entrance and 100 bicycles at the western entrance. In addition 8 motorbike parking spaces would be provided, and 3 spaces would be designated for minibuses.

Accommodation

14. It is proposed to construct the Academy on the existing playing field, to the west of the current school building, extending towards Linton Road and running parallel to Heath Road. The 'L' shaped building would project to the north at its eastern end, beyond which would lie car parking and the sites vehicular access points, via Hubbards Lane. The eastern limits of the proposed development site are dictated by the location of the existing school buildings, which must be retained until the new building is completed. Once the new building is complete, the students would relocate into the new Academy, and the old buildings would be demolished. With the proposed building pushed to the west, more central to the site, the forecourt area in front of the new building would become important in landscaping terms and has the potential to become a civic style entrance plaza.
15. In addition to the building, the other principal components of the masterplan are the requirements for 220 car parking spaces, storage for 250 bicycles, the 4 court multi-use games area, play/social areas and natural turf pitches. The masterplan seeks to match the existing sports provision on site, and following consultation between the school, Sport England and the applicant, the proposal also includes a number of additional pitches requested by the school. Hard and soft informal play spaces would be provided around the new building to allow opportunities for informal play. Habitat areas have been included within the masterplan, taking advantage of the existing high value

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ecological areas to the north of the site. The habitat area would be accessed by pupils via footpaths from the surrounding amenity grassland.

16. The schedule of accommodation based on the DfES Building Bulletin 98 (BB98) guidelines generates a gross internal building area of 14,013 sq m for the 1,765 students. The site is approximately 10.5ha in area which is very slightly under the BB98 guideline for site area of 105,551 sq m. This application integrates the new school and sports facilities into a single building, including a range of teaching facilities, including: 10 Learning Plazas; 5 science laboratories, 4 multi-material laboratories, a food technology area, 5 art studios, a music suite with practice rooms; a Food Court; a Dance/Activity Studio, 4 court Sports Hall and associated changing accommodation; a Lecture Theatre; administration areas and a central atrium known as the 'heartspace'.
17. The 10 Learning Plazas have been designed as double-height volumes to promote natural lighting and ventilation, and accommodate a more intimate teaching environment in mezzanine areas. The 'heartspace' would run the full length of the building, from the entrance point to the east, and would act as a central circulation spine. All teaching spaces, including the plazas would be arranged around the 'Heartspace' and accessed from it. The 'heartspace' is seen as the learning 'street', accommodating breakout activities from the teaching areas and communal activities such as performance and dining. In addition, fingers of accommodation would project south of the main building line, allowing larger break out spaces within the building.
18. The entrance to the school is proposed on the east side of the building, and would be signified by a 'floating' plaza, which would hover over the entrance lobby. The entrance would be adjacent to the central plaza, which would act as a collecting point for pedestrians arriving from the west, as well as vehicle passengers and pedestrians from the east. Pupils, staff and visitors would all share the Academy entrance, which would also provide evening and weekend access to facilities (e.g. the sports hall, MUGA, lecture theatre) by the local community. To the south of the entrance and opposing the sports/administration wing, would lie the sixth form accommodation. This component of the accommodation would be separated from the remainder of the teaching spaces to address the specific requirements of the smaller teaching spaces for the older age groups and to create separate areas for social interaction and self-study. The sixth form accommodation would be provided over 3 storeys at the eastern end of the building, above the dining court.
19. Immediately to the north of the car parking area to the east of the site, a four court Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is proposed. The open playing field area has been laid out to accommodate the School's requisite requirement for playing pitch provision, including summer time track and field provision and cricket pitch provision. The applicant advises that the proposals have been designed to allow increased use of the indoor and outdoor sports facilities by local community groups. It is intended that that new Academy would support the wider social, environmental and economic regeneration of the area. This would be achieved through community learning and access to the new facilities. The Academy would offer a range of extended school facilities, including access to the sports hall and pitches, and lettings (e.g. the performance or lecture space) by community groups, and adult education classes. In order to maximise extended and community use of the building and its site, including the sports pitches and MUGA, all areas would be accessible from the front entrance plaza, via the main Academy entrance. Hours of community use have not been provided by the applicant.

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Amenity Considerations

20. The applicant advises that the proposed building has been designed to minimise the impact on surrounding residential areas. In particular, the siting of the new school building means that it maintains the maximum possible distances from the residential properties to the west and north of the site. The tallest element of the proposed building is the sixth form component, at a full four storeys in height. This element is located to the south east of the proposed building, where the applicant considers it would have least impact on neighbouring properties, but where it would also act as a landmark to Heath Road. The significant bulk of the sports hall would be mitigated by its setting at a lower level to that of the remainder of the accommodation. In addition, the applicant advises that the Learning Plaza block is proposed to be broadly equivalent to four storeys in height, whereas the Specialist Plaza, extending to the south, would be only two storeys in height. However, the lower floor of the Specialist Plaza would be double-height so that the floor levels align for ease of access from the Learning Plaza block.
21. The western corner of the proposed building would be a minimum of 20 metres from the site boundary and 31m from the rear elevation of the closest residential property in Hanson Drive. The southern elevation of the building would be 25 metres from the site's boundary with Heath Road, and 35 metres (at the closest point) from the Grade II Listed Gate House to Linton Park, located on Heath Road.

Materials

22. The elevations of the sixth form block and sports complex would form the frontage to the main pedestrian and vehicular entrance points. This eastern facing elevation is, therefore, seen as the more public side to the building and the applicant proposes to use a light coloured masonry to reflect its civic nature. The masonry is proposed to reflect the hues and textures from the local historical and geological context of ragstone, originally quarried in the locality. The Learning Plaza component of the building has been developed to take reference from the green landscape of the playing fields to the north. A proprietary framed curtain walling system is proposed to create a random pattern of solid and void, to reflect natural field patterns and the dappled colour variation viewed through mature foliage. The specialist plazas, to the south of the building, would be mainly viewed from Heath Road and would be constructed of curtain walling and cladding materials. Projecting brise-soleil (projecting fins which deflect direct sunlight from windows) would protect the internal learning environment from excessive solar gain. The buildings, branding, signage and logos would have the look and feel of a business environment, expressing the specialism of science and technology.

Landscape and Ecology Considerations

23. The applicant advises that local character and historical landscape elements such as hedgerows, shelterbelts and orchards, as well as the landscape structure of Linton Park, have informed the landscape proposals for the site. Existing semi-mature and mature boundary trees would be retained as a valuable screening of the site. The green spaces within the site would be retained and enhanced to increase their flexible use for sports activities. In the north west corner of the site, an existing area of scrubland has been identified as being of significant value as a habitat for nesting birds and other wildlife. In response to this, it is proposed to develop an ecological garden in this corner

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of the site. A pavilion is proposed to the top of the bank, between the ecological garden and the sports pitches, which would serve as a key point for access and management of the ecological garden area, and includes an external classroom and store for maintenance and sports equipment. The existing tree line which runs along the bank to the south of the ecological garden would be thinned out to create views between the terraces and to ensure that the space would be adequately surveyed. The proposals for the ecological garden provide accessibility through footpaths, as well as educational garden spaces for classes to carry out experiments.

24. The proposals seek to retain the most significant trees on the site which are those located near to, or on, the site boundary. A significant number of new trees are proposed within the landscape scheme for the site, to both strengthen the boundary planting and soften the appearance of the development.

Sustainability

25. The applicant advises that the project would achieve a minimum 'Very Good' rating under BREEAM for schools. It is proposed that the building would include a number of sustainable features including a ground source heat pump, solar water heating panels, photovoltaics and would use insulation to secure a thermal performance 15% beyond current standards.

Construction Management Strategy

26. When this application was submitted an indicative location of the site compound was provided. Following the Members Site Visit, the applicant has submitted a Construction Management Strategy, which includes details of the construction access, site compound, car parking for site personnel, site set up and phasing of the development. This document was sent to consultation with Maidstone Borough Council, Boughton Monchelsea, Coxheath, Linton & Loose Parish Councils and Kent Highway Services on the 28 January 2009. In addition, 21 local residents were sent a copy of the document for their information and were invited to comment on the details. Four site notices advertising the submission of the Construction Management Strategy were posted around the site boundary. The closing date for comments is Thursday 12 February, and any comments received prior to the Committee Meeting will be presented to Members.
27. The Construction Management Strategy proposes that the construction access would be via Heath Road, approximately 100 metres from the Heath Road/A229 crossroads. The site offices would be located to the west of this access, parallel to Heath Road, with the site parking area extending to the north, occupying the western area of the site which currently separates properties in Hanson Drive from Heath Road. In order to mitigate the visual and noise impacts of the car parking and site offices, the applicant is proposing that a topsoil storage area run parallel to the boundary with properties in Hanson Drive. This topsoil storage area would be in the form of a bund, to a maximum height of 2metres, and constructed in accordance with British Standards. The existing pedestrian access to the north of this area would be maintained, located outside of the site compound, as would the small group of trees adjacent to the playing field. The document shows the phasing of the development, and the changing uses of areas of the site as elements of the new build are completed, and demolition of the existing buildings commences. For example, the parking area for site personnel in Phase 1

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would be used for temporary staff car parking and pupil drop-off/pick-up in Phase 2 & 3 before being restored to playing field in Phase 4.

The application is supported by a Design and Access Statement, Biodiversity Statement, Contaminated Land Investigation, Renewable Energy Assessment, Statement of Community Involvement, Transport and Travel Plans, Arboricultural Survey, Archaeology Statement, Sports Strategy Statement, Drainage Assessment and Flood Risk Assessment.

Reduced copies of the submitted drawings showing the site layout, elevations and access are attached.

Development Plan Policies

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

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

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|-------------|---|
| Policy SP1 | States that 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. |
| Policy NR5 | The quality of Kent's environment will be conserved and enhanced, including the visual, ecological, geological, historic and water environments, air quality, noise and levels of tranquillity and light intrusion.
Development should be planned and designed to avoid, or adequately mitigate, pollution impacts.
Development which would result in, or significantly contribute to, unacceptable levels of pollution, will not be permitted. |
| Policy QL1 | Requires that 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 QL8 | Listed buildings will be preserved and their architectural and historic integrity and the character of their settings will be protected and enhanced. |
| Policy QL9 | Historic landscape features and the settings and views into, and out of, historic landscapes, parks and gardens will be protected and where possible enhanced. |
| 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 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 EN1 | Development in the countryside should seek to maintain or enhance it. Development which would adversely affect the countryside will not be permitted unless there is an overriding need for it which |

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- outweighs the requirements to protect the countryside. Development so permitted should include appropriate mitigation and/or compensation.
- Policy EN5 The primary objective of designating Special Landscape Areas is the protection, conservation and enhancement of the quality of their landscapes, whilst having regards to the need to facilitate the social and economic well being of the communities situated within them.
- Policy EN8 Wildlife habitats will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Development likely to have an adverse effect, directly, indirectly or cumulatively, on important habitat species will not be permitted unless there is an overriding need for the development and/or the adverse impact can be adequately mitigated and/or compensated.
- Policy EN9 Seeks to maintain tree cover and the hedgerow network. Additionally, states they should be enhanced where this would improve the landscape, biodiversity, or link existing woodland habitats. Ancient and semi-natural woodland will be protected and, where possible, enhanced.
- Policy TP15 States that development which generates significant increases in traffic, especially heavy goods vehicles, will not be permitted if it is not well related to the primary and secondary road network, or if it would result in a significantly increased risk of crashes or traffic delays, unless appropriate measures to mitigate the effect of the development have been secured.
- Policy TP19 States that development proposals should comply with vehicle parking policies and maximum standards adopted by the County Council.

(ii) The adopted **Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan 2000:**

- Policy ENV6 In appropriate cases the Borough Council will require a landscape scheme, including surfacing and boundary treatments, to be carried out as part of development proposals.
- Policy ENV22 In dealing with applications to develop existing open areas within the urban areas and village settlements, the Borough Council will have regard to:
- (1) The visual contribution which the existing site and the proposed development will make to the urban or village landscape; and
 - (2) The need to uphold and improve the appearance of the locality, with particular emphasis in more densely developed areas; and
 - (3) The need to conserve wildlife habitats.
- Policy ENV28 In the Countryside planning permission will not be given for development which harms the character and appearance of the area, or the amenity of surrounding occupiers, and development will be confined to:
- [.....]
- 4) The provision of public or institutional uses for which a rural location is justified;
- [.....]
- Proposals should include measures for habitat restoration and creation.

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- Policy ENV32 Within the Southern Anti-Coalescence Belt as defined on the proposals map, development which significantly extends the defined urban area or the built up extent of any settlement, or which, as a result of infilling, consolidates existing areas of development, will not be permitted.
- Policy ENV34 Particular attention will be given to the protection and conservation of the scenic quality and distinctive character of the Special Landscape Area and priority will be given to the landscape over other planning considerations.
- Policy CF9 The Borough Council will seek to ensure, where appropriate, the providers of educational facilities to make provision for dual use of facilities in the design of new schools and will encourage the dual use of educational facilities (new and existing) for recreation and other purposes. Development proposals which incorporate dual use will be permitted except where the increased level or duration of activities is incompatible with local residential amenity.
- Policy T13 Car parking provision.

Consultations

29. The following have been consulted on the planning application:

Maidstone Borough Council raises no objection subject to the imposition of conditions regarding external materials, external lighting, landscaping, an Arboricultural method statement, hours of community use, a Travel Plan, slab and site levels, disposal of foul and surface waters, provision of parking, access and turning areas, bicycle storage, a construction management scheme and biodiversity enhancement. In addition, a number of informatives are requested by the Borough Council with regards to construction activities.

Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council makes the following comments on the application:

- 1) The junction between Hubbards Lane and Heath Road needs to be significantly improved. A roundabout should be seriously considered.
- 2) The new bus entry point from Heath Road should have adequate visibility splays.
- 3) A drop-off bay should be provided adjacent to the pedestrian access point on the A229.
- 4) Careful consideration should be given to providing drop-off/pick-up points within the site.
- 5) Confirmation of contractors access points and measures to minimise disruption to the road network during the construction phase are required.
- 6) A 'Community Access Plan' should be drawn up and community use of the facility should be encouraged.
- 7) A Travel Plan should be prepared to reduce the reliance on the car.
- 8) The school interior spaces should be able to be easily converted into traditional classroom spaces should the new approach to teaching proposed not be successful.
- 9) The number of students will be increased, with resultant increase in pressure on the road network. However, the percentage increase in traffic is likely to be negligible.
- 10) The impact on local residential amenity should be carefully considered.

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11) The location of the new school building does not relate in any way to the surrounding context, with its position appearing to arbitrarily relate solely to avoiding the existing school buildings.

12) Part of the existing school site (former car park) appears to have been omitted from the new school grounds. What use is proposed for this?

13) Are any works or financial contributions proposed to the Linton cross road junction?

Coxheath Parish Council suggests that the design is not very 'Kentish', although recognises the design constraints and considers that, as far as possible, materials that are sympathetic to the local character should be used. The Parish Council's main concerns centre on the wider impact of the proposed development in terms of traffic congestion, safe cycle routes/safe access and community use. A number of comments are made, which are summarised below:

1) The proposal would severely exacerbate congestion in the locality and local highway improvements should be required under planning condition.

2) The School Travel Plan target to double the number of pupils travelling to school by cycle, to 18 trips per day, is far too low and is inconsistent with the number of cycle parking spaces proposed. The target should be substantially increased and, in order to achieve this, safe cycle routes to the school should be required under planning condition.

3) Safe pedestrian and cycle crossing points should be provided, as should an onsite drop-off/pick-up point for students. The onsite drop-off/pick-up point proposed only has 4 spaces, which is unlikely to be sufficient.

4) The issue of parents dropping off/picking up pupils on the A229 by the pedestrian access point should be addressed.

5) Community Use of the facilities is welcomed, and both outdoor and indoor facilities should be made available.

6) The Multi Use Games Area should be floodlit to maximise its use, and this should be required by planning condition.

Linton Parish Council makes a number of comments and observations on the application, which are summarised below:

1) The overall design is modern and functional and no doubt can be modified as educational requirements change over the years. However, the large angular buildings do not blend easily into the countryside and would be much improved if they were clad in timber and built of brick.

2) The footprint of the new building and associated works indicate a reduction in the number of playing pitches and hard play areas. This is regretted.

3) If floodlighting is to be introduced it must be high quality, low level, and subject to conditions restricting hours of use.

4) A new School Travel Plan needs to be produced as a matter of urgency recognising more realistically the wide catchment area for the Academy, and the lack of public transport serving the area. There will be an increase in the number of vehicles accessing and parking on the site and the space required for car parking has been well underestimated.

5) As the academy would be used out of hours for school and community use, high quality, low level lighting should be installed in the car parks for safety reasons.

6) Concern is expressed as to whether the expected increase in the school roll could be sustained in the long term.

7) There will be an increase in the traffic volumes along Heath Road, and a large proportion of the additional traffic would use the Heath Road/A229 crossroads. None of

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this is seriously recognised in the proposals for this development. Conditional on this development must be a total redesign of the Hubbards Lane/Heath Road Junction. The Heath Road/A229 crossroads must also be redesigned. These works should be undertaken as a matter of urgency, either funded by the developer of Kent Highway Services.

8) A 'Community Plan' should be drawn up to agree how local communities and the Academy can work together and benefit from the development.

9) Given the present financial climate, it should be ensured that sufficient funds would remain available to complete the project.

Loose Parish Council has no objections to the design of the proposals per se, but has strong concerns that the applicant has not seen fit to address the traffic movements associated with the new school, and the impact that future traffic would have on the neighbouring villages. A number of comments are made on the application, which are summarised below:

1) The Parish Council is amazed that no changes are proposed to the Hubbards Lane/Heath Road junction. This should be widened and/or visibility improved.

2) The crossroad junction with the A229 and Heath Road is a prime concern. Some major improvement provisions need to be made to aid traffic flow and a pedestrian crossing should be provided.

3) Safe cycle lanes to the site should be provided, especially due to the amount of cycle parking proposed.

4) Adequate turning circles should be provided for buses entering and exiting the site.

5) If extra traffic creates congestion it would encourage road users to drive through neighbouring villages, which the infrastructure could not tolerate.

6) The maximum provision of community use should be put into place.

A joint letter of representation from all four of the Parish Councils has also been received, which summarises their individual letters into one.

The South East England Development Agency supports the application.

The South East England Regional Assembly considers that the proposed development would not materially conflict with or prejudice the implementation of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9 and Alterations) or the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft South East Plan (July 2008). It is suggested that the County Council impose conditions covering transport and a travel plan, sustainable construction, design, noise and air pollution, and biodiversity.

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment no comments received to date.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) – Kent Branch raises no objection to the application subject to certain issues being addressed by the imposition of conditions, including external materials, sustainability, community use and preservation and use of 'green spaces' within the site.

The Divisional Transportation Manager raises no objection to the proposal in respect of highway matters, subject to conditions including conditions regarding the provision of bus access, adequate visibility splays, adequate parking on site for vehicles associated with the development, disposal of surface water, prevention of the deposit of mud on

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the highway, and the provision of vehicle and cycle parking, turning areas, loading and off-loading areas in accordance with the permitted drawings and prior to occupation of the development.

In addition, the applicant is required to provide a contribution of £2000 towards the cost of a Traffic Regulation Order to provide waiting restrictions along Hubbards Lane between its junction with the school vehicular egress and the junction with Heath Road.

The County Council's Landscape Adviser comments as follows:

“With regard to the freestanding and retaining walls, we query whether a fair faced concrete finish would be most appropriate visually and whether any other surfaces might be better placed to provide seating elements within the retaining wall structures.

Our previous comments, suggested that it may be beneficial for the applicant to propose a native hedgerow, along the southern boundary of the northern sports pitches linking the ecology garden with the eastern site boundary. However, the applicant considers that such a hedge would be inappropriate because it would restrict surveillance. Whilst we accept this security issue, we suggest that a row of individual native trees would provide an alternative to the hedgerow and would provide an element of visual filtering for residential properties to the north along Salts Avenue, whilst allowing views of the northern pitches by staff. We are pleased to acknowledge the proposed reinstatement of the Linton Road hedgerow as a visual screen and as a reconnection with the Heath Road boundary hedgerow.”

The County Council's Noise Advisor considers that the issue of noise break-in should be addressed by the relevant Building Control Authority, although through careful logistical planning and/or acoustic treatment of the building envelope, noise break-in could be managed sufficiently.

A condition should be imposed to ensure that the Rating Noise Level from plant associated with the school would not exceed the existing LA90 when measured at the nearest residential property. In addition, should the MUGA be floodlit at a later date, an assessment of the potential noise impacts associated with the MUGAs extended hours of use must be undertaken. On the basis that the MUGA is not currently proposed to be used outside the hours of use of the existing playing fields, the Noise Advisor has no concerns over the proposal.

The County Archaeologist: raises no objection subject to a condition requiring archaeological field evaluation works and subsequent safeguarding measures to preserve/record archaeological remains.

The County Council's Conservation & Design Architect raises no objection subject to a condition requiring the details of boundary fencing, hedge and tree planting along the Heath Road frontage to be submitted for approval. It is recommended that a hedge is incorporated into the boundary treatment using native hedgerow specimens and estate fencing. Likewise, further tree planting should be native species to complement those in the park land on the opposite side of the road to the application site.

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English Heritage considers that the development would affect the setting of the Grade II Listed gate house, North Lodge. English Heritage recommends that the impact of this proposal on the setting of the lodge and park should be fully explained by the applicant, with sections through the site to show their relationship to the proposed academy buildings. Further works to alleviate the impact of the proposed buildings on the setting of the lodge and park should be considered, including re-positioning the buildings further to the north to allow enhanced tree planting along the southern boundary of the site. The current proposals for new trees on this boundary may not be acceptable given their proximity to the buildings and existing trees, so a more detailed plan is required to ensure that an appropriately dense landscape buffer between the proposed Academy and the gate house is achieved.

However, English Heritage did not wish to be consulted on the planning application again and recommended that the application be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of our specialist conservation advice.

The Garden History Society: no comments received to date.

The County Council's Biodiversity Officer raises no objection to the proposal subject to conditions concerning the need for bat surveys if the buildings are not demolished within 1 year of the surveys already undertaken, further examination by an ecologist of all trees for bats to be carried out prior to any trees being felled, protection of nesting birds and the submission of a mitigation and enhancement strategy for the entire site. Further advice is provided on the contents of the strategy.

Environment Agency has no objections to the application but has made comments and requested conditions be imposed covering surface water drainage and contamination of previously developed land.

Sport England raises no objection subject to conditions regarding community use, the design of sporting facilities to accord with Sport England design guidance, the development of sufficient quality replacement playing pitches, adequate reinstatement of playing pitches upon completion of construction and appropriate phasing of development to minimise adverse effects on sporting facilities.

Kent Police Architectural Liaison Officer raises no objection subject to the applicant adhering to Secured by Design principles.

The County Fire Officer no comments received to date.

Local Member

30. The local County Members, Mr Hotson and Mrs Stockell, have been notified of the application.

Publicity

31. The application was publicised by the posting of 5 site notices and the individual notification of 142 neighbouring properties.

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Representations

32. To date, I have received 15 individual letters of representation from local residents. A summary of the main issues raised/points made is set out below:

Highway related

- There is a need to improve the junction between Heath Road and Hubbards Lane. For example, it could be made into a bell mouth;
- There is a need to improve the Heath Road/A229 crossroad;
- The Transport Assessment and Travel Plan submitted with the planning application is inaccurate, out of date and open to criticism. In addition, it does not address other highway surveys undertaken in the local area, or future developments in the region, including housing development and the Kent International Gateway;
- Cornwallis Academy is not an insignificant contributor to traffic in its own right. Account must now be taken of extra activity due to the proposed increase in pupils, including 70 additional pupils of driving age;
- Marginal consents without regard to an overall traffic strategy, such as is sought here, contributes to the traffic paralysis forecast for Maidstone early in the next decade;
- Ample visitor parking, and a drop off/pick up facility, should be provided in the school grounds;
- The amount of car parking proposed seems considerable. Could the number of car parking spaces not be reduced, in turn allowing the building to be moved eastwards?
- Too much cycle parking is proposed and will therefore be unused. This could potentially be converted into additional car parking areas in the future which is not acceptable;
- Access for fire engines maybe impeded and, should their be a fire at the school, this would be very dangerous for local properties, which would be within a few metres of the school building;

Site layout and design

- By moving the building closer to Linton Road/Hanson Drive, more pupils would be dropped off here causing congestion, blocking of drives and residential streets, and safety issues as sight lines are blocked by parked cars;
- The pedestrian access gate on Linton Road should be closed and a replacement one provided on Heath Road;
- The development is too close to the boundary with neighbouring properties;
- The design of the building is not sympathetic to the area, and would be a monstrosity;
- The building would create unacceptable levels of air and noise pollution (including that from the play plazas) and, due to its height, overlooking, loss of privacy and loss of light to properties in Hanson Drive;
- Can the school not be located elsewhere within the school grounds?
- Why does the school have to be re-built rather than refurbished?
- Can the section of the school building closest to properties in Hanson Drive not be lowered in height? Or cut into the ground to reduce its impact? Or tiered?

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Amenity

- The car park is to be expanded towards the boundary of the site and closer to residential properties. It is requested that careful consideration be given to the lighting of this area;
- External lighting should be carefully considered and hours of operation restricted;
- In an effort to reduce noise from the car park, fencing or screening should be provided along Heath Road and into Hubbards Lane;
- The development will ruin people's enjoyment of the natural beauty of the locality, reducing the amount of people coming to walk in the area, subsequently impacting upon local businesses;
- The development is too close to the boundary with neighbouring properties;
- Adjacent properties in Hanson Drive are at a lower level than the school building, compounding its overbearing nature;
- The building is of a considerable bulk, and is imposing upon the rural landscape;
- Significant landscaping should be provided to the boundary with properties on Hanson Drive, including evergreen planting;
- The proposed cycle shelters near Hanson Drive would increase noise pollution, and encourage smoking to the rear of them, creating a substantial fire risk;
- At present pupils gather to smoke on the pavements outside the school, producing lots of litter. Could provision be made in the school grounds for a smoking facility?
- Support for improved school facilities is expressed, but the amenity of neighbouring residents needs to be given careful consideration;

Construction

- The proposed site offices are too close to residential properties, creating visual, noise and air pollution, and potential overlooking issues;
- Contractors will park on Loose Road and in Hanson Drive, blocking drives and making the movement of vehicles very difficult;
- Lorries delivering to the site must not wait on surrounding roads to enter the site;
- Any damage to local roads as a result of construction vehicles should be made good;

Nature Conservation

- Badgers and other wildlife occupy the site, and the development may have an unacceptable impact upon them.

Discussion

Introduction

33. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan policies outlined in paragraph (28) 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 the Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity. Issues of particular relevance include siting & design, impact upon heritage interests, sustainable construction, landscaping and biodiversity, community use and sports provision, drainage and transport and access issues.

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34. Policy QL1 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan requires new developments to be of a high quality and well designed, and not to lead to a loss of residential amenity. Policies ENV22 and ENV32 of Maidstone Borough Local Plan seek to protect existing open areas and protect the functioning of the southern anti-coalescence belt in terms of preventing the significant extension of the defined urban areas or the built up extent of any settlement. Further, consideration should be given to the Kent and Medway Structure Plan Policy QL11 and the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Policy CF9 that encourage decision makers to make provision for community facilities. In conjunction with these and other relevant policies, these issues are considered and discussed below. In principle, I see no overriding objection on land use planning grounds, on the basis that the site is already well established for the accommodation of educational services.

Siting and design issues

35. This proposal would relocate the built development from the south east of the site to the south west. Although an area of land to the west of the proposed school building would be retained as a playing field, due to the shape of the site boundary, the school building would be significantly closer to residential properties, particularly those in Hanson Close and on Linton Road. This has met with concern and objection from neighbouring residents and consultees and, therefore, needs to be addressed. In addition, the proposed siting needs to be considered in the context of the setting of Linton Park, a Grade II* Listed Historic Park and Garden, and its Grade II Listed Gate House. The implications of the siting on the setting of these important historical features will be discussed later in this report. The following section will address the general issues associated with the proposed siting of the development, its massing and design.
36. The Cornwallis site has extensive playing fields to the north and west, with most of the built and hard development associated with the school located in the south eastern area of the site. The playing fields and open green spaces all make a significant contribution to the setting of the school and to the local area, including the southern anti-coalescence belt, as well as their use for education, recreation and sport. The protection afforded to the anti-coalescence belt by the Borough Wide Plan Policy ENV32, Development Plan Policies that seek to protect, conserve and enhance the environment, and the protection afforded to playing fields, have all been major influences in the masterplan that has evolved now forming the basis for this application. However, to provide continuous and efficient educational use of the Academy site throughout the proposed development, it would be necessary to build upon an existing area of open grassland/playing field.
37. It should be noted that whilst this proposal is for a single large building, with a footprint of 6800 sq metres, the total footprint of the existing buildings is 9800 sq metres. This development would, therefore, substantially reduce and rationalise the landtake associated with the Academy's built development. Although car parking and hard play would occupy a larger proportion of the remaining site than at present, a similar amount of the site would be open grassland and/or playing fields. On that basis, Sport England has not raised an objection to the proposed development.
38. In my view, the site layout proposed establishes an acceptable pattern of development within the site so that there is no conflict with objectives of the anti-coalescence belt designation subject of Local Plan Policy ENV32. Indeed the proposal would not result

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in a significant change to the extent of the built development within the site. It retains an appropriate balance of green spaces, provides for enhanced landscaping of the site and maintains the integrity of the main playing field to the north. In these respects, I also consider that it would accord with the other Development Plan Policies that seek to protect, conserve and enhance the environment, and ensure that developments respect their setting and relate sympathetically to their site context. The site as a whole would therefore continue to contribute to the visual character and quality of the area, as well as to the physical separation of local villages.

39. Whilst the gross floor space of the building would increase, the area of land take would be minimised with a building, in part, the equivalent of 4 storeys in height compared to the existing single, two & three storey buildings. However, whereas existing buildings are a considerable distance from properties in Hanson Drive, the western corner of the proposed school would be a minimum of 20 metres from the site boundary, and 31m from the rear elevation of the closest residential property in Hanson Drive. That has met with objection from residents in Hanson Drive who are concerned that the building is too close to the boundary, and of a scale and massing which would affect their amenity.
40. The physical and design constraints of the proposal and the site, and the requirements to maintain an operational school during the construction phase, have led to the building being located in the western part of the site. The applicant has sought to minimise the impact of the development on properties in Hanson Drive and has, following a further review of the construction logistics and required safety zones, moved the building a metre further eastwards than originally proposed. As a result, the proposed development would now be just 7 metres from the existing school buildings, allowing the smallest possible construction/safety zone. The revised positioning of the building ensures that the north west corner of the building is approximately 5 metres further east than the easterly boundary of gardens in Hanson Drive. Furthermore, the proposed building would be a minimum of 31 metres from the closest residential property, and 21 metres from the site boundary. These distances are well over those specified within the Kent Design Guide, which suggests that window to window distances should be over 21 metres. It should also be noted that the rear elevation of properties in Hanson Drive would not directly face the development and, therefore, window to window views would be at oblique angles.
41. The bulk of the building has also met with objection from neighbouring properties, and this needs to be considered in conjunction with the siting of the building. At the equivalent to four residential storeys in height the building would be slightly taller than the existing tallest building on site. However, all built development would be included within one building, and an increase in height results in a smaller footprint and, therefore, less landtake. Despite the height of the building, I consider that the distances detailed above are sufficient to ensure that there is no significant overlooking, or the creation of a sense of enclosure. The building has been carefully designed to ensure that the tallest element, the sixth form block, would be furthest away from residential properties, reducing the impact of the development and ensuring that it is not overbearing. In addition, the elevational treatment of the school would aid in breaking up its bulk by adding interest and relief to the building.
42. It should also be noted that the boundary between properties in Hanson Drive and the school site is heavily screened with existing trees and hedging. Additional tree planting along this boundary was proposed by the applicant from the outset and, in response to

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the concerns of neighbouring residents, further tree planting to the corner of the site adjacent to Hanson Drive has been proposed. 50% of this additional tree planting would be evergreen to maintain screening throughout the year, and would also serve to mitigate noise from the play ground (plaza), a further concern raised by local residents. The County Council's Noise Advisor raises no objection to the scheme and would only have concerns over negative noise impacts upon neighbouring residents should floodlighting be introduced to the MUGA, extending its hours of use. The floodlighting of the MUGA is not included within this application and would, therefore, need to be subject to a separate planning application should the Academy require it at a later date. That application would have to be considered on its own merits at that time, and a noise assessment would be required. However, at this time it is not considered that the proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents with regards to noise subject to a condition controlling the level of noise emitted from plant associated with the school. Although the arrangement of the site would change, the overall noise levels would not be significantly altered from those currently related to use of the site.

43. In addition to concerns over the siting of the building, concern was raised by residents in Wykeham Cottages over the proximity of the car park (at the corner of Hubbards Lane and Heath Road) to their properties on the opposite side of Heath Road. Concerns over lighting and noise associated with use of the car park have been raised and, as a result, the applicant has altered the car parking layout to enable higher levels of screening and planting to be provided to the south-east corner of the site. The reduction in the number of car parking spaces will be discussed later in this report, as will the issue of external lighting. However, it should be noted that the County Council's Noise Advisor does not have any concerns with regards to noise associated with the development having a detrimental impact upon the amenities of the locality. In addition, the amendments made would serve to lessen any light pollution, although it should be noted that this area of the site is already used for car parking, and any lighting proposed would be designed to minimise light spill to adjoining properties in accordance with the relevant environmental standards. In light of the above, I consider the car parking layout to be acceptable to terms of residential amenity (highway implications will be discussed later in this report).
44. Local residents also expressed concern that the layout of the site would restrict access for fire engines. As a result of this concern the County Fire Officer was consulted on the application. No comments have been received to date, however, the applicant has confirmed that fire brigade access would be provided to in excess of 50% of the building's perimeter. That would include access to the play plaza via the service route to the south west of the proposed building. In addition, the development would have to accord to national requirements for the safety of educational establishments. In light of this, I do not consider that the development would provide restrictive access for the fire brigade.
45. In light of the information given above, and the mitigation provided by the applicant, I do not consider that the siting and massing of the development would have a significantly detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents. Taking account of the above factors, I would not object to the scale or massing of the proposed buildings, or the siting/layout of the development as a whole. Although the building would be the equivalent of up to 4 storeys in height, I consider that there are benefits to keeping the footprint of the buildings as compact as possible and to reducing land take. In addition, I

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consider the provision of a single building to accommodate the Academy to be a considerable improvement over the dated piecemeal development which currently houses the school, which, in my view, is not aesthetically pleasing. However, although considered to be acceptable in terms of massing and scale, a high quality of design and detailing is essential.

46. Paragraph 22 of this report outlines the applicant's intentions with regards to design and external materials. Masonry, glazing, curtain walling, brise-soleil and cladding are some of the elements proposed by the applicant, which would be used to identify various characteristics of the building, whilst being sympathetic to the surrounding landscape. The building's branding, signage and logos would have the look and feel of a business environment, intending to express the specialism in science and technology. This is, in my view, appropriate for the site and reflects the aspirations of the applicants in terms of the environment they wish to create.
47. Representations from local residents and consultee responses have commented on the design of the building, which some accept, and praise, whilst others consider it to be unsympathetic to the locality. Although some concerns relate to the massing of the building, the majority of the concerns relate to the materials and visual appearance of the building. The applicant advises that the strategy for use of materials reflects the three main components of the building. Whilst this strategy has led to several material types, colour and texture would be used to unify elements of the three components. For example, the greens of the northern façade translate to the southern, and the cladding board proposed above the plinth levels in the sixth form block would similarly be used for the specialist plazas and sports hall facades. Although a large building, I do not have concerns over the general design as proposed, which is appropriate for the innovative uses of the internal space and the range of activities proposed. However, the final selection of external materials, including colour finishes and details of window/door reveals, should be submitted for approval pursuant to planning conditions. Subject to the imposition of these conditions, I do not consider that the design, massing, or scale of the building would have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of the locality and, therefore, would be acceptable.

Listed Building/Historic Park & Garden

48. In considering applications which may affect the setting of a Listed Building and/or Historic Park and Garden, a key consideration is whether or not the proposed development would maintain and/or enhance the character of their settings. The County Council's Conservation and Design Architect and English Heritage initially expressed concern over the impact of the proposed development on the setting of the Grade II* Listed Historic Park & Garden, Linton Park, and North Lodge, the gardens Grade II Listed gatehouse. Both of these historical features are located to the south of Heath Road and, unlike the school site, lie within a Special Landscape Area. English Heritage considered that further works to alleviate the impact of the proposed buildings on the setting of North Lodge and Linton Park should be considered, including re-positioning the school building further to the north to allow enhanced tree planting along the southern boundary of the site. It should be noted, however, that English Heritage did not wish to be consulted on the planning application again and recommended that the application be determined in accordance with policy guidance, and our specialist conservation advice. In light of this, further information submitted by the applicant in response to the initial concerns of the County Council's Conservation & Design

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Architect and English Heritage was only sent to consultation with the County Council's Architect.

49. The County Councils Conservation & Design Architect initially considered that the development would unduly impact upon the setting of the Listed Gate House, and that mitigation would need to be considered. It was recognised that re-siting of the building would not appear to be practical and, therefore, the applicant was requested to consider increasing the area between the proposed school and the Listed Building to allow for further tree planting. This request was in general accordance with the views of English Heritage.
50. The heritage concerns were discussed with the applicant who has advised that North Lodge, the single storey 19th Century gate house, is set within a belt of considerable tree cover and the immediate environment to the south of Heath Road is of more relevance to the setting of the building than the school site to the north of the road. The applicant considers Heath Road to be a major physical feature that separates the Listed Building and Park & Garden from the school site, and states that the character of the areas either side of the road are quite different. Although I agree with these comments, and also consider the character of land to the north and south of Heath Road to be quite different, the setting of the Listed Building and Park & Garden needs to be carefully considered in the determination of this application.
51. The school building has been designed in an attempt to mitigate any potential impact on the listed property/Park & Garden by reducing the building in scale towards the southern site boundary. The main body of the academy building would be approximately 50metres from North Lodge at the closest point. However, two 'fingers' encroach into this 50m zone, but these are single storey and of a domestic scale, whilst still being approximately 36metres from the Listed Building/Park & Garden. The requirement to maintain the operation of the existing school means that the proposed building cannot be moved any further east than it already has. In addition, the proximity of residential properties, as discussed above, prevents the building from being re-located further to the north. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed building cannot reasonably be moved further from the road frontage, a fact already recognised by the County Council's Conservation & Design Architect. Focus therefore turns to mitigating the impact of the development, screening the proposed building in order to maintain and enhance the setting of the Listed Building and the Historic Park and Garden.
52. The proposed development is at a lower level than Heath Road and, of more importance, the upper levels of the proposed building would be screened by the canopies of existing trees along the school boundary. The applicant advises that future landscaping of the site would introduce screening of the lower levels with the introduction of shrub and low level planting, and small ornamental trees. The applicant has amended the masterplan of the site to further reinforce the planting within the area of the Academy site immediately adjacent to the Listed Building. However, following the submission of this additional information from the applicant, the Conservation & Design Architect considers that there is an opportunity to further mitigate the impact of the new school by increasing the density of tree and boundary planting. It is recommended that some form of hedge is incorporated into the boundary treatment using native hedgerow specimens and estate fencing. Likewise, further tree planting should be native species to complement those in the park land on the opposite side of the road to the application site. The Conservation & Design Architect now raises no objection to the application

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subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the submission of a landscaping scheme which incorporates the suggestions made above.

53. Whilst views from North Lodge itself, and the exit from Linton Park, would obviously change as a result of the proposed development, I consider that the mitigation offered by the applicant, and the consideration of these issues in the design of the building, have resulted in a proposal which would not have a significantly detrimental impact on the setting of the Listed Building or the Historic Park & Garden. Subject to the submission of a substantial landscaping scheme, which addresses the issues raised by the Conservation & Design Architect, I do not consider that this application should be refused on the grounds of its impact on the setting of North Lodge or Linton Park.

Landscaping and Biodiversity

54. As referred to above, the landscaping of this site is vital in mitigating the impact of the development on neighbouring residents and also the setting of Linton Park and North Lodge. It is imperative the mature and high quality trees are retained where possible, and protected throughout construction works, and that a scheme of substantial tree and shrub planting is provided should the application be permitted. Some trees in the central part of the site would have to be removed as a result of the proposed development. However the intention is to retain trees within the site as far as possible, and to retain boundary planting. Furthermore the landscape strategy put forward aims to reinforce and strengthen the existing boundary planting where that is necessary, to create a campus style setting. The new planting would be of significant benefit to the site and locality, as well as helping to absorb the new development into its surroundings.
55. The County Council's Landscape Advisor does not raise objection to this application, but does require further details to be submitted pursuant to condition, should permission be granted. It is suggested that a row of individual native trees should be provided along the southern boundary of the northern sports pitches linking the ecology garden with the eastern site boundary. Should permission be granted, a detailed scheme of landscaping and tree planting would be required pursuant to condition. This could ensure that the required trees were included. The Landscape Advisor's concerns with regards to the location of the construction site offices have been addressed within the submitted Construction Management Strategy, and the site offices have been moved accordingly.
56. The proposals include a 10m wide ecological boundary buffer strip to the western edge of the playing fields. This, in conjunction with tree protection fencing, would ensure that the trees and ecological habitat to the western boundary of the site were protected. Maidstone Borough Council and the County Council's Biodiversity Officer have requested the submission of a Habitat/Biodiversity enhancement strategy to cover the site as a whole, and I consider that this should form a condition of consent. That would ensure that existing habitats were retained in addition to securing the future enhancement of the ecological value of the site, which would improve the local educational and recreational environment.
57. Subject to conditions ensuring that trees to be retained are protected in accordance with BS5827: Trees in relation to construction, the submission of a Habitat/Biodiversity enhancement strategy, and a scheme of landscaping and tree planting, I see no reason to refuse this application on the grounds of tree related matters. In addition, Maidstone Borough Council has requested that an Arboricultural Method Statement be submitted

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pursuant to condition, which should include details of any works or operations in the vicinity of retained trees, detailing construction or installation methods to avoid damage to trees, including their roots. Given the fact that a number of mature trees are found within the site, I consider that an Arboricultural Method Statement should also be submitted pursuant to planning condition.

58. With regards to Biodiversity issues, a number of ecological reports have been submitted with the application that indicate that survey work for protected species has been carried out, in particular for bats, badgers and reptiles. The County Council's Biodiversity Officer is satisfied with the information submitted and has not raised any objections to the proposed development. However, the Biodiversity Officer has requested a number of conditions of consent with regards to bats, trees, badgers, reptiles, birds, biodiversity enhancement monitoring and management. The imposition of the required conditions would protect wildlife and mitigate against any negative impacts of the development, minimising any disturbance and/or risk to protected species as far as practicably possible. I therefore consider that these should form the basis of conditions of consent should permission be granted.

Transport and access issues

59. As outlined in paragraphs 12 & 13 of this report, it is proposed to retain the two existing pedestrian access points from Hubbards Lane and Linton Road, and vehicular access would remain via Hubbards Lane. In addition, a separate bus only entrance would be provided from Heath Lane, which would directly access a dedicated bus/coach drop-off and pick-up facility designed to accommodate a minimum of 12 buses. Given the wide catchment area that the school serves, many of the pupils are bussed to school. Buses and coaches would then exit the site via the Hubbards Lane site exit, facilitating an on site one way system. This proposed facility would half the number of buses using the Hubbards Lane/Heath Road junction, and would remove the need for any bus to turn into Hubbards Lane. The existing on-site car parking arrangement would be extended and formalised, to provide 220 car parking spaces, and a dedicated 9 bay pupil drop-off/pick-up facility would be provided. In addition, 8 motorbike parking spaces are proposed, 3 spaces for minibuses and 2 storage facilities for bicycles capable of accommodating a total of 250 bicycles.
60. This application has met with objection and concern on the grounds of highway matters from the four Parish Councils and local residents. In addition, off-site highway works have been requested, including improvements to the Hubbards Lane/Heath Road junction and works to the Heath Road/A229 crossroads. These works are seen by some consultees/local residents as fundamental, and consider that this application should not be approved without the undertaking of such works. However, Kent Highway Services have been asked to consider the need for off-site highway works and, upon the consideration of the information submitted, have determined that works to the two junctions are not required. The reasons for this will be discussed below. However, a contribution of £2000 is required towards a Traffic Regulation Order to provide waiting restrictions along Hubbards Lane between its junction with the school vehicular egress and the junction with Heath Road. I have received a written undertaking from the applicant agreeing to provide such a contribution, and a plan showing an indicative layout of the works that would be undertaken. Should permission be granted the provision of the required contribution would be required pursuant to planning condition. In addition, the applicant has confirmed that the remaining conditions required by Kent

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Highway Services are acceptable, although the phasing of the development would not enable all car parking to be available prior to occupation of the proposed building. However, all will be provided and subsequently maintained following demolition of the existing buildings and upon completion of the scheme.

61. This application would essentially provide replacement accommodation for existing poor quality buildings on site. However, the proposed pupil numbers under this application are 1765, of which 490 would be in years 12 & 13. There are currently 287 pupils in years 12 & 13, so this application would increase the sixth form numbers by about 200. However, the applicant considers that the increase in sixth form numbers would equate to approximately 70 additional pupils of driving age. It should be noted, however, that there would be a decrease in the pupil numbers in the lower years than existing. This application would increase and formalise car parking on site to provide 220 spaces, a number which Kent Highway Services deem to be acceptable, and would provide 9 dedicated pick-up/drop-off bays. However, the visibility splays at the existing exit are currently restricted by fencing and vegetation. As this application would provide additional onsite car parking, and a dedicated pick-up/drop-off facility, the use of this exit would be intensified. Therefore, improvements to the visibility splays at this exit are required by Kent Highway Services, and should permission be granted, this would form a condition on consent. In addition, should permission be granted, a revised School Travel Plan would be required pursuant to planning condition, which would determine the likely number of sixth form pupils that would actually drive to school, and aim to reduce reliance on the car. The Travel Plan would need to be approved in consultation with Kent Highway Services and be subject to ongoing monitoring and review.
62. Furthermore, planning permission has previously been granted under reference MA/02/1892 for the erection of a new two and three storey sixth form centre on the site. Permission has since been granted under reference MA/06/0369 to extend the time within which an application for reserved matters relating to the sixth form centre must be made. This consent is not due to expire until the 22 May 2009. No conditions were imposed on either of these permissions to restrict the number of pupils attending the school or was there a requirement to undertake highway works or increase car parking. In addition, the school is currently under capacity, and could increase to full capacity without the need for any further permission. This current application would increase car parking on site, and improve the current access arrangements, in addition to providing a dedicated bus entrance and on site pupil pick-up/drop-off facilities.
63. The masterplan for the site provides for 12 dedicated bus/coach parking bays, accessed via a separate bus only site entrance from Heath Road. Should permission be granted, the provision of this entrance, and the associated onsite facilities, would be required by planning condition. In addition, the applicant has successfully demonstrated that adequate visibility splays and turning areas can be achieved, and Kent Highway Services has accepted these details. The provision of the bus entrance would remove the need for buses to turn into Hubbards Lane from Heath Road, halving the number of bus movements at this junction, alleviating existing congestion and safety concerns. The 12 dedicated parking bays would adequately cater for the total number of buses on site at one time, and would enable the Academy to manage the pupils using the buses in a controlled and safe manner. In addition, the dedicated facility would enable the remainder of the site parking and car drop-off/pick-up facility to operate freely and without the hindrance of buses.

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64. A significant amount of cycle parking is proposed by the applicant, 150 spaces by the eastern site entrance (Hubbards Lane) and 100 spaces at the western entrance (the A229 pedestrian entrance). This amount of cycle parking has met with objection, some suggesting that it is too much and concern is expressed that it would eventually be converted into additional car parking. As a result of these concerns, the applicant and Kent Highway Services have agreed to a phased introduction of the cycle parking, initially providing 100 spaces, 50 at the Hubbards Lane entrance and 50 towards the pedestrian entrance from the A229. 100 cycle parking spaces would adequately cater for existing demand, and future review and monitoring of the School Travel Plan would inform the decision as to when/whether to provide the remaining 150 spaces. Details of the design of the cycle parking would be required pursuant to condition to ensure that it is of an appropriate design standard. In addition, the cycle parking to the western side of the site could not be converted to car parking as vehicular access to this area of the site is not available. In addition, a condition of consent would ensure that the cycle parking is provided, maintained, and not built upon without the written approval of the County Planning Authority. Subject to these conditions, I do not consider that the provision of cycle storage is a cause of concern. In addition, the Academy would actively encourage pupils to cycle to school through Travel Plan targets.
65. The retention of the pedestrian access on the A229 (Linton Road) has met with objection from local residents and concerns have been raised over pedestrian safety by consultees. This is an existing entrance, and although some local residents experience problems with parents dropping of pupils and inconsiderate/illegal parking, this is an existing issue which would not be exacerbated by this planning application. As already outlined, the increase in pupils numbers would be in the sixth form, lower year groups would reduce in size. Older age groups generally make their own way to school, using private cars or buses, all of which access the site via Hubbards Lane/Heath Road. This secondary pedestrian entrance is, however, an important access for pupils arriving on public transport along Linton Road, and the Academy have asked the Police to tackle the illegal parking in the past, and will continue to do so. In addition, the provision of an on site dedicated pick-up/drop-off facility should discourage parents from dropping off pupils on the A229. I consider that this pedestrian access is an important facility for pupils of the Academy, and can see no reason why it should not be retained. Although I appreciate the existing problems experienced by local residents, this is a school management issue and I do not consider that this application would significantly exacerbate those or be a detriment to the safety of pupils.
66. In my view this application cannot be expected to solve/rectify existing highway problems. However, the proposed development must address any additional highway pressures brought about by the proposed works. I consider that the applicant has made adequate provision for the additional pupils that the school would cater for. In addition, the provision of a bus entrance, further on-site car parking, a dedicated bus and pupil pick-up and drop-off facility, and a contribution to a Traffic Regulation Order would help ease existing congestion and help alleviate existing highway problems. All of these matters would be covered by planning condition and would be provided by the applicant prior to the completion of the development, as phasing would allow. The Divisional Transportation Manager and Maidstone Borough Council also consider that an updated Travel Plan should be submitted for approval and thereafter be implemented as approved, and be subject to ongoing monitoring and review. Subject to the conditions outlined above, I do not consider that the proposed development would have a

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significantly unacceptable impact upon the local highway network. I therefore see no reason to refuse the application on highway grounds.

External lighting

67. No details have been provided on external lighting for the development. This can often be a cause for concern raised by neighbouring residents and, in this instance, local residents have expressed concern over not only the lighting of the building but the associated car parking areas. If permission is granted, it would therefore be appropriate to reserve details by condition so that the type and position of any external lighting can be controlled to ensure any potential nuisance from light pollution can be minimised and to accord with Structure Plan Policy NR5. In addition, for the avoidance of doubt, it would be conditioned that no floodlighting shall be installed on site without the submission and determination of a full planning application.

Secured by Design

68. The applicant has undertaken discussions with the Kent Police Architectural Liaison Officer and it has been agreed that they would adhere to Secured by Design requirements and in consultation with Kent Police. Some of these matters, such as perimeter fencing and security lighting, would need careful consideration to ensure they were applied in a balanced way so that, for example, the visual appearance of the site was not compromised by inappropriate fencing. They would otherwise accord with Structure Plan Policy QL1 in respect of a safe and secure environment. If planning permission is granted these matters would be dealt with in the drawing up of the detailed design drawings and, in part, by planning condition i.e. details of lighting and fencing.

Sustainable construction

69. The applicant advises that the project would achieve a minimum 'Very Good' rating under BREEAM for schools. As outlined in paragraph 25, the building would include a number of sustainable features. Maidstone Borough Council request that a condition of consent be that the development achieve at least a 'Very Good' rating, and have requested details of the final rating to be submitted for approval prior to commencement. However, I consider that the applicant has given sufficient information within the planning application to demonstrate how the rating of 'Very Good' would be achieved. I therefore consider it sufficient and acceptable to condition that the development achieve at least a 'Very Good' rating, but not to request the submission of details. In particular, the developers are already tasked with meeting the exacting design standards demanded of them by the Academy funding process.

Community use and sport provision

70. It is proposed that there would be community use of the school buildings and the associated sports facilities, a principle which is supported by Kent & Medway Structure Plan Policy QL12 and wider Government aspirations for extended school use and community activities. However, at this stage there are few details against which to assess the potential impact. Maidstone Borough Council has suggested that a condition of consent be that the buildings/pitches are not used for community use before 08.00am or after 10.00pm. However, this could be too restrictive for events such as theatrical

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plays/shows, which may take place in the evening, albeit not on a regular basis. However, the amenity of neighbouring residents must be protected and community use controlled to ensure minimal disturbance to neighbours.

71. In light of this, and in order to protect the amenities of nearby residential properties, it would be appropriate for details of community use to be submitted for approval pursuant to planning condition. These details would need to include proposed hours of use for indoor and external facilities, the types of uses proposed and the frequency of use, as well as detailing how use of the facilities by the local community would be managed. The submitted details would be subject to consultation with relevant consultees to ensure that the proposed community use would not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of the locality. Once considered acceptable and approved, the community use of the facilities would be required to strictly adhere to the hours of use and details given. Subject to the imposition of such a condition, I consider that community use of the development would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenities of the locality.

Drainage, protection of water resources and contaminated land

72. The Environment Agency and the Borough Council have both requested that details of drainage be submitted pursuant to condition. The Environment Agency initially objected to this application on the grounds that the submitted Flood Risk Assessment had not adequately dealt with the issue of drainage, and requested a Drainage Assessment be submitted in accordance with PPS25. The applicant submitted this information and the Environment Agency subsequently withdrew its objection, stating that they have no objection in principle to the surface water drainage system proposed. However, it is recommended that a detailed scheme for the provision of surface water drainage be submitted. It is considered that this is required to prevent the increased risk of flooding by ensuring a satisfactory means of surface water disposal. The Environment Agency also requires the imposition of a condition regarding the submission of further survey work concerning land contamination. Therefore, I consider that subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the submission of a scheme to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site within 3 months of the date of the permission, the development could be controlled to ensure that it would not result in unacceptable pollution levels.
73. In addition to the Environment Agency, Maidstone Borough Council has raised no objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of conditions, three of which concern drainage. A scheme for the disposal of foul waters is required, in addition to surface waters, and it should be ensured that there would be no discharge of foul or contaminated drainage from the site into ground water or any surface waters. Therefore, should permission be granted, conditions would be imposed covering the matters raised above. This would ensure that the development would not result in an unacceptable level of pollution, in accordance with the principles of Policy NR5 of the Kent & Medway Structure Plan. In addition, the Environment Agency's advice regarding foul and surface water drainage, and contaminated land would be covered by an informative.

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Archaeology

74. An Archaeological Statement accompanied this planning application. The County Archaeologist has concluded that in order to secure the appropriate level of evaluation and mitigation of archaeological potential at the site, a condition of consent be imposed. It is requested that no development takes place until the applicant has secured the implementation of archaeological field evaluation works, and following on from the evaluation, the submission of measures to ensure the preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording. Therefore, subject to the imposition of the required condition, I do not consider that this proposal would have a detrimental impact on archaeological remains.

Construction

75. 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 and demolition in order 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 normal 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.
76. Maidstone Borough Council and the Divisional Transportation Manager have requested that details of a Construction Management Strategy be submitted for approval prior to the commencement of development. The Borough Council considers that this should include details of the methods and hours of working, location of site compounds and operative/visitors parking, and details of site security and safety measures. In light of this request, the applicant has submitted a Construction Management Strategy, which, as detailed in paragraph 26 of this report, has been sent to consultation with statutory consultees, some local residents, and advertised by way of site notices. Paragraph 27 of this report outlines the details included within the submitted Construction Management Strategy, which appear to be logical given the constraints of the site and the complicated nature of the development.
77. To date no comments have been received, but the consultation period expires prior to the Planning Applications Committee Meeting on the 17 February 2009. A summary of consultee comments and any representations received will be prepared reported to the Committee. Should the details submitted be deemed to be acceptable by Members, then the Construction Management Strategy would not be required pursuant to planning condition.
78. In addition to the above, should permission be granted conditions of consent would ensure that dust, noise, 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.

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Conclusion

79. The application proposes new Academy buildings on a well-established education site. In principle, I therefore see no overriding objection to the proposed development. The proposal would provide a welcome improvement in the provision of new and modern education & community facilities together with a building of a high standard of design in terms of external appearance and finishes. Subject to any further views received before the Planning Applications Committee Meeting, particularly with regards to the Construction Management Strategy, I am satisfied that subject to the imposition of conditions, this proposal would not have a significantly detrimental effect on the amenity of local residents, the character of the local landscape, heritage issues or the local highway network. In my view it would not give rise to significant material harm and is in accordance with the general aims and objectives of the relevant Development Plan Policies. There are no material planning considerations that indicate that the conclusion should be made otherwise. However, I recommend that various conditions be placed on any planning permission, including those outlined below.

Recommendation

80. SUBJECT TO any further views received before the Committee Meeting with regards to the Construction Management Strategy, I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO conditions, including conditions covering:
- 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 including the submission of details of door and window reveals;
 - details of all external lighting;
 - rating noise level from plant not to exceed to existing LA90 when measured at the nearest residential property;
 - a scheme of landscaping, including hard surfacing, its implementation and maintenance;
 - measures to protect trees to be retained;
 - an Arboricultural Method Statement;
 - the need for a bat survey to be undertaken prior to demolition of the existing school buildings;
 - habitat/biodiversity enhancement strategy, including monitoring and management;
 - protection of badgers from construction activities;
 - no tree removal during the bird breeding season;
 - development to accord with the recommendations of the ecological survey;
 - details of fencing, gates and means of enclosure, including colour finishes;
 - archaeological works;
 - Secured by Design principles to be adopted;
 - a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good' to be achieved;
 - the playing field provided and marked out as shown on the proposed site plan;
 - a community use agreement relating to use of the indoor and outdoor facilities, including hours of use and nature of use;
 - the provision of car parking, cycle parking, access and turning areas;
 - details of cycle parking design and phased implementation;
 - promotion of a Traffic Regulation Order and a contribution of £2000 if successful;
 - preparation, submission for approval, implementation and ongoing review of a revised School Travel Plan;

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- provision of visibility splays, including improvements to the visibility splays at the sites exit;
- details of foul and surface water drainage;
- control of discharge of foul/contaminated drainage;
- survey work regarding land contamination;
- no flood lighting shall be erected on the multi-use games area, or elsewhere on the site, without the written permission of the County Planning Authority;
- 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;
- development to be carried out in accordance with the submitted construction management plan;
- measures to prevent mud and debris being taken onto the public highway.

81. I FURTHER RECOMMEND that the applicants BE ADVISED of the following informatives:

- Sport England be consulted by the applicant to ensure that the proposed sporting facilities are designed to satisfactory technical standards. Attention is also drawn to the relevant Sport England Guidance Notes providing technical advice on the appropriate standards for the sports facilities.
- Account should be taken of the comments made by the Environment Agency relating to drainage, contamination, and storage of fuel, oil & chemicals.
- Account should be taken to the informatives made by Maidstone Borough Council.

Case officer – Mary Green	01622 221066
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Background documents - See section heading
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Appendix 1

APPLICATION MA/08/TEMP/0052 – DEMOLITION OF EXISTING SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND ERECTION OF NEW ACADEMY. RE-PROVISION OF OUTDOOR PLAYING PITCHES, MUGA, PARKING SPACES, STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE WORKS AND ASSOCIATED CIRCULATORY ACCESS ROUTE AT THE CORNWALLIS ACADEMY, HUBBARDS LANE, MAIDSTONE

NOTES of a Planning Applications Committee site visit to the Cornwallis Academy, Maidstone on Tuesday, 9 December 2008.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr R E King (Chairman), Mrs V J Dagger, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr J F London, Mr T A Maddison, Mr J I Muckle, Mr W V Newman, Mr A R Poole and Mr F Wood-Brignall.

OFFICERS: Mrs S Thompson, Mr J Crossley and Miss M Green (Planning); and Mr A Tait (Legal and Democratic Services).

PARISH COUNCILS: Mr R Fuller (Boughton Monchelsea), Mrs J Sawyer (Linton), Mr J Andrew (Loose).

THE APPLICANTS: Cornwallis Academy (Mr R Harris – Chairman of Governors, Mr D Simmons – Head, Ms G Luscombe and Mr McGregor). Mr H Pye of Jestico and Whiles.

(1) The Chairman opened the meeting. He explained that its purpose was for the Committee Members to familiarise themselves with the site and to listen to the views of interested parties.

(2) Miss Green opened her presentation by explaining that permission had been granted in November 2008 for the construction of a new Academy on the site of the Oldborough Manor Community School. This formed part of the proposals to make the Oldborough Manor Community School, Senacre Technology College and Cornwallis School sites a 'double academy' from July 2007. It was intended that both of the Academies would be constructed by autumn 2010, with the demolition of the existing buildings and associated external works following once the new buildings were occupied.

(3) Miss Green said that this particular proposal was for a new building to house the second of the Academies, catering for 1765 pupils and providing over 14000 square metres of accommodation.

(4) Miss Green then said that the Cornwallis Academy (formerly Cornwallis School) was located approximately 4.2km to the south/south-east of Maidstone Town Centre. The site was located within the rural fringes of Maidstone and within the 'southern anti-coalescence belt'. Beyond Heath Road to the South lay the Linton Park Estate. This was a Grade II* Listed Historic Park & Garden, and a Special Landscape Area. The gate house to the park was also Grade II Listed.

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(5) Miss Green then gave a detailed description of the application. She said that it was proposed that the existing buildings would be demolished, with a new school building being constructed on the existing playing field and informal grass areas. By locating the proposed school on the existing playing field, the new school could be completed whilst the existing buildings remained fully operational. Upon completion of the new build, the existing school would be demolished and the land remodelled to provide informal and formal external play areas, sports facilities, and car parking.

(6) Miss Green then distributed two plans. The first of these showed the existing school buildings (in orange) and the new proposed Academy building (in grey). Miss Green pointed out the parameters of the main “L shaped” building, which would be built on the point where the meeting was taking place. The western corner of the building would be approximately 20 metres from the site boundary and 30 metres from the rear elevation of the closest residential property in Hanson Drive (the most southerly of the new roads between the current playing fields and Linton Road). The southern elevation of the proposed building would be approximately 25 metres from the boundary with Heath Road and 35 metres from the Grade II Listed Gate House to Linton Park.

(7) Miss Green continued by referring Members to Page 6 of the briefing note for a summary of the accommodation and associated external facilities that the applicant proposed to provide. Access to the site would remain from Hubbards Lane, and the existing car parking would be extended to provide 247 car parking spaces. Storage for 250 bicycles would also be provided, as would a bus-only entrance to the site from Heath Road. A four-court multi use games area (MUGA) would be provided to the north of the car parking. Playing fields and sports pitches would occupy the northern area of the site. Pedestrian access would be via the existing Hubbards Lane entrance and from Linton Road, using an existing pedestrian access gate, south of Hanson Drive.

(8) Miss Green referred to the second of the two plans which showed the layout and relative heights of various elements of the main Academy building. The building itself would provide 10 learning plazas, 5 science laboratories, 4 multi material laboratories, a food technology area, 5 art studios, a music suite, food court, dance/activity studio, a 4-court sports hall, lecture theatre, admin areas and a central atrium known as the ‘Heartspace’. The highest element of the building would be the proposed 6th form accommodation, which would be located in its south eastern corner.

(9) Miss Green went on to say that existing semi-mature and mature boundary planting and trees would be retained and protected throughout construction works, and would be enhanced as part of the site’s wider landscaping scheme. An existing area of scrubland in the North West corner of the site had been identified as being of significant value as a habitat for nesting birds and other wildlife. The applicant was therefore proposing to develop an ecological garden in this corner of the site. A sports pavilion building was proposed at the top of the bank at the northern boundary of the site. This would also provide a classroom facility and storage area.

(10) Miss Green told the meeting that the applicant had advised that the project would achieve a minimum ‘Very Good’ rating under BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) for schools. It was proposed that the building would include a number of sustainable features, including a ground source heat pump, solar water heating panels and photovoltaics (tiles or slates containing solar cells).

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(11) Miss Green then reported the views of Statutory Consultees. The County Council's Conservation & Design Architect, Landscape Consultant, Noise Consultant and Biodiversity Officer all require additional information to be submitted before the application was determined. So too did English Heritage. The Environment Agency had raised objection to the proposal on the grounds that the submitted Flood Risk Assessment was unacceptable and did not comply with the requirements of PPS25. Boughton Monchelsea and Linton Parish Councils had commented on the proposed development primarily expressing concern over the access to the site. They had requested improvements to local road junctions. In addition, 13 letters of representation had been received from neighbouring properties, primarily located in Hanson Drive and Heath Road.

(12) Miss Green concluded her presentation by summarising the points of objection raised by local residents. These related to the siting, height and massing of the proposed building, design, proximity to the boundary and neighbouring properties, overshadowing, loss of light, noise and light pollution, and highway implications. These points are summarised on pages 15 and 16 of the briefing note.

(13) Members then inspected the Hubbards Lane/Heath Road junction in order to witness the current traffic congestion issues associated with school start and finishing times. Mrs Luscombe (Cornwallis Academy) informed Members that the buses arrived at 3pm and left at 3.10 pm. Staff and Sixth Formers left after the buses had gone. She estimated that some 80% of pupils came to school by bus as they lived in the outlying villages. This resulted in 12 buses per day coming on site. She then said that 50% of Year 13 Sixth Form students owned their own cars. Curiously, there were no more than half a dozen pupils who travelled in by motor cycle. There were currently 270 sixth form pupils at Cornwallis. This number would eventually increase to 490.

(14) Mrs Luscombe agreed with Mrs Hohler's suggestion that a car-sharing scheme could be developed for sixth form pupils.

(15) The remainder of the meeting was conducted indoors. Mrs Dagger asked whether any objections had been received from the owners of Linton Park. Miss Green replied that a response was expected.

(16) In response to a question, Mrs Luscombe said that the application did not contain a floodlighting element. Miss Green added that community use would take place indoors during the evenings and weekends and outdoors during out-of-school hours.

(17) Mr Pye (Jestico and Whiles) said that the applicants only had a remit to deal with traffic issues on site as they had no budget to deal with traffic issues off-site. Consequently, they could not propose such external measures as road widening, lay-bys and cycle paths outside the school. The proposal therefore contained parking bays for 12 buses as well as 250 cycle racks (in compliance with KCC's Vehicle Parking Standards.) The applicants were currently holding discussions with KCC Highways over the details of the new bus access point in Heath Road.

(18) Mr Andrew (Loose PC) asked about the public drop-off point by the crossroads opposite the Linton Road entrance. He asked whether this was considered to be the right place. Miss Green replied that this entrance was already in existence and therefore was not

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(in itself) a part of the application. She added that the residents of Hanson Drive had raised the concern that the proposed increased use of that entrance by visitors would lead to parking congestion if visitors parked in their road before using that entrance.

(19) Mr Andrew said that there had been a number of occasions where children who used the Linton Road entrance had run across the road despite the pedestrian lights being red. Mr Harris (Chairman of Governors) said that this was a practice that the School did everything it could to discourage.

(20) In response to a question from Mrs Hohler, Mr Pye said that a 20% increase in student parking had been planned for. Mrs Luscombe said that careful consideration would be given to the Travel Plan that supplemented the application.

(21) Mrs Luscombe informed the meeting that there was no railway station in the vicinity of the School. The nearest stations were in Maidstone itself. This meant that the bus was the only means of public transport available. Of the 12 buses that carried children to and from the School, 3 were provided by Arriva and the rest were contracted by the School to provide the service.

(22) Mrs Luscombe replied to a question from Mr Muckle by describing the School's current mechanisms for managing parking and travel onto the site. The sixth form timetables varied from those of other pupils in that they did not necessarily have to come in for the normal hours of 8.30 am to 3 pm. They might, for example only be at school from 10 to 2. On the other hand, they might stay behind after the others had gone home. The School encouraged greater use of free time in order to prepare the sixth formers for University life. Car sharing was encouraged. A number of sixth formers still used the buses.

(23) Mrs Luscombe explained that the sixth form would not reach full capacity until 2013 when the School Leaving Age rose to 18.

(24) The Chairman explained that the Planning Applications Committee would need to assume maximum capacity when it determined the application.

(25) Mr Harris informed the meeting that the School had been built in the 1960s to accommodate 800 pupils. Since then, the number of pupils had doubled within the same accommodation.

(26) Members were shown larger elevations of the proposal.

(27) Mr Muckle asked why the Environment Agency had declared the Flood Risk Assessment to be unacceptable. The site appeared to be on higher ground than the rest of Maidstone. Mrs Thompson explained that every application had to conform to the requirements of PPS25. The applicants had not yet done so, and would need to fulfil all these requirements before the Environment Agency could withdraw its objection. However, flood risk issues also related to surface run-off, rather than just marine or river flooding.

(28) Mr Andrew said that there were a number of underground springs in the area. It could be that some of the drainage aspects of the proposal were currently a flood risk to other sites.

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(29) Mrs Sawyer (Linton PC) asked what the playing surfaces would consist of. Mr Pye said that these would all be natural turf except for the MUGA. He added that water run-off from the hard areas would be drained away and contained in a water tank.

(30) Mr Fuller commented that the surfacing which would best suit this particular soft clay site would be permeable paving. He added that this was a very exciting project, which could become a landmark.

(31) The Chairman thanked everyone for attending. The notes of the visit would be appended to the Head of Planning Applications Group's report to the determining Committee.