

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms,
Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 16 July 2014.

Application by Kent County Council Property and Infrastructure Support for the conversion of existing light industrial building into 5 classrooms, a Plan Prepare and Assess (PPA) room with new staircase/lift extension and associated external works, including fencing, canopy and access platform, and the removal of existing mobile classroom at Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge – TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

Recommendation: Permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Members: Mr. R. Long & Mr. C. Smith

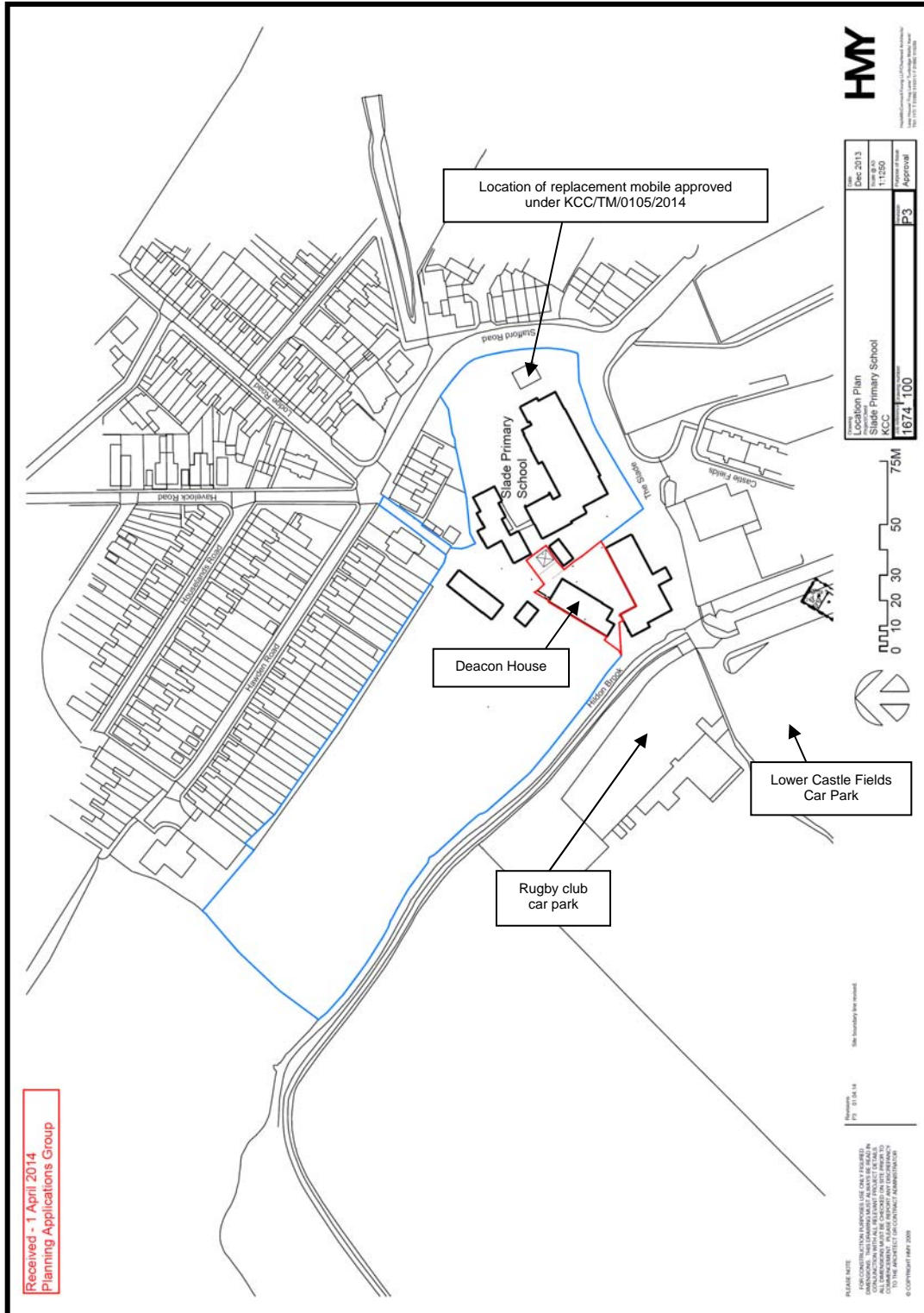
Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. Slade Primary School is located close to the centre of Tonbridge, to the north-west of the High Street. The school's main elevation fronts The Slade, with the side of the school leading out onto Stafford Road. Stafford Road provides access to a high density residential area, which lies to the north and east of the school. The school playing fields are located to the west, with agricultural fields beyond. Located to the south-west are the Tonbridge swimming pool and rugby club along with an extensive public car park. To the south, opposite the school on The Slade, are further buildings and an area of open space.
2. Immediately to the south-west of the school are two buildings, known as Deacon House and Hildenbrook House. Hildenbrook House is a four-storey building with office use at ground floor level and residential use above, which has a frontage onto The Slade, and lying to the rear of this is Deacon House, the subject of this planning application.
3. Deacon House is a two/three story disused building, originally built as an industrial unit but later converted into offices. There is an area of hardstanding between the two buildings forming an informal courtyard, and an existing vehicular and pedestrian access onto The Slade, which lies between the school and Hildenbrook House. Deacon House backs onto the existing school playing fields.
4. Deacon House lies adjacent to but outside of both the Tonbridge Conservation Area and the Metropolitan Green Belt, but within the urban boundary of Tonbridge. Hilden Brook runs along the western boundary of the site and the school playing fields.

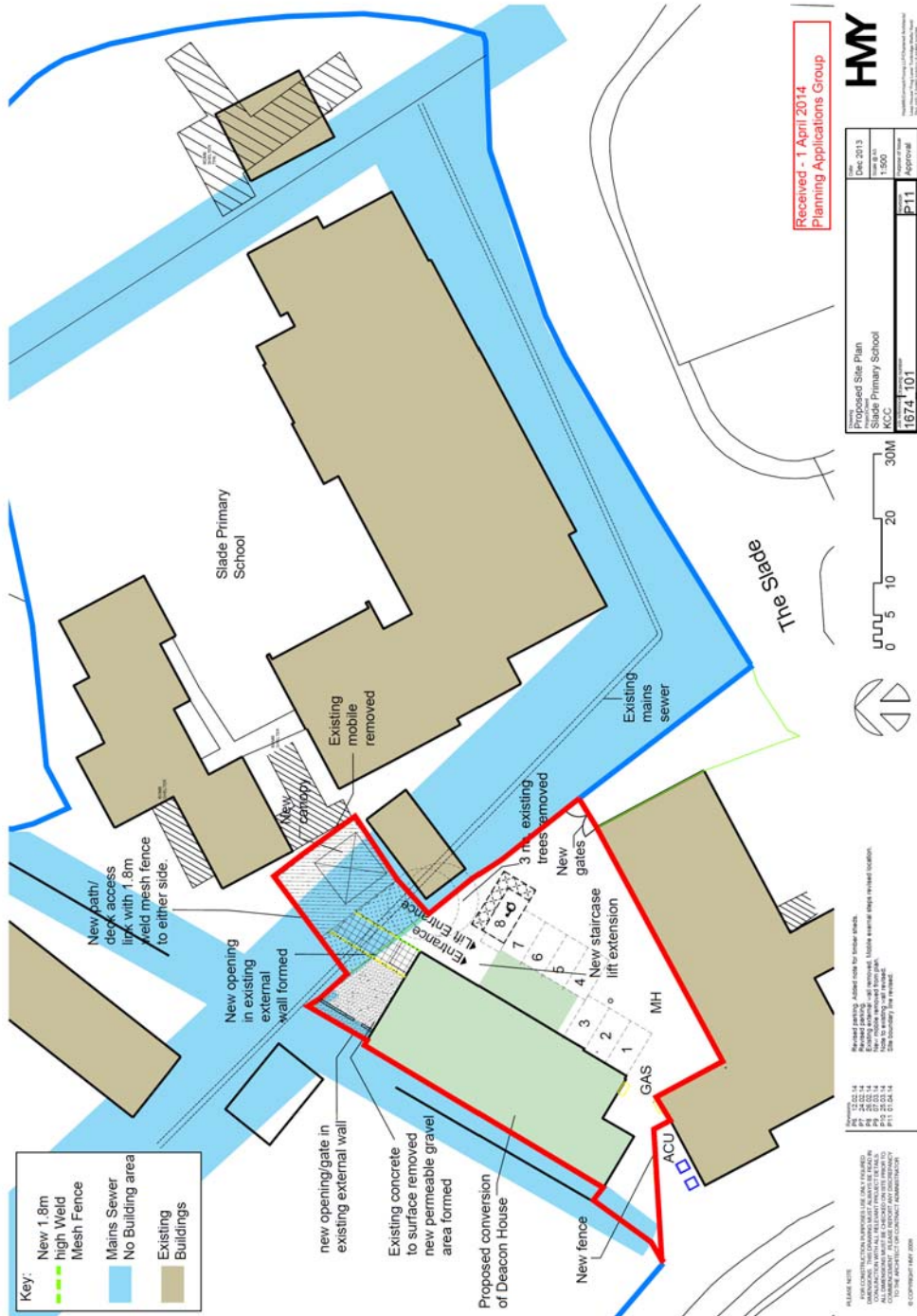
Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
 TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

General Location Plan



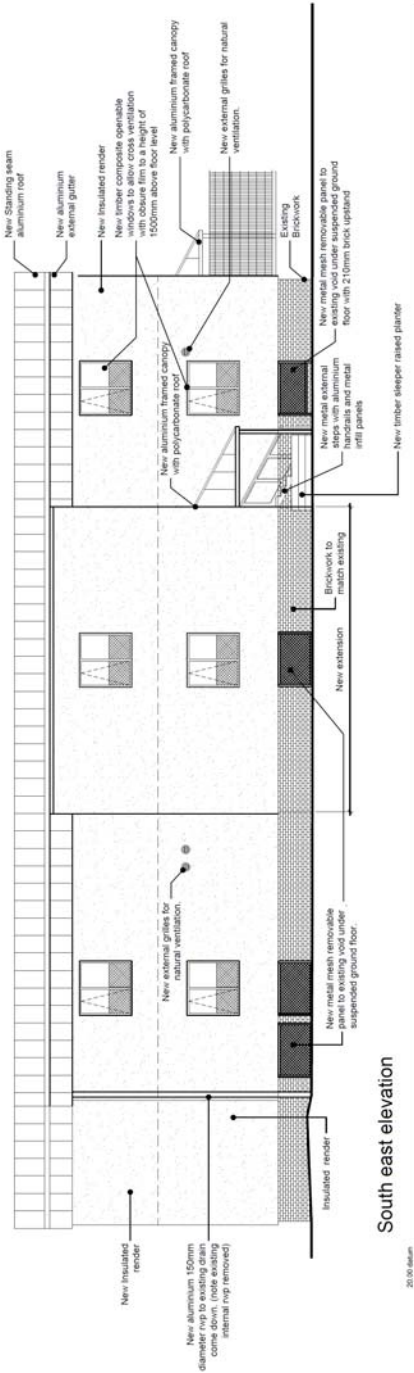
Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
 TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

Site Location Plan

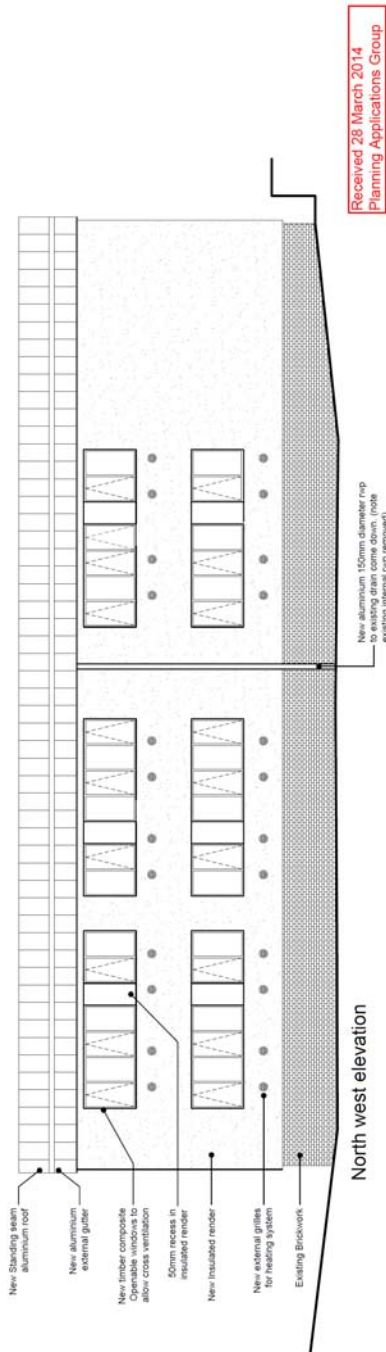


Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
 TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

Proposed Elevations



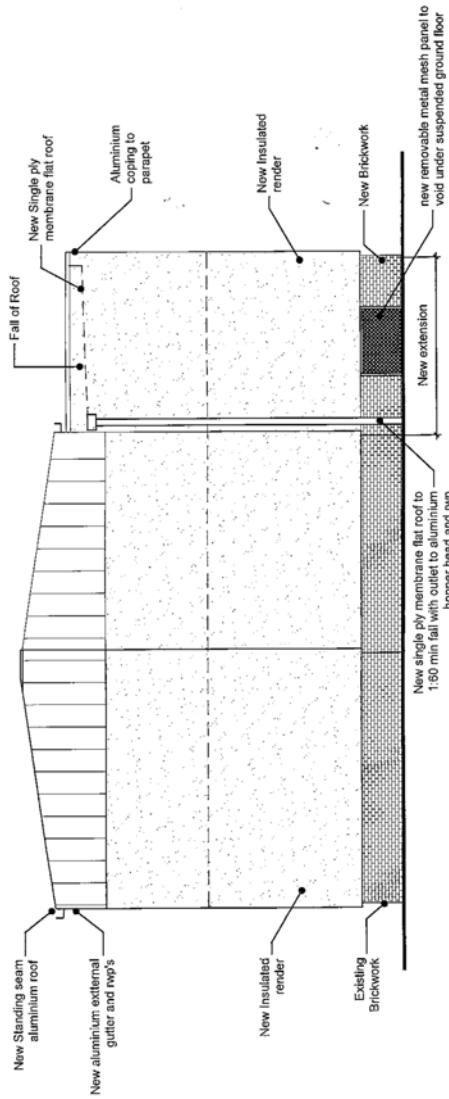
South east elevation



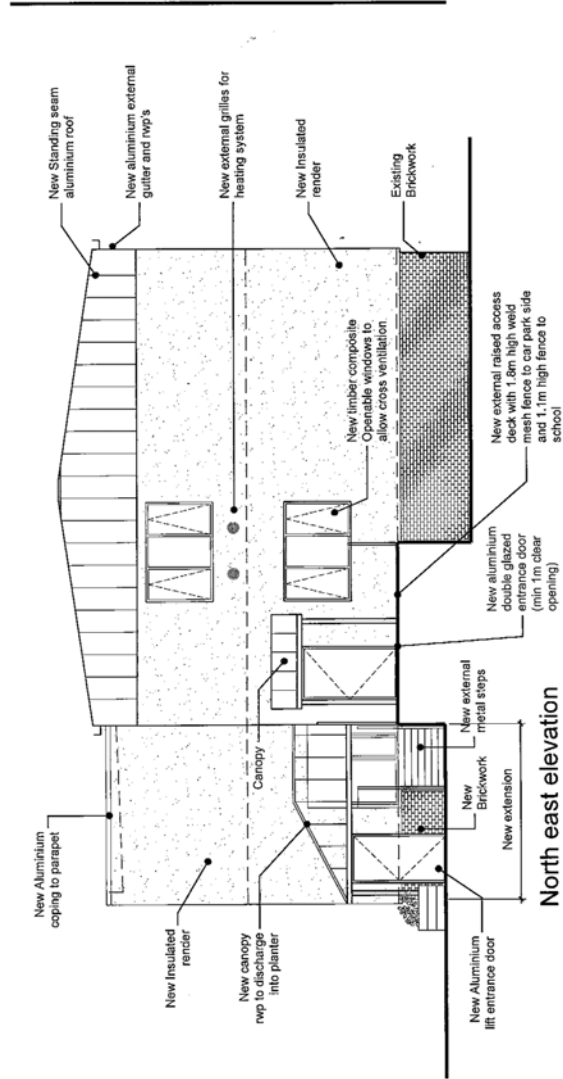
North west elevation

Received 28 March 2014
 Planning Applications Group

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
 TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

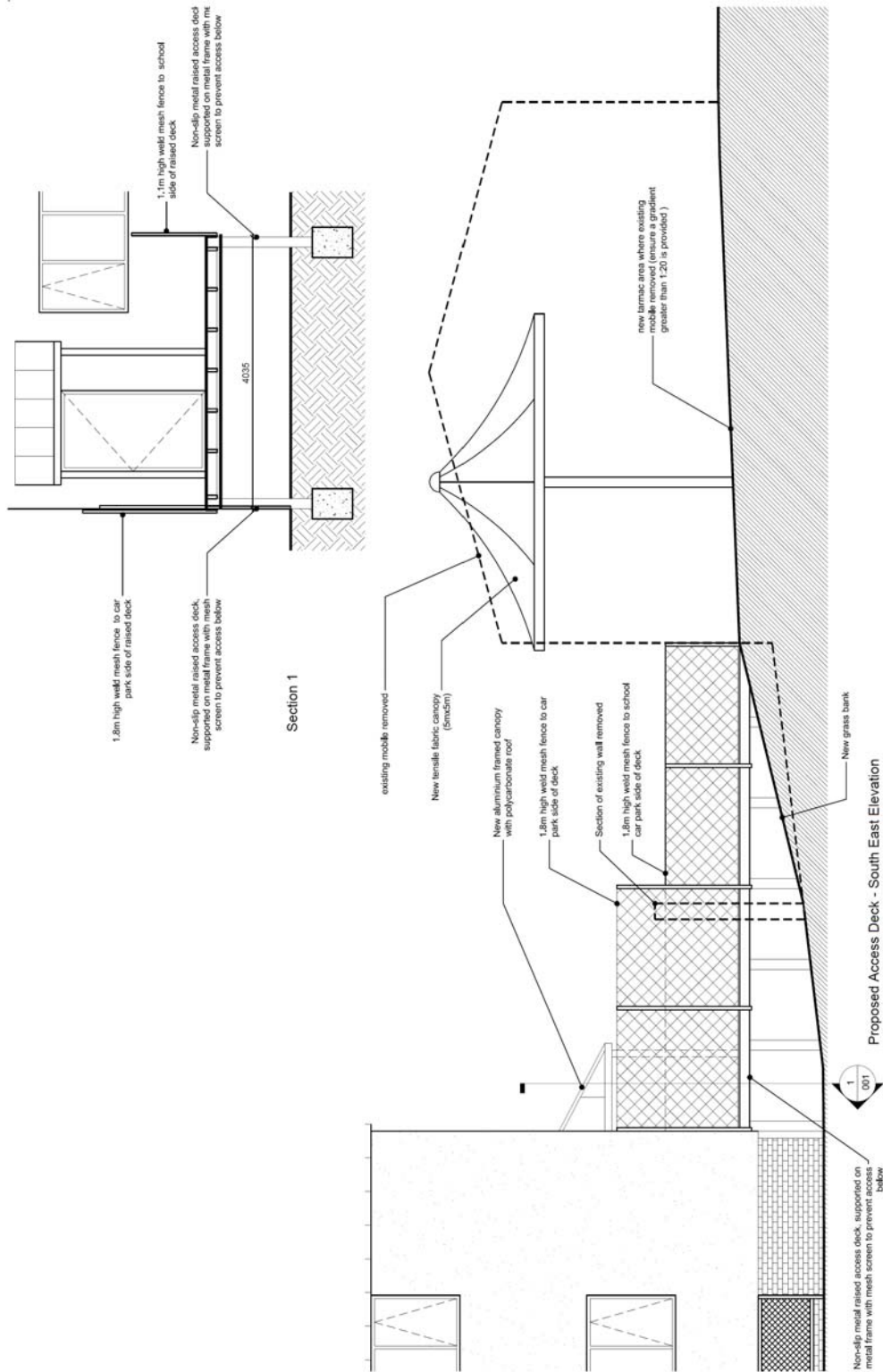


South west elevation



North east elevation

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
 TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)



Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

Background

5. Slade Primary School is currently a 1.5 Form Entry school, with a yearly admission number of 45 pupils. The Kent Commissioning Plan for 2013-2018 has identified a significant requirement for reception year school places in the Tonbridge and Malling Local Authority area. Slade Primary School is consistently oversubscribed, and with an Ofsted grading of 'outstanding' is first preference for many parents. Slade Primary School has therefore been identified for expansion to meet the projected increase in demand for primary school places in Tonbridge South. KCC has secured funding for this expansion through the 'Targeted Basic Needs' programme.
6. The intention is for Slade Primary School to permanently increase to a 2 Form Entry school, admitting 60 reception year pupils each year. This increase would take place from this September (2014), and each year thereafter, so that total pupil numbers at the school would eventually increase from 315 to 420. The number of staff at the school would increase from 40 to 44.
7. The increase in pupil numbers requires the addition of 4 new classrooms and attendant facilities. The proposal is outlined in detail in paragraph 10.

Recent Site History

8. There is a lengthy planning history relating to the school itself, for various extensions, fencing and the siting of, and renewal of, mobile classrooms on the site, dating from 2013 back to 1956. Recent approval (under delegated powers) has been given for the replacement of the existing mobile classroom which lies on the corner of The Slade and Stafford Road, with a slightly larger mobile for a temporary period of 5 years (reference KCC/TM/0105/2014).
9. The planning history for Deacon House itself is as follows:

TM/67/10089/OLD	Storage building for building materials and temporary office Approved
TM/03/00270/FL	Conversion and extension of existing office buildings into residential use with ancillary car parking and landscape works Approved
TM/05/00308/FL	Demolition of existing two storey office building and construction of 6 no. town houses Approved
TM/08/01875/FL	Renovation of existing building to create 8 no. two bedroom units and formation of new second floor to create a further 2 no. two bedroom units and 1 no. one bedroom unit, including formation of two new stair pods and car parking layout Approved
TM/11/01392/FL	Extend time limit for planning approval TM/08/01875/FL (renovation of existing building to create 8 no. two bedroom units and formation of new second floor to create a further 2 no. two bedroom units and 1 no. one bedroom unit, including formation of two new stair pods and car parking layout) Approved

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

Proposal

10. The application seeks to convert the existing building, build a small two storey extension and provide direct access to this building from the existing school site. The existing building would be re-clad in insulated render with a brick plinth at the bottom, and a new standing seam aluminium roof. Removable mesh panels would be inserted in the brick plinth on the south-east and south-west elevations. The windows would be timber and opening to allow ventilation. The windows on the south-eastern elevation would serve the corridors and would be provided with obscure film up to a height of 1500mm above floor level. The classroom windows would be located on the north-west and north-east elevations.
11. Due to the change in ground floor levels between the two sites, Deacon House would have a suspended ground floor with a void below of 0.975m. On this suspended ground floor level the conversion would provide three classrooms with a corridor access and boys wc; whilst at first floor level the accommodation provided would be the girls wc, a fourth classroom, a PPA room and an additional room which could either serve as a small hall or an additional (5th) classroom. This 5th classroom would be 89m² in area, approximately 30m² larger than the other classrooms thus allowing it to be used for either purpose.
12. The extension would be located on the southern elevation and would provide room for the staircase and lift, and a small store room at first floor level.
13. Two entry points would be created for the building. The first would be direct from the hardstanding/courtyard between Deacon House and Hildenbrook House. A level threshold would be provided for the lift from this courtyard, as well as stairs from here to the upper ground floor level into the new stairwell. The second access would be directly into the upper ground floor level on the eastern elevation across a raised access deck linking this building with the existing school site (see drawing on page D4.8). An opening would be created in the existing perimeter wall in this location.
14. To facilitate this access from the school site a temporary mobile classroom, currently sited along the western boundary, would be removed along with three small self-seeded trees. A new tensile fabric canopy would be erected in this location. For safety reasons a 1.8m high mesh fence would be used on the car park side of the raised access into Deacon House above the courtyard/hardstanding area, reducing to 1.1m high fencing within the existing school site.
15. Within the courtyard, 8 parking spaces would be provided, including 1 space for disabled users, and these would be allocated for staff parking only (increasing the current on site staff parking from 18 spaces to 26 spaces). New gates would be positioned across the access, in line with the corner of Hildenbrook House (and set back from The Slade road frontage).

Planning Policy

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

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
 TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

- (i) **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** March 2012 and the **National Planning Policy Guidance** (March 2014), sets out the Government's planning policy guidance for England, at the heart of which is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The guidance is a material consideration for the determination of planning applications but does not change the statutory status of the development plan which remains the starting point for decision making. However the weight given to development plan policies will depend on their consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the development plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

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

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

- Consideration of whether the opportunities for sustainable transport have been taken up and safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people;
- Achieving the requirement for high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- The great importance that the Government attaches to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, and that great weight should be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools.

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

- (iii) **Tonbridge and Malling Borough Core Strategy September 2007:**

Policy CP1 Sustainable Development: 1) All proposals for new development must result in a high quality sustainable environment; 2) provision should be made for housing, employment and other development to meet the needs of existing and future residents of the Borough; 3) the need for development will be balanced against the need to protect and enhance the natural and built environment; 4) locations for development should seek to minimise waste generation, water and energy consumption, reduce the need to travel and where possible avoid areas liable to flooding; 5) new housing development should include a mix of house types and tenure and mixed use developments promoted where appropriate; 6) development to be concentrated at the highest density compatible with the local environment, and be well served by public modes of transport; 7) that development should minimise the risk of crime and make appropriate provision for infrastructure to serve the new development including social leisure, cultural and community facilities and adequate open space accessible to all.

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

- Policy CP2 Sustainable Transport:** New development that is likely to generate a significant number of trips should (a) be well located relative to public transport, cycle and pedestrian routes and with good access to local service centres; (b) minimise the need to travel through the implementation of Travel Plans and the provision or retention of local services and facilities; (c) either provide or make use of, and if necessary enhance, a choice of transport modes, including public transport, cycling and walking; (d) be compatible with the character and capacity of the highway network in terms of the volume and nature of traffic generated; (e) provide for any necessary enhancements to the safety of the highway network and capacity of transport infrastructure whilst avoiding road improvements that significantly harm the natural or historic environment or the character of the area; and (f) ensure accessibility for all, including elderly people, people with disabilities and others with restricted mobility.
- Policy CP10 Flood Protection:** 1) Within the floodplain, development should seek to make use of areas at no or low risk to flooding before areas at higher risk, where possible and compatible with other policies; 2) development which is acceptable (in terms of PPS25) or otherwise exceptionally justified within areas at risk of flooding must be (a) subject to a flood risk assessment, and (b) include an appropriately safe means of escape above flood levels anticipated during the lifetime of the development, and (c) be designed and controlled to mitigate the effects of flooding on the site and the potential impact of the development on flooding elsewhere in the floodplain.
- Policy CP11 Urban Areas:** States that development should be concentrated within the confines of the urban areas which include Tonbridge.
- Policy CP23 Tonbridge Town Centre:** Within Tonbridge Town Centre there should be a sustainable development pattern of retail, employment, housing and leisure uses, and a range of other services to regenerate and enhance the vitality and viability of the Town centre.
- Policy CP25 Mitigation of Development Impacts:** Development will not be permitted unless the service, transport and community infrastructure necessary to serve it is either available, or will be made available by the time it is needed. Development proposals must therefore either incorporate the infrastructure required as a result of the scheme, or make provision for financial contributions and/or land to secure such infrastructure or service provision at the time it is needed, by means of conditions or a planning obligation.

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

(iv) Tonbridge and Malling Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan Document April 2010:

- Policy CC1 Mitigation – Sustainable Design:** Requires all proposals for new development, building conversions, refurbishments and extensions to incorporate passive design measures to reduce energy demand.
- Policy CC3 Adaptation – Sustainable Drainage:** Requires the provision of sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) appropriate to the local ground water and soil conditions and drainage regimes. Where SUDS are not practical the proposal should incorporate alternative means of surface water drainage to ground watercourses or surface water sewers.
- Policy NE3 Impact of Development on Biodiversity:** Seeks to protect biodiversity interest across the Borough.
- Policy SQ1 Landscape and Townscape Protection and Enhancement:** Proposals for development are required to reflect the local distinctiveness, condition and sensitivity to change of the local character areas as defined in the Character Area Appraisals SPD. All new development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance (a) the character and local distinctiveness of the area including its historical and architectural interest and the prevailing level of tranquillity; (b) the distinctive setting of, and relationship between, the pattern of settlement, roads and the landscape, urban form and important views; and (c) the biodiversity value of the area, including patterns of vegetation, property boundaries and water bodies.
- Policy SQ6 Noise:** Proposals for noise sensitive development (including schools) will be required to demonstrate that noise levels are appropriate for the proposed use. Proposals for built development should incorporate design measures such that internal noise levels are demonstrated to meet criteria levels in relevant guidance, including BS 8233:1999 and Building Bulletin 93.

(v) Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan April 2008:

- Policy TCA1 Quality of Development:** Development within the Central Area of Tonbridge is required to satisfy requirements regarding (a) positively addressing the river Medway; (b) providing animated and well designed street frontages; (c) make provision for a good connection of streets, footpaths and cycle paths; (d) the integration into the design of car, motorbike and cycle parking; (e) the design of development respecting the context of the site and its character especially when viewed from the castle and high view points; and (f) a mix of land uses with regard being had to the compatibility of neighbouring uses.
- Policy TCA15 Parking Standards:** Parking within the Central Area will be in accordance with PPG13, PPS3 and the adopted Kent County Council parking standards.

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

Consultations

17. **Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council** has no objection to the application subject to a condition requiring the removal of the mobile classrooms once they are no longer required, and providing the Environment Agency has been consulted and are satisfied that the development is acceptable.

Environment Agency raises no objection subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the works to be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment and the mitigation measures contained within the report.

School Travel Planner commented on the draft School Travel Plan which has since been updated to incorporate her comments, and can be secured via condition.

Conservation Officer and County Archaeological Officers were consulted on 7th May 2014. No comments received to date.

Kent County Council's Highways and Transportation raise no objection subject to conditions covering the updating of the school travel plan, and the submission of a construction management plan.

Local Member

18. The local County Members Mr Christopher Smith, and Mr Richard Long, were notified of the application on 7th May 2014.

Publicity

19. The application was publicised by the posting of two site notices, and the individual notification of 45 residential properties.

Representations

20. In response to the publicity, one letter of representation has been received from the Slade Area Residents Association. The key points raised can be summarised as follows:

- No objection to school buildings but regret that the speed with which the plans are being effected means a portacabin still features on site
- Concerned about traffic problems in the area, which are underestimated in the Transport Statement
- Main entrance to the school is on Stafford Road and not The Slade. If those making the site visit were under the impression that the main gate was in the Slade they were observing the wrong place
- Congestion and danger to pedestrians on Stafford Road at drop off time due to illegal parking and dangerous turning
- Transport Statement ignores the fact that Stafford Road is the sole vehicle exit for the main part of the housing estate comprising some 200 households

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

- Statement supposes problems do not exist as parents can park in Lower Castlefields, but parents do not use that facility
- Transport Statement based on one afternoon visit, when problems less severe as pick up is extended over several hours due to after school clubs, parents not being in such a rush, and traffic not conflicting with local residents returning from work
- Observations should have been made over several days at both am and pm
- Do not agree that increase in school roll will not proportionately increase traffic movements
- Revised School Travel Plan relies on encouraging more walking to school and more cooperative behaviour of parents – not solved the problem up to now, so why would it work in the future?
- Should include other measures such as traffic warden policing and allowing the concessionary parking to apply to Upper Castlefields car park as well.

Discussion

21. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph 16 above. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore the 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.
22. This application is being reported for determination by Members of the Planning Applications Committee following the objections raised by the Slade Area Residents' Association. In my view the main issues to consider are the principle of the conversion, its design and appearance; the impact on residential amenity with particular regard to the residents in Hildenbrook House; and the highway and parking implications arising from the development and the school expansion in general. Other matters to consider relate to landscape and ecology, flood risk, contamination, construction management and archaeology and conservation issues.

Conversion, Design and Appearance

23. Deacon House forms a previously developed site within the built up urban area of Tonbridge, where the re-use and redevelopment of land and buildings is supported by policies CP1 and CP11 of the Tonbridge and Malling Core Strategy. The principle of its re-use for education purposes therefore accords with planning policy and guidance. The school site is extremely constrained for new development opportunities within the existing grounds due to the presence of the mains sewers within the site, which cannot be built over. The re-use of this existing building, located in such close proximity, therefore makes an excellent use of a previously developed site to the advantage of the local school and welcome community infrastructure.
24. The appearance of the building (which appears generally run-down at present and visually detracts from the street scene) would be enhanced through the re-cladding of the elevations with render and the introduction of a new standing seam roof. The design of the building would reflect the design of Hildenbrook House to the south, and bears many similarities to the redevelopment of the building when it was approved for

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge

TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

residential conversion in 2008 and 2011. A two storey extension would be included on the south-east elevation to provide space for the lift and stair core. This element would have a flat roof slotting in just below the gutter level of the main building and thus appearing as a subservient element to the main building. It would be similarly clad in render and I consider that this would not detract from the overall appearance of the scheme.

25. It is considered that the modern design would reflect the appearance of the immediately adjoining property and be in keeping with more modern development within Tonbridge generally. Whilst it does not reflect the traditional Victorian school building, the redevelopment of Deacon House would improve its overall appearance within the street scene, thus positively contributing to the character of the area, rather than detracting from it. Deacon House is located just outside, but adjacent to, the Tonbridge Conservation Area, which includes the original school building. By improving the overall appearance of this building through its redevelopment, it is considered that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be enhanced.
26. The difference in ground floor levels between the school site and Deacon House requires an access deck to be provided for entry into Deacon House from the school and a small element of the existing boundary wall would be removed to accommodate this. For safety reasons a 1.8m high fence would be provided on the car park side of the access deck where it crosses from the existing boundary wall to Deacon House itself. On the other side and within the existing school site this fence would be at a height of 1.1m only. The fence would be open mesh, thus reducing its visual impact, and although relatively high would be necessary from a safety point of view. A condition requiring details of the colour of the fencing could be imposed to ensure its appearance was in keeping with the overall area, and the school buildings.
27. The existing modular building which is located in this area would be removed and a tensile canopy erected here, which would provide a focus and link between what would be the two parts of the school. In addition framed canopies would be provided over both entry doors into Deacon House, enhancing the overall design through their detailing.
28. The mobile classroom located on the corner of The Slade and Stafford Road, is substandard and approval has been given for the replacement of this with a slightly larger mobile in the same location for a period of 5 years. This mobile would still be required even with the approval of the conversion of Deacon House and therefore the only modular building to be removed as a result of this scheme is the one referred to in the paragraph above. A condition requiring the removal of mobile classrooms as suggested by Tonbridge and Malling BC would therefore not be necessary.
29. In terms of design the scheme is considered to meet the aims of Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP23 and CP24 and Policy SQ1 of the Managing Development and the Environment DPD.

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

Amenity Issues

30. The main residential area close to the school lies to the north and north-east, accessed from Stafford Road, however the upper floors of Hildenbrook House are also residential flats and the impact of this conversion should therefore be considered in terms of their residential amenity.
31. The internal layout of Deacon House has located all of the classrooms at the northern side of the building, with the classroom windows all facing north towards the school playing fields, or north-east towards the existing school. The windows on the south-east elevation would serve the corridors and stair and lift core only, and would be provided with an obscure film to a height of 1.5m above floor level. This design was incorporated following the public consultation carried out by the applicants prior to the submission of the application, and in response to concerns raised regarding privacy, and is considered to address their concerns adequately.
32. Some low level external lighting is proposed around Deacon House in order to ensure the safety of users around the site in the evening and night time. The exact details could be secured through a condition to ensure that the lighting would not be intrusive to the occupiers of the neighbouring building and would be switched off at a reasonable time.
33. The use of the courtyard between Hildenbrook House and Deacon House for parking may introduce a noise disturbance to the neighbouring residents. However, the car park would only provide 8 spaces, and it is considered that as this area would be restricted for staff parking, where they would arrive in the morning and leave after school, rather than general visitor parking that may take place throughout the day, the impact would be very limited.
34. The applicants have submitted a Noise Report which looked at the impact of noise of the development – both in terms of noise created by the use of the building as a school, and whether the existing noise levels would affect the pupils and staff in using the building. The report concluded that the site and setting was sufficiently quiet to allow free ventilation to teaching spaces by means of natural ventilation through open windows. The report also made recommendations on plant noise design levels, which if adhered to would allow plant to be selected that is appropriately quiet for the area, and would mean that the conversion would not adversely affect noise levels in the area during the day or evening periods. A condition is recommended to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the submitted Noise Report.
35. It is therefore considered that the development would accord with Policy SQ6 of the Managing Development and the Environment DPD.

Highway and Parking Issues

36. As set out in the background section of this report, Slade Primary School is proposing changing to a 2 Form Entry primary school, which would eventually result in there being 420 pupils at the school, increasing from the existing school roll of 315 pupils. Staff numbers will increase from 40 to 44. In support of the application a Transport Statement

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

has been submitted which has been considered by KCC's Highways and Transportation Advisor.

37. The current parking provision on site is 18 spaces, restricted to staff parking only and no provision is made for parent drop off or parking within the site due to its constrained nature. With the proposed conversion of Deacon House the parking provision would increase to 26 spaces, but again this would be allocated for staff parking only. Kent Vehicle Parking standards would permit up to a maximum of 48 spaces for the school, therefore although the school does not provide this full allocation, the 26 spaces provided would comply with the parking guidelines.
38. By assessing the existing travel modes for pupils attending the school, the Transport Statement has calculated the likely increase in vehicle trips that would be associated with the rise in pupil numbers, and has calculated that there could be a 30% increase in traffic movements. This would be a 'worst case' scenario as it does not take into account the effects of the School Travel Plan, any absences from school, and also assumes that all pupils and staff travel in the same peak period, which is very unlikely. Notwithstanding this, and whilst it is acknowledged that some incidences of increased inconvenience to residents in the Slade area to the north of the site may occur, the additional traffic generated as a result of this scheme could not be classed as significant compared to overall traffic movements in this neighbourhood nor would it be detrimental to highway safety.
39. In support of the application the school have submitted a revised School Travel Plan, which has been assessed by the County Council's school travel planner. She states that the Travel Plan reaches the KCC criteria and is considered to be a very good plan. It is expected that the implementation of the School Travel Plan would assist with the increase in traffic generated. Parents would continue to be able to make use of the agreement with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to use the Lower Castle Fields and leisure centre car parks for free at drop off and pick up times, provided they have a permit.
40. The objections received from the Slade Area Residents' Association (SARA) are related to traffic and parking concerns and the impact the additional pupils will have on the surrounding residential area. With regard to their concerns regarding the robustness of the Transport Statement, it has been confirmed that two site visits were completed, and the correct accesses into the school observed. It is generally accepted that accumulations of parents at school are greater in the afternoon and from a parking perspective agreed that this is the worst case scenario, hence the survey being carried out during the afternoon.
41. The site visits undertaken for the Transport Statement showed that parents did use the Lower Castle Fields car park, and have demonstrated that sufficient capacity exists in these car parks for parental use. The SARA suggestion that the concession parking should also be applied to the Upper Castle Fields car park may have some merit but would rely on agreement with Tonbridge and Malling BC. Should consent be granted, an informative encouraging this to be investigated is recommended, along with greater engagement between the School Travel Plan Co-ordinator and the community through SARA, in order to try and minimise the impact the school has on the surrounds at peak times. Further processes in the School Travel Plan, such as using a 'name and shame'

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

process, could also be implemented to address some of the inconsiderate behaviour observed by SARA of some drivers in terms of parking and manoeuvring.

42. Given the above, it is considered that the proposals would not have a significant impact in transport terms, and would therefore accord with Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy and Policy TCA15 of the Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan.

Other Matters

Landscape and Ecology

43. A Tree Survey of the site was carried out, which assessed the trees within the school site and around Deacon House. No Tree Preservation Orders were found within either area. A group of 3 self seeded trees located within the existing school site where the access deck would lead across to Deacon House would need to be removed for the development to proceed. However, these are constrained by their location next to the mobile classroom (which is also to be removed) and classed as category C trees only, where they should not be a reason to restrict development.
44. An Ecological Appraisal of the site, including a Phase 1 Habitat Survey was also carried out for the site. The report concluded that there was limited potential to provide habitat for protected species, and that there was no requirement for further work for most protected species. The potential for bat roosts within Deacon House, however, was recommended for further assessment, and emergence surveys are currently being undertaken. The outcome of these surveys will be reported verbally to Members at the Planning Applications Committee meeting.
45. The survey also recommended that the trees should be removed outside of the bird breeding season and if this was not possible that the site should be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist for the presence of breeding birds prior to the start of the works (and that if breeding/nest building birds were found that no works should commence that are likely to disturb the nest, until the young have fully fledged).
46. Provided the development is carried out in accordance with the recommendations contained within this report, and subject to the findings of the bat emergence surveys, the development would accord with Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy, and Policy NE3 of the Managing Development and the Environment DPD.

Flood Risk

47. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted to accompany the application, given that the site falls within Flood Zone 3, where there is a high risk of fluvial flooding. Deacon House has been confirmed as being liable to flood, and has flooded as recently as December 2013. The ground floor of Deacon House would be raised above the designed flood level and the FRA confirms that this would mitigate the risk of internal flooding. The void beneath the lower ground floor would be allowed to be inundated in the event of extreme flood events, and that by allowing the building to flood internally the available volume within the floodplain would increase by at least 56m³, thus reducing the risk of flooding to those on site and those locally.

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

48. A range of sustainable drainage measures were considered, but due to the constrained nature of the site there are limited opportunities to introduce SuDS (sustainable urban drainage systems) to manage surface water runoff at source. In addition its proximity to Hilden Brook would mean that drainage systems that utilise infiltration as a means of disposal would not be suitable due to high groundwater.
49. The consideration of alternative sites for the development in zones with a lower probability for flooding have also been addressed in the FRA. The redevelopment of Deacon House is highly specific to this school and no suitable alternative sites in the locality upon which to relocate the entire school are reasonably available. Failing this the scheme is required to pass the exception test in accordance with paragraph 102 of the NPPF. This requires that it should be demonstrated that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, informed by a strategic FRA where one has been prepared; and a site specific FRA must demonstrate that the development will be safe for its lifetime taking into account the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
50. The FRA demonstrated that the development proposals would reduce the risk of flooding to those off site and would be safe for its lifetime, therefore the conversion scheme is considered acceptable in relation to the exception test.
51. The Environment Agency has considered the details submitted and has raised no objection to the scheme, subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the works to be carried out in accordance with the approved FRA and the mitigation measures contained within the report. The scheme would therefore comply with Policy CP10 of the Core Strategy.

Contamination

52. A Phase 1 Geo Environmental Assessment has been submitted to accompany the report which outlined the possible contamination risks due to the site's historic use as a builders yard prior to its office and commercial use. Contamination tests did not indicate any elevated concentrations of contaminants and given that the development involves minimal ground works as the scheme is for the conversion of the building, it is considered that there would be little contamination risk associated with the development.
53. No objection has been raised in relation to contamination on site from the Environment Agency, nor highlighted the need for any specific conditions.

Construction

54. Given that there are neighbouring residential properties, if planning permission is granted it is considered appropriate to impose a condition restricting hours of construction to protect residential amenity (Monday to Friday between 0800 and 1800; Saturday 0900 to 1300; and no operations on Sundays or public holidays). It is also considered good practice on school sites for contractors to be required under the terms of their contract to manage construction traffic/deliveries to minimise conflict with traffic and pedestrians at the beginning and end of the school day.

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge

TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

55. Should permission be granted a condition requiring the submission of a full Construction Management Strategy prior to commencement of development is considered appropriate. That should include details of how the site access would be managed to avoid peak school times, details of the methods and hours of working, location of site compounds and operative/visitor parking, details of site security and safety measures, lorry waiting and wheel washing facilities and details of any construction access.
56. In addition to the above, should permission be granted, a further condition to ensure that dust and mud are not deposited on the highway would also be considered appropriate, to minimise disruption to local residents.

Conservation and Archaeology

57. Deacon House lies outside the Tonbridge Conservation Area, but adjacent to it, along the existing school boundary. The conversion of Deacon House and its renovation, is considered to enhance the appearance of this building, which is on the periphery of the Conservation Area. I therefore consider that the proposal would not harm the setting or character of the Conservation Area and would be acceptable in relation to Policy SQ1 of the Managing Development and the Environment DPD and Policy TCA1 of the Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan.
58. Deacon House lies within an area identified as being of archaeological interest and the application has therefore been supported by a desktop assessment. Whilst the report states that there is a moderate to high potential for archaeology within the school site, the conversion of Deacon House involves only limited intrusive ground works due to the building's current existence. The small extension would be in an area where ground disruption has already occurred and as such it is considered unnecessary to require any archaeological watching brief condition in this instance.

Conclusion

59. The application has been considered on its own merits and in the light of the NPPF, the Planning for Schools Development Policy Statement and the Development Plan, and comments received raising concerns about the scheme. I consider that the proposed conversion of Deacon House would be in keeping with the surrounding area from a design point of view, and would improve the appearance of the building within the street scene and adjoining Conservation Area. In addition it is considered that the extra traffic generated as a result of the increase in pupil numbers would not result in an unacceptable impact on the highway network or residential amenity, and would accord with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.
60. Therefore, subject to the imposition of conditions, I consider that the development would not give rise to any material harm, and is otherwise in accordance with the general aims and objectives of the relevant Development Plan Policies, the Planning Statement and the guidance contained in the NPPF, and that permission should therefore be granted.

Conversion of light industrial building into 5 classrooms, Slade Primary School, The Slade, Tonbridge
TM/14/1687 (KCC/TM/0107/2014)

Recommendation

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

- the standard 5 year time limit;
- the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
- the submission and approval of details of all construction materials to be used externally including the access deck fence;
- the submission and approval of details of the lighting scheme, including hours of use;
- the development being carried out in accordance with the recommendations in the submitted Acoustics Specification;
- the parking permitted outside Deacon House to be restricted to the use of staff members only;
- the implementation of the updated School Travel Plan (Version 3.1, dated May 2014) and its on-going review;
- measures to be taken to prevent mud and debris being deposited on the public highway;
- hours of working during construction to be restricted to between the hours of 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays, with no operations on Sundays or Bank Holidays;
- the submission of a Construction Management Plan, providing details of access, parking and circulation within the site for contractors, site personnel and other operatives & management of the site access to avoid peak school times;
- The development being carried out in accordance with the precautionary measures, recommendations, and mitigation works detailed in the submitted Ecological Appraisal;
- The development being carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment and the mitigation measures contained therein.

62. I FURTHER RECOMMEND that the following INFORMATIVES be added:

- The School Travel Plan Co-ordinator should engage with the community through the Slade Area Residents Association in order to minimise the impact the school has on the surrounds with regard to traffic generation and parking problems at peak times.
- The School Travel Plan Co-ordinator is encouraged to investigate the possibility of implementing a permit scheme for using the Upper Castle Fields car park for parents during school peak times with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.
- The registering with Kent County Council of the revised School Travel Plan through the “Jambusters” website following the link <http://www.jambusterstpms.co.uk>.

Case officer – Helen Edwards	01622 221055
------------------------------	--------------

Background documents - See section heading
--