

Single storey extension for 2 additional classrooms and 2 temporary classrooms, Ospringe CE School, Water Lane, Ospringe, Faversham
SW/14/0614 (KCC/SW/0135/2014)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 10 September 2014.

Application by Kent County Council Property and Infrastructure Support for the construction of a single storey extension to provide 2 additional classrooms with toilets together with external playground space, and the siting of two temporary mobile classrooms and toilets for use during the construction phase at Ospringe Church of England School, Water Lane, Ospringe, Faversham, Kent ME13 8TX – SW/14/0614 (KCC/SW/0135/2014)

Recommendation: Permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Members: Mr A Bowles & Mr T Gates

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. Ospringe Primary School is located on the southern edge of Faversham in the hamlet of Ospringe. The original school is a single storey yellow brick building with clay roof tiles, which sits along the road frontage. It has two gable features, white windows and stone window plinths and is of a very traditional design. White railings enclose the school along the front of the site by the footpath and vehicle access to the parking area is towards the northern end of the site.
2. The school has had numerous modern extensions added to the rear, which are also mainly of yellow brick but with flat roofs, and of little architectural merit. Teddies pre-school building is located to the west of the school and also backs onto the playing fields.
3. There is a sports field located to the north-east of the school, laid to grass and enclosed along the boundaries with mature trees. There are allotment gardens to the west of the school and playing fields. The eastern boundary of the playing field is formed with the rear gardens of the properties which front onto Water Lane. Number 50 Water Lane is the closest to the school and is a bungalow, whilst 44, 46 and 48 are two storey properties. Opposite the school on the other side of Water Lane are bungalows.
4. Water Lane is a predominantly residential street. The road varies in width along its length but is relatively narrow overall with parking on both sides of the road, requiring cars to pass in single file in places, although not outside the school frontage. Water Lane meets the A2 with a T-junction at the northern end of the road, where the road width is restricted by historic buildings.
5. The school lies within the Ospringe Conservation Area, which extends further south along Water Lane and north to the properties along the A2.

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Background

6. Ospringe CE Primary School is a 1 Form Entry school. In September 2011, due to demand for school places in Faversham, the Local Authority increased the Published Admission Number (PAN) from 30 to 40 on a temporary basis, and the school has continued this temporary expansion for the last three years admitting 40 reception age pupils in September 2011, 2012 and 2013. In order to continue to meet the demand for primary school places in Faversham, the temporary increase in the PAN will be continued for one more year - with the PAN increasing to 45 for this September (2014). From September 2015 the PAN will revert back to 30 pupils.
7. Whilst the PAN reduces again from next September the School needs to accommodate this temporary 4 year bulge as it works its way through the school. The School have advised that in order to keep infant class sizes down to 30 pupils, and avoid having mixed key stage classes (which compromise the quality of the delivery of the curriculum), the school need 10 classrooms in all. To partly meet the demand caused over the previous 3 years the School converted their ICT suite into a classroom last summer (2013) and therefore currently have 8 classrooms, with some being mixed year classes.
8. This planning application therefore seeks to provide the additional 2 classrooms required by the School, and the 2 temporary classrooms are proposed to accommodate the children whilst the permanent classrooms are being constructed.

Recent Site History

9. The planning history for Ospringe CE School is as follows:

SW/02/175	Retention of mobile classroom Approved 25 March 2002
SW/02/1007	Extension of school car park, demolition of building partly within the Conservation Area, felling of a tree in Conservation Area, erection of 2m high fence, and erection of sign. Approved 23/10/2002
SW/03/444	Single storey extension to form new main entrance, reception area, head teachers office and administration office. Approved 02/06/2003
SW/03/876	Resubmission of SW/03/444 for a larger extension. Approved 13/08/2003
SW/06/544	Provision of access ramps for disabled access to main entrance and infant and junior school blocks. Approved 20/08/2006
SW/07/62	Extension to provide a care suite facility. Approved 21/02/2007
SW/07/660	Retention and renewal of mobile classroom. Approved 17/07/2007
SW/07/1411	Demolition of outbuilding and extension of existing car parking and erection of brick wall and gates. Approved 31/01/2008

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General Location Plan



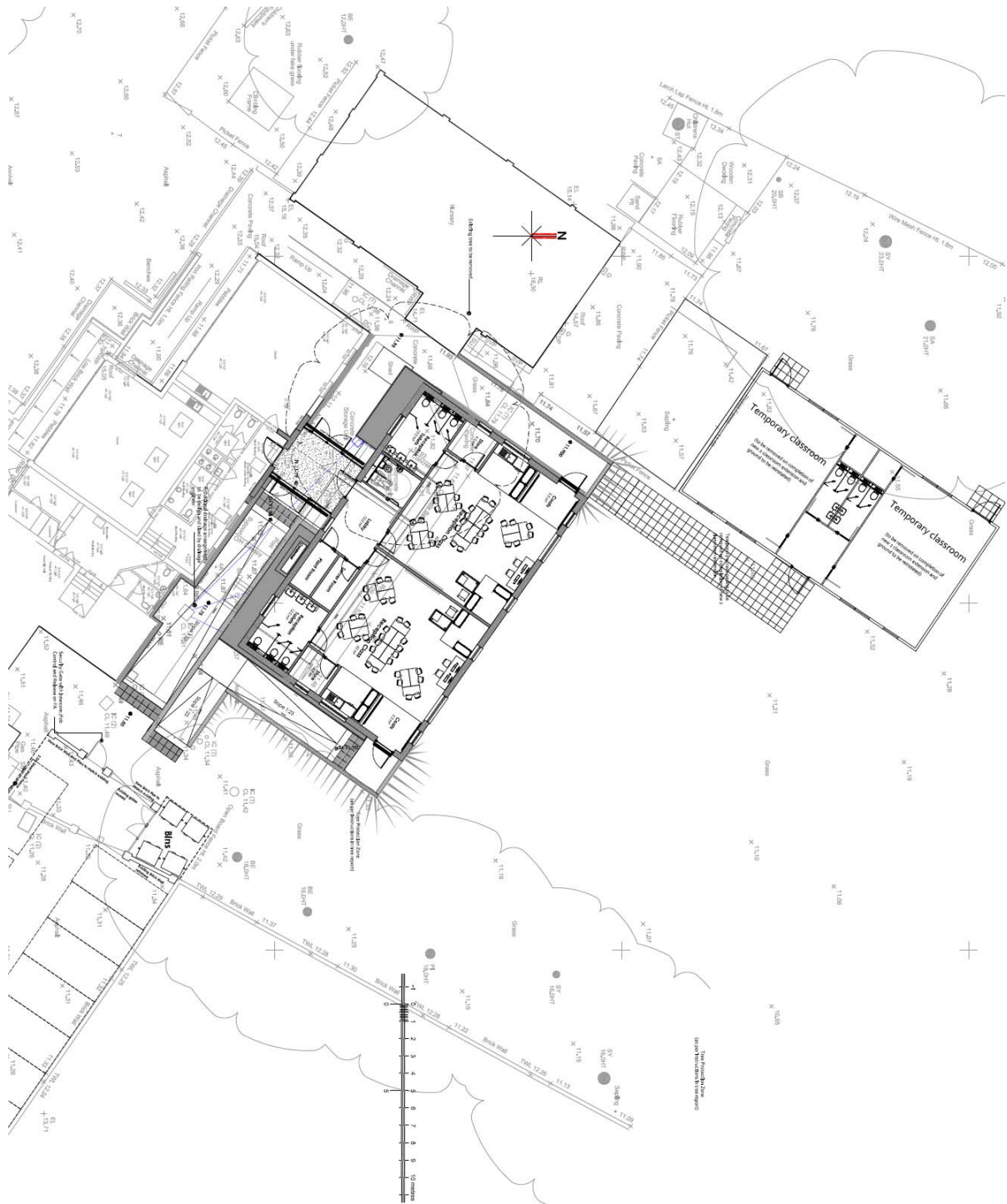
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Site Layout Plans

OSPRINGE CE PS



2 classroom extension and 2 temporary classrooms, Ospringe CE School, Water Lane, Ospringe, Faversham SW/14/0614 (KCC/SW/0135/2014)



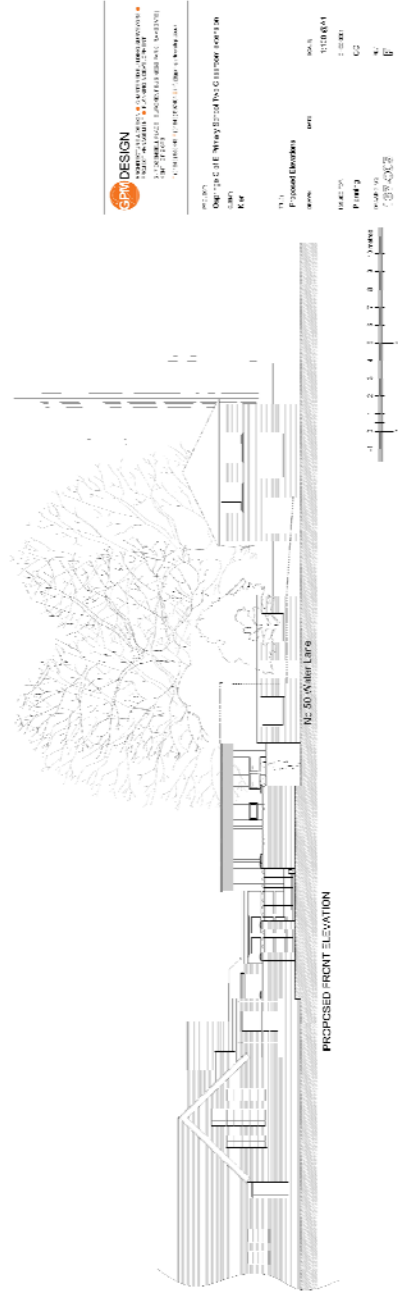
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Proposed Elevations of Extension



NOT TO SCALE
FOR INFORMATION ONLY
DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING

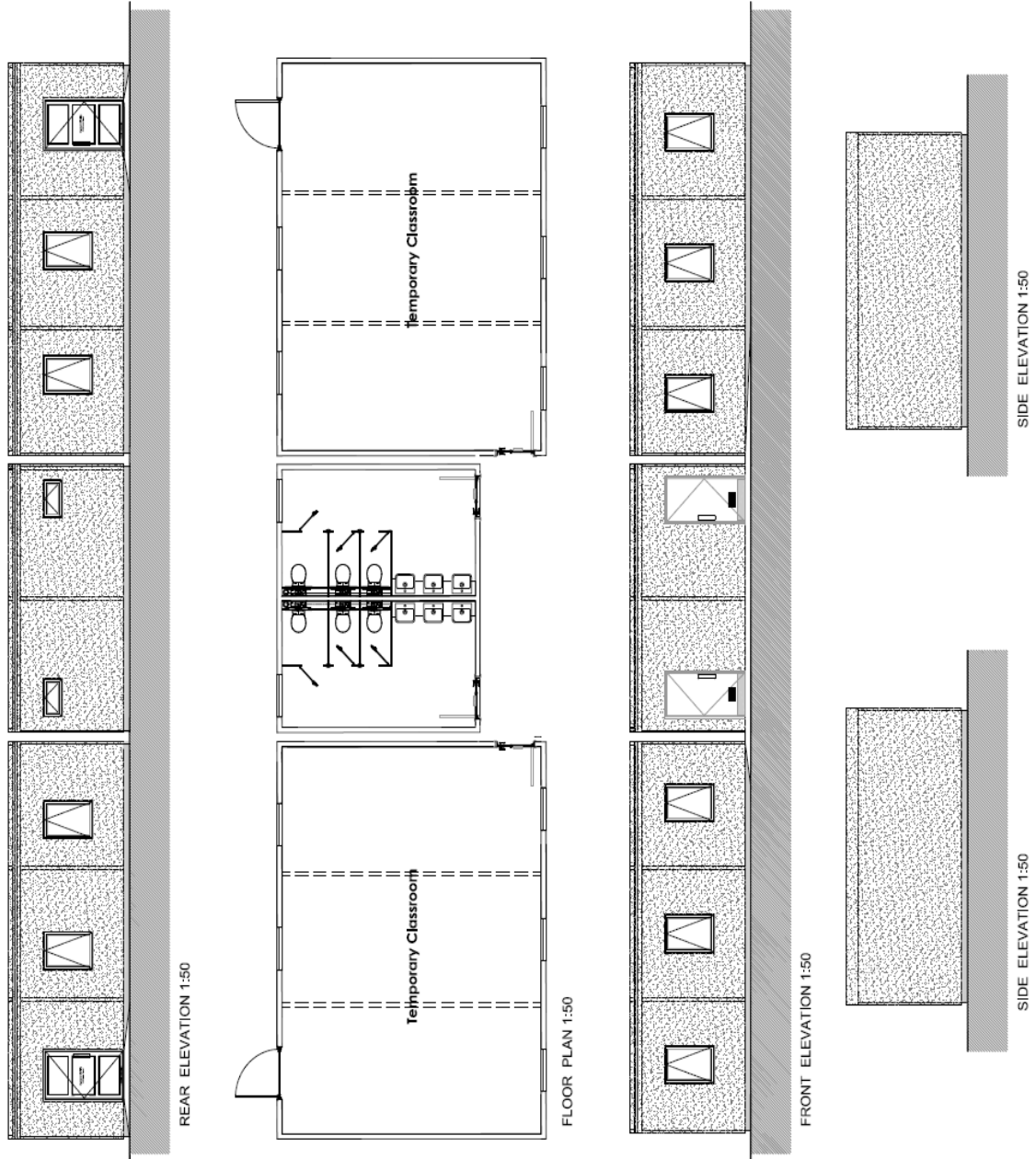
PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION (PLAYING FIELD VIEW)



OSPRINGLE CE PS

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Proposed Elevations of Temporary classrooms



OSPRINGE C of E PS

Prepared - 20 May 2014
Planning Applications Group

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Proposal

10. The application involves the removal of an existing mobile classroom (which is currently unused due to the fact it cannot accommodate 30 pupils due to its small size) and in the same location the erection of a single storey extension to provide two additional reception classrooms.
11. The extension would be attached to the existing building with a small glazed link which would open into a lobby serving both classrooms. The classrooms would have a floor area of 62m², with their own cloakroom area, store cupboard and access to toilet facilities.
12. The building and link would have a flat roof, with a yellow brick plinth and vertical cedar cladding above, grey in colour. A section of through coloured render would be provided centrally on each of the north and south elevations, and the scheme proposes grey rainwater goods and grey powder coated aluminium double glazed windows and doors.
13. A shallow ramped access would be created from the eastern direction up to a level threshold into the link building, and additional ramps would provide access to each classroom via the cloakroom.
14. The two temporary classrooms would be positioned to the west of the proposed extension and to the north of the existing nursery, with a separate central unit that would provide two sets of toilets. These would be standard modular buildings which would be rendered and have flat roofs, and would be retained for the construction period of the permanent extension.
15. At the front of the site, the application also proposes the slight relocation of the access from the car park onto Water Lane. The crossover would be moved further to the north to allow for a reorganisation of the school car park to formally lay out 19 parking spaces, including 1 disabled space.
16. As a result of the proposals two trees would be removed from the site. One is a walnut tree located close to the existing school buildings, which it would not be possible to retain given the proposed footprint of the development. The other is a blue atlas cedar located along the eastern boundary of the playing field by the rear garden of 48 Water Lane, which had suffered major crown damage during the high winds last winter, and has already been removed for sound arboricultural reasons.

Planning Policy

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

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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) **Swale Borough Local Plan 2008:**

Policy SP1 Sustainable Development: Proposals should accord with principles of sustainable development that increase local self-sufficiency, satisfy human needs, and provide a robust, adaptable and enhanced environment.

Policy SP2 Environment: Development should avoid adverse environmental impact, and where development needs are greater, adverse impacts should be minimised and mitigated.

Policy C1 Existing and New Community Services and Facilities: The Borough Council will grant planning permission for new or improved community services and facilities, and particularly those that include provision for wider public use.

Policy E1 General Development Criteria: Proposals should cause no demonstrable harm to residential amenity and other sensitive uses or areas; reflect positively characteristics and features of the site surroundings; and protect and enhance the natural and built environments.

Policy E15 Development Affecting a Conservation Area: Development within, affecting the setting of, or views into and out of a conservation area, will preserve or enhance all features that contribute positively to the area’s special character or appearance

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- Policy E19 Achieving High Quality Design and Distinctiveness:** Development proposals should be of a high quality design and respond positively to design criteria.
- Policy E21 Sustainable Design and Build:** Proposals should incorporate sustainable design and build measures into the detailed design of new development in its use of siting, design, materials and landscaping.
- Policy T1 Providing Safe Access to New Development:** Proposals which cause unacceptable impacts of the capacity of the highway network or on highway safety will not be granted planning permission.
- Policy T3 Vehicle Parking for New Development:** Requires appropriate vehicle parking for new development in accordance with the adopted Kent County Council parking standards.
- Policy T4 Cyclists and pedestrians:** Requires cycle parking facilities for new development in accordance with the Kent County Council cycle parking standards.

- (iv) The draft **Swale Borough Local Plan ('Bearing Fruits')** (August 2013) also contains broadly similar policies on transport, parking, design and general development criteria, but these policies currently carry very little weight, given their draft status.

Consultations

18. **Swale Borough Council** has been consulted (both initially and regarding the amendments) but no comments received.

Faversham Town Council raises no objection subject to the removal of the temporary accommodation before the new classrooms are bought into use; a refinement of the design of the building to provide a much neater parapet detail; and the adoption of a school travel plan. They also note that they are concerned to prevent any further escalation of present traffic problems in the area. (No further comments were received following the re-consultation).

Ospringe Parish Council gave the following comments to the original consultation: They were opposed to the application due to the fact the documents gave contradictory statements; the traffic implications of increasing the size of the school; resultant grid lock at the junction with the A2; pollution from the congestion; parking and traffic issues around the school; and insufficient on site staff parking.

Upon receipt of the amended plans and documents, the Parish Council further objected to the scheme and any increase in the size of the school or pupil numbers on the grounds that Water Lane is completely unsuitable to support that. The knock-on effects on the A2 at this point are already serious without any further school expansion. They note that it is the school related on-road parking that is the main cause of residents' issues with the school, and also requested details of the replacement trees and their locations.

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Sport England, following the receipt of amended plans, have raised no objection to the application.

Kent County Council's Highways and Transportation Officer raised concerns over the discrepancies between the documents and confusion over the proposed numbers of pupils which did not allow an accurate assessment of the impact to be made. In response to the amended plans and documents he advises that whilst vehicular activity associated with the school in relation to traffic using Water Lane and its junction with the A2 is a concern, given the modest increase in pupil numbers by 15 beyond the current roll over a temporary period of 4 years, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable on balance, subject to the imposition of a condition requiring a School Travel Plan.

Biodiversity Officer raises no objection subject to the mitigation measures detailed in the Ecological Appraisal being implemented; that any lighting proposed does not illuminate the hedgerows; and that the two replacement trees should be native species, appropriate to the area.

Conservation Officer raises no objection.

Local Member

19. The local County Members Mr Andrew Bowles and Mr Tom Gates were notified of the application on 12th May, 28th May and 7th July. Mr Gates advised that he had no views to make at the time but that as a member of the Planning Applications Committee he could speak at the meeting.

Publicity

20. The application was publicised by the posting of a site notice at the front of the school, an advertisement in a local newspaper, and the individual notification of 48 residential properties.

Representations

21. In response to the original publicity, 24 letters of representation were received. The key points raised can be summarised as follows:
- Object to any increase in pupil numbers at the school
 - Increase in staff numbers would cause more parking problems
 - No objection to the flat roof classrooms but have an issue with the current and unwelcome increase in parking, traffic movement and pollution such an expansion at the school would bring to Water Lane.
 - Concern over the accuracy of the figures in the supporting information regarding staff numbers, which are believed to be greater than stated, and will increase further with this application.
 - Current parking provision for staff is inadequate and any school expansion will result in more parking congestion in Water Lane.
 - School expansion will increase traffic at the T-junction with the A2, which lacks common sense and a duty of care for residents.

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- No sound proposals offered to try and mitigate the increase in traffic and parking congestions – 2 additional parking places and asking parents to speed up their drop off would have a minimal effect.
- Teddies Pre-School Nursery also contributes to the congestion on Water Lane, and this combined with overflow staff parking, visitors' cars, and the morning and afternoon school runs would result in increased discomfort for residents every school day.
- Extra traffic will make the problems of cars mounting kerbs, blocking residents' driveways and pollution worse.
- Replanting of trees along neighbours rear boundary will reduce sunlight to the house and garden. Ask for re-planting to take place away from neighbour's boundary.
- Could the field behind the allotments, with access onto Main Road, be purchased and used for parking?
- Understood permission to expand the school roll had been turned down due to highway objections
- Additional traffic would further affect air quality
- No additional car parking seems to be included in the application
- School pupil numbers are only temporarily increased due to admissions over the published numbers – therefore numbers will revert to previous levels and decrease in time.
- Transport Statement inaccurate and misleading
- Significant residential developments planned in the area, therefore how will roll numbers decrease?
- Should look to provide a new school instead of extending existing schools which will bring chaos, noise, pollution and congestion for local residents.
- Due to narrow width of road cars frequently mount the pavement to pass each other, putting children's safety at risk
- More staff work at the school than stated in the transport statement and they cannot all park in the school grounds
- Staff numbers do not include nursery staff (also on site) or ancillary staff
- Staff should drop material off and then park elsewhere – on allotment path or by the church
- Applications for additional houses have been turned down due to extra traffic generated
- Classroom extensions would be too close to the rear gardens of the properties on Water Lane
- Previous damage from footballs being kicked at the rear fence with neighbouring property

In response to the publicity following receipt of the amended plans and documents 43 letters of representation have been received. The key points raised can be summarised as follows:

- Object to any increase in pupil numbers
- Application accepts there is a problem with congestion and parking
- Parents will not use the car park on London Road as an alternative as it is too far from the school
- Car park is already busy and almost full on most weekdays with no spare capacity for school parking
- Access into and out of the car park is narrow

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- The walk from the car park to the school is not only long but dangerous as cars park on the pavements forcing pedestrians into the road
- Suggest increasing the car park size and creating a pathway from there to the school through the fields at the rear
- Increasing the yellow lines in Water Lane will further inconvenience residents and restrict the available parking area for parents near the school
- Increasing the zigzag parking restrictions outside the school will also make parking problems worse
- Increased parking restrictions and the overflow of staff parking will impact on residents entering and exiting their drives at peak times
- Cars constantly mounting the pavement at the T-junction with the A2, and any increase in traffic will exacerbate this
- Recent injury to a school pupil hit by a car near the junction of Water Lane and the A2
- Planning application offers no credible solution to these problems and is likely to exacerbate the problem
- The T junction of Water Lane and the A2 is not designed for this level of vehicle movements
- Traffic congestion and high pollution are common issues experienced by residents
- Accident figures out of date as more accidents recently near the junction with the A2
- The School have advised that the walking bus is not allowed along Water Lane due to safety concerns
- Contest that 16 parking spaces can be provided in the school grounds
- Consistently 8-10 staff cars parked in the street
- Residents cannot access their own driveways at peak school times
- School minibus is always parked on site, taking up 1½ bays
- There are parking problems and traffic issues every day (not just when the School had extra staff on site for teacher training) and it has been ongoing for years
- Parking solutions are not as simple as portrayed in the Transport Statement

Discussion

22. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph 15 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.
23. This application is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee following the number of objections received. In my view the main issues to consider are the design and layout of the extension and its impact on the Conservation Area; the traffic and parking implications of the proposal and the amenity aspects for residents arising from this; and the loss of part of the playing field.

Design and Layout

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24. The proposed extension would be a simple flat roof design which, although of little architectural merit in itself, would be in keeping with the other flat roof extensions to the rear of the original school. The building would have a brick plinth constructed with yellow bricks to match the rest of the school, with timber cladding above, which would give it a more modern appearance.
25. The extension is set well back from the road frontage and would be viewed across the existing parking area. Although partly visible from the road the extension would have a limited impact on the street scene due to both the set back, and the fact that it would be behind a new brick wall and access gates. In addition part of the extension would be screened behind number 50 Water Lane. In overall terms it is considered that the extension would be of an appropriate design, in keeping with the design of the remainder of the school, and would not harm the appearance of the street scene.
26. The extension would be set away from the shared boundary with the properties fronting Water Lane, and also screened by the existing trees along this boundary. Given the low building height and the separation between the houses and the school extension, it is considered that the layout of the extension would have a very limited impact on the residents of the neighbouring properties.
27. The temporary classrooms would be located to the north-west of the extension, in front of the existing Teddies Nursery. These temporary buildings would be of a standard modular design, with flat roofs and cream coloured rendered panels. The temporary buildings would be located away from Water Lane towards the allotments which are located along the western boundary, and as such would have a very minimal impact on the wider appearance of the school site. Given that these would only be sited in the grounds on a temporary basis whilst the extension is constructed, it is considered that they would be acceptable in terms of both siting and appearance.
28. In general design and layout terms it is therefore considered that the proposals would accord with the aims of Policies E19 and E21 of the Swale Borough Local Plan, and the aims of the NPPF.

Impact on Conservation Area

29. Ospringe CE School lies in the middle of the Ospringe Conservation Area, and therefore due regard needs to be had to the need to conserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area. The Character Appraisal of the Conservation Area makes reference to the yellow brick village school, and its "...hotch-potch of modern buildings at the back", and then goes on to refer to the twentieth century dwellings which characterise the opposite side of Water Lane, as being "...rather undistinguished in appearance and fails to respond to the form and character of the older development elsewhere along Water Lane".
30. The proposed extension would be in keeping with the other flat roof extensions at the rear of the school and therefore, when viewed as a whole with these extensions would not drastically alter the appearance of the school within the street scene. This part of Water Lane, as outlined in the Conservation Area Appraisal, is characterised by more modern development, and as such it is considered that the proposed scheme would not cause any demonstrable harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. In particular, the proposed new built development would be barely visible from any

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public vantage points in the Conservation Area, nor would it introduce any visually incongruous or inharmonious development that would significantly alter the special character of the Conservation Area. The development would therefore accord with Policy E15 of the Swale Borough Local Plan.

Traffic and Parking

31. The school is located in a predominantly residential street, where there is a mixture of off-road and on street parking for the residents. In addition Water Lane is quite narrow in places and traffic often has to pass in single file passed parked cars. The junction with the A2 is busy and traffic entering Water Lane from the East (Faversham town centre) has to swing onto the wrong side of the road to enter, again causing traffic to have to queue and let other cars pass by.
32. The school has a small parking area, which to date has been used informally with cars often taking up slightly more than one space and hence not optimising the space available. Under the current scheme the vehicle crossover is proposed to be relocated slightly to the north-east (towards 50 Water Lane) in order that the on site parking area can be better used and formal spaces would be laid out providing 19 spaces (including 1 disabled space) on site. I accept that there is no additional space on site to realistically create additional parking areas, and the proposed alterations therefore make the best use of the space that is available.
33. As with all schools, traffic and parking problems are generated at peak drop off and collection times in both the morning and the afternoon. In cases such as this one, where the school is located within a narrow residential street, such traffic generation can have a great impact on nearby residential properties. What needs to be considered in this case is whether the additional pupils that are being enrolled at the school this year, compared to the school roll of previous years, would detrimentally affect the capacity of the highway network and the amenities of the occupiers nearby to a significant enough degree to presume against planning consent.
34. In order to keep in context, it needs to be borne in mind that Water Lane is part of the public highway and the public highway is there to be used, and not reserved for the sole use of just one group of users. Use of Water Lane for access and parking by others, might well be an irritant for Water Lane residents but that is not a reason to presume against much needed community infrastructure. Similarly, if use of the road and its junction with the A2 is acceptable for continual use by residential traffic, it follows that its less frequent use by school traffic ought to be acceptable as well. What is important is to try and better manage the use of Water Lane so that risks to road safety are minimised and that nuisance for residents is reduced as far as is practicable.
35. The school has taken in an additional 10 pupils each year, above the published 1FE number of 30, for the past three years. This bulge is due to continue for one more year where an additional 15 children will be enrolled (September 2014), and after this the school roll is due to revert to 30 per year. This four year bulge would need to work its way through the school, so the following table illustrates total pupil numbers from 2013 up to 2021 when the bulge will have worked its way through the school.

Year Group	Sept 2013	Sept 2014	Sept 2015	Sept 2016	Sept 2017	Sept 2018	Sept 2019	Sept 2020	Sept 2021

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Year R	40	45	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Year 1	40	40	45	30	30	30	30	30	30
Year 2	40	40	40	45	30	30	30	30	30
Year 3	30	40	40	40	45	30	30	30	30
Year 4	30	30	40	40	40	45	30	30	30
Year 5	30	30	30	40	40	40	45	30	30
Year 6	30	30	30	30	40	40	40	45	30
Total	240	255	255	255	255	245	235	225	210
Change	-	+15	-	-	-	-10	-20	-30	-45

As this table demonstrates, the numbers of pupils start to drop again in September 2018, from the peak of 255 this year (2014).

36. Although the development for a two classroom extension seems to imply a large increase in pupil numbers there would only be an actual increase of 15 pupils this year over and above the numbers already enrolled at the school last year. This total pupil roll of 255 would then remain static through to the end of the academic year 2017/2018, when the numbers would start to decrease, eventually returning to the 1FE figure of 210 pupils by September 2021.
37. The School could be required by condition to submit an updated School Travel Plan which would need to include details of ways to encourage alternative means of travel to school for both staff and pupils, such as walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing. In addition it should be noted that some of the additional pupils will be siblings to those already present at the school and therefore would not generate additional traffic movements above the existing situation.
38. The zig-zag markings outside the school would be increased to cover the school car park entrance, and white lines are proposed outside residential accesses, which would help deter parents from blocking residents' driveways. The proposal to increase the single yellow lines (prohibiting parking during peak drop off and pick up times) is a suggestion of something that *could* be considered rather than something that is actually going to happen as part of this planning application. It is not something that is *required* to mitigate this development, as the temporary increase in pupil numbers would not warrant this.
39. Concerns about traffic dangers are often an expression of complaints about unwanted traffic congestion, although congested road space can have the benefit of deterring motorists and encouraging other means of travel. Whilst the car park on London Road may be some distance from the school, it does provide a realistic 'park and stride' option for pupils at this school, especially given the difficulties in entering and exiting Water Lane, and similarly the option of using the footpaths to the west of the school grounds during the warmer months are initiatives that could be implemented through the School Travel Plan.
40. The Highways and Transportation Officer has acknowledged that there is concern over the vehicular activity generated by the school in relation to traffic using Water Lane and its junction with the A2, but given the modest increase in pupil numbers by 15 over a four year period, and then its reduction as set out above, along with the requirement for an updated School Travel Plan, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in

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highway terms. I therefore consider that the scheme accords with Policies T1, T3 and T4 of the Swale Borough Local Plan.

Other Matters

Construction

41. 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.
42. 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.
43. 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

Biodiversity

44. The application has been supported by the submission of an Ecological Appraisal covering flora, birds, mammals (bats, water voles, badger and hedgehog), amphibians (great crested newts and toads), reptiles and invertebrates. Kent County Council's Biodiversity Officer has considered the information submitted and confirmed that the proposals would not have any adverse effect on any of the species assessed, subject to the precautionary mitigation detailed in the report being carried out.
45. Such mitigation includes, for example, that construction should not be undertaken during spring/summer months to avoid disturbance to roosting birds; that lighting is kept to a minimum and directed away from hedgerows to avoid disturbing foraging and commuting bats; and that works should be undertaken with care in case any hedgehogs that are found during construction can be relocated to a safe area. Such mitigation could be covered by condition, if consent was granted.

Tree Protection

46. The development would require two trees to be removed from the site. One is a Blue Atlas Cedar that was damaged in the storms and has already been felled for safety reasons. The other, a Walnut, would need to be removed in order to allow room for the proposed extension. The remaining four trees along the eastern boundary, where the playing fields back onto the rear gardens of 46-50 Water Lane are shown to be retained and would need to be protected during the course of the development with appropriate fencing around the Root Protection Area. A condition ensuring this takes place could be

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imposed if consent was granted. An additional condition requiring the details of the replacement trees to be submitted and approved, prior to planting could also be imposed to ensure the replacement trees are native and appropriate to the site. Their location could be agreed so as to avoid any impact on neighbouring properties from undue overshadowing.

Future use of the Classrooms

47. The proposed extension would not provide sufficient space for the school to sustain a permanent move to a 2 FE school. Once the bulge of pupils has moved through the school, the additional space that will be vacated is proposed to be used by the School for those functions such as the IT suite which were previously lost to provide classroom space for the additional pupils over the past 3 years, and the functions which are currently housed in the adjoining School House (staff room and toilet, and 3 group work rooms, which are used for supporting pupils in small numbers, physiotherapy, music lessons, etc). The rent for the School House has to be met by the School (previously it was funded by the Local Authority) and the relocation of these uses into the main school would help with the School's finances. Whilst this is not a planning matter, it provides a long term view for the use of these permanent structures.

Conclusion

48. 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 extension to Ospringe School would be acceptable from a design point of view, and would not harm the character of the street scene or the Conservation Area. In addition, it is considered that the extra traffic generated as a result of the relatively modest increase in pupil numbers would not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the highway network or residential amenity, as it would only be for a temporary 4 year period before pupil numbers begin to decrease, and therefore the development would accord with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.
49. 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.

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Recommendation

50. I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE APPROVED 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;
- the submission of an updated School Travel Plan and its ongoing review;
- The parking to be laid out as approved and thereafter maintained and used for no other purpose;
- 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 submission of tree protection details during construction;
- The submission of details of replacement tree planting, and timing for their planting;
- The submission of details, and written approval, of any external lighting.
- The removal of the 2 temporary classrooms within 1 month of completion of the construction works.

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

- The registering with Kent County Council of the revised School Travel Plan through the “Jambusters” website following the link <http://www.jambusterstpms.co.uk>;
- That all necessary highway approvals and consents are obtained; and
- That a statutory licence must be obtained for the construction of the required vehicular crossover.

Case Officer: Helen Edwards

Tel. no: 03000 413366

Background Documents: see section heading
