

Renewal of planning permission for three modular buildings at St George's C of E Primary School, Minster on Sea, Sheerness – SW/15/500171 (KCC/SW/0442/2014)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 11 March 2015.

Renewal of planning permission for retention of 3 mobile buildings for a further period of 5 years at St George's Church of England Primary School, Chequers Road, Minster On Sea, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 3QU – SW/15/500171.

Recommendation: permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Members: Mr Adrian Crowther

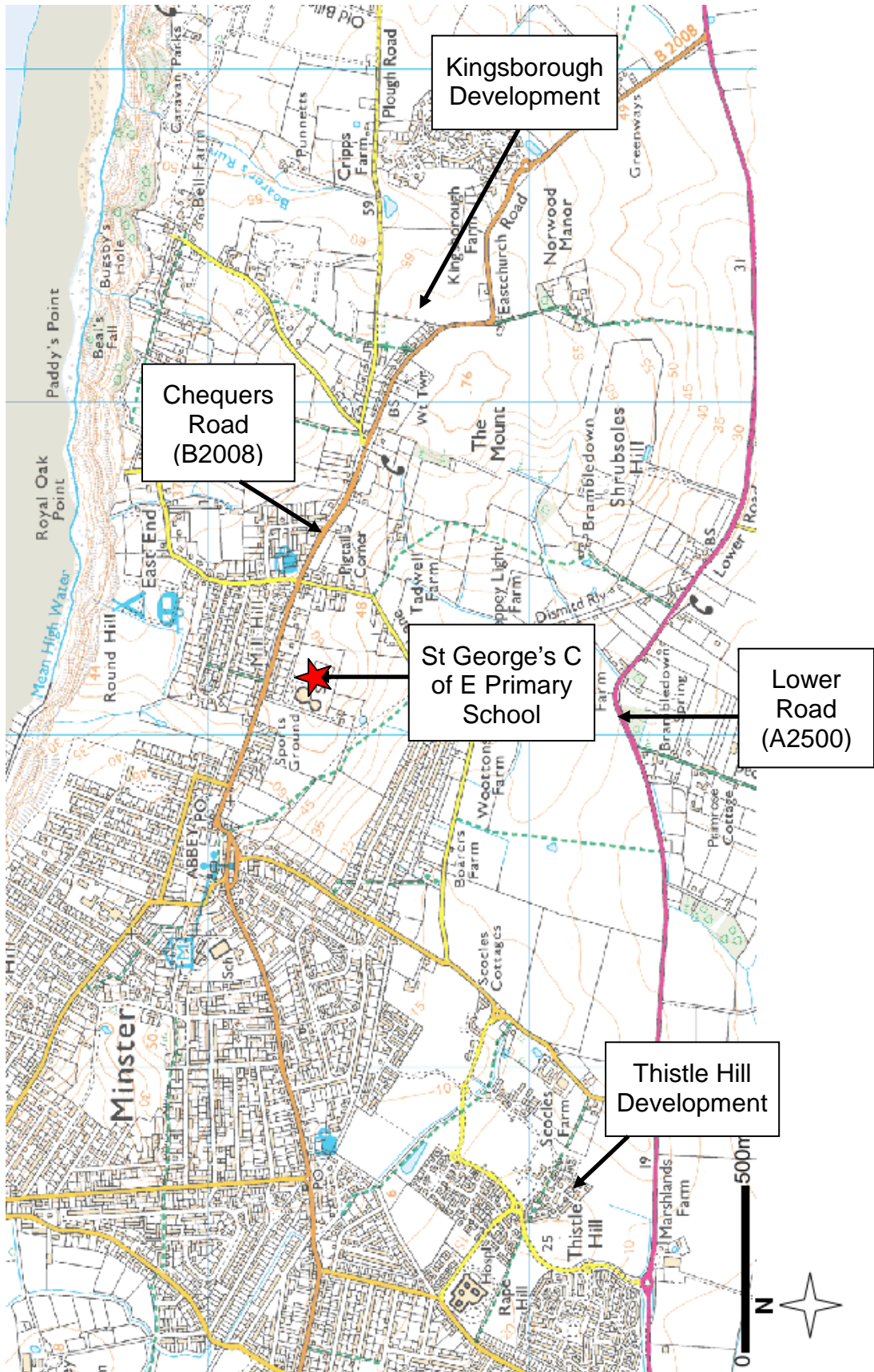
Classification: Unrestricted

Site Description

1. St Georges Church of England Primary School is located on the fringes of the settlement of Minster, Sheppey, in a semi-rural location. The school is accessed via a shared access road off Chequers Road. Minster Cricket Club is located to the west of the School site, residential properties to the north and agricultural land to the south and east. There is currently a small housing development being constructed to the north west of the school access which has its own access via Boundary Close.
2. The main school comprises a brick building in two octagonal shapes, one being slightly smaller, with a link block connecting the two. The building has pitched grey slate roofing with red aluminium windows, doors, fascia and rainwater goods. The school's playgrounds are situated to the east, south and south west of the main school building with playing fields located to the north east, east and southern boundary. On site car parking provision for visitors and staff is available within the northern part of the site with a separate car park to the east of the shared access road. A pupil drop off facility is also available on-site.
3. Daisychains Nursery and the Breakfast and Afterschool Club are located to the east of the main school building on part of a tarmac play area. The Nursery occupies two double modular buildings with the Breakfast and Afterschool Club occupying the third double unit. The modular buildings are enclosed by 1.2m (3.9ft) high timber palisade fencing and are accessed via a path leading from the main school car park, through controlled access gates.
4. There are no site-specific Development Plan Policies identified in connection with the application site itself, although general policies are set out in paragraph (11).

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Wider Site Location Plan



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Site Location Plan

Notice
Do Not Build.
Report all changes, alterations, errors and omissions.
Useful information is the information concerning any works on site or adjoining sites.
All materials, components and workmanship are to comply with the relevant British Standards, Codes of Practice, and appropriate manufacturer's recommendations that from time to time shall apply.
For all locations, work, see relevant drawings.
This drawing is the copyright of Diocesan Architectural Services Ltd, Diocesan Architects.

Rev	Date	Description

Received - 11 December 2014
Planning Applications Group



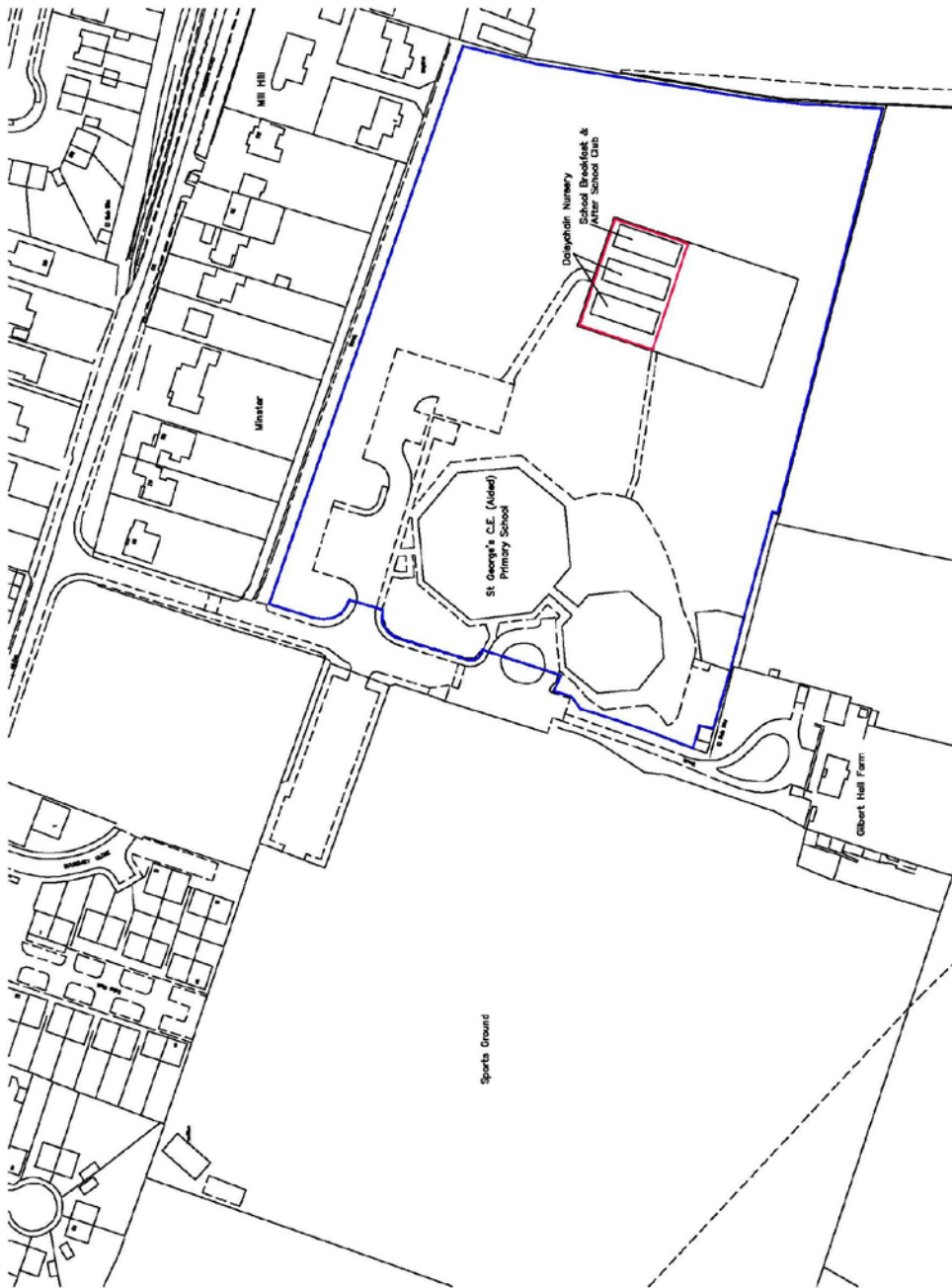
B, B & J The Courtyard
Parsonage House
The Priory, Faversham
Kent, ME13 9EF
Tel: 01796 862200
Fax: 01796 862186
www.diaa.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE:
ST GEORGE'S C of E PRIMARY
SCHOOL & DAISYCHAIN NURSERY
CHEQUERS ROAD, MINSTER
ISLE OF SHEPPEY

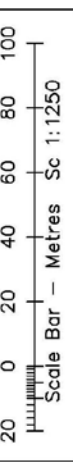
DRAWING DESCRIPTION:
MOBILE BUILDING
PLANNING RENEWAL
LOCATION PLAN

SCALE: 1:1250 @ A3
DATE: Dec 2014
DRAWN BY: CJJ
CHECKED BY:

STATUS: PLANNING
DRAWING NUMBER: 14-0857_00
REVISION:



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Relevant Planning History

5. In recent years, St George's C of E Primary School has been granted planning permission for re-modelling works to the school building in October 2008. (SW/08/930). Planning consent for a canopy to the Reception Class (SW/09/332) was granted in May 2009. Permission for the creation of a Pre-school and nursery facility was granted in December 2009 with the relocation of three modular buildings. (SW/09/851). The applicant is applying for planning consent to retain these three modular buildings. Subsequent planning permissions include the extension of the Reception Class external play area and ancillary works, granted in September 2010. (SW/10/1042). Planning application SW/11/43 for the installation of a quiet revolution vertical axis wind turbine was withdrawn in October 2011. Permission for the construction of a car park on the existing access to the playing field and cricket pitch was granted in August 2011. (SW/11/740). In May 2014, permission was granted for the provision of a new canopy to the Year 1 playground (SW/14/171). Planning permission for the formation of additional office space by infilling the external covered area to the link block (SW/15/500403) is expected to be issued shortly under delegated powers.

Background and Proposal

6. The application proposes the retention of three existing modular buildings currently used by the Daisychains Nursery and St George's Church of England Primary School as a Breakfast and Afterschool Club. The applicant is seeking a renewal of planning permission for all three modular buildings for a further time period of 5 years. Locating the nursery within the confines of the school site was seen as beneficial by Kent County Council's Early Years Team and the school enabling children to have a combined learning experience with children having the opportunity to transfer to the main school site.
7. The nursery is run by Daisychains Nursery (a not for profit charity organisation). The nursery is fully supported and approved by Kent County Council and has an Ofsted rating of 'Outstanding'. Daisychains Nursery is attended by 100 children and runs sessions between the hours of 07:45 to 18:00 during weekdays including school holiday periods with no weekend use. Seven full time staff members and fourteen part time staff are employed at the nursery. The Breakfast and Afterschool Club caters for 30 pupils and is run between the hours of 08:00 and 08:50 and 15:10 and 18:00 during weekdays with no weekend or school holiday use.
8. The two double modular units occupied by Daisychains Nursery have a combined floor area of 292.22m² (958ft) and measure 7m (23ft) by 20m (66.7ft) with a height of 3m (9.8ft). The units are positioned parallel to each other with a canopy link between each building. The units have been divided up to provide two class areas, a baby and toddler area with sleep room, admin space, staffroom, and kitchen and toilet facilities. A covered play area is provided along the western elevation of the western-most modular building. This leads out to the external play area.
9. The school Breakfast and Afterschool Club is located in a single double unit, to the east of the nursery buildings. The floor area of the single modular unit is 148.11m² (485ft) and comprises a large open area, lobby, kitchen and toilet facilities.
10. The modular buildings are of a standard construction with Stoneflex textured wall cladding in Sahara Beige (for the nursery buildings) and Boston Brick (for the Breakfast

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and Afterschool Club building) and uPVC double-glazed windows and access doors with white frames. Fire exit doors are white painted timber. The modular buildings have flat roofs with canopies to the western elevation of the nursery buildings. Access to the modular buildings is gained via steps and ramps for disabled accessibility.

Planning Policy Context

11. The following Guidance/Statements and Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to the consideration of the application:

(i) **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** March 2012 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 application but does not change the statutory status of the development plan which remains the starting point for decision making. However the weight given to development plan policies will depend on their consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the development plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

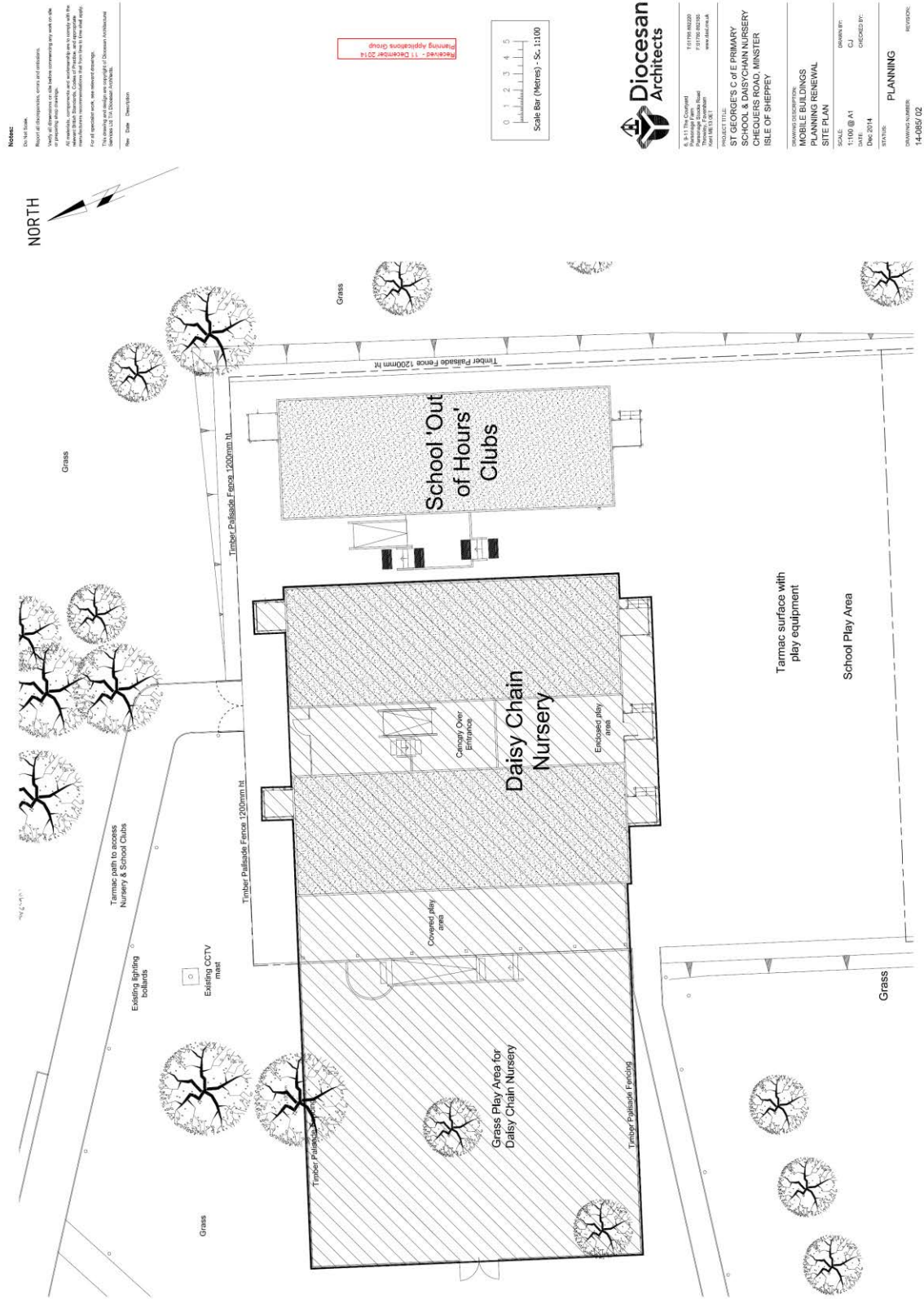
In determining applications the NPPF states that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

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

- promoting sustainable transport
- the promotion of community facilities and planning decisions which guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
- 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.

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Block Plan

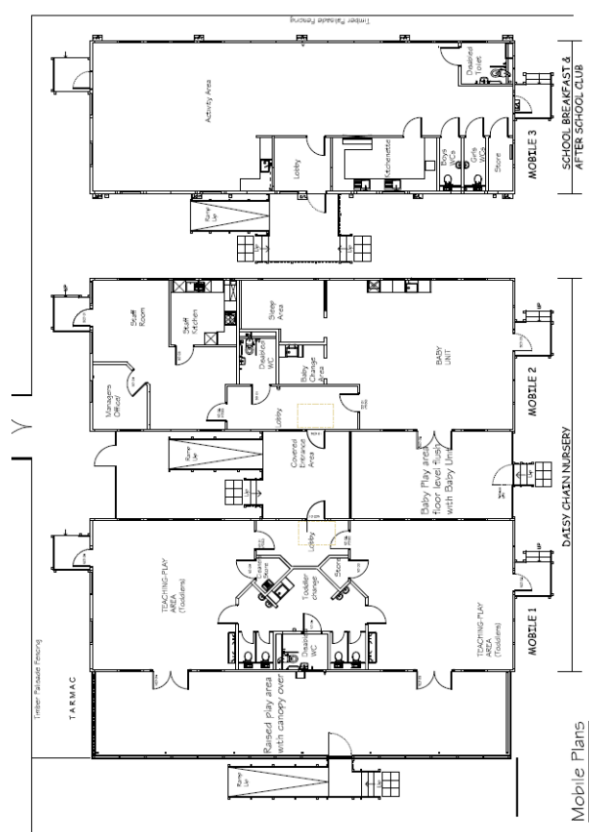


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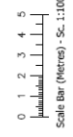
Floor and Elevation Plans

Notes:
 1. Do Not Mark
 2. Report all discrepancies, errors and omissions.
 3. Verify all dimensions on the building components are used on the drawings or ready for construction.
 4. All dimensions are to be taken from the face of the work unless otherwise stated.
 5. All dimensions are to be taken from the face of the work unless otherwise stated.
 6. For all details, refer to the relevant drawings.
 7. All dimensions are to be taken from the face of the work unless otherwise stated.
 8. All dimensions are to be taken from the face of the work unless otherwise stated.

- MATERIAL NOTES:**
 MOBILE SKIRT: HORIZONTAL SLATED TIMBER, STAINED FINISH
 EXTERNAL WALL CLADDING: STONEWARE PANELS
 DAISSYCHAIN NURSERY: SARAKA BEGG
 SCHOOL EXTENDED HOURS CLUBS: BOSTON BRICK
 FACIA: STAINED PLYWOOD
 ROOF: BITUMINOUS FELT
 WINDOWS: UPVC, WHITE WITH DOUBLE GLAZED UNITS
 DOORS: UPVC, WHITE WITH DOUBLE GLAZED UNITS
 RAINWATER GOODS: UPVC, BLACK
 CANOPIES: TWIN WALL POLYCARBONATE SHEETING SUPPORTED BY WHITE POLYESTER POWDER COATED STEEL
 RAMPS AND STEPS: TIMBER WITH VERTICAL BALUSTRAIDING AND HANDRAILS.



Planning Approvals (Stage 1) 11 December 2014



PROJECT TITLE:
 ST GEORGE'S C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL & DAISSYCHAIN NURSERY
 CHEQUERS ROAD, MINSTER ISLE OF SHEPPEY

ISSUED DESCRIPTION:
 PLANNING PERMITS PLANS & ELEVATIONS

SCALE: 1:100 @ A1
DATE: Dec 2014
DESIGNED BY: [Name]
CHECKED BY: [Name]
DATE: [Date]
PROJECT: PLANNING
ISSUED NUMBER: 14-085/03
REVISION:



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(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) The adopted **Swale Borough Local Plan (Saved Policies) 2008** constitutes the current adopted development for the Borough and can be summarised as follows:

Policy SP1 *Sustainable development:*

Proposals should accord with the principles of sustainable development and ensure that proper and timely provision is made for social and community infrastructure.

Policy SP2 *Environment:*

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

Policy SP7 *Community services and facilities:*

Planning policies and development proposals will promote safe environments and a sense of community by increasing social networks by providing new services and facilities, and safeguarding essential and viable services and facilities from harmful changes of use and development proposals.

Policy C1 *Existing and new community services and facilities:*

The Borough Council will not permit proposals that involve the loss, or change of use, of a local community facility, where this would be detrimental to the social wellbeing of the community. 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:*

Development proposals should accord with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise; reflect positively characteristics and features of the site and surroundings; and protect and enhance the natural and built environments.

Policy E19 *Design quality and distinctiveness:*

Development proposals should be of high quality design and respond positively to design criteria.

(iv) The draft **Swale Borough Local Plan ('Bearing Fruits')** (December 2014) 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 and the early stage during the development plan making process.

Consultations

12. **Swale Borough Council** – Raise no objection to the proposal

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Minster-on-Sea Parish Council – Object to the proposal on the following grounds:

“Minster-on-Sea Parish Council objects in principle to the plan for temporary accommodation being used for a further five years when permanent accommodation is required. This together with the lack of a promised travel plan and unsafe routes due to the lack of footpaths connecting the site to Chequers Road, the Kingsborough development and the Thistle Hill Estate means that the proposal has to be deemed unsustainable.”

Local Member

13. The County Council Local Member Mr Adrian Crowther was notified of the application on 9 January 2015.

Publicity

14. The application was publicised by the posting of 2 site notices at the main school pedestrian entrance located off the shared access road from Chequers Road and the fence enclosing the modular buildings. The individual notification of 10 neighbouring properties was carried out as part of the consultation process.

Representations

15. No letters of representation have been received from any local residents on the application.

Discussion

Introduction

16. The application seeks planning permission for the renewal of planning permission for the retention of three modular buildings for a further time period of 5 years. These modular buildings are currently used as a nursery and pre-school by Daisychains Nursery and Breakfast and Afterschool Club by St George's Church of England Primary School. The application is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee as a result of the objections received from Minster-on-Sea Parish Council.
17. In considering this proposal regard must be had to Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph 11 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 Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations including those arising from consultation and publicity.
18. The main aspects to consider are the implications of the proposal upon visual amenity and the need for the retention of the modular buildings and traffic and highway access issues. There is strong policy support for the development of schools to ensure that there is sufficient provision to meet growing demand, increased choice and raised educational standards, subject to being satisfied on amenity and other material considerations. In the Government's view the creation and development of schools is

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strongly in the national interest and planning authorities should support this objective, in a manner consistent with their statutory obligations. Planning Authorities should give full and thorough consideration to the importance of enabling such development, attaching significant weight to the need to establish and develop state funded schools, and making full use of their planning powers to support such development, only imposing conditions that are absolutely necessary and that meet the tests set out in Circular 11/95.

Impact on Visual Amenity

19. The modular buildings are located centrally within the school site and are largely screened by the main school buildings from the school's shared access road. The tree line along the northern boundary of the school site also provides a good level of screening to residential properties located to the north of the site. The site gently rises from west to east and the modular buildings look out onto the adjacent agricultural land to the west. However, the limited height of the buildings and the muted colours of the buildings do not create a dominant impact.
20. The buildings, in my view, do not impact upon the amenity of local residents, and are of a nature and scale appropriate to the site. Additionally, the site does not fall within a protected or designated area.

Continued Retention

21. Planning consent was given to the re-location of three existing modular buildings to the existing site in December 2009. The applicant states that the continued use of the modular buildings is currently essential as they provide accommodation for a key service to the school and local community which would be severely missed if forced to close. Currently, neither the school nor Daisychains Nursery have the funding to be able to house these facilities in permanent accommodation. It should be noted that whilst not ideal, modular accommodation is frequently used on school sites across the County, providing much needed teaching facilities.
22. Minster-on-Sea Parish Council have objected to the retention of the modular buildings for a further five year time period and the Parish Council consider that permanent accommodation for the facilities should be sought. It should be noted that the current facilities are well-maintained and the method of construction used is adequate for retention for a further period of five years, although I consider that the applicant should be encouraged to consider permanent accommodation to house these facilities.

Access, Parking, Traffic and Highway Issues

23. The applicant has acknowledged that congestion generated by the school and nursery traffic is a concern and have attempted to alleviate this by staggered session times and encouraging sustainable methods of travel wherever possible. The nature of the operational times of the Breakfast and Afterschool Club means that some pupils arrive earlier and leave later than normal school peak times, reducing the impact on the local road network.
24. It should also be noted that a number of pupils attending the nursery have siblings at the school thereby not increasing the number of vehicle trips. The proposal would not lead to any direct increase in the number of pupils attending the nursery or Breakfast

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and Afterschool Club and thereby any existing traffic problems would not be exacerbated by the retention of the buildings.

25. Minster-on-Sea Parish Council have also commented that a Travel Plan has not been submitted with the application. As Members are aware, School Travel Plans are used to promote sustainable modes of transport and aim to reduce traffic congestion in and around schools. All schools across the County are encouraged to update their Travel Plans regularly with initiatives aimed at reducing car based trips. A review of the school's Travel Plan was carried out in December 2014 detailing the measures that have been taken to address traffic and highway issues and suggested areas of improvement that could be made by KCC Highways and the school. It is important to note that this proposal does not give rise to an increase in pupil or staff numbers attending the nursery and Breakfast and Afterschool Club and consequently would not generate an increase in traffic on the surrounding local road network. As an increase in vehicular trips would not be generated by the proposal, it is not considered that the submission of a School Travel Plan with the planning application was necessary to support the application. However, the recent review of the Travel Plan shows the school's commitment to addressing school related highway issues.

Conclusion

26. This application seeks the retention of 3 modular buildings currently providing early years accommodation and breakfast club and after school facilities for the local community which are strongly supported by planning policy. Concerns have been raised regarding the impact of the proposed development on various aspects including impact on visual amenity and traffic and highway safety issues. These need to be balanced against development plan policies and the case of need outlined by the applicant for the retention of the modular buildings. The modular buildings are sited centrally within the school site and have limited visual impact. Although traffic and highway safety issues have an impact on the school site, the current proposal would not itself give rise to an increase in such impacts. In my view the development would not give rise to any significant material harm sufficient to warrant withholding planning consent. The proposed development is in accordance with the general aims and objectives of the relevant Development Plan Policies. In addition, the development is in accordance with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Policy Statement on Planning for School Development. I recommend that a temporary planning consent be given, subject to the condition to control the length of the development to a period of five years.

Recommendation

27. I RECOMMEND that permission BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO the imposition of conditions, including;
- the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
 - the modular building to be removed from site at the expiration of 5 years from the date of the decision.
28. I FURTHER RECOMMEND THAT the applicant BE ADVISED of the following informative:

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- the applicant should investigate the feasibility of providing permanent accommodation for the nursery and Breakfast and Afterschool Club.

Case officer – Hardeep Hunjan

03000 413397

Background documents - See section heading
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