

New sports hall & fitness suite at Dover Grammar School for Boys – DO/14/01067 (KCC/DO/0361/2014)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 8th April 2015.

Application by Kent County Council Property and Infrastructure for new sports hall, including changing rooms, disabled changing rooms, fitness suite, sports office, plant room, viewing galleries and storage at Dover Grammar School for Boys, Astor Avenue, Dover, Kent, CT17 0DQ – KCC/DO/0361/2014 (DO/14/01067).

Recommendation: Planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Member(s): Mr G Cowan & Mrs P Brivio

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. Dover Grammar School for Boys is located off Astor Avenue approximately 1.7km (1.1 miles) northwest of Dover town centre. The school is located to the south of the Tower Hamlets residential area and to the north of the Astor College for the Arts. To the north of the school there is a Local Nature Reserve and to the south and south west of the site there are school playing fields.
2. The application is on land to the south of the existing school gymnasium. The application is on school playing fields and is served by the site access road between Astor Avenue and Noah's Ark Road. The application site includes an area of existing parking within the school site and an area of proposed parking.
3. The nearest residential properties to the proposal are approximately 18m (59ft) north east of the existing car park screen bund in Anselm Road and to the north east of the site access road in Hamilton Road, Chamberlain Road and Anselm Road.

Background

4. The application describes how the existing sports hall at the site is in poor condition and does not adequately meet the needs of the School for sports activity within the curriculum. Consequentially the School considers that it is not delivering the required provision in order to promote and encourage healthy lifestyles. The existing facilities dates back to c.1930's and houses one netball court size court in a hall approx 165sq.m (1776 sq.ft) with a mezzanine level providing an additional 25sq.m (269 sq. ft) for basic fitness machines. The hall is connected to a changing room by a link corridor and the applicant has provided photographic information showing the poor state of repair of these facilities.
5. The School currently allows some community use of their sports hall and the playing field pitches at the site.

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Planning History

6. The main school was opened for use in 1931 and the building fabric is relatively unchanged. The most recent applications are detailed below:

DO/14/551 - Application to provide a 60 month extension to the existing planning permission for the single mobile classroom unit (allowed by permission reference DO/09/1003) to the north east of the proposed sports hall was granted. This allows the mobile classroom to be in place until 31/09/2019.

DO/13/624 - Proposed installation of a five bay mobile classroom unit to provide 2 additional classrooms plus entrance lobby, storage and/or teacher office space to the north west of the school site.

DO/09/548 - Provision of one two bay mobile classroom and one 6-bay mobile classroom on land to the north east of the proposed sports hall. Permission was granted for a period up to 31st August 2014. The 6 bay classroom is still on site.

DO/05/6 - Improvement to the external security (fencing) to the site and to improve the access road and parking provision to lower third ground floor level of the school. This proposal related to the access into the site from Astor Road and the creation of parking bays to the south east of the main school building set behind the steep bank.

DO/04/113 - Erection of 1 two bay mobile classroom.

Proposal

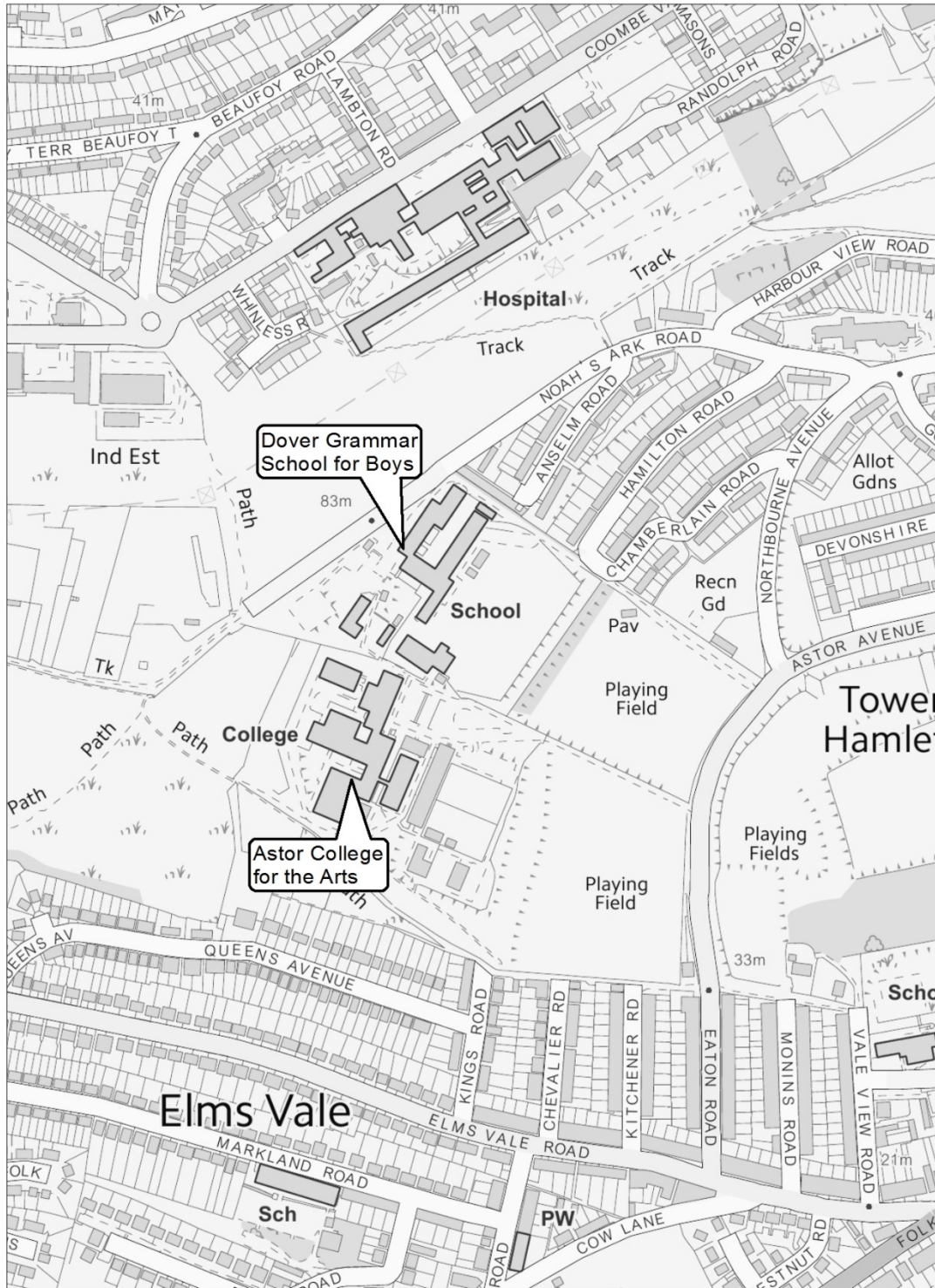
7. The application is for a mono pitch sports hall, located approx. 75m (246ft) from the site boundary to the north east of the site with the nearest properties in Anselm Road. It is proposed that the ground floor would include the main sports hall (702sq.m/7556 sq.ft) providing 4 courts with a 7.5m (24.6ft) internal height and ancillary accommodation such as changing room, medical room, cleaning facilities, boiler room and sports equipment storage and the first floor would provide a health and fitness suite (57.2 sq.m/615.6sq.ft) and plant room, a sports coordinator office, internal and external viewing galleries, an external spectator balcony to extend the full length of the south facade and emergency access.
8. The proposed total ground floor gross area is 1054sq. m (11345sq.ft) and the first floor area is 350 sq. m (3767sq.ft). It is proposed that the building be sited between approx. 5m (16ft) and 7m (23m) to the south east of the existing hall (measured without the roof overhang). The footprint of the building measures 44m (144ft) by approx. 25m (82ft), excluding the overhang from the monopitch roof which if included would measure approx. 29m (95ft) by 48m (157ft).
9. The proposed structure utilises vertical columns and mono-pitched steel beams with the most visible southern elevation being lower (at 7.8m/26ft) than the northern elevation (at 11.35m/37ft high).
10. An external viewing balcony has been provided along the southern elevation. The balcony and roof eaves overhang in order to prevent solar gain to the internal viewing gallery and both are supported by angular steel columns that run along the south elevation. The columns would encase the rainwater management system in order to remove the rain from the low side of the mono-pitch.
11. The applicant proposes the installation of photovoltaic panels on the mono-pitch roof which would allow the school to generate its own electricity. The specification and arrangement detail has not been included within the application.

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12. The applicant proposed that all of the elevations would be of brick and render construction. The roof is proposed to be Kingspan XL Forte which is embossed with a traditional leather grain finish to minimise light reflectivity. The proposed colour is Merlin Grey (18B25) or similar. The proposed eaves fascia colour is Diamond RAL 9023 Metallics; proposed soffit colour is Silver RAL 9006 metallics. Trim colours are proposed to be grey. The applicant proposes walls with a mix of brick types with blue bricks (Ibstock Fireborn Natural Blue Riven (0307); white bricks (Ibstock Fireborn Clazed IBS WT10) brown bricks (Ibstock Ashdown Crowborough Multi Stock to suit existing) and an off white render (Sto Lotusan self cleaning render system). The proposed windows are polyester coated aluminium and the windows and external columns are proposed to be dark grey.
13. In addition the applicant proposes an additional 12 car parking spaces including 2 disabled parking bays, and 3 motor cycle parking bays and secure cycle racks for 12 cycles beneath the roof overhang of the proposed building and close to the main entrance to the proposed sports hall. The car parking provision is approx. 28m (91.8ft) to the south west of the site boundary and properties in Anselm Road. Some additional landscaping work is proposed in the main car parking area. The applicant states that all of the school's existing parking bays would be available for community use outside of the school hours making the total parking 103 spaces. Two points of access would be used to the site.
14. The applicant proposes that the sports hall and the existing sports pitches would be available for use by the community out of school hours and that a community use agreement would be drawn up in order to formalise any agreements made. The applicant proposed that the sports hall and pitches would be used for the School's own use between the hours of 0830 and 1730 Monday to Friday in term time. They also proposed that the sports hall would be available for community use between 1730 and 2200 hours Monday to Friday and 0900 to 1730 on Saturday and Sunday and that the pitches would be available for community use 1730 to 2000 Monday to Friday and 1000 to 1230 on a Sunday during term time. Outside of term time the applicant proposes that the community use of the sports hall would be between 0900 and 2200 hours Monday to Friday and 0900 to 1730 hours Saturday and Sunday and that the pitches would be available 0900 to 1730 Monday to Friday and 0900 to 1730 on a Sunday. The applicant states that these times are the potential window of opportunity for pitch use and that within that the use of the pitches would need to be carefully managed to ensure that they are in good condition for the School's own use.

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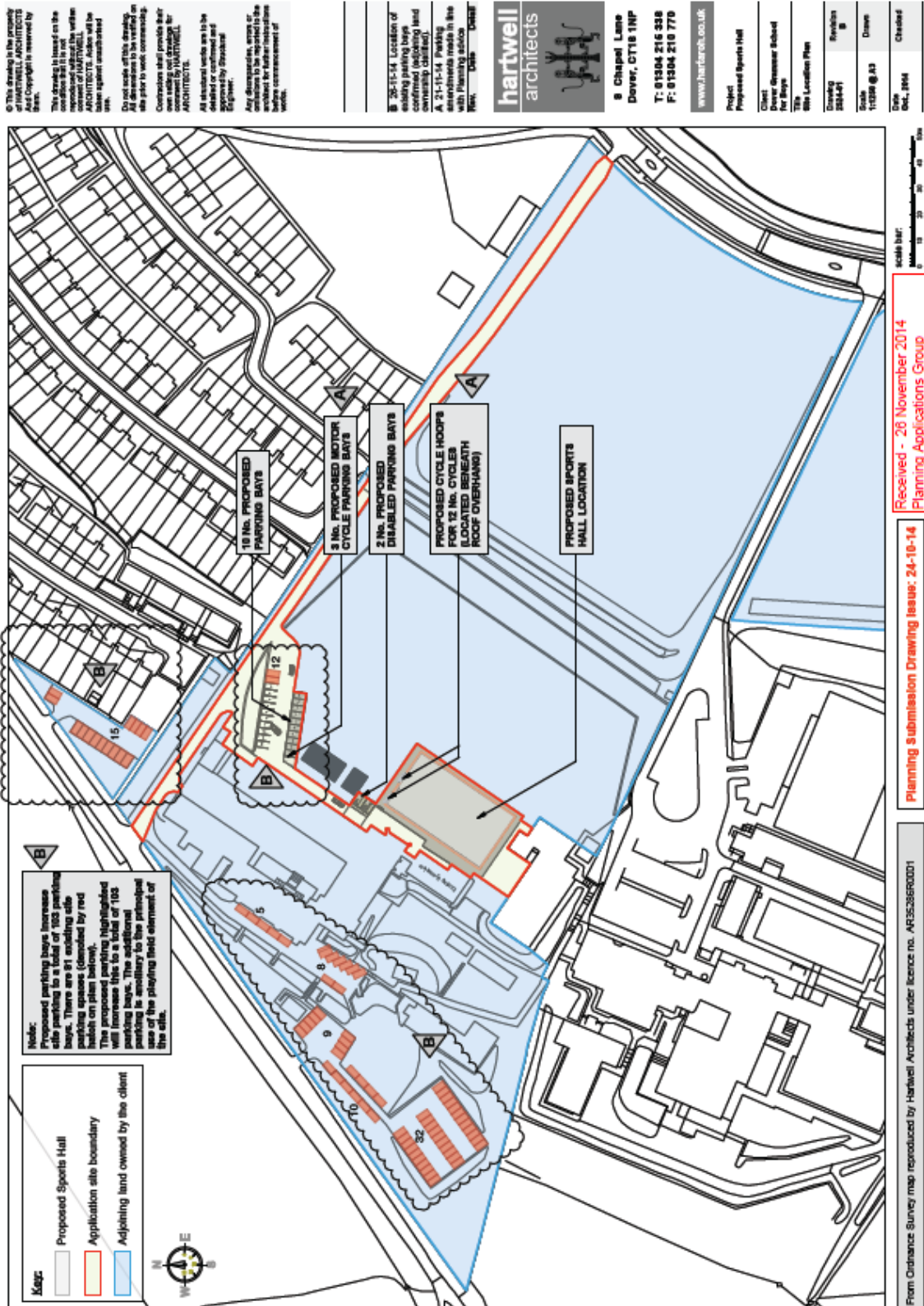
Location



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Proposed Site Plan including location of existing parking



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Proposed South elevation

Received 24 October 2014
Planning Applications Group

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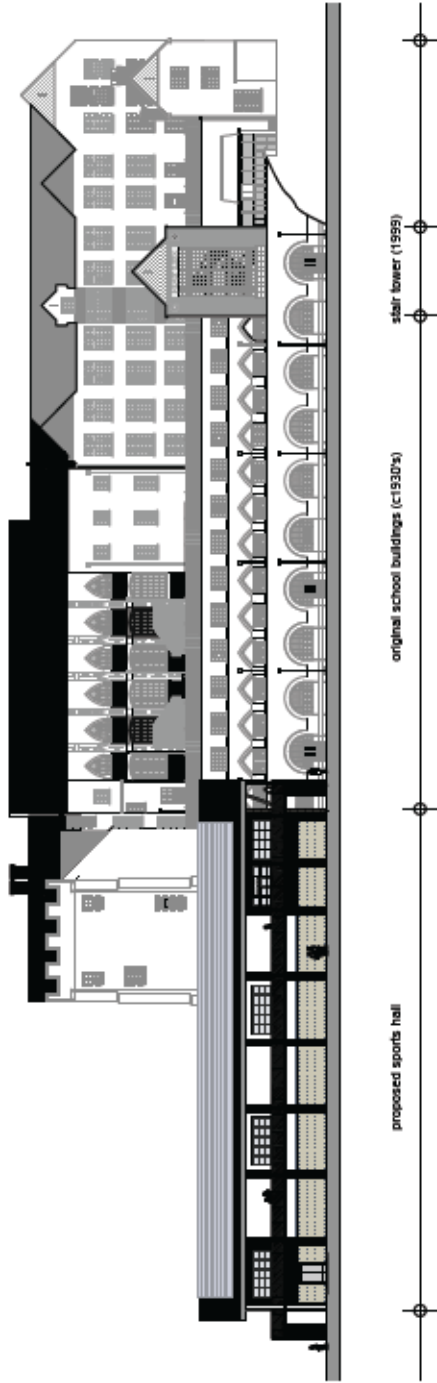
Rev.	Date	Detail



hartwell
architects

9 Chapel Lane
Dover, CT16 1NP
T: 01304 215 336
F: 01304 210 770
www.hartarch.co.uk

Project Proposed Sports Hall	
Client Dover Grammar School for Boys	
Title Contextual South Elevation	
Drawing 2524-07	Revision -
Scale 1:500 @ A4	Drawn
Date Oct., 2014	Checked



CONTEXTUAL ELEVATION (SOUTH)
scale 1:500



Planning Submission Drawing Issue: 24-10-14

Application for a new sports hall and fitness suite at Dover Grammar School for Boys – DO/14/01067 (KCC/DO/0361/2014)

Proposed south and east elevations

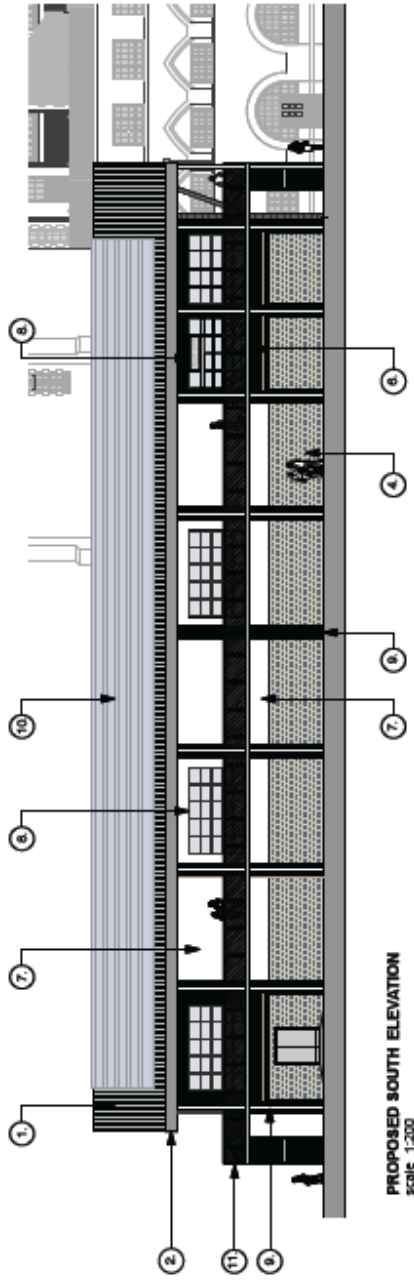
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Rev.	Date	Detail

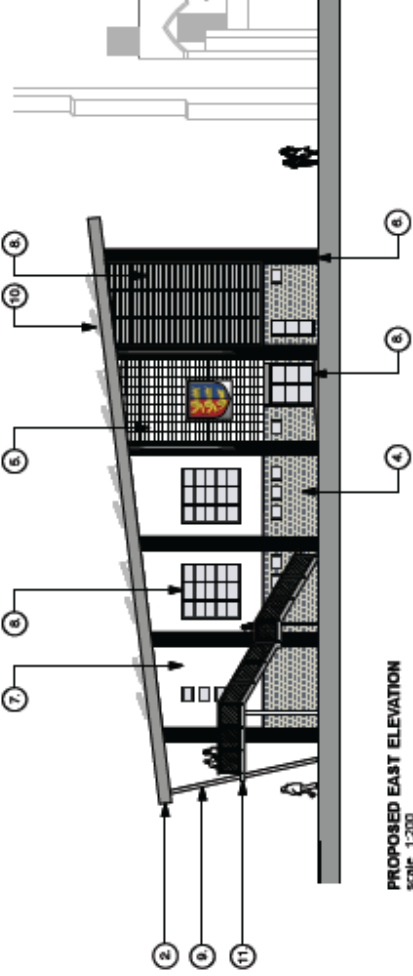


9 Chapel Lane
 Dover, CT16 1NP
 T: 01394 216 388
 F: 01394 210 770
 www.hartwell.co.uk

Project	Proposed Sports Hall
Client	Dover Grammar School for Boys
Drawn	Proposed south & east elevations
Scale	1:200
Date	04.10.14
Checked	



PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION
 scale 1:200



PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION
 scale 1:200

- Materials Key:
- 1. Roof: Kingspan Insulated Roof System. Colour: Chalk/White (to be confirmed)
 - 2. Kingspan stone fabric colour: Chalk/White (to be confirmed)
 - 3. Goff colour: Silver-RAL 9005-Aluminium (to be confirmed)
 - 4. Insulation: Natural Blue Fibre (0007)
 - 5. Insulation: White (BS WT-10)
 - 6. Insulation: Ashdown Concrete - Multi Stone (to suit existing)
 - 7. Window: 600 Aluminium self-cleaning window system - Colour: Chalk/White
 - 8. Windows, doors and louvers: Polyester powder coated Aluminium. Colour: Dark Grey (RAL colour to be confirmed)
 - 9. External steel columns: Colour: Dark Grey (RAL colour to be confirmed)
 - 10. Photovoltaic panels
 - 11. Galvanneal steel balcony and belvedere with Meranti hardwood handrails

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Planning Submission Drawing Issue: 24-10-14



Application for a new sports hall and fitness suite at Dover Grammar School for Boys – DO/14/01067 (KCC/DO/0361/2014)

Proposed north and west elevations

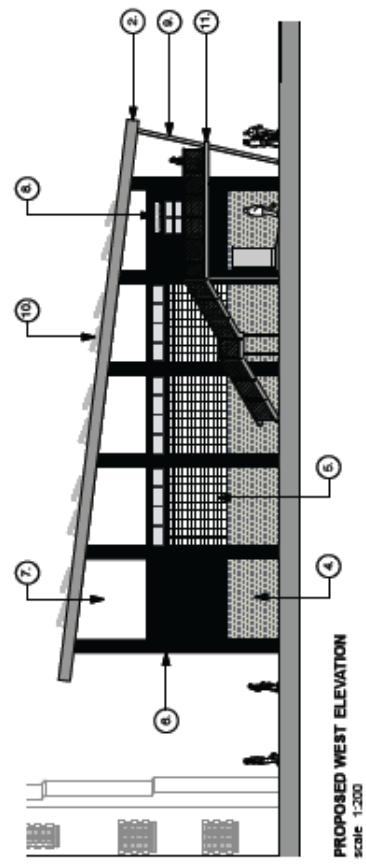
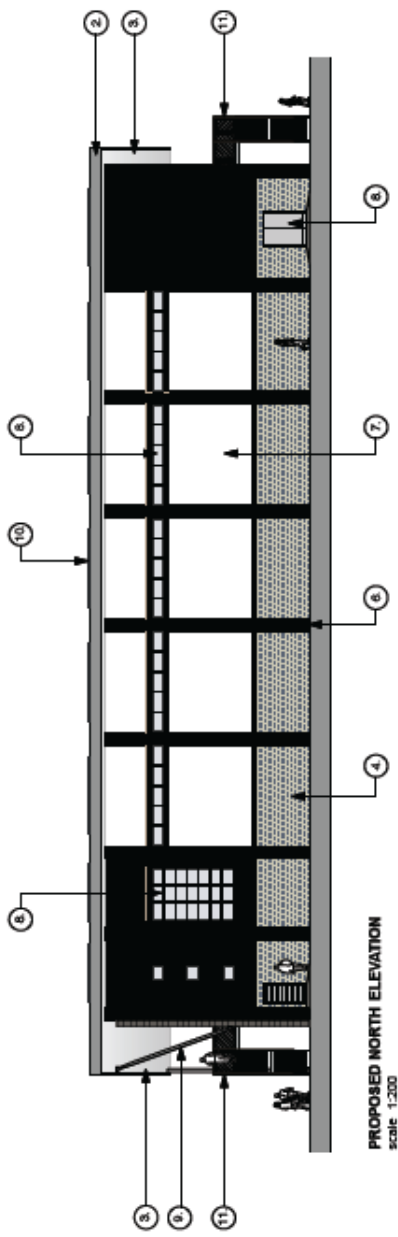
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Rev:	Date:	Detail:

hartwell architects

9 Chased Lane
 Dover, CT16 1NP
 T: 01304 215 338
 F: 01304 210 770
 www.hartwell.co.uk

Project: Proposed Sports Hall
 Client: Dover Grammar School for Boys
 Title: Proposed north & west elevations
 Revision: -
 Scale: 1:200 @ A3
 Drawn: -
 Date: Oct_2014
 Checked: -



- Materials list:**
1. Roof: Kingspan Insulated Roof System. Colour: Obsidian-HAL 9007-Metallic (to be confirmed)
 2. Kingspan eaves fascia colour: Diamond-HAL 9103-Metallic (to be confirmed)
 3. Bolt colour: Silver-HAL 9006-Metallic (to be confirmed)
 4. Backrest: Prebon - Natural Blue Piven (0397)
 5. Backrest: Prebon - White (BS WT-16)
 6. Backrest: Helixdown Cromborough - Matt Black (to suit existing)
 7. Render: Eto Leksan self-levelling render system - Colour: CR-White
 8. Windows, doors and louvers: Polyester powdered coated Aluminium. Colour: Dark Gray (RAL colour to be confirmed)
 9. External steel columns: Colour: Dark Gray (RAL colour to be confirmed)
 10. Photovoltaic panels
 11. Galvanneal steel balcony and balustrading with Meresse hardwood handrails

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 Planning Submission Drawing Issue: 24-10-14



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Proposed roof and external works plan

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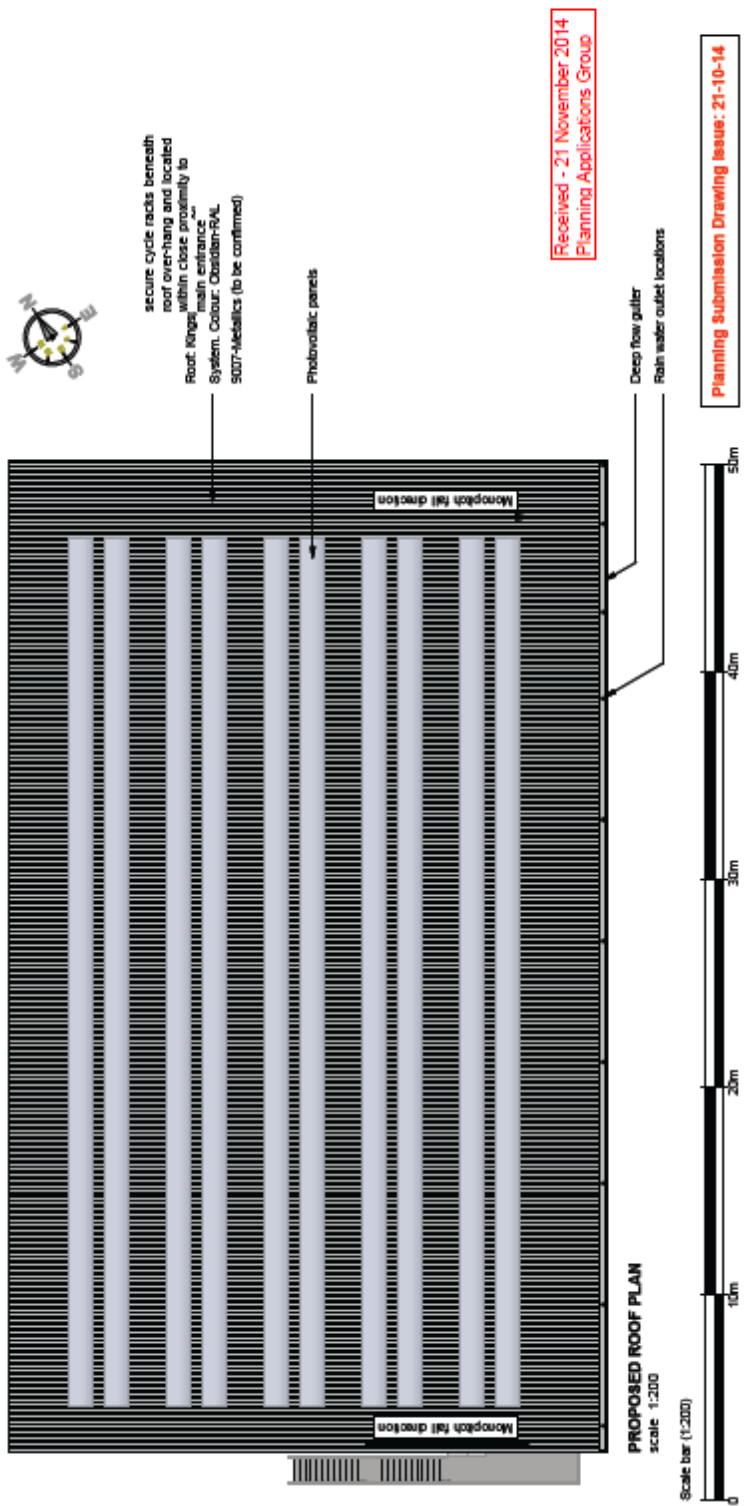
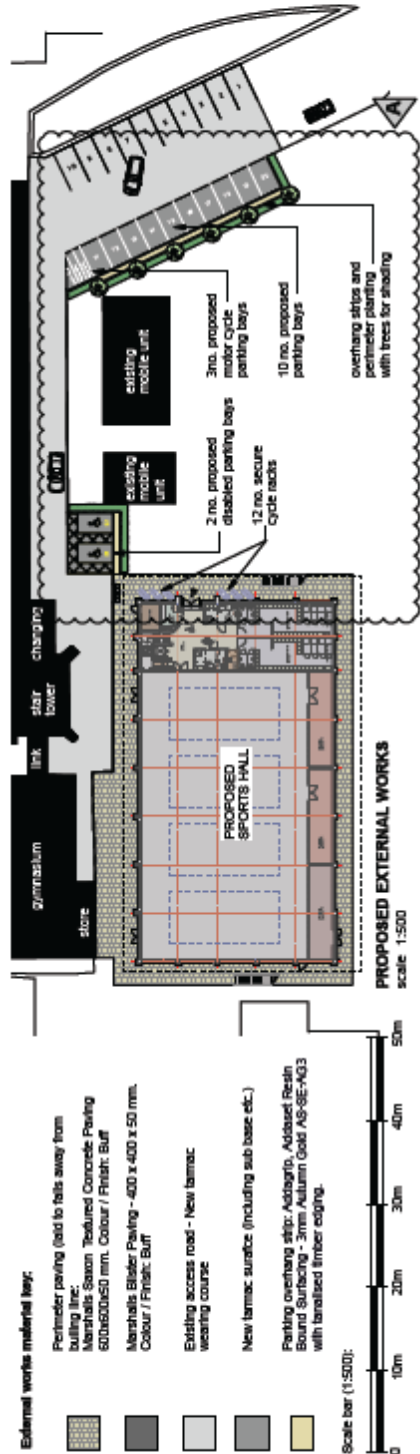
Any discrepancies, errors or omissions to be reported to the architect immediately before commencement of works.

A. 21-11-14 Planning
 Planning Application for
 with Planning advice and
 Sport England guidance.
 Rev. Date Description



9 Chapel Lane
 Dover, CT16 1NP
 T: 01304 216 338
 F: 01304 210 770
 www.hartwell.co.uk

Project	Proposed Sports Hall
Client	Dover Grammar School For Boys
Proposed Roof & External Works Plan	Revision A
Drawing	201406
Scale	1:200 & 1:500
Date	01.10.14
Drawn	DL
Checked	DL



Received - 21 November 2014
 Planning Applications Group

Planning Submission Drawing Issue: 21-10-14

Application for a new sports hall and fitness suite at Dover Grammar School for Boys – DO/14/01067 (KCC/DO/0361/2014)

3D visuals



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Planning Submission Drawing Issue: 24-10-14

3D VISUALS OF PROPOSED SPORTS HALL (NTS)

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Rev.	Date	Detail

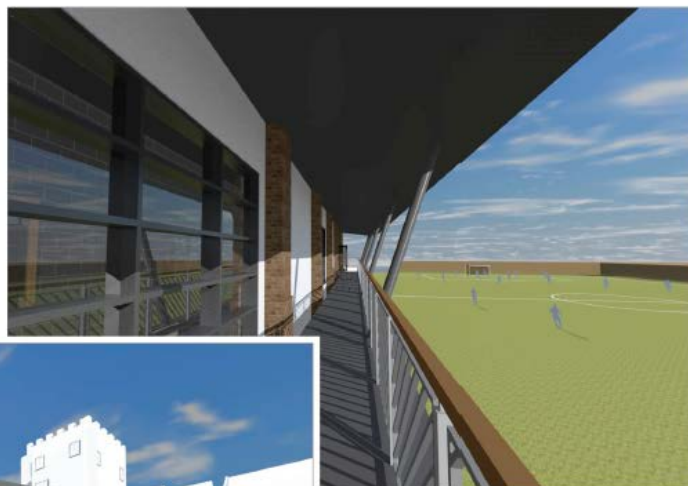
hartwell architects

 9 Chapel Lane
 Dover, CT16 1NP
 T: 01304 215 336
 F: 01304 210 770
www.hartwell.co.uk

Project: Proposed Sports Hall
 Client: Dover Grammar School for Boys
 Title: 3D Visuals of Proposed Sports Hall - 01
 Drawn: 2014-09
 Scale: NTS @ A3
 Date: Oct. 2014

Drawn	Revision

Received 24 October 2014
Planning Applications Group



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Rev.	Date	Detail

hartwell architects

 9 Chapel Lane
 Dover, CT16 1NP
 T: 01304 215 336
 F: 01304 210 770
www.hartwell.co.uk

Project: Proposed Sports Hall
 Client: Dover Grammar School for Boys
 Title: 3D Visuals of Proposed Sports Hall - 02
 Drawn: 2014-09
 Scale: NTS @ A3
 Date: Oct. 2014

Drawn	Revision

Planning Submission Drawing Issue: 24-10-14

3D VISUALS OF PROPOSED SPORTS HALL (NTS)

Application for a new sports hall and fitness suite at Dover Grammar School for Boys – DO/14/01067 (KCC/DO/0361/2014)

Planning Policy

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

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) March 2012, and the 2014 guidance 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, optimising the potential of the site to accommodate development, responding to local character and history, create safe and accessible environments and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- the promotion of healthy communities, including that great weight 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 and that there is opportunity for sport and recreation and that existing open space, sport and recreation land including playing fields are protected;
- and conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment.

Planning Statement on Planning for Schools Development - where there is commitment for planning to work in a positive manner when dealing with proposals for the creation, expansion and alteration of state-funded schools and that there should be a presumption in favour of the sustainable development of state-funded schools as expressed in the NPPF.

Local Plan/Local Development Framework policies are contained in the Dover District Local Plan 2002 and the Adopted Core Strategy (2010).

Dover District Local Plan 2002 Saved Policies

POLICY OS6 seeks to guide the location of proposals for indoor sports and recreational facilities to town centre locations in Dover or, if no such site is available, located on the edge-of-centre with good pedestrian and cycle links to the centre, or if no such site is available, is located

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elsewhere in the urban area on a site which is or can be made accessible by a range of transport modes, including public transport.

- POLICY OS7 seeks to guide the location of proposals for outdoor sports and recreational facilities or for the expansion/enhancement of existing facilities in Dover in order to enable a significant proportion of users the opportunity to access the facility by public transport, cycle and on foot. Seeks to ensure that development will not be permitted if it would cause harm to residential amenity through noise or illumination and where floodlighting is permitted conditions will be imposed to regulate operation, including hours of use.
- POLICY ER6 Seeks to ensure that proposals for external lighting will only be permitted where full cut-off lanterns are used, unless Historic Environment interests indicate otherwise.

Adopted Core Strategy 2010 Development Management Policies

- Policy DM11 seeks to guide the location of development in order to manage travel demand and require that development that would generate high levels of travel would only be permitted within the urban areas in locations that are or can be made to be well served by a range of transport means.
- Policy DM13 seeks to ensure that there is adequate parking provision based on the characteristics of the site, the locality, the nature of the proposed development and its design objectives.
- DM16 seeks to protect the character of the landscape.
- Policy DM17 seeks to ensure groundwater source protection.
- Policy DM25 seeks to guard against the loss of open space space.

Consultations

Dover District Council

Initially raised objection to the height, size, and site of the proposal, whilst accepting the need for improved indoor sports facilities. However in response to additional information provided by the applicant with regard to the proposed design height, size and siting these objections were subsequently resolved.

Kent County Council Highways and Transportation

Has no objections in respect of highway matters subject to conditions for the provision of new vehicle and cycle parking spaces and parking being available for use for the sports hall and sports pitches and provision of a construction management plan and an informative with regard to the access/egress for construction traffic from Astor Avenue and that deliveries are restricted to between 09.30 and 2.30pm.

Environment Agency

Requires a preliminary risk assessment, as the site is in a vulnerable groundwater location ordinarily this should be with the application. However the applicant request extenuating circumstances because of funding and up front spending when funding is not yet secured. The EA suggest that because of this they would be willing to have pre-commencement conditions in this case although the conditions would be more stringent as they are not informed and focussed from the findings of a preliminary risk assessment. The Agent has confirmed that they would prefer this approach.

Sport England

In relation to the proposed sports hall with changing rooms, disabled changing rooms, fitness suite, sports office, plant room, viewing gallery and storage, Sport England states that this aspect of the proposal would appear to be sited on an area of existing playing field and although the playing field would be reduced in size, it would still be capable of accommodating a football pitch. They state that the development is considered to meet exception E5 and do not wish to raise an objection to the application subject to a condition for a community use agreement in order to secure well managed safe community access to the sports facility to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport. Sport England states that the proposal would provide additional car parking to serve the proposed sports hall and remaining playing field which would appear to be clearly needed. It considers that the additional car parking would be ancillary to the principal use of the site as a playing field and is therefore satisfied that the proposal for additional car parking meets exception E2 in that the development includes new facilities that are ancillary to the principal use of the site as playing field and does not adversely affect the quantity or quality of pitches or adversely affect their use.

Sport England states that if a condition for a community use agreement is not attached to any decision in order to secure well managed safe community access to the sports facility to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport they would wish to maintain / lodge a statutory objection which would require referral to the National Planning Casework Unit should the Authority be minded to approve the application.

Kent County Council Biodiversity

Advised that the footprint of the proposed new building is on short amenity grassland and that there is limited potential for direct ecological impacts. However they comment that the existing sports hall is in a poor state of repair with potential for roosting bats and have concern that if bats are using the existing building the proposed new building would prevent or disturb bats from entering and exiting their roost (if one is present). In response to their initial advice the applicant provided an assessment of the existing sports hall's potential for roosting bats. In response to submission of further information Biodiversity advise that they are satisfied that there has been an adequate assessment for the potential for bats and their roost to be present and that the proposed development is not likely to result in ecological impacts. They advise that no lighting associated with the proposed development is directed to the area identified as having bat roosting potential. They also advise that if subsequent works are proposed relating to the existing sports hall storage room, further consideration of the potential for bat presence will need to be undertaken. They advise that the provision of swift nest boxes along the eaves of the north

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eastern elevation of the proposed sports hall would be appropriate and could be secured condition if permission is granted.

Local Member(s)

16. The Local Members Mrs P Brivio and Mr G Cowan were notified of the application on 6th November 2014 and 15th December 2014. In response to the earlier notification Mr Cowan confirmed that he supports the application.

Publicity

17. The application has been advertised by the posting of site notice in two locations, newspaper advertisement and by the individual notification of 66 properties in relation to the initial application and amended details in clarification of proposed hours and community use.

Representations

18. One neighbour representation has been received in objection to the proposal from a resident in Anselm Road, with concerns about increased use and new parking facilities; noise during construction; noise during use; traffic and congestion and pollution impacts given limited parking on site; extended hours and extra noise and anti-social behaviour. There are also concerns with regard to alcohol use associated with the proposal and alcohol related anti-social behaviour. There is also a suggestion for the School to avoid disruption by sharing the facilities of the neighbouring Astor College for the Arts.

Discussion

19. In considering this proposal regard must be had to 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, this proposal needs to be considered in the context of Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity.
20. This application is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee because of a neighbour representation objecting to the proposal.
21. I consider that the key determining issues in relation to this application are the need for the development; the location of the proposal and the impacts in relation to design, amenity and highway matters. These matters are discussed further below.

Need

22. The existing sports hall and changing room facilities are in need of repair and modernising. It is understood that the School have recently replaced the floor and are intending to continue using the existing facility in addition to the new proposal. In addition, the existing facilities do not meet Sport England's criteria for safe indoor sporting activities (eg a requirement for flush internal wall finishes "without sharp edges, projection or abrasive surfaces that could cause injury to users". The current facilities have protruding brick columns, recessed double doors, and single glazed

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doors. There is no mechanical ventilation and it is understood that this results in overheating and condensation. The teaching environment is therefore considered uncomfortable. The applicant states that the School is restricted from offering its pupils a number of indoor sporting activities because of the substandard condition and size of the facility. The School are unable to teach more than one class at a time and substandard provision means that the school falls behind in objectives to promote and encourage healthy lifestyles. Given the condition and extent of the existing indoor sports facility and the limitations to sports provision, I am satisfied that there is a need for modern sports facility to provide education in this regard and to support the promotion of healthy communities as advocated by the National Planning Policy Framework and Government guidance.

23. Neighbour representation questions whether the facility is needed if the school can share the facilities of the neighbouring Astor College for the Arts. It is understood that the existing sports facilities at the neighbouring Astor College of Arts are not available to the Dover Grammar School during the school term time and that the respective schools are of a size that require their own dedicated facility.
24. The community use of the sports hall is being proposed in response to current enquiries from the community for use of the existing school hall, which it is understood are currently being turned down by the School. Community use of the proposal is a requirement of Sport England and is linked to funding for the scheme.
25. Given the national planning context relating to promoting healthy communities and a presumption in favour of the sustainable development of state-funded schools in order to meet the needs of existing communities I accept that there is a need for new indoor sports facilities within the school for the school's own use. The external pitch facilities already exist.
26. However the extent of need for community use of the proposed sport hall needs to be considered. The Dover District Council Sport and Recreation Strategy 2008-2018 indicates that the supply of sports hall facilities open to the community is limited by restricted availability of access and that community use agreements that contribute to sufficiency of supply are to be encouraged. The Strategy document indicates that the Astor College has a 4 court sports hall but there is limited access and not full community use.
27. In relation to the outdoor pitches, the applicant advises that there is already community use taking place at the site. The draft Dover District Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy 2014 indicates that existing community use of the Dover Boys Grammar School playing fields for rugby and football is "non secure" (ie not formally managed). The Strategy indicates there are 2 senior football pitches available at the school for football use and that the maximum carrying capacity is 2 times per week (the number of games the pitch can withstand in a week before affecting pitch quality). There is 1 senior rugby pitch with a carrying capacity of 1 game per week. The Strategy also indicates that there is a current shortfall of publically accessible ("secure") football and rugby pitches in Dover. The Strategy indicates that the Astor College of Arts does not have football facilities available for community use and that community use of the rugby pitch is "non-secure". The draft strategy therefore leads me to conclude that there is a current need in Dover for community use of the existing 3 pitches.
28. The community use agreement required by Sport England would allow the pitches to move from the existing "non-secure" use to "secure" use and would require more

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formal management arrangements covering such matters as hours of availability, management arrangements and pricing policy to be in place. It is intended to secure well managed and safe community access to sports facilities on educational sites. Given that Dover District Council in their initial response to the proposal also accept that there is a need for the facility, I also conclude that there is a need for an indoor sports hall at the proposed site which cannot be met by shared use of the Astor College site given the restricted availability of that site to the School's own use. I accept that there is a need for community use of new facilities given that planning policy encourages shared use of facilities and the promotion of active healthy communities and also a need for sufficient car parking to be included within this proposal in order to meet highways requirements. I also conclude that the pitches are already in informal community use and that formalising this with the inclusion of the pitches within a community use agreement would not in itself require separate planning permission.

29. Planning policy encourages the shared use of facilities in promoting healthy communities. The need for such facilities must however be balanced against the location impacts of this proposal on playing field land and the wider amenity impacts that the development may create. That is discussed below.

Location

30. Development Plan Policy OS6 and DM11 indicates that the location within Dover is generally acceptable for a new indoor sports hall, and I see no objection in principle from the development plan policy viewpoint.
31. The application indicates that a number of alternative location options within the school site have been considered, two of which were discounted as a result of pre-application discussion with Sport England, and one of which was discounted because the location was further away from the main school building and therefore attracted increased cost, travel distance between the school building and security issues. The final location proposed by the applicant was intended by them to respond to the exceptions to playing field policy; to minimise the impact of pupil movement around the school site; to allow use of the proposed new changing rooms in conjunction with the existing gym; to limit the impact of construction on the existing school activities; and to take advantage of the views across the playing fields in the viewing gallery design.
32. In their initial response, Dover District Council suggested that consideration should be given to utilising the space on which the existing sports hall is located to allow the proposal to be sited closer to and be better related to the main school building and also to reduce the footprint of the proposal. The applicant advised that the option of demolition and construction of a realigned building was considered but not favoured by the School due to the additional cost of demolition and risks of excavation so close to the existing tower and chalk cliff behind the gymnasium. The applicant also advised that the proposal has the benefit of continued use of the existing building during the construction period which is important to the provision and continuity of sports education.
33. The applicant states that a number of locations were initially considered as part of the design process and that the proposed location chosen was as a result of consultations with a number of relevant bodies, including Dover District Council, Kent County Council Planning and Sport England. They state that proposed location has been carefully considered in relation to the scale of the existing school buildings,

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proximity and aesthetic of neighbouring properties, landscape and potential impact on views from the surrounding area and provide additional information with regard to a height and massing analysis for the proposed location.

34. The school is located in an elevated and prominent location. However, in their initial response Dover District Council raised objection to the proposal because of height, size and siting which in their view would appear overly dominant and obtrusive in the context of the school and the wider area, particularly given the elevated and prominent position of the school. In their response to these views the applicant has provided additional supporting information seeking to justify the design and the proposed location for the proposal. As a result of the additional information, Dover District Council withdrew their objection accepting the justification that the proposed site is the most appropriate within the school grounds. The information submitted by the applicant shows that the proposed location would be generally masked from views by trees and foliage when viewed from the south east of the site and that the proposal would be partially visible when viewed from across the valley from Dover Castle and that the mono-pitch design allows the proposal to sit comfortably within the gradient of the land.
35. In my opinion, the proposed location of the sports hall which is primarily for the School's own use is appropriate within the school's own site and that the proposed location at a school site for community use is also acceptable in planning terms in this location, given the planning policies DM25, OS11 and OS6 which support sports facility provision within Dover, and the national planning policy which encourages shared use of public facilities in the promotion of healthy and sustainable communities.
36. Within the site, the proposal is located to the south west of the school buildings and is near to and grouped with the existing buildings on and around the site and takes advantage of the levels below the main school buildings and the existing screening which is provided by the tree belt further south of the site. Views from Astor Avenue are therefore screened and, given the height of the proposal in relation to the existing buildings, I consider that the applicant has demonstrated that the proposal sits appropriately within the wider landscape subject to the further consideration of design and materials impacts and amenity impacts which is discussed further below. I consider the location within the school site to be appropriate given the grouping near to other school buildings and furthest away from residential property. Furthermore, the location of the proposal within the school site on school playing field does not prejudice the number of pitches at the site and Sport England does not object to the proposal. The additional car parking spaces are located close to existing car parking at the site and are screened by an existing steep bank. Additional landscaping has been proposed to the south of the proposed landscaping.
37. I therefore conclude that the location and site for this Sports Hall proposal is acceptable in planning terms on this school site.

Design Impacts

38. National planning policy requires good design and positive contributions to making better places for people and this includes making developments visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Policy DM16 requires consideration of the design of the proposal requiring development locations to be carefully selected and the design and scale of buildings to be crafted to fit the circumstances.

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39. The applicant states that a sports hall by definition will have considerable mass and that the size of the proposed building is linked to the requirements of Sport England, as failure to adhere to Sport England guidelines for such proposals would jeopardise funding of the proposal and damage the ability of the School to attract community use to the facility. Minimum court sizes and floor to ceiling heights are set out by Sport England. Provision of a fit for purpose sports hall facility is important in planning terms, in relation to longevity of proposals and provision of sustainable facilities that encourages differing levels of participation. The provision of more than one court allows for a number of sports activities to take place at the same time, which is of benefit to the provision of sports education at the school.
40. The applicant indicates that the mono-pitch roof design was chosen in order to respond to the site context given the elevated position of the site, rather than the vaulted roof design that has been used elsewhere. The design height for the proposed 4 sports hall courts is 7.5m (25ft) internal height. Externally the building to the north of the site would be 3.55m (11.6ft) higher (excluding the height of the proposed pv panels) than to the south of the site which would be 7.8m (25.6ft) high.
41. In my opinion, care has been taken to ensure that the proposal is well designed and would incorporate the existing building form and function. It would be set back against the existing building and the height of the building is at an appropriate level within the context of the tower and arches of the southern elevation. I consider that the proposed design although modern would not detract from the appearance of the existing building at the site. The site is currently well screened by a vegetation belt between the pitches although there are views towards the site from other elevated positions, such as from Dover Castle. The nearby Astor College is also prominent to that view. The roof line of this proposal would be lower than that of the “yellow” building of Astor College and the colours for external materials proposed take account of the need to fit in to the existing site context.
42. The detail of the pv panels proposed has not been included within the submission and, should Members decide to grant permission, a condition can be used to require details of the PV panels design, colour and orientation to the building prior to installation. The principle of PV panels on the building is acceptable and in accordance with planning guidance.
43. Having regard to the development plan policies, and also the comments received from the statutory consultees, I therefore consider that the design is appropriate for the location and that the design and scale has been crafted to fit the site context and surroundings.

Highway impacts

44. The NPPF suggests that developments should only be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. The applicant has clarified that both access points would be available for use when the proposal is open and that the existing school parking would be available for use at the site, in addition to the proposed new vehicle and cycle parking spaces. There are no objections from the Highways Authority with regard to parking and highway matters subject to provision and retention of the new cycle and vehicle parking at the site, and to the provision of a construction management plan with regard to the access route for construction traffic, parking and turning areas for delivery vehicles, parking for site

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personnel, wheel wash facilities and proposed working hours. I am satisfied that these matters can be required via planning condition.

45. The neighbour representation raises a concern about congestion arising from limited parking availability at the site and an escalation of noise and vehicular pollution with increased use.
46. Use of the proposal during school time would be for educational use and not generate any additional traffic. The community use of the proposal would be formally managed and at times which are outside school hours, resulting in extended hours of use at the site. The football and rugby pitches are currently used for community use on an informal basis and planning permission would not be required for this activity to continue under a community use agreement. Such an agreement would require the pitches to be managed so as to ensure that the quality of the pitch surface is not damaged by over or misuse and this would influence the level and regularity of use and the consequential level of increased use.
47. Given that there is no objection from our Highways Advisor, subject to conditions requiring that on-site vehicle and cycle parking being made available, I conclude that there should be sufficient on-site parking at the site within existing and proposed parking, totalling 103 spaces provided within the school to avoid off site impacts from increased traffic and congestion.
48. The proposal also includes additional parking spaces and cycle and motor cycle parking. The nearest parking for the proposed sports hall would be the additional parking area proposed to the south of existing parking behind an earth bund. This is located close to housing in Anselm Road and Hamilton Road. However, I am satisfied that the additional on-site parking is appropriately located in relation to the existing onsite parking and would be largely screened from views by the existing earth bund, and by additional proposed landscaping to the south.
49. The neighbour representation indicates concern with regard to increases in noise at the site. In response, the applicant acknowledges that noise from vehicles using the access drive could have increased impact and offers installation of an acoustic fence to show the applicant's willingness to respond to the concerns of the School's neighbours. That would guard against additional noise impacts from the use of the additional car parking spaces proposed, ie from manoeuvring. The fence proposed would be constructed with timber having a density of 12 kg per sq.m, 2m (6.5ft) high and imperforate, installed along a 34m (111.5ft) length of access road nearest to residential properties in Anselm Road. The applicant has provided an indicative location for this and has also suggested willingness for a condition also to be used to require the monitoring of noise levels at appropriate intervals along the site access road during construction with the installation of further acoustic fencing along the site access should it be deemed necessary. I am satisfied that this matter can be addressed by use of a planning condition to require the installation of a 34m section of acoustic fence prior to construction works commencing and to also require monitoring of the noise environment during construction work along the site boundary with the construction of further sections of fencing should it be deemed necessary. Given that the installation of fencing to 2m (6.5ft) height would be permitted development, I would also suggest that the applicant also engages with neighbouring property with regard to the proposed locations and timings for the installation of fencing, and also in relation to the on-site construction activity should members decide to grant permission.

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50. I also consider that a condition can be used to require a community use agreement, including the requirement for all parking at the site to be available for the proposed community use outside of normal school hours. I also consider that the applicant be advised via Informative of the need to ensure that parking on site is appropriately managed during community use and to provide appropriate details to users of the facility.
51. A construction management plan should be required to be submitted to address access route for construction traffic; parking and turning areas for delivery vehicles and parking for on-site personnel; wheel wash facilities and proposed working hours during construction in order to address the short term impacts during the construction period. As requested by the Highways Advisor, the restriction of construction traffic access/egress to the Astor Avenue entrance and the restriction of deliveries to between 09.30 and 2.30pm can be addressed via planning condition and informative.
52. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal including these measures would not give rise to unacceptable adverse impacts arising from highways and parking issues within the existing site context, and that the proposal accords with the planning policy in relation to access, pedestrian safety and highways matters.

Amenity Impacts

53. The pitches are not floodlit and no additional lighting is proposed for the pitches and therefore the hours of use would be restricted in any event to daylight hours. I would intend to impose a condition preventing the use of floodlighting in this location. I also would intend to request details of any external lighting proposed around the building and car park areas at the site, and am satisfied that that could be required by condition, if Members are minded to grant permission.
54. The neighbour representation expressed objection to noise during construction and noise during use. The temporary disruption arising from building works needs to be balanced against the longer term need for developing and modernising school facilities, and in providing shared facilities for community use and ensuring that community facilities meet the needs of existing and new communities. I am satisfied that noise during construction can be controlled to the standard construction hours of 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday and 0800 to 1300 Saturday with no work on Sundays and Public Holidays by condition, in order to ensure that these additional temporary impacts can be managed to an acceptable level for the duration of the construction work on site. The applicant states that they can ensure in their tendering process that the contractors are members of the Considerate Constructor's Scheme and that any enabling work can include construction of an acoustic fence along the site boundary in the appropriate locations. The submission of a construction management plan can include such matters in addition to responding to the Highways requirements and can be required by a condition. The construction of a 34m (111.5ft) section of acoustic fence along the site boundary can also be required by a condition if Members are minded to grant permission.
55. The existing sports pitches are already used by the community on an informal basis and permission would not be required for this to be formalised. However a Community Use Agreement would formalise the management arrangements for this use and provide restrictions on use which would assist in managing the noise environment. Sport England would require submission of a Community Use Agreement before the use commences and their response to the proposal is subject

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to the provision of that. I would therefore suggest that that can be required by condition if Members are minded to grant permission.

56. The proposed sports hall is 75m (246ft) away from the nearest properties. With the exception of the spectator viewing gallery, activities would take place indoors in a purpose built facility, designed to meet all Building Regulation requirements in relation to containment of noise within the building. Whilst there would be a viewing gallery on the south elevation overlooking the playing field pitch and at first floor level with access steps to the eastern elevation, the gallery is set under the overhang of the roof. The applicant states that they would not expect this design feature to result in unreasonable levels of noise when compared to the levels of noise being created elsewhere on the school field when the pitches would be in use, or from spectators viewing from ground level. Use of the sports hall would not therefore be expected to result in unacceptable noise amenity impacts.
57. The applicant states that noise associated with the indoor use of the sports hall would have a negligible effect on the School's neighbours, although noise from cars using the access could have a marginally increased impact on neighbouring properties. Given the commitment to monitor and provide an acoustic fence where required along the boundary fence, I see no reason to refuse the application on the grounds of noise.
58. The neighbour representation also expresses a concern about anti-social behaviour, alcohol use associated with the proposal and alcohol related anti-social behaviour. The applicant states that no alcohol will be available at the site as that would not be compatible with a school location, and I would expect the community use at the school site to be closely managed by the School. Moreover, the Community Use Agreement arrangements would need to be submitted in order to meet Sport England requirements, and therefore I suggest inclusion of this consideration within the proposed condition requiring Community Use Agreement.
59. The guidance within the NPPF encourages planning decisions which aim to achieve places that promote safe and accessible environments and developments which deliver social and recreational facilities which the community needs. It also encourages decisions that ensure that established facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable and are retained for the benefit of the community. Given also the strong policy support for school development, and taking into account the comments received from the statutory consultees, I do not consider that there are sufficient grounds for the refusal of this proposal on the grounds of amenity impacts with regard to noise, lighting or the fear of anti-social behaviour.

Biodiversity and other matters

60. Taking into account comments received from Kent County Council Biodiversity, I consider the impacts in terms of biodiversity to be acceptable in planning policy terms.
61. The site is however in a vulnerable position with regard to ground water as it is on a major aquifer and an inner source protection zone. The Environment Agency would require a preliminary risk assessment to be carried out prior to any development at the site. The applicant has requested that the groundwater risk assessment be required by condition and taking into account comments received from the

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Environment Agency, I am satisfied that conditions can be used in relation to groundwater protection matters should Members be minded to grant permission.

Conclusion

62. Planning policy seeks to promote healthy and inclusive communities. Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation are also considered to be important contributions to health and wellbeing of communities. However, planning policy also seeks to require good design so that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development and are visually attractive. It also seeks to ensure development proposals are acceptable in terms of amenity impacts which are also relevant to promotion of healthy communities.
63. In this case, where it is accepted that there is a need for appropriate sports facilities at the school, and at the same time an opportunity to meet the wider community sports needs with regard to sports facilities, I consider the location of the proposal to be acceptable. I also consider the proposed design to be acceptable in that it responds appropriately to the site context and location.
64. Having taken into account the responses from the statutory consultees, in particular from Kent Highways and Transportation in relation to highways matters, I conclude that the proposal is acceptable in terms of location, need, design and amenity impacts, and I therefore conclude that the proposal would be acceptable in this location.

Recommendation

65. I RECOMMEND that, PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO conditions, including:
- The standard 5 year time limit for implementation;
 - That the development be carried out in accordance with submitted details;
 - Submission and approval of a Community Use Agreement, before the use commences;
 - Installation of a 34m section of acoustic fence prior to construction work commencing and monitoring during construction work with provision for construction of further sections of acoustic fencing if required;
 - Submission and approval of external lighting details to the proposed building and car park area prior to installation;
 - That no external floodlighting to existing pitches be installed;
 - Submission and approval of samples of materials for the external building materials prior to commencement;
 - Submission and approval of details of pv panels including colour, manufacturer, size and orientation;
 - Remediation strategy should contamination not previously been identified be found to be present;
 - Restriction of construction working hours to between 0800 and 1800 Monday to Friday and 0800 to 1300 Saturday with no work on Sundays and Public Holidays;
 - Restriction of construction vehicles delivering materials to between the hours of 09.30 and 1430 Monday to Friday;

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- Submission of details of construction management plan to include access routes, vehicle loading, unloading, turning, circulation and parking and details of the location of the construction compound prior to commencement of work on site;
- Provision of additional vehicle and cycling parking on site;
- Restoration and making good of any disturbed areas of field or planting;
- Provision of wheel washing facilities prior to commencement of work on site and for the duration of construction;
- Provision of swift nest boxes along the eaves of the north eastern elevation.

I FURTHER RECOMMEND THAT the applicant BE ADVISED of:

- Inclusion of appropriate management measures within the Community Use Agreement to ensure that parking on site is appropriately managed during community use and provision of appropriate details for users of the facility.

Case officer – Hazel Mallett

03000 413411

Background documents - See section heading
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