

SECTION D
DEVELOPMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL

Background Documents: the deposited documents; views and representations received as referred to in the reports and included in the development proposals dossier for each case; and other documents as might be additionally indicated.

Item D1

Erection of three single storey extensions and associated external works at Green Park Primary School, The Linces, Dover, Kent – DO/15/01080 (KCC/DO/0328/2015)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 9th March 2016.

Application by KCC Property and Infrastructure Support for the erection of three single storey classroom extensions and associated external work to include ramps, access, retaining walls, paths, alterations to playground and extending the existing parking provision at Green Park Primary School, The Linces, Dover – DOV/15/01080 (KCC/DO/0328/2015)

Recommendation: Permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Member: Mr Gordon Cowan and Mrs Pam Brivio

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. Green Park Primary School is located to the south-east of Whitfield Hill and the north-east of Crabble Hill in Dover, on the edge of the Buckland Estate. It is just over 2km (1.2 miles) to the north-west of Dover Town Centre, and is located in a predominantly residential area. The school lies on the north-western side of The Linces, on land which rises away from the road. Residential development along The Linces is two storey housing, and The Linces itself acts as a minor distributor road permitting access to a number of smaller residential streets and closes. To the rear of the houses on the south-eastern side of The Linces (opposite the school) is an area of open space, and to the south of this is the Buckland Community Centre.
2. Access to the school is from The Linces, and there are zig-zag keep clear markings in front of this. Vehicular access is for staff only, and the on-site car park is located in front of the school building. The school itself is predominantly single storey, of brick construction with flat roofs. Pedestrian access is via a single gate to the south of the vehicular entrance, and metal railings run along the school boundary along this road frontage. To the east of the school is an independent nursery, which has its own access and is not part of the school. The playgrounds lie to the west of the school buildings and the playing fields run round the rear of the school, backing onto the newly built housing site off Old Park Hill.

Background

3. The school was formed in 2008 when Melbourne Primary School and the Powell School amalgamated, and is currently a 1.5 Form Entry with a school roll of 315 pupils and 55 existing members of staff. The need for additional school places is set out in the Kent Education Commissioning Plan 2015-2019. For Dover District the pressure points are for primary school places in Dover Town, Whitfield and St Margaret's at Cliffe wards. Dover District's birth rate mirrors the Kent and National levels, and even with the recent drop in birth rates, the impact of 10-12 years of rising birth rates will continue to provide

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pressure for places. Within Dover District up to 8,000 new homes may be built by 2021, and sites in and around Dover, Deal, Sandwich and Aylesham will also impact on existing primary school places. More housing is proposed in Whitfield – 1,050 new homes by 2021 and a further 5,040 in the following two decades, generating the need for at least three new 2 form entry primary schools to serve this new community.

4. As a result of this need it is proposed to increase Green Park Primary School from a 1.5 form entry to a 2 form entry with a school roll of 420 pupils and an increase in staffing numbers to 61 (105 additional pupils and 6 new staff).

Recent Site History

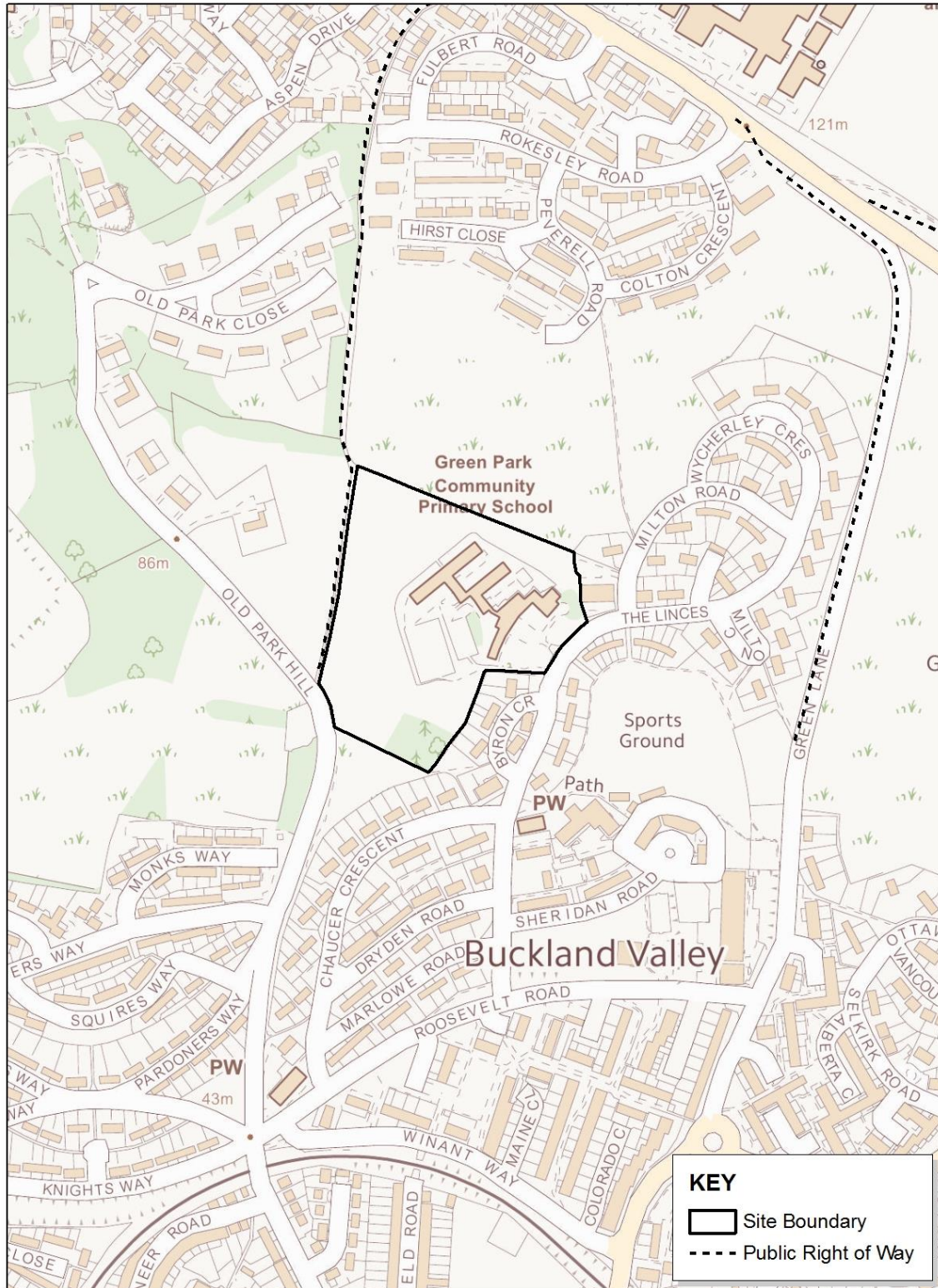
5. The most recent planning history for the school dates back to 2010 for an application for a new perimeter fence and prior to that in 2008 there were applications approved for a 2 bay mobile classroom, a new classroom extension and access improvements to the main entrance onto The Linces.

Proposal

6. The application seeks permission for the construction of three single storey extensions to provide three new classrooms (one retrospectively), an increase in the on-site parking area and the creation of a second pedestrian access onto The Linces. The second pedestrian access would be located to the north of the vehicular access, meeting The Linces at the nursery side of the site, and allowing access for pedestrians coming from both directions to the school without having to cross the school access. A new pathway within the site would run up this side of the school site and link directly to the existing school area and the two new classrooms proposed in this area.
7. At present 33 parking spaces are provided on site. One of these is proposed to be removed to allow access to an area which would be surfaced with tarmac and laid out for 8 spaces, giving a net increase of 7 spaces on site, and bringing the total to 40. One tree is required to be removed from this area to accommodate the additional parking. Vehicular access into the site remains unchanged.
8. The three extensions would be achieved by extending the existing corridor layout of the school and extending the length of these 'arms'. The extensions would follow the design of the existing building, with brickwork to match and glazing to make the most of the south facing aspect. The extensions would be defined by the inclusion of parapet walls, which would provide a break between the existing and new development.
9. The construction of classroom extension '3' was started when the applicants thought the extension was allowed under permitted development. When the size of the extension was clarified at the point when the School applied for the extra two classrooms it was established that in fact its size (combined with an existing storage container located in the car park) exceeded the permitted development rights, and hence this third classroom was included in the current application.
10. The application has been supported by the submission of a Design and Access Statement, Transport Statement, an Addendum to the Transport Statement and a revised School Travel Plan.

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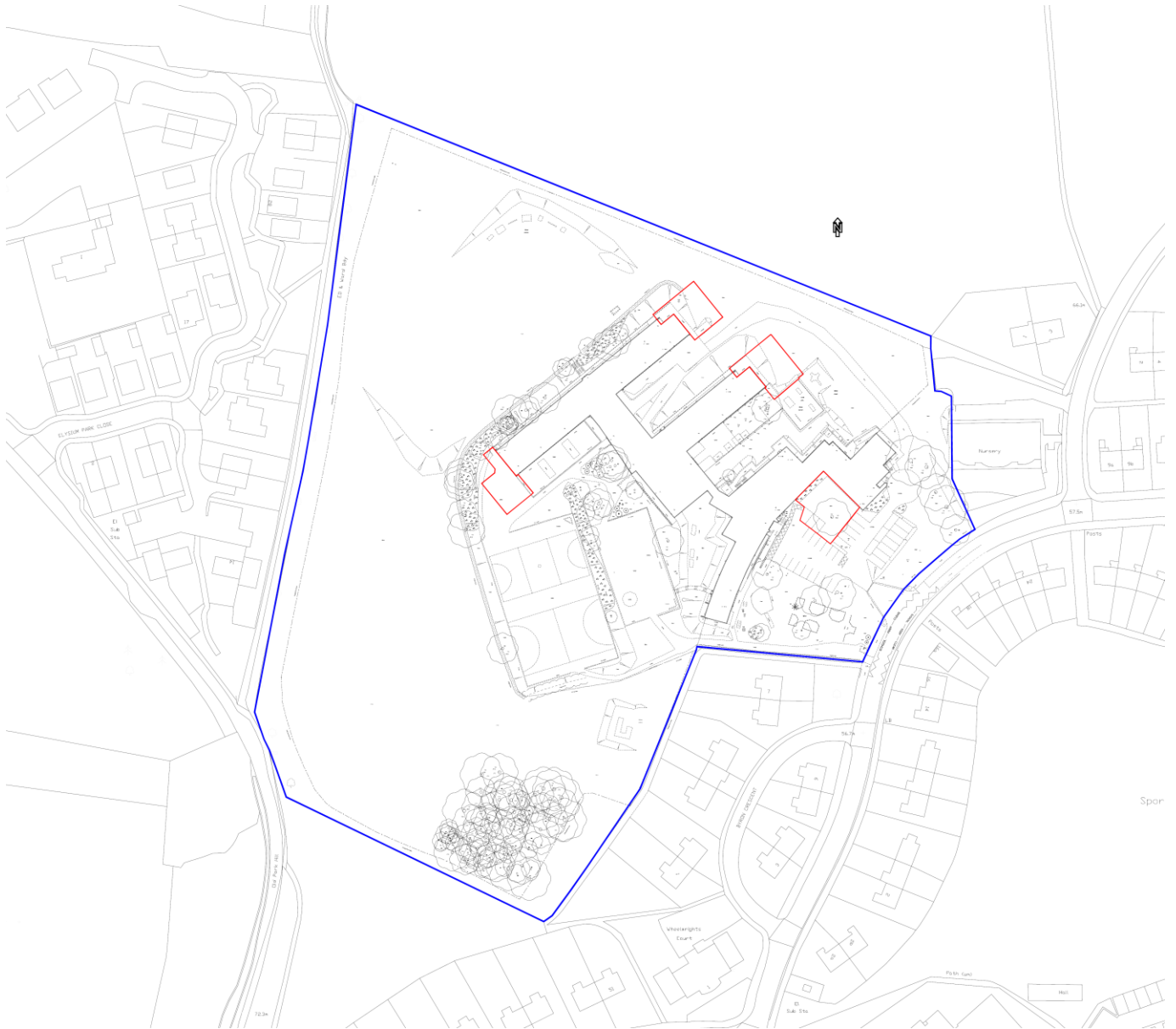
General Location Plan



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Ordnance Survey 100019238

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Site Location Plan



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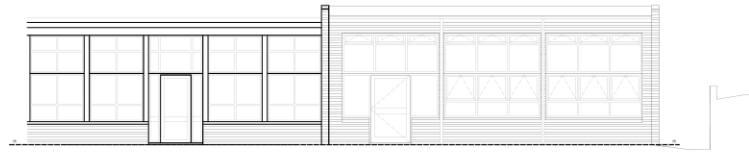
Site Layout Plan



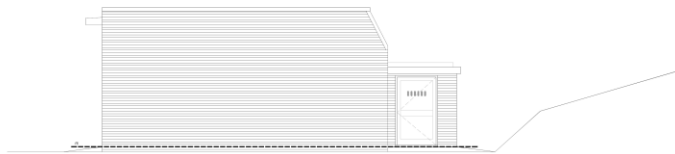
Site Layout Plan as Proposed
1:500

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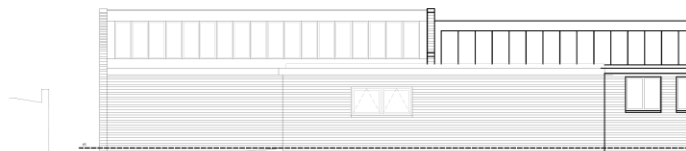
Proposed Elevations and Floorplans - Extension 1



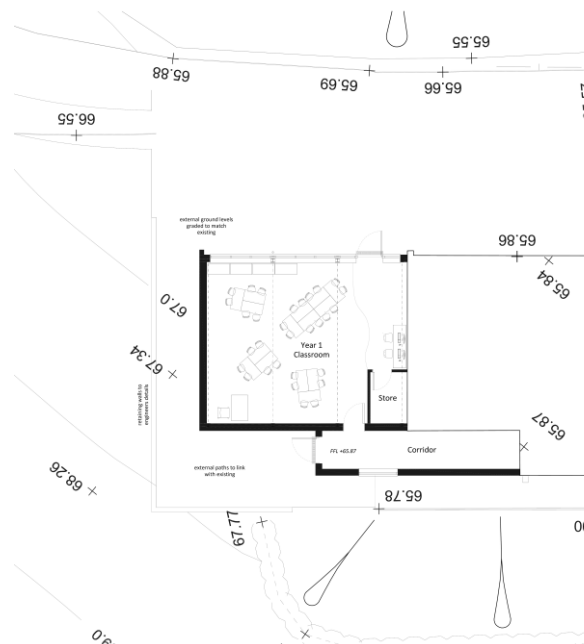
Front (South-East) Elevation
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Side (North-East) Elevation
1:100



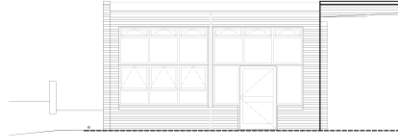
Rear (North-West) Elevation
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Ground Floor Plan
1:100

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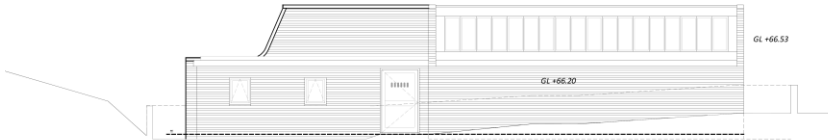
Proposed Elevations and Floorplans - Extension 2



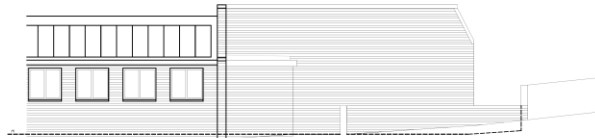
Side (North-East) Elevation
1:100



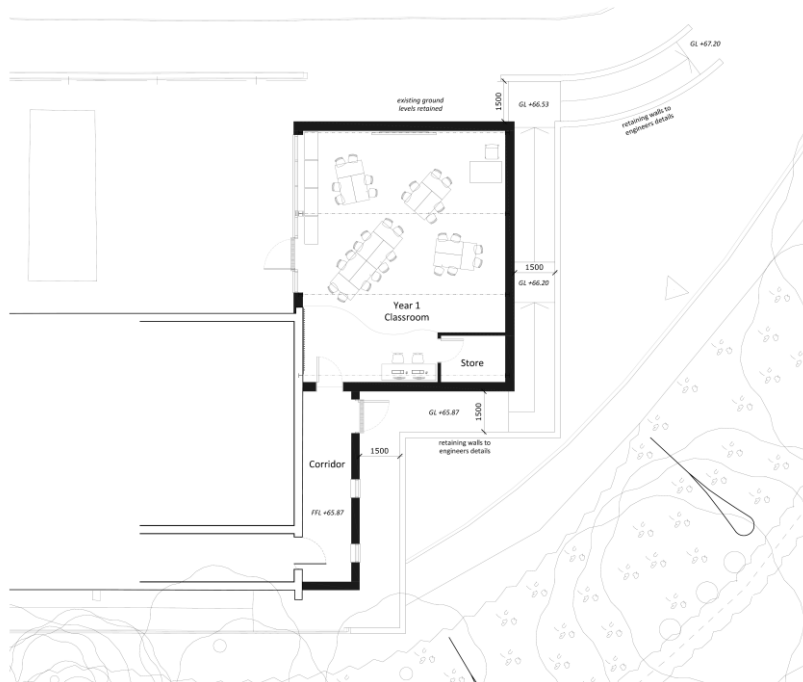
Front (South-East) Elevation
1:100



Side (South-West) Elevation
1:100



Rear (North-West) Elevation
1:100



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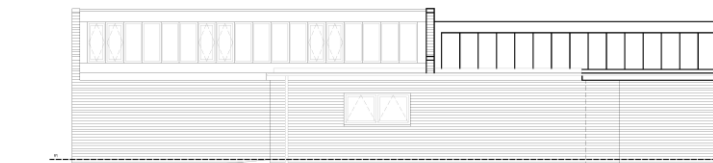
Proposed Elevations and Floorplans - Extension 3



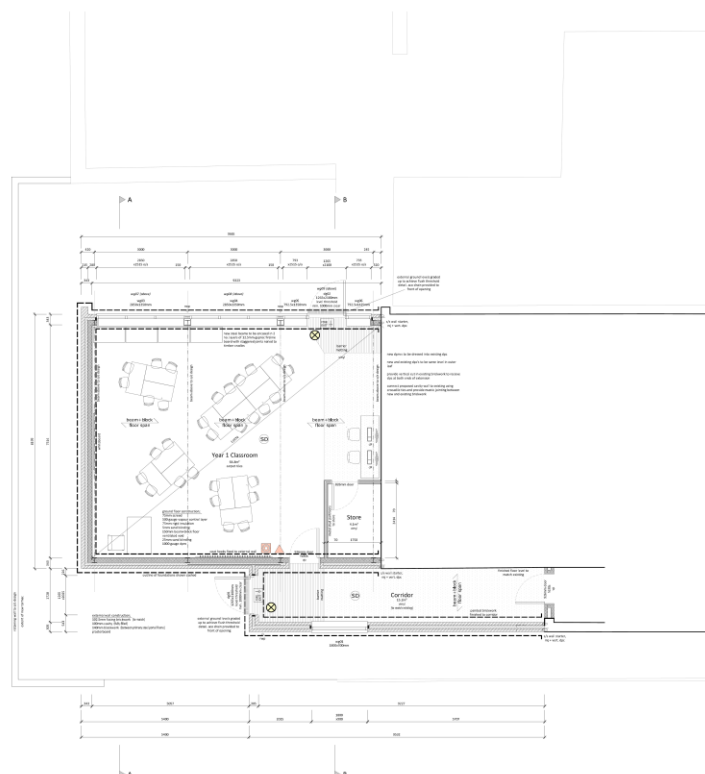
Front (South-East) Elevation
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Side (North-East) Elevation
1:100



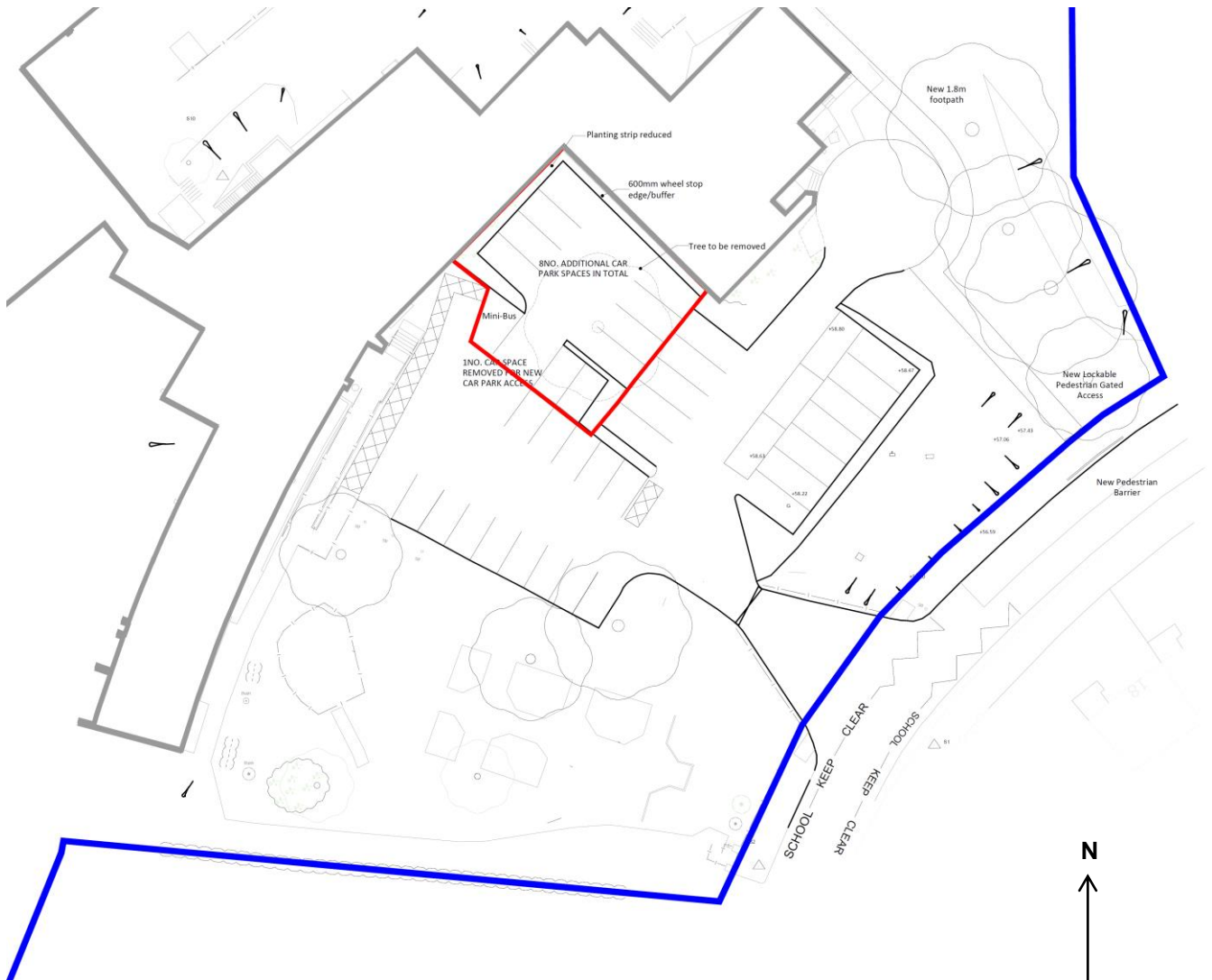
Rear (North-West) Elevation
1:100



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Proposed Parking and New Pedestrian Access Layout



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Planning Policy

11. 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 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.
- That access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation are important in their contribution to health and well-being, and therefore that existing open space, sports and recreation facilities should not be built on unless the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality.

- (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.

- (ii) **Dover District Council Core Strategy (2010)**

Policy CP1 Settlement Hierarchy: The location and scale of development in the District must comply with the settlement hierarchy. The hierarchy should also be used by infrastructure providers to inform decisions about the provision of their services. *(The site lies within the Secondary Regional Centre of Dover – the major focus for development).*

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Policy DM11 Location of Development and Managing Travel Demand: Planning applications for development that would increase travel demand should be supported by a systematic assessment to quantify the amount and type of travel likely to be generated and include measures that satisfy demand to maximize walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

Policy DM13 Parking Provision: Provision for parking should be a design-led process based upon characteristics of the site, the locality, the nature of the proposed development and its design objectives. Provision for non-residential development should be informed by Kent County Council Guidance SPG4 (Kent Vehicle Parking Standards, July 2006 which allows for a maximum provision of 1 space per member of staff plus 10%), or any successor.

Policy DM17 Groundwater Source Protection: Within Groundwater Source Protection Zones the policy sets out what would and would not be allowed in order to safeguard against possible contamination.

Consultations

12. **Dover District Council** raises no objection to the application.

Dover Town Council raises no objection to the application.

Environment Agency (Kent Area) states that they consider the application as having a low environmental risk, therefore no comments to make.

Highways and Transportation Officer raises no objection subject to the imposition of conditions relating to the retention of on site parking, submission of construction details, and School Travel Plan measures.

School Travel Planner raises no objection.

Local Member

13. The local County Members, Gordon Cowan and Pam Brivio, were notified of the application on 26th October 2015.

Publicity

14. The application was publicised by the posting of a site notice, and the individual notification of 56 residential properties.

Representations

15. In response to the publicity, two letters of representation have been received. The key points raised can be summarised as follows:

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- Raise the point that work had started on site before the application was made, therefore no point consulting neighbours at this stage (*Officer responded to advise that the proposed floor space had exceeded what was initially thought to be permitted development, therefore the application was submitted retrospectively to comply with the altered consent scenario, seeking approval for the classroom already built and permission for the other two*)
- The Linces cannot cope with the volume of school traffic
- Need to make improvements to the road and parking provision
- Parents double park along the road
- Traffic mounts pavements to get around gridlock
- Gridlock impacts on emergency services on the Linces and branch roads
- Road surface not up to this volume of traffic and needs resurfacing.

Following receipt of the Transport Statement Addendum proposing the walking bus from Roosevelt Road and the staggered school finish times, neighbouring properties were re-consulted, and one further letter was received:

- Grave concerns regarding traffic in the school vicinity – appalling at both ends of the school day even without the proposed expansion
- Teaching staff seem to park all day – is there not enough parking?
- Solution of the walking bus is welcome but think the uptake would be poor
- Option of parking on Roosevelt Road just shifts the problem
- Roosevelt Road and The Linces are bus routes and should be kept clear
- Would impact on emergency vehicle access
- The School should provide adequate parking and drop off points so that the highway is kept clear.

Discussion

16. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the 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 the Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity. In my opinion, the key material planning considerations in this particular case are the design and siting of the proposed extensions and the traffic, parking and highway implications of the increase in the school roll.

Design of Extensions

17. The three extensions are all proposed as single storey additions, constructed from brickwork, with a parapet wall and flat roof. The design of the extensions would be in keeping with the style of the existing school, and from this perspective the additions would be appropriate. The school is sited away from the surrounding residential properties, set back within the school grounds, and therefore the classroom extensions would have a negligible impact on the residential amenity of the occupants of neighbouring houses. There would be no loss of useable outdoor play space as a result of the proposals, and it is therefore considered that the siting of the extensions would be acceptable, and in accordance with the guidance contained in the NPPF.

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Transport Related Issues

18. The application is for new classrooms to facilitate an increase in the school roll from a 1.5 form entry to a 2 form entry school. As set out above this will allow the pupil numbers to increase from 315 to 420 and staff numbers from 55 to 61. To assess the implications of such an increase the applicants submitted a Transport Statement, and in response to comments from the Highways and Transportation Officer also submitted an addendum, which will be discussed below.
19. The School only provides parking on site for staff – there is no provision for parent parking or any drop off zone. Under the proposed expansion, there would be 6 new members of staff and the Kent and Medway parking standards allow for 1 space per member of staff plus 10% as a maximum. In this instance that would equate to 7 new parking spaces. A car park extension is proposed on site to provide an additional 8 parking spaces for staff but one existing space would be lost in order to provide access to this area. There would therefore be a net gain of 7 spaces. Given that on-site parking is constrained for existing members of staff it is considered appropriate to permit the maximum number of parking spaces to benefit local parking amenity and reduce the existing impact the school creates.
20. Access into the site would remain as it is, but an additional pedestrian access is proposed onto The Linces, from the northern side of the access. This would allow pupils and their parents to enter the school from this direction without the need to cross the school access road, and would reduce congestion along the existing footway.
21. The Transport Statement (using a set out methodology which takes into account factors such as sibling effect, before and after school clubs, pupil absences, etc.) has established the trip attraction of the school based on the current staff and pupil numbers, and then used this data and methodology to calculate the likely trip attraction of the school at its full capacity (420 pupils and 61 staff).
22. At present the school attracts a total of 81 vehicle trips (including arrivals and departures) in the morning peak hour, and 100 total vehicle trips (arrival and departure) in the afternoon peak hour. With the school at full capacity it is forecast that there would be a total of 113 vehicle trips (including arrivals and departures) in the morning peak hour and 140 total vehicle trips (arrival and departure) in the afternoon peak hour. This would be an additional 32 one-way vehicle trips across the morning peak hour and 40 additional one-way trips across the afternoon peak hour.
23. Due to the School's location within the residential area it serves, a high proportion of the children travel to school by sustainable means, with only one fifth being driven to school, and this is lower than the vast majority of primary schools across the County. However, concern was raised by the Highways and Transportation Officer that the additional traffic forecast above would create an additional burden on The Linces, which is already congested as a result of both school traffic and existing residents on street parking.
24. In order to find a solution, discussions were held between the applicants, the Highways and Transportation Officer and the School, and a formal addendum to the Transport Statement was submitted. The first initiative proposed in the addendum is to introduce a new walking bus between the school and Roosevelt Road, adjacent to the Buckland

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Community Centre, both before and after the school day. The exact timings of the walking bus would be determined upon consultation with parents to ensure the greatest uptake of the service. The use of the community centre as a meeting point would, the applicants state, be an ideal meeting point as it provides a convenient, well known place for parents and staff to meet that is within close walking distance of the school and avoids parents using The Linces in the first instance. Given that the community centre is in close proximity to the play park, it is suggested that this would make it attractive for pupils and would therefore influence parents decision to use the walking bus.

25. The community centre is a 450m walk-distance to the school pedestrian entrance, equating to a 6 minute walk time. The addendum to the Transport Statement shows three alternative walking routes from the community centre to the school, all taking approximately 6 minutes and all of a suitable and safe standard. Roosevelt Road is of sufficient width to accommodate parked vehicles without detriment to the movement of traffic, and it is considered that limited parent parking would not obstruct the movement of buses along the road. The statement further illustrates that there would be a distance of 93m where parents could park on the northern side of the road, without impeding others, which could accommodate 15-16 vehicles simultaneously.
26. The potential use of the Memorial Hall car park cannot be confirmed at this time as this would need a signed agreement with its management trust. However, the applicants are hopeful that if the walking bus route is popular amongst the pupils and parents there are potential opportunities for the use of this car park in the future.
27. Whilst it is unclear at this stage what the level of uptake for the new walking bus would be, it should be noted that the school has one of the highest numbers of pupils walking and travelling by means other than the car almost anywhere else in the County, and already successfully run an existing walking bus from Rokesley Road (to the north of the school). It is therefore considered that the school would be well placed to achieve uptake for this new route.
28. In order to ensure that the bus route in Roosevelt Road is not affected by the potential parking of parents cars here in association with the walking bus once its established, the applicants are proposing to provide a Unilateral Undertaking to provide a sum of money (£3000) to install bus stop clearway markings or parking restrictions on Roosevelt Road should the need arise. Whilst it is hoped that this will not be necessary, by having this agreement in place it does provide a level of comfort that such problems can be addressed if necessary.
29. It is considered that this walking bus proposal would be preferable to the provision of additional on-site parking for parents or the provision of a drop off zone as both of these measures would encourage more traffic to drive along The Linces in the first place. By promoting a walking bus route from Roosevelt Road traffic is directed away from The Linces thus seeking to improve the situation.
30. The second initiative the School are proposing is to introduce staggered finishing times for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 at the end of the school day. Whilst there may be only limited benefit to this as there will be a number of pupils with siblings across the two Key Stages, it will seek to lessen the greatest accumulation of parked vehicles at the end of the day and therefore allow traffic to move easier along The Linces.

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31. These types of initiative cannot be secured through the use of a planning condition, and as such the only way to ensure they are undertaken is to include them within the School Travel Plan. Given that these measures are the means to address the potential parking issues associated with the increase in school roll, the School have updated their School Travel Plan prior to the determination of the planning application, and registered it with Kent County Council's 'Jambusters' website. Both the County's School Travel Plan Officer and the Highways and Transportation Officer have considered the Travel Plan addendum and the revised School Travel Plan.
32. The Highways and Transportation Officer has commented that with the above measures in place the proposed school expansion is unlikely to have a severe impact on the highway network. He states that he would like to see the School pursuing an agreement for parents to use the community centre car park in association with the walking bus from Roosevelt Road and an informative advising the applicants of this could be included if the application is approved. The County's School Travel Plan Officer has confirmed that the revised Travel Plan and the comments from the Headteacher, in response to her queries, provide a clear picture of the proposals, and she is happy that the Plan meets the criteria required.
33. Whilst the concerns raised by local residents regarding the existing traffic problems experienced in The Linces are acknowledged, it is clear that the School are seeking to address the problem with alternative solutions which will either stop cars entering The Linces in the first place, or stagger their arrival and departure times to lessen the peak impact. Sufficient parking would be provided on site for the additional members of staff associated with this proposal, plus one additional space for existing staff. Congestion on streets surrounding schools located in the middle of urban areas is common place, but not in itself a reason to resist any future development at such schools. In particular, the congestion tends to be short lived, and only on days when the school is open, and is often more of an irritation than a serious road safety issue. It also needs to be borne in mind that the public highway is there to be used by the public, whether they are residents, employees or school parents, and it cannot be reserved for the sole use of any one sector of the public. Nevertheless, instead of wholly relying on the use of the public highway, ways of reducing the impact of the school on the local highway network, as is the case here with the proposals in the School's Travel Plan, are the best way of offsetting the congestion nuisance and any road safety risk.
34. It is therefore considered that subject to the adoption of the School's Travel Plan prior to the occupation of the extensions, its annual review for a period of 5 years to ensure the measures proposed are promoted by the School and taken up by the parents, plus having in place the Unilateral Undertaking to address any future congestion problems experienced in Roosevelt Road, the application is acceptable from a traffic and transport related view, and would be in accordance with Policies DM11 and DM13 of the Dover District Core Strategy and the guidance contained in the NPPF.

Other Matters

Construction Management

35. 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;

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Saturday 0900 to 1300; and no operations on Sundays or public holidays).

36. Should permission be granted a condition requiring the submission of a full Construction Management Strategy prior to commencement of development is also 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 (to ensure mud and dust are not deposited on the highway) and details of any construction access.

Conclusion

37. There is strong Government support in the NPPF for the development of new schools to ensure that there is sufficient provision to meet growing demand, increased choice and raised educational standards; subject to being satisfied on local amenity and all other material considerations, such as highway matters and design. In my view the proposed development would not give rise to any significant and demonstrable harm in any of these respects, as far as planning, environmental and amenity aspects are concerned. It is argued that the impact of additional traffic associated with the increase in the school roll could be appropriately off-set through the measures set out in the School Travel Plan, to avoid any further impact on neighbouring residents.
38. It is considered that subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions (set out below), and having in place a Unilateral Undertaking which would be able to address future problems on Roosevelt Road should they occur, the proposal would not have a significantly detrimental effect on the local highway network, local amenity or the environment. In my view the development is sustainable and there are no material planning considerations that indicate that the conclusion should be made otherwise.

Recommendation

39. I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO the imposition of conditions covering (amongst other matters) the following:
- The standard 5 year time limit;
 - the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
 - the submission and approval of details of all construction materials to be used externally;
 - the approval of the School Travel Plan prior to occupation of the extensions hereby approved and its ongoing review for a period of 5 years;
 - 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 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 (to ensure mud and dust are not deposited on the highway), details of any construction access and details of any temporary traffic management measures required on the highway during construction;

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- the provision of the additional on-site parking areas prior to occupation of the school extensions and their retention thereafter;
- the provision and permanent retention of a minimum of 2 additional secure, covered cycle parking spaces prior to occupation of the extensions;
- the Unilateral Undertaking to provide the sum of £3000 to be used for bus stop clearway markings or parking restrictions in Roosevelt Road should the need arise in association with the proposed 'walking bus', be signed prior to the occupation of the extensions hereby approved.

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

- The registering with Kent County Council of the School Travel Plan through the "Jambusters" website following the link <http://www.jambusterstpms.co.uk>;
- That the applicant ensures that all necessary highway approvals and consents are obtained;
- That the applicant be advised to discuss any temporary traffic management measures required with the Road Works Coordination Team.

Case Officer: Helen Edwards

Tel. no: 03000 413366

Background Documents: see section heading
