

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

Two storey extension, temporary classroom, demolition of the former Ladesfield care home to facilitate a new access road and additional on-site parking at Joy Lane Primary School, Whitstable – CA/15/02596/K3F (KCC/CA/0375/2015)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 18th May 2016.

Application by KCC Property and Infrastructure Support for the expansion of Joy Lane Primary School comprising the construction of a two storey extension to the existing building together with the erection of a temporary classroom, the demolition of the former Ladesfield care home building to facilitate a new access road from the school site to Vulcan Close, additional on-site car parking, formation of an on-site pickup/drop/off area and associated hard and soft landscaping at Joy Lane Primary School, Joy Lane, Whitstable, CT5 4LT - CA/15/02596/K3F (KCC/CA/0375/2015)

Recommendation: Permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Members: Mark Dance & Michael Harrison

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. The application site falls into two parts. The first is the existing school, which is located on the southern side of Joy Lane. Joy Lane runs east west along the coast between Whitstable and Seasalter. Access to the school is via a short side street which also serves one residential property (number 38) and allows access to the rear of number 34 Joy Lane. This side street is the main vehicular access to the school and car park, which is gated. There are zig-zag 'keep clear' road markings on either side of Joy lane in the vicinity of this side street. The school site is surrounded by residential development – to the north by properties on Joy Lane; to the north-west by those in Cundshall Close; to the west by properties on Valkyrie Avenue and Cypress Close; and to the south by properties on Shearwater Avenue. To the north-east of the school is a private day nursery, which is accessed from Vulcan Close. A public right of way runs along part of the school's northern boundary, which connects Joy lane to Valkyrie Close. A gated pedestrian access to the school is located about half way along this right of way.
2. The existing school buildings lie some 30m (98 feet) back from the school gates behind the existing parking and turning area, and occupy the north and north-eastern section of the site, with the playing fields being located to the south and west. The buildings are single storey and constructed with a mixture of materials – the original school being brick and flat roof, whilst the later additions are steel framed with render panels and standing seam roofs. In addition the school site accommodates the Oyster Bay swimming pool, which is housed in a separate building and the Oyster Bay Autism Unit on site. The recent planning history is set out below.

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3. The second part of the application site is the area immediately to the east of the school boundary, which is currently occupied by the Ladesfield Care Home, accessed from Vulcan Close. The care home was closed in 2011 but has recently been used as a temporary reception centre for teenage asylum seekers. The Ladesfield Care Home is a three-storey building with some single storey elements and sprawls across the site. The private day nursery lies to the north of the Ladesfield Centre. There is a large car park in front (east) of the building and the nursery has its own parking area, but both are accessed from Vulcan Close, which is a no through road. Vulcan Close also serves residential properties and the Connie Packington Day Centre, with the Fire Station located at the eastern end of Vulcan Close, fronting onto Borstal Hill.
4. The school is located to the south of Whitstable Town Centre and within the settlement confines of Whitstable. The Whitstable South Conservation Area lies to the north of (and adjoining the site boundary) by the Ladesfield Care Home part of the site, however the application site lies outside of the Conservation Area itself. There are no Listed Buildings on or adjacent to the site and there are no Tree Preservation Orders. The playing fields within the site are designated as Protected Open Space but there are no other Development Plan designations which apply to the site.

Recent Site History

5. The following planning applications are the most recent:

CA/11/542: Single storey detached building to replace the existing autism unit.
Granted subject to conditions, 6th May 2011

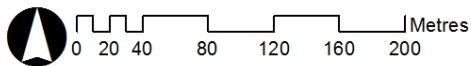
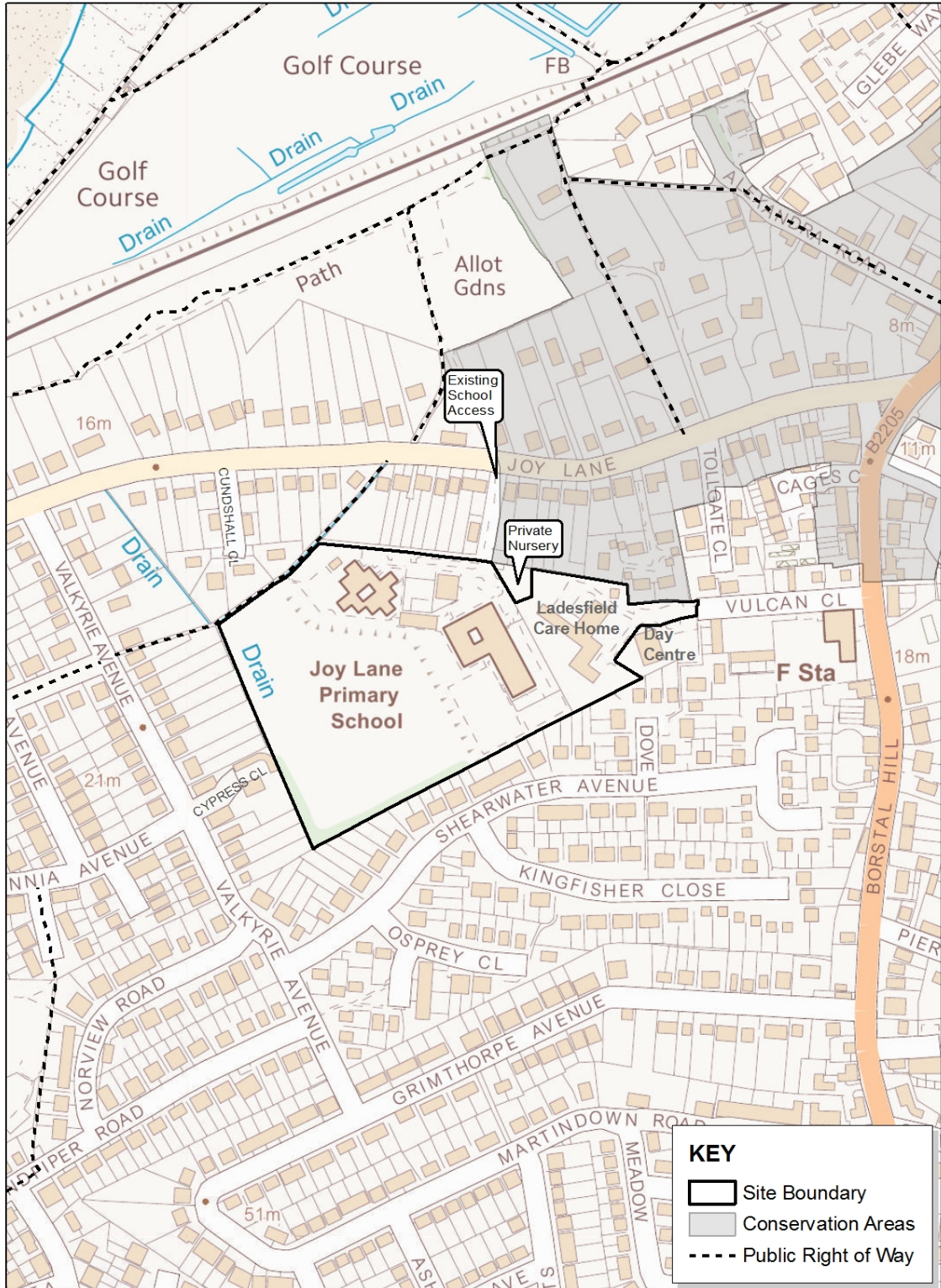
CA/13/2232: Proposed extension of the existing Infant building to provide two classroom spaces and general purpose office/WC/welfare facilities.
Granted subject to conditions, 5th February 2014.

Background

6. In 2013 and 2014 Kent County Council undertook local consultations regarding the proposal to increase the intake of Joy Lane Primary School from a 2 form entry to a 3 form entry primary school. The need for additional school places is set out in the Kent Education Commissioning Plan 2015-2019. In March 2014 the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform, Roger Gough, approved the expansion of Joy Lane Primary, in line with the need for an additional 29 reception year places across the Canterbury District.

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General Location Plan



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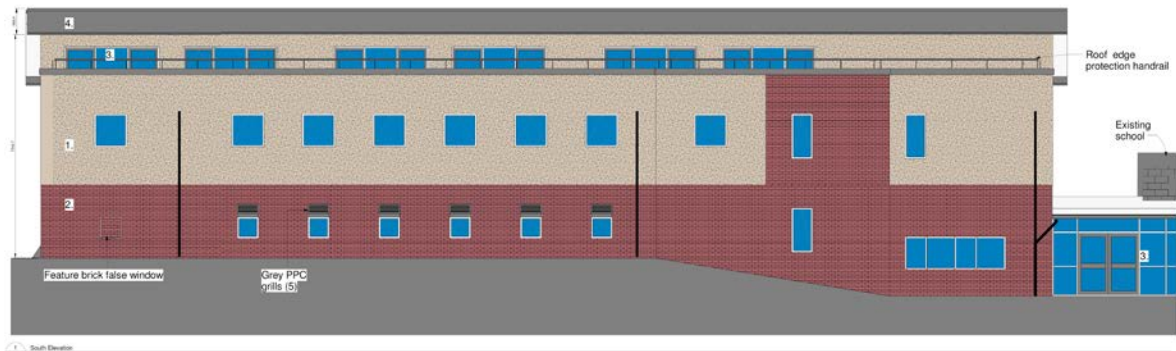
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Site Layout Plan



Two storey extension, temporary classroom, demolition of the former Ladesfield care home, Joy Lane Primary School, Whitstable – CA/15/02596/K3F (KCC/CA/0375/2015)

Proposed Elevations



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Proposed Elevations

NO DIMENSIONS TO BE SCALED FROM THE DRAWING

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CSW - RESIDUAL RISK
The following are considered to be significant risks related to this drawing, which could not be fully mitigated or removed through design. Further possible control measures have been identified within the Design Risk Assessment which may help to mitigate these and other identified risks further during the construction / implementation phases.

1. Render to be off-white to match existing

2. Brickwork - Clumber Red Medium Brick
Hanson or similar

3. Openings - PPC Grey windows

4. Vents 600mm X 300mm baffle's

Reference Name: Kent County Council
Reference No.: CA/15/02596/K3F (KCC/CA/0375/2015)

Client: Kent County Council
Project Name: Joy Lane Extension Block

Drawn: [Name]
Checked: [Name]
Scale: 1:50
Project No.: 000-PE-XX-ZZ-DR-A-1005

1: East Elevation
2: West Elevation

VISUAL SCALE 1:50 @ A1

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Client: Kent County Council
Project Name: Joy Lane Extension Block

Drawn: [Name]
Checked: [Name]
Scale: 1:50
Project No.: 000-PE-XX-ZZ-DR-A-1009

1: Link South Elevation
2: Link North Elevation
3: Link Section

LEVEL 0: LINK BUILDING

VISUAL SCALE 1:50 @ A1

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Proposal

7. The application seeks permission for a two storey classroom extension, the siting of a temporary mobile building for the period of the construction works, the reorganisation of the existing parking area and creation of additional parking spaces, and a new access road through to Vulcan Close.
8. The two storey extension would be located along the north-western boundary and would have a glazed link to the existing school building (approved in 2014). The extension would have a linear footprint providing three classrooms at ground floor level and a further three rooms above at first floor, two of which would be used as classrooms and the third as a 'practical space'. The classrooms would face to the north-west (towards the school boundary), with the corridor running along the rear. At the eastern end of the extension would be a plant room at ground floor and both boys' and girls' toilets, and similarly above at first floor would be toilets and an additional meeting room. A staircase and lift would be provided at one end of the building, with a second staircase at the other end.
9. The extension would be constructed from red mixture bricks and off-white rendered panels, a metal standing seam roof and PPC aluminium grey windows and doors. The windows would be set slightly forward of the main elevation to break up the façade and the standing seam roof would oversail the end gable wall. The single pitch roof would extend over the classroom element, whilst above the corridor section at the rear would be a flat roof.
10. The extension would be dug into the ground from existing ground levels, and set behind a retaining wall and graded land, with a ramp and safety handrail providing a link from the playground round to the existing school buildings. A similar ramp with handrail would be provided from the playground to the entrance to the extension by the lift and stairwell.
11. A new playground would be provided to the south of the new extensions and a new MUGA would be located centrally within the site just south of the swimming pool building on the edge of the playing field, with a 2.4m (7.9 feet) high fence sited along two sides to prevent balls hitting the school buildings behind. The temporary classroom would be installed in the south-east corner of the site, adjacent to the main school building and would be used until the new accommodation was completed, providing one classroom, store and toilets. This would be of a standard design with a flat roof and panelled walls.
12. The existing Ladesfield care home is proposed to be demolished, and the existing highway of Vulcan Road extended through the middle of the site to meet the school boundary. The existing parking layout within the school would be remodelled and parking spaces extended down the eastern boundary in front of the main school buildings, where the access from Vulcan Close would connect with the school. It is proposed that all cars would access the school site from Joy Lane and exit through Vulcan Close in a one-way system. In total the new parking layout would provide 126 parking spaces – comprising 73 staff car parking spaces, 45 'park and stride' spaces and 8 mobility impaired spaces. 6 parking bays would be provided for the existing nursery on the edge of the school site. A new cycle store and separate cycle parking would be provided (accommodating 13 bicycles) alongside the existing parking area and

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swimming pool building, and a drop off area created to the north of the main school. 7 motorcycle spaces would also be provided.

13. The plans submitted show that 15 trees would be removed to accommodate the new parking layout and extensions on site.
14. The school currently provides a two-form entry with 432 places currently available for pupils, and 90 members of staff, 22 of which are part time. The proposed extension, outlined above, would provide the facilities to allow the school to expand to a full three-form entry school, with 630 pupils and a total of 101 employees, 25 of which would be part time.

Planning Policy

15. 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 desirability of sustaining and enhancing the historic environment;
- 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.

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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.

(ii) **Canterbury District Local Plan (2006)**

Policy C4 Transport Assessment and Travel Plan: sets out that development proposals considered by the Council to have significant transport implications are to be supported by a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan which shows how multi-modal access options will be achieved and how transport infrastructure arising from the expected demand will be provided.

Policy C9 Parking: sets out that the City Council will apply Kent County Council's adopted Vehicle Parking Standards to development proposals. Cycle parking will be convenient, secure and complemented by showering and changing facilities for cyclists.

Policy C11 Social Infrastructure: sets out that proposals for new buildings or uses for local communities to provide social infrastructure will be encouraged and granted planning permission on the basis that any new building is appropriately designed and located, and highway safety would not be prejudiced.

Policy C16 Education: sets out that the City Council will work with the Education Authority and School Governors to ensure that provision is made for educational needs arising from housing developments and that appropriate mechanisms are secured through legal agreements to deliver this provision.

Policy C24 Open Space: sets out the circumstances for which development proposals that would result in the loss of protected open space, as shown on the Proposals Map, would be permitted.

Policy C27 Public or Private Playing Fields: sets out the circumstances for which proposals for development which would result in the loss, in whole or in part, of playing fields would be permitted.

Policy BE1 Good Design Principles: seeks proposals to be of high quality design which will respond to the objectives of sustainable development, having regard to:

- the need for development;
- accessibility and safe movement within the proposed development;
- the landscape character of the locality and the way the development is integrated into the landscape;
- the conservation and integration of natural features including trees and hedgerows;
- the visual impact and impact on local townscape character;
- the form of the development – the efficient use of land, layout, landscape, density and mix, scale, massing, materials, finish and

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architectural details;

- the reduction in energy consumption by means of layout, design, construction and alternative technologies;
- safety and security;
- the privacy and amenity of the existing environment;
- the compatibility of the use with adjacent uses;
- the need to keep the building in use and fit for purpose; and
- appropriate supplementary planning guidance adopted by the Council.

Policy BE7 Conservation Areas: requires development within, affecting the setting, or views into and out of a Conservation Area should preserve or enhance all features that contribute positively to the area's character or appearance.

Policy NE5 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows: states that development should be designed to retain trees, hedgerows, woodland or other landscape features that make an important contribution to the amenity of the site and the surrounding area and which are important to wild flora and fauna. The City Council will refuse planning permission for proposals that would threaten the future retention of trees, hedgerows, woodland or other landscape features of importance to the site's character, and area's amenity or the movement of wildlife.

Canterbury District Local Plan Publication Draft (2014)

Policy SP1 Sustainable Development: states that when considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF.

Policy EMP9 Education Needs: sets out that the City Council will work with the Education Authority and other school providers to ensure that provision is made for educational needs arising from new development and that appropriate mechanisms are secured through legal agreements to deliver this provision.

Policy OS2 Playing Fields: sets out the circumstances for which proposals for development which would result in the loss, in whole or in part, of playing fields would be permitted.

Policy OS9 Protection of Existing Open Space: sets out the circumstances for which development proposals that would result in the loss of protected open space, as shown on the Proposals Map, would be permitted.

Policy HE1 Historic Environment and Heritage Assets: seeks to ensure that heritage assets are appropriately conserved and continue to contribute to the quality of life for present and future generations.

Policy LB10 Trees, Hedgerow and Woodland: states that development should be designed to retain trees, hedgerow and woodland that make an

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important contribution to the amenity of the site and the surrounding area and which are important to wild flora and fauna.

Consultations

16. **Canterbury City Council** raises no objection.

KCC Conservation Officer raises no objection having been assured that the Ladesfield site would be cleared and levelled after demolition.

Environment Agency (Kent Area) has not responded.

KCC Public Rights of Way (East Kent PROW Team) Officer raises no objection subject to the imposition of informatives ensuring the footpath between Joy Lane and Valkyrie Avenue is not obstructed.

KCC Landscape Officer raises no objection to the application but suggests the inclusion of conditions to secure the planting of replacement trees to compensate for those that would be removed, to secure the appropriate species of tree and hedgerow is chosen, and that the recommendations in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment are carried out in order to protect the trees to be retained.

Sport England raises no objection as the scheme would comply with Sport England Policy exception E3 in that the proposed development only affects land which is incapable or forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch.

KCC Sustainable Drainage Officer raises no objection subject to the imposition of two conditions relating to surface water drainage schemes.

KCC Highways and Transportation Officer raises no objection subject to the imposition of conditions relating to the submission of a Construction Management Plan; the submission of technical details of the new access road and this being completed prior to occupation of the extension; the provision and retention of the vehicle parking spaces, cycle parking and truning/loading areas; and the submission of a Travel Plan and Traffic Management Plan prior to occupation.

KCC School Travel Planner requires a revised Travel Plan to be agreed prior to occupation of the extension.

KCC Biodiversity Officer raises no objection to the application.

Local Member

17. The local County Members Mr Mark Dance and Mr Michael Harrison were notified of the application on 27th November 2015.

Publicity

18. The application was publicised by the posting of three site notices, an advertisement in the local newspaper, and the individual notification of 119 residential properties

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surrounding the site.

Representations

19. In response to the publicity, 84 letters of representation have been received – 65 in support of the planning application and 19 raising objection or concern about the proposals. The key points raised can be summarised as follows:

In Support:

- The proposal would significantly address and alleviate issues with parking and congestion along Joy Lane;
- The infrastructure to be put in place would more than accommodate the school and parents in the area;
- Extension would provide the necessary teaching space for the additional children;
- Joy Lane is a good school which should be allowed to expand;
- Would provide facilities that are fully accessible to all children;
- The development would allow the school to grow and benefit the local community;
- Proposals would benefit the parents of children at the school and local residents;
- Would improve the safety of children getting to and from school;
- Would provide a better flow of traffic in the area at school drop off and collection times;
- Excellent idea to divert traffic from a busy road through a cul-de-sac which has minimal traffic usage.

Raising objection:

- The proposed parking on site would be inadequate for the expanded school, especially given the evidence of the traffic survey, so existing traffic and parking problems on Joy Lane would be made worse;
- Existing parking problems have not been addressed – expanding the school would make the situation worse still; without adequate on-site parking traffic would back up on Joy Lane increasing congestion;
- Traffic surveys undertaken in June/July when good weather means more parents walk to school – the parking situation is worse in the wet and cold weather;
- Many near misses with vehicles and children occur, and emergency vehicles and buses struggle to get through Joy Lane at busy times;
- Behaviour and attitude of some parents towards residents at drop off and collection times inconsiderate, blocking residents' driveways, parking at junctions, parking on grass verges, leaving headlights on, etc.;
- The proposed increase in parking spaces would not address the current parking problems let alone expanded school numbers, and would result in more inconsiderate and dangerous parking in the area;
- No analysis provided for how the drop off/pick up parking provision would work, and insufficient parking proposed for staff numbers as well as parents;
- The School does not police parents using Joy Lane; parking already occurs on both sides of Joy Lane in peak periods;
- Concern over how residents of 34 and 38 Joy Lane would access the rear of their properties;

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- Concern that the measurements of road widths given in the documents are inaccurate and misleading and the layout would affect how residents access their properties;
- Joy Lane would also struggle to cope with construction vehicles;
- Proposed access through the Ladesfield site would have a negative impact on residents in Vulcan Close;
- Concern that the proposed access through Vulcan Close would affect the current parking for Age UK and the running of their day centre;
- The junction of Vulcan Close and Borstal Hill is already busy and this proposal would make it worse;
- Residents of Joy Lane suggest access both into and out of the school should be from Vulcan Close, and the Joy Lane access used by staff and servicing vehicles only;
- More parking should be provided on the Ladesfield site;
- Joy Lane and Valkyrie Avenue should be designated for residents only parking during term time, forcing parents to use the drop off facility;
- The School Travel Plan will only be a gesture by the School to change travel patterns – it cannot be enforced;
- Extension would blight views out of properties backing onto school site;
- Extension would be too close to the neighbouring property (5 Cundshall Close) resulting in loss of privacy for occupiers;
- Two storey height of extension would allow views directly into rear garden and rooms at back of neighbouring house;
- Occupiers of house would have direct views into school classrooms, which would be inappropriate for pupils and teachers;
- Two storey extension is out of keeping with rest of single storey school buildings;
- Lack of consideration by KCC about the impact of the extension on the occupants of the adjoining property;
- Concern that lighting of the extension would cause a nuisance; lighting would affect residents of adjoining property to the detriment of their health;
- Proximity of playground and extension to neighbouring property would create noise disturbance and affect occupants' health and well-being;
- Proposal should be single storey and located in the centre of the site to have less impact on local residents;
- Height of the extension would be distracting and the material choices are inappropriate;
- Need evergreen planting along the boundary of properties in Valkyrie Avenue to screen the site from residents;
- Despite assurances that Joy Lane residents' concerns would be taken into account before an application was made, this has not been done;
- Consider the application should be refused on the grounds of insufficient information relating to the highway impacts of the scheme unless a revised assessment produced.

In response to additional details requested by the Highways and Transportation Officer, the applicants submitted a Transport Statement Addendum, and those residents who had originally objected to the proposal were notified, to advise them that additional information had been received. In response to this re-consultation 5 additional letters of representation were received, raising the following comments:

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- Using access from Joy Lane into the school as one-way would affect the occupiers at 34 Joy Lane from accessing their property as they currently do; as neither the County or School own the road off Joy lane they cannot change the layout or use of the road;
- Proposed parking still does not seem adequate and would result in a backlog down the access road to 34 Joy Lane;
- By managing the traffic entering the school site in order to ensure the car park does not get grid-locked at peak times, would result in traffic backing up along the access road and onto Joy Lane at peak times instead, and would restrict occupiers of 34 and 38 Joy Lane trying to leave their properties along this road;
- The suggested times for the management of the traffic through the site are inadequate and should start at 8am and run through peak times until after the school clubs have finished in the evening;
- Traffic associated with the Oyster unit should not be managed separately – if they are using the same site they should conform to a central traffic management policy;
- There should be a sole point of contact to deal with incidents or issues arriving with traffic flow;
- Amount of time taken for dropping off a child is variable therefore could result in cars queuing along Joy Lane;
- If this drop off system does not work well, parents will continue to park along Joy Lane and surrounding roads affecting residents ability to access their own properties;
- The Transport Addendum does not address the issues surrounding the current dangerous on street parking;
- The proposal would add 50% more pupils to the school without a proper assessment of the number of cars that currently park in surrounding streets or any assessment of the numbers that will park there after the proposal has been implemented;
- Consider no thought has been given to how the new through route would work in practice, therefore there can be no certainty that it will work, therefore it should be refused;
- Parents may choose not to use the drive through option if it gets congested and park on the surrounding streets as they have been doing previously; seems unlikely that parents would arrive at the pick-up bay at exactly the right time to collect their child, therefore it would end up being used for parking, contrary to its aim;
- Lack of attention shown to addressing the one key issue to the local community (parking) and considers it negligent to rely on the submitted Traffic Management Plan; existing highways situation is unacceptable and increasing the number of vehicles would have a severe impact on highway safety.

Discussion

20. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph 15 above. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore the proposal needs to be considered in the context of the Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity. In my opinion, the key material planning considerations in this particular case are the principle of demolishing the existing Ladesfield Care Home; the siting and design of the proposed extension in terms of its built form; the impact of the new extension on residential amenity for occupiers of nearby residential properties; the highway and traffic implications of the school expansion including the impacts on

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surrounding roads, the extension of Vulcan Close to meet the school and the traffic generated by the increase in the school roll; and other matters such as heritage implications, construction management, landscape, ecology, flood risk and drainage.

Principle of Demolishing Ladesfield Care Home

21. The application site is located within the urban setting of Whitstable where there is a presumption in favour of development. Following the re-organisation of adult care services across Kent, Ladesfield Care Home was closed in 2011 and judged unsuitable for meeting modern adult care needs. However, the existing care home was temporarily bought back into use as an emergency reception centre during the summer of 2015 following the large number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children arriving in the Country and needing to be housed and assessed by the County Council. The temporary centre ceased operating in January 2016, and is currently empty. There is no policy requirement in the Local Plan to retain the former care home, and therefore no objection to the demolition of the centre as proposed, and the site's future re-development.
22. The remainder of the site (the land which falls to either side of the proposed new access road) is planned to be disposed of separately, and does not form part of this school expansion application.

Siting and Design of the Extension

23. The proposed extension would be sited adjacent to the most recent addition to the school, along the north-western boundary of the site. The extension would be of a modern design, constructed with a mixture of brick and render to the elevations and a standing seam metal roof. The materials chosen would tie the extension in well with the materials used in the other buildings on site, and the standing seam roof would replicate that of the most recent extension. The 'front' elevation of the extension would face to the north-west, whilst the more utilitarian rear elevation would face back in towards the school playing fields. The grey framed windows would be set slightly forward of the render and brick façade to alleviate the mass and help break up the appearance of the elevations. The layout and linear form of the extension would be of a similar style and design to other two storey primary school extensions approved across the County in recent months, and would provide a practical and appropriately designed extension to the school.
24. The extension would be sited further within the site and away from the boundary than the latest single storey extension also located in this area. At the closest point there would be a distance of 22m (72ft) between the proposed extension and the school boundary, and a further 7m (23ft) between this boundary and the nearest house in Cundshall Close. In between the school boundary and the neighbouring property runs the public footpath linking Joy Lane and Valkyrie Avenue, thus physically separating the two areas. Along this boundary line the school site is enclosed by an established hedgerow, interspersed with several established trees, all of which would be retained.
25. It is considered that the proposed extension would be sited well within the school site and away from the boundary line, allowing plenty of space about the building and allowing the established trees close to and within this boundary to be retained. Furthermore, in order to provide a level access with the adjacent teaching block the

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proposed extension would be dug into the ground along its western elevation, giving the added benefit of a lower ridge height than if the building had followed the existing ground levels, and reducing the overall impact of the extension on the wider area.

26. The temporary mobile classroom would be sited in the south-eastern corner of the site, and would be of a standard mobile construction and appearance. Given the temporary nature of this structure and the fact that it would be removed once the extension was complete, it is considered that there would be little harm caused by its temporary siting in this location. It would not affect any nearby residential properties in Shearwater Avenue given its proximity to the existing school building, against which it would be viewed, and the intervening landscape treatment along this southern boundary.
27. It is therefore considered that the siting and design of the proposed extension within the school setting would be acceptable and accord with the aims of Policy BE1 of the Local Plan.

Impacts on Residential Amenity

28. Concern has been raised by nearby residents that the proposed extension would result in a loss of privacy as a result of the proximity of the extension and its two storey nature. As set out above, the distance between the proposed extension and the neighbouring property at the closest point would be 29m, and this exceeds the widely accepted industry guideline of 21m as a separation distance between neighbouring properties, and included in design guides across the Country. In particular, this distance is judged to be a target separation distance between the facing windows of 'habitable rooms' in adjacent properties, beyond which privacy by virtue of overlooking is deemed to be of insignificant nuisance. It should also be noted that many houses are spaced much closer than that and are actually more closely overlooked by houses either side of them and often to the rear as well. Given this distance and the intervening boundary treatment, it is considered that the extension would be at a sufficient distance away from the neighbouring houses, so as not to cause an overlooking issue. The perception of overlooking is another matter and often influences people's opinion, but it should also be noted that the rooms are to be used as classrooms, and therefore the children would generally not be standing at the windows looking out, but rather sitting in class partaking in supervised structured activities. Moreover, the rooms would not be for living accommodation and would only be occupied during the school day and when the school is open.
29. The school site is surrounded by residential properties and views into the school are inevitable. It is considered that the extension would be sited far enough into the site to mean that direct views into the classrooms would be no different to views of the children on the playgrounds or playing fields. The outlook for properties which back onto a school site will naturally be of the school buildings and playing fields. The playing fields themselves are protected as open space in the Local Plan and therefore the only place for locating any additional buildings is alongside the existing built form on site. The proposed extension, although two storey rather than single storey, would be well related to the existing buildings, and in my view would not be so close to the neighbouring properties as to be considered overbearing, or to cause any overshadowing. Moreover, the nearest properties are separated from the school building by some tree and hedging, as well as an intervening right of way.

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30. The new hard surfaced playground would be located behind the new extension and therefore the building itself would help protect the occupiers of neighbouring properties to the north from noise as a result of children playing in this area. Lighting in the extension would be during school hours only, therefore would be unlikely to have a detrimental impact on neighbouring properties.
31. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of the occupiers of the surrounding properties, and would be in accordance with the general guidance of Policy BE1 of the Local Plan. The perceived impact on residential amenity as a result of traffic and parking related issues will be covered in the section below.

Highway and Traffic Implications of the School Expansion

32. The proposed extension would be built to facilitate the expansion of the school from a 2FE to a 3FE primary school, thereby increasing the number of pupils from 420 to 630 at full capacity and increasing the number of staff from 90 to 101. As a result the applicants have had to consider the impact this increase in pupil and staff numbers could have on the surrounding road network and look at ways to alleviate any problems. The application was therefore supported by the submission of a Transport Statement, and upon the request of the Highways and Transportation Officer the submission of an Addendum to that.
33. The representations received provide a picture of the existing parking and traffic problems, which residents experience during school peak times. In order to provide a solution, the proposed development includes the creation of a through road from the eastern edge of the school site, through the Ladesfield site to join up with Vulcan Close. It is proposed that vehicle traffic would then enter the site from Joy Lane, which would be restricted to 'in-only' movements for school traffic. There would then be a one-way route through the school site and traffic would exit via the new road linking to Vulcan Close, and from there proceed onto Borstal Hill. The new link road between Vulcan Close and the school (on the Ladesfield site) would be a two-way road, but vehicular access into the school from this direction would be prohibited by a school gate. In order to ensure appropriate driver behaviour, especially at peak school times, the School have set up a Traffic Management Team who would be on site from 8.40am and 2.45pm to ensure compliance by drivers, and to direct the flow of traffic to ensure an effective use of the on-site drop-off and pick-up loop. The 'Traffic Management Plan', detailing how the Team would control access to and from the site, was included in the Transport Statement Addendum. In addition to this alternative access and exit layout, the number of on-site parking spaces would be increased to provide additional staff parking, park and stride spaces for parents and a drop off layby adjacent to the main school. The total number of spaces on site would then be 126 - 73 of these would be for staff, 45 park and stride spaces for pupil pick up and drop off, and 8 spaces for mobility impaired drivers. In the Transport Statement Addendum the applicants have provided additional information to look at the junction capacity of both Joy Lane as the access to the school site and Vulcan Close/Borstal Hill for the exit of the school site.
34. The County's Highways and Transportation Officer has assessed both the original Transport Statement submitted and the subsequent addendum and concurs with the conclusions presented in terms of the traffic impact that the development is likely to have. The methodology used to predict the number of trips that the school expansion is

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likely to generate is appropriate and the postcode data that was used to determine the distribution of traffic on the highway network is also considered to be acceptable. The junction capacity assessment for Vulcan Close and Borstal Hill demonstrates that the junction would operate satisfactorily in road safety terms and therefore it is considered that the access arrangements would provide an adequate system to manage traffic on the public highway without an unacceptable impact.

35. I consider that the proposals set out above to provide on-site parent parking and drop off facilities, and the creation of a one way through route directing school traffic out through Vulcan Close rather than back onto Joy Lane, represent a substantial improvement to the current situation, where no parent parking is provided on site and only 46 parking spaces are provided for staff and Special Educational Needs traffic on a first come first served basis. An additional 27 staff parking spaces are proposed for an associated increase in staff numbers of 11, therefore this clearly addresses some of the existing parking shortfall for current staff. The Highways and Transportation Officer confirms that the proposed parking and drop off/pick-up arrangements would be satisfactory and is considered sufficient mitigation for the proposed expansion of the school, and are likely to reduce the current levels of on-street parking on Joy Lane and the surrounding roads.
36. In response to the objections received, it should be clarified that the applicants are not proposing to alter the access road off Joy Lane to one-way only, but simply to encourage the parents and staff who access the school site to enter from Joy Lane and exit the site through Vulcan Close. The road off Joy Lane is outside of the application site red line and no physical alterations would be made to this road – simply the use of it by school related traffic would be managed differently to the current situation. Access both in and out of this road by the two properties that have direct access to it – 34 and 38 Joy Lane – would not be affected, albeit the Traffic Management Plan produced by the School (and the staff who would implement this on site) would need to be aware of the potential wish for these residents to leave their properties against the flow of traffic at peak times.
37. The applicants have an adopted School Travel Plan which was agreed in 2015 in accordance with a condition placed on the previous consent for the classroom extension permitted in 2014. This document would need to be updated to reflect the proposed increase in pupil and staff numbers and uploaded to the Jambusters website for continuing monitoring, and should be agreed prior to the occupation of the new extension. If this application was to be permitted, then that updating of the Travel Plan could be required by a planning condition.
38. Congestion on streets surrounding schools located in the middle of urban areas is commonplace, 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 additional parking proposed, and the new exit road through Vulcan Close, are the best way of offsetting the congestion nuisance and any road safety risk. It should also be noted that these proposals have been

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formed over a lengthy period of involvement with the Highways Authority and community engagement.

39. Some detailed representations have been received expressing concerns at current driver behaviour and inconsiderate parking practice by school parents. Whilst that relates to the current situation and the proposals have sought to address the off-site traffic and parking situation, and thereby reduce the likelihood of nuisance, it needs to be borne in mind that the planning process is primarily concerned with the use of land and not social factors such as human behaviour. There is some limited opportunity to influence behaviour in the design of development proposals, but ultimately the planning process cannot be relied upon to control human behaviour, nor to favour one sector of society over another when it comes to the use of the public highway.
40. It is therefore considered that subject to the imposition of conditions regarding the provision of the new parking and access arrangements prior to occupation, the adoption of a revised School Travel Plan prior to occupation, the agreement of a Traffic Management Plan prior to occupation, and the need for a Construction Management Plan the application is acceptable from a traffic and transport related view, and would be in accordance with Policies C4 and C9 of the saved Local Plan and the guidance contained in the NPPF.

Other Matters

Ecology

41. The application site has been assessed by 'Practical Ecology' to provide an ecological baseline for both the school site and the Ladesfield Care Home and to assess whether any further surveys, mitigation or ecological enhancements would be required for the site. The survey assessed the value of on-site habitats and the site's potential to support protected or notable species such as great crested newts, bats, badgers, reptiles, dormice and nesting birds. The report has been assessed by the County Council's Biodiversity Officer who was satisfied with the information submitted showing that there were no notable species recorded on site other than four common pipistrelle bat roosts. On this evidence further work was undertaken to assess the former care home building's potential for bat roosting and again this has been considered by the Biodiversity Officer, who has confirmed that they are now satisfied that there is low potential for roosting bats to be present. However, because the occasional use of the site by bats cannot be ruled out, they advise that a precautionary approach needs to be used when removing the suitable bat roosting features, and this advice could be covered by an informative to the Applicants.
42. The Ecology Report also proposed enhancement measures for the site, which include the provision of bird boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog boxes on the site, and the Biodiversity Officer states that a selection of the recommendations put forward should be implemented if permission is granted, and these could be secured by condition.
43. An informative is also proposed to ensure that the applicants are aware that the removal of any trees or suitable habitat that could be used by breeding birds should be undertaken to avoid the nesting season and that if this is not possible that the trees should first be surveyed by a qualified ecologist. If nesting birds are recorded works must cease until all the young have fledged.

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Setting of Conservation Area

44. The application site adjoins the South Whitstable Conservation Area in part along the northern boundary by the Ladesfield Care home, but is outside of the Conservation Area itself. The saved and emerging policies in the Local Plan state that heritage assets should be appropriately conserved and that development affecting the setting of, or views into or out of, a Conservation Area should be preserved or enhanced. This is also the guidance given in the NPPF in paragraph 126. None of the buildings within the site are listed or considered as non-designated heritage assets, and neither do they have any historic or aesthetic connection to the Conservation Area. It is considered that the demolition of the Ladesfield care home and the clearance of the site would not adversely affect the setting of the Conservation Area, which lies to the north, but this would need to be borne in mind for any future redevelopment of the site that comes forward at a future date. The Conservation Officer considered the application and raised no objection provided the site was cleared following demolition. As such it is considered that the application would accord with saved Policy BE7 and emerging policy HE1 of the Local Plans.

Landscape

45. The application was supported by the submission of an arboricultural assessment for both the school site and the Ladesfield Care home site which show the number of trees that would be removed from each site to enable the development to go ahead. On the school site this would be two small groups of trees in the location of the extension itself, whilst on the Ladesfield site most of the trees and hedges would be cleared to enable the road development (and the future redevelopment of the remainder of the site), except for the groups of trees along the northern boundary, backing onto the houses in Joy Lane, and adjacent to the existing nursery.
46. The Landscape Officer has assessed the information submitted and raises no objection to the application, but suggests the inclusion of conditions to secure the planting of replacement trees to compensate for those that would be removed and to make sure that the appropriate species of tree and hedgerow is chosen. I see no reason why this could not be covered by an appropriate landscaping condition if planning consent was forthcoming. In addition the condition should also ensure that the recommendations in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment are carried out in order to protect the trees to be retained.
47. As such the scheme would accord with saved Policy NE5 and emerging Policy LB10 of the adopted and draft Canterbury Local Plans.

Flood Risk and Drainage

48. The application was supported by the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment, which assessed the sites annual probability for flooding and proposals for surface water management. The application site is within Flood Zone 1 (i.e. the lowest ranking of flood risk), and as such has a less than 0.1% annual probability of flooding from rivers or the sea. The site is outside the extent of predicted fluvial or tidal flooding and therefore is considered not to be at any significant safety risk related to this type of flooding. In terms of the NPPF technical guidance on flood risk, the site is considered appropriate for the proposed use.

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49. The County Council's Flood Risk Project Officer has considered the application with regard to surface water drainage and has raised no objection to the proposals provided the proposed discharge rates to the public surface water sewer are agreed with Southern Water and this can be covered by a condition. Furthermore a condition has been requested to secure the submission of a detailed sustainable surface water drainage scheme, which should be agreed in writing prior to the commencement of development.

Construction

50. Given that there are neighbouring residential properties, if planning permission is granted it is considered appropriate to impose a condition restricting hours of construction to protect residential amenity (Monday to Friday between 0800 and 1800; Saturday 0900 to 1300; and no operations on Sundays or public holidays).

51. A condition requiring the submission of a full Construction Management Strategy, prior to commencement of development is considered appropriate, to include amongst other matters the routeing of construction and delivery vehicles to and from the site; the timing of deliveries to avoid school peak times; the location of parking and turning areas for construction and delivery vehicles and for site personnel and visitors; the provision of wheel washing facilities; details of a site access point for construction; and temporary traffic management and signage.

Conclusion

52. In my view the key determining factors for this proposal are the planning policy aspects, together with the likely amenity impacts, the suitability of the highway network to accommodate the additional school traffic and parking implications, and the appropriateness of the proposed extension in terms of design and layout.

53. 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, design, ecology, flooding and surface drainage. 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, as demonstrated in the discussion above.

54. It is considered that subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, the proposal would not have any significant detrimental effects on the local highway network, the amenities of local residents or the natural environment. In my view the development is sustainable and there are no material planning considerations that indicate that the conclusion should be made otherwise. However, I recommend that various conditions be placed on any planning permission, including those outlined below.

Recommendation

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

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- 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;
- 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 routing of construction and delivery vehicles to and from the site; the timing of deliveries to avoid school peak times; the location of parking and turning areas for construction and delivery vehicles and for site personnel and visitors; the provision of wheel washing facilities; details of a site access point for construction; and temporary traffic management and signage;
- that the recommendations set out in the Ecological Appraisal be implemented;
- the submission of details and specifications of the new access road, and their approval in writing prior to occupation of the extension;
- completion and maintenance of the access shown on the plans prior to the occupation of the extension;
- the provision and permanent retention of the vehicle parking spaces prior to the occupation of the extension;
- the provision and permanent retention of the cycle parking facilities prior to the occupation of the extension
- the provision and permanent retention of the vehicle loading/unloading and turning facilities prior to the occupation of the extension;
- the submission of a revised School Travel Plan prior to occupation of the extension hereby approved and its ongoing review for a period of 5 years;
- the submission of a Traffic Management Plan for written approval prior to the occupation of the extension;
- the submission of a fully detailed sustainable surface water drainage scheme for the site prior to commencement of development, and the written approval of such a scheme and its on-going maintenance prior to occupation of the extension;
- the submission of a native species landscape scheme and details of a maintenance scheme for such landscaping;
- the recommendations within the Arboricultural Impact Assessments to be carried out in order to protect the trees to be retained;
- the removal of the temporary classroom within 3 months of the occupation of the permitted extension.

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;
- To ensure that works to trees are carried out outside of the breeding bird season and if this is not possible that an ecologist examines the site prior to works commencing;
- The applicant must use a precautionary approach when removing features with bat roosting potential in the former Ladesfield Care Home;
- There must be no disturbance to the surface of or obstruction of the use of the Public Right of Way, CW56.

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Case Officer: Helen Edwards

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Background Documents: see section heading