

**Expansion of school from 2FE to 3FE at Hextable Primary School, Rowhill Road – SE/16/1480 (KCC/SE/0074/2016)**

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 14 September 2016.

Application by Kent County Council for a new three classroom extension with SEN room to the Infants School with associated landscaping, demolition of an existing mobile classroom and construction of one new library and group space, plus three new single storey classroom extensions to the Junior School, new cycle store and MUGA, and pupil pick up/drop off facility with parking spaces – Hextable Primary School, Rowhill Road, Hextable, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8 7RL. (Ref: KCC/SE/0074/2016 and SE/16/1480)

Recommendation: Planning permission to be granted, subject to conditions.

Local Member: The late Mr R Brookbank

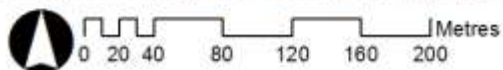
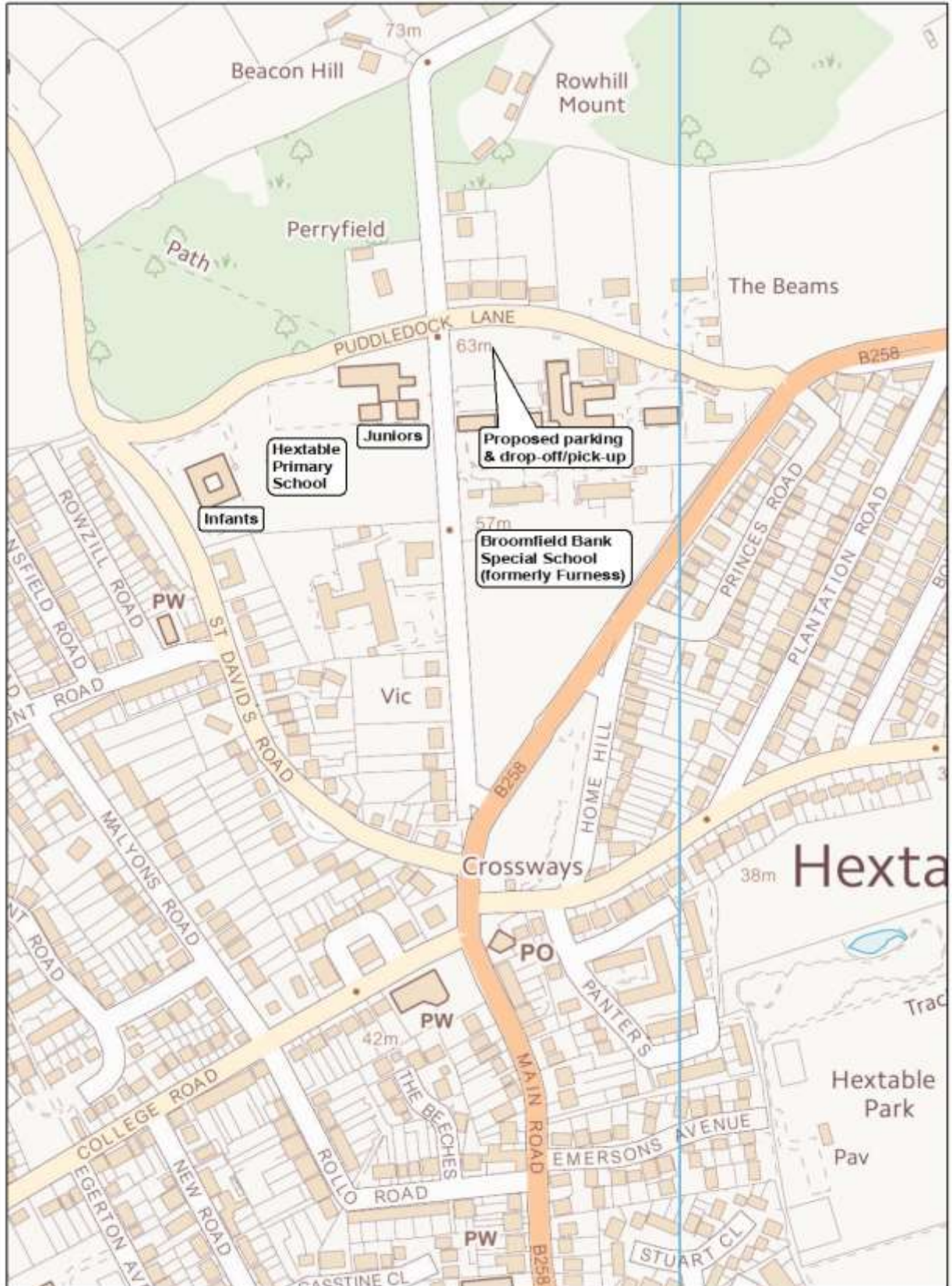
Classification: Unrestricted

**Site**

1. Hextable Primary School is located within the village of Hextable, which is located to the north of Swanley. The school site is adjacent to residential development to the south and west boundaries and Broomhill Bank School (north) (the former Furness School site) to the east. To the north is woodland within the Metropolitan Green Belt and some residential properties. The school site is not included within the Green Belt however the green playing field land within both school sites are identified by Sevenoaks District Council as Open Space. The school can be accessed from both the east via Rowhill Road and the west via St David's Road. To the north is Puddledock Lane. Please refer to the site location plan.
2. The school comprises of two buildings and is separated into the infant school and junior school with the playing field in the middle of these two buildings. The infant building is located to the west of the school site and is accessed off St David's Road for both vehicles and pedestrians. It currently comprises a single storey flat roofed building around a quadrangle, which houses a nursery, reception class and KS1 infant children. There is a total of 6 classrooms, a hall, staff room, 2 ICT suites and offices. There is also a cookery room and a plant room. There is a parking area by the infant building for staff only but it is not formally marked out as over the years the road markings have faded, but it is considered that this area can accommodate around 24 vehicles plus 2 disabled parking spaces.
3. The junior school is accessed off Rowhill Road and comprises a mixture of 1 and 2 storey buildings housing the KS2 junior children. It currently comprises 10 classrooms in total. On the ground floor there are 7 classrooms (one of these classrooms is currently used as a resource room), a hall, ICT suite, kitchen, various stores and cloakrooms and an office area which includes the head teacher's office and a staff room. On the first floor of the junior building there are 3 further classrooms with one of the classrooms currently being used as a library. There is also a mobile building (a container) which is used for storage. There is a parking area by the junior building for approximately 17 spaces and this is for staff use only plus 1 disabled parking space. Presently there are around 44 parking spaces within the 2 parking areas for staff use only.

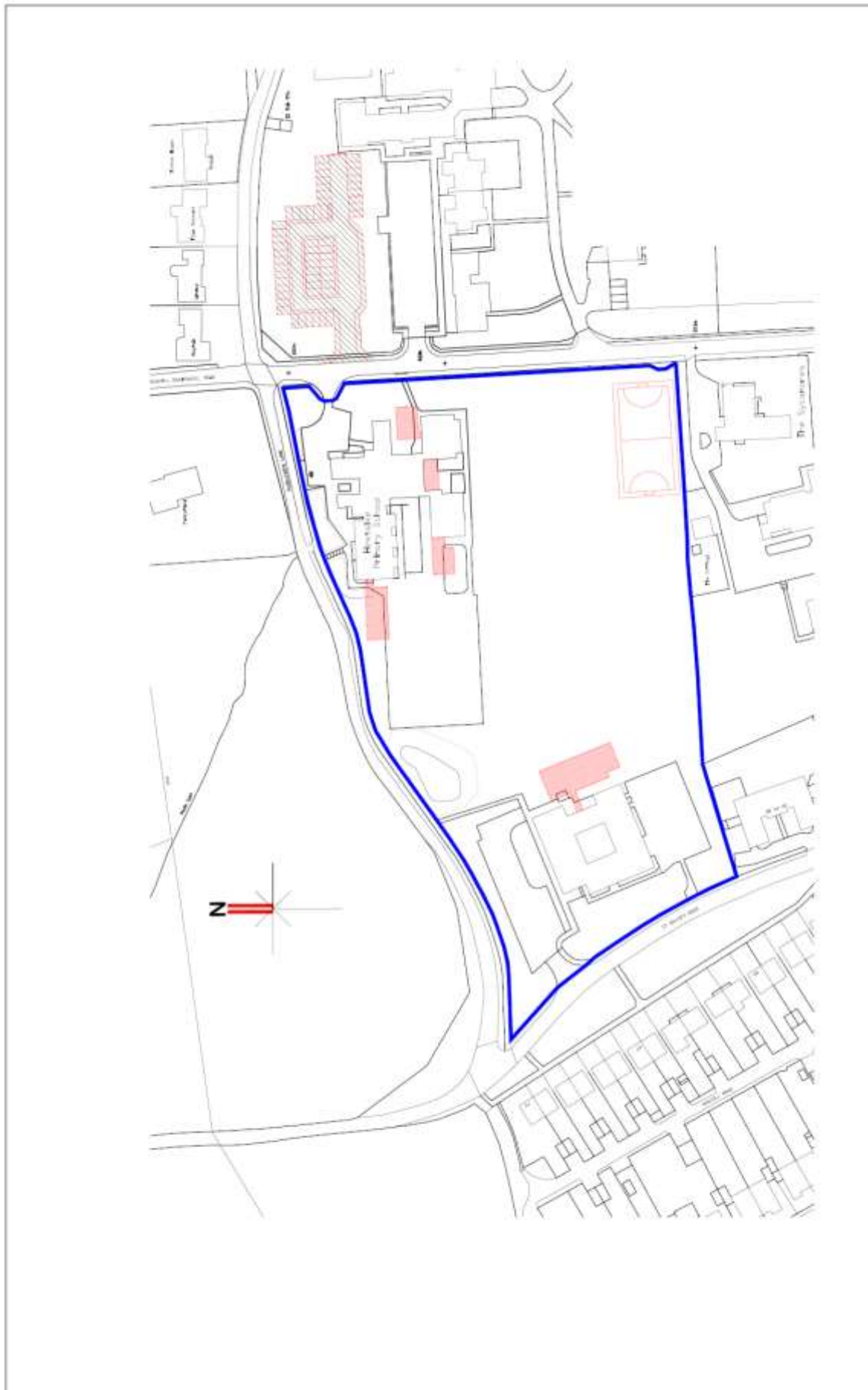
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Site Location Plan

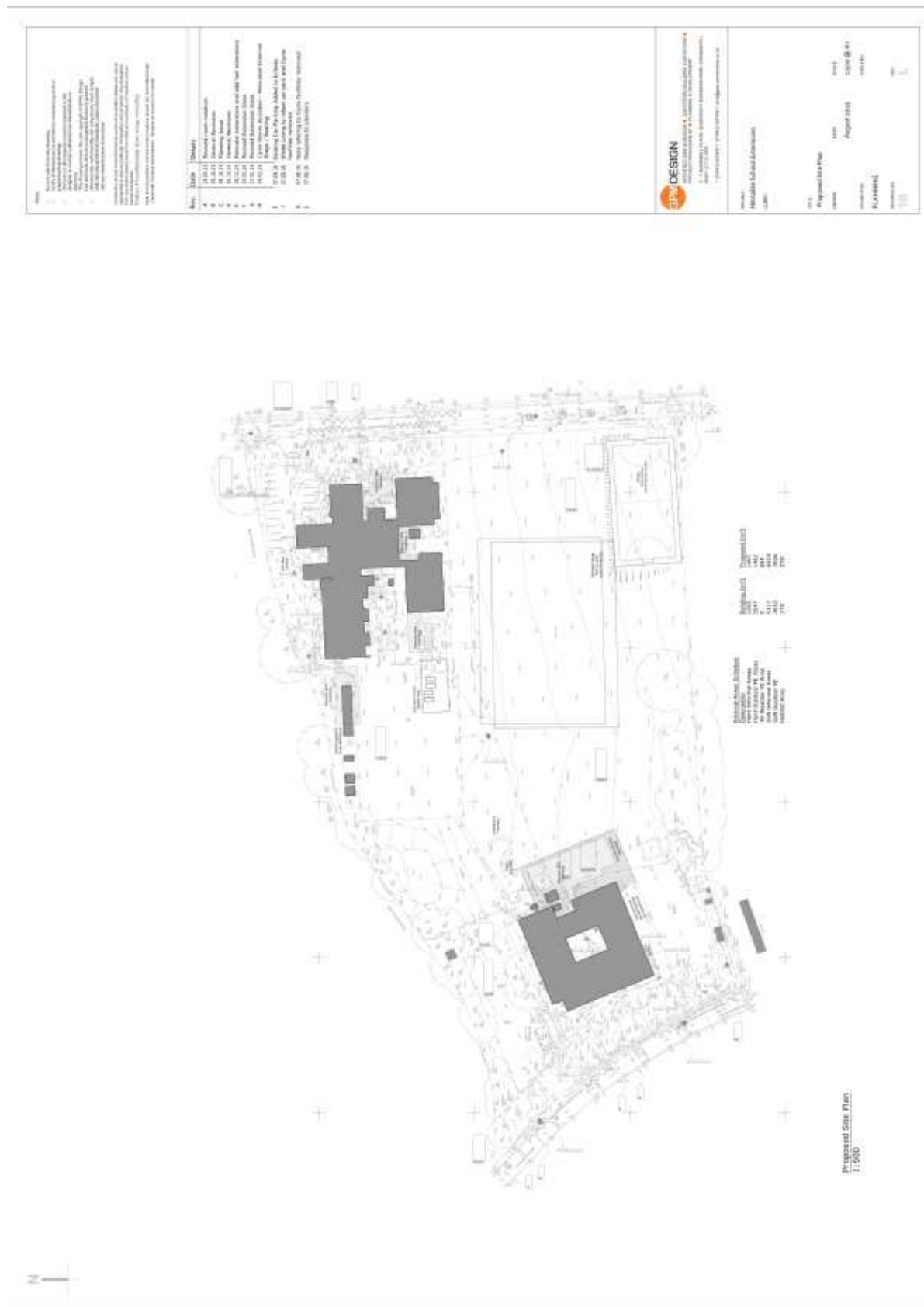


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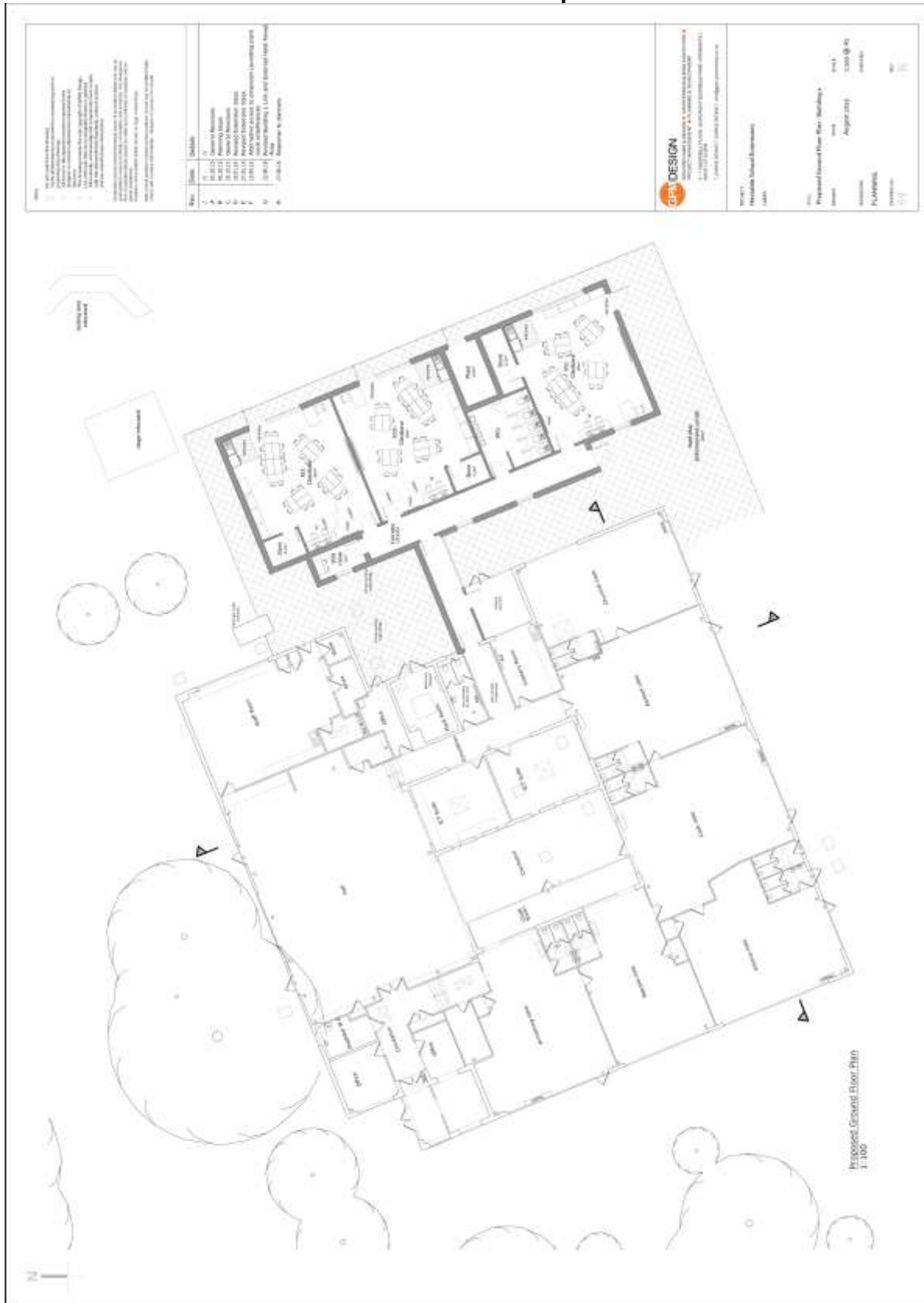


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Expansion of school, Hextable Primary School – SE/16/1480

Infant School - Floor plan



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Infant School - Elevations

**Proposed South Facing Elevation**  
1:100

**Proposed East Facing Elevation**  
1:100

**Proposed North Facing Elevation**  
1:100

**Proposed West Facing Elevation**  
1:100

**External Materials:**  
 - External Walling: Render  
 - Roofs: Asphalt  
 - Windows: UPVC  
 - Single Ply Roof Finish  
 - UPVC Windows + Doors

No.	Name	Details
A	1:100	Overall Elevation
B	1:100	Roofing Plan
C	1:100	Roofing Section
D	1:100	Roofing Section
E	1:100	Roofing Section
F	1:100	Roofing Section
G	1:100	Roofing Section
H	1:100	Roofing Section

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

PROJECT: Hextable Primary School Expansion

DATE: August 2023

SCALE: 1:100 @ A3

DATE: 15/08/23

SCALE: 1:100

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DATE: August 2023

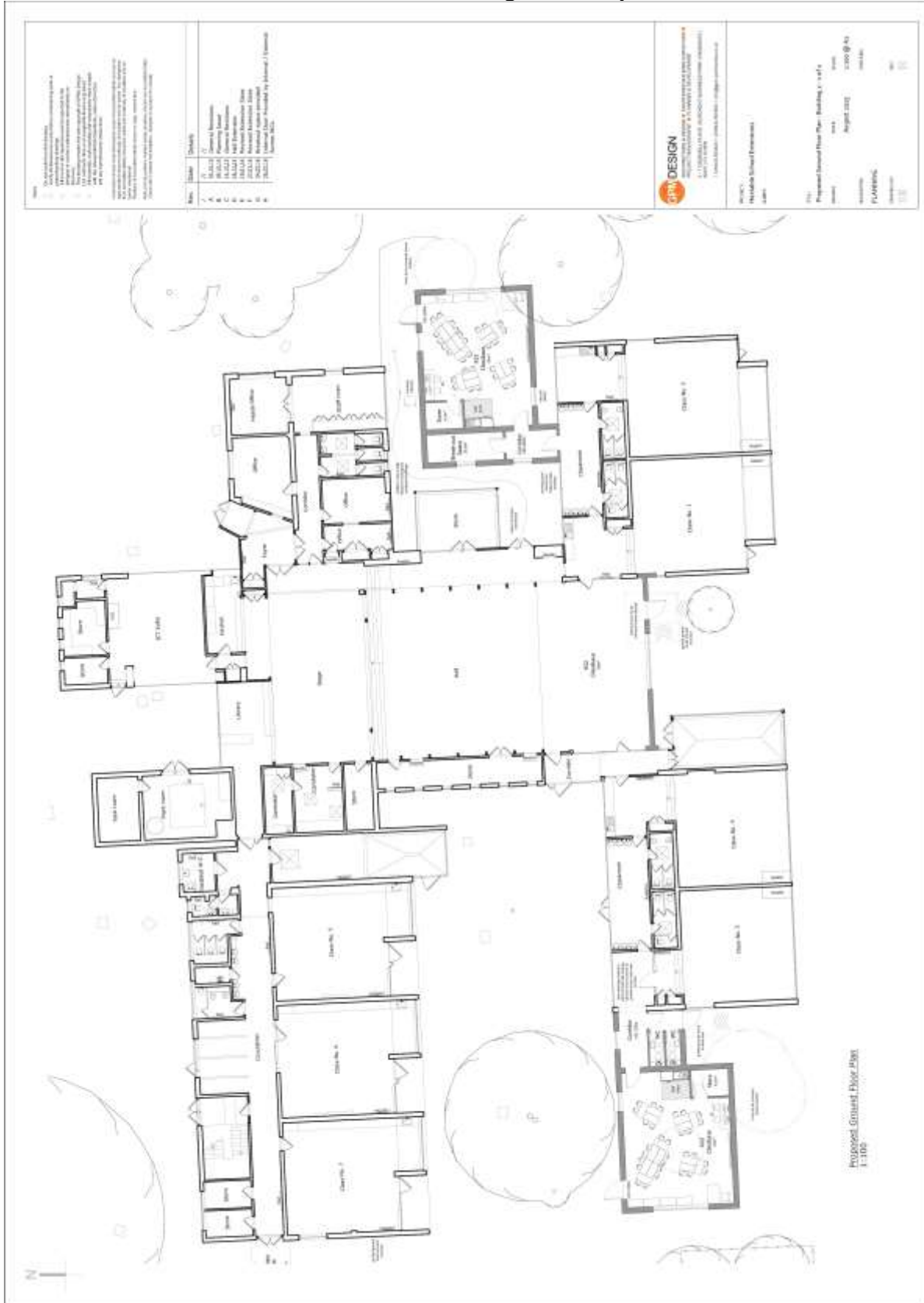
SCALE: 1:100 @ A3

DATE: 15/08/23

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Expansion of school, Hextable Primary School – SE/16/1480

Junior School Building 1– Floor plan



Expansion of school, Hextable Primary School – SE/16/1480

Junior School Building 1 – Elevations

**Notes**

1. All elevations are shown in black lines on a white background.
2. All elevations are shown in black lines on a white background.
3. All elevations are shown in black lines on a white background.
4. All elevations are shown in black lines on a white background.
5. All elevations are shown in black lines on a white background.
6. All elevations are shown in black lines on a white background.

No.	Rev.	Description
1	0	Issue for Planning
2	1	Issue for Planning
3	2	Issue for Planning
4	3	Issue for Planning
5	4	Issue for Planning
6	5	Issue for Planning

**DESIGN**

Hextable Primary School

16/16/1480

16/16/1480

16/16/1480

16/16/1480

16/16/1480

**External Materials**

Brickwork Finish

UPVC Windows + Doors

Single Ply Roof Finish

UPVC Windows + Doors

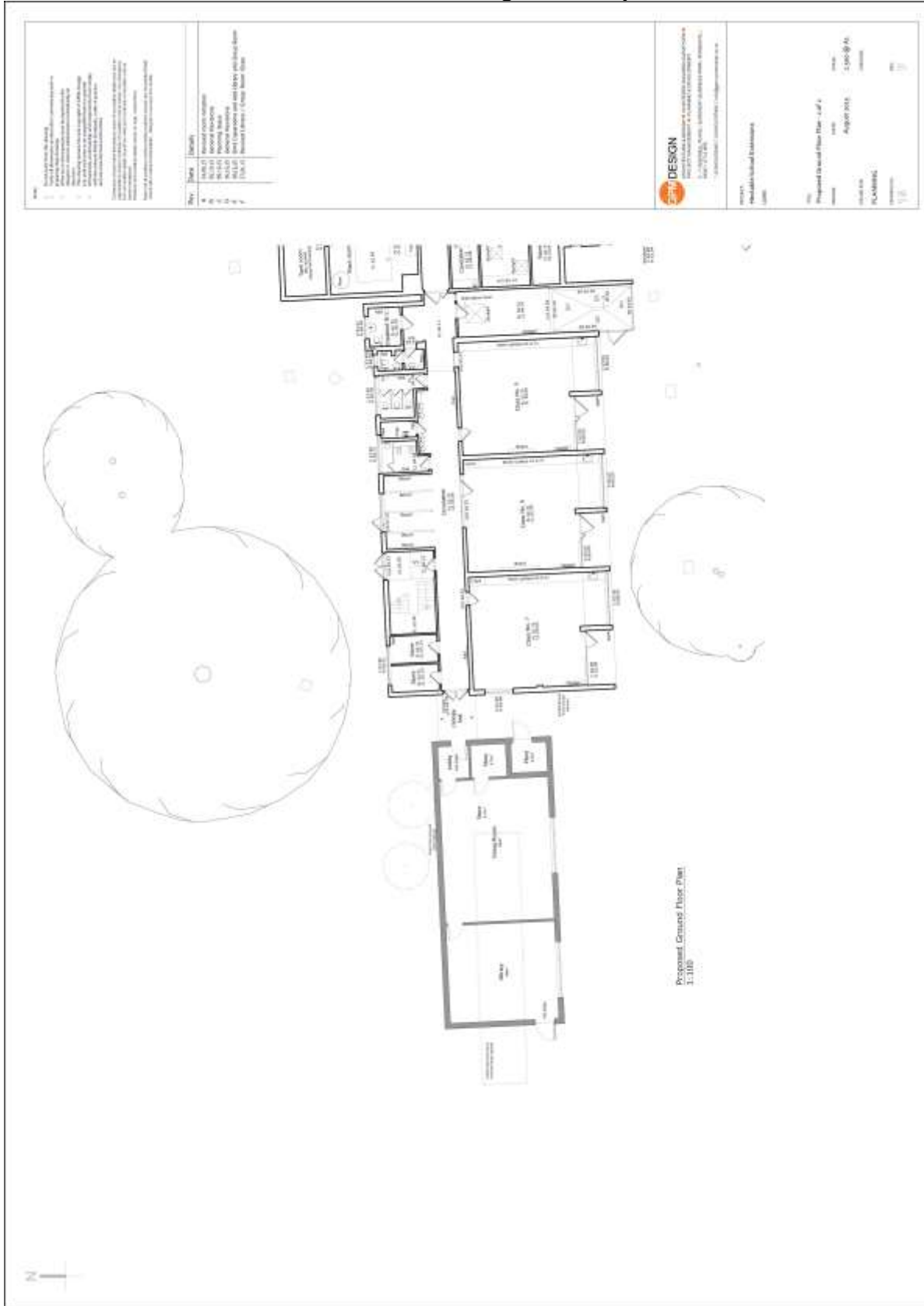
Proposed East Facing Elevation  
1:100

Proposed West Facing Elevation  
1:100



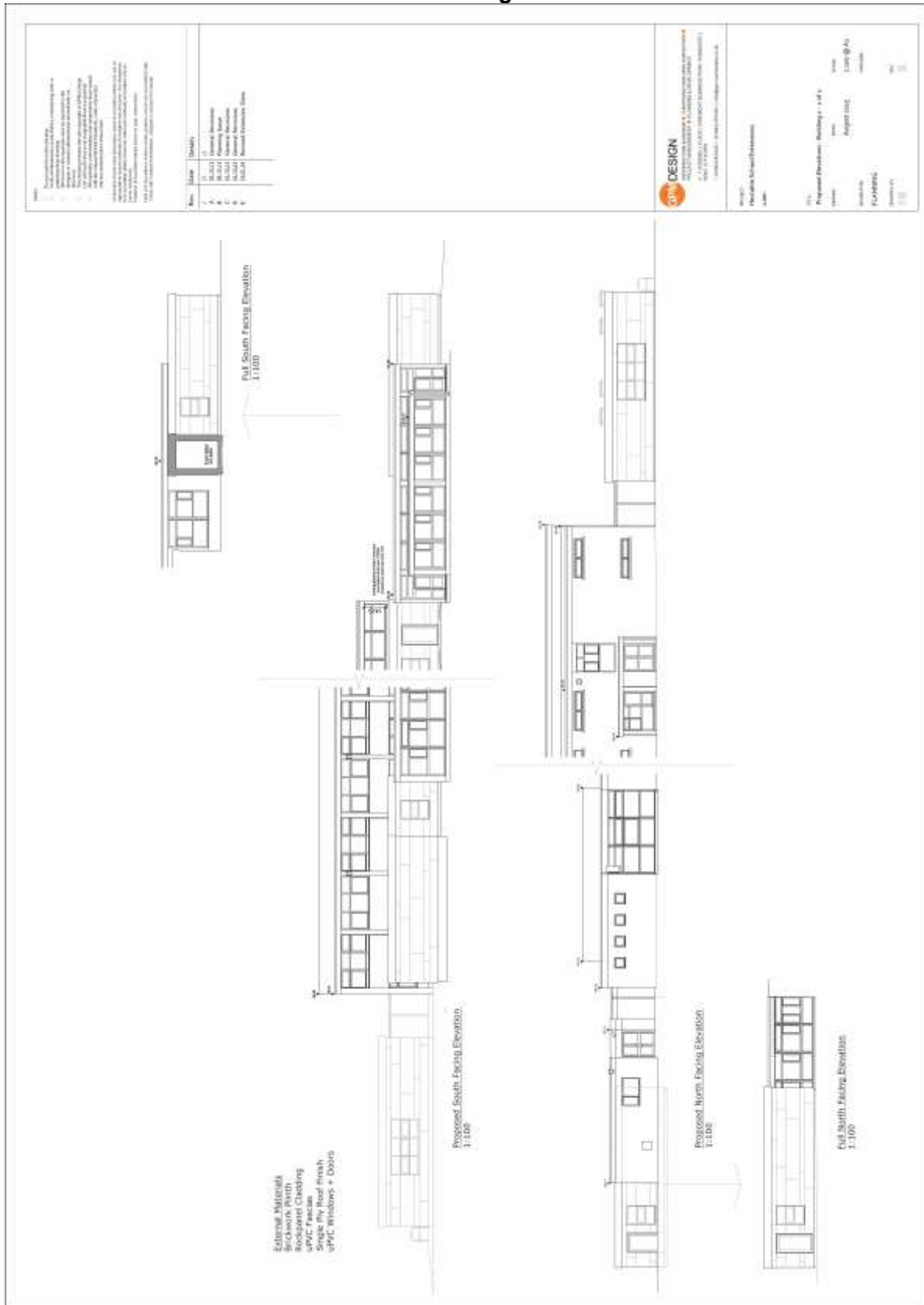
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Junior School Building 2 – Floor plan



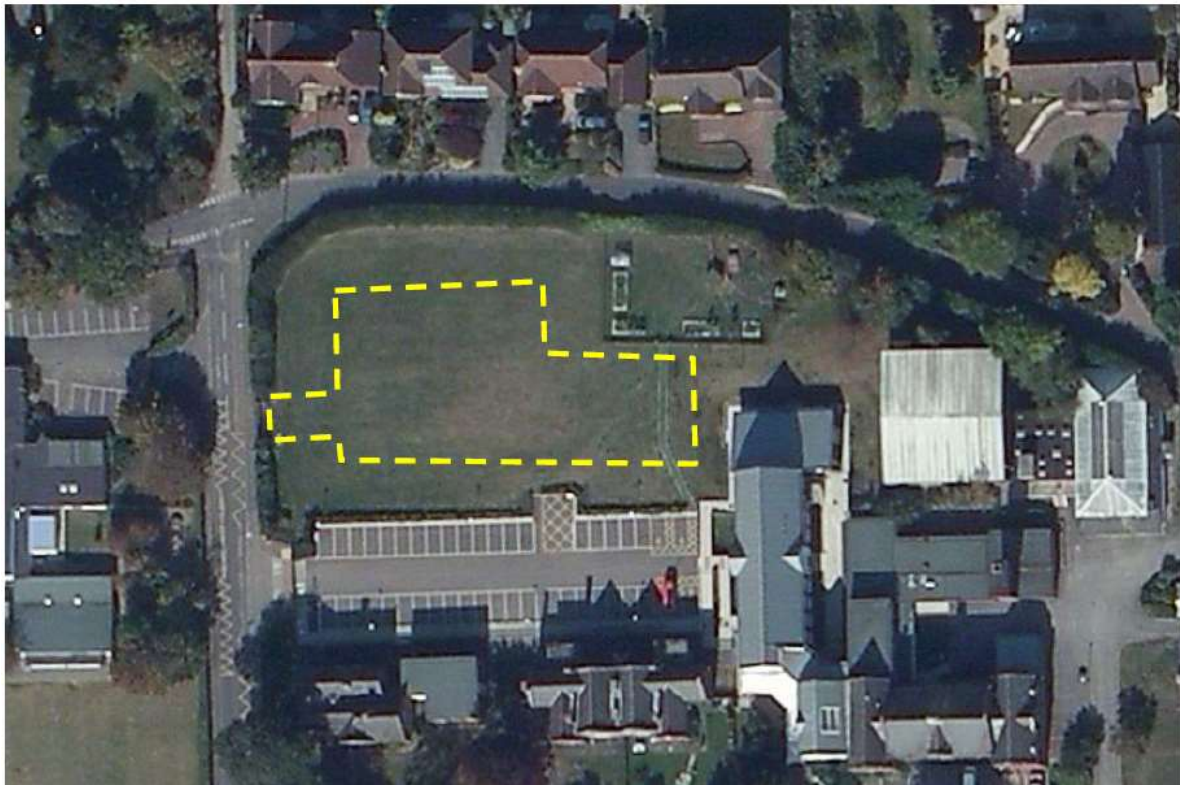
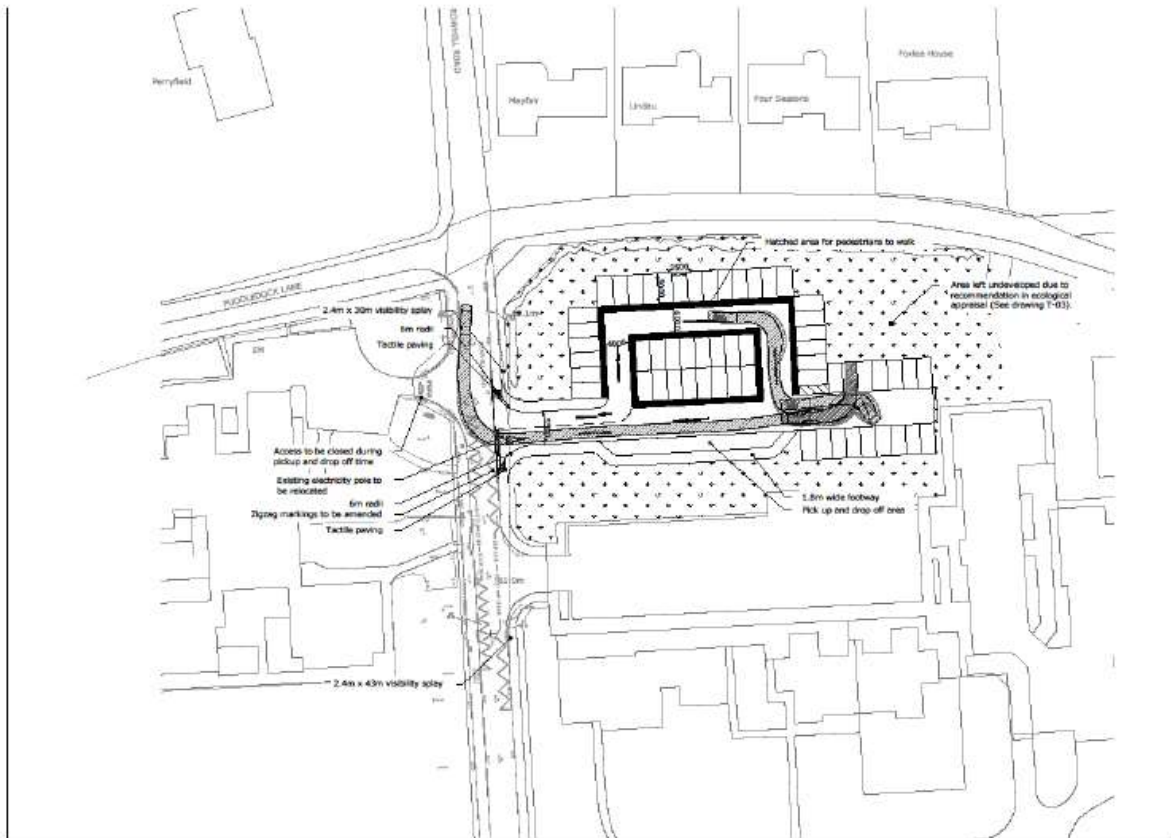
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**Junior School Building 2 – Elevations**



Expansion of school, Hextable Primary School – SE/16/1480

Pupil pick up/drop facility plus 57 park and stride car park



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4. The school buildings are located to the north east and north west of the site with internal paths locating the two school buildings. Pedestrians can walk between the two school buildings via the external footpath that runs along Puddledock Lane. Hard play areas are located by the respective infant and junior buildings and playing field is to the south of these buildings. The site is predominately flat with a gentle slope up from south to north and east to west and the overall level change is 6 metres, with steps and level changes used to mitigate the impact of the slope.

**Background**

5. The Swanley/Hextable urban areas have been seeing an upsurge in demand for primary school places due to various new housing developments and the recent birth rate increase. In addition Sevenoaks District is experiencing significant inward migration both from London and other parts of Kent. This growth and migration brings new families to the area requiring enhancements to the infrastructure in order to meet the future needs of the town and its residents. Consequently there is a forecasted deficit of places for the Sevenoaks urban area from 2016 onwards.
6. Last year the Kent Commissioning Plan provided forecasts that indicated an increase in the demand for primary school capacity. Furthermore, this increased demand showed no signs of reducing over the forecast period.
7. The planning application proposes to expand the school from a 2FE (form entry) to a 3FE school. The present pupil roll is 393 and it is proposed to incrementally increase the pupil numbers by 30 new pupils every year until 2023, when upon completion of the development there would be 630 pupils. It is also proposed to increase staff numbers by an extra 14 so increasing the number of staff at this school from 60 to 74.
8. The current school hours are from 8am in the morning, as the school operates a breakfast club for those children that are signed up to it, whilst all the other school pupils arrive between 8.45 and 9.00am. In the afternoon there is a staggered pick up time. The infants are picked up at 3.15pm and the juniors are picked up at 3.30pm.

**Recent Planning History**

9. The most relevant recent site planning history is listed below:

SE/05/1088	Extension to office and front entrance. Granted planning permission.
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**Proposal**

10. This planning application has been submitted by Kent County Council's Capital Projects Team and proposes an additional 7 classrooms at the school with 3 additional classrooms at the infant school and 4 additional classrooms at the junior school. The proposed 3 classroom extension at the infant school would be linked to the existing building by a new corridor. All 3 classrooms would measure 60sqm (645.8sqft), with a store room in each classroom and an area for coats and a wet area. It is also proposed to provide a SEN room and additional toilets. An area of hard playground is also proposed around the extension. This development would then provide a total of 9 classrooms at the infant school.
11. At the junior school, it is proposed to build an additional 2 classrooms, both measuring 55sqm (592sqft) and including a store room and a wet area. These classrooms would

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be linked to the existing school by a new corridor and additionally provide a small break-out space as well as 2 additional toilets. An extension to the existing school hall is also proposed which would increase the size of the existing school hall by 54sqm (581.3sqft). These extensions are proposed on the ground floor level of the junior school. Additionally there is currently a mobile building (container) which is used for storage located on the juniors' playground. It is proposed to permanently remove this mobile building from the site and replace it with a new building containing the library and a group room. The library would measure 44sqm (473.6sqft) and the group room would measure 66sqm (710.4sqft). This new building would also include a small lobby area, store and plant room and it would connect to the existing school building with a canopy link.

12. The school's current library is located in one of the three existing classrooms that are located on the first floor of the junior school and it is proposed to convert this classroom back to a teaching space. One of the seven existing classrooms located on the ground floor of the junior school is currently used as a resource room and it is proposed to relocate this function to the group room that is proposed to be located in the new building also housing the relocated library. This would then provide a total of 12 classrooms at the junior school.
13. As part of this planning application it is also proposed to provide a pupil pick-up/drop-off facility which would be located on land to the east of the existing school site and built on an area of open space belonging to Broomhill Bank School (the former Furnace School site). This area of open space has not been regularly used as a playing field in the last 5 years. This new pupil pick-up/drop-off facility would be accessed off Rowhill Road and located to the north of the existing pedestrian entrance to the junior school site. This facility would provide an area for parents to stop away from the public highway at peak times and would provide a total of 57 park-and-stride spaces as well as a drop-off bay. To facilitate safe pedestrian crossing from the proposed pick-up/drop-off facility to the school entrance on Rowhill Road, it is suggested that the existing School Crossing Patrol Officer should be relocated slightly to the north so that this is adjacent to the new access.
14. A Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is also proposed as part of this application and located to the southern boundary of the school site and adjacent to Rowhill Road. This south-east corner of the playing field cannot be used during the winter months due to poor drainage and is unused in high summer as the ground becomes too hard for use. It is proposed that the MUGA would be of a sand or rubber crumb based synthetic turf surface with pitch marking for various sports to allow all year round outside use of this facility. A 3m (9.84ft) high weld mesh is proposed and currently there are no plans to provide any lighting or floodlighting. It is intended to allow the local community to use the MUGA during evenings, weekends and school holidays. A separate existing gateway access from Rowhill Road would be utilised to allow independent community use.

**Amendment**

15. The planning application has been amended slightly to address an objection raised by Sport England as part of consultation process. Around the proposed 3 classroom extension to the infant block there is a paved area which Sport England was concerned about encroaching too much onto the existing playing field and thus affecting the potential provision for sport. Sport England advised that to remove its objection that this proposed hard paved area be reduced in size so it would not encroach any further on the sports field than the proposed 3 classroom extension. This reduction in the

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proposed paved area was duly carried out and Sport England removed its objection to this planning application.

**Planning Policy Context**

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

- (i) **National Planning Policy and Guidance** – the most relevant national planning policies and policy guidance are set out in:

The **National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)** and the **National Planning Policy Guidance (March 2014)** set out the Government's planning policy and guidance for England, and is a material consideration for the determination of planning applications. It does not change the statutory status of the development plan which remains the starting point for decision making. The NPPF and its guidance replace the majority of the former Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS's). 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; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe;
  - 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 (August 2011)** sets out the Government's commitment to support the development of State-funded schools, and their delivery through the planning system.

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**(iii) Development Plan Policies**

The adopted **Sevenoaks District Core Strategy (February 2011)**

**Policy L07 Development in Rural Settlements:** Requires all new development to be of a scale and nature appropriate to the village concerned and should respond to the distinctive local characteristics.

**Policy SP1 Design of New Development and Conservation:** Requires all new development to be designed to a high standard, reflect the distinctive local character of an area, create safe, inclusive and attractive environments, incorporate sustainable development principles and maintain biodiversity.

**Policy SP2 Sustainable Development:** Sets standards for sustainable design and low energy generation. Proposals also cover measures to reduce the reliance on travel by car and seek to improve air quality.

**Policy SP9 Infrastructure Provision:** The Council will support the development of infrastructure facilities required to resolve existing deficiencies or to support the scale and distribution of development proposed.

**Policy SP10 Green Infrastructure, Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision:** Promotes the provision of multifunctional green space by linking existing green space areas. The Policy also seeks the retention of open space, sports and recreational facilities, including indoor facilities of value to the local community, unless any loss can be justified by additional provision of at least equivalent value to the local community.

**Policy SP11 Biodiversity:** Seeks to conserve biodiversity, to ensure no net loss through development and to promote opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

The adopted **Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan (February 2015)**

**Policy EN1 Design Principles:** Sets out the need for high quality design and for proposals to meet criteria including: responding to scale, height and materials; respecting the topography and character of the site and any sensitive features; not result in the loss of buildings or open space that would affect the character of an area, provided satisfactory means of access and parking provision; include opportunities for increasing biodiversity potential, including sustainable drainage and to avoid harm to existing biodiversity; create a permeable layout; safe and easy access for those with disabilities; creation of a safe and secure environment to deter crime and fear of crime; include modern communication technology and infrastructure; and make efficient use of land.

**Policy EN2 Amenity Protection:** Proposals should provide adequate residential amenities for existing and future occupiers of development, and safeguard amenities of existing and future occupiers of nearby properties by ensuring development does not result in excessive noise, vibration, odour, activity, vehicle movements, overlooking or

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visual intrusion and where it would not result in a loss of privacy or light.

**Policy GI 2 Loss of Open Space:** Proposals which prevent the change of use or redevelopment of Open Space, including redundant school playing fields, unless it can be demonstrated that the open space is surplus to requirements, or that the loss will be mitigated by equivalent replacement provision. There should be no significant adverse impact upon the character of the local environment.

**Policy T1 Mitigating Travel Impact:** Sets out the need to mitigate against adverse travel impacts including their impact on congestion and safety, environmental impact such as noise, pollution and impact on amenity and health.

**Policy T2 Vehicle Parking:** Sets out that vehicle parking provision, including cycle parking, for non-residential developments should be in accordance with the advice of Kent County Council as Local Highway Authority.

**Consultations**

17. **Sevenoaks District Council:** Raises **no objection** to the planning application.

**Hextable Parish Council:** Raises **concern** and commented as follows:

“The Parish Council has concerns for the increased traffic, traffic flow and parking for the extra places planned for Hextable Primary School. We expect that planners will take this into consideration and may wish to look at alternatives to the current traffic flow system around Rowhill Road, Puddledock Lane and St David’s Road. Many residents have expressed their concerns for this to the Parish Council.”

**Wilmington Parish Council** (neighbouring Parish Council): Raises **concern** and comments as follows:

“It was noted that the site is outside of the Parish however some concern was expressed over a possible increase in traffic through Wilmington.”

**Kent County Council Highways and Transportation:** Raises **no objection** to the application and comments as follows:

“Whilst it is accepted that currently there is a certain amount of congestion on the roads surrounding the school at pupil start and finish times, it must be recognised that this only occurs during term time (30 weeks per year) and for relatively short periods in the mornings and mid-afternoon. Therefore it is considered that any mitigating measures need to be assessed against the overall impact for the short periods in which it may occur. Safety for vehicles, and more importantly pedestrians, is of the highest importance and it is not considered that the additional traffic generation as a result of the school expansion will compromise road safety.

The application is supported by a comprehensive and robust Transport Statement, the scope of which was discussed and agreed with KCC Highways prior to the application being submitted. The content and conclusions of that Transport Statement are found to be valid.



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The Transport Statement demonstrates that whilst there is likely to be an increase in vehicle movements in the roads surrounding the school due to an increase of pupil numbers from 420 to 630 pupils, and in teacher numbers from 60 to 74, this can be accommodated by a number of mitigating measures such as the provision of a new drop-off/parking area for parents and, most importantly, through a revised and updated School Travel Plan to encourage both pupils and teachers to walk/car share.

The proposed new drop-off/parking area to the east of Rowhill Road will accommodate up to 57 spaces which is considered to be adequate given the staggered start/finish times that the school currently, and will continue to operate. A Road Safety Audit has been undertaken in the proposal and provided the issue raised in the audit are addressed it does not result in any safety issues. This recommends that conditions are submitted that require the visibility splays as shown on the application drawing attached to the Transport Statement to be implemented and maintained in the future, and for the existing school crossing patrol to be maintained, or replaced with a suitable formal pedestrian crossing facility should the school crossing patrol cease to operate at any time in the future. A condition should also require the new drop-off/parking area to be constructed and completed prior to the expanded building coming into use.

It is estimated that the number of parking spaces available within the school grounds (44 spaces) should be adequate to accommodate the teaching/admin staff who drive to the school and this complies with the maximum parking standard specified in KCC's Parking Standards (SPG4). This takes into account the fact that a number of teachers are part time and therefore spaces can be "doubled up" and that the School Travel Plan will encourage more staff to use more sustainable methods of travel or car share. The situation of staff parking should be monitored in the future and it is suggested that some of the new parking provision off Rowhill Road could be utilised if found necessary since it is likely to be empty outside school start and finish times.

A condition should be applied to require a new School Travel Plan to be submitted and approved in co-ordination with KCC's School Travel Plan Officer with a target, as stated in the Transport Statement of reducing the number of pupils who travel to school by car by 10% in the first 3 years.

A further condition requiring the submission and approval of a Construction Management Plan should be applied to ensure that no additional road safety hazards are introduced during the construction period. This should cover such issues as deliveries, parking compound, hours of working and lorry routing.

In conclusion, I do not wish to raise an objection to this proposal since, whilst it is accepted that there may be additional congestion in the area at school start and finish times, these are of short duration and only during term times. In view of the policy given in NPPF Paragraph 32 which state among other things that development should not be refused on transport grounds unless the cumulative impact is severe, I do not consider this to be the case in this instance. The introduction of mitigating measures to reduce that impact, as discussed above, makes the application acceptable in highway terms."

**County Ecology Officer:** Further to initial comments and receipt of a Bat Report, makes the following comments:

"No bats were recorded emerging from the buildings during the emergence survey and as such it is concluded in the report that 'no further works in relation to bats is recommended'. It is our understanding that the potential bat roosting features identified during the ecological survey work will not be removed as a result of the

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proposed development. As such, we agree that there is no need for bat mitigation measures relating to impacts to roosting bats, if the works take place while these surveys remain time-valid.

As previously advised, the submission and implementation of the detailed methods to avoid and/or reduce the potential for impacts to reptiles and breeding birds must be secured by condition, if planning permission is granted. The submission and implementation of a detailed method for the precautionary approach to felling of the trees with bat roosting must be secured by condition, if planning permission is granted. The implementation of wildlife-sensitive lighting is recommended in the report. We advise that if any external lighting is proposed, the details, demonstrating adherence to the recommendations in the report, can be secured by condition, if planning permission is granted.

Measures to minimise the potential for impacts to mammals including hedgehogs are recommended in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report. We advise that the implementation of these measures must be secured by condition, if planning permission is granted.

One of the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework is that “opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged”. In addition to securing the implementation of the necessary mitigation measures, we advise that Kent County Council should also seek to ensure that ecological enhancement measures are provided within the landscaping of the proposed development site. The reports provide some recommendations; the details can be secured by condition, if planning permission is granted.”

**School Travel Planner:** Raises **no objection** subject to an updated School Travel Plan being conditioned and for the School to submit this via the Jambusters website.

**Sport England:** Further to its initial objection and upon receipt of revised drawings showing a reduced hard paved area around the proposed infants block extension, Sport England raises **no objection** to this planning application and has the following comments:

The proposed revisions involve the reduction of the proposed hard paved area adjacent to the proposed extension to building 1, changes to proposed building 1 and the omission of the proposed cycle bays. The hardstanding area now proposed is considered to represent a minor encroachment onto the playing field but having considered the nature of the playing field and its ability to accommodate sports pitches; it is not considered that this element of the proposed development would reduce the sporting capability of the site. As such, Sport England is satisfied that this element of the proposed development now broadly meets the intention of the following Sport England Policy exception E3.

Overall, Sport England now **does not wish to raise an objection** to this application to the revised scheme provided a condition is imposed in order to facilitate community use of the Multi Use Games Area as indicated in the Design, Access and Planning Statement.

**Environment Agency:** no response received.

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**Local Member**

18. The local County Member, the late Mr Robert Brookbank, was notified of the application on 16 May 2016. Mr Brookbank made the following comments:

“After further consultation with the Parish Council and other interested parties, it is apparent that the only objection to the proposal will be the general one about the increase in traffic in the centre of the village, which applies throughout the County.”

**Publicity**

19. The application was advertised by the posting of site notices, and the notification of 48 neighbours.

**Representations**

20. Three letters of representation have been received, objecting to the application. The main points of the objection can be summarised as follows:

- The roads around these schools are unable to cope with the level of traffic generated by the existing size of these schools.
- Although providing a pupil pick up/drop off facility at the junior school will alleviate some of the problems for them, this will do nothing for the extra chaos being created at the infant school. There is doubt raised regarding the effectiveness of this facility.
- As there is no substantial new building taking place in Hextable, the vast majority of the new pupils attending the schools will come from outside the area with most of them arriving by car.
- Every day the traffic situation in St David’s Road sees cars being driven along the pavement amongst the pedestrian parents and children as the road is not wide enough to cope with 2 lanes of traffic and parked cars along one complete side.
- This application does not address the parking problems in St David’s Road at drop off/pick up points and causing congestion as it is too far from the Infants School for parents to use it.

**Discussion**

21. In considering this proposal regard must be had to Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (16) above. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, this proposal needs to be considered in the context of Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Policy Statement for Schools Development and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity.

22. This application has been reported for determination by the Planning Applications Committee following the receipt of objections from 3 local residents. The main issues relating to this objection are on traffic grounds, local congestion and lack of parking around the school site. Initial objections and concerns from Sport England and the County’s Ecologist have been addressed through negotiation and subsequently been withdrawn.

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Transport Issues

23. The planning application proposes to expand Hextable Primary School from a 2FE (420 pupils) to a 3FE (630 pupils). It is proposed to incrementally increase the pupil numbers by 30 new pupils every year until the school reaches this capacity in 2023. It is also proposed to increase staff numbers by an extra 14 so increasing the number of staff at this school from 60 to 74. Whilst it is not proposed to increase the number of staff parking spaces, albeit to re-mark the worn out parking lines in the existing infant staff car park, it is proposed to provide a new pupil pick-up/drop-off facility, which would provide a total of 57 park-and-stride spaces as well as a drop-off bay on land to the east of Rowhill Road, currently located at Broomhill Bank School.
24. The application was supported by the submission of a Transport Statement, which considered the impact the development would be likely to have on the capacity of the existing highway network and the parking demand on the surrounding streets. Kent Highways has considered the statement and the calculations of the existing trip attractions and the proposed number of additional vehicles that are likely to be associated with the increase in pupils and staff numbers.
25. The general impact of the additional pupil numbers is that a predicted further 72 vehicles would be associated with each school drop off and collection period. This impact would be more noticeable at the afternoon collection time, as parents wait for the children to be released and therefore park over a longer period, rather than dropping off and continuing on their journey. However this predicted increase in vehicles assumes a worst case scenario with a 100% pupil attendance rate and no consideration of the distribution of these additional vehicle movements on the local network. It is likely that the assignment of these trips would be split between Puddledock Lane, Rowhill Road and St David's Road. Further it is apparent that the School already implements a staggered departure times between the infant and junior school, which spreads the traffic flows over a greater period of time and thus reducing the level of traffic impact.
26. It is noted that pupil pick-up and drop-off currently takes place on the local highway network surrounding the school as there are no on-site facilities to accommodate this. As a result of the proposed uplift in pupil numbers it is expected that there would be an additional 72 vehicles in the peak hours on the highway network. Therefore to mitigate the traffic impacts as a result of the additional traffic, it is proposed to provide a new car parking facility on land to the east of the school site which would be accessed via a new priority junction on Rowhill Road. This facility would provide 57 park-and-stride spaces plus a drop-off bay to be used by parents in the peak hours. Additionally the 57 park-and-stride spaces would be used on a multiple number of times during the morning drop-off period as parents arrive at school over a wider period of time, and could feasibly accommodate the extra traffic that would be generated. It is also proposed that a one-way loop in a clockwise direction would be enforced through the site to ensure that the facility operates efficiently. The existing access to the junior school staff car park, which lies directly opposite the proposed access, would be closed at peak times. To ensure pedestrian safety a hatched pedestrian walkway would be provided and a 1.8 metre (5.9ft) footway to the south of the drop-off bay, connecting with the site access.
27. It must also be noted that Kent Highways has raised no objection to this application. Whilst it is accepted that currently there is a certain amount of congestion on the roads surrounding the school at pupil start and finish times, it has been recognised that this only occurs during term time and for about 30 weeks per year. It is also for a relatively short period of time in the morning and mid-afternoon. Kent Highways have also

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accepted that the content and conclusions reached in the Transport Statement as being valid. Not all the new additional pupils would be driven to school and so some would walk to school, or may travel in existing vehicles either through car sharing or because they already have siblings at the school.

28. Whilst it is proposed to increase staff numbers by 14 to 74 members of staff, there are no proposals to provide more on-site parking for staff as it has been concluded that there is adequate parking provision. An assessment was carried out in the Transport Statement and based on a recent staff travel survey, which concluded that the staff car driver mode share of 81% would result in a demand for up to 45 staff car parking spaces to accommodate the full time staff that would be parked at the site throughout the day. Given that a total of 44 spaces are available to staff within the school site, then the current car park would accommodate these members of staff. Furthermore, through the introduction of a School Travel Plan and regular monitoring, the School would aim to introduce measures as to encourage more members of staff to share car trips or to encourage other ways of travelling to school, and so that could further reduce the demand for the number of staff members travelling and parking at the school.
29. However this application has met with objection from local residents living in St David's Road on traffic and parking grounds. They consider that the current level of parking at school start and finish time is unacceptable and that the road is unable to cope with any more traffic. Whilst a parking facility by the junior school is being proposed to help cope with the extra demand for parking that expanding the school would generate, residents of St David's Road feel that this facility is too far away to have any impact upon reducing traffic and parking by the infant school. Like hundreds of other schools in Kent, the premises are located in a primarily residential area and are accessed by the public highway. Whilst inevitably there is some competition for road space, typically resulting in localised congestion, that congestion is often for relatively short periods of time. Whilst some nuisance is incurred, such congestion equates to less than 10% of the working day and occurs on less than 60% of the total days in the year. It is not a continuously experienced problem of a magnitude that might otherwise warrant refusal of planning permission for development proposals.
30. Moreover, the public highway is there to be used by the public, whether as residents, visitors, employees or others, and no one category of user has priority, so the use of our roads has to be shared by different users at different times of the day. Friction tends to arise when the public all want to use the public highway at the same time, but the only solution to that is better management of the available facilities, including spreading of the load with multiple access points, managing demand by the staggering of hours, improving existing on-site parking facilities, including pupil drop-off facilities for parents, and encouraging alternative modes of travel to school. All of these initiatives are incorporated within these planning proposals, and can be secured through the Travel Plan process if planning consent were to be given.
31. Furthermore the school currently has no on-site parking facilities for parents and so all parents that drive to school have to park out on the public highway. This planning application proposes a pupil pick-up/drop facility plus a total of 57 park-and-stride parking spaces, which would provide for the first time a dedicated area for parents to park off the public highway, and thus to relieve some of the current on-street parking in the surrounding roads around the school.
32. In conclusion, I do not wish to raise an objection to this proposal since, whilst it is accepted by Kent Highways that there may be some additional congestion in the area at school start and finish times, these are of short duration and only during term times.

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In view of the policy given in NPPF Paragraph 32 which state among other things that development should not be refused on transport grounds unless the cumulative impact is severe, I do not consider this to be the case in this instance. The introduction of mitigating measures to reduce that impact, as discussed above, makes the application acceptable in highway terms. As such it is considered that the application would accord with Policy T1 and T2 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plans and Paragraph 32 of the NPPF. Under the circumstances, I would therefore not raise a planning objection to the proposal on highway grounds.

Need

33. As outlined in paragraph 16 of this report, great emphasis is placed within planning policy generally, specifically paragraph 72 of the NPPF, on the need to ensure a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs to existing and new communities. The NPPF states that Planning Authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. The NPPF further states that Planning Authorities should give great weight to the need to create expand or alter schools. The Policy Statement – Planning for Schools Development (15 August 2011) further sets out the Government's commitment to support the development of state funded schools and their delivery through the planning system. In addition, Sevenoaks District Core Strategy contains planning objectives that support the improvement of facilities where necessary. In particular, Policy SP9 of the Core strategy seeks to support the development of infrastructure facilities required to resolve existing deficiencies, with the definition of 'infrastructure' encompassing education and community facilities.
34. The applicant has identified an upsurge in the demand for primary school places within the Sevenoaks South area, and a future need which will be outstripped by demand unless additional places are provided. Support for the provision of school places is heavily embedded in the NPPF and local planning policy, and I consider that the need for the development should be given significant weight in this instance.

Design and layout

35. Development Plan Policies promote high quality design, sustainable development and significant improvements to the built environment. The proposed buildings would be independent single storey structures with thermally efficient clear span spaces. The locations of the new buildings have been proposed in order to minimise any external visual impact, with designs that are complementary and subordinate to the existing locations. The proposed location, with the exception of the single classroom proposed to the eastern frontage of the junior school, all of the other proposed extensions are to the rear of the existing school buildings and are therefore not visible from the public realm. All the new buildings are proposed to be constructed in complementary materials and fenestration to the existing school buildings and are all proposed to be single storey extensions with flat roofs.
36. The various extensions would encroach upon the various existing hard and soft play areas around both the infant and junior school blocks, however there is sufficient land to enable these facilities to be replaced and educational requirements in terms of soft and hard play areas to be compiled with. This replacement and improvements includes the provision of the proposed MUGA to the south east corner of the site and the minor relocation of the existing playing pitch to accommodate that facility. The overall development concept is to provide a series of small scale alterations and additions to achieve the additional floor space, hard surface play space and improved drop-off/pick-up facilities for parents.

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37. Members will note that no objection has been received to the proposed location or design of the various extensions to the school. However in order to control the development and to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the proposed development, I consider that final details of all materials to be used externally should be submitted pursuant to condition, should permission be granted. Subject to the imposition of this condition, I consider that the design and layout of the proposed development to be acceptable and I would therefore not raise a planning objection on this matter.

Open space

38. The school's playing field and the area of open land to the north of Broomhill Bank School are both covered by the District Council's Open Space Policy, which states that a change of use or redevelopment of these spaces will not be permitted unless the applicant can demonstrate that the open space is surplus to requirement and that there is no need for an appropriate alternative community, sports or recreational use or the loss would be mitigated by equivalent replacement provision or that the development is for alternative sports/recreation use.
39. The applicant has confirmed that at Hextable Primary School there is an existing surplus of playing field provision and the small loss of the existing playing field will be offset by the provision of the MUGA, which will provide both an educational use as well as a community use. Additionally the MUGA would occupy existing playing field land that is currently not used during the winter months due to poor drainage and unused in high summer as the ground becomes too hard for use. Furthermore the MUGA would be available at all times for the schools use as well as out of school hours use by the local community. The proposed MUGA would not affect the existing marked out formal pitch areas. Sport England and Sevenoaks District Council have raised no objection to this element of the planning application.
40. The area of open land to the north of Broomhill Bank School, which is identified as being Open Land by Sevenoaks District Council, has not been regularly used as playing field for over 5 years and is deemed as being surplus to the school's requirement. It is proposed to locate the pupil drop-off/pick up facility as well as the 57 park-and-stride spaces here. It should be noted that the loss of this area of open space for the community is offset by the proposed provision of the MUGA on the Hextable Primary School site. There would be no significant adverse impact upon the character of the area as the site is reasonably well shielded and enclosed by the boundary hedgerow. The openness of this area would also be retained for the majority of the time as this parking area would only be used for a short time during the morning drop off and afternoon collection times, and only during school term time. For the rest of the time, this area will retain the current openness of this site. Neither Sport England or Sevenoaks District Council have raised objection to this element of the planning application.
41. I am satisfied that thorough consideration has been given to the proposed loss of both of the Open Spaces and as such it is considered that the application would accord with Policy GI 2 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan. Under the circumstances, I would therefore not raise a planning objection on this matter.

**Conclusion**

42. In summary the proposal seeks to provide additional primary school places to meet local need and is in accordance with planning policy to support the improvement of local infrastructure, as set out in the Sevenoaks District Core Strategy;

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the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan; the NPPF and the Policy Statement – Planning for Schools Development. I consider that, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, this proposed development constitutes sustainable development, with an appropriate level of new off-street parking facilities for parents in the form of a 57 park-and-stride car park and parent’s drop-off area. Whilst the proposed development will generate an increase in traffic, Kent Highways are satisfied that this proposal is acceptable, subject to the imposition of conditions and its impact would not be severe. In addition weight should also be given to the NPPF’s clear policy support for ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places be available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, and the need to create, expand or alter school. In my view, the development would not give rise to any significant material harm and is in accordance with the general aims and objectives of the relevant Development Plan Policies, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework. I am not aware of any material planning considerations that indicate that the conclusion should be made otherwise.

**Recommendation**

43. 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 carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
- The submission of details of all materials to be used externally;
- A scheme of soft and hard landscaping and its implementation and maintenance;
- Measures to protect trees to be retained;
- No tree removal during the bird breeding season;
- The submission and implementation of detailed method statement to avoid and/or reduce the potential for impacts to reptiles and breeding birds;
- Measures to minimise the potential for impacts to mammals including hedgehogs as recommended in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report;
- Details of any external lighting to be provided;
- Provision and permanent retention of new drop-off parking area prior to the occupation of the proposed development;
- Visibility splays to be provided as approved and to be maintained;
- 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 and Bank Holidays;
- Measures to prevent mud and debris being taken onto the public highway;
- The submission of a construction management plan, including lorry routing, access, parking and circulation within the site for contractors and other vehicles related to construction operations;
- The retention of school crossing facilities across Rowhill Road;
- The submission of a revised School Travel Plan, within 3 months of the occupation of the new buildings, via the Jambusters website and be the placed on the school’s website and for the Travel Plan to be reviewed annually;
- A Community Use Agreement relating to the MUGA including hours of use.

Case officer – Lidia Cook	03000 413353
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Background documents - See Section heading
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