

**Relocation of mobile classroom at Saltwood Primary School permitted under planning permission SH/09/332 – SH/09/773**

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 6 October 2009

SH/09/773 – Application by Saltwood C of E Primary School for the relocation of the mobile classroom permitted under planning permission SH/09/332 at Saltwood C of E Primary School, Grange Road, Saltwood, Hythe.

Recommendation: Planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

**Local Member(s): Mr A.Bowles**

**Classification: Unrestricted**

**Site**

1. Saltwood Primary School is situated in the middle of residential development in the village of Saltwood. The school site is enclosed to the North, South and West by residential development and the playing fields are to the East. The grounds are accessed by the main entrance on Grange Road, or by an alternative footpath leading between two residential properties from School Road. The school lies near the Saltwood Conservation Area. A site location plan is attached.

**Background**

2. Saltwood Primary School occupies a restricted site that is enclosed predominantly by residential development. The school boundaries to the North, South and West are shared with the rear gardens of the houses on Grange Road and School Road. Several of these houses overlook the school grounds.
3. Recent planning history includes an extension to the school to the southern elevation, and a canopy, which was granted consent in 2004. The most recent relevant planning permission was for a mobile building and remodelling of the access to the school field, which was granted earlier this year. The mobile building permitted under that permission forms the subject of this application.
4. The mobile building was initially applied for in order to house the Playgroup/Nursery which is currently housed in the village hall on Grange Road. The location permitted under the original application was concluded by the School and the Agents to be too expensive; therefore they have submitted the current application moving the mobile building to a new location within the school grounds.
5. The mobile building was justified on the grounds that it would give the Nursery/Playgroup dedicated space in a more accessible location. The current arrangement in the village hall means that they cannot have fixed displays and concerns were raised about security. The application also stated the mobile unit would be made available for community use out of hours and during the summer.

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**NOTES**  
 All work must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the current British Standards and Quality Regulations.  
 The contractor must notify all third and adjacent site owners, in writing, immediately upon completion of any work on the site.  
 Use written observations only.  
 It is made IAN.  
 This drawing is the copyright of D.A.S. Ltd.

**REVISED DRAWING**  
 01/07/2009

No.	Revision Description	Date	Drawn
A	Peri Perimeter	01/07/2009	IAN

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SCHOOL No. **3350**

**SALTWOOD C OF E (HUBBEN) PRIMARY SCHOOL BREAKFAST/AFTER SCHOOL CLUB**

PROPOSED TITLE: **SITE LOCATION PLAN**

SCALE: 1:1250

DATE: **PLANNING**

Drawn by: **IAN** Date: **JULY 2009**

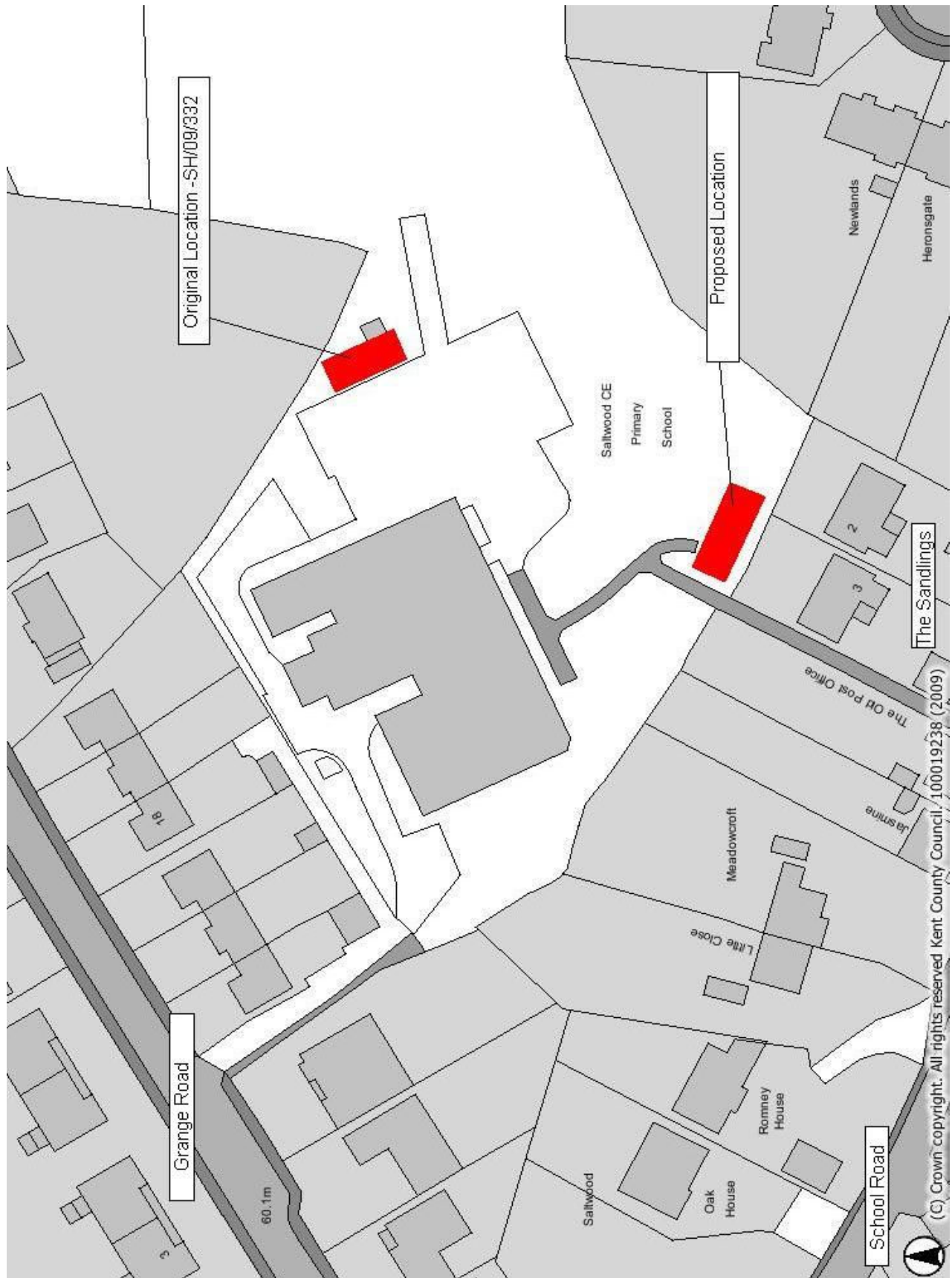


Site Location Plan

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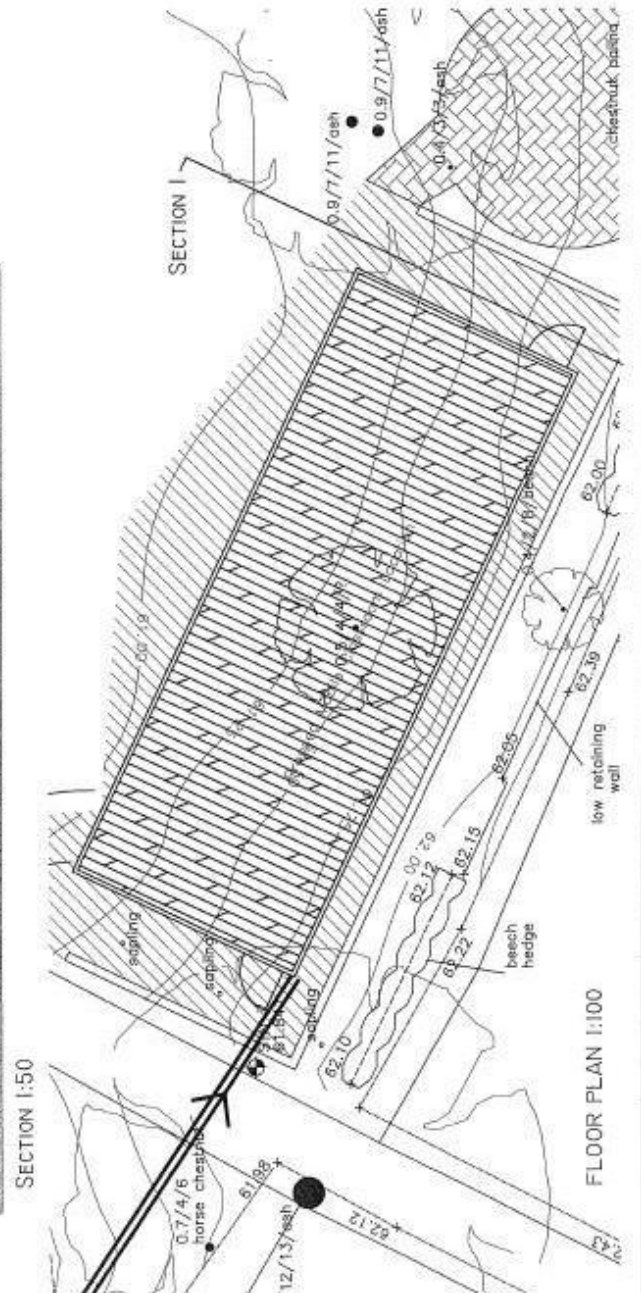
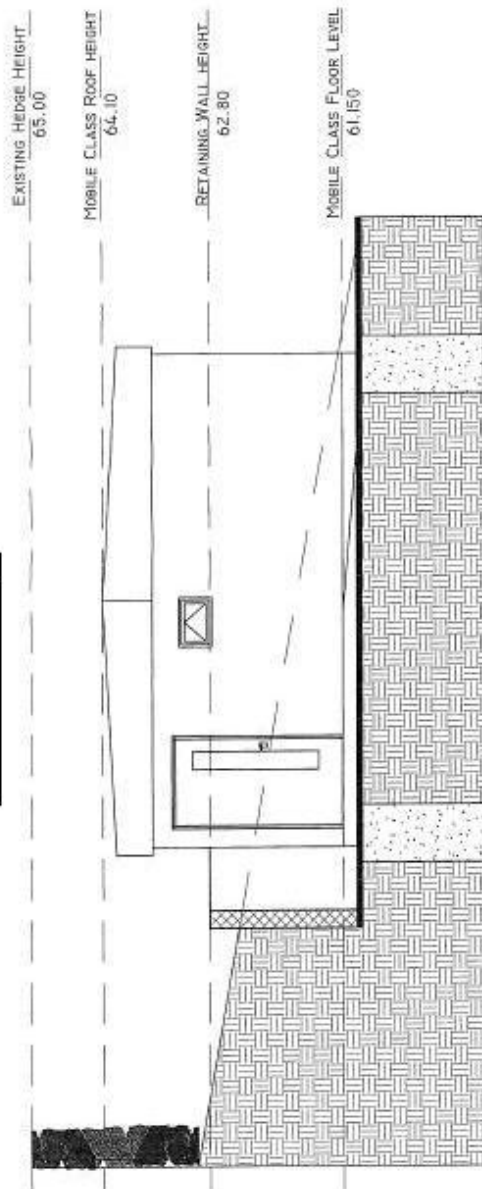
# Item D3

## Relocation of mobile classroom at Saltwood Primary School permitted under planning permission SH/09/332 – SH/09/773



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Section Drawing



**NOTES:**  
 1. All work shall be carried out in accordance with the Building Regulations and any relevant Building Regulations. The contractor shall notify the local authority of any work before commencing any work or preparing any drawings.  
 2. All work shall be carried out in accordance with the Building Regulations and any relevant Building Regulations. The contractor shall notify the local authority of any work before commencing any work or preparing any drawings.

DATE: 11 AUG 2015

No. / Revision / Description / Date / Checked

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30005L/10  
**3350**

PROJ: SALTWOOD C OF E LDD/EDI  
**SALTWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**BREAKFAST/AFTER SCHOOL CLUB**

CLIENT: SALTWOOD C OF E LDD/EDI  
**SALTWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**BREAKFAST/AFTER SCHOOL CLUB**

PROPOSED MOBILE CLASS  
 PLAN & SECTION

SCALE: 1:100

DATE: 11 AUG 2015

DR: MJC  
 CHECKED: MJC

DATE: 11 AUG 2015

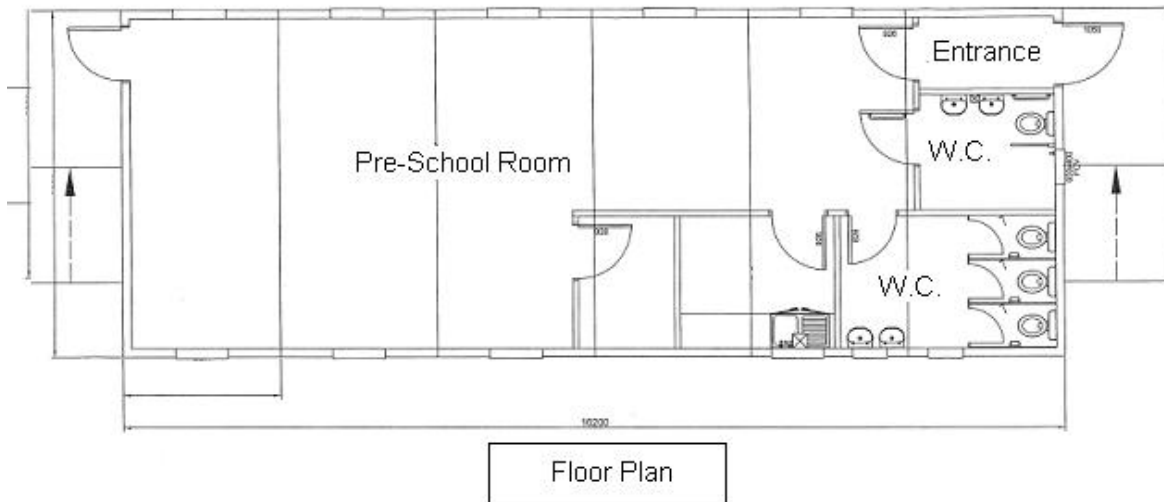
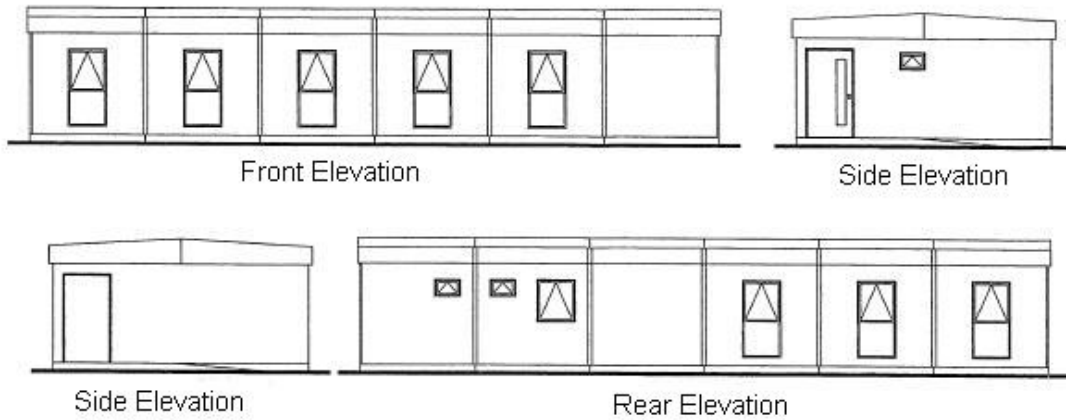
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#### Proposal

6. The application proposes to relocate the mobile unit permitted under SH/09/332 to a new location as shown in the plans. The previous application was granted earlier this year, and also included the moving of some sheds and the remodelling of the access to the playing field in order to accommodate the new unit. The original location is adjacent to the playground and playing fields, to the East of the main school buildings. The new location would place the unit into a bank, adjacent to the Southern boundary with the rear gardens of the houses on School Road. The main reason given for relocating the unit is that the new location would be considerably cheaper as the original submission would incur great costs in providing service connections. The Head Teacher of the school contends that the difference would be in the region of £20,000.

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7. The design of the unit is proposed to remain as permitted under the original permission. The unit has a Sandtex grey finish, with dark-stained timber for the steps, ramps and handrails. The unit would provide 95m<sup>2</sup> of floor space, standing at a height of 3.15m. An additional plan was submitted showing the existing and proposed Sections with the unit set into the sloping bank. The installation of the unit would require the removal of one mature tree.
8. The unit is proposed to provide accommodation for the Playgroup/Nursery that is currently housed within the village hall on Grange Road. The proposed times of use are for between 9am and 12pm, weekdays, although they plan to extend these hours to include 12pm to 3pm after the group has settled and dependent upon demand. It is also proposed that the unit is made available for use by other community groups and clubs out of hours, and during the summer holidays. Although there is no indication as to the particular groups that may use the unit or the hours that it may be used.
9. The applicant provided information that due to the young age of the users, they would access the school grounds via the School Road footpath in order to keep them separate from the main school pupils. The applicant agreed that after normal hours, the main school entrance on Grange Road would be used, so as to reduce traffic on School Road, and to minimise disruption to the residents living next to the footpath.

**Planning Policy**

10. The Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to consideration of the application:

- (i) The adopted **South East Plan 2008**

**Policy CC1** Seeks to achieve and maintain sustainable development within the region.

**Policy CC4** Expects that all development will adopt and incorporate sustainable construction standards and techniques.

**Policy CC6** Seeks sustainable and distinctive communities that respect the character of settlements and landscapes, and achieve a high quality built environment.

**Policy S3** States that local planning authorities, taking into account demographic projections, should work with partners to ensure adequate provision of pre-school, school, and community learning facilities.

**Policy BE1** Management for an Urban Renaissance, Local Authorities will promote and support design solutions relevant to context and which build upon local character and distinctiveness and sense of place.

- (ii) The adopted **Shepway District Local Plan Review 2006**

**Policy SD1** Development proposals should take account of the broad aim of sustainable development.

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**Policy BE1** A high standard of layout, design and choice of materials will be expected for all new development.

**Policy SC2** Planning permission will be granted for new or improved social and community facilities where the proposal would meet all of the following criteria:-

- a) Compatible with surrounding land uses;
  - b) Acceptable in highway, infrastructure and environmental terms;
  - c) Accessible by a range of transport alternatives to the car and;
  - d) Includes adequate provision for access for disabled persons.
- Where appropriate, new facilities should be designed so that they can accommodate a range of social and community activities.

**Consultations**

11. **Shepway District Council** – No response received to date.

**Saltwood Parish Council** raises an objection on the grounds that the proposal would have a detrimental effect on neighbours.

**Divisional Transport Manager** raises no highway objection to the proposal.

**Local Member(s)**

12. The local County Member for Swale East, Mrs S. Carey, was notified of the application on the 4 August 2009.

**Publicity**

13. The application was advertised in the Folkestone & Hythe Extra on 14 August 2009, and by the posting of a site notice and the notification of 9 neighbours.

**Representations**

14. Three letters of representation were received from local residents. The main comments are as follows:

- Object to the use of the School Road footpath by all school users
- Original site would negate the need to landscape the bank.
- Re-grading the bank could cause shifting and affect drainage of the nearby rear gardens.
- The playgroup/nursery area would be directly overlooked by 2 and 3 The Sandlings and the neighbour feels that this has potential child protection issues.
- Felling the tree would impact on amenity and increase overlooking. It provides shade to children who use the area for play and would not be removed under original submission.
- Object to after-hours use considering the proximity to nearby residents, increasing noise and light pollution.
- Access from School Road footpath should be restricted to just users of the unit; however doing this may increase congestion on Grange Road.

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- If permission is granted then the windows on the Southern elevation should be frosted and sealed shut.
- The original site was the correct choice, and money is the only thought behind moving. No objection to original site as this was the point furthest away from nearby properties therefore minimising disturbance.
- Additional users of the site would increase traffic danger on School Road.

#### **Discussion**

15. In considering this proposal regard must be had to Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (10) 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 the Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity.
16. The main issue for discussion is the potential adverse effects on the nearby residents by relocating the mobile unit to the proposed location. The possible negative impacts relate to the proximity of the unit to residential properties, the potential for out of hours use and the use of the footpath as access from School Lane to the unit. In my opinion the design of the mobile unit can be seen as acceptable, as this was assessed as part of the previous planning application. It is worth noting that there were no objections to the original application.
17. Saltwood Primary School lies near the Saltwood Conservation Area. The proposed development is not visible from the designated area and would not impact upon it.

#### Siting

18. The proposed relocation of playgroup/nursery would move the unit to within 3m of the boundary fence shared with Nos. 2 and 3 The Sandlings. The unit would be 11m from the rear elevation of No. 3 and 13m from No. 2. The original permitted location for the unit is 48m from the nearest residential property. The occupants of these properties have submitted objections, principally referring to the potential impact the relocation would have on their residential amenity.
19. The applicant has indicated that the main reason for moving the unit from the original location is financial. Also, by having the unit closer to the footpath leading from School Road, they would be able to use this as a dedicated access for playgroup/nursery users, separate from the main school users.

#### Impact on residents

20. The proposed location would involve the removal of a 7m Cherry Tree. The effect of this would be to reduce the screening from the rear windows of the houses in The Sandlings, and increase the overlooking of the school playground from the upstairs windows. The loss of this tree could not practically be mitigated by additional planting. There is an existing hedge along the boundary which stands at a height of 2m, which is kept cut back by the School. If this were to be allowed to grow it would aid the screening of the proposed unit. Whilst the protection of private views into or across the site is not a material planning consideration, the neighbours have commented that there had been several recent tree fellings that have contributed to



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the school grounds becoming almost completely visible from the surrounding houses. The applicant has stated that the School would be willing to allow the boundary hedge to grow more, as it is currently kept cut back at present.

21. The cherry tree is the only remaining significant vegetation that provides any screening between the first floor windows of the houses and the school grounds. Although due to its size, the screening effect is limited. If it was to be removed and the unit installed, there would be insufficient space between the mobile unit and the boundary hedge for replacement planting.
22. The mobile unit would be set into the bank so that it is at the same level as the school playground. The playground is approximately 2m lower than the ground level of the rear gardens of Nos. 2 and 3 The Sandlings. This would mean that the windows of the re-positioned unit would not be visible from the residential properties, but they would be able to see most of the roof from their upstairs windows.
23. The section drawing, in my opinion, shows that the unit would be sufficiently set down to minimise the visual impact on the residential property. The level change between the gardens and the school playground would make the unit acceptable in this location, despite the proximity, in the sense that the unit would not impact on visual amenity any more than the currently permitted location. The applicant had indicated that, having taken advice, the retaining wall around the mobile unit would be positioned 2 metres from the boundary hedge to avoid the roots being disturbed. The applicant stated that they can provide structural calculations for the retaining wall, to demonstrate that there would not be any slippage/subsidence of the bank.

#### Noise and light

24. I held discussions with the agent about possible ways to reduce the potential for the mobile unit to impact on the nearby properties. The solutions proposed included ensuring that the windows on the southern elevation of the unit were frosted, to reduce the potential for loss of privacy, reduce light pollution and overlooking from the residential buildings, and to keep these windows sealed shut in order to reduce noise pollution. In my opinion these solutions are satisfactory for the mobile unit to be used by the playgroup/nursery during normal opening hours. The frosted windows would prevent residents being able to see in to the unit, and users out. Any light intrusion during the winter months would not be significant above normal levels. The potential impact on amenity would not differ greatly from the existing use of the playground and the school buildings. Under the circumstances, I consider that it would be unreasonable to deny planning consent on the grounds of the unit's visual impact, noise disturbance or privacy impacts, if the proposed window requirements were pursued.

#### Out of hours use

25. The applicant has stated that the unit would be made available for wider community use out-of-hours. Whilst the benefit to the community may be recognised, and planning policy supports the mixed use of community facilities, there is no indication as to the potential users and therefore it is not possible to assess the impact on the neighbours. Therefore, I would advise that use after normal school hours is not acceptable in the proposed location, due to the potential adverse impact on the neighbours through increased noise and light pollution at unsocial hours. The

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original location permitted is 70m from these properties, and the potential for out-of-hours use to impact on nearby properties would have been greatly reduced.

Access

26. The application states that the unit would be accessed by the footpath from School Road. This is justified in order to separate the young nursery children from the main school children. The neighbours have raised concerns over road safety; however the Divisional Transport Manager has raised no objection, so I would advise that the proposal would not greatly increase risk. The neighbours were also concerned about the use of this path out-of-hours and the increased noise and disturbance that this may cause to No. 3 The Sandlings. The applicant has stated that in order to prevent this, out-of-hours users could be required to use the main entrance from Grange Road, and if consent was given that could be imposed as a conditional requirement.

**Conclusion**

27. I consider that the relocation of the mobile unit from the permitted location would be acceptable in terms of visual impact. In particular, the difference in the site levels would mean that the unit would be largely obscured by the boundary hedge. The original location for the unit would have meant that the unit is wholly visible, although further away from residential properties. However, based upon current information I do not consider that the proposed location is acceptable for use out of normal school hours. The proximity to the neighbouring properties would result in an increase of noise and disturbance beyond that which currently exists. The originally proposed location would place the unit away from residential properties and therefore the impacts on residents would be less. Therefore I recommend that permission be granted, subject to conditions.

28. I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO conditions covering the following aspects:

- the standard time condition;
- the hours of use to be restricted to normal school hours;
- the development be carried out in accordance with the permitted details.
- the rear windows to be obscured glazing and sealed shut
- the unit to be set down as shown in the section drawing 08-086/07

Case officer – Jeff Dummett	01622 221071
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Background documents - See section heading
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