

Partial demolition of the existing, and construction of new accommodation, at The Community College, Whitstable – CA/08/271

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 24 June 2008.

Application by Kent County Council Children, Families, Health and Education and the Land Securities Trillium for the partial demolition of existing school buildings, construction of new teaching and ancillary accommodation, car parking and landscaping, and the provision of temporary accommodation to house pupils during construction works at The Community College Whitstable, Bellevue Road, Whitstable - (Ref: CA/08/271)

Recommendation: Permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Member(s): Mr M. Dance & Mr M. Harrison

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. The Community College, Whitstable is located approximately 1 km to the south of the centre of Whitstable, just north of the A2990 (the former Thanet Way). The College campus comprises four parcels of land – the main campus site, Plot 10 (a wildlife area also used for field athletics events), Invicta Field (unused site) and Church Street Playing Fields (used for various sports, and athletics). The main campus site, which fronts Bellevue Road, contains all the teaching and administration accommodation, together with a joint College and community indoor sports centre, owned and managed by Canterbury City Council. All built accommodation lies to the south of the site, with three fenced outdoor games courts and approximately 2 hectares of open playing field, accommodating a football and cricket pitch, located to the north. A recently completed floodlit all weather sports pitch is located adjacent to the north eastern boundary of the site, in close proximity to the existing sports centre. The site is bounded by residential properties, apart from the college frontage. Between the College boundary and the residential properties on the north west, north east and south east lie Bellevue Road, Invicta Road and Clifford Road, which are unmade roads. *A site plan is attached.*

Background

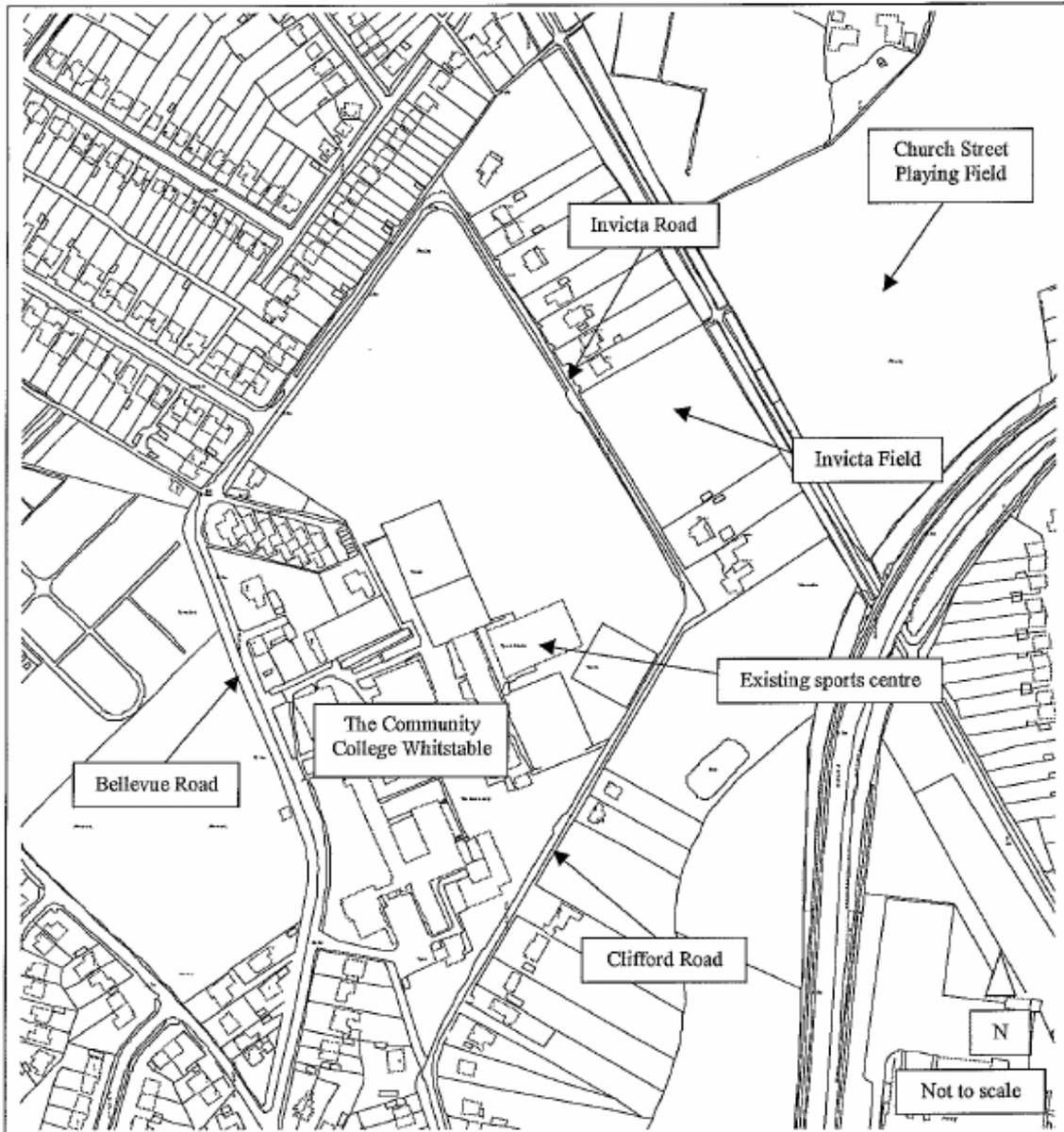
2. The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme is a Government initiative to transform all the Country's Secondary School's to enable them to meet the new challenges of 21st Century education. In particular, new methods of teaching and new styles of learning have implications for the type and arrangement of spaces for schools. A move away from traditional teaching methods means less reliance on the earlier school designs of classrooms and corridors. Opportunity therefore exists for more innovative designs of school buildings with a wider variety of internal and external spaces, and greater scope for fuller use of the premises by the local community.

Proposal

3. This application has been submitted jointly by Land Securities Trillium and Kent County Council Children, Families and Education, under the Building Schools for the Future programme, and proposes the partial demolition of existing school buildings,

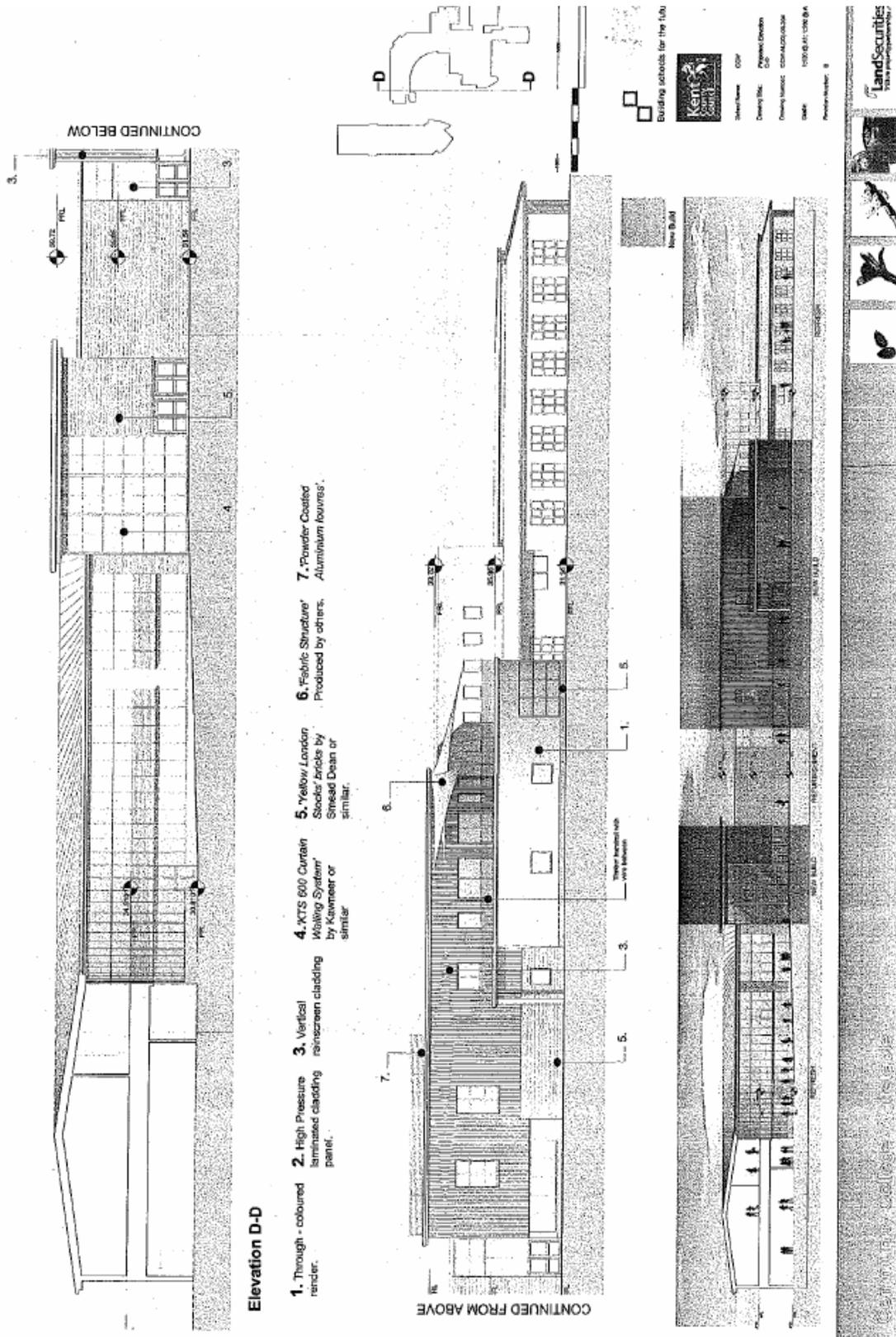
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SITE LOCATION PLAN

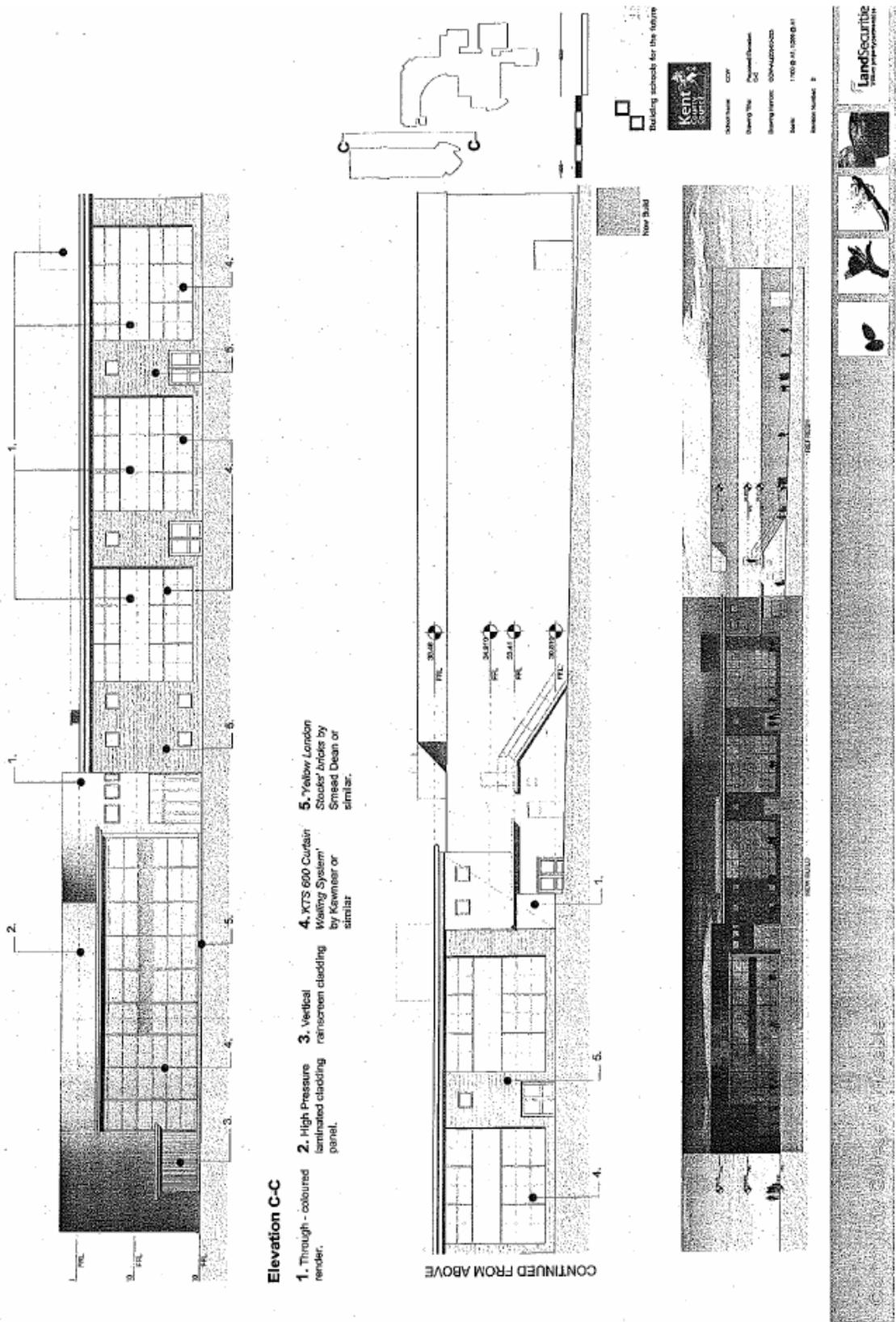


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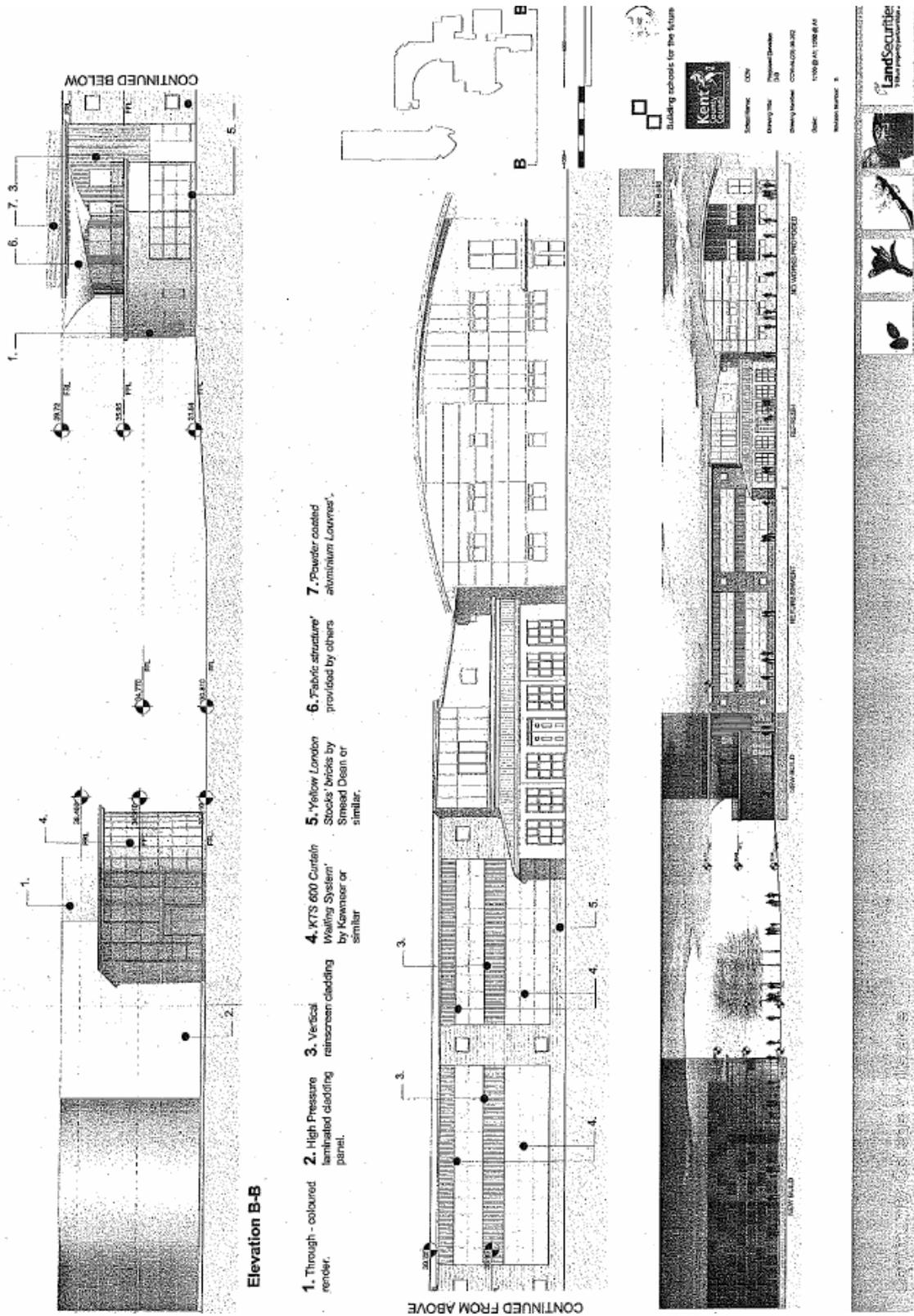
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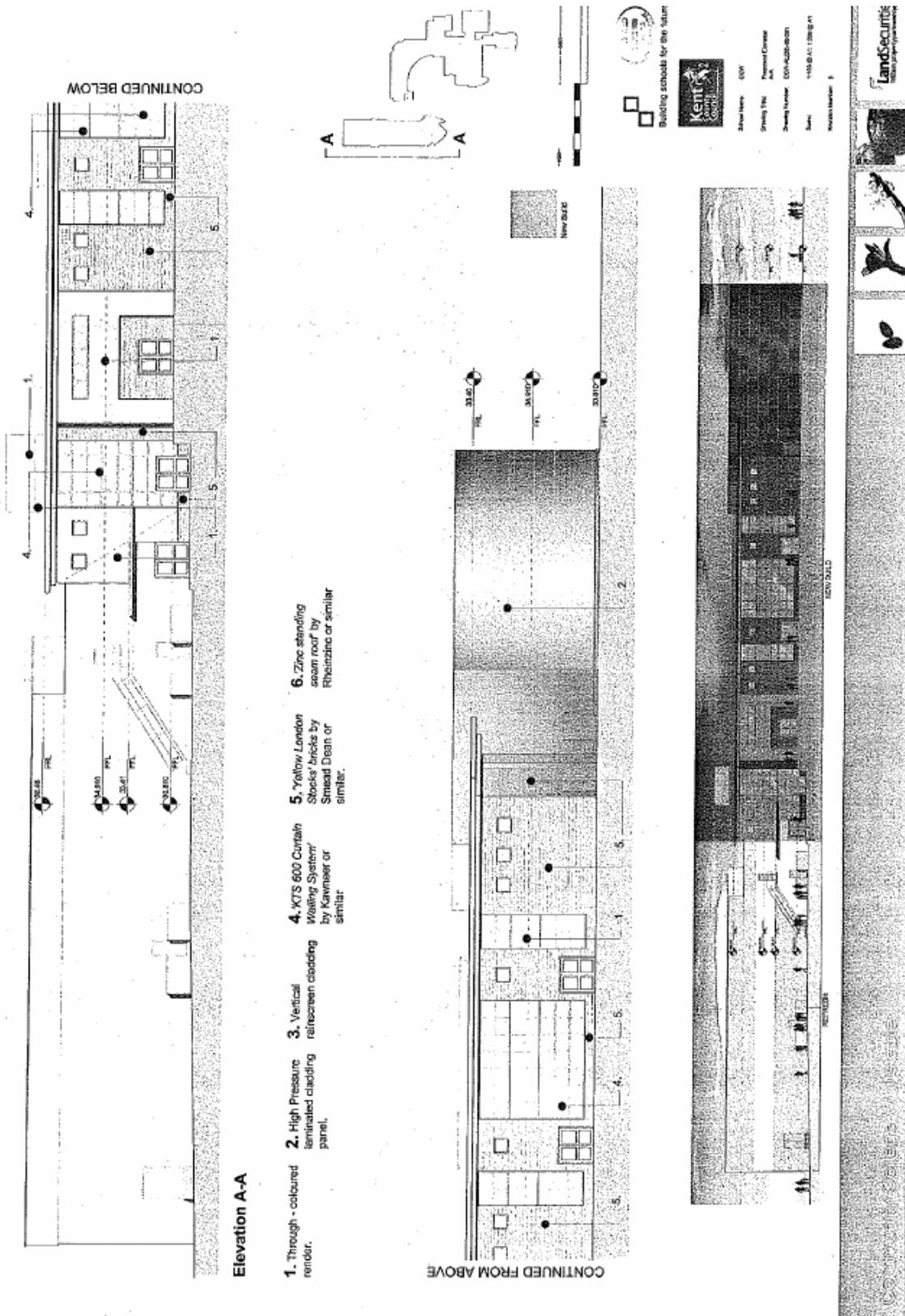
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construction of new teaching and ancillary accommodation, car parking & landscaping, and the provision of temporary accommodation to house pupils during construction work at the Community College, Whitstable. The Kent BSF programme has given the Community College the opportunity to completely reorganise the campus, replacing worn-out unsuitable environments with high quality new accommodation, designed for new ways of learning. In addition, retained older buildings would be fully refurbished, remodelled and extended as a part of this proposal.

4. The applicant states that this development involves the creation of 3 'schools', Logic, Creative and Global, all of which are connected together around a courtyard that is the focus for the whole school. The Land Securities Trillium has taken the opportunity to provide the maximum area of new building, whilst not encroaching onto the school playing fields, or further towards the site's boundaries. In order to achieve this, the 'northern block', gymnasium and changing rooms, most of the western facing front wing, the old kitchen, water tower and plant room would be demolished. The removal of these structures would allow the site to be organised around a central plaza/courtyard, which would afford views out to the west and over the coastline beyond Whitstable.
5. The 3 main 'schools' would be arranged around the central plaza. Learning spaces would open into the plaza to provide outdoor teaching areas. The space would also offer maximum flexibility throughout the school day and for after hour uses, teaching, socialising, gathering, performance, display and outdoor dining. A ha-ha wall and pine trees would provide a physical separation between the courtyard and the arrival court, whilst maintaining a strong visual link to the seafront. The applicant advises that the ha-ha wall would provide a secure line whilst remaining visually unobtrusive. Informal hard play areas adjacent to the sports hall and creative building would provide space for play, seating, outdoor classrooms and informal gathering. A nature area, to the north of the school, would be fenced off from the main school grounds for safety reasons, but linked by a path to the sports field. Tables and benches would be provided within the nature area for outdoor teaching. A grass amphitheatre is proposed to the south of the sports pitch area to provide spectator seating and informal performance space.
6. The applicant proposes that all new buildings would be within the existing built envelope of the school, at a scale similar to the existing buildings. It is also proposed that building materials and planting would reflect local geology, such as that seen at Reculver Park with its chalk and clay layers that create distinctive alternating acid and alkaline habitats. At the main entrance to the school it is proposed to erect a gridded gabion wall of local stone and recycled material to create a distinctive sign-wall for the school. The ha-ha wall to the front of the school would be constructed using timber, similar to the hardwood groynes used on local beaches. A linear arrangement of pine trees would be located to the front of the school, creating a strong arrival feature. New buildings would be faced with coloured render, brickwork, fibre cement cladding panels and, in the case of the sports hall, timber faced panels. Two roof systems are proposed for the new and refurbished buildings at the school, single ply membrane roofing to the flat roof areas, and aluminium standing seam composite roofing to the pitched areas.
7. As outlined above, the key organisational elements of the Community College are the 3 schools – Global, Logic and Creative. At the request of the School, the administration functions are distributed between the 3 schools, with the Global School housing general administration, the Creative School accommodating the staff room, and the Logic School remaining largely as existing.
8. The Logic School would be created from the recently completed science and technology block, which has a strong architectural form with a curved internal façade

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- ~~—facing into the courtyard. A new double height dining hall would connect the Logic School to the refurbished and extended proposed Global School, which would deliver the humanities curriculum. The Global School would be formed by adding a new wing to the existing Learning Resources Block, which would link to the existing front block, creating a courtyard area. An external balcony above the existing first floor corridor is proposed, and the existing buildings re-clad. At the front of the Global School the main administration areas would be located, along with the Learn Direct facility.~~
9. The Creative School would be housed within a new 'learning barn', located towards the north of the central plaza, which would be connected to the sports hall, which would be heavily refurbished as part of this proposal. The main visitor entrance would be adjacent to the performance hall, at the western end of the Creative School. The location of the performance hall would enable the community to use the facility, as other community facilities such as the nursery, would all be accessed from the public highway in the south western corner of the site. The removal of the western block would create a more generous and well landscaped setting for the entrance to the school, as well as creating space to address existing access problems, and to separate vehicular and pedestrian movements.
 10. The main approach to the Community College is along Bellevue Road from the south side of the site, with secondary routes from Downs Avenue in the north, and Invicta Road to the east. There are numerous existing accesses to the site, both pedestrian and vehicular. Vehicles currently enter and exit the site at four points along Bellevue Road, and the entrance points for cars, cyclists and pedestrians are combined and confused. Under this proposal the site access would be rationalised, and vehicles and pedestrians would be separated. Pedestrian entry points around the site boundary would be retained to allow access to the site from the north, and a new student access would be provided. This access would be from the northern boundary to the site, with a pathway leading through a landscaped area to the informal hard play area adjacent to the sports hall and creative building. Pathways around the existing hard courts would also improve access from the southern boundary and increase use of proposed newly planted habitat areas.
 11. Parking is currently scattered throughout the site, and the applicant advises that it is often not used, resulting in unnecessary congestion on local roads. The applicant therefore proposes to rationalise car parking and vehicle movement on site, reducing vehicle impact on the school and student activities, as well as reducing congestion on surrounding roads. A total of 150 spaces are intended to be provided under this proposal. The parking would be split into 3 key areas, with additional parking for staff to the south, visitor parking to the west, and overflow and after hours parking to the north. Student cycle parking facilities would be increased in number and relocated to the main student access path. Cycle parking for staff and visitors would be provided adjacent to the front entry and creative building.
 12. The Community College, Whitstable, has stated that they wish the proposed new buildings and facilities to incorporate design features that would encourage and develop increased community use of the school facilities, both within the school day and outside of core school hours. As a result of this requirement, part of the existing dining area would become a facility for the community, including a nursery. Learn Direct facilities would be provided in the extension which creates the Global School. The applicant states that they have carefully placed and provided secure access to facilities which the public can use, such as performance spaces and sporting facilities, to facilitate the use of the building beyond the school day.

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13. ~~The applicant aims to achieve the ‘Excellent’ BREEM rating for the new buildings.~~
14. Whilst the phased construction works are underway, pupils would be decanted into temporary mobile accommodation. The temporary modular accommodation would be provided on the existing hard play area to the east of the school site, and the applicant advises that there would be a need for the provision of three blocks, six classrooms, in total. Upon completion of the permanent works the temporary accommodation would be removed.

The application was accompanied by a Travel Plan, an Environmental Report, a Site Investigation Report, an Ecological Scoping Survey and an Archaeological Desktop Assessment.

Reduced copies of the submitted drawings showing the site layout, elevations and floor plans are attached.

Planning Policy

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

(i) **The Kent & Medway Structure Plan: Adopted 2006:**

Policy SP1 - Seeks to conserve and enhance Kent’s environment and ensure a sustainable pattern of development.

Policy EN8 - Wildlife habitats and species will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Development likely to have an adverse effect, directly, indirectly or cumulatively, on important habitats or species, will not be permitted unless the adverse impact on an important nature conservation resource can be adequately mitigated and/or compensated.

Policy EN9 - Tree cover and the hedgerow network should be maintained. Additionally, they should be enhanced where this would improve the landscape, biodiversity, or link existing woodland habitats.

Policy QL1 - Seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and of a high quality that responds positively to the local character. Development, which would be detrimental to the built environment, amenity, function or character of the area, will not be permitted.

Policy QL12 - Provision will be made to accommodate additional requirements for local community services in response to growth in demand from the community as a whole. The services will be located where they are accessible by walking, cycling and by public transport.

Policy TP3 - States that the local planning authority should ensure that development sites are well served by public transport, walking and cycling.

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Policy TP19 - States that development proposals should comply with vehicle parking policies and maximum standards adopted by the County Council.

Policy NR5 – The quality of Kent's environment will be conserved and enhanced. This will include the visual, ecological, geological, historic and water environments, air quality, noise and levels of tranquillity and light intrusion.

Policy NR10 - Development will be designed to avoid the risk of flooding. Where development is necessary in area at risk of flooding is should be designed and controlled to mitigate the impact of flood risk.

(ii) The adopted (2006) **Canterbury District Local Plan:**

Policy BE1 - The City Council will expect proposals of high quality design which respond to the objectives of sustainable development.

Policy BE3 - Design statements and/or Development Briefs shall be submitted with planning applications setting out the principles used in the scheme to relate the development within and to its context. This will apply to all planning applications, where the development is visually significant or is significant to its neighbours.

Policy C17 - The City Council will work with the Education Authority and school Governors to ensure that the needs of primary and secondary schools are taken into account in the assessment of their development needs and proposals. Planning permission will be granted for proposals that are needed by the schools subject to design and highway safety considerations.

Policy C40 - When granting planning permission for development which could potentially result in pollution, the City Council will impose conditions or seek agreements to ensure subsequent mitigation measures are undertaken.

Consultations

16. **Canterbury City Council:** has no objection to the proposed development, subject to the resolution of the two following matters:

- 1) it is requested that the Education Authority ensures that the development is carried out to a BREEAM 'Very Good' standard;
- 2) that a new Travel Plan is introduced for the school to cover both daily pupil and staff travel and for evening adult education and school extra-curricular functions;

Divisional Transport Manager: comments as follows, and confirms that the issues raised can be resolved by the imposition of conditions, providing that they are enforceable:

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~~“Pedestrian Movement – The School Travel Plan suggests there are conflicts between cars and pedestrians at the school gate. The applicant is proposing a drop off and pick up point. In my opinion this does not suitably address this issue as this effectively creates 2 additional accesses along a well used pedestrian route. A more appropriate solution to this issue would be the introduction of a lay-by with the footway re-routed behind, thus reducing the impact on pedestrians.~~

The Travel Plan states that there is a clear intention for the College to promote sustainable means of travel to the site, however there have been no proposals in relation to this. References are made to improving safer routes to school, however this has not been assessed as part of this proposed redevelopment. Aside from the internal alterations, no improvements have been proposed – justification is required. The applicant has also made no reference to the Bus Service currently situated outside the college, how does this integrate with the revised college layout?

The issue of the cycle/pedestrian access point at the junction with Downs Avenue is yet to be clarified, as the resubmitted plans show only the internal layout without reference to the surrounding highway. The pedestrian crossing point should be provided clear of the junction, and links from the existing cycle lane to the new access point should be provided or clearly demonstrated. A link from the two sides of Bellevue Road has been identified as part of the cycling action plan contained with the School Travel Plan.

I note from previous correspondence that Traffic Calming in Downs Avenue has been raised. I do not feel that there is sufficient justification for a traffic-calming scheme along this particular stretch of highway.

Parking Provision – The existing parking provision is above the maximum standards with the existing college generating a maximum standard of 133 spaces, but providing 111 spaces within the frontage and an additional 92 within the hard landscaped area to the rear. However, the applicant has not indicated if these additional spaces are available at all times, or how well occupied the existing car parking area is. I note that cycle parking is being provided in accordance with Kent Vehicle Parking Standards, which is a step in the right direction.

The proposal significantly reduces parking provision to approx. 75 spaces fronting the school, with additional ‘out of hours’ car parking to the rear. I appreciate that the College is attempting to control traffic generation through reduced parking provision. However, the potential impact on the surrounding highway network must also be considered. Many of the surrounding highways do not have waiting restrictions and, as such, the reduction in parking may potentially displace the existing on site parking onto these highways, especially as there is a proposed increase in pupil numbers at the school, a proportion of which could potentially drive to the College. In accordance with Kent Vehicle Parking Standards, the proposed college would generate a maximum parking provision of 136 spaces, however, this is based on staff numbers from which there is very little increase. In view of that, I feel that the reduced parking should be introduced in stages, as part of a revised school Travel Plan, as targets are reached.

Overall, I am disappointed that the engineering drawing has been submitted relatively late in the process and, as such, has not allowed sufficient time to

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address these issues in full. I feel that the development should not proceed until the above issues have been satisfactorily resolved.”

The County Council’s Landscaping Advisor: comments as follows:

“Although the massing of the proposed building is more substantial than the existing buildings, the proposals have the potential to provide a more coherent layout of a more consistent style. Housing to the north, along Invicta Road would have views of the proposed development from upper storey windows through and over existing boundaries and vegetation. These properties currently overlook the existing school site. There would be a moderate adverse visual impact caused by the proposed development due to increased building mass and associated hard surfacing, etc.

The proposed scale and design would be suitable to correspond with existing surrounding buildings within the campus, although the proposed buildings are larger and slightly taller than the existing buildings it is not envisaged that this would be inappropriate for the location and the built character of the site. There would be a slight adverse visual impact on properties off Invicta Road from upper storey windows due to the increased building massing.

The proposed demolition of a quantity of the existing college, would allow views into the site from Bellevue road but would not amount to causing any visual impact to any receptors on completion of the works.

The proposed locations of the temporary accommodation buildings, sits suitably within the context of the surrounding campus.”

In addition, the County Landscaping Advisor has no comments regarding the submitted Tree Survey, and requests that details of a planting schedule, densities and maintenance, be submitted pursuant to condition should consent be granted.

The Environment Agency: initially raised objection to the proposal on the grounds that the site is more than 1ha in area and, therefore, in accordance with PPS25: Development and Flood Risk, a drainage strategy/Flood Risk Assessment should be submitted with the application. Following the submission of the required information, including a Flood Risk Assessment, the Environment Agency has withdrawn its objection, and comments as follows:

“The County Planning Authority should be satisfied that the proposed permeable paving will act as a suitable attenuation mechanism. As mentioned in our previous response, Whitstable is underlain by London Clay which generally displays very low permeability. Infiltration methods of drainage may therefore not be particularly effective, and it is recommended that an alternative method of surface water drainage be sought.”

“Additionally, infiltration will also be required to drain the area of surface attenuation. The Authority should be satisfied that ground conditions in this area are of sufficient permeability to prevent waterlogging.”

In addition, the Environment Agency provides advice regarding flood risk, groundwater, contaminated land, removal of material and fuel, oil and chemical storage. Should planning permission be granted, the Agency recommend the imposition of conditions regarding drainage and land contamination.

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The County Archaeologist: requests that conditions be placed on any grant of planning permission requiring the securing of the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a written specification and timetable, and the submission of details regarding below ground excavations.

Canterbury's Police Architectural Liaison Officer: makes a number of recommendations regarding security measures, access, lighting and CCTV. It is also recommended that all access points on the site are gated to prevent unwanted access.

CABE: does not have the resources to comment at this time.

Local Member

17. The local County Members, Mr M. Dance and Mr M. Harrison, were notified of the application on the 22 February 2008.

Publicity and Representations

18. The application was publicised by advertisement in a local newspaper, the posting of 4 site notices, and individual neighbour notification letters to 81 local residents. 4 letters of representation have been received to date, and the points of concern and objection are summarised below. They relate to concerns regarding parking and construction traffic;

- Concern is expressed that existing parking problems would be exacerbated by the development;
- No objection is raised to the development itself but concern is expressed over heavy construction traffic using Clifford Road;
- Hours of construction should be restricted to 5.5 days a week to give local residents a rest from noise and dust;
- Bellevue Road is in very poor condition and would not stand up to heavy site traffic. Would conditions be imposed upon the contractor?
- It is asked that consideration be given to local residents, who would be directly inconvenienced by the construction works and associated traffic;
- It is requested that traffic calming be introduced on Downs Avenue, a principal access road to the school, as already installed on the other roads used to access the school site;

Discussion

19. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan policies outlined in paragraph (15) above. Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 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. Issues of particular relevance include siting, design and massing, impact upon residential and local amenity, and highway implications.

Siting, massing and design

18. Policy QL1 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan and Policy BE1 of the Canterbury District Local Plan require new developments to be of high quality and well designed, and not to lead to a loss of residential amenity. This application poses partial demolition

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~~of the existing school buildings, and the construction of new teaching and ancillary accommodation, car parking & landscaping, and the provision of temporary accommodation to house pupils during the construction works. The applicant advises that worn-out unsuitable accommodation would be replaced with high quality new accommodation, designed for new ways of learning. In addition to new buildings, the existing buildings would be fully refurbished and remodelled as a part of this proposal.~~

19. A number of buildings would be demolished as part of this proposal, including the 'northern block', gymnasium and changing rooms, most of the western facing front wing, the old kitchen, water tower and plant room. The removal of these structures would allow the site to be organised around a central plaza/courtyard. The applicant is proposing to create 3 'schools' which would be connected together around this courtyard area. By demolishing the sub-standard existing accommodation, the maximum amount of new building can be provided, whilst not encroaching onto the school playing fields, or further towards the site boundaries. Three areas of new build are proposed. The first is a small infill extension which would house the double height dining hall, connecting the Logic School to the Global School. The Logic School would be housed within the recently completed science and technology block, which would be refreshed where appropriate. The Global School would be created by the refurbishment of the existing Learning Resources Block, and the provision of a small extension to the north of this block. This extension would link the U shaped Learning Resources Block, creating an enclosed internal courtyard. The largest of the new build elements would be the 'Learning Barn', proposed to house the Creative School.
20. None of the new build development would extend beyond the existing built confines of the school. In fact, due to the demolition of existing building, built development would actually be further away from the boundary, and subsequently residential properties, as a result of this development. The site frontage would be opened up, and the site as a whole would appear more open in nature. It should be noted that objection to the proposed new build development work itself has not been raised, and as the site is surrounded by residential properties, this suggests that local residents do not consider that the buildings would have an adverse impact upon their amenity. As the new buildings would be sited within the built confines of the existing school, and in the most part upon areas of existing hard standing or within the footprint of buildings to be demolished, I can see no reason why this application should be refused on the grounds of siting. By removing existing buildings of poor condition, and replacing them with new accommodation, which is further from the boundary, I consider that the proposed siting of the buildings has the potential to improve the amenity of the closest residential properties.
20. However, the massing and design of the new build accommodation needs to be considered. The proposed double height dining hall would face the plaza/courtyard, infilling a gap between two existing buildings, and would not be visible from the boundary of the site. The massing of this element of the proposal is dictated by surrounding development, and is considered to be acceptable. The extension to the Learning Resources Block, to the front of the site, is orientated east-west running away from the site boundary, linking the 2 sides of the U shaped existing building. The extension would be part single storey, and part two storey, with access from the 2 storey element onto the roof of the single storey building, creating an outdoor terrace. Due to the demolition of most of the building that fronts the site, the mass of school as a whole would be substantially reduced. The small extension to the Learning Resources Block is minor in nature and size when compared to the built development which is to be demolished, and irrespective of this, is of a massing appropriate for its setting.

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21. ~~The proposed 'Learning Barn' is the largest new build element of this proposal, and would be located towards the north of the central plaza, connected to the existing sports hall. The new building would be 2 storeys in height, but lower than the adjacent sports hall. The massing of this building would accord with the recently completed science and technology block, and is appropriate for the site. The demolition of existing buildings in this area of the site would, again, move built development away from the boundary. Although the massing of the proposed building is more substantial than the existing buildings, the proposals have the potential to provide a more coherent layout of a more consistent style. I therefore consider the massing of the proposed buildings to be acceptable.~~
22. The proposed and refurbished buildings would be faced with coloured render, brickwork, fibre cement cladding panels, and in the case of the sports hall, timber faced panels. In addition, two roof systems are proposed, single ply membrane roofing to the flat roof areas, and aluminium standing seam composite roofing to the pitched areas. By refreshing or refurbishing the existing accommodation, the new build elements would be of a design that would correspond with the existing. The development has the potential to provide a consistent design across the site, improving the overall appearance of the Community College. I consider that subject to a condition requiring the submission of details of all materials to be used externally, that the development is acceptable in terms of siting, massing and design, and that the application should not be refused on these grounds.

Temporary Accommodation

23. Whilst the phased construction works are underway, pupils would be decanted into temporary mobile accommodation. This modular accommodation would be provided upon the existing hard play area to the east of the school site, and the applicant advises that three blocks, six classrooms, would be required in total. Upon completion of the works the temporary accommodation would be removed. The County Council's Landscape Advisor considers that the proposed location of the temporary accommodation sits suitably within the context of the surrounding campus. Although the proposed accommodation would be in close proximity to the boundary of the site, the boundary is heavily planted and screened, and neighbouring residential properties which face the site are separated from the boundary by Clifford Road, and front gardens. I therefore consider that, subject to a condition ensuring the removal of the temporary accommodation upon completion of the works, that the siting of the temporary accommodation is acceptable and would not have a detrimental impact upon the amenity of local residential properties.

Highway Implications and Access

24. Four letters from local residents have been received as a result of the publication of this planning application, and objection has been raised on the grounds of access and highway implications, as a result of the development itself, and the associated construction period. These issues will be discussed below in detail. However, it is important to note that the applicant confirms that it is proposed to increase the school roll by 172 as a result of this proposal. However, most of the increase could occur in any event, irrespective of the proposed development, as the design capacity of the existing school is 1200. However, the new facilities are expected to make the school more attractive to pupils, so this increase could occur faster than it otherwise may have done.
25. Local residents are concerned that existing parking problems could be exacerbated by the proposed development, and the Divisional Transportation Manager supports these

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~~concerns. He suggests that the reduction in the number of car parking spaces should be introduced in stages in order to reduce the likelihood of pupils parking on the public highway. The applicant has responded to this issues as follows:~~

“The amount of parking at the school is a key measure in the ‘carrot and stick’ approach to reducing car travel. At the same time, there is no intention of forcing traffic onto the surrounding roads. In order to assist this, it would be possible to provide a phased reduction in car parking at the school as part of the implementation of Travel Plan policies by allowing the area labelled for out of hours use for some car parking during the day. In order to control this usage, it would need to be made available for staff so that during the school day the area can be secured as intended. It is suggested that the matter be fully examined as part of the Travel Plan review, with relevant officers from KHS, in order to formulate a controlled reduction in spaces over a period of 3 years reducing the spaces to say 100 in the first year of occupation, 85 in the second year, and 75 thereafter. Should the annual monitoring of the Travel Plan indicate that the reduction should be more gradual, then it can be adjusted annually.”

26. In addition, in response to the concerns expressed by the Divisional Transport Manager with regards to the proposed drop off area, the applicant has commented as follows:

“The current design for the drop off will be omitted from the scheme and a revision made which would provide for a lay-by drop off. Detail of this will be provided on a revised masterplan which will be submitted prior to the Planning Applications Committee meeting on the 24 June 2008.”

In addition to this, and for the avoidance of doubt, I consider that the applicant should submit revised details of access, turning, and car parking pursuant to condition should permission be granted. This should include the omission of the drop off area, the inclusion of a lay-by for drop-off and should clearly show the phasing of the reduction in car parking spaces. In addition, the School Travel Plan should be updated and reviewed annually, addressing the phased reduction in car parking. Again, this would form a condition of consent.

27. The Divisional Transport Manager also expresses concern over the provision of a new pedestrian access, which it is felt could be too close to an existing road junction. As a result of this concern, the applicant has agreed to omit this access from the scheme. The existing pedestrian access would be retained instead, and a revised pathway to the cycle storage would be provided. Details of this amendment to the scheme will be submitted prior to the Planning Applications Committee Meeting on the 24 June.
28. A local resident has suggested that traffic calming is needed in Downs Road, a principal access road to the school. The applicant and the Divisional Transportation Manager have both been asked to comment on this suggestion. In response, the Divisional Transportation Manager does not feel that there is sufficient justification for a traffic-calming scheme along this particular highway. The applicant states that ‘this comment relates to a general issue in the Downs Road area which should correctly be dealt with as an entirely separate matter if it is considered that traffic calming should be required as a result of existing activities’. Although I can appreciate the current concerns over the use of Downs Road, in light of the views of the Divisional Transportation Manager, I do not consider that traffic-calming measures are required as a result of this particular planning application, and if justified should be pursued as a separate highways matter.

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29. ~~Lastly, residents are concerned over the possible damage that construction vehicles could cause to local roads, bearing in mind that the roads which surround the school are 'unmade'. Clifford Road and Bellevue Road are specifically referred to by residents, and the applicants attention has been drawn to these concerns. As a result, the applicant has confirmed that prior to the commencement of any works on site, a full condition survey of the surrounding roads and footpaths would be carried out and that any damage caused by construction vehicles would be identified and repaired upon completion of the project. The applicant states that all survey information would be lodged with the County Planning Authority. Therefore, I consider that subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the submission of a condition survey prior to the commencement of the development, and the making good of any damage upon the completion of the development, that the development would not have a significantly detrimental effect on the condition of local roads.~~
30. In light of the above, and the additional information submitted by the applicant, I consider that subject to the imposition of conditions, the proposed development would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the local highway network. I do not consider that this application should be refused on these grounds.

Trees and Ecology

31. An Ecological Scoping Survey and a Tree Survey have been submitted in support of this application. The Ecological Scoping Survey concludes that no further survey work is required, but makes a number of recommendations which should be followed prior to and during construction works, such as the provision of reptile fencing and the protection of nesting birds. Subject to the imposition of a condition requiring that the precautionary mitigation detailed within the Scoping Survey be followed, I do not consider that the development would have an adverse impact upon protected species. In addition, the development has the potential to increase the biodiversity value of the site. A nature garden and a scheme of landscaping and tree planting is proposed, details of which would be required under planning condition, should permission be granted. The County Council's Landscape Advisor is satisfied with the details included within the submitted Tree Survey, and does not consider that the proposed development would have a negative impact upon existing trees. Therefore, subject to the imposition of conditions, I consider that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact upon trees and ecology, and potentially could improve the biodiversity value of the site.

Drainage

32. In response to an initial objection from the Environment Agency the applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment and further additional information in support of this application. As a result of this, the Environment Agency has withdrawn its objection. However, the Environment Agency has recommended that an alternative method of surface water drainage be sought as they express concern over the scheme as proposed. As a result of this, I consider that, should planning permission be granted, a scheme for the disposal of surface waters should be submitted for approval. This would allow the matter to be re-addressed at that stage.

Residential Amenity

33. Local residents have expressed concern over hours of working, noise and dust associated with the demolition and building works. Unfortunately this is a negative feature of any development, but can be mitigated as far as practicably possible by the

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~~imposition of a condition to control construction hours. Should planning permission be granted construction hours would be limited to 0800 and 1800 Monday to Fridays, and 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays, with no works on Sundays or Bank Holidays. Conditions would also require best practice measures to be taken to minimise dust and to ensure mud and other debris is not deposited on the local highway network. I am satisfied that any negative impacts can be mitigated as far as practicably possible by the imposition of planning conditions. Therefore, subject to the imposition of conditions, I do not consider that this development would have a significantly detrimental effect on local residential amenity.~~

Conclusion

34. In summary, I consider that this proposal would not have a significantly detrimental effect on the local highway network, or the amenity of local residents, should Members be minded to permit, subject to the conditions outlined below. In my view it would not give rise to any significant material harm and is in accordance with the general thrust of relevant Development Plan Policies. 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

35. I RECOMMEND that PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO conditions, including conditions covering:
- the standard time limit;
 - the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
 - the submission of details of all materials to be used externally;
 - a scheme of landscaping, its implementation and maintenance;
 - measures to protect trees to be retained;
 - details of surface water drainage;
 - development to accord with the recommendations made in the submitted Ecological Scoping Survey;
 - programme of archaeological work;
 - revision of the School Travel Plan and subsequent annual review;
 - submission of details of parking, turning and access;
 - submission of a condition survey, and subsequent repair of local roads;
 - hours of working during construction;
 - measures to suppress dust;
 - prevention of the deposition of mud on the local highway network;

Case officer – Mary Green	01622 221066
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Background documents - See section heading
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