

EASTCOMBE WARD REPORT FOR BISLEY WITH LYPIATT PARISH COUNCIL

THOMAS KEBLE

PLANNING APPLICATION NO: S.22.0918.FUL

Partial re-development of the existing school site including: 1)demolition of the main school building; 2) the erection of a new three-storey teaching block; 3) alterations to the existing sports hall and entrance; 4) new landscaping features incorporating new tree planting and new dedicated play areas; 5) the reconfiguration of the bus/car park; 6) the provision of ancillary installations; and 7) the provision of sustainability measure.

PLANNING CASE OFFICER: Nick Gardiner-Lead, Helen Cooper.

SUPPORT with comments.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall this will be a welcome development for the school and our parish **although a number of issues need to be addressed at Detail Design Stage before we can fully support this project.** These are from a design perspective, also illuminated by a high number of objections by residents of Stonecote Ridge and one from Gardiner Close.

There has been little in the way of pre planning consultation for both our parish council and residents.

However we accept that we are in a difficult economic climate and architects, planners and engineers have been under duress with loss of staff due to covid. **Delay on this project is not an option. Spiralling construction costs, and cost of materials would see this project reduced to a minimal scheme and this would not be in the interests of the welfare and education of the students.**

KEY DESIGN ISSUES:-

- 1. NEW BLOCK-LOCATION AND ORIENTATION** requires redesign to allow for greater numbers of pupils accessing the reception whilst retaining security in monitoring entry; address privacy of residents by changing the location of several general classrooms on its second floor to look into the NE hub; and pleasant social spaces for relaxation and conversation with some filtered light as shade for the summer whilst addressing the shadows cast across the social courtyard in the winter with accompanying colder temperatures.
- 2. DETAIL DESIGN MUST BE PROVIDED BEFORE WORK COMMENCES.**

A) DESIGN PERSPECTIVE

1 TREESCAPE.

Residents are keen to retain our mature treescape and the Parish Council fought to retain those landmark trees, at St Mary's, opposite the entrance to the school. These, alongside those outside the entrance to Thomas Keble, form part of the spine of mature trees that weaves along through Eastcombe and acts as a buffer to any high development at Thomas Keble including the sports hall.

We welcome the protection of the other mature trees at the front of the school. However, the current consultation with the Tree Officer Mark Hemming has stipulated the following:-

'The submitted tree protection plan is incomplete. The plan must show the following; The dimensions for the barriers and ground protection offsets must be dimensioned on the plan.

Details of the site compound, contractors parking, site cabins, welfare, etc.

Services. These must be located outside the required root protection areas.

The area (s) for mixing cement or concrete.

I shall comment further once the above information has been submitted.'

We concur with his advice.

Loss of privacy: One resident has suggested **a new belt of trees to the west of the Main Block.** This could be four rows deep, and include a mix of deciduous and evergreen species of various heights. Species should be native and replicate local varieties **to enhance Kate Russell, Conservation Officer's consultation comment that the site should protect and enhance the Eastcombe Conservation Area, which is nearby.** Trees should include several semi matures in height and girth. This approach would provide @ 30-40 trees- 30% of which should be native shrubs. **This will support our action on Climate Change and wildlife corridors.** If this belt of vegetation extends along the south side close to the building it would marry up with the hedgerow and tree cover along the east of the site on the Recreation Ground.

Another proposal by a councillor includes a bund curving around this space. This raised land, with the tree planting would create an enclosure for social sitting space with seating, extending social space whilst making considerable cost savings on removal of some subsoil and topsoil from within the site.

The proposed car park on previous brown field land, should be more screened with additional deciduous trees. Please see clause no 8.

2. LOCATION OF THE MAIN BLOCK.

Whilst the angular /crescent shaped design along with the existing blocks has embraced social active and teaching space, by wrapping around and looking inwards to a hub, it fails to address many local residents' concern about **loss of privacy.**

The plan of the room layout on the ground, first and second floors of the west elevation confirm residents' concerns. Whilst the lower two floors should have minimal impact, there are classrooms along the full length of the west façade on the second floor which will overlook all private space of residents. These could be reconfigured to place classrooms on the northern side facing inwards.

There is no detail as yet on the design of the windows. Most classrooms only have light for pupils on the west façade- due to a central corridor, making opaque panels not an option.

3. OBSCURE PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE.

The plaza in 3D gives the impression of being much larger than actually shown on the plan 3D Views- External sh 2. In reality the pupils will be funnelled from this into steps and a ramp to get to the new entrance and sports hall.

This entry point fails to match the original concept given at a zoom meeting when the entrance was to have WOW factor. This position could well require large arrows to the entry and a plan explaining the layout of the site.

4. NUISANCE /NOISE FACTOR OF LIKELY ADDITIONAL USE OF ALLEYWAY FROM STONECOTE RIDGE and OUT OF HOURS EXTERNAL USE.

There is concern among residents that more parents will be tempted to use this back path from Stonecote Ridge to drop off and collect pupils. A councillor has suggested that this gate is closed and all pupils encouraged to walk to school via the path to the west of the site. There is space for a new path to join this without going along the main road.

Out of hours use of courts by the public should be considered-

To be in accordance with Environmental Health Consultant Dave Jackson:-

'Hepworth Acoustics Initial Noise Assessment is very much a preliminary. we shall require a formal scheme to be submitted for approval demonstrating that:-

a) the development will meet the requirements of the BB93 'Acoustic Design of Schools: Performance Standards' for internal areas; and b) the intended external building services plant and equipment will not result in an overall Rating Level at the façade of any residential receptor exceeding the design limits set out in Table 5 of the Hepworth assessment, in accordance with the methodology set out in British Standard 4142: 2014 +A1:2019, 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound'.

5. COLD UNINVITING, SMALL SOCIAL SPACES.

The new outdoor gathering spaces will be in shadow in the winter, caused principally by the location and height of the Main Block, which will create uncomfortable places to sit and chat.

We understand the high importance of satisfying Sports England with summer and winter sports areas but this results in its unfortunate compression of pupils' social space.

However, we appreciate the extension of the grassed area at the front adjacent to the Vatch Lane/Bisley Road and where pupils would be able to continue gathering.

Additional seating for those using this space would be appropriate.

6. INAPPROPRIATE MEANS OF ENCLOSURE.

F2 high weldmesh of 2.4 m height would be oppressive at the front-north of the greenhouse and animal enclosure and F5 more acceptable in both locations around this area. Shrubbery is shown but this will take a while to establish. There is space within this for a pond, which usually would have its own protective fencing for the pupils.

Having no footpath by the car park could be a hazard as pupils will certainly cut across the shrubbery even though a timber knee rail is proposed.

7. FLOOD LIGHTING.

To be in accordance with Environmental Health Consultant Dave Jackson.

'We shall also require a formal scheme to be submitted for approval demonstrating that the proposed artificial lighting serving the development (including new sports pitch lighting) does not exceed the vertical illuminance levels at neighbouring residential properties that are recommended within the Institution of Lighting Professionals "Guidance Note 01/21 - The Reduction of Obtrusive Light".'

We concur with this statement.

8. HARD SURFACING FOR VEHICULAR MOVEMENT.

REF: SITE PLAN 137059-WWA-00-ZZ-D-L-0101 P04

The concrete paviors – porous, for car bays and the pedestrian areas at the front of the school will certainly improve the aesthetics where so much hard asphalt surfacing could be ugly. **These should remain with paviors in any value engineering undertaken during construction where costs have to be reduced.**

Petrol interceptors should be used to prevent contamination of tree pits and shrub borders.

9. PLANTING STRATEGY.

We welcome the Planting Strategy which will be attractive and includes the uses of wild flora, 'turf roof' along the perimeter of the Main Block, grasses and sustainable elements eg bat boxes. The choice of amenity shrubs is varied and many species are robust with the exception of Echinacea which would be eaten by slugs here. Grass mixes for sports fields are detailed.

However, the amenity grass area within the centre of the car park is likely to be trampled and may require timber knee rail. Certainly more trees would enhance—perhaps those with blossom and trees with small to medium height at maturity.

Shrubbery close to the Vache Lane/Bisley Road along the car park should be low adjacent to the roadside to allow for visibility, and graded up from the road to allow for dense screening with evergreen shrubs to reach 3m height at maturity to soften the visual impact of

this large car park. Although native hedging is good, it will be difficult to maintain as a narrow strip, and cause poor visibility

Further trees- selected standards as a minimum should soften the car park area.

Please also see 1 TREESCAPE for additional trees as a screen.

10. LANDSCAPE AND MANAGEMENT PLAN.

It is essential that all landscape proposals that are approved by SDC committee are retained and carried out and not just conditioned.

Management plans must be effective to ensure establishment of trees and shrubbery, 3 years minimum and protected from vandalism.

The schedule should increase the litres in accordance with the Arboriculture Association, as it only allows for 20 litres of water per tree per fortnight for 2 years for all trees. It is advised that larger trees will require at least 20 litres of water twice a week. Brash is extremely free draining and any bunding should certainly require increased irrigation.

Pupil involvement in experiencing nature first hand should be encouraged.

The areas for a greenhouse and animal care are outdoor educational experiences which will be excellent.

References: Kate Russell, Conservation Officer: 'preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.'

11. MATERIALS.

The choices of materials need to be consistent with sustainability and safety. It is noted that cladding systems are being used on the Main Block. Any materials to be used will, no doubt be checked by sample and success in situ.

12. DEMOLITION AND CONSTRUCTION-MAKING GOOD ROAD SURFACING.

The Contractors' Method Statement should include making good any damage to road and pavement surfacing of the Bisley Road and Middle Hill. Any change in access arrangements should not include access across the Eastcombe Recreation Ground. We await the Construction Method Statement.

13. PUBLIC ART

Public art enhances a development's quality, appearance, local community culture and civic pride. We request SDC Delivery Policy ES16 to be respected and public art integrated into this development.

B) MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS, many raised by residents.

- ☐☐ **Overshadowing/loss of outlook** to the detriment of residential amenity (though not loss of view as such).
- ☐☐ **Overlooking** and **loss of privacy**.
- ☐☐ **Highway issues**: traffic generation, (vehicular access,) highway safety.
- ☐☐ **Noise or disturbance** resulting from use, including proposed hours of operation
- ☐☐ Deficiencies in **social facilities**, e.g. spaces in schools
- ☐☐ Loss or effect on **trees**
- ☐☐ Effect on (listed buildings and) conservation areas
- ☐☐ **Layout and (density of building)** design, visual appearance and finishing materials.
- ☐☐ Inadequate or inappropriate (**landscaping** or) means of enclosure.

Issued by Jenny Exley Cllr, Planning Lead for Eastcombe ward. 31 May 2022

As a side note, my report is based on long term professional experience as a Chartered Landscape Architect, designing school and college external spaces, working together with architects, and for East Sussex County Council.