

MC/16/1465

Date Received: 4 April, 2016

Location: Fort Pitt Grammar School, Fort Pitt Hill, Chatham, ME4 6TJ

Proposal: Demolition of 3 single storey temporary buildings and redundant bridge link together with removal of 2 steel storage containers and construction of a detached 3 storey Science and Sixth Form Centre with associated landscaping and enlargement of existing window opening within the external wall within south elevation of west wing building to create a new double entry door; construction of detached pergola structure, raised terraced/seating area; engineering works to existing rear access road (for emergency purposes only); formation of temporary access road for construction purposes only; erection of temporary buildings for site accommodation and storage

Applicant: Mr S Maile

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Ward River

Recommendation of Officers to the Planning Committee, to be considered and determined by the Planning Committee at a meeting to be held on 29 June, 2016.

Recommendation - Approval with Conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Drawing numbers: Drawing 01 Rev P3 location plan;

Drawing 03 Rev P4 Proposed Site Plan (received 12 April 2016);

Drawing 04 Rev P2 Detailed Proposed Site plan(received 12 April 2016) ;

Drawing 05 Rev P3 Construction Access Plan (received 10 June 2016) ;

Drawing 06 Rev P1 Temporary Site Access Road Proposals;

Drawing 11 Rev P7 Proposed Ground floor Plan;

Drawing 12 Rev P8 Proposed First and Second floor Plan (received 12 April 2016) ;

Drawing 13 Rev P1 Proposed Roof Plan;

Drawing 16 Rev P3 Proposed Sections sheet 1 of 2;

Drawing 17 Rev P3 Proposed Section sheet 2 of 2;

Drawing 21 Rev P5 Proposed Elevations sheet 1 of 3;

Drawing 22 Rev P5 Proposed Elevations sheet 2 of 3;

Drawing 23 Rev P2 Elevations –proposed Alterations to existing (received 12 April 2016) ;

Drawing 25 Rev P1 3d Perspective Views sheet 1 of 2;

Drawing 26 Rev P1 3d Perspective Views sheet 2 of 2; all received 4 April 2016 (unless stated)

Bat Activity Survey and report by Ecological (Version 1 dated 26 May 2016) received 27 May 2016.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 No development above slab level shall take place until samples of all materials to be used externally have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory and without prejudice to conditions of visual amenity in the locality, in accordance with Policy BNE1 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 4 No development shall take place until details of foundations designs and any other proposals involving below ground excavation have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: Required prior to commencement to ensure that due regard is given to the preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and in accordance with Policy BNE 20 and BNE21 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 5 The windows on the south facing elevation above ground floor level shall be fitted with obscure glass and apart from any top-hung light, that has a cill height of not less than 1.7 metres above the internal finished floor level of the

rooms they serve, shall be non-opening. This work shall be carried out and completed before the rooms are occupied and shall be retained at all times thereafter.

Reason: To ensure the development does not prejudice conditions of amenity by reason of unneighbourly overlooking of adjoining property, in accordance with Policy BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 6 Notwithstanding the submitted information, the proposed three-storey centre shall not be occupied until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a full scheme of landscaping (hard and soft) and boundary treatment for the site, which shall include reinstatement of land used for the construction process, landscape mitigation where existing buildings are proposed to be removed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All planting, seeding and turfing comprised in the approved scheme of landscaping shall be implemented during the first planting season following occupation of the buildings or completion of the development, whichever is the earlier and no areas of the site shall be used for growing fruit or vegetables. Any trees or plants which within 5 years of planting are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless the Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: Pursuant to condition 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to protect and enhance the appearance and character of the site and locality, in accordance with Policy BNE1 and BNE6 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 7 The removal of the existing bridge shall be undertaken in accordance with the submitted plan 1702 006 Pl.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the fort, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, in accordance with the objectives of Policy BNE20 of the Medway Local Plan.

- 8 Following the occupation of the proposed Science Centre building, the existing single-storey sixth form block to the northern side of the site shall be used for storage purposes only and shall not be used for any other purpose or if demolished full details of the finished surface level and mitigation works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to demolition and any works shall be carried out in accordance with any subsequent approved details.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity protection in accordance with the objectives of Policy T1, T13, BEN1 and BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 9 No development shall take place until full details of the proposed protective fencing to surround the existing Grade two Listed water pump have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The

protective fencing shall be installed in accordance with any approved details prior to works commencing on site.

Reason: Required prior to commencement of development in the interests of protecting an historic structure on the site in accordance with Policy BNE17 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 10 No development shall commence until a construction environmental management plan that describes measures to control the noise, dust, lighting and the effect on wildlife and habitat impacts arising from the construction phase of the development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and all construction works shall be undertaken in accordance with this approved plan.

Reason: Required prior to commencement of development in order to minimise the impact of the construction period on the amenities of local residents, wildlife and habitat and with regard to Policies BNE2, BNE37 and BNE39 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 11 Prior to commencement of works on site, full details of any lighting to serve the site through the construction phase or thereafter shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be completed in accordance with any approved details

Reason: Required prior to commencement of development to safeguard conditions of amenity and wildlife habitat within the scheme of development permitted in accordance with Policies BNE2, BNE37 and BNE39 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 12 Notwithstanding the submitted information (including ecological enhancements defined in part 5.4 of the bat activity survey and report by Ecological (Version 1 dated 26 May 2016- received 27 May 2016)), prior to the first occupation of the Science Centre, full details of ecological enhancements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include details of the bird and bat box design and design/layout of the proposed log pile arrangement as shown on the submitted plans, together with a programme of implementation. Works shall be carried out in accordance with approved details.

Reason: In the interests of wildlife habitat protection in accordance with Policies BNE37 and BNE39 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 13 The existing rear access on the southern boundary of the site shall be used for emergency vehicle access purposes only.

Reason: In the interests of amenity protection in accordance with the objectives of Policy BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 14 In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the

approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared and submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing.

Following completion of the measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out are complete identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action must be prepared must also be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development is undertaken in a manner which acknowledges interests of amenity and safety in accordance with Policy BNE23 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 15 Full details of the chemical test data on any imported soils to be used on the soft landscaped areas shown shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before being used on site. Any soil used shall be in accordance with any details approved and no areas of soft landscaping shown on the approved plans shall be used for the growing fruit/vegetables at any time.

Reason: In the interests of health and well being in accordance with the objectives of Policy BNE23 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 16 No development shall take place (except as may be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority) until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and time table which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved specification.

Reason: To safeguard the archaeological interest in the site in accordance with Policy BNE21 of the Medway Local Plan 2003

- 17 Notwithstanding the submitted details shown on the Construction and Access Plan (Ref 1702 005 P3) and the Arboricultural Tree Survey (Ref 1508), no development shall take place until a revised plan and details showing an altered construction access route and revised tree protection measures, both of which safeguard trees identified for retention, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall accord with the recommendations contained in British Standard 5837:2012 *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations* or any revision thereof and shall be carried out as described and approved before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of the development.

The development shall comply with the following sections of the Arboricultural

Tree Survey (Ref 1508):

- Section 13 (appendix 6) - tree constraints and protection methods
- Section 14 (appendix 7) - tree and ground protection specification

Reason: Required prior to commencement of development in order to safeguard trees identified for attention, pursuant to condition 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to protect the appearance and character of the site and locality, in accordance with Policy BNE1, BNE6 and BNE43 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 18 Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved (including all preparatory work), details of a scheme of supervision and monitoring for the arboricultural protection measures shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development thereafter shall be implemented in strict accordance with the approved details.

Reason: Required prior to commencement of development in order to safeguard trees identified for attention, pursuant to condition 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to protect the appearance and character of the site and locality, in accordance with Policy BNE1, BNE6 and BNE43 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 19 No tree identified for retention on the approved plans and details shall be cut down, uprooted, destroyed, pruned, cut or damaged in any manner during the development phase and thereafter within 5 years from the date of occupation of the building for its permitted use, other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars or as may be permitted by prior approval in writing from the local planning authority.

Reason: Pursuant to condition 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to protect and enhance the appearance and character of the site and locality, in accordance with Policy BNE1, BNE6 and BNE43 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

For the reasons for this recommendation for approval please see Planning Appraisal Section and Conclusions at the end of this report.

Recommendation – Approval with the following conditions:

Proposal

This application proposes the demolition of three single storey temporary buildings and a redundant bridge link, together with the removal of two steel storage containers to facilitate the construction of a detached three storey Science and Sixth Form Centre, with associated landscaping. The proposal would also include the enlargement of existing window opening within the external wall within south elevation of west wing building to create a new double entry door. Other works include the construction of a detached pergola structure, a raised terraced/seating area, engineering works to the existing rear access road (for emergency purposes

only), the formation of a temporary access road (for construction purposes only) and the erection of temporary buildings for site accommodation and storage.

The proposal seeks to provide the school with facilities suitable for purpose replacing the current, inadequate, non-compliant Science and Sixth Form facilities with no increase in student capacity.

The proposal comprises a erection of three storey building that would measure approx. 12.6m high on the northern side and 11.5m high on the southern side (accounting for the sloping mono-pitched roof) and 18m deep by 46m length (not including a 1.5m roof overhang).

The new building would be located to the south of the site and would form the southern side of a new quadrangle along with the existing Crimea and west wing buildings. The internal layout of the building has been designed so that all the most populated classrooms (science laboratories) are on the cooler north side of the building. Support space (generally occupied by staff and technicians) with the least occupancy is proposed on the south side facing the neighbouring residential development . The proposed ground and first floors would provide all the science facilities associated with the school with the second floor proposed for the Sixth Form facilities. The entrance to the building is proposed on the secure courtyard side and would link with the adjacent buildings on the site to compliment circulation needs of pupils and staff during the school day to all other departments.

The existing pedestrian access to the school would remain as existing, from the north off Fort Pitt Hill. The existing emergency access road that is on the southern boundary of the site would be realigned to accommodate the new building and maintain the emergency access. The proposal includes the landscaping of the open area to the north of the building. This would include footpaths linking the internal and external circulation routes of the school and the creation of informal seating areas for students to enjoy a safe and secure environment. Access to the site and the building itself would be accessible for all with level access provided between the new building and existing school. A lift would be provided for access from ground floor to first and second floor.

The ground and first storey façade of the building would comprise a combination of terracotta rain screen cladding panels and aluminium rain screen cladding panels. Glazed window/louvered panels would be set within the terracotta rain screen elements of the façade which would be of a natural finish. A brick finish is proposed to be used on two sides of the quadrangle. The second storey is proposed to have a set back curtain wall glazed façade to the north whilst the southern façade would be made of glazed/louvered panels and aluminium rain screen cladding. The gable end of the proposal would be a combination of the two. The proposed roof would be a twin skin standing seam aluminium roof with tapered profiles eaves and soffits, with a concealed gutter.

The primary design aim has been to reduce carbon emissions throughout with significant insulation, ventilation units, extraction fans along and a natural ventilation strategy with use of solar control glazing and low energy lighting also. The main teaching spaces would have a large amount of glazing to provide both views out and

good natural daylight that would also reduce energy consumption. Low temperature underfloor heating would be used throughout the building with both the heating and the hot water provision supplied by high efficiency air source heat pumps.

The existing Sixth Form Centre has a gross external area of 373 sq.m, the two storage containers 36 sq.m and the two redundant portacabins combined have a gross external area of 216 sq.m, which in total amounts to 625 sq.m of floorspace being removed. The new building has a gross external floor area of 2,433 sq.m, which would result in a net increase in gross external area of 1808 sq.m. Whilst the proposal represents an increase in gross external floor area, it would only increase the footprint of buildings on the site by 177 sq.m.

Whilst the science laboratories are to a large extent for specific use, the Sixth Form Centre would offer a working environment that can be adapted and changed to meet the potential changing needs of the school in the future, whilst also offering an environment that can cater for alternative uses during periods of time when the school are not using it. This will make the building more adaptable and usable throughout the duration of the year.

This proposal would be funded by the Education Funding Agency and would provide the school with the opportunity to continue encouraging relationships with local industry to create sponsorships, scholarships and conference opportunities to the upper floor. The proposal aims to ensure that adequate facilities for the teaching of science subjects and Sixth Form facilities are provided and there is no longer a reliance upon significantly sub-standard facilities for these purposes.

To facilitate the development and provide a degree of mitigation impact, the applicants propose a temporary access road for construction purposes only, with access to proposed temporary buildings for site accommodation and storage on the eastern side of the fort. This in part will require the levelling of the ground throughout with landscaping providing following completion of works on site. This would be bounded by temporary fencing to 1.2m in height to both sides with access from the highway to the north of the site through the main entrance. Safety hoardings (1.8m high) would be provided throughout. The existing emergency access would not be used for regular construction traffic but may be used infrequently for delivery and removal of plant due to the constraints of the site. A temporary footpath is proposed to the southern side of the site in order to retain circulation between the existing sports hall and the remainder of the site. An existing concrete/brick and stone bridge would also be removed on the eastern side of the site.

An existing Grade two listed water pump would be protected during construction works with a plywood surround.

Relevant Planning History

MC/02/0803

Application under Regulation 3 of the Town and country General Planning Regulations 1992 for the construction of a three storey disable access lift and access bridge.
Decision Approval with Conditions
Decided 07/01/2004

MC/02/0800	Listed building application for construction of a three storey disabled access lift and access bridge Decision Approval with Conditions Decided 07/01/2004
MC/99/5914	Regulation 3 application for the siting of a storage container on playing field adjacent to tennis court. Decision Approval with Conditions Decided 10/12/1999
HIS/98/76202	Construction of a new sports hall Decision Approval with Conditions Decided 29 July, 1999

Representations

The application has been advertised on site and in the local press, and by individual neighbour notification to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Six representations have been received objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Visually oppressive and overbearing development resulting in a dominant form of development when seen from neighbouring gardens when combined with existing buildings on site;
- Loss of privacy;
- Noise increase from antisocial disturbance;
- Odour/smell generation from chemical storage area;
- An alternative location within the site is possible;
- Increase in traffic intensity;
- increased danger caused by construction vehicles; and
- Intensification of use of emergency access for construction vehicles.

In response to representations received, the planning agent has commented as follows:

- The development has been designed predominantly with 'non student space' on the southern side of the building and where deemed appropriate, glazing could be controlled by condition;
- All the landscaping works that are to be carried out are detailed on our drawing 1702-004 rev P2. Any damage to existing will be rectified if need be and a full record of the existing situation will be undertaken prior to works commencing;
- The storage containers are used (and have only ever been used) to store exam furniture, tables and chairs only;

- The school hold a full asbestos register for the whole site and a full demolitions survey will be carried out prior to carrying out any removal of the building;
- Whilst there would be no increase in student numbers, the building would enhance mitigation from student noise;
- Due to orientation light loss and overshadowing would not be significant from the development;
- Access to the school for construction traffic will be as shown from the northern frontage of the site only. Should there be a need; to use the southern gates it would be by prior arrangement and with continued communication with the Fort Management Company;
- Blocking of the emergency access from resident parking is a concern; The access arrangements have been fully discussed with the Fort Management company throughout the process in the interests of neighbourly development;
- There will be no material increase in pupil numbers and so no resultant change to activity levels to the school; and
- Any noise disturbance would be for a limited time and during normal working hours only.

Kent Police advises that there are no major concerns relating to this development but they would encourage the applicants/agent to liaise with them in terms of additional CCTV coverage to cover the quadrangle area created by the development. They encourage discussions in light of secure by design and BREEM objectives.

Southern Gas Network (SGN) has provided information regarding the approximate location of low/medium and intermediate gas mains within the site. They advise of the need to be cautious in terms of construction and recommend appropriate safety precautions. They require the SGN pipeline to be maintained throughout the duration of the works.

Southern Water has provided a plan showing the approximate location of a sewer and advises that the final position of the building should not be determined until the location of the sewer is found. They draw attention to standing advice and recommend a precautionary site investigation to determine to location of the pipes to enable these to be protected during the course of construction if needed.

Historic England supports the proposal provided that harm to Fort Pitt heritage significance is reduced as much as possible with the imposition of planning conditions to suit. The site is a scheduled ancient monument (SAM) and the site is significant for both its military history and history of medicine in Britain. Much of the significance is embodied in its physical remains including archaeological remains buried below ground level. It has been used since the early 19 century as a fort formed as part of the defences for Chatham Dockyard (1803-1815) around a pre existing military hospital which continued in use until after the first world war. Of unusual design and constructed from brick and earth, the fort is surrounded by an infilled ditch. It contains many original structures and features of the fort with tunnels present below ground. Grade two buildings and a cast iron water pump exist within. Recent archaeological surveys revealed no finds of heritage significance within the vicinity of the site but it is possible that some archaeological remains survive at greater depth. The Geophysical survey did not reveal any indication that there might be tunnels running under the proposed site. The development is unlikely to be harmful to the heritage significance

subject to the involving Kent Archaeological unit being consulted on the project; foundation and services designs being managed and a written scheme of investigation being undertaken to investigate any potential harm to any buried remains.

Kent County Archaeological Unit raises no objection to the proposed works and agree with the comments of Heritage England. They suggest a condition that will be sufficient to protect the site during the course of construction.

Development Plan

The Development plan for the area comprises the Medway Local Plan 2003. The policies referred to within these documents and used in the processing of this application have been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012 (NPPF) and are considered to conform.

Planning Appraisal

Principle of Development

Section 17 of the NPPF within the core planning principles provides 12 land-use planning principles that should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking and integral to this states that planning should 'proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs'. It also requires that planning should 'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all' and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs'.

Section 8 of the NPPF is also relevant as it concerns promoting healthy communities, stating how the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Paragraph 72 states that the government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, and that local authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.

The site is located within the urban boundary as defined by the proposals map of the Medway Local Plan 2003. Both national advice and local policies support the efficient and effective use of land used for community and education purposes. The preamble to Policy CF6 of the local Plan recognises the importance of catering for an increasing demand for upgrading schools. As the site is currently used as a school and would result in removal of existing buildings on site in a poor state of condition, the proposed works would meet this objective and conform to the objectives of Policy CF6.

Visual Impact on the surrounding area

Fort Pitt Grammar School is a secondary education, selective girls' grammar school with 1,000 students aged 11-18. The School is situated in Chatham on Fort Pitt Hill within the curtilage of a Scheduled Ancient Monument and within the New Road, Rochester Conservation Area. The site was originally the location of a defensive fort

built in the early 19th Century with some of the buildings remaining today. The site consists of buildings ranging between one and three storeys in height.

Immediately to the north lies a large education facility occupied by the University of the Creative Arts. To the north-east, beyond the school's perimeter fence and Fort Pitt Hill, lies an open public park comprising of two tiers of sloping grassland with a low level historic masonry wall. The land falls away to New Road, lined with residential and business uses.

The former Kent College site to the south (originally part of the school playing fields) has now been developed for residential use and overlooks the school site. The school buildings (including those remaining of the former hospital) are bounded to the east by the best preserved section of the Fort's ramparts, comprising a masonry retaining wall some 7-8m high with mature trees screening the central collection of buildings. Beyond the wall, the site of the infilled defensive ditch is used for tennis courts and, beyond this the school's sports pitches.

The western site boundary is well screened with dense vegetation with mature trees and offers good visual protection from an area of public open space (Jackson's Field).

There are three vehicular access/exit points to the school along the northern boundary, immediately off Fort Pitt Hill; one provides service access and two provides entrance and exit points to the school car park. In addition to this, one emergency access point is offered from the south of the site, through the new Fort housing scheme. There are two pedestrian access points into the school grounds, both of which are from the north of the site, off Fort Pitt Hill. Unofficial access points onto the school playing fields are apparent from the south-east which currently creates safeguarding issues for the school. The site is bounded to the southern side by housing relatively recently built.

The choice of location for the proposal followed consultation with Historic England and consideration of what available locations posed the least threat to the Scheduled Ancient Monument and any potential remains of buildings that have previously occupied the site. Four options were investigated for the location and positioning of a new building. These options considered the potential impact of any building work on the existing Fort buildings and limiting the interference to areas of historical importance. In addition, it was considered that the best and most cost effective design solution was to combine the proposed Sixth Form Centre with the Science provision. This approach would reduce the footprint of the new building and reduce the impact on any potential remains. This exercise also allowed the archaeologists to possibly discover better and further particulars about the history of the site. This shaped the application submission.

The building would be predominantly screened by the existing height of buildings to the northern side of the site from the highway. The proposed works would have a greater impact on the appearance of the site where seen from two storey housing to the south. The building would be set into the ground at the rear so as to provide level access from the courtyard entrance which would contribute, to a degree, would help reduce the visual impact from the neighbouring housing development which sits at a higher level than the school site. The scale would reflect existing adjacent

buildings but incorporate an additional floor level and would be of a contemporary design with modern materials. Although these existing buildings provide only two floor levels, the floor to floor height in the proposal ensures the scale is similar to that of the existing buildings. The chosen height of the terracotta façade would also compliment the eaves lines of the existing buildings, further ensuring a relationship in scale and appearance. The proposal would not result in the loss of structures of any historic value and would overall, have no adverse impact on the appearance of the site with the chosen design and choice of materials.

Furthermore, the proposal would include a structured, robust, attractive, long-term and easily maintainable landscaped area to the north of the proposed building and planting of semi-mature trees along the southern boundary of the site.

The proposal has been carefully devised without detriment to the historically significant site and subject to the conditions imposed to protect historic archaeological remains (if found), ensure appropriate reinstatement where temporary works are proposed or buildings removed and enhance the site through additional landscaping, no objection is raised. The proposed scheme would meet the objectives of Policies BNE1, BNE6, BNE12 BNE13, BNE14, BNE20 and BNE21 in seeking to achieve a high quality design that will both preserve and enhance the area's historic fabric.

Amenity Considerations

Whilst planting is proposed on the boundary, this would be too premature to prevent overlooking following immediate occupation of the building. The existing sports hall would provide some mitigation but not sufficient for all neighbouring amenity to be protected. The proposed development would be seen from the neighbouring properties to the south, but in consideration of the proposed finished land levels, siting of the development, orientation and distance from these properties, no objection is raised, subject to the imposition of a condition that would require the installation of appropriate mitigation glazing to prevent direct overlooking from windows above ground floor level towards neighbouring gardens and windows.

It is welcomed that the layout has been designed to reduce the impact on neighbours' amenity in terms of use.

Due to the building's orientation, the location of the proposed building would not cast any shadow onto the existing neighbouring houses or cause significant loss of daylight or sunlight.

In order to be assured that the construction process is managed effectively in terms of access, noise, dust and fumes, a Construction Management Plan is recommended to be secured by condition. A condition is also proposed to prevent the emergency vehicle access being used for construction traffic due to the potential activity levels generated by construction traffic through a residential development.

On this basis, the proposal would accord with the objectives of Policy BNE2 of the Local Plan

Trees

No protected trees or trees with significant amenity value would be adversely affected by the development and no trees with Preservation Orders would be affected by the proposed construction of the new building. However, in consideration of the extent of construction works proposed, it is considered appropriate to impose conditions that require the means of protection and location of the access route together with a scheme of monitoring and supervision.

The works would be in accordance with the objectives of Policy BNE41 and BNE43 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

Ecology

Following the submission of a Phase 1 Habitat Survey, it was found that the only statutorily protected species that may be present on the site are roosting bats. A bat survey was conducted to establish their presence and as a consequence of this, it was found that the site has a low bat population but the development may affect the foraging behaviour of the species. In view of this, careful management of lighting is recommended to ensure that Bats are protected in terms of feeding pattern. The applicants propose to also install ecological enhancements in terms of both bat and bird boxes within the existing tree coverage and a log pile habitat to the west of the site which can be secured by planning condition. The development would comply with the objectives of Policies BNE37 and BNE39 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

Highways

The proposed development would have no significant highway implications. The three existing vehicular access points from Fort Pitt Hill to the school would remain and are considered adequate as there would be no increase in the population of the school. The temporary construction road to facilitate the works would utilise one of the entrance points and ensure construction plant is segregated from staff and pupil parking areas where parking overspill is accommodated east of the site within the school grounds.

The existing emergency vehicular access point along the school's southern boundary (from the neighbouring site to the south) would also be maintained. The proposal would also allow for an enhanced turning head for emergency vehicles to the southern side of the site. The existing amount of cycle parking spaces would also be retained.

The proposed development would not result in a significant increase in vehicle movements to and from the site to what already exists. The existing frontage parking would be retained and the existing access used. Accordingly, the proposal is satisfactory from a parking and highway safety perspective and as such no objection is raised to the development under the provisions set out under Policies T1, T2, T4 and T13 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

Local Finance Considerations

None relevant to this application

Conclusions and Reasons for Approval

Having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Development Plan Policies, the proposal is considered acceptable with regard to principle, character, amenity and highway considerations. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with Section 17 parts 3 and 12 and Section 8 Paragraph 72 of the NPPF and Policies BNE1, BNE2, BNE6, BNE12, BNE13, BNE14, BNE20, BNE21, BNE37, BNE39, T1, T2, T4 and T13 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

Background Papers

The relevant background papers relating to the individual applications comprise: the applications and all supporting documentation submitted therewith; and items identified in any Relevant History and Representations section within the report.

Any information referred to is available for inspection in the Planning Offices of Medway Council at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR and here <http://publicaccess.medway.gov.uk/online-applications/>