
Wrotham Wrotham	561223 158223	19 January 2015	TM/14/04186/FL
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Proposal:	Two no. single storey class room extensions and first floor extension to the reception plus new roof over external courtyard to form a multi-functional space. Re-cladding of exterior of main building with timber boarding.
Location:	Wrotham Secondary School Borough Green Road Wrotham Sevenoaks Kent TN15 7RD
Applicant:	Wrotham School

1. Description:

- 1.1 Planning permission is sought for two single storey extensions to the school building to add classrooms, along with a first floor extension above the reception area, and a new roof over an existing external courtyard to form a multi-functional space at Wrotham Secondary School, Borough Green Road, Wrotham.
- 1.2 One of the extensions would be sited to the north of the main school building, partially infilling an area between the sports hall and a class room. This extension would provide two classrooms measuring 7.8m x 7.1m, and 7.8m x 7.05m and this section would be flat roofed with a sedum roof covering.
- 1.3 The second extension would be sited to the east of the centre of the school building infilling an area between two existing classroom wings. This extension would provide two classrooms measuring 7.5m x 7.35m, and 7.5m x 8.67m and this section would be flat roofed with a sedum roof covering. A new external courtyard would be provided between the new extension and the existing locker rooms/changing rooms.
- 1.4 A large internal courtyard is proposed to be covered by a partially sedum, partially glass lantern roof to create a multifunctional space below.
- 1.5 At first floor two new offices would be created above the existing main entrance, again with a flat sedum roof.
- 1.6 Fifteen new visitor parking spaces are proposed as part of the application which would lie close to the southern end of the site.
- 1.7 The existing coloured panelling beneath windows on the main building is proposed to be replaced with timber boarding.
- 1.8 The agent has submitted a supporting statement which sets out the following:

The school has had to apply for funding from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to pay for these essential works to be carried out and a condition of this funding was that work should commence in the summer term (May) with a large proportion

of the works having to be carried out in the summer holidays to avoid disruption to curriculum delivery, added to this a further condition that all works must be completed by the 2015/16 year end (March 2016).

I would just like to point out and clarify on a couple of points in response to the Parish Council objections:

- This proposed application does not in any way create or add additional pupils to the schools current role, it is only to carry out essential updating and renovation works to the building fabric and create more space for areas such as exams and dining for the students. There are 2 out of date mobile classrooms to be replaced and only 2 additional classrooms which are merely to ease timetable planning.*
- This application has, and will have, no negative impact on the traffic congestion highlighted by the Parish Council. In fact the application allows for and creates additional parking for staff and visitors as well as sixth form students that drive which will if anything have a positive impact on the traffic situation.*
- In short, I would suggest that this application is completely unrelated to the very separate issue of highways management and congestion on the main road and do not feel it appropriate or fair that the Parish Council should effectively use the current application as a means to have this separate issue heard, there are other more appropriate and correct avenues through which this separate highways matter should be debated, discussed and addressed.*
- It should be noted that KCC Highways raised no objections to this application.*
- The School along with ourselves acting as their consultants would happily engage with the Parish Council and KCC Highways to look at ways to address and resolve this separate highways matter and as part of this look to amend and update the schools travel plan, it is my opinion that there is a fairly simple low cost solution to this separate matter but it should not be allowed to 'Highjack' this planning application which is completely unrelated.*

With regard to your queries raised please see below;

- The current EFA official net capacity of the school is 716 with a current role of 776. – although based on the EFA capacity assessment of the school it is 'oversubscribed' it is important to note that it has been for a number of years and so the traffic situation is not a related factor here. Also, it is important to note that all the students do fit in the school currently.*
- Pupil numbers would not increase in anyway as a result of this application or the proposed works. As described above the additional space proposed is merely to better accommodate and delivery curriculum to the students.*

- *There will only be 2 additional classrooms and these will merely allow us to have more flexibility with timetabling. The additional amenity space would provide for extra exam and dining space for the existing students. They would also allow us to demonstrate to the EFA that we have a net capacity assessment of the building which is closer to our actual numbers.*
- *This application would not see or generate any increases in the schools numbers, if the capacity of the school was needed to be increased by KCC or the EFA at any time in the future this would require additional buildings/space which would be subject to a future planning application.*
- *The schools capacity would be unchanged regardless of this application.*

2. Reason for reporting to Committee:

- 2.1 Called in by Councillor Martin Coffin as a result of the significant public interest in the application and the out of school gates traffic issues.

3. The Site:

- 3.1 The site lies on the eastern side of Borough Green Road, to the south of Grange Park School and the M20 Motorway, and to the north of Borough Green Village. To the west lies a line development of houses and bungalows which run north to south.
- 3.2 The school site has its own access off Maidstone Road to the southern end of the western boundary. The main school building lies in the north-western quarter of the site with the Technology Block and New Block lying to the east, the English Block lying in the south-eastern quarter of the site and several smaller building, including a Caretakers house running close to the southern boundary.
- 3.3 The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4. Planning History (post 2000):

TM/01/01620/CR3 Grant With Conditions 7 August 2001

Demolition of existing school farm buildings and construction of new single storey classroom block (TM/01/TEMP/I)

TM/08/02835/CCEASC screening opinion 8 September 2008
EIA not required

Request for screening opinion under Regulation 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 for Proposed Development: Erection of a new special school, parking, play area, landscaping and ancillary works (KCC reference TM/08/Temp/0056)

TM/08/02857/CR3 Approved 22 December 2008

Erection of a new special school, parking, play area, landscaping and ancillary works (KCC ref: TM/08/TEMP/0056)

TM/09/02519/FL Approved 22 February 2010

Construction of a multipurpose artificial sports pitch with 8 raised lighting columns, fencing and pedestrian access

TM/10/00181/CR3 Grant With
Conditions 29 June 2010

Proposed replacement of temporary teaching accommodation (Horsa Huts) with the provision of a 2 storey building comprising of the following accommodation: 5 laboratories, laboratory prep rooms and chemical storage, 6th form multi learning resource centre, Additional Educational Needs facility, 6 general teaching classrooms, creative and media space, support offices and services, plant room. Rearrangement of staff car parking following demolition of Horsa Huts

TM/10/00243/CR3 Approved 18 May 2010

The provision of a single storey changing room pavilion for school and community use in association with existing outdoor facilities and the proposed outdoor all weather pitch. (The accommodation comprises 4 team changing rooms, officials changing rooms, disabled changing room, public toilets, store and plant room).

TM/10/00497/CR3 Approved 19 May 2010

Proposed provision of a fencing and demonstration 'food pod' facility with associated herb vegetable garden. The food pod is a stand alone single storey factory produced unit comprising of teaching and demonstration space, two storage rooms and plant room. (KCC reference TM/10/TEMP/0004)

TM/10/00498/CCEASC screening opinion 15 February 2010
EIA not required

Request for screening opinion under Regulation 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 for Proposed Development: Proposed provision of a fencing and demonstration 'food pod' facility with associated herb vegetable garden. The food pod is a stand alone single storey factory produced unit comprising of teaching and demonstration space, two storage rooms and plant room. (KCC reference TM/10/TEMP/0004)

TM/10/00586/CCEASC screening opinion 25 January 2010
EIA not required

Request for screening opinion under Regulation 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 for Proposed Development: The provision of a single storey changing room pavilion for school and community use in association with existing outdoor facilities and the proposed outdoor all weather pitch. (The accommodation comprises 4 team changing rooms, officials changing rooms, disabled changing room, public toilets, store and plant room.

TM/10/02597/CR3 Approved 25 November 2010

Demolition of existing 1 bay mobile classroom building and the replacement with a 2 bay temporary timber framed classroom building (KCC ref TM/10/TEMP/0024)

TM/10/02907/CCEASC screening opinion 17 September 2010
EIA not required

Request for screening opinion under Regulation 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 for Proposed Development: Demolition of existing 1 bay mobile classroom building and the replacement with a 2 bay temporary timber framed classroom building (KCC ref TM/10/TEMP/0024)

TM/11/01150/CR3 Approved 1 June 2011

Details of external materials, soft landscaping and paving pursuant to conditions (3), (4) and (6) of planning permission TM/10/00497/CR3: Proposed provision of a fencing and demonstration 'food pod' facility with associated herb vegetable garden. The food pod is a stand alone single storey factory produced unit comprising of teaching and demonstration space, two storage rooms and plant room. (KCC reference TM/10/497/R3, 4 and 6)

TM/11/01885/CR3 Approved 5 September 2011

Revised proposal for replacement of temporary teaching accommodation (Horsa Huts) with the provision of a 2 storey building (originally granted planning permission under application TM/10/181) including a reduction in the floor space and consequential changes to foot print, floor plans, elevations and external works including rearrangement of staff car parking. KCC ref TM/0293/2011

TM/11/01926/CCEASC screening opinion 12 July 2011
EIA not required

Request for screening opinion under Regulation 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 for Proposed Development: Revised proposal for replacement of temporary teaching accommodation (Horsa Huts) with the provision of a 2 storey building (originally granted planning permission under application TM/10/181) including a reduction in the floor space and consequential changes to foot print, floor plans, elevations and external works including rearrangement of staff car parking. KCC ref TM/0293/2011

TM/11/02554/CR3 Approved 27 October 2011

Revised proposal including location for the provision of a single storey changing room pavilion for school and community use in association with existing outdoor facilities and the proposed outdoor all weather pitch. The accommodation comprises 4No. Team changing rooms, officials changing rooms, disabled changing room, public toilets, store and plant room (Amendment to TM/10/00243/CR3) (KCC Ref: KCC/TM/0355/2011)

TM/11/02731/CCEASC screening opinion 15 September 2011
EIA not required

Request for screening opinion under Regulation 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 for Proposed Development: Revised proposal including location for the provision of a single storey changing room pavilion for school and community use in association with existing outdoor facilities and the proposed outdoor all weather pitch. The accommodation comprises 4 No. Team changing rooms, officials changing rooms, disabled changing room, public toilets, store and plant room (Amendment to TM/10/00243/CR3) (KCC Ref: KCC/TM/0355/2011)

TM/12/00047/CCEASC screening opinion 19 December 2011
EIA not required

Revised proposal including location for the provision of a single storey changing room pavilion for school and community use in association with existing outdoor facilities and the proposed outdoor all weather pitch. The accommodation comprises 4No. Team changing rooms, officials changing rooms, disabled changing room, public toilets, store and plant room (Amendment to TM/10/00243/CR3) (KCC Ref: KCC/TM/0355/2011)

TM/12/00192/CR3 Approved 13 March 2012

Repositioning of single storey changing room pavilion for school and community use granted permission under application TM/11/02554/CR3, including revised car parking layout

5. Consultees:

5.1 PC: Wrotham PC generally agrees in principal with investment and improvements in the built infrastructure of Wrotham School. However, WPC strongly objects to this application as presented. There have been two recent Highways reports, one by Les Henry Assoc on behalf of the WPC and Amey on behalf of Kent Highways Services. Both reports list the very dangerous existing highways conditions that prevail outside of the two schools at start and end of day. Children and adults are being put at risk due, in part, to the current arrangements and lack of focus at both schools.

5.1.1 The A227, primary road network, is completely blocked on the south bound carriageway for up to 15 minutes on a daily basis during term time and completely irrational driver behaviour often occurs, borne from frustration. Tipper trucks, tragically in the news at present, travel up and down the road constantly servicing the local quarry. All this at the same time that pedestrian teenagers are exiting Wrotham School in droves and crossing through this maelstrom of traffic.

5.1.2 Wrotham School were repeatedly asked for an up to date copy of their School Travel Plan, as required by KCC and have consistently failed to even reply to the request. The current proposal will extend existing classrooms, thereby increasing the school role capacity. This will further exacerbate a currently dangerous situation further. No Travel Plan has been submitted with this application.

5.1.3 WPC attaches both reports and photographs with these comments and draw the attention of the Officer to the conclusions particularly in Les Henry Associates report that lists a series of measures that could be adopted in a joint Travel Plan agreed between Wrotham and Grange Park School. Sensible measures like staggering the opening and closing times of the two schools are eminently achievable.

5.1.4 The final paragraph of Les Henry's report states the following regarding solving the current dangerous highways problems. "However, only with a whole hearted approach and desire by all parties involved to overcome the current dangerous situation that occurs daily on Borough Green Road, would it be successful."

5.1.5 WPC hopes that this planning application, which affects highways problems outside of the school, could act as a catalyst for all parties to address the problem seriously before an accident occurs.

5.1.6 The PC attached photographs to support their views along with three documents being:

- A report prepared by AMEY for KCC entitled "Borough Green Traffic Management Options" dated November 2014.

- D- Print Crash Report for the A227 Borough Green Road and accompanying map detailing personal injury crashes for 3 years prior to 30.06.2014.
- Les Henry Associates Ltd Technical Report entitled “Wrotham School and Grange Park School A227 Borough Green Road, Wrotham, Kent: Road Safety Issues” dated December 2014.

5.2 Private Reps (12/0S/0R/0X + Site and Press Notice): No response.

5.3 KCC Highways: Original comments: No objections.

Additional comments:

5.3.1 As there is no proposal to increase the school roll or the number of staff at the school then the highway authority would not raise objection. This is because the proposals are not likely to result in a significant increase in traffic accessing the site. However, we would welcome the proposal to amend and update the schools travel plan. For this, the applicant should liaise with Annette Bonner.

6. Determining Issues:

6.1 The site lies within the Green Belt where prevailing policies state that the extension of an existing building may not be considered inappropriate development provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building, as set out within paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF). Wrotham Secondary School has been extended significantly over time and any further extension, when taken cumulatively would amount to more than a proportionate addition to the original building. The proposal is, therefore, considered to be inappropriate development, which is harmful by definition. Accordingly, there must be a sufficient case of “very special circumstances” to override the harm.

6.2 Paragraph 72 of the NPPF 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. Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.”*

6.3 The Planning for Schools Development Policy Statement (DCLG - August 2011) is also an important material national policy consideration, stating that:

“...We expect all parties to work together proactively from an early stage to help plan for state-school development and to shape strong planning applications. This

collaborative working would help to ensure that the answer to proposals for the development of state-funded schools should be, wherever possible, “yes”.

“The Government believes that the planning system should operate in a positive manner when dealing with proposals for the creation, expansion and alteration of state-funded schools.”

6.4 It goes on to state:

“A refusal of any application for a state-funded school, or the imposition of conditions, will have to be clearly justified by the local planning authority. Given the strong policy support for improving state education, the Secretary of State will be minded to consider such a refusal or imposition of conditions to be unreasonable conduct, unless it is supported by clear and cogent evidence.”

6.5 With these policies in mind, there is clearly a strong Government impetus in favour of new state school development as a matter of principle.

6.6 Wrotham Secondary School is an established site within the Green Belt with substantial built form across the site. The proposed extensions would infill between existing wings on the main building and their bulk would therefore have a negligible impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Moreover, the roof over the courtyard to provide a multifunctional space would enclose a section of the site which is surrounded by existing built form and, accordingly, its development would have no impact on the openness of the Green Belt in my view. The additional office space to be provided above reception would build over an existing flat roof and would enclose an area which has built form on three sides; again, this aspect of the proposals would have a negligible impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

6.7 In light of the requirement to attach great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools as set out within paragraph 72 of the NPPF, and when considering the content of the Planning for Schools Development Policy Statement, added to the limited material impact to openness identified in above, I am of the view that in combination a sufficient case of very special circumstances has been advanced to override the definitional harm identified. In this respect the proposal accords with Paragraph 88 of the NPPF which seeks to ensure that the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

6.8 The design of the extensions is in keeping with the scale, form and materials of the main building and would therefore respect the site and its surroundings in my view. The new timber panelling to the remainder of the building would tie in with the existing cladding on The Curve building on site. As such, I consider the proposal would accord with Policy CP24 of the TMBCS 2007 and paragraphs 57 and 58 of the NPPF with regard to visual amenity.

- 6.9 For the reasons set out above, I am of the view that the proposal would preserve the natural beauty of the AONB in accordance with paragraph CP7 of the TMBCS and Paragraph 115 of the NPPF.
- 6.10 The application proposes 15 additional parking spaces for visitors on site. KCC Highways have considered the proposals and raise no objection on highway grounds. It is noted that the PC has raised a strong objection on the basis of the existing queuing situation on the highway at school opening and closing times. There concerns have also been evidenced within the supporting documents which accompanied their objection.
- 6.11 It is acknowledged that there is a conflict at the present time on the highway which is exacerbated by the Grange Park School entrance which lies in close proximity to the Wrotham School entrance. A queue forms which forces passing traffic in to the centre of the road conflicting with oncoming traffic. Whilst this is an issue and a cause for concern, it is important to recognise that this application cannot be used as a mechanism to resolve the existing problems that have been described. It is instead necessary to address the potential, *specific* impacts that might arise from the proposed development itself. In this respect, it should be noted that the NPPF (paragraph 32) states that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.
- 6.12 Crucially, the current application does not intend to introduce additional staff or additional pupils to the site. The scheme also includes the provision of 15 additional on-site parking spaces. KCC Highways have been re-consulted on the scheme and continue to raise no objection, a view which I agree with particularly in light of the above considerations.
- 6.13 Notwithstanding the above, there is a need to acknowledge the wider issue regarding queueing traffic on the highway by virtue of both schools being located in close proximity of each other and there is a need for a collaborative approach to finding solutions to the problem. I, therefore, recommend an Informative is attached to any planning permission to remind the applicant of local concerns and encourage the school to work towards finding an appropriate solution. I would stress again that such measures could not reasonably be required through this planning permission for the reasons explained above.
- 6.14 I also consider it necessary and reasonable, in light of the email received from the agent on 26 March 2015, and the comments received from KCC Highways, that a condition is incorporated to limit the number of students on the school roll to 800 to seek to ensure the existing problems described are not exacerbated by pupil numbers significantly exceeding the revised capacity for the school. Given that part of the justification put forward by the school in their submission relates to the fact that the proposed development is not intended as a means to increase pupil or staff numbers, I am of the view that such a condition would be reasonable and

relevant to the development in question. Any future applications for development on the site would be assessed on their merits and the condition would be superseded by any future decisions which might allow for an increase in capacity. With that in mind, I do not consider that the imposition of such a condition at this time would be unreasonable, therefore meeting the tests set out not only in the NPPF but also in the Planning for Schools Development Policy Statement.

- 6.15 In light of the above assessment, I recommend that planning permission be granted subject to the imposition of planning conditions.

7. Recommendation:

- 7.1 **Grant Planning Permission** in accordance with the following submitted details: Location Plan P51-PL01 dated 15.12.2014, Proposed Floor Plans P51-PL02 dated 15.12.2014, Proposed Floor Plans P51-PL03 dated 15.12.2014, Proposed Elevations P51-PL04 dated 15.12.2014, Existing Floor Plans P51-PL10 dated 15.12.2014, Existing Floor Plans P51-PL11 dated 15.12.2014, Existing Elevations P51-PL12 dated 15.12.2014, Email dated 26.03.2014, subject to the following:

Conditions

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

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the existing building or the visual amenity of the locality.

- 3 The use shall not be commenced, nor the premises occupied, until the area shown on the submitted layout as vehicle parking space has been provided, surfaced and drained. Thereafter it shall be kept available for such use and no permanent development, whether or not permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order amending, revoking or re-enacting that Order) shall be carried out on the land so shown or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to this reserved parking space.

Reason: Development without provision of adequate accommodation for the parking of vehicles is likely to lead to hazardous on-street parking.

- 4 The total number of students enrolled at the school shall at no time exceed 800 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

Informatives

- 1 The applicant is encouraged to consider securing provision for an operational in/out drop off facility at the entrance to the site to improve the existing highway conditions at arrival/collection times. Further applications to increase student capacity at the site may not be viewed favourably should measures not have been taken to secure delivery of such improvements.
- 2 It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure, before the development hereby approved is commenced, that all necessary highway approvals and consents where required are obtained.
- 3 The applicant is reminded that the proposal should ensure that it complies with the requirements of Building Bulletin 93 'Acoustic Design of Schools' (BB93:2014), taking into account the recently issued Baseline Design for Schools from the Education Funding Agency.
- 4 With regard to the construction phase of the development, the applicant is asked to take all reasonable steps to mitigate any impact upon surrounding residents. With this in mind, they are strongly encouraged to apply for a Section 61 Control of Pollution Act 1974 'prior consent' notice to regulate working hours/methods. It is recommended that you contact the Environmental Health Pollution Control Team on pollution.control@tmhc.gov.uk in advance of the commencement of works to discuss this further. The applicant is also advised to not undertake construction works outside the hours of 08.00 -18:00 Mondays to Fridays, 08:00-13:00 on Saturdays and to not undertake works on Sundays, Bank or public holidays. Furthermore, arrangements for the management of demolition and construction traffic to and from the site should be carefully considered in the interests of residential amenities and highway safety. With regard to works within the limits of the highway and construction practices to prevent issues such as the deposit of mud on the highway, the applicant is encouraged to consult The Community Delivery Manager, Kent County Council, Kent Highway Services, Double Day House, St Michaels Close, Aylesford Tel: 03000 418181 at an early time.
- 5 The applicant is reminded that the use of bonfires could lead to justified complaints from local residents. The disposal of demolition waste by incineration is also contrary to Waste Management Legislation. It is therefore recommended that bonfires not be had at the site.

Contact: Lucy Harvey