PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT KNEBWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL, SWANGLEYS LANE, KNEBWORTH SG6 3AA

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION FOR (i) DEMOLITION OF CLASSROOM BUILDING AND REPLACEMENT WITH NEW MODULAR CLASSROOM BUILDING AND (ii) RETENTION OF MOBILE NURSERY BUILDING ON A PERMANENT BASIS

February 2018

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement has been produced to accompany the full planning application submitted to the County Planning Authority for the following proposal -

- Demolition of an existing classroom block and replacement with a new modular classroom building. The existing classroom block needs to be replaced because it is in poor condition and asbestos is pervasive throughout it. Due to the need to remove the asbestos, it is not economically viable to repair the existing building.

- Retain the existing mobile nursery building on a permanent basis. This building is subject to a temporary planning permission that is due to expire in March 2018. Permission is sought to retain this building on a permanent basis.

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1.2 For the avoidance of doubt, it is not proposed to increase the number of children attending the school. The development is simply required to provide improved accommodation for the school.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

The Application Site and its Surroundings

2.1 The school site is located to the south of Swangleys Lane, close to the junction with London Road. Opposite the site to the north is St Martin's church. To the west and east is residential development and to the south is Stepping Stone pre-school.

2.2 The main school building dates from the 1920s and is of traditional construction with a red tile roof. Most of the site frontage comprises the hard surfaced school playground and staff car park. There are other more recently constructed school buildings at the rear of the main building, one of which is a mobile unit containing a pre-school nursery.

2.3 The building that is proposed to be replaced lies on the eastern side of the main school building and is linked to it by a glazed walkway.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.1 Paragraph 72 of the National Planning Policy Framework is relevant to this proposal. It states:

'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'.

3.2 Paragraph 72 goes onto state that Local Planning Authorities should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools.

DCLG Policy statement (August 2011) – Planning for schools development

3.3 The statement sets out the Government's commitment to support the development of state funded schools and sets out a number of principles that should apply, including that there should be a presumption in favour of the development of state funded schools (as expressed in the NPPF).

North Hertfordshire Local Plan No.2 with alterations (1996)

3.4 The North Hertfordshire District Local Plan was adopted in April 1996 and subject to review in September 2007. The Saved Policies that are considered relevant to the application are policies 5 and 55.

- Policy 5 Excluded Villages

North Herts Local Plan 2011-2031 – Proposed Submission (October 2016)

3.5 North Herts District Council is currently preparing a new District Plan, which will eventually replace the current Plan. The plan is at an advanced stage of preparation (Examination In Public) and would therefore be afforded significant weight in the determination of any planning application. The following policies in the submission version of the plan are considered relevant to this application:

- SP1: Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire
- SP2:Settlement hierarchy
- SP 9: Design and sustainability
- SP10: Healthy Communities
- CGB2: Exception sites in rural areas
- D1: Sustainable design
- HC1: Community facilities
- NE8: Sustainable drainage systems

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 The following planning history is considered to be of relevance to this proposal:

- 1/00049-12 :Retention of existing mobile classroom unit.

5.0 APPLICATION PROPOSALS

5.1 As indicated in the Introduction to this report there are two elements to this proposal:

5.2 **(1) Replacement classroom** block – the existing building is not fit for purpose so needs to be replaced. The proposed new building will be of modular construction.

5.3 The new building will be partially built off-site and delivered to the site in 6 modular sections. This off- site form of construction helps to minimise disruption to the school. The new building will also fully comply with the Approved Document Part L2A: Conservation of Fuel and Power (New Buildings other than dwellings). It will be provided with energy efficient lighting, heating and water heating and will meet all current air permeability tests.

5.4 The use of an off-site modular building solution represents a sustainable and expedient response to the need for places at the school, as well as providing a good quality teaching environment

Amount of Development

5.5 The new building has a gross internal floor area of 194m2 with the external dimensions being 21.62 x 9.44m and not exceeding 6.0m in height. It has been designed to accommodate up to 60 children and 4 teaching staff. The building contains two classrooms (62.0 & 61.5m2), two wet areas (6.0m each), boys toilets, girls toilets, disabled toilet, service cupboard and corridor.

Scale

5.6 The proposed new modular building is single storey with a pitched roof and is of very similar size/height to the building it will replace, which itself is of modest proportions in comparison to the other school buildings. Therefore, the new building will not appear out of scale on the school site.

Appearance

5.7 The proposed external finish is a brick cladding system comprising of red and yellow stock brick slips to a similar pattern as the adjacent year 1 building and main school building (brick slip samples to be submitted and approved by the planning authority prior to ordering). Windows and doors to be white powder coated aluminium and fascia boards to be white. The roof will be pitched to an angle of 30 degrees and finished with fibre cement tiles, colour to be agreed (colour samples to be submitted and approved by the planning authority prior to ordering).

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Access

5.8 The existing vehicular access and staff parking arrangements will remain unchanged by this proposal..

5.9 In terms of inclusive access, the main entrance doors will be accessed via the existing 2.10m wide enclosed corridor and will provide level clear access for wheelchair users. The internal doors into the classroom will be 926mm wide providing wheelchair access. The building has been designed to fully comply with Part M (Access to and Use of Buildings) of the Building Regulations.

Landscaping

5.10 The proposal will not result in the loss of any landscaping features such as trees and hedges. There are no proposal for additional landscaping as this may undesirably impact upon playground area that immediately adjoins the proposed new building.

Surface Water Drainage

5.11 The existing building that is to be demolished is 182m2 and the proposed replacement building is 194m2. The new building is 12m2 larger than the existing building, this additional 12m2 is currently non-permeable tarmac surface. There will be no increase in surface water run off created by the proposal. It is however proposed to provide betterment by the use of either a new soakaway or attenuation to the existing surface water drainage system.

5.12 Details / calculations will be submitted once on site percolation testing has be undertaken. If the percolation test is successful then soakaway calculations for all rainfall return periods up to and including a 1 in 100 year + 40% climate change event will submitted for approval. If the test is unsuccessful then calculations and details of the proposed attenuation will be submitted for approval.

5.13 The above can be secured by way of an appropriate planning condition. However, a pre-occupation planning condition is preferred to a pre-commencement condition. This is because by carrying out the percolation testing once the contractor is appointed and site set up, this will avoid the disruption of having to send in separate contractors to dig up a hole in the playground and make it good prior to the works starting. It would also result in a significant cost saving to the County Council.

Building Construction Arrangements

5.14 The building contractors will use the existing double access playground gates off Swangleys Lane and create a secure access route to the proposed location of the new building. During demolition / construction all works will be fenced off using 2.0m high solid hoarded Heras type safety fencing. Vehicular / delivery movements will be restricted at the start and the end of the school day when pupils are likely to be in the location of the works.

5.15 All contractors vehicles will be parked on site within the secure compound. The contractors working day is proposed to be between

8.00am and 5.30pm with no deliveries or movement of contractors vehicles between 8.15am – 9.15am and 2.45pm – 3.45pm (term time only). It is proposed that the works will commence at the beginning of the school summer holidays when deliveries or movement of contractors vehicles to be restricted to 8.00am – 17.30pm. Time restrictions to be adjusted and additional restrictors may be applied to suit school summer holiday site activities / clubs

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5.16 **(2) Retention of the existing mobile nursery building on a permanent basis** - this building is currently subject to a temporary planning permission that is due to expire in March 2018. The design/appearance of the building remains largely unchanged from its original installation.

5.17 There is definitely a need for the mobile classroom at Knebworth School to provide free early education (Nursery) and the new 30 hours free childcare entitlement for working families. The demand for such places is steadily increasing so without this provision the Local Authority would be unable to deliver its statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient free early education and childcare places.

5.18 The building remains in overall good condition having been well maintained both internally and externally. It is expected that it would be serviceable for another 10 years, at which point it may need to be replaced. Bearing in mind that it is relatively well screened and that national planning guidance is that authorities should not look to keep granting temporary permissions, it is requested that permission is granted on a permanent basis. The applicant is unable to identify any significant harm that would be caused by granting such permission.

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6.0 APPRAISAL OF SCHEME

Principle of development

6.1 In terms of the principle of development, Policy 5 of the adopted local plan indicates that the Council will normally permit development for community facilities if the development is compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of village character. The detail of the development described in this application is considered to demonstrate that it is entirely consistent with the aims of this policy. Similarly, the proposed development is considered to comply with Policy CGB2 and Policy SP10 of the emerging local plan, which relate to the provision of community facilities (amongst other things). Furthermore, paragraph 72 of the NPPF indicates that Local Planning Authorities should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools As such the proposed development is felt to be acceptable in principle.

Impact upon the character and appearance of the area

6.2 The proposed new classroom building merely replaces an existing building of virtually the same size and in the same location. It has also been designed to be sympathetic to the character of the existing school buildings. Given these factors, the new building would also not give rise to any conditions that would significantly impact upon the amenities of neighbouring properties.

6.3 Although the mobile nursery building was originally granted on a temporary permission, there is no reason why, given its particular location on the site, it should not be retained permanently.

6.4 In view of the above considerations, the impact of the development on the site and surroundings is acceptable.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The proposed development will provide a new classroom for the benefit of the school and local community. Similarly so for the permanent retention of the mobile nursery building. The overall development has been assessed in relation to relevant national and local plan polices and is considered to fully comply with them. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is granted for the proposed development.

HCC Development Services
February 2018