

TO: PLANNING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE

DATE: 24th September
2014

BY: PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL TEAM
MANAGER

DISTRICT(S) MOLE VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

ELECTORAL DIVISION(S):

Ashtead

Mr Townsend

PURPOSE: FOR DECISION

GRID REF: 517393 157311

TITLE: SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL PROPOSAL MO/2014/0778/SCC

SUMMARY REPORT

Land at St Peters Catholic Primary School, Grange Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7JN.

Construction of new classroom block comprising six classrooms and WCs.

St Peter's Catholic Primary School occupies a site within the Green Belt and is currently a 1 Form of Entry (1FE) Primary School catering for children aged from 5 to 11 years old. The yearly intake of the school is 30 pupils which gives them a capacity for up to 210 pupils. The current proposal is for the construction of a single storey building which would provide space for six additional classrooms and associated WC's. The proposed building is required in order to expand the school from a 1FE primary school (30 pupils per year group) to a 2FE primary school (60 pupils per year group) resulting in a total of 420 pupils.

To date three letters of representation have been received raising concerns which largely relate to traffic issues and which are set out in detail in the report.

Officers consider that the design and scale of the building is acceptable to the site and will not have any adverse impact on neighbouring residential dwellings. There is no

significant impact on trees, some trees will be lost but these do not have significant value and can be replaced elsewhere.

The proposal will give rise to a significant increase in vehicle movements and the impact of this on the surrounding area has been considered in detail and mitigation measures sought to alleviate the impact. The overall conclusion is that there is capacity within the local area to accommodate the increase in traffic without compromising highways safety subject to the applicant securing a number of measures to mitigate the impact including off-site highways improvements.

The proposal will cause harm to the Green Belt by virtue of the fact that it represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt but the applicant has submitted very special circumstances which clearly outweigh the harm caused by virtue of that inappropriateness and other harm to the open character of the Green Belt. The factors which constitute very special circumstances amount to the need to provide school places in this area and the lack of alternative suitable sites within the urban area to meet the need. Officers consider that very special circumstances do therefore exist in this case and the proposal can be considered acceptable having regard to Green Belt Policy.

The recommendation is to permit the application subject to conditions.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Applicant

Estates Planning and Management

Date application valid

14 May 2014

Period for Determination

9 July 2014

Amending Documents

Traffic Management Plan dated May 2014 Received 26/06/14

Outline Logistics Proposal March 2014 Received 26/06/14

Indicative programme – SIPs Option Received 04/06/14

Revised Travel Plan dated July 2014 Received 30/07/14

Revised Transport Assessment dated July 2014 Received 30/07/14

Location Plan, drawing number AI-01 Rev C dated Feb 14 Received 30/07/14

St Peters school – Proposed Scheme (Sheet 1 of 5) drawing number FS/0001 Received 30/07/14

St Peters school – Proposed Scheme (Sheet 2 of 5) drawing number FS/0002 Received 30/07/14

St Peters school – Proposed Scheme (Sheet 3 of 5) drawing number FS/0003 Received 30/07/14

St Peters school – Proposed Scheme (Sheet 4 of 5) drawing number FS/0004 Received 30/07/14

St Peters school – Proposed Scheme (Sheet 5 of 5) drawing number FS/0005 Received 30/07/14

SUMMARY OF PLANNING ISSUES

This section identifies and summarises the main planning issues in the report. The full text should be considered before the meeting.

	Is this aspect of the proposal in accordance with the development plan?	Paragraphs in the report where this has been discussed
Design and Visual Amenity	Yes	18-20
Development on Playing Field	Yes	21-22
Impact on Residential Amenity	Yes	23-25
Highways Considerations	Yes	26-36
Impact on Trees	Yes	37-38

Impact of Existing Noise Sources	Yes	39-41
Impact upon the Green Belt	No	42-49
Very Special Circumstances	Yes	50-57

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

Site Plan

Plan

Aerial Photographs

Aerial

Site Photographs

Figure

BACKGROUND

Site Description

1. St Peter's Catholic Primary School occupies a site within a largely residential area, north east of Leatherhead and west of Ashted. The school is bordered by the M25 and Right of Way 51 adjacent to the west, the Barnett Wood Lane Sports Field to the north, residential properties and Grange Road to the east and Linden Pit Path (a public Right of Way) to the south. Beyond the Linden Pit Path are the grounds of St Andrew's Catholic Secondary School. The site is located within the Green Belt and there are trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order located to the far east of the site. The existing school

buildings are single storey with a mixture of pitched and flat roofs. The site slopes down towards the north west of the site.

2. St Peter's is currently a 1 Form of Entry (1FE) Primary School catering for children aged from 5 to 11 years old. Their yearly intake of 30 pupils gives them a capacity for up to 210 pupils; however there are currently 216 pupils on roll.

Planning History

3. There have been a number of previous planning applications at this site determined by both Surrey County Council and the District Council. The most notable of these are as follows:-

MO/88/1529 Single storey extension to library Permitted November 1988

MO/99/1030 Single storey extension to library Permitted September 1999

MO/2012/0473 Glazed canopy and amphitheatre Permitted May 2012

THE PROPOSAL

4. The current proposal is for the construction of a single storey building which would provide space for six additional classrooms and associated WC's. The proposed building is required in order to expand the school from a 1FE primary school (30 pupils per year

group) to a 2FE primary school (60 pupils per year group) resulting in a total of 420 pupils. There is a need for additional school places within the local area due to an increase in birth rates and families moving to the area.

5. The building would be constructed of bricks and would have a flat roof with roof lights. The proposed block would be adjacent to the existing school building and would form a new 'wing' projecting from the west to the east. The building would measure a maximum width of 32m and a maximum depth of 18m, with a height of approximately 3.7m.
6. Following negotiations a package of highways mitigation measures are now being proposed as part of this proposal which comprises the following:-
 - a) Measures to deter and prevent parking on verges and footways on Ottways Lane, Grange Road and Grange Mount and to improve pedestrian facilities (as generally shown on Atkins Drawings FS/0001, FS/0003, FS/0004 and FS/0005)
 - b) Measures to deter parking on the school access road and at the junction with Duckworth Drive (as generally shown on Atkins Drawing number FS/002 and cfp architects drawing 1581/AL-01 revision C)
 - c) The widening of the footway between Duckworth Drive and Grange Road (as generally shown on Atkins Drawing number FS/002)
 - d) The widening of the pedestrian access to Linden Pit Path and the provision of a parent waiting shelter

CONSULTATIONS AND PUBLICITY

District Council

6. Mole Valley District Council

Raise objection on original submission and on amended proposal which include highways improvement measures stating "*St Peters has a wide catchment and therefore a considerable number of its pupils travel to school by car. It is noted that there will be various steps taken to deter parking close to the school and that a TP will be implemented. However, MVDC considers that traffic and congestion will continue to be an issue on the local road network and near to the school despite the proposed mitigation.*"

Consultees (Statutory and Non-Statutory)

7. County Arboriculturalist No comments received
8. Environmental Noise No objection. The school is in a noisy

location (near M25) and steps will need to be taken to control internal noise and measures have been suggested by the applicant in respect of mechanical ventilation. Details of this have not been submitted so a condition requiring compliance with BB93 and BB101 will be needed. The actual location of the extension will improve external noise for the play area.

9. Transport Development Planning

No objection to amended submission subject to conditions relating to

1. Installation of measures to deter and prevent parking on verges and footways on Ottways Lane, Grange Road and Grange Mount
2. Installation of measures to deter parking on the school access road and at the junction with Duckworth Drive
3. Widening of the footway between Duckworth Drive and Grange Road
4. Widening of the pedestrian access to Linden Pit Path and the provision of a parent waiting shelter
5. The Interim School Travel Plan to be updated
6. Construction shall be strictly in accordance with the Traffic Management Plan May 2014
7. No construction vehicle movements to or from the site between the hours of 08.15am and 09.15 am and 2.45pm and 3.45pm.
8. The development shall not be occupied unless and until a scheme for the phased introduction of an additional 50 cycle parking spaces has been submitted

10. Sport England

No objection. The location of the classroom is such that it is not considered to prevent the ongoing use of the remaining playing field as it is located on an area incapable of forming part of a playing pitch.

Parish/Town Council and Amenity Groups

11. Ashtead Residents Association
- No objection in principle but ask that the case officer is totally satisfied with the management of the traffic in the locality of Grange Road that is already well recorded as a problem area for residents due to intensity of school within a relatively small radius.

Summary of publicity undertaken and key issues raised by public

12. The application was publicised by the posting of 2 site notices and an advert was placed in the local newspaper. A total of 44 owner/occupiers of neighbouring properties were directly notified by letter. To date three letters of representation have been received raising the following concerns:-
- There are three schools on Grange Road and the parking situation is currently untenable during school drop off and pick up
 - The double yellow lines have had a knock on effect and parents now park on the bend where Grange Road leads to Ottways Lane and the Lane itself
 - Parents also park in the entrance road to St Peters School on both sides and also in the entrance to Duckworth Drive frequently blocking the entry and exit to cul de sac
 - Parents are abusive when asked to move
 - There are no double yellow lines therefore have little recourse
 - Parking problem will double if school doubles
 - Not viable to increase unless consideration is given to parking issues and potential remedies
 - One option to provide an additional entry / exit route via Harriots Lane to alleviate this and introduce double yellow lines to the access road to the school
 - Ideal to have a single entry and exit route and drop-off within the school
 - No interest in managing traffic just to focus on getting children to walk / cycle
 - Irresponsible parking and traffic congestion are a constant problem
 - Local infrastructure already massively strained and to effectively add another school would make the situation unbearable for residents.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

13. The County Council as County Planning Authority has a duty under Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to determine this application in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) (1990 Act) requires local planning authorities when determining planning applications to “have regard to (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, (b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and

(c) any other material considerations”. At present in relation to this application the Development Plan consists of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000 and the Mole Valley Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2009.

14. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted in March 2012. This document provides guidance to local planning authorities in producing local plans and in making decisions on planning applications. The NPPF is intended to make the planning system less complex and more accessible by summarising national guidance which replaces numerous planning policy statements and guidance notes, circulars and various letters to Chief Planning Officers. The document is based on the principle of the planning system making an important contribution to sustainable development, which is seen as achieving positive growth that strikes a balance between economic, social and environmental factors. The Development Plan remains the cornerstone of the planning system. Planning applications which comply with an up to date Development Plan should be approved. Refusal should only be on the basis of conflict with the Development Plan and other material considerations.
15. The NPPF states that policies in Local Plans should not be considered out of date simply because they were adopted prior to publication of the framework. However, the guidance contained in the NPPF are material considerations which planning authorities should take into account. Due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies are to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight they may be given).
16. The NPPF highlights in paragraph 72 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. It continues by stating that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement. The NPPF further states that local planning authorities should, inter alia, give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools.
17. In this case, the main issues are whether there are very special circumstances which clearly outweigh the harm caused by inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The design of the development will be assessed to ensure it is acceptable in terms of visual amenity and residential amenity; and whether there would be unacceptable impacts on highway safety or the residential amenities of surrounding properties as a result of additional traffic generated by an enlarged school. The impact upon trees as well as the loss of the playing field will be assessed.

DESIGN AND VISUAL AMENITY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012

Paragraph 17 - Core Planning Principles

Chapter 7 – Requiring Good Design

Mole Valley Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2009

Policy CS14 – Townscape, Urban Design and the Historic Environment

Mole Valley Local Plan 2000

Policy ENV22 – General Development Control Criteria

18. The NPPF states that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Chapter 7, paragraph 56 states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 64 goes on to say that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
19. Core Strategy Policy CS14 resists development of a poor quality of design and requires all new development to respect and enhance local character. Local Plan Policy ENV22 requires the design and layout of development to satisfy several criteria including being appropriate to the site in terms of its scale, form and appearance and external building materials; and respecting the character and appearance of the locality. Respect for the setting of development is also expressed in Local Plan Policy ENV23, which requires that development proposals consider the scale, character, bulk, proportions and materials of the surrounding built environment. Local Plan Policy CF2 requires that proposals for community facilities should not detract from the character and appearance of the property and surrounding area.
20. The proposed new building in this case lies adjacent to and extends out from the north eastern end of the school and would form a courtyard effect around the existing school playground. The proposed building is of linear form under a flat roof and this reflects elements of the existing school building. The proposed extension would have external brickwork to match the existing school. Officers consider that the proposed extension respects the scale and form of the existing school and is appropriate to the site in terms of scale, appearance and external detailing. The proposal therefore complies with Development Plan policy in this regard.

DEVELOPMENT ON PLAYING FIELD

Mole Valley Core Strategy 2009

Policy CS16 – Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities

- 21 Policy CS16 states that open space, sports and recreation facilities will be safeguarded from development. This reflects the Policy stance of Sport England in their document entitled 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England' which resists the loss of existing playing fields.
- 22 The proposed classroom building would be sited on an area of open land on the edge of the formal playing pitches on this site and officers consider that the location of the classroom will not prevent the ongoing use of the remaining playing fields as it is located on an area incapable of forming part of the playing pitch due to its configuration and proximity to existing buildings. This view has been supported by Sport England who has been consulted on the proposal and who have no objection to it. The proposal therefore accords with Development Plan Policy in this regard.

IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 Core Principles

Chapter 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Mole Valley Local Plan 2000

Policy ENV22 – General Development Control Criteria

Policy CF2 – Provision of New Community Facilities

- 23 NPPF identifies that within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision making. These 12 principles include that planning should seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Paragraph 109 of chapter 11 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by *inter alia* preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put a unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.
- 24 Local Plan Policy ENV22 requires development not to significantly harm the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties by reason of overlooking or its overpowering effect, noise, traffic or other adverse environmental impact. Local Plan Policy CF2 requires that development for community facilities satisfies a number of criteria including not detracting from the character and appearance of the property and the surrounding area; it has no adverse impact on the amenities of the locality, especially those of neighbouring properties; and traffic generated by such development has no adverse affect on local residential amenity.
- 25 The proposed extension in this case lies in the centre of the school site and a significant distance from the school boundaries. The nearest residential properties are in Kingfisher Close and are some 85m from the proposed building. There will not therefore be any impact arising from this proposal on any residential dwellings and the proposal therefore accords with Development Plan policy in this regard. The residential amenity issues arising from the traffic arising from the proposal is considered in the following section.

HIGHWAYS CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012

Chapter 4 – Promoting Sustainable Transport

Mole Valley Local Plan 2000

Policy MOV2 – The Movement Implications of Development

Policy MOV5 – Parking Standards

PolicyCF2 – Provision of New Community Facilities

- 26 Paragraph 32 of the NPPF states that all developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport

Assessment; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people. Paragraph 35 states that development should be located and designed where practical to create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians. Paragraph 36 states that a key tool to facilitate sustainable transport modes will be a Travel Plan and all development which generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a Travel Plan.

- 27 Local Plan Policy MOV2 states that development will only be permitted where it can be made compatible with the transport infrastructure and the environmental character in the area and where appropriate developers will be required to contribute to transportation initiatives and highways improvements. Policy MOV5 applies the County Council's parking standards as maxima, having regard to the developer's own requirements and subject to road safety or traffic management implications. The specific criteria applied to development of community facilities under Policy CF2 include that parking and access requirements can be satisfactorily accommodated and that the amount of traffic generated would not adversely affect highway or safety of residential amenities in the locality.
- 28 The applicants have submitted a Transportation Assessment in support of this application which has been amended during the consideration of the proposal. This examines the existing highways conditions in the area and arising from the school and identifies the additional implications arising from this proposed development. In order to examine the existing position a 'hands up' pupil survey was undertaken looking at modes of travel to school both existing and preferred for both pupils and staff at the school and it also identified the catchment area of the school to look at how far people travel. A review of the existing footway and cycleway networks was undertaken, as well as the frequency of bus provision. In addition a parking survey was undertaken to assess the existing demands for parking at school drop off and pick up times and the road network was examined in terms of the volume and speed of existing traffic.
- 29 The proposal will result in an increase in capacity of the school from a 1 form entry primary school (210 pupils) to 2 form entry (420 pupils), with an increase from 36 to 45 staff. There are two on-site car parks with a combined capacity of around 35 spaces, although one is unsurfaced and is not used as efficiently as it could be. The school currently has a cycle shelter for 20 cycles and a scooter shed for 20-30 scooters and it is proposed that there is a phased increase of at least 50 additional cycle parking spaces for pupils and 13 for staff.
- 30 The school is located on the Leatherhead/Ashted borders, to the east of the M25. It is accessed from Grange Road, along with two other schools, St Andrews Catholic Secondary School and Downsend School, an independent preparatory school. The main access to Downsend School is from the A24 Leatherhead Road but both St Andrews and St Peters only have vehicular access from Grange Road. Grange Road is accessed directly from the A24 which carries around 2000 vehicles per hour during the school morning and afternoon peaks. Start and finish times at St Peters and St Andrews are staggered so that the two schools do not start and finish at the same time. There are 3 sets of 'school keep clear' markings on Grange Road with double yellow lines along much of the eastern side of the road. There is a public footpath which runs alongside St Peters, known as Linden Pit Path, which has a footbridge across both the M25 and the Leatherhead Bypass. It links Grange Road with St John's Close/Linden Gardens. Some parents park in St John's Close/Linden Gardens and then use Linden Pit Path to access

the school. There is a pedestrian only gate into the school from Linden Pit Path. 38% of those pupils that arrive by car, park in Linden Gardens and then walk along Linden Pit Path to access the school.

31 As St Peters is a faith school, it has a broader catchment than secular community schools. 45% percent of children live within a kilometre/15 minute walk of the school, although only 7% of these live within half a km, with 19% living more than 2km away from the school. The existing pupil mode share for St Peters reflects this, as follows:-

- 48% come by car
- 27% walk
- 5% cycle
- 6% scooter
- 2% come by bus
- 12% come by other modes (taxi/school transport)

49% of pupils at St Peters have a sibling in the school and 20% have a sibling at either St Andrews or Downsend. Having regard to the above it is apparent that significant number of pupils will travel to school to this site with a sibling. Applying the mode shares set out above to the expanded school will result in around 199 cars taking children to and from school. This is a worst case scenario as it takes no account of siblings in the school or the successful implementation of measures in the travel plan.

32 The parking survey shows that there are 125 spaces available within a 5 minute walk of the school and providing parents do not all arrive simultaneously, there is sufficient spare capacity for the additional vehicles from the school expansion to be accommodated on local roads. Parking will be approaching capacity, with 92% of spaces occupied in the am peak and 83% in the pm peak. Parking availability will be tight and measures are proposed to prevent parking on footways and verges which will be more attractive to parents when spaces become more difficult to find. It is clear from the survey that there is already an issue as parents are already parking illegally (over driveways, on footways and verges and on keep clear/double yellow lines). Parking on footways and verges reduces capacity for pedestrians and can force them, particularly if they have pushchairs or wheelchairs, to walk in the road which is unacceptable. As it is essential that child safety is not compromised, the consultants conclude that parents will be required to park further afield or the peak 15 minute arrival/departure period will be extended over a longer period. The implementation of measures in the Travel Plan will be key to managing the impact of parent parking and travel to school.

33 The A24 Leatherhead Road is operating close to capacity during the school peaks morning and afternoon. The consultants were asked to consider the likely impact of the increase on this to see if it was material. The expansion of the school will see an increase in queuing on the A24/Grange Road/Ermyrn Way junction and similarly on the A24/A243 Knoll Roundabout junction on the Leatherhead Bypass. The increase in signal controlled delay will only be minor and is calculated on the basis of a worst case scenario. It should be noted however, that if the children do not attend this school, they will need to attend an alternative and there is a high likelihood that this additional traffic will be on the highway network travelling to school in any case, just not to this particular school. The increase in traffic and thus delay may occur, irrespective of whether it is this school that is expanded or another. It is therefore concluded that the impact of the

proposal is acceptable and that there is no proportionate and appropriate mitigation that can be introduced to reduce the increase in delay at these two important junctions.

- 34 The staff car park is currently around 75% utilised according to the school. Around 20 of the 27 spaces were occupied. The proposals will increase the capacity of the staff car park by 3 spaces to 30. This will not accommodate all of the additional staff that are expected to drive to the school but it will accommodate around two-thirds. Staff may be able to 'double park' to increase the capacity, but this will need to be managed by the school.
- 35 Transportation Development Planning was consulted on the application and following negotiations with the applicants have secured agreement to a number of on and off site highways improvements to mitigate the impact of the development on the local highways network – these are set out in paragraph 5 above. TDP now have no objection to the proposal subject to conditions relating to matters as set out under 'Consultations' (paragraph 9) above. TDP comments that although there is a minor impact on traffic queuing and delay, the main impact in respect of this proposal is the additional parking demand that will be generated. There are a number of physical measures that are now being proposed to dissuade dangerous and inconsiderate parking but the school will need to actively promote responsible parking and other measures, such as park and stride, walking buses etc in order to manage the impact of the proposal. The parking impacts largely affect resident amenity and convenience but there are some potential highway safety implications and these will be addressed by the physical measures which are required to be installed by way of planning conditions. TDP also comment that it is hoped that St Peters and St Andrews will work together to manage the impact of travel to school in this location as currently there are no joint initiatives between the two schools. TDP concludes that although this is a finely balanced case, the impact of the proposal has been mitigated as far as is possible by the applicants.
- 36 Having regard to the conclusions of TDP Officers consider that the highways issues in respect of this proposal have been satisfactorily assessed and proportionate measures to mitigate against the impact arising from the proposal have been proposed and can be secured by planning conditions. As such the proposal accords with Development Plan Policy and is acceptable in this regard

TREES

Mole Valley Local Plan 2000

Policy ENV22 – General Development Control Criteria

- 37 Local Plan Policy ENV22 requires the design and layout of development to satisfy several criteria including having regard to attractive features such as trees that contribute to the amenity of the area.
- 38 Five small trees will need to be removed on the site to facilitate the development. None of these trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order and a full tree assessment has been submitted with the application. Out of the five trees shown to be removed (as they lie within or adjacent to the footprint of the proposed building) 3 are Grade C trees, one is Grade U and one is Grade B. The trees are relatively small in stature and generally of poor structure. Officers consider that the loss of these trees will have a very limited impact to the visual amenity of the area and the applicant has proposed replacement

planting elsewhere on the site which will mitigate against the impact and can be controlled by a condition on the planning permission. In addition tree protection measures are proposed for the remainder of the trees on the site. Officers therefore consider that the proposal is acceptable in this regard and complies with Local Plan Policy.

IMPACT OF EXISTING NOISE SOURCES

National Planning Policy Framework 2012: Para 137

Mole Valley Local Plan 2000

Policy ENV22 – General Development Control Criteria

- 39 Policy ENV22 of the Local Plan requires, inter alia, that new development provides a satisfactory environment for its occupiers. Para 123 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should aim to avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development. Detailed guidance on appropriate noise levels for new development affected by existing noise sources formerly contained in PPG24 'Planning and Noise' have not been included in the NPPF and the National Planning Guidance on Noise contains no specific guidance for schools. Previously PPG24 stated that school development located in noisy environments should take account of Department for Education design guidance on internal noise levels in schools, which suggests noise levels in classrooms should not exceed 35dB LAeq. In addition Building Bulletins 93 and 101 reiterate this figure as being appropriate. In the absence of any new guidance within the NPPF officers consider that the advice contained in Building Bulletins 93 and 101 remains an appropriate starting point for assessing the noise climate of this proposal, and this view is shared by the County's Noise Advisor.
- 40 In this case the school lies in close proximity to the M25 and it already suffers a degree of noise intrusion from that road. The applicant has advised that in drawing up these proposals the noise impact arising from the M25, particularly on the new classroom block which would lie closest to the road, has been considered in the design. The applicants acoustic advisors conclude that in order to achieve satisfactory noise levels within the new classrooms (in accordance with BB 93 and 101) noise attenuating passive ventilators will be required in all classrooms facing the M25 so that windows can be kept closed at all times. The proposal in this case is to provide a full building mechanical ventilation system with heat recovery within the new classroom block, though the details of such a scheme have not been submitted with the application.
- 41 The County Council's Noise Advisor has reviewed applicant's submissions on noise and confirms that the approach taken is an appropriate one and has no objection to the proposal subject to a condition that the noise levels set out in Building Bulletin 93 and 101 are achieved. Officers consider that subject to such a condition the proposal accords with the Development Plan Policy and is acceptable in this regard.

IMPACT ON THE GREEN BELT

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework 2012: Chapter 9; Protecting Green Belt Land

The Mole Valley Core Strategy 2009

Policy CS1 – Where Development Will Be Directed

Harm due to Inappropriateness

- 42 Paragraph 87 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 states that as with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 89 states that Planning Authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt except in specific circumstances which include 1) where the proposal would be for the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces and 2) For the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.
- 43 Policy CS1 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy 2009 states that in the countryside, development will be considered in the light of other policies within the Core Strategy and the provisions of PPG2 'Green Belts'. PPG2 has now been superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 44 Extensions to existing buildings can be considered to be appropriate development in the Green Belt provided they do not amount to disproportionate additions over the existing building. Generally extensions above a 30% increase (though sometimes this can be extended up to 50%, depending on the circumstances in each case) are likely to be considered 'disproportionate'. In this case officers consider that the proposal is a 'disproportionate' extension' in view of the proposed increase in floor space (which for the current proposal is 31% though it is also noted that the school has been previously extended so cumulatively this figure will be greater) but also because of the form of the extension which forms a large new wing of development on the site. The proposed development would not therefore fall within any of the above categories and therefore would be considered as inappropriate development within the Green Belt. In these circumstances it is for the applicant to then demonstrate very special circumstances exist in order to justify the inappropriate development. The NPPF states that '*When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations*' (para 88).

Other Harm to the Green Belt

- 45 In accordance with paragraph 88 of the NPPF the impact of the development needs to be assessed in terms of any other harm to the Green Belt in addition to the inappropriateness of the proposal as discussed above in paragraph 42 above. The extent of harm to the Green Belt, and in particular the impact the proposal has on the purposes of including land in Green Belts through its impact on openness is influenced by the scale and location of the proposed development. Also in this case the school lies within a 'strategic gap' between Ashted and Leatherhead and Green Belt policy seeks

to maintain the openness of such gaps to prevent the coalescence of towns. The prevention of towns merging into one another remains a key purpose of the Green Belt as stated in the NPPF.

- 46 In this case the proposal is for a sizeable extension to the existing school. Having regard to openness the school complex occupies a large curtilage which is secluded, and the school buildings themselves are distant from nearby dwellings. The site is also well screened with existing trees on all of its boundaries. The proposed extension has been designed to be sympathetic to the style and design of the existing school and would be single storey with a flat roof. In this setting and against the existing school buildings the massing of the extension would be minimal and when viewed from the south and southwest it would be screened by the existing school buildings. The well established trees on the site boundaries would help to screen the extension from public views from the east and northeast but the extension may still be visible from vantage points in those directions, and from the west. In particular the extension would be visible from the Public Right of Way (Footpath 51) which exists along the western boundary of the site and from the rear of the residential dwellings which lie to the north east (in Harriots Lane).
- 47 In view of the size of the proposed building and its location to the rear of the school officers consider that it will give rise to a loss of openness and it will therefore cause harm to the Green Belt in this location. The loss of openness is considered to be moderately significant given the scale of the proposal.
- 48 In respect of impact on the strategic gap, the proposed extension has a relatively compact footprint and will form a new wing to the existing school building. The proposal does not extend the built form of the school onto the open areas of the site and therefore officers do not consider that the visual amenity of the existing gap in this location will be diminished or give rise to the coalescence of towns..
- 49 In conclusion officers consider that the impact on the gap has been ameliorated by the design of the proposal in this case and the scale of the extension is proportionate to the need and the development cannot be located elsewhere to meet the need identified for the locality. Accordingly officers consider that while the size of the building will give rise to a moderately significant loss of openness, they attach moderate weight to other harm overall.

Need for the Development

- 50 St Peters' Catholic Primary School is currently a 1 form of entry Primary School catering for children aged 5 to 11 years old. Their yearly intake of 30 pupils gives the school capacity for 210 pupils however there are currently 216 pupils on the school roll. The proposal seeks to expand the school to form a 2FE Primary School with a yearly intake of 60 pupils and to accommodate this increase 6 new classrooms are required.
- 51 There are insufficient places in the existing school accommodation within the Ashtead/Leatherhead area of Mole Valley. This is in part due to an increase in birth rates and an increase in numbers of people choosing state education as opposed to private education. The following table provides historical information on the total number of reception school places in Ashtead/Leatherhead (the PAN), compared with the actual number of pupils since 2007.

Year	PAN	Pupils in Reception Year	Spare reception places
2007/8	240	230	10
2008/9	240	238	2
2009/10	240	232	8
2010/11	240	223	17
2011/12	240	246	-4
2012/13	240	286	-44
2013/14	240	269	-27

- 52 In 2012 the Ashtead/Leatherhead area had a shortfall of 44 reception places and as a result the Education Authority provided temporary accommodation at two schools (The Greville Primary and West Ashtead Primary). In 2013 there was another shortfall of 27 and the LEA again provided temporary accommodation at The Greville Primary School. There is now a need to find a long term solution to the need for additional places as this looks to continue into the future.
- 53 In addition to the general need for places in the area, the shortage of Catholic places is particularly acute in the Ashtead/Leatherhead area. This is demonstrated in the number of baptisms in the parishes that St Peter's School serves. The increase in catholic baptisms across the parishes served by St Peter's School between 2007 and 2013 was up by 67% and the actual number of baptisms in 2013 at 70 is significantly above the existing 30 reception places available at St Peters Catholic School, which is the only Catholic School serving this area.

Alternative Sites

- 54 Notwithstanding the above the LEA did look at other options for providing the additional school places required in the area and the results of this are summarised below.

The Greville Primary School The LEA is consulting on expanding this school by 1 FE from 450 to 660 places and if this succeeds the school will be operating at capacity. However the Greville School alone cannot meet the need for all of the additional places forecast as required in the Ashtead area.

St Giles Infant School Only offers infant places and does not have a site big enough to expand

West Ashtead Primary The school has significant highways issues and expansion was deemed inappropriate

Barnett Wood Infant School Only offers infant places and does not have a site big enough to expand

Leatherhead Trinity School Not in the area of demand and does not have a site suitable for expansion

St Peters Catholic Primary School Has site big enough to accommodate expansion by 1FE also meets faith requirements as is the only Catholic School in the area.

- 55 In conclusion the applicant states that of all of the schools in the area only The Greville Primary and St Peters Catholic Primary can be expanded to meet the demand. Both the expansions are needed to meet the overall levels of need identified as the Greville site is not large enough to provide for all of it. This situation constitutes very special circumstances why planning permission should be granted for the development which lies within the Green Belt.

10

Whether need for additional school places constitutes very special circumstances

- 56 Officers consider that a robust case has been made by the applicants demonstrating a need to increase the number of primary school places within this area as summarised above and given the location, there are limited alternatives available. Paragraph 72 of the NPPF also lends additional weight to this proposal, this state's *'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.'*
- 57 Officers consider that the need set out above coupled with the lack of suitable alternative sites constitutes very special circumstances.

Conclusions on Green Belt

- 58 The new building proposed as part of this scheme constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Officers consider that the proposal causes harm to the Green Belt by virtue of its inappropriateness but also the size of the proposed extensions also cause harm to the open character of the Green Belt in this location. Notwithstanding this, officers are satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated that there is a clear need to increase this school from a one form of entry (1FE) primary school to a two form of entry (2FE) primary school. It has been demonstrated that this is the most suitable site within the local area and indeed is the only school able to address choice through the provision of Catholic Places. The accommodation therefore needed cannot be located within the urban area given the specific need in this area. The proposal would provide additional school places given the shortfall in the local area. Officers consider that the very special circumstances of need for additional school places to meet the clear demand within the local area which cannot be accommodated on another site clearly outweighs the harm

caused to the Green Belt by virtue of inappropriateness and other harm. Officers therefore consider that the proposal can be supported as an exception to Green Belt policy.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 59 The Human Rights Act Guidance for Interpretation, contained in the Preamble to the Agenda is expressly incorporated into this report and must be read in conjunction with the following paragraph.
- 60 In this case, the Officers' view is that while impacts on amenity caused by traffic movements at the start and end of the school day are acknowledged, the scale of such impact is not considered sufficient to engage Article 8 or Article 1 of Protocol 1. Their impact can be mitigated by conditions. As such, this proposal is not considered to interfere with any Convention right.

CONCLUSION

- 61 The development constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Officers consider that the very special circumstances of the need for additional school places within the area which cannot be accommodated elsewhere amount to factors which constitute very special circumstances which clearly outweigh the harm due to inappropriateness and the loss of openness. Officers are satisfied that the scale of the proposal is proportionate to the need and the harm to the Green Belt has been limited by locating the new building close to the existing buildings coupled with the sympathetic design of the building and appropriate use of materials .
- 62 Officers consider that the development can be permitted as an exception to Green Belt policy and that otherwise potential harm can be ameliorated by the imposition of planning conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

- 63 That pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, that application MO/2014/0778/SCC be PERMITTED subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:-

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in all respects strictly in accordance with the following plans/drawings:-
 - 1581 AL-01 rev C Location Plan dated 25/06/14
 - 1581 AL-02 rev C Site Plan Existing dated 22/04/14
 - 1581 AL-03 rev B Site Plan Proposed dated 22/04/14

1581 AL-05 rev B Plan Proposed dated 22/04/14
1581 AL-06 Roof Plan Proposed dated April 2014
1581 AL-11 Sections dated April 2014
1581 AL-31 rev A Elevations Existing dated 22/04/14
1581 AL-32 rev A Elevations Proposed dated 22/04/14
1097-SK4 rev P2 Drainage General Arrangement dated 22/04/14
St Peters school – Proposed Scheme (Sheet 1 of 5) drawing number FS/0001
St Peters school – Proposed Scheme (Sheet 2 of 5) drawing number FS/0002
St Peters school – Proposed Scheme (Sheet 3 of 5) drawing number FS/0003
St Peters school – Proposed Scheme (Sheet 4 of 5) drawing number FS/0004
St Peters school – Proposed Scheme (Sheet 5 of 5) drawing number FS/0005

3. The materials to be used on the external elevations of the building hereby approved shall match the existing building.
4. The building hereby approved shall be designed to achieve noise levels within the classrooms which accords with the guidance set out in Building Bulletins 93 and 101.
5. The measures set out in the Arboricultural Implication and Assessment and Method Statement by Babcock dated April 2014 shall be fully implemented prior to and during the construction of the development.
6. No later than six months after the commencement of the development hereby permitted a scheme to provide replacement trees for those trees to be removed on the frontage of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. Such scheme shall include the size, location and species of the proposed replacement trees and measures for the landscaping to be maintained for a period of five years. Such maintenance shall include the replacement of any tree or shrub which is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies or becomes in the opinion of the County Planning Authority seriously damaged or defective. The replacement shall be of the same species and size and in the same location as that originally planted.
7. The development shall not be occupied unless and until detailed schemes for the following has been submitted for approval by the County Planning Authority and have been implemented in full accordance with the details approved:
 - a) Measures to deter and prevent parking on verges and footways on Ottways Lane, Grange Road and Grange Mount and to improve pedestrian facilities (as generally shown on Atkins Drawings FS/0001, FS/0003, FS/0004 and FS/0005)
 - b) Measures to deter parking on the school access road and at the junction with Duckworth Drive (as generally shown on Atkins Drawing number FS/002 and cfp architects drawing 1581/AL-01 revision C)
 - c) The widening of the footway between Duckworth Drive and Grange Road (as generally shown on Atkins Drawing number FS/002)
 - d) The widening of the pedestrian access to Linden Pit Path and the provision of a parent waiting shelter

8. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted the Interim School Travel Plan shall be updated and submitted for approval to the County Planning Authority. The approved Travel Plan shall be implemented upon first occupation of the development hereby permitted and thereafter maintained, monitored and developed.
9. Subject to the provisions set out in Condition 10 below the development shall be implemented strictly in accordance with the 'Traffic Management Plan' dated May 2014 and stamped as received 26 June 2014
10. In carrying out the development hereby permitted, no HGV movements to or from the site shall take place between the hours of 8.15 and 9.15 am and 2.45 and 3.45 pm nor shall the contractor permit any HGVs associated with the development at the site to be laid up, waiting, in Grange Road, Ottways Lane and Harriots Lane during these times.
11. The development shall not be occupied unless and until a scheme for the phased introduction of an additional 50 cycle parking spaces has been submitted for approval to the County Planning Authority and the approved scheme has been implemented in full accordance with the details approved.
12. In carrying out the development hereby permitted, no construction activities shall take place except between the hours of 8.00 and 18.00 between Mondays and Fridays and between 8.00 and 13.00 on Saturdays. There shall be no working on Sundays or bank and public/national holidays.

Reasons:

1. To comply with Section 91 (1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
3. To ensure a satisfactory form of development having regard to the visual amenity of the area in order to comply with policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2009 and policies ENV22, ENV23 and CF2 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000
4. To ensure satisfactory conditions for the occupiers of the building in accordance with Policy EVV22 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000
5. In the interest of the visual amenity of the site and the area in accordance with policy ENV22 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000
6. In the interest of the visual amenity of the area in accordance with policy ENV22 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000
7. To ensure that the development does not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users in accordance with Policies MOV2, MOV5 and CF2 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000
8. To manage and mitigate the highways implications of the development hereby permitted in accordance with Policies MOV2, MOV5 and ENV22 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000
9. To manage and mitigate the highways implications of the development hereby permitted in accordance with Policies MOV2, MOV5 and ENV22 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000
10. In the interests of the amenity of the residential dwellings in the vicinity of the site in accordance with Policy ENV22 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000

11. To manage and mitigate the highways implications of the development hereby permitted in accordance with Policies MOV2, MOV5 and ENV22 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000
12. In the interests of the amenity of the residential dwellings in the vicinity of the site in accordance with Policy ENV22 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000

Informatives:

1. The attention of the applicant is drawn to the requirements of Sections 7 and 8 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and to Building Bulletin 102 'Designing for disabled children and children with Special Educational Needs' published in 2008 on behalf of the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, or any prescribed document replacing that note.
2. This approval relates only to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and must not be taken to imply or be construed as an approval under the Building Regulations 2000 or for the purposes of any other statutory provision whatsoever.
3. The County Planning Authority confirms that in assessing this planning application it has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the requirements of paragraph 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
4. Details of the highway requirements necessary for inclusion in any application seeking approval of reserved matters may be obtained from the Transportation Development Planning Division of Surrey County Council. The permission hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to carry out any works on the highway. The applicant is advised that prior approval must be obtained from the Highway Authority before any works are carried out on any footway, footpath, carriageway, or verge. There will be a charge.
5. The Highway Authority would wish to see the predominant use of double height kerbs and fewer bollards than shown on the initial drawings to deter parking as these have less long-term maintenance liability.
6. The developer is reminded that it is an offence to allow materials to be carried from the site and deposited on or damage the highway from uncleaned wheels or badly loaded vehicles. The Highway Authority will seek, wherever possible, to recover any expenses incurred in clearing, cleaning or repairing highway surfaces and prosecutes persistent offenders. (Highways Act 1980 Sections 131, 148, 149).
7. Section 59 of the Highways Act permits the Highway Authority to charge developers for damage caused by excessive weight and movements of vehicles to and from a site. The Highway Authority will pass on the cost of any excess repairs compared to normal maintenance costs to the applicant/organisation responsible for the damage.

CONTACT

Dawn Horton-Baker

TEL. NO.

020 8541 9435

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The deposited application documents and plans, including those amending or clarifying the proposal, responses to consultations and representations received as referred to in the report and included in the application file and the following:

Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Guidance 2012

The Development Plan

The Mole Valley Core Strategy 2009
The Mole Valley Local Plan 2000

Other Documents

Building Bulletins 93 and 101
