

10 February 2021

Kent County Council
Planning Applications Group
First Floor, Invicta House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XX

Dear Kent County Council

Re: Supporting Statement - explanation for the Amherst School's new classroom proposal

1. The Process, assessment and motivation for change:

The primary reason for the new Amherst School classroom is to provide a space to which children can go during the school day with a teacher for one-to-one extra reading and maths lessons, as well as in small groups for additional revision. Amherst welcomes children of all abilities, the classroom has been designed for accessible wheelchair use, it is aimed to be a room away from the school, a break-out space, surrounded by greenery, with lots of light and good views of trees and fields. The room will also be used as a breakfast club and after school club. Caring for children in a separate space before and after school assists in the security of the school as a whole, as well as makes the children feel they are not still in school, rather they are in a fun building, nestled between greenery.

2. Amount:

The gross external metre square of the new proposed classroom is 101.8m².

3. Design Layout:

The classroom has one central space which could be divided into two by using the bifold door system. The kitchen on one end is to enable staff to provide the children with a snack before and after school. This building has toilets for boys and girls. The large panes of glass in the new classroom will face the school's existing glassed classroom, therefore providing a comforting link in transparency, but at the same time providing a special space for privacy.

4. Scale:

The building is recessed into the current bank of land, which assists in reducing the height. The boundary hedge is trimmed to a height of approximately 97.11m (Please see Section AA on sheet 301) and the majority of the building is below this level. The classroom is a far distance from the street, which is the closest boundary i.e. 17.8 metres away from the pavement

5. Appearance:

The building is designed to 'roll down the hill', in terms of the playing field at the high end of the site and the school being at the lower level. The new classroom cuts into the high level and curves down towards the school. The curved roof is created as a fun shape to which children can relate, which makes for a more inviting building as well as reflects the curve on the school across the road, Riverhead Infants School. Most children start at Riverhead Infants School and progress onto Amherst. The new classroom's brick will match the yellow brick of Amherst School. The stone capping to the parapet walls will blend in well with the yellow brick and create a smart appearance. The glass panes and white frames will reflect the school's current windows and doors.

6. Sustainability:

The building has been designed with 365mm thick insulated walls and 475mm insulated ceiling, which will provide an enhanced thermal barrier. The photo voltaic solar panels will produce the heat to fuel the underfloor heating which is proposed throughout the building.

7. Access:

Children would use the existing school paths to reach the classroom. There are two security gates off the street before the classroom front door.

8. Biodiversity:

Bird and insect life will not be interrupted with the positioning of the new classroom as it is astride the bank, well away from the boundary hedges. The school will erect eight new bird feeds on peripheral trees, avoiding trees where foliage obscures the entrance hole to the bird feed. The positioning of the bird feeds will be within direct line of flight across the field. The bird boxes to be erected are the Schwegler Nestbox.

9. Conclusion:

The new classroom aims to be well away from all boundaries and nestled into the bank. The side elevations have no windows, therefore the neighbouring houses beyond the closest boundaries would have no greater visual or noise increase than the current school emits. We have aimed to follow the architecture of the neighbouring buildings with the colours, textures and finishes and create a fun curved shape to which children relate when viewed both internally and externally.

10. Pre-planning advice with Sevenoaks Planning Department:

We held a pre-application advice meeting via Zoom with planning officer Louise Cane on 08.02.2021. Ms Cane provided positive feedback and supported our scheme. Please see attached her letter.

Please find attached drawings for pre-application advice.

Yours sincerely



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