



Phase 2

Planning & Heritage Statement

Provision of a classroom extension, infill extension and internal alternations to improve existing facilities, new fencing and hard play area and removal of mobile classroom and base and erection of a shed

Townley Primary School, Crown Road, Christchurch, Wisbech PE14 9NA

On Behalf of

Cambridgeshire County Council

July 2023

Our Ref: C23049

Phase 2 PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT LIMITED

270 Avenue West | Skyline 120 | Great Notley | Braintree | Essex | CM77 7AA | 01376 329059 | www.phase2planning.co.uk

Quality Assurance

Site Name: Townley Primary School, Crown Road, Christchurch, Wisbech PE14 9NA

Client Name: Cambridgeshire County Council

Type of Report: Planning Statement

Author	Initials	Date
Samantha Stephenson BA (HONS), MScTP, MRTPI Principal Planner	SS	June 2023

Reviewed	Initials	Date
Lisa Skinner BSc (Hons) MA DipMgt MRTPI Director	LS	June 2023

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Site and Surroundings	3
3. Planning History	5
4. The Proposed Development	7
5. Planning Policy	10
6. Consideration of the Main Issues	15
7. Conclusion.....	24

1. Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Phase 2 Planning and Development Ltd for Jeakins Weir on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council, (CCC), hereafter referred to as the applicant, in support of a full planning application to erect a classroom extension, alongside an infill extension and internal and external alterations at Townley Primary School, Crown Road, Christchurch, Wisbech PE14 9NA.

1.2 This application for the proposed works is pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.

1.3 The description of development is as follows:

“Provision of a classroom extension, infill extension and internal alternations to improve existing facilities, new fencing and hard play area, removal of mobile classroom and base and erection of a shed”

Purpose and Structure of this Report

1.4 The purpose of this report is to draw together the main planning issues in the consideration of this proposal.

Planning Application Documents

1.5 The plans forming part of this application submission have been prepared by Pick Everard and comprise:

Drawing Title	Drawing no.
Location Plan	110630-PEV-XX-XX-DR-A-9000 P02
Existing Site Plan	110630-PEV-XX-XX-DR-A-9100 P02
Proposed Site Plan	110630-PEV-XX-XX-DR-A-9200 P04
Existing Ground Floor Plan	110630-PEV-XX-00-DR-A-9300 P02
Existing Roof Plan	110630-PEV-XX-R0-DR-A-9301 P02
Proposed Ground Floor Plan	110630-PEV-XX-00-DR-A-9400 P04
Proposed Roof Plan	110630-PEV-XX-R0-DR-A-9401 P02
Existing Elevations	110630-PEV-XX-XX-DR-A-9500 P02
Proposed Elevations	110630-PEV-XX-XX-DR-A-9600 P04

1.6 Further drawings have been submitted that include landscape proposals and lighting proposals.

1.7 In addition, a number of supporting documents have been prepared in support of this planning application which comprise the following:

1. Local Authority Development Letter
2. This Planning Statement including the Heritage Statement
3. Design and Access Statement
4. Ecological Appraisal
5. Biodiversity Survey and Report, Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Checklist
6. Tree Survey/Arboricultural Report
7. Surface Water Strategy
8. Foul Drainage Strategy
9. Landscape Proposals
10. Proposed Lighting Layout
11. Transport Statement
12. Construction Environmental Management and Traffic Plan
13. Photo Sheet
14. Covering Letter

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 Townley Primary School is situated in the village of Christchurch in the Fenland district of Cambridgeshire and is located on a site of approximately 1.3 hectares. Christchurch is situated 10 miles north of Ely and 7 miles south east of March. The A141 runs between Chatteris and March is 10 miles to the west and the A10 running between Downham Market and Littleport is 10 miles to the east.



Figure 1: The application site: Source Google Maps

- 2.2 The village is effectively a ‘ribbon’ development with two roads running through the village. Roads run to the north west and south west of the village and are both B roads. The nearest ‘A’ road, the A1101, runs from Welney to Upwell, which runs in a north south direction to the east of Christchurch.
- 2.3 Townley School is a 0.5 FE school with a capacity of 105 school places, with a 15-place nursery. The school currently caters for children between ages 2 and 11 years, covering nursery, reception stage and year groups 1 to 6. The school currently has approximately 100 pupils comprising approximately 72 families, with a high number of siblings attending the school. The school currently employs 25 staff, which are a combination of full and part-time posts.
- 2.4 The school is located on Crown Road. The vehicle entrance takes you along the side of the site at the southern end which accesses the car park. This also provides access to the playing fields via double gates for grounds maintenance. Further along Crown Road is a pedestrian entrance which leads directly to the main entrance and access to the mobile classroom and early years play area. Continuing north there is a further pedestrian access point providing access to the main school playground.
- 2.5 Townley Primary School is predominantly single-storey rendered facade with brick pier details under plain tile pitched roofs. Some of the ancillary accommodation has flat bitumen felt coverings. The main entrance and hall are to the front of the site. The teaching accommodation is mainly to the rear of the main building with a separate dining and kitchen facility behind the main block, linked to the school with a covered walkway. One

playground is located to the north of the school, with a swimming pool adjacent to the northern boundary. There is an EYFS play area to the south-east corner and an area of play equipment to west side of the playground, with extensive playing fields beyond. There is a significant tree belt within the school site on the southern side of the playing field.

2.6 The school is bordered to the north, east and west by residential properties and to the south by a field and a Grade II Listed Building (Syringa House, Upwell Road), the boundary with the school is obscured by hedging. The village also contains a church, a public house and a community centre. The nearest railway station is at Manea (5.5 miles), which links to March to the north and Ely to the south.

2.7 The site is partly within the settlement boundary (school buildings) and partly outside. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency maps, this means that the site falls outside of any identified flood plains. The site is not within a Conservation Area or covered by a TPO. The area is also indicated as having potential for archaeological interest. Another heritage asset locally in the area is the Christchurch and Welney Pipeline.

3. Planning History & Consultation

3.1 The key planning history that is relevant to this site relates to the following planning applications that have been submitted to the County Council:

- Demolition of Horsa building and erection of a building to be used as a kitchen and dining hall, ancillary accommodation with revised parking layout. Condition 2: Approved plans and documents, Condition 7: Tree planting and biodiversity enhancement, Condition 9: Lighting Ref. No: F/2016/16/CC/C1 Status: Approve
- Non-material amendment to condition 3 of application F/2016/16/CC, to amend the approved external facing materials to match the existing school building. Ref. No: F/2016/16/CC/N1 Status: Approve
- Demolition of Horsa building and erection of a building to be used as a kitchen and dining hall, ancillary accommodation with revised parking layout. Ref. No: F/2016/16/CC Status: Approve
- To provide extension to front of property and a disabled use toilet Ref. No: F/01072/00/CC Status: Approve
- Extension To Existing Classbase And Provision Of New Classbase And Cloakroom Ref. No: F/00098/96/CC Status: Approve
- Extensions To Provide Additional Toilet Accommodation Ref. No: F/00326/80/CC Status: Approve

Pre-Application Advice and Consultation

i) Pre-application advice

3.2 A decision was made not to seek pre-application advice as the project meets all the requirements for permitted development except for the maximum permitted height and is considered to be of small scale The proposed height respects the visual character of the existing school and its context rather than seeking to reduce the height of the ridge, which led to the requirement for a formal application.

ii) Consultation

3.3 Whilst no public consultation was undertaken for the same reasons as outlined above, a number of Statutory Consultees were consulted, and this feedback was integral to the design of the development and included:

-
- Sport England advised that the proposed extensions to the school does not impact on the playing field, and meets exception 3 of the playing fields policy. There is a slight incursion onto the playing field to create an additional play area, however this does not impact on the one football pitch on the playing field and therefore meets exception 3 of their playing fields policy.
 - Consultation with the Historic Environment Team confirmed that no archaeology investigations will be required.
 - As there is no change to the pupil numbers, there is no increase in traffic. However, a Transport Statement was commissioned which found minor deficiencies to the pedestrian network, such as tactile paving and noted general repairs required, but no significant issues were identified.
 - Cambridgeshire Constabulary provided their recommendations which have been considered during the design.
 - Cambridgeshire Fire Safety Advisor reviewed the proposals and confirmed that the proposal appeared to be acceptable.

3.4 The design has evolved to address these concerns and the amendments to the scheme are fully detailed in the Design and Access Statement.

4. The Proposed Development

4.1 This planning application seeks full planning permission to provide permanent facilities for the school, replacing the existing mobile classroom that is beyond economic repair, that provides 2 classroom with 15 pupils in each room. There is no increase in pupil numbers or staff. It is proposed to extend to the northeast corner of the school to provide a new year 5/6 classroom and associated facilities. This frees space within the existing school to provide new nursery/reception accommodation, together with a small extension to the west providing ancillary accommodation. There will also be some associated external works.

4.2 The description of development reads as follows:

“Provision of a classroom extension, infill extension and internal alternations to improve existing facilities, new fencing and hard play area and removal of the existing mobile classroom and base and erection of a shed”

4.3 The overall floor area can be broken down as follows:

	Existing School GIFA sqm	Demolition /Removal	Proposed GIFA	Increase in floor area GIFA
Existing school	645			
Mobile	141	- 141		
New School			775	
Overall extension increase at site				130
New shed				13

4.4 The new elements include the rear infill extension, (24sqm GEA), the main side classroom extension, (109 sqm GEA) and the new shed, (13sqmGEA). This creates a total new build on the site of 146 sqm GEA.

4.5 The proposal comprises of a new year 5/6 classroom with associated toilets to the north-east corner of the existing building. Year 5/6 pupils will move from their current classroom on the south side of the school. The main extension will extend into the existing playground, parallel to the road, and uses the existing playground entrance door to access into the extension. The

lockers will be recessed from the corridor, and new male and female toilets are provided, allowing the existing KS1 toilet to be stripped out and used as a store.

- 4.6 The newly vacated existing year 5/6 classroom will be remodelled into a pre-school and reception class with the addition of age-appropriate toilets within the class space. In order to accommodate a food prep area and to replace the lost boys WCs, it is proposed that there be an infill extension to the rear of the school. This proposed infill will replace part of the existing canopy to the dining hall and wrap around the current boy's and girl's WCs. The existing external canopy would be cut back but remain to protect the walkway to the dining hall.
- 4.7 The proposed classroom extension is of single-storey construction to match the adjacent school building with corresponding ground floor levels. The largest space is the 62m² classroom space which is taller to align through with the hall and matches the hipped roof and high eaves line. The accompanying accommodation has a flat roof which is higher than the adjacent to allow for simpler interfacing and rainwater management.
- 4.8 The rear extension has a flat roof which will tie into the existing, therefore its level is to match the adjacent construction. The infill construction will be flanked on both sides by the taller classrooms.
- 4.9 In terms of appearance and materials, it is important to match the form and appearance of the extension with the existing school building. This limited material palette also reflects the wider village context. The external wall construction consists of red facing brick piers with render panels between. The classrooms and hall have high, hipped, plain tile roofs and tall, fenestrated glazing. The adjoining accommodation has a flat roof and follows the render panel and brick pier arrangement.
- 4.10 The proposed hipped roof form fitted matches the existing and the roof profile takes cues from the adjacent hall, with the eaves line aligned through to the new hipped roof over the classroom. The WC area to the rear of the classroom is covered with a flat roof, to correspond to that of the existing school adjacent. The extension to the rear will be a simple red facing brick panel and will reflect the red brick of the dining hall opposite. The roof line will match the adjacent existing construction to assist with rainwater runoff.
- 4.11 The proposal includes external works to increase the hard play areas, to ensure the school can retain a full-size netball court marked on the playground. The existing hard standing will be extended, requiring the removal of the existing sand pit and play equipment. One of the sheds (which is 13.5 sqm) will be demolished in order to accommodate the new position of the netball court. New provision of storage will be provided.

-
- 4.12 The area previously occupied by the current mobile classroom is to be utilised as a play area for the Reception/Pre-School. The mobile classroom sits on existing hard standing, at completion of the works the existing mobile will be removed and the secure fence line altered to return the existing hard standing as outdoor space
- 4.13 The proposed extension extends into the existing hard playground and to compensate for the loss of external space the hardstanding is to be extended in line with the end of the dining hall and the existing play equipment and sandbox removed. It is proposed to replace the play equipment in the same location.
- 4.14 New fencing is also proposed as some of the fences are not high enough and would not meet the County Council's "safe and secure environment" objective. The new fence and gate proposed is to be erected at the corner to the new early years classroom to the boundary. It will be a 1.8m high weld mesh to match the existing (see photo sheet for photo of the existing fence and gate and proposed site plan A-9200 for proposed location).
- 4.15 With regard to energy efficiency, the design incorporates the following;
- Siting, design, layout and orientation to minimise impact on the existing site;
 - Where required, high efficiency plant and equipment to minimise carbon emissions;
 - Use of renewable and recycled products and materials;
 - Waste reduction measures both in construction and in use.
- 4.16 Whilst official BREEAM accreditation will not be sought, the development will be self-assessed against BREEAM principles and achieve a standard of 'Very Good'. The building fabric will achieve 'U' value ratings in excess of current building regulations standards.
- 4.17 With reference to accessibility, the works will comply with Part M of the Building Regulations and ensure inclusive access in and around the building and will include the following:
- Level access approach to all principle entrances;
 - Wheelchair accessible doors where appropriate;
 - Doors fitted with closers of a type that require no more than the maximum permitted opening force;
 - Doors containing vision panels to provide visibility from 500mm to 1500mm minimum above floor level; and
 - Accessible toilet facilities.

It is anticipated that the development will commence November 2023, scheduled for completion August 2024, and be operational before the start of term in September 2024.

5. Planning Policy

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is therefore necessary to consider the Development Plan for the area and it is also appropriate to have regard to Government guidance. This section of the Statement sets out a summary of the Government guidance and the main planning policies that are relevant to the consideration of the proposal.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies. It identifies the Government's vision, objectives and goals for the planning system and provides guidance on the determination of planning applications.

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development

- 5.3 In paragraphs 7 and 8 the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of 'sustainable development' and states that sustainable development has a role to provide accessible local services that reflect the current and future needs of the community. The NPPF is clear that there are economic, social, and environmental dimensions to sustainable forms of development.
- 5.4 Paragraph 10 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is a core theme throughout the NPPF. It is set out at paragraph 11 and is required to be incorporated in plan making and pursued in decision making.
- 5.5 Paragraph 12 outlines that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not affect the statutory status of the Development Plan, which is the starting point for decision making. Development proposals that accord with an "up-to-date" development plan should usually be granted. The NPPF also identifies that local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

Section 4 - Decision Making

- 5.6 Paragraph 38 requires local planning authorities to proactively work with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. The paragraph continues stating that *"Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible."*

-
- 5.7 Paragraphs 39-42 encourage pre-application engagement and the benefits that can follow from this.

Section 8 - Healthy and Safe Communities

- 5.8 Section 8 relates to promoting healthy and safe communities, and this includes creating safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder and the fear of crime do not underpin the quality of life or community cohesion. Paragraph 93 requires LPAs to *“plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities ... and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments”*.
- 5.9 Paragraph 95 of NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to ensuring a sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities. In doing so, LPAs should *“give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools...”*.
- 5.10 Paragraphs 98 & 99 refer to the importance of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land and these should not be built on unless they are surplus to requirements, equivalent or better facilities would be provided, or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision that offer benefits that would outweigh the loss of the current use.

Section 9 - Sustainable Transport

- 5.11 The NPPF also recognises the importance of access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity as being important for the health and wellbeing of communities.
- 5.12 Paragraph 104 requires transport issues to be considered from the earliest stages of developing proposals and 111 states that *“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”*

Section 11 – Making effective use of land

- 5.13 Paragraph 119 seeks to ensure that Local Authorities make as much use as possible of previously developed or ‘brownfield’ land.
- 5.14 Paragraph 120 includes several relevant points as follows:

“d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and

available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lockups and railway infrastructure) and”

- 5.15 Paragraph 123 states *“Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs.”*
- 5.16 Paragraph 123 states that local planning authorities should support proposals to *“make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools and hospitals, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space.”*

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places

- 5.17 The Government’s commitment to good design, which it sees as a key aspect of sustainable development, indivisible from good planning, is set out at section 12 of the NPPF. It states at paragraph 126 that, *“good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.”*
- 5.18 Paragraph 130 requires development to function well over its lifetime, be visually attractive with a considered layout, be sympathetic to local character, establish a strong sense of place, optimise the development potential of a site and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 5.19 Paragraph 132 sets out a requirement for Applicants to work closely with those most directly affected by their proposals and evolve designs taking into account their views. It confirms that applications that demonstrate early, proactive engagement with the local community should be looked upon more favourably than those that cannot.
- 5.20 Paragraph 134 states that applications should be refused if they are not well designed, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.
- 5.21 Conversely, significant weight should be given to development which reflects local design policies and government guidance and/or outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding, and coastal change

- 5.22 This section seeks to direct inappropriate development away from areas at the highest risk of flooding and advises local planning authorities on determining planning applications that they should 'Ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere'.

Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 5.23 This Section focuses on recognising the importance of the environment.

Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The NPPF requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage. It states at paragraph 200 that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. It states at paragraph 202 that *“where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal...”*.

Local Planning Policy

- 5.24 The site is within the administrative boundary of Fenland District Council, (FDC). The Development Plan for the area comprises the Fenland's Local Plan that was adopted in 2014. The following policies are considered to be relevant:

- LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents
- LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside
- LP6 – Employment, Tourism, Community Facilities and Retail
- LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy
- LP13 – Supporting and Managing the Impact of a Growing District
- LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland
- LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland
- LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District
- LP17 – Community Safety
- LP18 – The Historic Environment
- LP19 – The Natural Environment

Emerging Local Plan

- 5.25 The Draft Fenland Local Plan (2022) was published for consultation between 25th August 2022 and 19 October 2022, all comments received will be reviewed and any changes arising from

the consultation will be made to the draft Local Plan. Given the very early stage which the Plan is therefore at, it is considered, in accordance with Paragraph 48 of the NPPF, that the policies of this should carry extremely limited weight in decision making. Of relevance to this application are policies:

- LP1 – Settlement Hierarchy
- LP5 – Health and Wellbeing
- LP7 – Design
- LP8 – Amenity Provision
- LP 11 Community Safety
- LP 17 Culture, Leisure, Tourism and Community Facilities
- LP18 – Development in the Countryside
- LP20 – Accessibility and Transport
- LP22 – Parking Provision
- LP 23 - Historic Environment
- LP 24 - Natural Environment
- LP27 - Trees and Planting
- LP32 – Flood and Water Management

[Supplementary Planning Documents \(SPD\)](#)

- Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD

6. Consideration of the Main Issues

6.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 identifies that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Having identified and reviewed the relevant planning policy and national guidance, the main issues concerning this planning application are:

- The principle of the development;
- Design and layout;
- Impact on Heritage Assets;
- Trees and Landscaping Proposals
- Living Conditions of Existing Residents;
- Sustainable transport, access and parking;
- Ecology and biodiversity;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Construction; and
- Energy and sustainability;

6.2. Each of these matters will be considered in turn below.

The principle of the development

6.3. There are two key matters of principle to be considered. Firstly, the site is primarily within the settlement boundary and already operates as an educational establishment and secondly there is a need for this proposed development .

i) Development in the open countryside

6.4. Christchurch is defined within the Local Plan, as a “Small Village” where development will be considered on its merits but will normally be of a very limited nature. In accordance with Policies LP1 & LP3 the site is considered to be in a sustainable location and the planning policies state that proposals will be supported to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in Fenland and brings benefits for all sectors of the community. Policy LP12 supports new development where it contributes to the sustainability of that settlement and does not harm the wide open character of the countryside. The principle of development in this location would therefore be considered acceptable.

-
- 6.5. Policy LP2 seeks to achieve the highest attainable standard of health and wellbeing, while LP13 seeks to provide access to good infrastructure. Emerging Policy LP17 supports the development of new cultural, leisure, tourism and community facilities that help improve the range and quality of facilities for local communities and makes the most of existing facilities.
- 6.6. There is a need for the enhancement of education facilities which improve accessibility and quality of education provision. At present, education provision is met through reliance on a mobile classroom located on site; this temporary solution is unsustainable and the unit is well beyond its lifespan, hindering the ability of the School to deliver high quality education to the local population. This is not compliant with requirements stipulated in local policy or national policy. The proposals will facilitate the removal of the mobile classroom (shown on drawings A-9100 Existing Site Plan, A-9200 Proposed Site Plan and the submitted photo sheet), which is considered to be strongly supported in planning policy terms and is a benefit of the scheme. The importance of delivering suitable schools, able to provide quality education to the local community is reflected in paragraph 95 of the NPPF: The importance of *“a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities”* and Local Planning Authorities should *“a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications.”*

ii) The need

- 6.7. The application is accompanied by Local Authority Development Letter that details the need for the proposed development. The proposed extensions will replace a substandard building, delivering a more suitable space for the classroom and improve the energy efficiency of the site by removing the mobile classroom which is far from ideal, its condition, lack of insulation and age means that it is deteriorating. There is a recognised need for a more permanent teaching provision. The proposal as stated would not lead to any additional pupils or staff at the School and merely seeks to provide a suitable standard of building in which to educate the pupils.
- 6.8. The erection of the proposed extensions will enhance and improve education facilities in scale, range and quality compliant with policy. Improvements will be made to the quality of teaching facilities, moving from a mobile classroom into a school of high quality design.

Design and layout

- 6.9. The aim of the proposals is to create permanent provision, promote accessibility and flexibility for all and a high quality of design for internal, external spaces and the public realm. The form of the building responds to the nature of the use and the overall site constraints, the extensions would be single storey in form in keeping with the existing school. The aesthetic of the proposed extensions has largely been informed by the existing school, using consistent and in-keeping materials, as detailed above in Section 4 and further in the submitted Design

& Access Statement. The proposal has also been designed in order to reflect the existing school. Both the design and materials *“responds to and improves the character of the local built environment, ...reinforces local identity and does not adversely impact, either in design or scale terms, on the street scene”* being largely guided by existing materials and colour palates on site, thereby consistent with policy LP16. The need for design and layout to be *“sympathetic to local character, and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting”*, is referenced in paragraph 130 of the NPPF and throughout Chapter 12.

- 6.10. The proposed classroom extension is of single-storey construction to match the adjacent school building with corresponding ground floor levels and matches the hipped roof and high eaves line. While the rear extension has a flat roof which will tie into the existing matching the adjacent construction. Proposed materials will match the existing with the use of red facing brick and render panels.
- 6.11. The design and layout are therefore considered to represent good design with regard to site characteristics and the surrounding context and would comply with national guidance within the NPPF and the adopted policies of the local plan.
- 6.12. The extended building would be visible in the streetscene, however the sympathetic design, scale and matching materials are considered to be appropriate in this location and would not adversely impact the character and appearance of the area and is therefore considered acceptable in relation to national planning guidance and policies LP16 of the adopted local plan and LP7 of the emerging Local Plan.

Impact on Heritage Assets

- 6.13. The Grade II Syringa House on Upwell Road is adjacent to the site, however while the proposed development will be visible from within the street scene on Crown Road, it is considered that due to the distance from the site to the listed building (see figure 2 below), the intervening soft landscaping and the appropriate design and materials utilised that there will be no detrimental impact on the setting of the listed building.

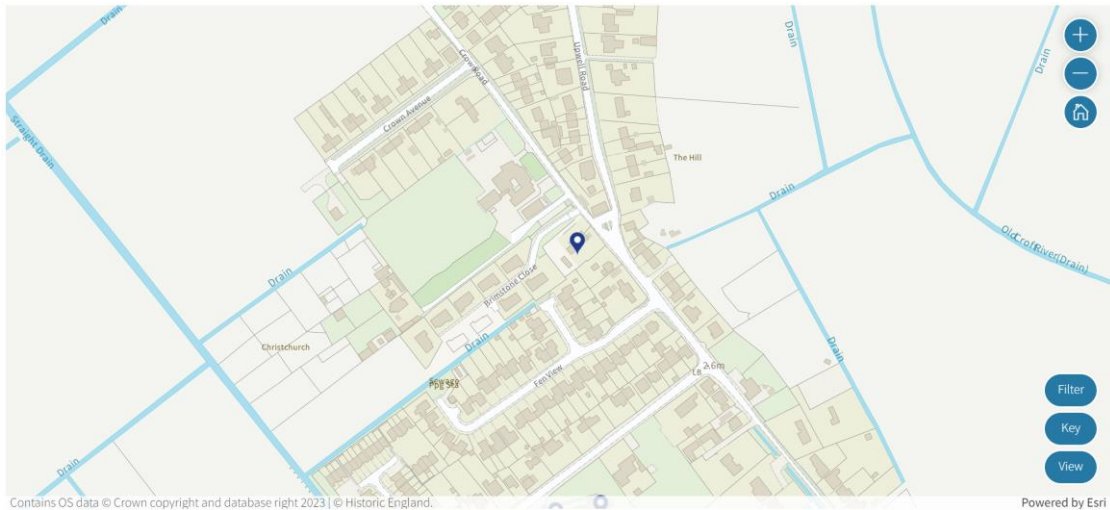


Figure 2: Historic England map identifies Syringa House

- 6.14. Further the removal of the existing temporary mobile classroom base sited to the south is considered to enhance the setting of the listed building.
- 6.15. Another heritage asset in the area is the Christchurch and Welney Pipeline which will not be impacted upon by this development. The pipeline was laid in 2008 and during the work archaeological finds were made but these were not in the proximity of the school and the proposed works. This has been confirmed by the Cambridgeshire County Council Heritage Environment Team.

Trees and Landscaping proposals

- 6.16. The application is accompanied by the submission of a Tree Survey, Impact Assessment & Outline Method Statement this identifies 15 individual trees on the site, all commonly-planted amenity species, none are ancient or otherwise particularly noteworthy. One tree (T07, a remnant semi-mature cherry in very poor condition by the current vehicle entrance) was classed as unsuitable for retention: removal is recommended.
- 6.17. There are 2 high quality specimens: T02, a large mature beech in a prominent position on the frontage with the road, and T12, a good example of a mature silver birch on the eastern boundary, the proposed development should not adversely impact these trees. Protective fencing will be erected to prevent any of the soft ground inside the RPAs of trees from being damaged.
- 6.18. One tree needs to be removed to accommodate the work. This is T10, a sapling silver birch graded C (low quality) in the tree survey which is growing in the area of soft ground which is to be converted to hard play. Its loss is not significant arboriculturally, the landscaping proposals forming part of the planning application include a replacement tree.

-
- 6.19. The submitted report concludes that the development proposals will not cause any material risk of harm to retained trees provided the method statement is followed. The only tree that has to be removed is not significant: as a sapling it can readily be replaced. The Applicant is happy to accept a condition ensuring compliance with the submitted Outline Method Statement.
- 6.20. Compliant with policies LP16, LP17 and LP19 of the local plan, the proposed landscaping respects, retains, and enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the local landscape. The Landscape Proposals Plan (ref: 2317-WWA-ZZ-ZZ-LS-0001 P04), shows how there is minimal impact on the existing landscape with only the relocation of a groundskeepers' shed, extension to the hard standing and new secure line fence where the existing relocatable has been removed. The landscape proposal will provide new hard standing to ensure a full size netball court can still be marked and includes replacement trees and shrubs.
- 6.21. As the proposals are unlikely to result in any loss of features of ecological interest there is no requirement for mitigation, however it is appropriate to consider opportunities for enhancement. One tree bird nesting box and one bat box will be placed on retained trees, ideally within the woodland on site. Any new planting scheme will include native trees, shrubs and bulbs and the project ecologist consulted as part of the landscape design plans.
- 6.22. The proposed landscaping is therefore shown to retain and enhance landscaping on site, with the quality and quantity of landscaped areas to be used by both staff and pupils on site increased.

Living Conditions of Existing Residents

- 6.23. While the proposed extension to the front of the site moves built form closer to the boundary to the north, there still exists a significant distance to the boundary to ensure that there will be no additional impact on neighbouring amenity. Due to the distance, orientation of the building and the fact that the extension would be single storey, it is not considered there would be any adverse impact on existing residential amenity due to loss of light, overshadowing or loss of privacy.
- 6.24. The proposed development does not increase the number of pupils or staff on site, consequently there will be no increased noise and disturbance.
- 6.25. The amenities of existing residents have therefore been taken into account and the proposal is therefore considered acceptable in relation to national planning guidance and policy LP2, and LP16 of the adopted local plan.

Sustainable transport, access and parking

- 6.26. While the proposed development does not increase pupil or staff numbers, and no additional classes are proposed, with the extension looking only to provide enhanced facilities for the number of pupils already attending the school, this application is accompanied by a Transport Statement (TS).
- 6.27. The TS outlines the existing operation of the school and presents any matters that influence the travel patterns of the staff and children to the school. An audit of the existing sustainable transport routes to the school has also been undertaken to identify any additional facilities and improvements that would be beneficial to the school following the opening of the proposed extensions to the building.
- 6.28. The TS concludes that some minor deficiencies of the pedestrian network, such as tactile paving and general repairs were identified, but in general no significant issues were identified. No additional car parking or cycle parking is proposed, with the existing cycle and scooter parking located close to the existing temporary classroom being relocated within the site, at a location to be agreed with the school. As there are no additional pupils or staff as a result of these proposals, it is not considered appropriate to require any such improvements as a condition of the approval for this current proposal.
- 6.29. Further, although the school drop-off and pick-up necessitates parents parking on Crown Road and Upwell Road, the existing arrangements appear to operate effectively, with no delay to traffic on the highway network.
- 6.30. The TS recommends that consideration may be given to providing cover for the cycle parking, covered cycle parking may encourage cycling to the school.

Ecology and Biodiversity

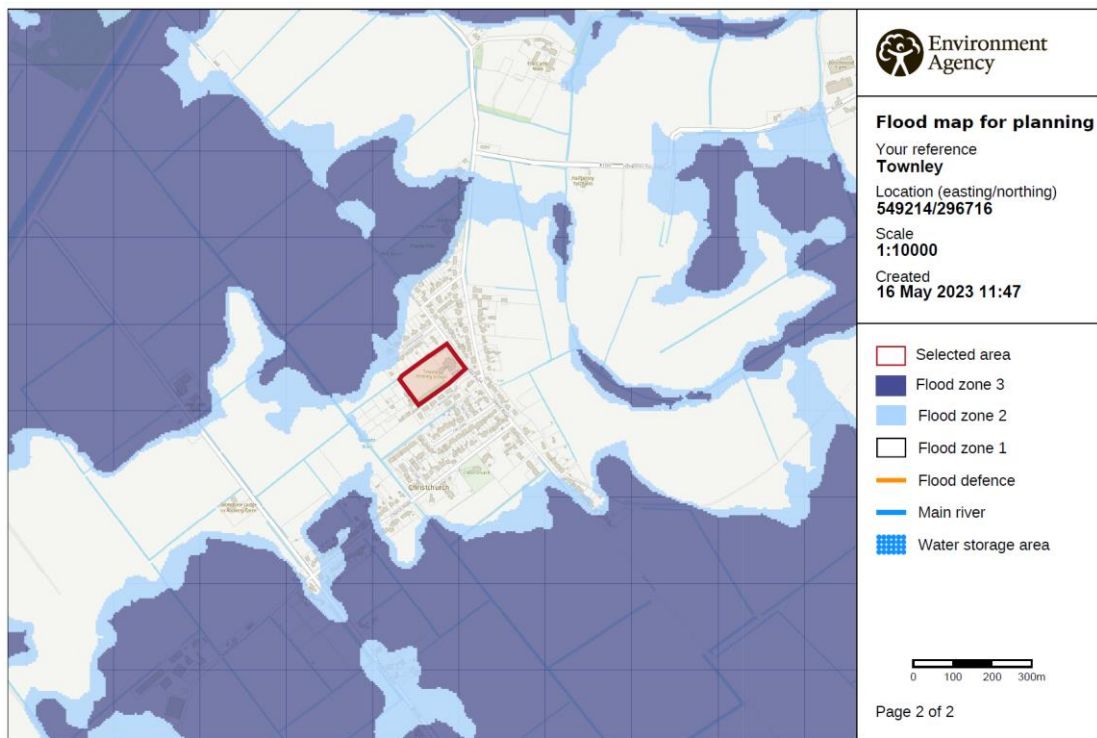
- 6.31. This application is accompanied by the submission of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), this confirms that school does not include and is not within close proximity of any protected or local sites. The majority of the site comprises buildings, hardstanding and amenity grassland, with an area of semi-mature broadleaved woodland, hedges and scattered trees. The proposals will involve the loss of one sapling, some amenity grassland, an area of hardstanding and three built structures comprising, two sheds and a temporary classroom.
- 6.32. The majority of development footprint lies within an area of existing hardstanding forming the current playground. There are no habitats or features of ecological value within this area, and as such there are no perceived impacts to the development of the single storey extension. There is an area of amenity grassland which is currently part of the playing field, housing an outdoor trim trail. The play facilities are unsafe in their current state and therefore not used

by the school. This small area of amenity grassland will be removed to facilitate a new section of hardstanding play area for the school. Amenity grassland in this location is of negligible ecological value and, as such, no negative impacts of habitat loss are perceived in relation to the proposed development.

- 6.33. The PEA concludes that no further surveys are recommended, and includes recommendations such as the protection of retained features, good construction practice in relation to wildlife and suitable enhancements tailored towards species previously recorded in the wider area.
- 6.34. The proposals are unlikely to result in any loss of features of ecological interest there so there is no requirement for mitigation, however it is recognised that there are opportunities for enhancement such as tree bird nesting and bat boxes and use of native planting as detailed above in paragraph 6.21.
- 6.35. The report concludes that there are no reasons in relation to ecology why the proposals should not be approved for planning and implemented in accordance with the provisions of adopted plan Policies LP12 & LP16

Flood risk and drainage

- 6.36. The application site does not exceed 1ha and the site is located in the lowest category of flood risk, Flood Zone 1, where there is less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding as shown in the extract below. Therefore, a Flood Risk Assessment is not required. However, the application is accompanied by a drainage strategy accompanies this submission and should be read in detail.
- 6.37. The proposed surface water strategy to discharge to soakaways utilising infiltration structures will ensure that that there will be no increase in: the peak rate of storm water runoff leaving the site; the volume of runoff leaving the site; and the pollution load to receiving waters from storm water runoff by following the SuDS 'management train'.



© Environment Agency copyright and / or database rights 2022. All rights reserved. © Crown Copyright and database right 2022. Ordnance Survey licence number 100024198.

Figure 3: Environment Agency

- 6.38. In relation to foul water, this would be discharged via a gravity pipe network into the existing Anglian Water foul water infrastructure. Anglian Water has confirmed during pre-application discussions, that the sewers have sufficient capacity to accommodate flows generated by the school development.
- 6.39. The proposals are therefore considered acceptable in regard to surface and foul water provision having regard to the guidance within the NPPF and policies LP12 and LP14 of the local plan.

Construction Management

- 6.40. A Construction Management Plan (CEMP) accompanies the submission in accordance with validation requirements, this outlines the proposed building works to be undertaken and how the constructor intends to manage the project to minimise the impact on the local residents during the works.
- 6.41. The Applicant is happy to accept a condition to ensure compliance with the CEMP.

Energy and sustainability

- 6.42. As detailed in Section 4 of this Statement, with regard to energy efficiency, the design incorporates the following;

-
- Siting, design, layout and orientation to minimise impact on the existing site;
 - Where required, high efficiency plant and equipment to minimise carbon emissions;
 - Use of renewable and recycled products and materials;
 - Waste reduction measures both in construction and in use.

6.43. Whilst official BREEAM accreditation will not be sought, the development will be self-assessed against BREEAM principles and achieve a standard of 'Very Good'. The building fabric will achieve 'U' value ratings in excess of current building regulations standards. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the requirements of adopted policy LP14 Design Implementation and paragraph 154 of the NPPF.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Phase 2 Planning and Development Ltd on behalf of Jeakins Weir for Cambridgeshire County Council to support a full planning application to provide a classroom extension, alongside an infill extension and internal and external alterations at Townley Primary School, Crown Road, Christchurch, Wisbech PE14 9NA.
- 7.2 The application demonstrates the need for the permanent classroom provision that will serve the existing pupils at the school and the site is an existing school that is sited within the settlement boundary. The principle of development has therefore already been established at this site.
- 7.3 A suite of technical documents, and drawings accompany this application, demonstrating the scheme has been carefully designed to be compatible with the existing school and surrounding context. No harm to identified heritage assets will occur. The landscape drawings and associated reports confirm that there will be no landscape harm and that it is possible to improve the biodiversity of the site that would lead to positive improvements for the ecology of the area.
- 7.4 The current proposals are therefore in accordance with the three dimensions of sustainable development promoted within the NPPF, particularly paragraph 95 that recognises the need to ensure that there is sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities.
- 7.5 In summary, the application is supported by evidence to confirm that the proposal is acceptable in all regards and the proposed development would bring significant benefits to the education for pupils in the area. The Council is therefore requested to grant planning permission for the development.



Phase 2

PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
LIMITED