

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5 FEBRUARY 2020

Ward: Park

App No.: 191634

Address: Hamilton Centre, 135 Bulmershe Road, Reading, RG1 5SG

Proposal: Conversion of Hamilton Centre into 2 storey Special Educational Needs College for 11 - 18 yr olds. Project also includes a 500m² new build extension, car parking, landscaping and multi use sports area.

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Date received: 4th October 2019

Major Application PPA target decision date: 14 February 2020

RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services to **GRANT** planning permission by 7 February 2020 subject to a S106 legal agreement. If the S106 agreement is not signed by 30 May 2018, delegate to officers to **REFUSE** planning permission unless an extension of time is agreed as delegated by the HPDRS.

Outline of Heads of Terms [to be updated, as necessary]:

Community use provisions:

- (i) The provision for community use of the school hall, changing rooms and accessible toilet via an agreed Community Use Agreement (CUA) in accordance with the Maiden Erlegh Trust (MET) hire policy, no later than first occupation of the school (unless otherwise agreed) and any CUA to apply over the lifetime of the development.

Open space mitigation provisions

- (ii) Require playing pitch improvement works be undertaken to the value of £25,000. Notification of commencement and satisfactory completion of such works together with proof of undertaking to the value of £25,000 will occur no later than first occupation of the school.

Employment and Skills Plan

- (iii) Commitment to provide a Construction Phase Employment and Skills Plan (ESP); otherwise a payment towards such in accordance with the Council's adopted Employment, Skills and Training SPD.

An update to these Heads of Terms shall be provided in the Update Report, as required.

N.B. The above Heads of Terms are still be agreed by the various signatories to the application at the time of writing and any further discussion on these provisions are ongoing.

Conditions to include:

1. Std Three year time limit
2. Approved plans
3. Material samples
4. Existing and proposed ground levels plan
5. Hard and soft landscaping (Major scheme) - To include plans with full levels details, wildlife-friendly species and habitat creation, mixed-species hedging, permeable surfacing; details of new hard surfacing within RPAs; location of all utilities; all ancillary works including boundary fencing and their foundation details along with implementation, maintenance and aftercare.
6. Biodiversity Enhancements - to include integral bird nesting and bat roosting opportunities on and around the new buildings.
7. Arboricultural Method Statement
8. Full means of enclosure - to include new access gates and adherence to Secure by Design principles, to be installed prior to first occupation.
9. Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)
10. Construction/demolition hours of working (std)
11. No bonfires during construction
12. Vehicle parking (As specified)
13. Cycle parking (As specified)
14. Roads to be provided (As specified)
15. EV charging points
16. Car parking management plan
17. Travel Plan
18. Travel Plan annual review
19. Refuse, recycling and management arrangements - To include rat prevention measures.
20. BREEAM 'Excellent' to be achieved: Pre-assessment estimator
21. BREEAM 'Excellent' to be achieved: Post-Construction review
22. Details of surface water drainage scheme
23. No plant equipment to be installed until noise report submitted and approved
24. No ventilation/extraction to be installed until odour measures/mitigation submitted and approved
25. No installation/operation of external lighting before submission of lighting report, to include examination and mitigation of impacts on wildlife.
26. Reporting of any Unexpected Contamination

Informatives:

1. Positive and proactive working
2. Building Regulations approval required
3. S59 Highways Act
4. TRO/s38/s106/PROW informatives
5. Other permissions/consents may be required
6. This planning permission confers no right of access, nor does it infringe Civil rights
7. Landscaping ongoing works informative
8. Environmental Protection Act

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Regulation 3 planning application is a result of a successful Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Priority Schools Building Programme Bid (PSBP2) made by Reading Borough Council. Planning Officers have worked closely with Hampshire County Council and the Council's Education Team at pre-application stage along with Sport England, Councillors and statutory consultees to ensure that this application is supported by relevant information and is clearly presented to members given the extensive and complex history of uses around the Alfred Sutton Playing Field in East Reading.
- 1.2 Officers can confirm that revised plans were received on 22 January 2020 making a series of changes to the proposal. Members will note that this application originally contained a proposal to convert the existing derelict tennis court into a tarmac Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) for school and community use. However, this land had already been committed by the Council to mitigate against previous approved development adjoining the playing fields. Furthermore, the proposed unlit tarmac MUGA would not have satisfied Sport England requirements to accommodate greater all-year-round usage as compensation for any loss of the existing playing fields. For these reasons, this element of the proposal was withdrawn from this planning application.
- 1.3 Also of note as part of these revised plans are details of a new pedestrian access gate to the southern corner of the playing fields allowing access from Regis Park Road. This inclusion fulfils a past commitment of the Council to provide enhanced public access for nearby residents as a result of previously approved residential development. Whilst the wider use of the Alfred Sutton Playing Field by Maiden Erlegh Secondary School, University Technology College and Alfred Sutton Primary School remains unaffected by this application, enhanced public access is now included as part of this proposal and can be secured via condition to ensure implementation prior to first occupation of the development should members approve this scheme.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is an irregular shape, of approximately one hectare (although this shall be confirmed accurately in the Update report). A location plan is shown below.



2.1 The Hamilton Centre is an unoccupied community building situated on the south western corner of the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields in the east of Reading Borough. The playing fields are also bounded by the annex to Maiden Erlegh (Secondary) School (MES), University Technology College (UTC) and Alfred Sutton Primary School (ASPS) to the north and northwest boundary. Wokingham Road runs along part of the eastern boundary whilst to the south east is the relatively new residential development off Regis Park Road. To the west are the residential streets of Bulmershe Road and Hamilton Road. Other buildings and uses in proximity to the playing fields are Lakeside Care Home, The Ridgeline Trust Therapeutic Wildlife Garden, Loddon House student accommodation (University of Reading) and Parkside Doctors Surgery. Figure 1 below shows the general Location of Hamilton Centre (highlighted) with surrounding uses.

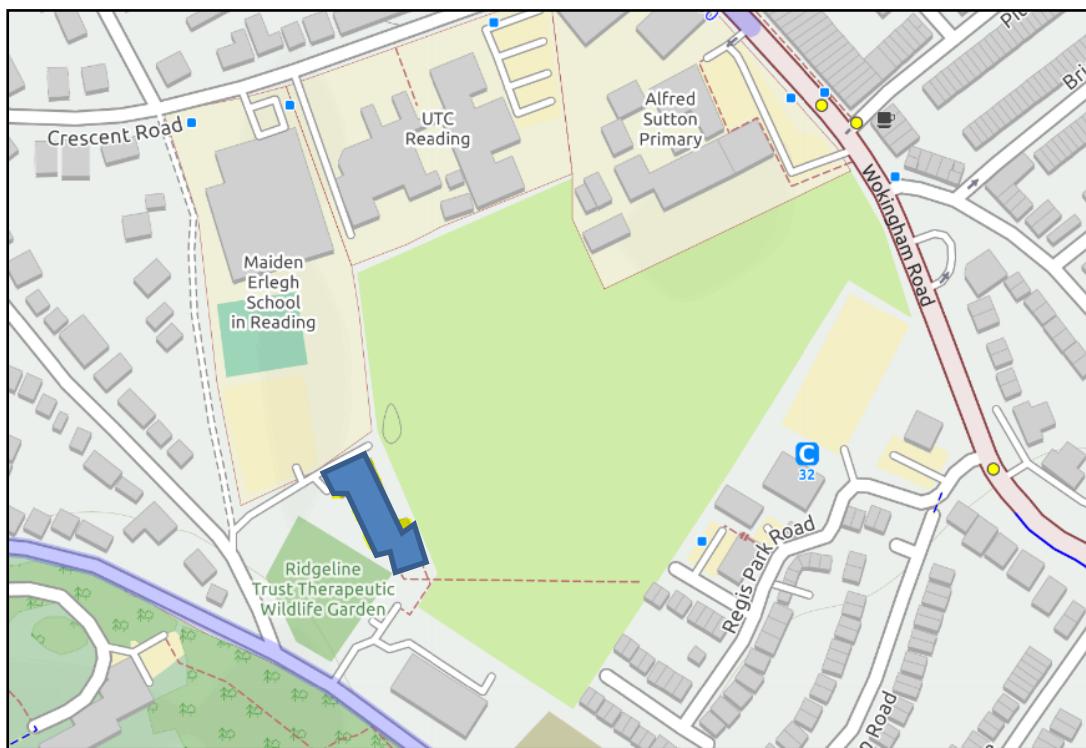


Figure 1 - General Location of Hamilton Centre (highlighted) with surrounding uses.

- 2.2 The existing pedestrian and vehicular access to the site is gained from Bulmershe Road, close to the junction with Hamilton Road. This access leads to a car park shared with the staff of MESS. It should be noted that the Hamilton Centre and the wider playing fields are at a lower ground level than the access and car park, which are at the upper level of a steep bank. Fire escape/access from the Hamilton Centre is therefore currently provided by a bridge directly from the first floor of the building. A steep bank runs north/south separating the higher level of Bulmershe Road and the shared car park to the west with the lower level of the Hamilton Centre and the playing fields to the east. There is also a gentle fall in levels across the playing fields themselves from west to east. Mature trees line the perimeter of the playing fields to the south and west.
- 2.3 The existing playing pitches consist of five marked 7-aside sports pitches and one occasional 11-aside pitch, a grassed triangle to the southern corner and currently disused tennis courts in the far eastern corner. The surface is generally uneven and poorly draining due to the

compacted topsoil layer, especially in the southern corner used for sports. In addition to use by students at the adjoining primary, secondary and higher educational institutions, formal community use of the playing fields occurs at weekends by local youth football clubs. Use of the pitch is managed by the Crescent Road Playing Fields Joint Management Committee. This consists of Maiden Erlegh Trust, UTC, ASPS and Reading Borough Council. There are no designated public footpaths or rights of way within the site or the wider site area of the playing fields, however members of the public do benefit from access for informal dog walking and as a through-route from the Wokingham Road in the east. This is accessed by a path which runs along the southern perimeter from the Hamilton Centre on the western side to the disused tennis courts on the eastern side.



Figure 2 - Existing pitch layout

- 2.4 The Hamilton Centre itself was constructed in the 1970s and is a functional flat-roofed concrete and brick-clad building. The building was initially used as a Sixth form college for approximately 300 pupils, which ceased in the 1980s. Most recently the building was let as office space by Reading Borough Council to a number of institutions including Thames Valley University and WEA??. Part of the ground floor was converted into a Surestart children's centre in 2010. The building has been vacant since October 2018.
- 2.5 The existing building is currently vacant and secured. At the time of Members' site visit, the building appeared to be in a state of disrepair. The application site is not located within a Conservation Area, neither are there buildings of historic interest in the vicinity of the proposed development site.



Figure 3 - Aerial view of Hamilton Centre (looking Northwest)

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The application seeks permission for the refurbishment and extension of the Hamilton Centre to allow it to accommodate the relocation of the Phoenix College SEMH from its existing smaller site at Christchurch Road. The refurbished and extended building would provide general and specialist teaching accommodation for the relocated Phoenix College whilst an enclosed curtilage would provide outdoor play, circulation and green space for the pupils.
- 3.2 Phoenix College is a specialist education unit which accommodates 64 pupils with SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) issues, for age range 11 - 18. The College's existing accommodation comprises of a converted Victorian town house which has been extended twice plus two modular single storey units to the rear. The college's existing site has been confirmed as not able to meet basic design and space standards required by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) output specification. The accommodation falls short of the space standards for a school of this size and type by over 50%. Furthermore, the quality and nature of the provision is very unsuited to the needs of a special school with a lack of sanitary facilities meaning that the College can only accept male pupils, despite there being local demand for female pupil places.
- 3.3 The provision of SEMH facilities is a specialised sector and fundamental in allowing the Council to fulfil its duty to provide education and care for its most vulnerable young people and purpose-built accommodation is necessary.
- 3.4 The ESFA (now Department for Education (DfE)) and RBC Education agreed that the existing Christchurch Road site and accommodation were unsuitable for development both in terms of meeting basic need and representing value for money. Agreement was reached to allow RBC as the Responsible Body to develop another more suitable site using a funding contribution from the DfE. This proposal is as a result of a detailed site options appraisal completed in April 2018 and subsequent feasibility study.

3.5 Specifically as part of this planning application, the proposed works associated in connection with the conversion of the Hamilton Centre in order to accommodate the relocated Phoenix College include:

- The recladding, re-roofing and re-glazing of the existing building;
- The construction of an extension to the northern side of the existing building. This would comprise of new main entrance, dining room, kitchen and changing rooms and a double height sports / assembly hall (hall, changing rooms, and accessible toilet available for community use);
- A purpose-built car park extension to the northern part of the site accessed through the existing shared car park;
- Creation of an enclosed external play area running parallel to the eastern façade of the building;
- Incorporating a triangular area of land to the southeast corner of the playing field bordering Lakeside Care Home and Regis Park Road to create a multi-use games area (tarmac MUGA) and provision of an orchard/wildlife area.
- Installation of a new gate to the southern boundary with Regis Park Road to allow enhanced public access from Regis Park Road to the wider playing fields.
- Financial contribution of £25,000 towards further improvement of the existing Alfred Sutton Playing Fields to correct drainage issues.

3.6 Fig 4 below identified the constitute parts of the proposal:

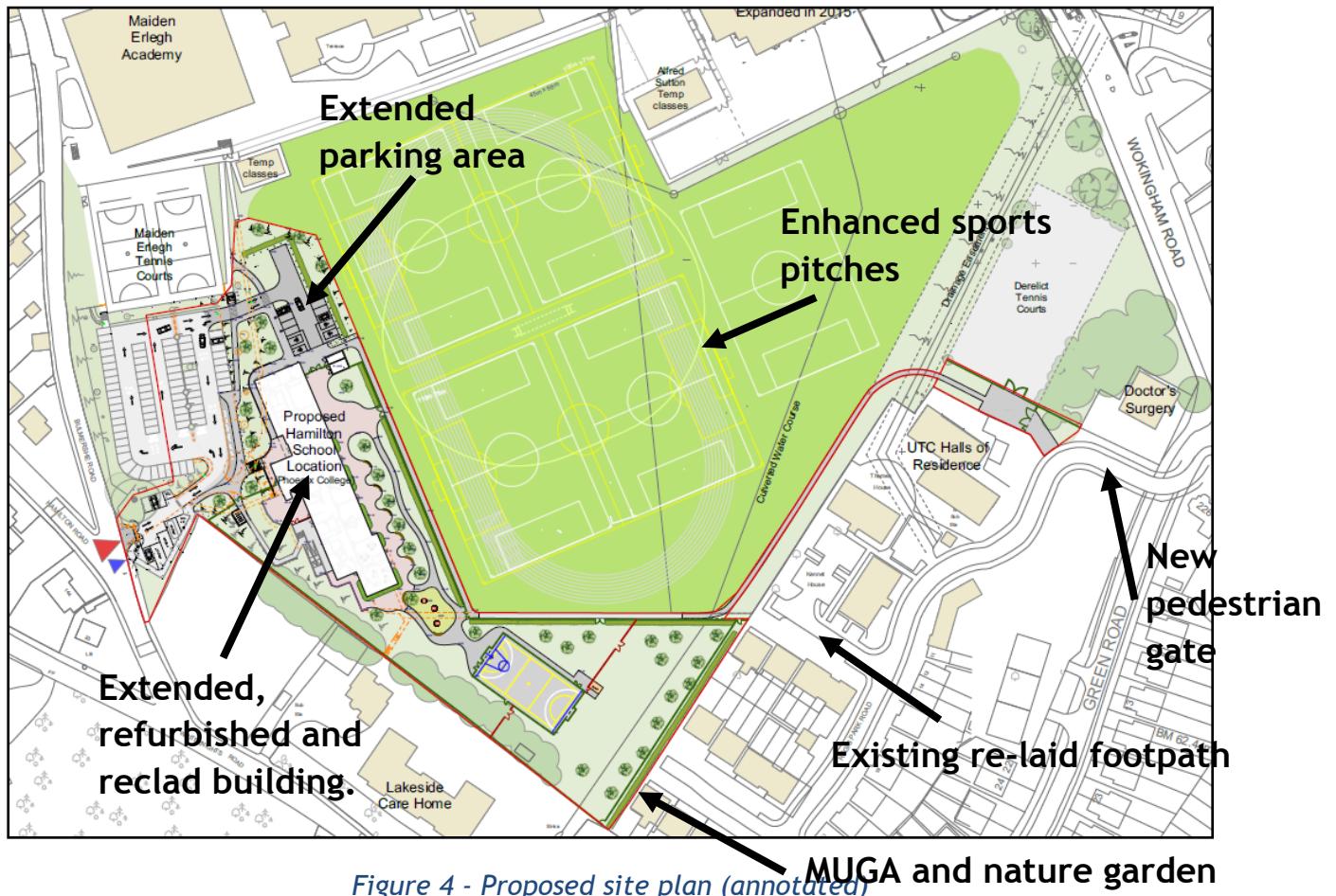


Figure 4 - Proposed site plan (annotated)

3 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

3.1 It should be noted that amended plans were received from the agent responding to a number of observations made by Officers, consultees, Elected Members and third parties.

Amended plans received in December and January consisted of the following:

- Removal of artificial grass pitch from disused tennis courts at Green Road;
- A supplementary Planning Statement for Sport England;
- Transport and parking amendments;
- Planting plan showing species and locations;
- Demolition and full Tree Protection Plan;
- Details of new perimeter path and pedestrian gate to southern boundary with Regis Park Road;
- Confirmation on the plans that the new changing room, accessible toilets and sport hall will be available for community use and bookings;

3.2 The CIL requirement for schools is nil under the Council's adopted CIL Charging Schedule.

3.3 Given the nature of the site and public access to the playing fields, Councillors were invited to undertake an unaccompanied site visit to the site. As both an RBC scheme and a Major planning application, it is being reported to Planning Applications Committee.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 Relevant planning history is as follows:

10/00891/REG3	Refurbishment of vacant rooms at Hamilton Centre to provide a sure start children's centre, children's action team and health office accommodation and a new entrance shared with existing reading borough council youth integration provision, plus associated external works including a new footpath, a new entrance canopy, ramp and steps and new external play area.	Approved on 24 June, 2010
10/02198/APPCON	Discharge of condition 3 of planning permission 10/00891/reg3	Discharged 31 January, 2011
11/00063/APPCON	Discharge of conditions 2 and 4 of planning consent 10/000891/reg3	Discharged 03 March, 2011
12/00102/REG3	Installation of roof mounted solar photovoltaic (pv) panels	Permission 10 February, 2012

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Sport England - No objection.

"Thank you for re-consulting Sport England on the above application with additional information.

It is understood that the proposal prejudices the use, or leads to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field or has been used as a playing field in the last five years, as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595). The consultation with Sport England is therefore a statutory requirement.

Sport England has considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (particularly Para 97) and against its own playing fields policy, which states:

'Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of:

- *all or any part of a playing field, or*
- *land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or*
- *land allocated for use as a playing field*

unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.'

Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document can be viewed via the below link:

www.sportengland.org/playingfieldspolicy

I have reviewed the additional information in light of my holding objection dated 6th December. The applicants are content that the proposal meets our planning policy exception E3. Having reconsulted with FA, I am minded to accept this statement.

The FA again have advised that they would be willing to work with the applicants on the delivery of a full size 3G sports lit Artificial Grass Pitch...

...We also welcome the applicants' commitment to improve the drainage on the existing playing field.

Conclusion

Having assessed the application, Sport England is satisfied that the proposed development meets Exception 3 of our playing fields policy, in that:

'The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- *reduce the size of any playing pitch*

- *result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);*
- *reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;*
- *result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or*
- *prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site.'*

This being the case, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application".

5.2 RBC Transport Strategy- No objection subject to conditions following receipt of revised plans and additional information.

"The proposed application includes the refurbishment of the existing Hamilton Road Centre to provide general and specialist teaching accommodation, ancillary and support spaces including recladding, re-roofing and re-glazing of existing building. The proposals also include the construction of a single-storey block comprising main entrance, dining room, kitchen and changing rooms and a double height sports / assembly hall. These works are to facilitate the relocation of the Phoenix Special Educational Needs (SEN) College to the Hamilton Road Centre.

The School provides SEN education to pupils with Education, Health Care Plans (EHCPs), providing support for social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. The existing site currently caters for male secondary aged pupils (11 to 18 years).

The School has capacity for 64 pupils, however only 43 pupils are currently on roll at the current site and this capacity is to be retained at the proposed application site.

The new build construction, on the application site, will be designed to cater for a future expansion in pupil numbers, up to 96 spaces. However, as this is yet to be confirmed by RBC, this application only focuses on the current school's capacity of 64 pupils, as per the current site.

The current SEN School has a total of 24 full time equivalent (FTE) staff. This comprises of 16 teaching and support staff, 3 admin staff and 5 therapeutic support staff. If the School should be expanded in future to admit 96 students the staffing numbers would increase by four teaching and support staff, taking the total number to 28 FTE Staff. To future-proof this requirement, any parking standards for the new site will be based against 28 FTE staff.

The vacant building, on the new site, was once a Sixth form college with its last use being the Hamilton Children's Centre. This closed in 2017 following a review by RBC of children's centres across the borough. The building has remained vacant since then.

The application has been accompanied by a Transport Statement and I comment on this as follows:

Location and Access

The site is bordered by a residential care home (Lakeside) to the south, Hamilton Road and Bulmershe Road to the west, and the Maiden Erlegh Secondary School site to the North. A large playing field area (Alfred Sutton Playing Fields) is adjacent to the east (rear) of the new site location.

The only main public vehicular access to the new site is off Hamilton Road. This is the same access used, when it was a Children's Centre and also offers access to the Maiden Erlegh secondary school staff car park. There is an existing secondary vehicular entrance (gated) to the former tennis courts from Regis Park Road; this will be retained and used for maintenance access only.

The new school site is located on Hamilton Road, which offers the only vehicular access entrance to the site. It is a residential single carriageway road, street lit and subject to a 20mph speed limit (20mph roundels present on the carriageway). Speed cushions are present across sections of Hamilton Road, within the vicinity of the site's entrance junction.

There are no parking restrictions on Hamilton Road within the immediate vicinity of the site entrance. Some local residential properties have off street driveway parking while others do not, and so on street parking is evident. Double yellow lines are present around the junction of Hamilton Road and Whiteknights Road.

Footways are present along the western side of Hamilton Road, in the vicinity of the School entrance junction. A footway is present on the eastern side of Hamilton Road but ends just north of this entrance junction. No formalised pedestrian crossing facilities are present within the area.

Bulmershe Road is directly to the north of the main site access and shares the same entrance junction off Hamilton Road. Bulmershe Road is a private road and has an unmade surface. A 'No Entry' road sign is located to the right of its entrance with 'Private Road Access Only' presented underneath. Bulmershe Road does not have any street lighting.

The closest bus stops are on Whiteknights Road, close to the southern end of Hamilton Road, approx. 80m from the site entrance. These stops cater for the number 19a, b and c services which link the western suburban areas of Woodley and Earley with stops at the University of Reading Whiteknights campus, Royal Berkshire Hospital and the Town Centre, including outside the mainline rail station.

The number 17 bus service runs between Earley in the east of Reading borough to Tilehurst in the west, via the town centre and railway station. This is a route with services running 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. From Monday to Friday there is a high frequency service (every 8 mins) between the hours of 08:00am to 06:20pm. There are several stops for this service along the Wokingham Road (A329). The closest stop to the School for this service, is located on the Wokingham Road, to the rear of the playing field area, approx. 600m to the school's main entrance.

The primary vehicular access point for the new school will remain off Hamilton Road, and it is stated that it will be remodelled (including the entrance into the existing staff car park for Maiden Erlegh school) to facilitate two-way traffic flow movement in and out of the site. The submitted plans now identify a widening to 4.3m that would facilitate this and this has been deemed acceptable.

A drop off layby will be constructed, close to the school's entrance point. The drop off lay by will help ensure that pupils are delivered safely to the school site, by their respective transport.

As the drop off layby will be on the right hand side of the car park, a movement strategy will be adopted for users of the car park, to ensure that all school related vehicles can drop pupils off on the left hand passenger side safely.

This will involve a one-way system around the car park to ensure that school related traffic can achieve this position within the layby area. In principle this proposal is acceptable however following the introduction of the circulatory route it is noted that the separation of the Maiden Erlegh School car park and the Hamilton Centre car park has been lost, it would therefore need to be confirmed how the parking will be managed to ensure that overspill parking does not occur into each car park. A car park strategy plan has been submitted which identifies the car parking spaces allocated to each use but this still does not specify how the spaces will be managed between the two uses. I am however happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.

Trip Generation

In order to understand the scope of anticipated site trip generation, at peak AM and PM times, pupil travel to school data (provided by Phoenix College) had been utilised to provide a baseline percentage. However this did not include any information on staff travel, the transport addendum for the school has reviewed the travel to work data but this is an inaccurate assessment as this takes data from residents of the area specified and not data of employees. This assessment is therefore unacceptable. I have however undertaken my own assessment for the school as a whole and this is as follows:

Table 1 - School Vehicle Trip Rate

Arrival	Departure	Total
AM	0.128	0.131
PM	0.042	0.026

Table 2 - Actual School Number of Vehicle Trips

Arrival	Departure	Total
AM	8	8
PM	3	2

This is an acceptable assessment and identifies that staff would travel to and from the school mainly outside of the peak periods.

In addition, as identified at the pre-application stage, no assessment has been undertaken on the existing use of the site to identify how this would differ from the proposed use. I appreciate the Planning Statement states that the building was initially used as a Sixth form for approximately 300 pupils and has most recently been let as office space with part of the ground floor converted into a Surestart Children's centre in 2010 and this may have resulted in higher trip generation but this must be confirmed through a detailed assessment.

The Transport Addendum has been submitted and this has provided further analysis between the existing and proposed uses. I have reviewed the submitted TRICS data for the existing use and it is noted that the site has included sites that are not comparable to the application site as they are not located in similar locations.

I have undertaken my own assessment of the trip rates for the existing use and I include acceptable trip rates and subsequent number of trips in the tables below.

Table 3 - Office Vehicle Trip Rate

Arrival	Departure	Total
AM	0.528	0.043
PM	0.071	0.563

Table 4 - Actual Office Number of Vehicle Trips

<i>Arrival</i>	<i>Departure</i>	<i>Total</i>
AM	23	2
PM	3	24

Table 5 - Children Centre Vehicle Trip Rates

<i>Arrival</i>	<i>Departure</i>	<i>Total</i>
AM	0.400	0.133
PM	0.429	0.714

**It should be noted that due to no trip rate being available for a children centre trip rates for a community centre have been used.*

Table 6 - Actual Children Centre Number of Vehicle Trips

<i>Arrival</i>	<i>Departure</i>	<i>Total</i>
AM	1	1
PM	1	2

Table 7 - Total Vehicle Trips Generated by the Development

<i>Arrival</i>	<i>Departure</i>	<i>Total</i>
AM	24	3
PM	4	26

Overall the proposal results in a reduction in trips from the existing use and therefore has been deemed acceptable in principle.

Parking

It has been stated that the current SEN School has a total of 24 full time equivalent (FTE) staff but should the school be expanded in future to admit 96 students the staffing numbers would increase by four teaching and support staff, taking the total number to 28 FTE Staff. The parking demand has been assessed based on the larger demand and this has been deemed acceptable.

It has been stated that the parking requirements have been calculated in line with RBC's Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011), which stipulates a maximum requirement of 1 space per FTE staff. This equates to a provision of 28 spaces, and revised drawings have been submitted that identify this provision and is therefore acceptable.*

Within this provision 4 disabled bays have been retained and is acceptable. These bays have been relocated to within the new car parking area and this makes access to the building more accessible than the existing situation.

In line with the adopted Local Plan the proposal should include a provision of 10% electric charging points which equates to 4 spaces. The revised plans have identified that this provision will be provided but the plans do not specify the location of the charging points. I am happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.

The new car park is provided with 3 minibus bays to facilitate travel of pupils to and from the school and this is acceptable. Three powered two-wheeler spaces have also been provided and this is acceptable. The car park layout has been reviewed and now retains a provision of 63 spaces for Maiden Erlegh School in the rear car park and is acceptable.

Ten cycle spaces are proposed for both staff and pupils use which complies with Policy, this is a retained existing facility and complies with policy.

Internal Design

To ensure there would be sufficient space within the site to accommodate the anticipated 10 vehicles at the peak drop-off and pick-up times as well as service and emergency vehicles tracking has been undertaken. This has been reviewed and been deemed acceptable.

In the circumstances there are no transport objections to the proposal subject to the following conditions.

- C2 Construction method statement (to be submitted)
- DC1 Vehicle parking (as specified)
- DC5 Cycle parking (as specified)
- DC12 Roads to be provided (as specified)
- DC24 EV charging points
- DC17 Car parking management plan

I am happy with the framework travel plan subject to the following conditions.

- DC18 TRAVEL PLAN
- DC19 ANNUAL REVIEW OF TRAVEL PLAN

5.3 RBC Environmental Protection - No objection subject to conditions. Comments below summarised as follows:

Environmental Protection concerns

- Noise arising from development - mechanical plant and sports facilities
- Air quality impact
- Light - external / floodlighting
- Odour and noise - kitchen extraction
- Construction and demolition phase
- Bin storage - rats

Noise generating development

Mechanical plant - Applications which include noise generating plant when there are nearby noise sensitive receptors should be accompanied by an acoustic assessment carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014 methodology. A preliminary noise assessment has been submitted as the plant has not been designed yet. The noise assessment submitted has been carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014 and the methodology has been correctly applied, however the assessment proposes that the noise rating level of the proposed plant will be less than -10dB below the background noise so there may be some adverse impact on the local noise climate. The noise source specific noise level (plant noise level) should be at least 10dBA below the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor and the rating level should not exceed the background level (as measured in accordance with BS4142:2014). Within Reading there is strong justification for requiring the plant specific noise level to be at least -10dB below the measured background level. Specifically to prevent cumulative impact from addition of plant over time which could result in background creeping up to levels which might cause adverse health impact, which is more likely in a densely occupied town such as Reading. Levels of -10dB ensure that the background level is not increased and nuisance is unlikely.

Ideally a full noise assessment with plant details should be submitted at application stage in case the plant requires significant redesign in order to meet the required noise criteria. If this is not possible then the following condition is recommended.

Recommended Condition - BS4142 Noise assessment to be submitted

Sports facilities

Noise from the sports pitches are likely to impact on the amenity of surrounding residents. It is acknowledged that the grass pitches are already in existence and the redesign is unlikely to significantly impact on the noise experienced by residents, unless the hours of use will change. Further information is requested regarding existing and proposed hours of use of the grass pitches. The artificial turf pitch is located in close proximity to residents and it is replacing a derelict tennis court therefore the impact of increased noise may be significant. A noise assessment is recommended for this part of the development which should be ideally prior to consent being issued.

Kitchen Extraction - odour

In addition to concerns about noise (as discussed above), cooking odour is often a significant problem in commercial kitchens and therefore the applicants must provide an assessment of the likelihood of odours based on the proposed cuisine and a statement of how the proposals will ensure that odour nuisance will be prevented. Reference must be made to the Defra Guidance on the Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems (January 2005).

The following condition could be attached to consent, however it is possible that the criteria cannot be met with the plant specifications proposed in this application and a new application may need to be made at a later date for alternative plant / location.

Condition - Odour assessment

Air Quality - Increased emissions

As the school is relocating from another nearby site (although it will be expanding), and there is a sustainable travel plan in place, I recommend that an air quality assessment is not required for this development.

Contaminated Land

You are advised that the development lies on the site of an historic brick works. The site investigation has not identified any contaminants of concern on the section of the site that is being redeveloped, however, the following condition is recommended.

Recommended condition - Reporting of Unexpected Contamination

Light

I have concerns about any proposed flood-lighting of the redesigned playing fields and/or all-weather pitch resulting in loss of amenity to nearby residents.

If flood lighting is proposed then the application should be refused until more details have been submitted; this information should include a layout plan with beam orientation and a schedule of equipment in the design (luminaire type; mounting height; aiming angles and luminaire profiles) and an isolux contour map to show light spill levels (down to 2 lux if operating between 23:00 and 07:00, or down to 10 lux if operating only between 07:00 and 23:00). The plans should neighbouring buildings so that the predicted impact on them can be assessed. The applicants should demonstrate that light levels will not exceed the

relevant guidance lux levels specified in the table below. Information should also show how glare will be controlled.

Construction and demolition phases

We have concerns about potential noise, dust and bonfires associated with the construction (and demolition) of the proposed development and possible adverse impact on nearby residents (and businesses).

Fires during construction and demolition can impact on air quality and cause harm to residential amenity. Burning of waste on site would be considered to be harmful to the aims of environmental sustainability.

Recommended conditions

Control of Noise and Dust - CMS to be submitted

Hours of Working - construction and demolition phase

Bonfires

Bin storage - rats

Details of bin stores'

- 5.4 RBC Education and Children's Services - No comments received as a Reg 3 application made on their behalf

- 5.5 RBC Planning Natural Environment Team - No objection subject to conditions.

*"Whilst I appreciate that not all details will be resolved prior to a decision (but secured by condition instead), the response to the points in my email of 7/11/19 is disappointing. The request for maximising the opportunity for large canopy trees has not been achieved with only 2 trees over the whole site (*Quercus rubra*) falling in this category. The variety of *Acer saccharinum* and *Acer platanoides* proposed are both more narrow in form than the species.*

*The request for predominantly native trees and non-native to be wildlife friendly has not been met - 6 species are proposed; 3 of which are non-native, albeit one (*Pyrus*) has noted wildlife value (bee friendly); one of the natives is a 'naturalised' species. It would have been helpful to have an explanation with the landscaping to try and understand that proposed. I note the inclusion of 'Apple Discovery' (taken to be 'Malus Discovery') on the eastern side and a native hedge around the perimeter with the field and eastern boundary, which is positive.*

I understand that GS Ecology have requested ecological enhancements, over and above wildlife friendly planting, which have not been indicated on the landscape plan but could be secured via condition.

In relation to tree retention and removal, the drawing proposed doesn't cover the whole site, which would be expected. Whilst it shows which trees are to be removed by location, no details are given about the trees, i.e. a tree survey, hence the tree numbers and species is not given, as would be expected. The drawing shows an indicative line of tree protective fencing but does not give the specifications of this and as it does not cover the eastern part of the site (including the TPO trees at the Lakeside Care Home, whose RPAs should be used to determine the location of fencing) therefore it would not be an acceptable plan for tree protection purposes. In addition, it does not give a detailed method for fencing installation within the RPAs of the TPO Lime trees at the Care Home as requested.

I note that Proposed Sports Pitch Layout drawing E03700-L-7103 P4 indicates some level changes in the eastern area. It will be important to clarify these given that the mature trees on the boundary (within Lakeside Care Home) are protected. I assume you are happy to agree the boundary treatment via condition as no final details of this appear to have been given. I note that field drainage work is to take place to assist the very wet conditions.

I assume you are at the stage of recommending approval in your PAC report and whilst most matters can be secured via condition, i.e. the principle of development is acceptable in tree and landscape terms, I would suggest it is appropriate to request that the total number of trees to be felled (included species) be provided along with the total number to be planted in order to confirm a net gain for PAC - it would be best for this to be supported by a 'Tree Removal and Retention' plan for the whole site, which could then be an approved document.

The following standard conditions would then be appropriate:

L2 (hard & soft landscaping etc) - all parts required; please move 'tree pit specifications' from part e to part c

L3 (boundary treatment)

L7 (Arb Method Statement)

There now does not appear to be a standard condition which includes ecological enhancements so please can you add an additional point to L2 in line with Giles' request, i.e.: Biodiversity enhancements, including integral bird nesting and bat roosting opportunities on and around the new buildings."

5.6 Berkshire Archaeology - No objections.

5.7 RBC Access Officer - No objections.

5.8 RBC Ecology Consultant - No objection subject to the following conditions.

Details of external lighting

Hard and soft landscaping

5.9 Crime Prevention Design Advisor - No comment received.

5.10 RBC Leisure and Recreation Service - No comments received

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

5.11 The applicant's SCI report summarises public engagement before submission of this planning application as follows:

- Design Proposals Public Consultation 12.09.19
- Meeting with Maiden Erlegh Secondary School - 25.01.19 and 16.09.19
- Meeting with University Technology College - 24.01.19
- Councillor Consultations - 12.09.19

Public consultation

5.12 Neighbour notification was undertaken on 17th October 2019. A site notice was displayed at the entrance to the site publicly visible from Bulmershe Road for the requisite period.

13 letters of representation received (11) objecting to the proposal (1) observation and (2) from individuals in their capacity as Ward Councillors. The neighbour representations are summarised below.

- Concern regarding additional vehicular and pedestrian traffic at peak times. Additional traffic will lead to tailbacks and unsafe crossing conditions. The level of traffic will also pose a risk to the potential students.
- White Knights Road has no crossing but is used by large numbers of pedestrians, including school children.
- Request assurance that adequate parking for parents collecting students at the end of the day and cars will not be parked in Crescent Rd.
- This part of Bulmershe Road is unadopted and we would want to keep it as access only for the private properties during the construction process and when the school is open.
- Object to the public access to the playing fields being stopped.
- Welcome the development of the site for Phoenix College however I am concerned over the expansion into Local Green Space.
- The plans indicate a total exclusion of public access to a green space originally donated to the community.
- Concern over the function of the enclosed pieces of grass field.
- The proposed playground is too close to our property/fence, we understand that this school is for special needs students, in this case, ideally, the playground needs close to its school buildings as possible.
- Will additional trees be planted in the area and if so, will they have any height and density indications?
- Current pitches already used to capacity and overcrowded.
- Inaccuracies in the plans to do with the location and extent of embankment.
- Continued and convenient public access to the green space is essential as this is community land.
- This is the third time this green space will have been eroded with justification being that it is for the provision of school facilities. Agree that school provision is essential but so is the protection of green space and community access to it. It is hoped the plans can be amended to allow for the school development with these rights in mind.
- Whilst the need to relocate the college is understood, a better alternative might be to split the sites into 1) autistic children requiring sensory and rehabilitant the existing building on its current footprint 2) retaining the existing site for current use.
- The playing field gets waterlogged and boggy to the degree that areas are regularly unusable for many weeks at a time.
- The proposed built areas of the car park, gym building, hardcourt, and related play space in front of the buildings, are all necessary BUT displace green areas which are to varying degrees essential to the life of the field.
- The plans will compress the played areas on which three existing schools rely and will make for a greater footfall on this compressed area which is already vulnerable.
- Unacceptable that the derelict tennis courts remain derelict in this new and more challenging context and there must be a firm commitment to take this forward with interested parties in the community. These might include the Lawn Tennis Association and the Football Federation.

Cllr Pearce

“As the lead Councillor for Education in Reading, I would like to stress my wholehearted support for this application. Phoenix College is a Special School for young people with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) issues who have Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPS). Many of our students here have complex needs, difficult backgrounds and lots are entitled to pupil premium funding, with Phoenix taking them after they have struggled in mainstream schooling. It takes in boys aged 11-18, largely from the local Reading area but not exclusively, and currently has capacity for 64 students with around 50 currently on roll. Its current location is an old house on Christchurch Road in Redlands Ward. The building is not fit for purpose for education and has recently had some emergency repairs to make it usable for students in the short term, but it cannot be home to some of our most vulnerable young people going forward.

Funding from the DfE has been secured to fund a new site. The chosen site is on Hamilton Road, which would see it located next to Maiden Erlegh Reading, the UTC and Alfred Sutton-a small hub of schools that can help and support each other. With a recent disappointing Ofsted result, the school has recently become an academy, and with this new site, with new oversight of the School, we have a great opportunity to make Phoenix the education setting that these young people deserve. The Hamilton Centre will need some internal renovations outlined in the report, but this is not a new build, and will be built with the potential in future to also school females to extend the total numbers to 90. Potentially an excellent and much needed educational resource in Reading.

The loss of green space is minimal, there is a large field behind these schools that the schools agree to share (times of day for PE and break/lunch times) and current designs see a path and a small corner used. The site/field is open to the public but not often used and discussion between schools about sharing the land is ongoing. In terms of the parking, the school involves only a small number of students, and many travel by bus, but this will need further investigation of the student cohort when the school is ready to move and will be detailed in the school’s travel plan. With the school helping 50 of Reading’s most vulnerable students, this planning application must pass to ensure that the site is fit for purpose and that these students get the support they deserve.”

Cllr White and Cllr McGonigle

“Residents have contacted us to express their views, which you may also see logged through the planning system.

We warmly welcome Phoenix College to the Hamilton Road site. They are a fantastic educational establishment doing a critical job and they and their pupils deserve a great school building and surroundings.

The application intends to take Local Green Space (LGS) from the Alfred Sutton playing fields (or Crescent Road Playing Fields) and re-assign it for educational use. We understood the LGS to have the same protection as ‘Green Belt’ land, and only to be developed in very exceptional circumstances. Is the use of LGS for an expanded car park justified by exceptional circumstances?

The application intends to partially mitigate for the loss of LGS by developing the old tennis courts / Mosque site on the Regis Park Road side. Community use areas are always welcome. However, this land was already used as mitigation for the Alfred Sutton School expansion.

<https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/Data/Policy%20Committee/20150720/Agenda/item14.pdf> This was done to alleviate Sport England's concerns over previous school expansion onto playing fields, and we are worried that this is now 'double-counting', and using the same piece of land to mitigate against multiple expansions into local green space.

The application intends some mitigation by developing the old tennis courts as "community use". However, residents have raised concerns that the previous Alfred Sutton School application (140968) also sought to use community use sports pitches as mitigation for loss of green space - which we don't think ever happened. Residents are concerned that the Council as applicant cannot be trusted to carry through its mitigation measures, without which the loss of open space has not been mitigated.

The application doesn't seem to allow for access to the playing fields from the Regis Park Road end, which was a condition of the application which originally developed Regis Park Road (application 071612). This condition doesn't seem to have ever been met, and it was our understanding that the developer had passed that condition back to the Council with a sum of money, and that the Council would seek to meet it as soon as it carried out any further development work. This application is that development work, but appears to be missing this access to the fields.

Residents have also raised concerns about increased traffic, parking and school transport in an already difficult area.

Finally, residents have raised concerns regarding any work on the playing fields, and especially additional drainage work, that might affect the culvert stream that runs from the Whiteknights lake underneath the playing fields. Please can we be assured that this will be properly taken into account?"

6. PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
Section 4 - Decision-making
Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities
Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
Section 11 - Making effective use of land
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

6.2 Reading Borough Council Local Plan 2019

CC1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CC2: Sustainable design and construction
CC3: Adaptation to climate change
CC5: Waste minimisation and storage
CC6: Accessibility and the intensity of development
CC7: Design and the public realm
CC8: Safeguarding amenity
CC9: Securing infrastructure
EN2: Areas of archaeological significance

EN7: Local green space and public open space
EN12: Biodiversity and the green network
EN14: Trees, hedges and woodland
EN15: Air quality
EN16: Pollution and water resources
EN18: Flooding and drainage
TR1: Achieving the transport strategy
TR3: Access, traffic and highway-related matters
TR5: Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging
OU1: New and existing community facilities
ER1: Sites for development in East Reading

6.3 Supplementary Planning Documents

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Employment, Skills and Training (2013)
Planning Obligations under S.106 (2015)

6.4 Other Reading Borough Council Corporate documents

Reading Open Space Strategy (2007)
Reading Open Space Strategy Update Note (2018)
Reading Tree Strategy (2010)
Reading Draft Playing Pitches Strategy

6.5 Other material guidance and legislation

National Planning Practice Guidance (2019)
The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations (Amended 2015)
Department for Transport Manual for Streets
Department for Transport Manual for Streets 2
Waste Management Guidelines for Property Developers, Reading Borough Council

7. APPRAISAL

The main considerations in the consideration of this planning application are:

- Principle of development
- Character and appearance of the area
- Amenity and public access
- Natural Environment
- Parking and access
- Environmental Protection
- Other matters

7.1 Principle of development

7.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for the area is the newly adopted Reading Borough Council Local Plan 2019 which contains up-to-date policies relevant for the determination of this application. A key material consideration remains the National

Planning Policy Framework (2019), which contains equally up-to-date national guidance an LPA must have regard to. The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making but is an important material consideration in any subsequent determination.

- 7.1.2 In considering the principle of such development it is considered helpful to identify the two principal components which constitute this proposal. These are:
- 1) The physical reuse, refurbishment and extension of the Hamilton Centre to accommodate an alternative community use; and
 - 2) The loss of existing open space which would come about because of (1).

Reading Borough Local Plan

- 7.1.3 In firstly considering the Development Plan as the starting point, Policy CC1 outlines the positive and proactive approach to new development which directly reflects the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy CC1 is clear that any proposed development that conflicts with the development plan will be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The local plan polices considered relevant to the assessment of both principle component are as follows and will be considered in turn:
- 7.1.4 In firstly considering component 1 for the reuse of the Hamilton Centre, the new Local Plan identifies the building and its access from Bulmershe Road as a housing allocation for 13-19 dwellings under Policy ER1f. Overarching Policy ER1 outlines the Council's strategy for development in East Reading and consists of 8 sites meeting a commitment of 'up to' 67 dwellings and a range of student accommodation and non-residential needs. Policy ER1f states that this site, at 0.35 ha, is anticipated to accommodate between 13-19 dwellings, address any contamination on site, avoid exacerbating parking issues on existing streets and justify the loss of existing community provision. See extract from the Local Plan proposal map below (Figure 4).

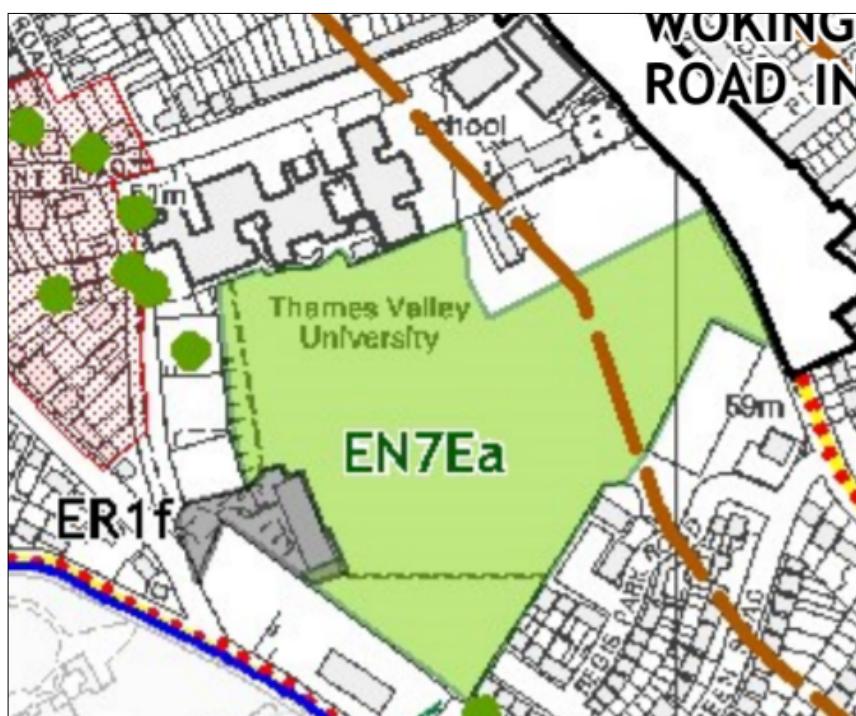


Figure 5 - Extract from Local Plan Proposal Map F (Not to scale)

- 7.1.5 The supporting text to Policy ER1 does however recognise that some of the sites identified for housing under Policy ER1 have the potential for community uses such as education uses not anticipated by the plan. The plan accepts that this would reduce the amount of housing which could be provided on such sites and as such, alternative uses could be appropriate provided that they do not harm the chances of delivering sufficient housing to meet the targets set out in the Local Plan.
- 7.1.6 As the Local Plan has recently been adopted, many of the sites identified through Policy ER1 (and wider strategic housing allocations contained within the plan) remain available to be brought forward for residential use through the planning process. As such, officers advise that there is no clear concern at this stage to demonstrate that the removal of this modest allocation site (of between 13-19 dwellings) from the overall housing land supply in place of a new community use to meet a identified SEMH need (not anticipated by the plan) would prejudice the Plan's overall strategy for meeting its housing need. Therefore, the in-principle retention and reuse of the Hamilton Centre for a new community use (SEMH school) is considered to be acceptable.
- 7.1.7 Policy CC9 'Securing Infrastructure' recognises the need for development within the Borough to be supported by the appropriate provision of services and infrastructure. Relevant to this proposal, Policy CC9 identifies both education and open space as particular aspects of infrastructure in which the highest priority must be given in the planning process.
- 7.1.8 The Hamilton Centre was originally constructed and used for educational purposes and therefore this its existing use is considered to be D1 (Non-Residential Institutions) in planning use terms. As the site now lies vacant, its refurbishment and reuse for much-needed community purposes (component 1) is supported in principle by Policy CC9 and would constitute an efficient use of an existing previously developed land within the Borough.
- 7.1.9 Finally, Policy OU1 'New and Existing Community Facilities' supports proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities. The policy recognises such development can include on-site intensification of important facilities such as schools. This proposal would result in an existing community facility being refurbished, extended, with additional car parking and curtilage being provided to facilitate its new use as a SEMH school. The Policy goes on to confirm that where a proposal for a new school meets a clear need, and it would otherwise accord with national and local policy, it will be acceptable on sites identified for residential or other development. This reinforces your officers' position that the current identified need outweighs the non-provision of the residential allocation contained within Policy ER1.
- 7.1.10 In moving on to consider component 2 as described in 7.1.2, a direct result of relocating an existing community facility to this site would be the need to physically extend the existing building, creation of a new car park and enclosed curtilage to create the require amount of playground, MUGA and nature garden for pupils. Therefore, the loss of peripheral parts of The Alfred Sutton Playing Field must be carefully considered.
- 7.1.11 Policy EN7 affords protection to both Local Green Space (LGS) and Public Open Space (POS) from inappropriate development. The Alfred Sutton Playing Fields is specifically identified within this policy as 4.9ha of LGS (Policy EN7Ea). This LGS has an area of useable playing fields of 3.4ha. The policy states that proposals which would result in the loss of any of these areas of open space, erode their quality through insensitive adjacent development, or jeopardise their use or enjoyment by the public, will not be permitted.
- 7.1.12 The Local Plan and specifically Policy EN7 recognise that access to high quality open spaces, sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of

communities. This policy supports the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-2020) and has been informed by the Council's Open Spaces Strategy where the protection of publicly accessible recreational open space is considered to be of great importance.

- 7.1.13 As a result of its specific location, form and current use, the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields provide both a valuable resource for those educational institutions which adjoin it and continues to provide albeit limited opportunities for informal public recreation to members of the local community.
- 7.1.14 Policy EN7 is specifically applicable to those areas of open space which can be accessed by the public. The policy makes the important distinction between those areas with unrestricted public access, like a park, and those with restricted public access, such as school playing fields, which are not covered by the policy. It is therefore important to understand how the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields are currently utilised and therefore what weight can be afforded to this policy.
- 7.1.15 The Alfred Sutton Playing Fields are primarily utilised as school playing fields with playing pitches taking up much of the available space. This is reflected by its name within the Local Plan and the fact it has been identified for future playing pitch use within the Council's draft Playing Pitches Strategy. However, notwithstanding any intended future use arrangements which are outside the control of this application, the land has been historically and continues to be accessible and used by members of the public. Pedestrians and dog walkers do enter the site and make use the perimeter path surrounding the pitches.
- 7.1.16 The amount of space now accessible and permitted for informal enjoyment by the public is limited and as described above is constrained by the heavy reliance and utilisation of the pitches by the four existing education establishments, especially during term time. This is supplemented by community football use on weekends which limits opportunities for informal public use. The pitches are managed by the Crescent Road Playing Fields Joint Management Committee. Given the recognised operational needs for educational use, officers consider that the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields functionally operate as formal school playing fields with restricted public access; rather than as a public park providing opportunities for unrestricted informal play and recreation by the general public.
- 7.1.17 Whilst this application does not affect the overall way in which the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields are used, the proposal would result in the loss of approximately 0.87ha of LGS i.e. useable playing field plus total marginal land (excluding Hamilton Centre and curtilage).
- 7.1.18 The wording of the policy makes it necessary to distinguish between land used primarily for informal recreation, like a public park, and land used primarily for managed playing pitches (as in this case). In considering specifically the identified areas of LGS which would be lost, it would mainly include land immediately surrounding the Hamilton Centre, the embankment adjoining the car park and leftover land to the south between the main building and the perimeter 'run-off' areas of the eastern pitches. There would not be any loss of public footpaths, nor would the ability be restricted for members of the public to continue to travel through or around the pitches as they currently do. Nonetheless, it is recognised that the development as proposed would clearly result in the loss of a part of the designated LGS and possibly alter the way the public access and experience the site.
- 7.1.19 Whilst accepting that there will be a degree of conflict with Policy EN7, applying the full weight to the criteria and protections afforded by this policy to such land identified in 7.1.18 in light of the policy's overall intention (to prevent loss or jeopardise the use or enjoyment of such land by the public) is considered inappropriate in this instance. Other specific policies within the Local Plan consider whether the proposals would result in any loss or

erode the ‘quality’ of this land (as playing fields) and therefore must also be considered in this section.

7.1.20 Policy OU1 ‘New and Existing Community Facilities’ is clear in its support for new, extended or improved community facilities. Importantly for this proposal, this policy recognises that the on-site intensification of some facilities (particularly schools) may result in the loss of some open areas. It acknowledges this may be acceptable where the following criteria are met:

1. The impact on open areas is minimised, and the area has no specific use, or
2. Where that use can satisfactorily be accommodated elsewhere on the site.

7.1.21 However, similar to Policy EN7, these criteria do not include loss of sports pitches and playing fields. This policy goes onto state that sports pitches and playing fields in particular, “*should only be developed where either one of the following exceptions can be met:*

- a) an assessment clearly shows the area to be surplus to requirements; or*
- b) the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.”*

7.1.22 As described above, this proposal is considered to result in the loss of part of the existing Alfred Sutton Playing Fields, with due regard to its primary existing use as sports and playing fields, it is necessary to consider whether any of the exceptions (a-c) of Policy OU1 are able to be met.

7.1.23 Firstly, regarding exception a), officers recognise that the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields are over-utilised by the existing schools which surround the site during the week and local football clubs on weekends. This is confirmed by an existing RBC commitment to put the disused tennis courts (referred to as the ‘Green Road site’) back into use as recreational open-space for use by the schools and community. This commitment was approved by the Council’s Policy Committee on 20 July 2015 and constituted appropriate mitigation (amongst other measures) in response to the historic expansion and encroachment of MES and ASPS onto the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields. The proposal would therefore fail exception a) of Policy OU1 as there is no evidence to show that any areas of the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields to be lost would be surplus to requirements.

7.1.24 With regard to exception b), the proposal would result in the loss of part of the earth embankment, part of the edge of the existing playing field along the length of the new building and enclose a larger triangle of land not able to be used for sport pitches to the south. The submitted plans show that an equivalent number of marked playing pitches can be provided following these works (a total of 5 pitches as a minimum). In turn, the refurbishment and redevelopment of the Hamilton Centre would provide new designated outdoor play space, a MUGA and a nature garden specifically for use by pupils of the relocated Phoenix College.

7.1.25 At present, any open space requirements generated by the existing educational use of the Hamilton Centre would rely upon the existing formalised shared management arrangements of the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields. In meeting the specific open space needs of SEMH pupils at the Hamilton Centre, the proposal would no longer solely require the utilisation of the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields (as would otherwise be case if the building remained in use a Sixth form college), thereby reducing the overall number of separate institutions which solely rely on the existing marked pitches’ space. With regard to level of facilities being

provided for an existing community facility, this proposal could reasonably be considered to provide a more appropriate provision of facilities in terms of quantity and quality than the peripheral part of the playing pitch actually being lost. Whilst secondary to the existing formal use of the pitches, public access to the site would not be reduced, but in fact be improved through delivery of a new public access gate to the southern boundary with the Regis Park development and upgraded perimeter footpath. The proposal could therefore be considered to meet exception b) of Policy OU1. However, in establishing accurately the value of those 'peripheral parts' of the playing pitch being lost and any equivalence of re-provision, input from Sport England as a Statutory consultee is required on any such proposal. This will be considered in detail below.

7.1.26 Finally in considering exception c) of Policy OU1, it is recognised that a large part of the playing pitch periphery being lost would be to provide the outdoor play areas, MUGA and nature garden required by the relocated Phoenix College. These facilities are themselves alternative sports and recreational provision for users of the existing building; the needs for which could be argued to outweigh the peripheral loss of the pitch. However, areas lost to the north to facilitate the new car park and new school extension are not for alternative sports and recreational provision. Furthermore, such provision would not benefit from the same public accessibility as the space lost. Therefore, the proposal is only able to partially meet exception c) of Policy OU1.

7.1.27 In considering the loss of playing pitches as required by exception b) and c) of Policy OU1 and as described above, due regard should be had to any comments received from Sport England as a Statutory consultee. Sport England specifically comments on any proposal which result in the loss of any playing pitch and through Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document can provide an assessment as to whether the proposal would meet any of Sport England's five specific exceptions.

7.1.28 Sport England has considered this application against the National Planning Policy Framework (particularly Para 97) and against its own playing fields policy, which states:

'Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of:

- *all or any part of a playing field, or*
- *land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or*
- *land allocated for use as a playing field*

unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions contained within Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document'.

7.1.29 Based on information provided by the applicant and in consultation with The Football Association (FA), Sport England are content that the proposal meets Planning Policy Exception E3. This exception criteria states:

The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not:

- *reduce the size of any playing pitch;*
- *result in the inability to use any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins and run-off areas);*

- *reduce the sporting capacity of the playing field to accommodate playing pitches or the capability to rotate or reposition playing pitches to maintain their quality;*
- *result in the loss of other sporting provision or ancillary facilities on the site; or*
- *prejudice the use of any remaining areas of playing field on the site.*

7.1.30 Sport England also welcomes the applicant's commitment to improve the drainage on the existing playing field through a planning obligation. This can be secure via a s106 legal agreement and supports several concerns raised by third parties. With such an obligation secured, Sport England does not object to this application.

7.1.31 Therefore, to summarise the overall policy situation, the principle of a reuse, refurbishment and extension of the Hamilton Centre to accommodate an alternative community use (component 1) is considered compliant with both Policy ER1 'Sites for Development in East Reading' and the specific housing allocation policy for the site (Policy ER1f). The proposal is also in broad compliance with Policy CC9 'Securing Infrastructure' and Policy OU1 'New and Existing Community Facilities' in meeting an existing educational need through a new community facility.

7.1.32 However, the loss of peripheral areas of existing open space which would come about as a result of the works associated with the reuse of the Hamilton centre (component 2) are considered contrary to the protections afforded by Policy EN7 'Local Green Space', yet compliant with those other policies which specifically seek to protect and enhance existing playing pitches like exception b) and c) of Policy OU1 and Exception E3 of Sport England Playing Pitch Strategy. With less weight afforded to Policy EN7 for the reason set in in 7.1.18, the proposal is largely considered to adhere to the majority of applicable local plan policies.

7.1.33 As officers acknowledge there is not the conflicts with the Development Plan above, it is necessary to return to Policy CC1 which states that, "*any proposed development that conflicts with the development plan will be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise*". In this case it is even more critical to consider guidance within the NPPF as an important material consideration in any assessment.

Other material considerations

7.1.34 At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The three overarching objectives to achieving sustainable development are defined as economic, social and environmental. The economic role requires proposals to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. The social role requires planning to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and a high-quality built environment. Whilst the environmental role requires the natural, built and historic environment to be protected and enhanced and importantly the mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

7.1.35 In terms of an economic role, the proposed development would contribute to and encourage associated economic activity within the Borough through both the construction works and ongoing operation and management of the school, including additional opportunities for the creation of specialist employment required in association with an enlarged SEMH school.

7.1.36 In terms of the social role, the Borough-wide need for a SEMH school places is acute. Paragraph 94 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of a Local Authority having a sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing communities. It goes on to say that, "*Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement and to development that will widen choice in education*". In

particular LPAs should give ‘great weight’ to the need to create, expand or alter schools through planning applications. Paragraph 121 supports the needs for LPAs to make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space.

- 7.1.37 There is currently pupil demand for 74 spaces at Key Stage 3 (KS) level, 55 spaces at KS4 and 75 spaces post age 16, totalling 204 spaces. The existing Phoenix College is the Borough’s only dedicated SEMH facility with capacity for only 64 spaces. Of all Special Educational Needs of which SEMH is a part, 178 pupils are currently taught out of Reading Borough due to lack of school places.
- 7.1.38 Therefore the provision of an enlarged, enhanced and purpose-built facility through reuse of an existing vacant facility to provides a critical piece of social infrastructure that will allow the Council to meet the current and future needs of some of its most vulnerable young people. The provision of such an enhanced facility is also consistent with the Government’s key objective within the NPPF to promote healthy and sustainable communities. However, as acknowledged, the development would result in the partial loss of an existing area of designated LGS. As advised above, the quality and quantity of playing pitch removed is not considered substantial or of high value, and in fact largely enabling the provision of enhanced specialist outdoor facilities for the school.
- 7.1.39 The proposed new school hall, changing room and toilet facilities will be available for community use and hire. It should be noted that the junior football clubs who use the field currently have no access to either changing facilities or toilets. These new facilities would be located adjacent to the existing car park affording easy access for their use on weekends. This enhanced facility for wider community use is a clear public benefit of the scheme which would be secured through a Community Use Agreement (CUA). These facilities will reinforce the overall usability of the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields as valued LGS.
- 7.1.40 In addition to the above, there is a commitment to undertake pitch improvement works up to the value of £25,000 in order to provide drainage enhancements. This will be undertaken as part of the overall implementation of the Hamilton Centre development work, and secured and monitored alongside the CUA within a S106 legal agreement. Finally, the proposal includes the creation of a new pedestrian access gate, linking with Regis Park Road in order to allow easier public access from Regis Park Road. The provision of this access is now designing in this facility, and therefore fulfils a past commitment to improve access as result of previous development as approved (via a s106 obligation). This will be secured via means of an enclosure condition and implemented in tandem with all boundary treatments prior to first occupation of the school. These additional community benefits would ensure the continued sustainable use of the land by both the schools as playing pitches and the local community as LGS.
- 7.1.41 When balanced against the value of the peripheral LGS lost, the need for adequate SEMH school provision, new community use facilities, pitch improvements and enhanced public access are considered substantial benefits which outweigh the identified harm caused. The development is therefore able to perform a positive social role as required by the NPPF.
- 7.1.42 Finally, but of increasing importance is the environmental role of this development. The refurbishment and extension of the existing Hamilton Centre would demonstrate a far greater and enhanced level of sustainability through compliance with the Council’s updated energy efficiency and sustainability standards contained within the Local Plan and required by current Building Regulations standards. Furthermore, the principle of utilising what is largely an existing building is supportive of the NPPF aim to encourage an efficient use of land.

7.1.43 The parts of the existing playing pitch being lost/enclosed are recognised as currently having little environmental value in terms of biodiversity. Through the comprehensive landscape strategy, management plan and biodiversity enhancements proposed (nature garden and planted orchard - details of which are to be secured), the development can perform a more active and positive environmental role within the Borough than it does at present. In addition, the re-location of the Phoenix College itself to another site within the Borough that is served by main arterial bus routes and the Borough cycle network positively contributes to reducing the need for staff to travel by private vehicle. The pitch improvement works are also considered an environmental improvement by assisting drainage: a concern raised by third parties.

7.1.44 Issues of landscape character, visual amenity, biodiversity, trees, flooding and drainage are considered in further detail later in this report.

7.1.45 Therefore, in summary, on this basis of the individual particulars of this proposal and with due regard to all the material planning considerations detailed above, the benefits (when taken as a whole) are considered to outweigh the identified conflict with Policy EN7 and the peripheral loss of an area of the LGS. The development is considered to represent a sustainable form of development which would result in the appropriate reuse of an existing building for an essential community facility. The principle of development is therefore considered acceptable and supported by officers.

7.2 Character and appearance of the area

Design and layout

7.2.1 The existing building is a rectangular two-storey educational building of 1970s appearance. Existing windows are single-glazed steel Crittal type and the building is considered to have little architectural merit both internally and externally (See fig 6 below)



Figure 6 - View across pitches towards existing building

7.2.2 The new extension to the existing building which will accommodate the school hall, dining room, kitchen and changing rooms would result in the building being extended along the same orientation as the existing building (northwards) making the most efficient use of the existing site. The structural grid and proportions of the existing building to the south lend this part of building towards accommodating the classrooms and teaching accommodation, leaving the extension to provide the larger volume spaces of hall, dining room and kitchen.

The extension is composed of two rectangular forms; a larger 9m high part for the main hall and a lower single-storey volume accommodating main entrance, dining hall, kitchen and changing rooms. The hall block is approximately 2.5m higher than the existing retained part of the Hamilton Centre. The main teaching spaces are located on the east side of the refurbished building with the larger specialist spaces located at the far end. The external treatment will consist of face brickwork to match existing and more contemporary vertical cladding of which the particular specification can be agreed via condition.

- 7.2.3 From a design perspective, the refurbished and extended building would retain similar proportions to the existing building in both plan and section, with it appearing as a rectangular elongated block when viewed from Wokingham Road or across the playing pitches to the east. The overall scale and proportions of the building are considered to remain in-keeping with both the recent two-storey development at MES and the buildings of UTC. All such all buildings surrounding the Alfred Sutton Playing fields will continue to display a strong functional and educational character and appearance. This proposal will be no exception.
- 7.2.4 The visual impact of the extension is mitigated by its location at the base of the existing earth bank and location to the perimeter of the playing pitches. Public views into and through the site are possible but given the presence of the existing Hamilton Centre already, there would be no discernible change or harm caused to any views of high amenity value.

Openness of the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields

- 7.2.5 It is accepted that the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields are of high environmental and amenity value. The section below will discuss to what extent these are affected by the proposal.
- 7.2.6 In terms of the overall openness and the experience of users of the Alfred Sutton Playing Fields, the siting, scale and design of the proposal is considered to have a comparatively limited effect on the openness of this land. Whilst the land on which the Hamilton Centre is located marginally higher than the rest of the playing fields, it is relatively secluded, being located in the North-West corner of the fields and set against the rising backdrop of the existing earth bund, car park and mature landscape perimeter of the pitches. 7.2.7 The curtilage created for the relocated school involves a small proportion of the whole area of open space available. As a combination of the above, the siting/visual impact of the proposal would not visually intrude onto the main open area of playing pitches. Although there will be a visual change for localised views, the proposed development would not cause any significant visual impact on the openness of the playing pitches.

7.3 Landscape, Trees and Ecology

- 7.3.1 The Council's Natural Environment Officer has visited the site and considered carefully the overall site strategy for soft landscaping and trees. The proposal will affect several trees recently planted as part of the previous MES development on the bank to the playing fields. In light of this and the need to ensure that as many trees are retained as part of the works as possible, additional information was secured confirming which trees are to be retained and which require removal. The applicant has advised that any tree loss as part of these proposals is to be mitigated with an overall net gain in tree planting. The submitted plans indicatively show extensive tree planting and full details can be secured via condition.
- 7.3.2 An Arboricultural Method Statement will need to be secured to deal with physical protection of retained trees and fence installation on the southern boundary with Lakeside Care Home, as the mature Lime trees close to the boundary (within the care home site) are subject to a group TPO. It is also noted that the proposal is likely to result in some level changes in the

eastern area. As such it will be important for officers to secure details of existing and proposed ground levels through relevant level and boundary treatment conditions in order to ensure that those mature trees on the boundary within Lakeside Care Home are adequately protected.

- 7.3.4 The landscaping conditions proposed would ensure that any planting is predominantly native (but can include non-natives for stock resistance), are wildlife-friendly and ensure the inclusion of mammal gaps where appropriate. The Council's Ecologist has requested ecological enhancements, over and above wildlife-friendly planting, and the need to include integral bird nesting and bat roosting opportunities on and around the new buildings. Whilst these have not been indicated on the landscape plan, they can reasonably be secured via a specific ecological enhancement condition, as supported by the NPPF and the Reading Local Plan 2019.

7.4 Impact on residential amenity

- 7.4.1 The nearest residential properties to the Hamilton Centre itself are a series of detached properties located directly opposite Hamilton Road to the east and to the south east at Regis Park Road. Directly to the south lies Lakeside Care Home, beyond the southern perimeter of the playing fields. Please see Fig 7 below showing comparative distances to neighbouring properties and their relationship to the existing building.

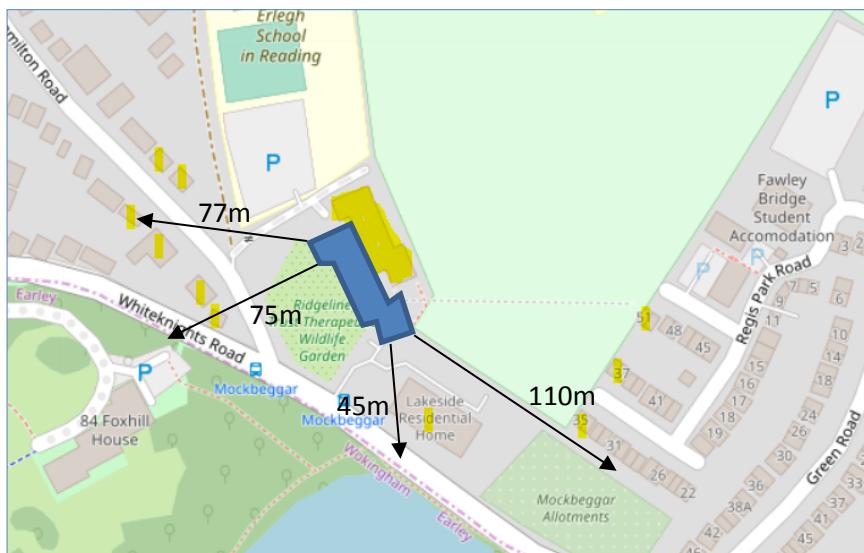


Figure 7: Neighbouring properties highlighted and their proximity to the existing building.

- 7.4.2 Various third-party representations consider that the development will adversely affect their residential amenity through vehicle movements, the reuse of the building, and the proximity outdoor play areas for pupils to their back gardens. Concern has also been expressed as to the consequence of mixing several schools on the same site, the possible traffic congestion that could be caused to several roads leading to the site, and the management of pupils across all sites at morning and evening peaks. Matters concerning transport, access and the impact on the highway network are considered in later sections in more detail, but officers note the original building accommodated 300 Sixth form pupil during its use as such during the 1980s.
- 7.4.3 Local Plan Policy CC8 sets out the need to ensure such proposals respect and protect the amenity of nearby residents. The following aspects of the scheme have been considered in this regard.

Noise/vibration and disturbance

- 7.4.4 The Hamilton Centre, in accommodating the Phoenix College as a SEMH school will benefit from its own parking areas and private outdoor play areas which would be used in good weather during term-time. Whilst not specified, school hours are generally matters more appropriately controlled outside of the planning system. However, given the limited size and specific nature of the school, any audible noise levels heard from nearby residential properties would be for short periods of the day (during break times) and be no worse than what would have ordinarily occurred in past when the building was occupied by a significantly more pupils. Furthermore, any usage of outdoor areas would be commensurate with the current use of the playing pitches by the existing schools and is considered to apply to any residential address which already back onto this open space. With regard to more prolonged mechanical noise that may be generated, the Council's Environmental Protection (EP) Team advises controls to ensure that no mechanical plant be installed until a noise assessment (in relation to prevailing background noise levels) has been submitted and approved.

Artificial lighting

- 7.4.5 Whilst the existing building is fully expected to have external lighting, this is unlikely to be any more intensive than would have been in use as either a sixth form college or Surestart centre. Whilst no details have been supplied, more energy efficient and sensitive lighting technology means the level of light spillage is expected to be comparatively less than in the past. Furthermore, a specifically worded planning condition can ensure that a fully-developed external lighting scheme (including lux level contours) is submitted to and approved in writing before first occupation. Observations were made by the Council's EP Team as to the requirement for floodlighting of any Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) on the reused tennis courts. As this part of the proposal is no longer being pursued for the reasons given earlier in this report, there is no requirement to secure AGP floodlighting details in advance of this report.

Air quality, dust and odour

- 7.4.6 Although expanding, the school is relocating from another nearby site and as a travel plan is already in place, the Council's EP Team do not require an air quality assessment to be submitted as part of this development.
- 7.4.7 The Council's EP Team also identifies odour as a risk from commercial kitchens and therefore requires the applicants to provide an assessment of the likelihood of odours based on the proposed cuisine and a statement of how the proposals will ensure that odour nuisance will be prevented. This can be secure via a standard odour management condition.

Traffic movements, deliveries, servicing

- 7.4.8 Whilst properties in the vicinity will notice an increase in activity at the site through general traffic movements and noise given the site has been vacant for a number of years, there is no indication that these impacts would be any worse than when the site was previously in educational use, or produce any significant level of harm to residential amenity. Refuse and recycling facilities along with appropriate collection arrangements are matters that can be adequately dealt with via condition also.

Construction phase

7.4.9 Full details of the construction phase along with matters such as dust management will be secured through a comprehensive Construction Environmental Management Plan condition (CEMP). At this early stage, construction access is likely to require use of the main vehicular entrance from Bulmershe Road, however this is yet to be agreed formally. A detailed site compound plan and method statement is currently being developed by the applicant's contractor. Therefore, through careful management, construction of this scheme is not considered to generate any unacceptable harm or disturbance which cannot be adequately controlled through the requirements of the CEMP and through existing health and safety and site construction controls. The following matters are also appropriate to manage via condition:

- Hours of Working - construction and demolition phase
- Bonfires
- Bin storage - rats
- Details of bin stores'

Contaminated Land

7.4.10 The development lies on the site of an historic brick works. Whilst the site investigation has not identified any contaminants of concern on the section of the site that is being redeveloped, as a precautionary approach, a condition is recommended to ensure the reporting of any unexpected contamination and remediation, if such is required.

Security issues

7.4.11 In the absence of any comments from the Crime Prevention Design Adviser (CPDA), the specification of fencing and pedestrian access gate can be controlled via suitably worded conditions and the design of the new access gate along with other aspects of the scheme can be aligned with key principles contained within 'Secured by Design' (SBD) guidance. If a response is received, it will be reported to your meeting.

7.5 Sustainability/energy

7.5.1 This application proposes not to seek BREEAM accreditation but pursue an alternative approach to show how the design complies with the subject headings under the BREEAM accreditation system. The reason contained within the submission is that the brief for this building requires an in-use Display Energy Certificate (DEC) which is claimed is a more robust performance target than that demanded currently by BREEAM (based upon theoretical performance rather than actual energy consumed).

7.5.2 Based on newly-adopted Local Plan policy, all major non-residential developments or conversions to residential are required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM 'Excellent' standards, where possible. Whilst the refurbished and extended building would inherently be more energy efficient, would make use of modern construction practices and need to meet updated Building Regulations requirements, there remains the need to secure compliance with Policy CC2 of the Local Plan. In this regard, provided that the required pre- and post- BREEAM energy efficiency conditions are attached to achieve the anticipated level of compliance, officers are satisfied that the requirements of the policy can be achieved.

7.6 Transport and access

- 7.6.1 The Council's Transport Officer has considered this proposal and amended information in detail. With regard to the site's existing location and proposed access, the primary vehicular access will remain unchanged from Hamilton Road, but will be remodelled (including the entrance into the existing staff car park for Maiden Erleigh school) to allow two-way traffic flow movement in and out of the site. The submitted plans now show a widening to 4.3m which is considered acceptable by the Transport Officer. A new drop-off layby will be constructed close to the school's entrance. A one-way system around the car park will ensure that school-related traffic makes use of the layby. A car park strategy plan has been submitted which identifies the car parking spaces allocated to each respective school, but this still does not specify how the spaces will be managed between the two uses. This can be dealt with by way of a condition.
- 7.6.2 In terms of vehicle movements/trip generation, the information provided with this application is considered acceptable and identifies that staff would travel to and from the school mainly outside of the peak periods. The updated Transport Addendum provides further analysis between the existing and proposed uses. The Transport Officer has reviewed the submitted TRICS data for the existing use and it is noted that the site has included sites that are not comparable to the application site as they are not located in similar locations.
- 7.6.3 In light of this discrepancy, the Council's Transport Officer has undertaken his own assessment of the trip rates for the existing use and concluded that the proposal results in a reduction in trips from the existing permitted use and is therefore acceptable in principle.
- 7.6.4 In terms of parking, it has been stated that the parking requirements have been calculated in line with RBC's Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011) which stipulates a maximum requirement of 1 space per FTE* staff. This equates to a provision of 28 spaces, and revised drawings have been submitted that identify this provision and is therefore acceptable. Within this provision, 4 disabled bays have been retained and relocated to within the new car parking area, making disabled persons' access to the building more accessible than the existing situation.
- 7.6.5 The proposed car park layout retains a provision of 63 spaces for Maiden Erleigh School in the rear car park and this is also considered acceptable. Finally, 10 cycle spaces are proposed for both staff and pupils use which complies with policy.
- 7.6.6 To ensure there would be enough space within the site to accommodate the anticipated 10 vehicles at the peak drop-off and pick-up times as well as service and emergency vehicles, vehicle tracking diagrams have been submitted and are acceptable to RBC Transport.
- 7.6.7 Therefore, in summary, the Council's Transport Team raises no objections to the proposal subject to the recommended conditions.

7.7 Other matters

Flood risk and drainage

- 7.7.1 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted with the application, as required for all Major planning applications. The site is within Flood Zone 1, with a low risk of flooding. The submitted FRA deals with on-site flood risk (within the red line). As localised surface water drainage issues are already known to occur on the playing fields, details of any hard-surfaced areas will need to ensure permeability along with the requirements of a

surface water management plan condition to ensure the proposed development does not cause any unmanaged runoff onto the adjoining pitches or a worsening of the current situation. The Update report will clarify whether this approach also satisfies SUDS considerations, if relevant to this application.

- 7.7.2 A construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan would be secured which identifies and promotes employment opportunities generated by the proposed development, or other developments within Reading, for the construction phase of the proposed development. Sometimes this requires a payment to Reading UK CiC, the Council's partner, to prepare the plan usually payable at least 1 month prior to implementation and index linked from the date of issue of planning permission. As such, the S106 will secure this in a flexible manner covering both options.

Equality Act

- 7.7.3 In determining this application, the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the planning application under consideration. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

Third Party comments

- 7.7.4 The complex nature of this proposal and the fact it affects a valued area of public open space has resulted in the receipt of a wide range of third-party objections. The relevant sections of this report cover all material planning issues raised. However, should any additional planning matters be raised between now and your meeting, the Update report will provide comments on any additional points of clarification.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 In first establishing the principle of development, the benefits of the scheme (when taken as a whole) are considered to sufficiently outweigh the limited identified conflict with Policy EN7 of the Local Plan and the peripheral loss of LGS on site. As described in section 7.1, the development is considered to represent a sustainable form of development which would result in the appropriate reuse of an existing building for an essential community facility. In supporting the principle of development, great weight has been attached to the fact this scheme meets the identified need of SEMH school provision and fulfils the general requirement for Local Planning Authorities to secure enhanced community facilities for the benefit of the whole community.
- 8.2 It has been demonstrated to officers' satisfaction that the design and visual impact of the proposal is acceptable and that no significant visual impact would be caused to the openness of the existing playing pitches. Landscaping, ecological and arboricultural enhancements can be secured via conditions, whilst for the reasons given in this report, the level of amenity enjoyed by nearby residents is able to be adequately protected in accordance with Local Plan Policy CC8.

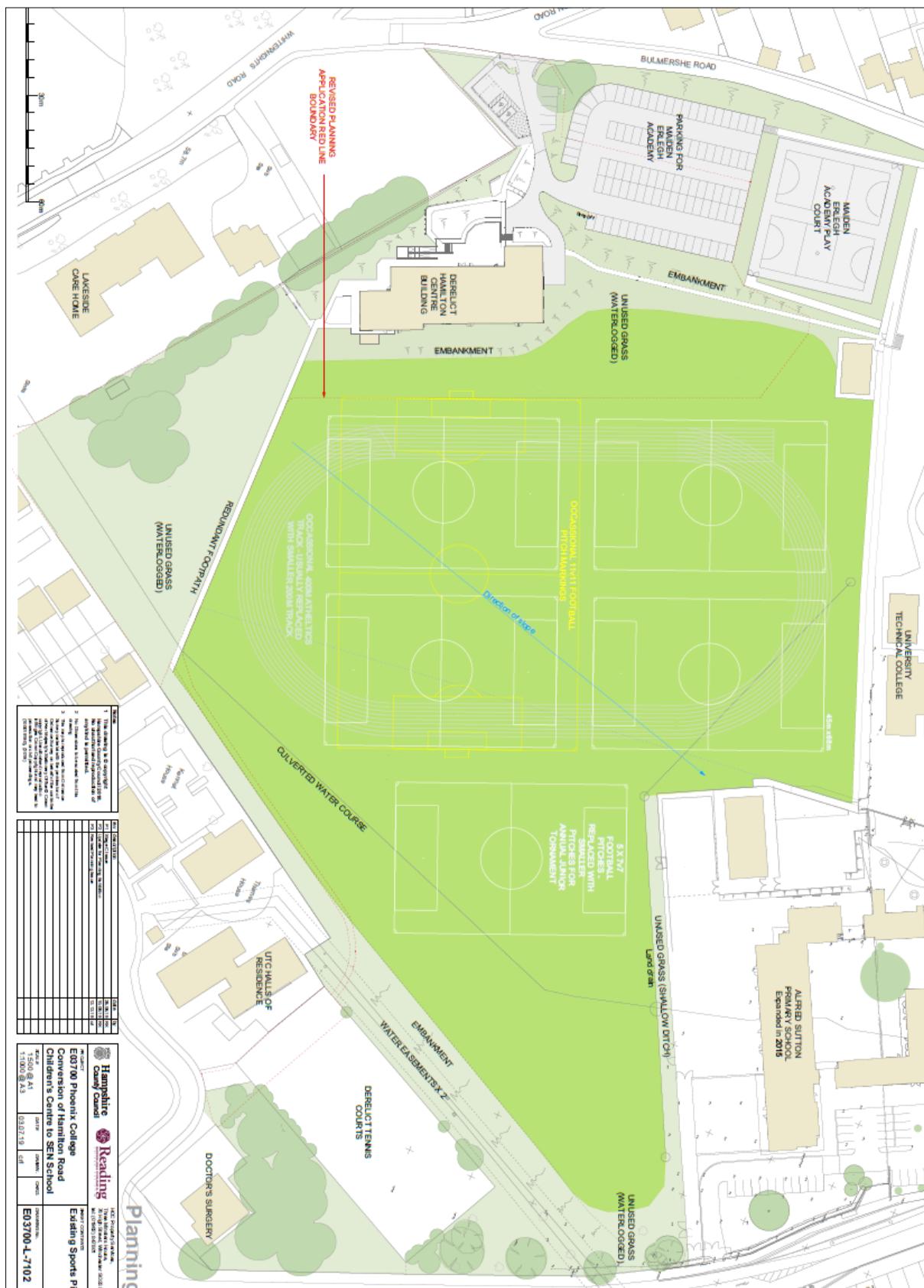
- 8.3 It is recognised that the proposal seeks to pursue an alternative approach to energy efficiency than BREEAM accreditation. The applicant is aware that their approach will need to be subject to the required pre-and-post BREEAM energy efficiency conditions with a bespoke timescale allow the greatest opportunity for compliance.
- 8.4 Finally, following the receipt of additional information, the Transport Officer raises no objections subject to a range of specific and standard planning conditions ensuring the scheme provides safe access, adequate parking, sufficient space to manoeuvre, and does not cause any wider impact on the highway network.
- 8.5 In conclusion, officers fully recognise that a proposal of this nature requires the Committee to consider a range of difficult and of competing issues. Having had regard to all matters raised, it is considered that the over-riding public benefits of this proposal and compliance with the main themes of local and national policy outweigh the limited on-site harm associated with the development. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions and a legal agreement as set out in the Recommendation at the start of this report.

Case officer: Brian Conlon

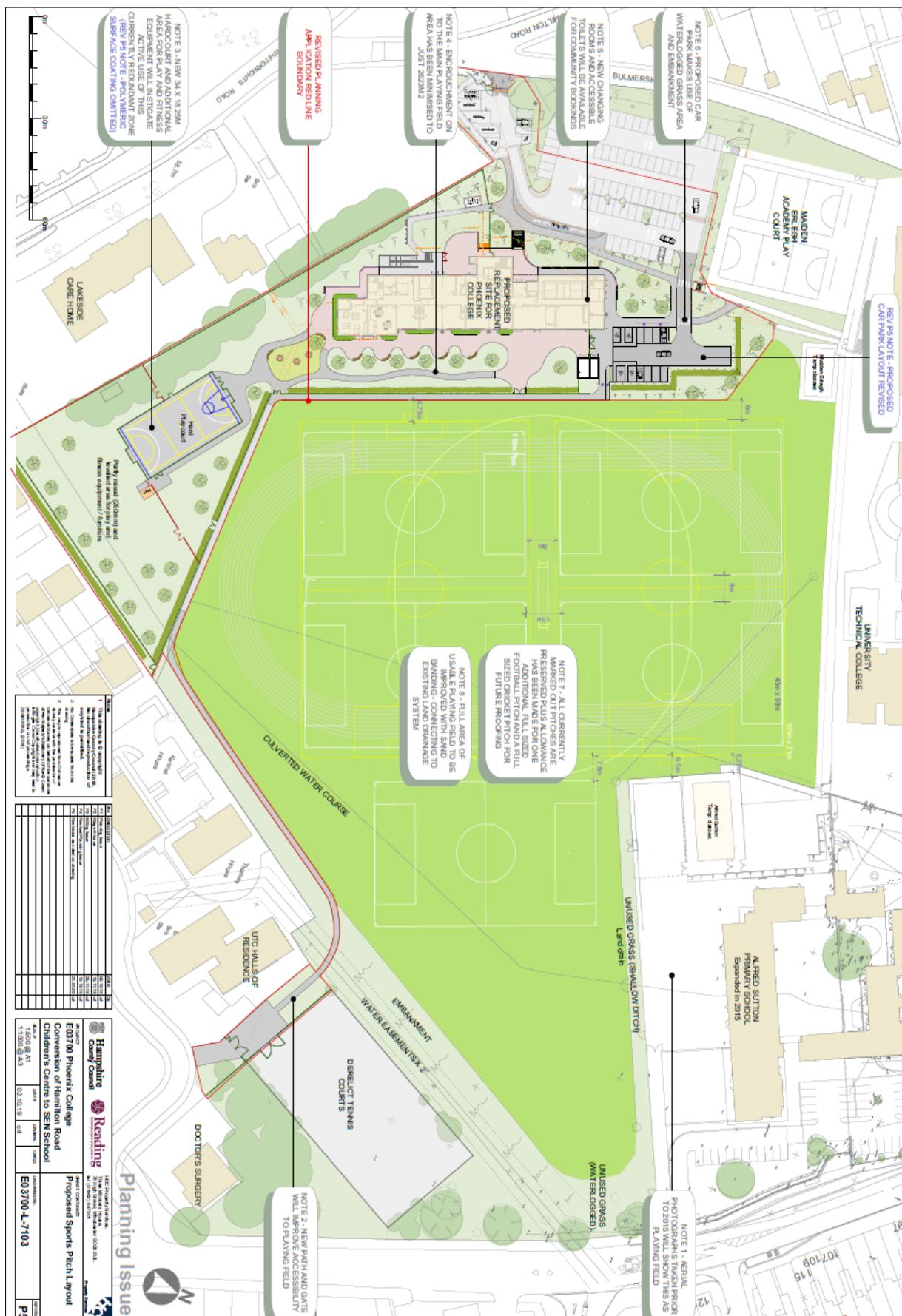
Plans: TBC in Update report



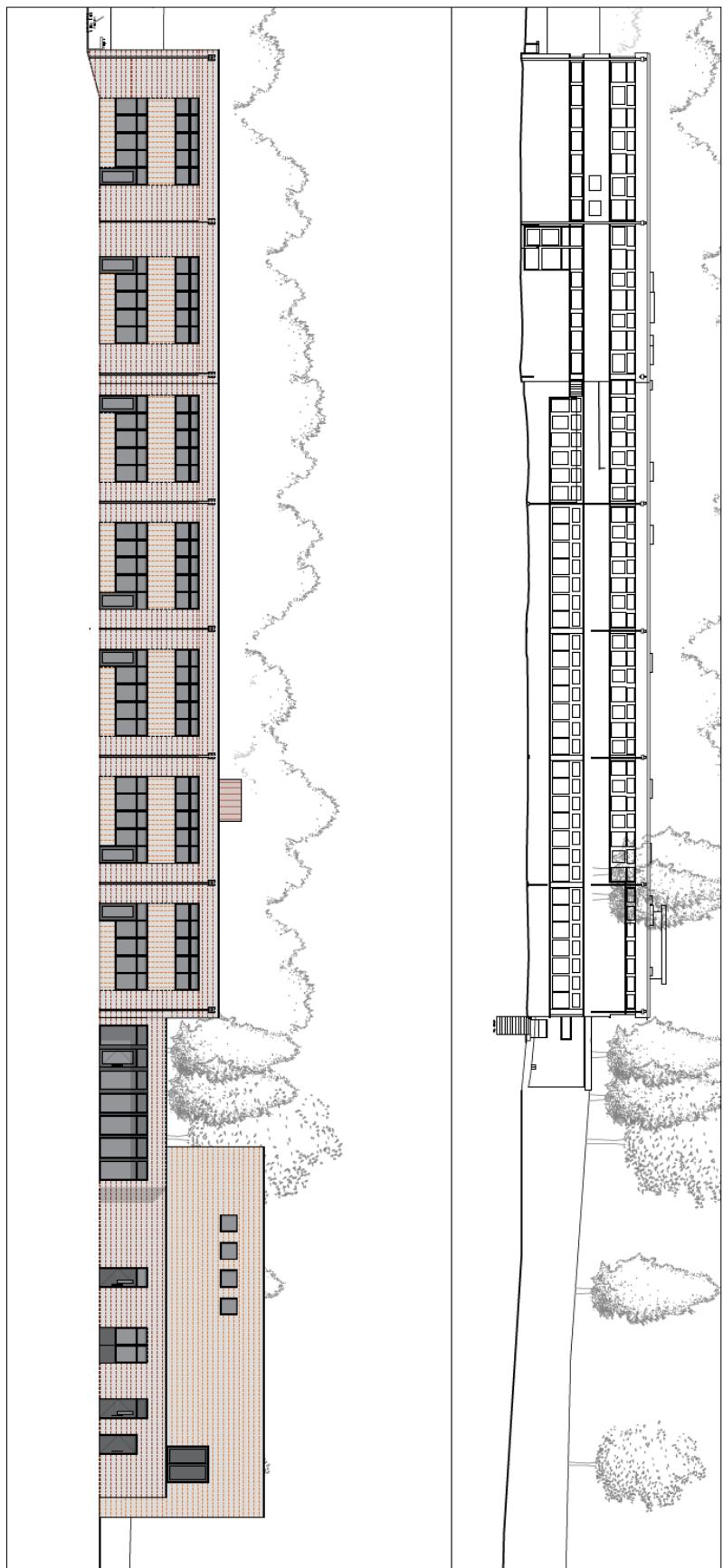
Car Park Strategy (Not to scale)



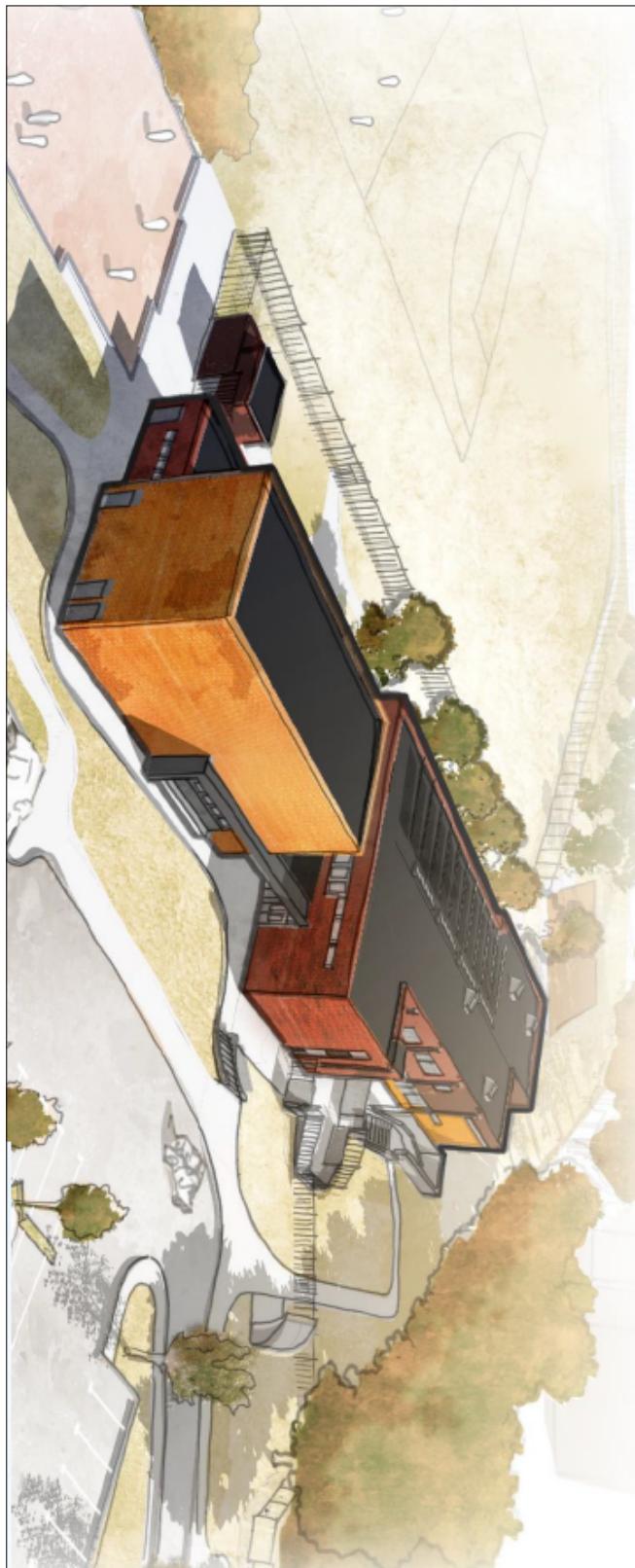
Existing pitch layout (not to scale)



Proposed pitch layout (Not to scale)



Proposed East Elevation (Not to scale)



Perspective showing main entrance from Bulmershe Road