



DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Thursday, 30th January, 2014

7.30 pm

Town Hall, Watford

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CONTACT

If you require further information or you would like a copy of this agenda in another format, e.g. large print, please contact Rosy Wassell in Democracy and Governance on 01923 278375 or by email to legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk .

Welcome to this meeting. We hope you find these notes useful.

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SPEAKING AT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Only one person will be permitted to speak on behalf of objectors and one in support of a proposal. Precedence to speak in support of the proposal will be given to the applicant or their representative.

In order to speak, a person must register before 12 noon on the day of the meeting by contacting the Democratic Services Team. The contact details are available on the front of this agenda.

If a speaker wishes the Development Control Committee to consider any documentation at the meeting, then it must be submitted to the Democratic Services Team by 12 noon on the day of the meeting.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillor R Martins (Chair)

Councillor G Derbyshire (Vice-Chair)

Councillors I Brandon, S Johnson, A Joynes, I Sharpe, T Williams, N Bell and M Watkin

AGENDA

PART A - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**
2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)**
3. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2014 to be submitted and signed.
(All minutes are available on the Council's website.)

CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

The Committee to take items in the following order:

1. All items where people wish to speak to the Committee and have registered to do so by telephoning the Democratic Services Team.
2. Any remaining items that the Committee agree can be determined without further debate.
3. Those applications where Members wish to discuss matters in detail.

4. **OUTSTANDING PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

One application report is included on this agenda for decision. This is not within the Government's target dates for determination of applications.

On 21 January 2014 there were no applications over eight weeks not yet determined but under consideration by the Development Management Section Head.

5. LANCHESTER BUILDING, WATFORD CAMPUS, HEMPSTEAD ROAD (Pages 1 - 48)

An application for:

The conversion of the building for use as a primary school with nursery, including two 3 storey rear extensions and alterations to elevations and new entrance canopy.

The formation of external play areas, including new surfacing, seating, fencing and gates, and alterations to landscaping.

The erection of fencing around the boundaries of the site.

Alterations to vehicular access to West Herts College and the provision of 7 car parking spaces, coach lay-by, cycle shelter and new footpaths.

PART A

Report of: **HEAD OF REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Date of Committee:	30th January 2014
Site address:	Lanchester Building, Hempstead Road
Reference number:	13/01134/FUL
Description of development:	Conversion of building for use as a primary school with nursery, including two 3 storey rear extensions, alterations to elevations and new entrance canopy. Formation of external play areas, including new surfacing, seating, fencing and gates, and alterations to landscaping. Erection of fencing around the boundaries of the site. Alterations to vehicular access to West Herts College and the provision of 7 car parking spaces, coach lay-by, cycle shelter and new footpaths.
Applicant:	West Herts Community Free School Trust
Date received:	6th November 2013
8 week date (minor):	1st January 2014
Ward:	PARK

SUMMARY

Full planning permission is sought for the conversion of the existing Lanchester Building at West Herts College into a two form entry primary school with nursery comprising the associated extensions and alterations to the building and external ground works to facilitate this use. The building itself is locally listed and the whole site is located within the Civic Core Conservation Area. The adjacent Little Cassiobury is a Grade II* listed building.

The proposed use of the Lanchester Building as a primary school will meet an identified and immediate need for primary school places within the central area of Watford. The use of the building as a school does not require planning permission; however, the proposed external works to the open space in front of the Lanchester Building are considered to have a moderate negative impact on the character and appearance of the Civic Core Conservation Area and the setting of the locally listed Lanchester Building. These works are also considered to have a minor adverse impact on the setting of the listed Little Cassiobury. Nevertheless, having regard to the unprecedented demand for primary school places in Watford, it is considered that the harm to these heritage assets is outweighed by the benefit of providing a new primary school on the site.

The applicant proposes to re-open the existing footpath to Cassiobury Drive as part of the proposal to allow children to access the school from this side of the site on foot. As there will be no facilities to drop off/pick up children from the Hempstead Road at the front of the site, this will also facilitate the dropping off and picking up of children by car. Although this will generate additional traffic movements and parking on the surrounding roads at the beginning and end of the school day, comprehensive waiting and parking restrictions exist on these roads. It is also proposed to enhance these restrictions with the addition of 'no loading' restrictions on the existing double yellow lines and, if appropriate, 'zig-zag' school markings. The cost of these works can be secured through a s.106 planning obligation. Providing these restrictions are complied with, it is not considered that problems relating to parking congestion or hazards to pedestrians would arise. The school will also promote walking and cycling to school through individual travel plans for each family that will further mitigate any potential for harmful impacts. Overall, it is considered that the proposed access and parking arrangements are the best that can be achieved in this case and that any potential impacts in respect of parking congestion on Cassiobury Drive and surrounding roads and increased queuing on Stratford Way will be only for short periods of time at the beginning and end of the school day and are not considered to be so severe or significant to merit refusing the application.

The Head of Regeneration and Development therefore recommends that conditional planning permission for the application be granted, subject to the completion of a s.106 planning obligation and appropriate conditions, as set out in the report.

BACKGROUND

Site and surroundings

The site forms part of the wider West Herts College campus at Hempstead Road and comprises the Lanchester Building (now vacant) and the area of open space in front of the building. The application site also includes the existing vehicular access to the college site from Hempstead Road and a disused and currently blocked off footpath leading to Cassiobury Drive to the south-west of the site. The Lanchester Building is a building of local interest. The whole of the site is also within the Civic Core Conservation Area.

To the south-east, the site adjoins Little Cassiobury, a Grade II* listed building, and the new college building. To the south-west, at the rear of the building, is the main college car park with properties in Cassiobury Drive and Woodland Drive beyond. To the north-west, the site adjoins a sheltered housing scheme on Hempstead Road and the rear gardens of properties in Woodland Drive.

Proposed development

Full planning permission is sought for the conversion of the existing building into a 2 form entry primary school with nursery. Although the application does not seek planning permission for a change of use of the building to a school, because the building has an existing lawful use for educational use, a wide range of external works are required to facilitate its use as a primary school. These include:

- The construction of two 3 storey extensions on the rear of the building to accommodate new stair cores.
- The replacement of the existing windows and doors, the formation of a new entrance and canopy, and the formation of new access ramps.

- The formation of two hard surfaced play areas within the open space at the front of the building with associated fencing, footpaths and seating.
- The erection of fencing around the boundaries of the open space at the front of the site.
- Alterations to the vehicular access to West Herts College and the provision of 9 car parking spaces and a coach lay-by.
- The re-opening of the existing footpath leading to Cassiobury Drive and the formation of two new pedestrian routes through the college car park.
- New landscaping.

Planning history

Originally built as 'Watford College', construction was commenced in 1938 but due to the outbreak of the Second World War, was not completed until 1953. Occupied by West Herts College from 1991, the majority of the building was demolished in 2009 when the new West Herts College building was constructed. It was vacated by the college at this time and has been empty since then. The Civic Core Conservation Area, including the application site, was designated in January 2001.

In 2002, a Tree Preservation Order was made covering 4 sycamore trees sited along the north-western boundary of the site, adjacent to 63-67, Hempstead Road (TPO 190).

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework

- Section 4 Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Section 7 Requiring good design
- Section 8 Promoting healthy communities
- Section 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2011-2026

No relevant policies.

Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016

No relevant policies.

Watford Local Plan Part 1 - Core Strategy 2006-31

SPA1	Town Centre
SD1	Sustainable Design
SD3	Climate Change
T2	Location of New Development
T3	Improving Accessibility
T4	Transport Assessments
INF1	Infrastructure Delivery and Planning Obligations
UD1	Delivering High Quality Design
UD2	Built Heritage Conservation
GI1	Green Infrastructure
GI3	Biodiversity

Watford District Plan 2000

SE7	Waste Storage and Recycling in New Development
SE36	Replacement Trees and Hedgerows
SE39	Tree and Hedgerow Provision in New Development
T10	Cycle Parking Standards
T21	Access and Servicing
T22	Car Parking Standards
U15	Buildings of Local Interest
U17	Setting of Conservation Areas
U18	Design in Conservation Areas

CONSULTATIONS

Neighbour consultations

Letters were sent to 238 properties in Hempstead Road, Cassiobury Drive, Woodland Drive, Parkside Drive and Stratford Way and 99 replies have been received. The main reasons given for objecting to the proposal can be summarised as follows:-

- i) The opening up of the existing footpath from Cassiobury Drive into the site and the use of this for the dropping off and picking up of children will cause significant traffic and parking congestion on Cassiobury Drive, Woodland Drive and Parkside Drive. The majority of objectors do not want this footpath re-opened and do not want the Cassiobury Estate to be used for the dropping off and picking up of children.
[Officer comment: The application does not propose the creation of a new footpath link to Cassiobury Drive, only the use of the existing footpath. The re-opening and use of this existing footpath does not require any planning permission.]
- ii) The number of cars using the estate for the dropping off and picking up of children will result in significant queues and delays on Stratford Way, Langley Way and other roads as the cars leave the estate. Many objectors refer to existing problems and delays (up to 10 minutes) for cars leaving the estate which they consider will be made significantly worse by the proposal and the proposed addition of a pedestrian phase to the Stratford Way junction. Suggested alternative drop-off points for the school include an area behind the Town Hall and the existing West Herts College car park.
[Officer comment: Observations on Stratford Way during school peak times have not identified any significant queuing on Stratford Way or any delays in vehicles leaving the estate. There is no drop-off facility at the rear of the Town Hall other than a short lay-by alongside the leisure centre. The West Herts College car park is not available for use and, in any event, is normally full.]
- iii) Although the school is proposed to be 'car-free' with the intention that the majority of children will walk or cycle to school, many objectors refer to the existing Cassiobury schools and the significant traffic and parking congestion that they

generate. They do not consider the claims made by the Free School Trust will be realised.

[Officer comment: Cassiobury Drive, Woodland Drive and Parkside Drive are subject to a number of parking and waiting restrictions that do not exist at the Cassiobury schools. Providing these restrictions are observed, through parking enforcement if necessary, there should be no parking congestion.]

- iv) Increased noise and pollution and increased hazards for children walking to school arising from a large number of cars arriving, turning and leaving in Cassiobury Drive and around the junction with Woodland Drive and Parkside Drive.

[Officer comment: It is not considered that the situation would be any different from any other school. Providing the parking and waiting restrictions are observed, there should be no inherent hazards to children walking to school.]

- v) The use of Cassiobury Park for the school playing fields.

[Officer comment: The school will use the existing sports pitches at Cassiobury Park, in agreement with the Council. Many schools in the town that do not have their own playing fields use Council sports pitches.]

Two respondents support the application. It is also worth noting that a number of objectors do not object to the use of the building for a school in principle but to the access arrangements on the Cassiobury estate.

The Committee will be advised of any additional representations received after the date this report was written.

Advertisements in local paper/site notices

Two site notices were placed outside the site on Hempstead Road and one on Cassiobury Drive, adjacent to the closed footpath, on 22nd November 2013.

Consultations

English Heritage

Does not wish to comment on the application.

Hertfordshire County Council (Highway Authority)

Decision

Notice is given under article 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

Peak Hours

The road network peak hours for the area are AM Peak 08.00 hour to 09.00 hour and the PM Peak is 17.00-18.00 Hour. The school peak hours are that morning peak hour coincides with the network peak hour, but the afternoon peak hour is between 15.00 and 16.00.

Parking

The proposal is for 2FE Primary School for 420 children and 45 members of staff. There are only 9 parking spaces provided for the development within the application site. The parking provision is inadequate for 45 members of staff and no children pick up and drop off facility is provided within the site. The LPA is the authority for on-site parking provision. The site is highly accessible by other forms of transport to car and there are adequate parking restrictions on the surrounding roads. However, the concern remains is the potential impact of parents dropping off and picking up children during school opening and closing time.

Local Road Network

The vehicular and pedestrian access is gained off Hempstead Road which is the main route linking Hunton Bridge Roundabout(M25/A41/A405 Junction) to Watford town centre. Hempstead Road is a single carriageway 8.0m wide is subject to 30mph speed limit with on street parking restricted by double yellow line. Hempstead Road also serves a number of residential properties with heavy traffic flow during peak times. In off peak period the road is not considered as a congested road.

Within the town centre Hempstead Road joins with A412 and A411 Beechen Grove Ring Road. Like any other major town centre roads this road network is very busy during peak hours.

Southern side of the site are local residential roads known as Cassiobury Drive, Parkside Drive and Woodlands Drive. Parking on these roads are limited to permit holders or via pay and display between 10.30am to 2.30pm.

There are some concerns over the queuing at Hempstead Road /Stratford Way signal controlled junction. The observed queue on Hempstead Road varies in average from 12 to 35 during morning peak hour. This junction is to be remodelled with the introduction of pedestrian phase to the signal. The implementation of the scheme has been programmed and due to start in early 2014.

Accessibility

The school is promoted as a free school to serve the Watford Town and surrounding residential catchment. The indication is no pupil to the school will live further than 1km away from the school. As a free school the children trip to school is dependent on the admission policy. However, it is the intention of the school to encourage staff, pupil, parents, volunteers and visitors to travel to school by walking and other modes of transport to car.

The area is well served by buses and number of buses stops within few minutes walking distance to the development site. Local area is well served by footways which are predominantly adjacent to the carriage way. The main cycling facilities are either on road or advisory routes. Some footpaths adjacent to the carriageway are 3m wide which provides the opportunity for safe cycling.

Accidents

Five year accidents between November 2008 and 2013 in the vicinity of the school site shows there were 70 personal injury accidents resulting in 84 casualties of which 6 were serious injury accidents. A particular concern of the accidents figures is 26 of the accidents were involving non motorcar users, i.e. they were cyclists and pedestrians of which 4 serious casualties 2 were pedestrian and 2 cyclists. It is also reasonable to say that most of the accidents took place mainly along the "A" roads and the junctions.

Proposed Pedestrian and Cyclists Route

There are number of residential properties on the southern side of the application site. The applicant's proposal to reopen the footpath located to the south of the school will provide a safe link on foot for the local residential properties. The reopening the footpath may encourage some parents to use the local roads pick up/drop off facilities. The local roads on the southern side of the application site are subject to parking restrictions and permit holder parking. The parents using these parking spaces should comply with the existing parking restriction. Except the morning peak period, school traffic movements will be outside the network peak hours.

To encourage walking and cycling and in the interest of the safety of children the highway authority has no objection to the reopening of the footpath. The footpath is to remain private and should be cleared, paved with lighting for safe pedestrian access during winter months. The highway authority supports the pathway to be gated and controlled by the school and used only for the school purposes.

Traffic Impact

The free school is promoted as a "car free school" and to serve the demand of children from the local catchment and within walking distance. However, there will be an element of traffic movement associated with the development. The proposed car parking provision is well below the Watford Council parking standards. However, the main concern is the parents pick up/drop off on local residential road during school closing and opening hours.

The fully occupied proposed school could generate up to 90 vehicular trips linked to school children during peak hours. The highway authority shares the local residents concern over the potential impact on the local residential roads on the southern side. But these roads are also subject to various parking restrictions and the parents who use these local roads should be made to comply with the existing parking restrictions.

Conclusion

In normal circumstances the highway authority would ask for a Green Travel Plan to be included in a S106 agreement with the provision for targets, monitoring and implementation of any mitigation measures in the local road network. The school

application comes under permitted development and the application is mainly for extension and works on exterior area. Any request for S106 will not satisfy the CIL requirements.

The applicant has submitted a transport assessment in support of the application, identified the highway and transport issue and have put forward measures to mitigate the impact and safety of the children.

The Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of consent, but will request the applicant to submit a Green Travel Plan three months prior to occupation and work with the highway authority to minimise the impact on local roads.

Crime Prevention Design Advisor

Many detailed comments regarding security and crime prevention have been made. The most relevant comments to the application are as follows:

- The proposed development must have a fence from the building line to Hempstead Road with the boundary to the early years play area being opaque so no-one can view through from the College grounds or otherwise and I note a timber close boarded fence will be incorporated. In view of the landscape the fencing around the remainder need only be to say 1.5 metres and either weldmesh or hooped fencing so children can be seen from other parts of the site.
- I will be looking for 1.5 metres hooped fencing around the reminder of the site with a secure gate to Hempstead Road which has access control to prevent both children leaving on to a busy road and prevent unauthorised access.
- Ideally the planting will be no more than 1 metre high and any trees to have their branches removed below 2 metres to provide a sight line across the school fields.
- Essentially the area where the children will be playing or have access to must be enclosed for safety's sake.

- There must also be some way of parents dropping children off to school and leaving the site, which could impact on the College traffic flow as all will be competing to get on to an already busy Hempstead Road.
- I also understand you may be looking to open the footpath from Cassiobury Drive to the college car park, and if so this would be strenuously opposed on the grounds of crime prevention. The College wanted the footpath opened up but accepted our arguments regarding permeability in to the car park and the increased criminality risk to the properties backing on to the college grounds. I would certainly oppose any application to open this pathway.
- If the Council are minded to open the alleyway then I would be looking for new a 1.8 metre timber close boarded fence topped with 300mm of trellis, so as to afford the dwellings around the alleyway some form of security protection. There will need to be some lighting along the alleyway which will need to be turned off after the alleyway has been closed. There needs to be either a metal weld mesh or metal gate at each end with the padlock area protected.

Planning Policy

As discussed we have asked for additional information as follows:

- details of the new windows - specification - Crittal or secondary glazing/position in the opening (note: some details have been submitted and are commented on later).
- details of new doors - materials/spec front/side and rear - where details at 1:25 have been submitted need to have the specification from the manufacturer (note: some details have been submitted and are commented on later).
- details of new canopy over the door for nursery entrance - materials/specification and fixtures (see comments later).

- fencing around nursery - suggest a slightly higher specification of Venetian screen and potential to plant behind it for a longer term green edge (no further information submitted).
- railing around frontage - suggest that the ones specified are too lightweight and should have a slightly heavier bar - consider whether a simple ball finial or curved top could be used. Suggest remove the existing metal hoops unless there is a really good reason for keeping them (no further information has been submitted).
- Can we have details of all types of fencing - in elevation form - including that on top of the retaining walls around the MUGA (no further information has been submitted).
- We need to see the cycle shelter details unless I have missed them somewhere (information submitted and comments later).
- Also refuse store fencing, ramp and guard rail (no further information submitted).
- If possible can we ask for images showing views of the Hempstead Road frontage so we can see the fencing and the gates etc. (website images ok to a point but not the best).
- Also, perspectives showing the cycle store/nursery play area and footpath (none provided).

This additional detail is required to provide sufficient information on which to make a sensible decision regarding the balance between any harm caused to the setting of Little Cassiobury (Grade II*), The Lanchester Building (local list) and the character and appearance of the conservation area and the public benefit from the proposed development (NPPF paras. 132-134).

The proposed use of the building as a free school involves little physical change to the building (some alterations to the rear; replacement windows like for like some conversion of windows to doors and additional canopy/balcony areas) and subject to approval of details the changes are acceptable in principle. By far the greatest change is to the land

around the building to accommodate the needs of a primary school rather than a further education establishment. In particular this involves the erection of fences and screens around the edge and within the land to the front and side of the Lanchester Building which does have a harmful impact on the heritage assets.

Setting issues

Efforts have been made to reduce the impact of the use of the land around the building for school related facilities such as lowering the MUGA to reduce the impact of the 2m high weldmesh fencing and using a town square railing style for the new railings which will enclose the whole site. However, the list of additional matters to be resolved set out above suggests that the proposed scheme has not resolved some of the issues yet. The proposed scheme needs to tread a fine line between providing for the basic needs of the primary school use and minimising the harm caused to the heritage assets.

The most significant asset is the Grade II* listed dower house known as Little Cassiobury which sits fronting the open landscape setting of the Lanchester Building. The changes proposed to the open setting will have a harmful impact on this setting of the Grade II* building. The main concern is the location of the MUGA on the land immediately in front of the boundary hedge. The ground on which the MUGA sits has been lowered by approximately 1m and the fencing abutting the hedge has been altered from the standard weldmesh to the town square railings. This has gone some way to mitigate the harm caused and if the railings chosen can be altered in the way suggested this will go further towards mitigating the harm.

There are more general alterations to the setting of both Little Cassiobury and the Lanchester Building, such as the enclosure of the whole frontage and sides of the open area with railings. The open nature of the landscaped setting is a key part of its character which will be fundamentally altered by the proposed enclosure. It is necessary to have a defensible and secure boundary for a primary school and the most appropriate enclosure method in terms of the heritage assets is to use black metal railings of the type found around town squares. The proposed scheme seeks to follow this approach but the particular product chosen is not of sufficient quality for this location. To resolve this issue

more successfully it is recommended that a more robust alternative is submitted addressing the points raised above. The metal hoops currently in place around the frontage should be removed.

Fencing around the nursery area: generally the approach adopted here is acceptable subject to agreeing a green hedge to be grown around the screen so that in time a less intrusive fence can be used alongside the hedge. It is my view that there are more robust alternatives to the screen available which have a higher quality of finish and which would be more appropriate in this exposed location within the site.

Finally, the proposed bike shelters – more details have been supplied and the style chosen matches that used by the College on their land. Whilst the style is quite simple and there is sense in using the same style as is used by the College, the shelters proposed are much longer than those used on the College land and are located in an exposed location. It is unfortunate that some of the shelters cannot be located in a less obtrusive location.

Lanchester Building

Windows: The information on the website does not provide good images of the chosen product in situ – can I suggest that a sample is provided and compared on site to the existing windows so that we can assess the degree of change – the front elevation is dominated by the windows so a wholesale replacement programme requires careful consideration of the window type to be used. We still need to ensure that there is a decent reveal (150mm is specified for the cill but does this include the reveal) on the window opening to ensure that the character of the building is not harmed. The same applies to any new external doors and in particular those to be located where there are currently windows.

Nursery canopy: I would like to see this simplified to follow the style of the glass box enclosing the main entrance. A simple sloped cover attached at the four corners and with regularly spaced rib elements will be sufficient – the metal should be coloured to match the main entrance.

Arboricultural Officer

The proposals will not require the removal of any large/significant trees: seven of the recently planted cherries will be removed to accommodate the fenced play area.

The level changes to the front of the building to accommodate the informal artificial play space and hard play area are not significant and should not affect the adjacent trees.

One area of concern is the additional 4 parking spaces (2 x disabled & 2 normal) which fall partially within the root protection areas of trees T3 & T4 of TPO 190. I would wish to see these four bays constructed without excavation, details of which should be submitted and approved prior to work commencing on site.

Details of tree protection fencing (type height and location) should be submitted and approved and a detailed landscaping scheme should also be submitted and approved.

APPRAISAL

In accordance with s.38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Development Plan for Watford comprises:

- (a) *Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31;*
- (b) *the continuing "saved" policies of the Watford District Plan 2000;*
- (c) *the Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2011-2026 ; and*
- (d) *the Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016.*

Land allocation

The site has no specific allocation on the Proposals Map of the Watford District Plan 2000 but is located within the Civic Core Conservation Area.

Principle of development

The Lanchester Building was originally constructed for educational use and remained in educational use up to 2009. Although vacant since this time, it retains a lawful use for

educational purposes (Class D1). As such, no planning permission for the use of the building as a primary school is required.

It is also worth noting that the opening up of the existing footpath between the college car park and Cassiobury Drive does not require planning permission. The footpath exists and the removal of fencing and vegetation to allow the footpath to be used does not constitute development requiring planning permission. Although the footpath is proposed to be re-opened to facilitate the use of the Lanchester Building as a primary school, in reality, the footpath could be re-opened at any time to give access to the existing college.

The application proposes that, with the re-opening of the footpath, parents bringing their children to school by car could park on Cassiobury Drive, Woodland Drive and Parkside Drive and use this footpath to access the school. These roads are all public highways and are subject to a range of parking and waiting restrictions. Subject to these existing parking and waiting restrictions being observed, Hertfordshire County Council as the Highway Authority has no objection in principle to the use of these roads to access the school.

The main issues for consideration are the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the conservation area; the impact on the character, appearance and setting of the Lanchester Building; the impact on the setting of Little Cassiobury; and the impact on the local highway network. Any harmful impacts identified need to be considered against the need for a new primary school within the Borough generally and in this location in particular.

Need for a primary school

Hertfordshire County Council as the Local Education Authority has submitted a supporting statement that sets out the need for a new primary school:-

“In line with the county trend, Watford Town has and still is experiencing an unprecedented growth in the demand for primary school places. The County Council’s school forecast is projecting a rise in demand for primary school places in Watford Town

due to three key factors - the level of housing being built in the borough, the rise in the birth rate and the movement of people into the borough.

The County Council has responded to the demand for additional school places by expanding the capacity of existing primary schools in Watford Town. As part of the ongoing primary expansion programme (PEP) the authority has already expanded the following schools on a permanent basis:-

- Holywell Primary to 3 form entry school (FE),
- Cassiobury Infants to 3FE school,
- Cassiobury Junior to 3FE school,
- Beechfield to 2FE school,
- Cherry Tree to 2FE school,
- St Anthony's School to 2FE school

In addition, the County Council has put in place a number of temporary expansions to meet the ongoing need for additional school places at:-

- Nascot Wood Infants,
- Kingsway Infants,
- Central Primary,
- Orchard Primary,
- St Catherines of Siena School,
- Laurance Haines School,
- Watford Field Infants.

As part of the programme to meet the rising demand it is proposed that the following schools are permanently expanded for September 2014 - Orchard Primary and Central Primary.

From a social and educational perspective the provision of additional classbases will provide further primary school places which are needed in Watford Town. The school planning forecast indicates that a significant shortage of places is nonetheless still expected in the town, which will rise to over 3FE (90 places) in 2014/15 and over 6FE in 2015/16, see table 1. The forecast demand is not evenly spread across the town with a significant concentration in the mid and central Watford school planning areas, which includes the area in the vicinity of the application site.

April 2013 Forecast	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
No. of reception places available	1230	1110	1110	1110
Demand	1182	1223	1305	1266
Surplus/Shortage	48	-113	-195	-156
% Surplus/Shortage	3.9%	-10.2%	-17.6%	-14.1%
Number of Form Entry	1.6	-3.8	-6.5	-5.2

There are very few schools left in Watford Town that are now able to expand and take additional children from the local planning area. As the demand for primary school places is forecast to continue there is therefore a need for up to an additional 7FE and potentially three new 2FE primary schools to be provided by 2015/16 to meet the demand.

The County Council consider the Lanchester Building well placed to help meet the ongoing demand for school places locally. The Lanchester Building is located in the Watford Central primary school planning area which is in the area of greatest need in Watford Town.

West Herts Community Free School Trust's proposal for a 2FE Primary Free School at the Lanchester Building is therefore supported by the County Council as it provides the additional school places in the area of greatest need, and is in a locality where there are few, if any, other opportunities available to locate a new school, as the area is built up.

In economic terms, the provision of additional class bases on an existing site for educational use is a cost effective solution to addressing the deficit of school places within Watford town and the Watford Central primary planning area in particular.”

Layout and design

The construction of two 3 storey extensions on the rear of the building to accommodate new stair cores.

The new 3 storey extensions will each measure 9.5m wide, 3.5m deep and extend to the full height of the building. They are to be rendered and painted in white. In respect of their scale, design and materials, they are very similar to the existing 2 rear extensions on the building which also accommodate stair cores. As such, they will have no adverse impact on the overall character and appearance of the building and are considered acceptable.

The replacement of the existing windows and doors, the formation of a new entrance and canopy, and the formation of new access ramps.

It is proposed that the existing metal windows will be replaced with new metal windows of the same style. Two new entrance doors will be formed in place of existing windows to serve the proposed nursery; one at the northern end of the front elevation to form the main entrance and one in the end elevation to give access to the enclosed play area. Both will have short access ramps for people with disabilities. A number of short ramps will also be formed on the rear of the building to serve fire exits. The proposed replacement windows will maintain the character and appearance of the building providing they are of an appropriate design. Discussions regarding the design of the windows are on-going and the specific design can be secured by condition. The other works will have no significant adverse impact on the overall character and appearance of the building and are considered acceptable.



Site layout plan

The formation of two hard surfaced play areas within the open space at the front of the building, with associated fencing, footpaths and seating, and the erection of a cycle store.

The formation of the hardsurfaced play areas within the existing grassed open space will significantly change the character and appearance of this area, as will the introduction of associated fencing around these areas. At the eastern end of the frontage, a formal multi use games area (MUGA) is proposed for team games. In order to mitigate the visual impact of this area, the existing raised ground level has been reduced by 1m to the ground level of the Lanchester Building. The existing grassed embankment along the boundary with the main entrance footpath is retained with a 1m high retaining wall and 1m high railings on top. The boundary of the MUGA adjacent to the front of the building will be formed of 1.8m high weldmesh fencing. The raised, grassed area and mature trees to the Hempstead Road frontage are also retained as existing with no additional fencing proposed to the MUGA along the boundary with this area. Instead, amphitheatre style open seating is proposed. To the boundary with Little Cassiobury, a 0.6m high retaining wall with 1.2m high weldmesh fencing is proposed which will sit below the level of the existing boundary hedge.

At the western end of the frontage, an informal hard surfaced play area is proposed. This will be set at existing ground level but will not be fenced, although new planting and seating will be provided around this area. The existing raised, grassed area and mature trees to the Hempstead Road frontage will be retained. Adjacent to this area a cycle store is to be erected. This will need to be screened from view by appropriate fencing and planting. This is subject to on-going discussions and can be secured by condition.

The erection of fencing around the boundaries of the site.

It is a necessary requirement of the use of the building as a school that the boundaries of the site are fenced for security and safety reasons. This will have a significant impact on the current open nature of the landscaped frontage. The proposed fencing is 1.8m high vertical railings set in 0.5m from the site boundary (on the line of the existing low level hoops that prevent vehicles from driving on to the landscaping). This form of railing will provide the level of security and safety required whilst still allowing good levels of visibility

into and across the site and will help to mitigate the impact of the fencing on the openness of the space. The specific design of the railings is subject to on-going discussions and can be secured by condition.

Alterations to the vehicular access to West Herts College and the provision of 7 car parking spaces and a coach lay-by.

The existing vehicular access to the college car park comprises a short lay-by and turning area suitable for coaches, beyond which is the barrier-controlled access to the car park itself. The proposed changes involve lengthening the existing lay-by and a remodelling of the turning area to allow for the provision of 9 car parking spaces, largely within areas of low level landscaping. The entrance barrier to the car park is to be relocated towards the Hempstead Road to give additional control and security to the use of this area. Although some low level shrub planting and 3 young trees (all planted upon completion of the new college) will be lost as a result of these proposals, the existing mature trees will be retained.

Impact on the Civic Core Conservation Area

The application site makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, particularly the area of open green space which is identified as a Key Open Space within the character appraisal:

“The treed open space in front of the existing West Herts College building forms part of the gateway to the conservation area and to the town centre; it also provides a setting for both the Lanchester building and the Grade II* listed Little Cassiobury. The space is green and contains significant trees which are reminiscent of the rural area which surrounded the Cashio hamlet in earlier centuries. The space is one of the few green spaces within the town centre. The space forms an important edge to one of the key views into the conservation area and into the town centre.”

The proposal involves a number of significant changes to this area of open space, principally the installation of fencing around the boundaries of the open space and the formation of two hard surfaced play areas within the space, one of which (the MUGA) includes additional fencing. In both cases, the proposed works have been designed to help mitigate any adverse impacts on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

In respect of the boundary fencing, the type of fencing proposed is a simple form of vertical railings that is considered appropriate in principle to the conservation area whilst also still allowing good views into and across the site. The design of these railings will need to be carefully chosen and this can be secured by condition unless a design can be agreed before the committee meeting. Although the effect of the railings will be to enclose the open space, they will still allow the open space to be viewed from the public realm and appreciated as open space. The open space will still form the visual setting for the Lanchester Building and Little Cassiobury and will retain the significant trees within it. The formation of the two hard surfaced play areas will result in the direct loss of part of the open space and a change in its character from grass to play areas. The effect of this on the character and appearance of the conservation area will be mitigated to some degree through various design measures; siting both play areas close to the building and away from the Hempstead Road frontage, retaining the existing significant trees within the open space, reducing the ground level of the MUGA and keeping the height of fencing to a minimum, and not fencing the informal play area. Notwithstanding these measures, the character and appearance of the open space will change significantly as a result of the proposals.

Within the context of the wider conservation area, the open space will still perform its role as a Key Open Space and part of the gateway to the conservation area and to the town centre, as identified in the character appraisal. The enclosure of the open space and the introduction of hard surfaces and fencing within the space itself will undoubtedly reduce its openness and consequently dilute its role. Overall, it is considered that the proposal will

have a moderate negative impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Impact on the Lanchester Building

Originally built as 'Watford College', construction was commenced in 1938 but, due to the outbreak of the Second World War, was not completed until 1953. It originally comprised a large, squared, figure-of-eight building with two internal courtyards. Only the front element now remains with the rest of the building having been demolished to accommodate the car park for the new West Herts College. The building is rectangular in footprint with a strong, symmetrical elevation, and it frames the area of open space to the front. Its scale, design and setting give it clear landmark qualities and it is considered to add distinctiveness and legibility to the street scene.

The two proposed three storey rear extensions will be similar in scale, design and appearance to the existing rear extensions, which also accommodate stair cores serving the building. The rear elevation was heavily altered when the rest of the building was demolished and, as originally built, was not exposed to view. The proposed extensions will not impact on the front elevation of the building, will not be visible from the public realm and will also retain the symmetry of the rear elevation. Other works on the rear elevation include fire exit doors and ramps at ground level. These proposed works are not considered to have any harmful impact on the character or appearance of the building.

On the front elevation and the end elevations, the existing metal windows will be replaced with matching metal windows. Two new doors will also be introduced in place of existing windows to serve the nursery. One, the main entrance door to the nursery, will be towards the northern end of the front elevation and will have a simple metal and glass canopy above it. The second, on the end elevation, will give access to the nursery play area. These changes are considered to be relatively minor and will not have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the building.

Overall, the proposed works are not considered to have a significant harmful impact on the character or appearance of the building.

The proposed works to the open space in front of the building, as described in the previous section, are considered to have a moderate negative impact on the setting of the building.

Impact on Little Cassiobury

Little Cassiobury is a Grade II* listed building and is sited adjacent to the Lanchester Building facing the open green space on the Hempstead Road frontage. It is a former dower house of the Cassiobury Estate and dates from the late 17th century. A small red brick mansion house, the building is two storeys with an attic served by three flat topped dormer windows. The house was built to accommodate widowed and unmarried members of the Essex family – under whose ownership it remained until 1922 when, following the death of the 7th Earl of Essex, the Cassiobury Estate was sold.

The house was extensively renovated internally during the 1930s by the acclaimed architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis. The building was subsequently acquired by the County Council in 1939 and was subject to further internal renovations and additions. The building was described by Pevsner in 1977 as ‘the best classical house in Watford’ but is currently unoccupied and its future use remains uncertain.

The immediate frontage of the building comprises a tarmac car parking area, bordered by a 1.8m hedge with small trees that forms the boundary with the open space in front of the Lanchester Building. In views of the front elevation from the north, the building is seen behind the open space which effectively forms its visual setting from the public realm. The siting of the proposed MUGA hard play area at the eastern end of the open space, adjoining the boundary with Little Cassiobury, therefore has the potential adversely to impact on the setting of Little Cassiobury. In order to help mitigate any adverse impacts, the existing raised ground level is to be reduced by 1m to the ground level of the Lanchester Building whilst retaining the existing hedge and trees along the boundary. The

fencing of the hard play area has also been proposed at 1.8m. With the top of the boundary hedge being 1.8m above existing ground level and 2.8m above the surface of the hard play area, the top of the fencing will be 1m below the level of the hedge. With this fencing also being coloured dark green, any potential visual impact on the setting of Little Cassiobury will be minimised. The 1.8m high weldmesh fencing that runs parallel to the front of the Lanchester Building will still be visible as will the railings on top of the low embankment adjacent to the main pedestrian footpath from Hempstead Road. Overall, it is considered that the proposal will have a minor adverse impact on the setting of Little Cassiobury.

Transportation, access and parking

The only vehicular access to the site will be via the existing college access. The existing drop-off/turning area is to be altered to provide 9 parking spaces for staff and a coach lay-by. The existing barriers to the college car park are to be re-sited closer to Hempstead Road to control access to this area and provide additional security. The barrier will also prevent parents from dropping off children in this area. There will be 3 pedestrian/cycle routes into the school. Two will be from Hempstead Road; one via the existing footpath leading directly to the main entrance and the second from the vehicular entrance which has a cycle/footpath alongside it. The third route will be from Cassiobury Drive to the rear of the site via the re-opened footpath that leads into the college car park. Two new pedestrian routes through the car park will lead to the building. It is proposed that any children arriving by car will be dropped off on Cassiobury Drive and will walk in via this route. It is the applicant's intention that the footpath to Cassiobury Drive will only be opened for use at the beginning and end of the school day and at all other times will be gated and locked. When access is needed by the school during the day, i.e. to take children to Cassiobury Park to use the playing fields, the footpath gates will be locked afterwards and the footpath will not be left open.

In addition to the 9 on-site car parking spaces, the applicant is also in discussion with the Council to secure 35 parking spaces for staff in The Avenue car park. These spaces will be secured for a period of 25 years.

Alternatives for vehicular access to the school have been considered; however, they would all involve access from Hempstead Road, which is already heavily congested in the morning peak. This would only serve to exacerbate this congestion with cars having to make uncontrolled right turn movements. One option would be to create a new central access road on the line of the existing footpath through the open space. Prior to the opening of the new college, this was the site of the main vehicular entrance to the college which was closed when the new access was formed. It would not be acceptable in terms of highway safety or congestion to form a new access here, very close to the existing access. This would also prevent the use of the open space as play areas for the school. A second option would be to enlarge and modify the existing access to the Registry Office and Little Cassiobury. This would also not be acceptable in highway terms, would also prevent the use of the open space by the school, and, in addition, would have a significant adverse impact on the setting of the Grade II* listed Little Cassiobury. A third option would be to use the existing college access. This is designed only for the stopping and turning of minibuses and coaches and not for the use of students or parents dropping off children. If used by parents of the school this would become very congested very quickly and inevitably result in cars queuing on Hempstead Road to enter the site. This, together with cars leaving the site, would significantly exacerbate existing levels of congestion on Hempstead Road which would not be acceptable.

In light of these limited alternative options for accessing the site, the proposal to use Cassiobury Drive and the surrounding roads to the rear of the site is by far the best option in terms of highway safety, minimising congestion, preventing the loss of open space and alleviating any adverse impacts on heritage assets. As is discussed below, these roads are also subject to comprehensive waiting and parking restrictions.

The school is to be promoted as a 'car-free' school on the grounds that vehicular access and parking is extremely limited. The intended catchment area for the school is to be within 1km of the site with a distance of up to 800m considered to be a reasonable walking distance for children. It is therefore intended that the majority of children will be able to

walk or cycle to school. This is to be promoted through the provision for each family of a personalised travel plan to encourage walking and cycling. A cycle shelter for 60 cycles is also to be provided on-site. In addition to this, the County Council is already proposing to introduce a new cycle route along Hempstead Road and to remodel the Stratford Way/Hempstead Road junction to introduce a dedicated pedestrian phase. This will allow pedestrians to cross safely all arms of the junction.

Notwithstanding the measures detailed above to encourage walking and cycling, it is acknowledged that a significant minority of parents may still drop off/pick up their children by car. The potential impacts of this on the local highway network need to be considered. The roads at the rear of the site adjacent to the re-opened footpath – Cassiobury Drive, Woodland Drive and Parkside Drive – are already subject to various waiting and parking restrictions. These include double yellow lines around the junction of these three roads (no waiting at any time), single yellow lines (no waiting between 8am and 6.30pm) and a controlled parking zone (Mon-Fri, 10.30am – 2.30pm, 1st September to 30th June). The hours of operation of the controlled parking zone will allow the marked bays to be used by parents at the beginning and end of the school day. The existing double yellow lines can be reinforced with ‘no loading’ restrictions which will prevent any stopping on the junction and the existing single yellow lines will prevent cars from waiting. These restrictions are considered sufficient to ensure the roads do not become congested with parked cars. If considered necessary and appropriate, targeted enforcement by the Council’s Parking Service can also take place (as is the case for many other schools in the Borough). The proposed addition of ‘no loading’ markings to the existing double yellow lines (and the possible addition of school ‘zig-zag’ markings if appropriate) will need to be funded by the applicant. It is estimated that the cost of these works will be approximately £10,000 and this sum will need to be secured by means of a Section 106 planning obligation.

The southern section of Cassiobury Drive is a ‘no through road’ leading only to the Peace Hospice. At present, this section of road, and the adjoining sections of Woodland Drive and Parkside Drive are very quiet in the mornings. Site visits at 8.30 - 8.45am on a school day morning have revealed few parked cars on-street and very little traffic. This situation

would change significantly if parents used these roads to bring their children to school by car. Nevertheless, these roads are public highways and their use for limited periods at the beginning and end of the school day is not considered inappropriate or unacceptable, providing the existing parking and waiting restrictions are observed. The County Council as the Highway Authority has no objections in respect of traffic generation or public safety.

Residents have also expressed concerns that the number of cars associated with parents dropping off and picking up children will result in significant queuing along Stratford Way as cars leave the estate, particularly during the morning rush hour. With priority given to Hempstead Road as an A Class road and the proposed introduction of a pedestrian phase at this junction, there is the potential for the green phase on the Stratford Way arm to be insufficient adequately to clear traffic from Stratford Way at peak school times. Two site visits have been undertaken to Stratford Way to observe the current situation. The first was on a Tuesday morning between 8.30 and 8.45am on a school day. Limited queuing was observed (up to 10 cars) and the green phase on Stratford Way was sufficient to ensure all waiting vehicles were able to exit the road in one cycle. A second visit was undertaken on a Friday morning between 8.30-9.00am. On this occasion, more extensive queuing was observed (up to 22 cars) and Hempstead Road was very congested with slow moving and stationary traffic. From the comments of local residents, this may be a more typical situation. Between 7 and 14 cars were able to leave Stratford Way on each green phase, restricted not by the length of the green phase but by their ability to enter Hempstead Road. This meant that a significant number of cars took 2 cycles of the traffic lights to leave Stratford Way (up to 4 minutes, as each cycle is 2 minutes). Although the green phase on the Stratford Way arm was sufficient to clear the traffic under normal conditions, the slow moving and stationary traffic on Hempstead Road prevented this. This is a potential issue that can be addressed only by ensuring that other measures are effective in minimising the number cars coming on to the estate in connection with the school. Although there is also the option of altering the phasing on the Stratford Way arm of the traffic lights, it is likely that this would have little effect if the traffic on Hempstead Road is slow moving or stationary.

A significant number of residents have referred to the existing parking congestion that occurs outside the Cassiobury schools located on Bellmount Wood Avenue. In this case, it should be noted that the only waiting restrictions on this road comprise double yellow lines on the bend in the road. The majority of the road has no waiting restrictions. The road is included within the Cassiobury controlled parking zone (Mon-Fri, 10.30am – 2.30pm, 1st September to 30th June) although no parking bays are marked out. A site visit was undertaken at the end of the school day when it was observed that Bellmount Wood Avenue and some parts of Langley Way were heavily parked. In the case of Bellmount Wood Avenue, cars were parked on both sides of the road and partially on both pavements. However, the double yellow lines and school 'zig-zag' markings were observed and no residents' driveways were blocked. Vehicle speeds were very slow and all children were accompanied by adults. No through traffic was evident at this time. Most of the parked cars had left the road after 20 minutes.

Bellmount Wood Avenue is a narrower road than Cassiobury Drive. It has a carriageway width of 6.0m and footpaths 3.0 - 3.3m wide compared to Cassiobury Drive which has a carriageway width of 7.5m and footpaths of 4.2m.

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed access and parking arrangements are the best that can be achieved in this case. Any potential impacts in respect of parking congestion on Cassiobury Drive and surrounding roads and increased queuing on Stratford Way will be only for short periods of time at the beginning and end of the school day and are not considered to be so severe or significant to merit refusing the application.

Trees and landscaping

The application site includes a number of significant trees as well as new tree planting undertaken as part of the development of the new college building. Although 4 trees sited along the north-western boundary with 63-67, Hempstead Road are covered by Tree Preservation Order 190, as the whole of the site is within the Civic Core Conservation Area, all trees on the site are protected.

A tree survey has been undertaken to categorise the individual trees. All of the mature and semi-mature trees on the site are considered Category A or B due to their maturity, good condition and contribution to the area. The new trees planted as part of the new college development are considered Category C due to their young age, small size and limited visual contribution. Three trees are recommended for removal due to their poor condition and/or for health and safety reasons. The only other trees that will be lost are 11 of the new trees, all Category C, which can be transplanted or replaced. All of the mature and semi-mature trees (Category A and B) are to be retained. Four of the proposed car parking spaces will encroach into the root protection zones of 2 of the Category A trees and these spaces will need to be constructed with a no-dig construction method. This is considered acceptable and can be secured by condition.

Conclusion

The proposed use of the Lanchester Building as a primary school will meet an identified and immediate need for primary school places within the central area of Watford. The use of the building as a school does not require planning permission; however, the proposed external works to the open space in front of the Lanchester Building are considered to have a moderate negative impact on the character and appearance of the Civic Core Conservation Area and the setting of the locally listed Lanchester Building. These works are also considered to have a minor adverse impact on the setting of the listed Little Cassiobury. Nevertheless, having regard to the unprecedented demand for primary school places in Watford, it is considered that the harm to these heritage assets is outweighed by the benefit of providing a new primary school on the site.

The applicant proposes to re-open the existing footpath to Cassiobury Drive as part of the proposal to allow children to access the school from this side of the site on foot. As there will be no facilities to drop off/pick up children from the Hempstead Road at the front of the site, this will also facilitate the dropping off and picking up of children by car. Although this will generate additional traffic movements and parking on the surrounding roads at the beginning and end of the school day, comprehensive waiting and parking restrictions exist on these roads. It is also proposed to enhance these restrictions with the addition of 'no

loading' restrictions on the existing double yellow lines and, if appropriate, 'zig-zag' school markings. The cost of these works can be secured through a s.106 planning obligation. Providing these restrictions are complied with, it is not considered that problems relating to parking congestion or hazards to pedestrians would arise. The school will also promote walking and cycling to school through individual travel plans for each family that will further mitigate any potential for harmful impacts. Overall, it is considered that the proposed access and parking arrangements are the best that can be achieved in this case and that any potential impacts in respect of parking congestion on Cassiobury Drive and surrounding roads and increased queuing on Stratford Way will be only for short periods of time at the beginning and end of the school day and are not considered to be so severe or significant to merit refusing the application.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

The Local Planning Authority is justified in interfering with the applicant's Human Rights in order to alleviate any adverse effect on adjoining properties and their occupiers and on general public amenity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (A) That, subject to the completion of a planning obligation under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure the financial contribution set out below, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions listed:

Section 106 Heads of Terms

- i) A financial payment to the Council of £10,000 towards the costs of providing 'no loading' restrictions on the double yellow lines around the junction of Cassiobury Drive, Woodland Drive and Parkside Drive and, where appropriate, the provision of school 'zig-zag' markings adjacent to the re-opened footpath.

Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun within a period of three years commencing on the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:-

[see Update Sheet for final set of amended drawing numbers to be inserted here].

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. Construction of the development hereby permitted shall not take place before 8am or after 6pm Mondays to Fridays, before 8am or after 1pm on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities and quiet enjoyment of neighbouring properties during the time that the development is being constructed, pursuant to saved Policy SE22 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

4. No development shall commence within the site until a Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This Plan shall include details of the routing of and access for construction vehicles, contractors parking, the delivery and storage of materials, measures to mitigate noise and dust, wheel washing facilities, plant and equipment and a contact procedure for complaints. The Plan as approved shall be implemented throughout the construction period.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities and quiet enjoyment of neighbouring properties and prevent obstruction of the adjoining highway during the time that the development is being constructed.

5. No development shall commence until details of the siting, height and type of tree protection measures to protect the existing trees on site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved measures have been installed. These measures shall be retained as approved throughout the construction period, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the health and vitality of the existing trees which represent an important visual amenity during the period of construction works, in accordance with saved Policies SE37 and SE39 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

6. All new facing brickwork and render shall match the colour and texture of the existing facing brickwork and render of the building, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the building and the character and appearance of the conservation area, in accordance with Policies UD1 and UD2 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

7. No external windows or doors shall be removed from the building and no new external windows or doors shall be formed in the building elevations until details of the materials and design of all replacement and new windows and doors have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved materials and design.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the building and the character and appearance of the conservation area, in accordance with Policies UD1 and UD2 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

8. No canopy shall be erected over the entrance to the nursery on the north-east elevation until details of the materials and design of the canopy have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved materials and design.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the building and the character and appearance of the conservation area, in accordance with Policies UD1 and UD2 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

9. No part of the building shall be occupied until full details of a soft landscaping scheme, as shown in principle on drawing no. 3088/140/00, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved landscaping scheme shall be carried out not later than the first available planting and seeding season after completion of the development. Any trees or plants whether new or existing which within a period of five years die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, or in accordance with details approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site and the character and appearance of the conservation area, in accordance with Policies UD1 and UD2 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

10. No part of the building shall be occupied until (a) full details of a hard landscaping scheme, including both hard surfaced play areas, as shown in principle on drawing no. 3088/140/00, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and (b) the works have been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site and the character and appearance of the conservation area, in accordance with Policies UD1 and UD2 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

11. No part of the building shall be occupied until (a) details (including materials, design, colour and height) of all means of enclosure around the boundaries of the site, within the site and around the building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and (b) all the means of enclosure have been installed in accordance with the approved details. For the avoidance of doubt, in this condition “means of enclosure” includes the main entrance gate and side entrance gate to the school, the fencing and gates to the footpath leading to Cassiobury Drive and the pedestrian guardrails within the car park. All means of enclosure shall be retained as approved at all times thereafter, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site and in the interests of security of the site and adjacent properties in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

12. No construction shall commence on (i) the 6 car parking spaces and adjoining footpath sited adjacent to the north-western boundary of the site or (ii) the footpath labelled ‘pedestrian route to school 2’ until details of a ‘no-dig’ method of construction for these parking spaces and footpaths have

been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The construction of these parking spaces and footpaths shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard, during the period of construction works, the health and vitality of the existing protected trees which represent an important visual amenity, in accordance with saved Policies SE37 and SE39 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

13. No part of the building shall be occupied until a detailed Green Travel Plan for staff, pupils and visitors has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Plan shall be implemented at all times, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To promote access to the school by sustainable means of travel and to discourage use of the private car, in accordance with Policy T3 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

14. No part of the building shall be occupied until (a) details of a cycle shelter sufficient to accommodate 60 cycles, and the means of screening this shelter, as shown in principle on drawing no. 3088/140/00, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and (b) the shelter has been constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure adequate cycle storage facilities are provided for staff, pupils and visitors to facilitate travel by cycle, and in the interests of the visual appearance of the site, in accordance with saved Policy T10 of the Watford District Plan 200 and Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

15. The footpath between the college car park and Cassiobury Drive shall only be open for use at times which previously have been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. At all other times, the gates to the footpath shall be kept closed and locked.

Reason: To meet the needs for safety and security of the site and to prevent anti-social behaviour, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

16. The external lighting scheme for the site shall be carried out in accordance with drawing no. 130995/E/2210 Rev.T1 (BSD Consulting Engineers) unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To meet the needs for safety and security for users of the site and in the interests of the visual appearance of the site, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

17. No lighting shall be installed on the footpath to Cassiobury Drive except in accordance with details which previously have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting shall only be switched on when the footpath is open for use.

Reason: To meet the needs for safety and security for users of the footpath and to minimise any adverse impacts on adjoining properties, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

Informatives

1. In dealing with this application, Watford Borough Council has considered the proposal in a positive and proactive manner having regard to the policies of the development plan as well as paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National

Planning Policy Framework and other material considerations, and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, as amended. The Council also gave pre-application advice on the proposal prior to the submission of the application and undertook discussions with the applicant's agent during the application process.

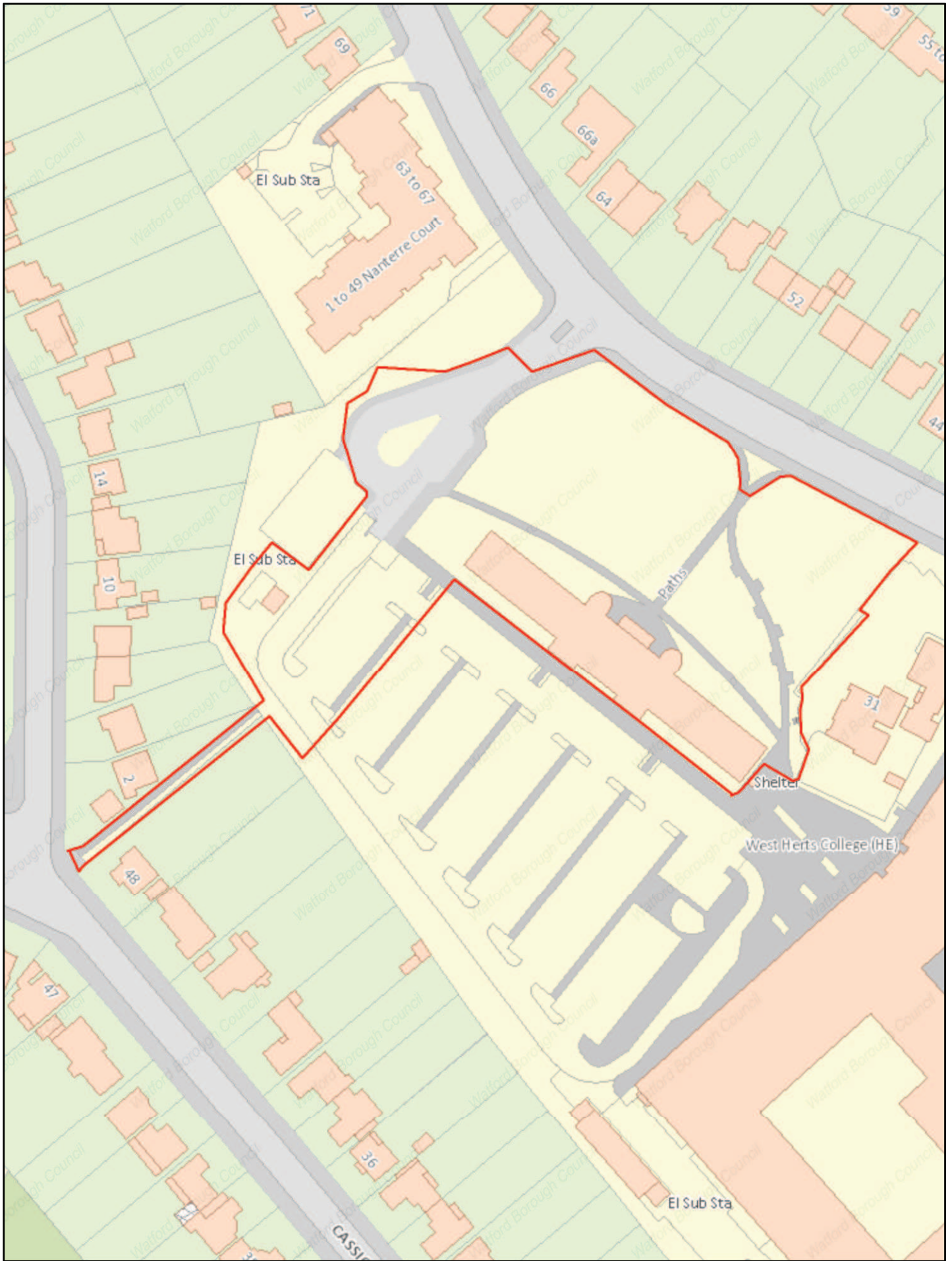
Drawings

[see Update Sheet for final set of amended drawing numbers to be inserted here].

(B) In the event that no section 106 planning obligation has been completed by 28th February 2014 in respect of the Heads of Terms set out in Recommendation (A), the Development Management Section Head be authorised to refuse planning permission for the following reason:

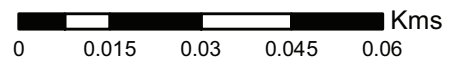
1. The proposal fails to incorporate appropriate measures to minimise parking congestion around the junction of Cassiobury Drive, Woodland Drive and Parkside Drive arising from the proposed primary school.
-

Case Officer: **Paul Baxter**
Tel: **01923 278284**
Email: **paul.baxter@watford.gov.uk**



Lanchester Building, Hempstead Road

Date: 22/01/2014



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DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

30th January 2014

UPDATE SHEET

Item 5

13/01134/FUL – Lanchester Building, Hempstead Road

ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIONS

1. Since the publication of the agenda, an additional 35 letters have been received from local residents objecting to the application. The reasons for objection are the same as those summarised on pages 6 and 7 of the agenda.
2. A bundle of letters in support of the application has also been submitted by the applicant. This contains 33 letters, none of which contain full addresses. From a reading of the letters it is possible to identify the respondents as follows:-

Local Councillor – 1

Local residents (Cassiobury estate or Nascot Ward) – 9

Local resident (unspecified) – 10

Others – 11

Employees of the applicant – 2

3. Following a meeting of the Cassiobury Residents Association last night, the following representation has also been received:-

The meeting was in agreement that the following representation be made to WBC regarding the current planning proposal:

Residents expressed unanimous support of the aims of the West Herts Community Free School Trust regarding their goal to alleviate the shortage of primary school places in Watford.

Serious concerns and misgivings arise over the plan to re-open a disused alleyway from the college grounds to exit onto Woodland Drive at its junction with Cassiobury Drive. This alleyway, some say, exits onto Woodland Drive not 'Cassiobury Drive'; planners now says the latter since it is a wider road and appears much less hazardous. We appreciate that the opening of the alleyway is not a material planning matter per se.

From mid 1970s onwards the police wished to close this alleyway permanently, since even when gated and padlocked it was the scene and facilitator of evening and late night anti-social and criminal behaviour.

There were periods when it was shut, and eventually by request of Herts Police Crime Prevention it was shut permanently.

In response to the application, the Crime Prevention Design Advisor, Hertfordshire Constabulary, writes on 19th December 2013 to WBC:

"I also understand you may be looking to open the footpath from Cassiobury Drive to the college car park, and if so this would be strenuously opposed by on the grounds of crime prevention. The college wanted the footpath opened up but accepted our arguments regarding permeability in to the car park and the increased criminality risk to the properties backing on to the college grounds. I would certainly oppose any application to open this pathway."

This planning proposal also includes a "dropping off area" on the public highway at the junction of Woodland Dr and Cassiobury Dr with Parkside Dr to gain access to the alleyway. This is a hazardous 4-way junction. Notwithstanding that infants should not to be 'dropped off' since a liaison between parents and teachers at both beginning and end of the day is deemed essential, the plan is that those arriving by car will be dropped off and collected at this point. It is proposed that wardens will shepherd pupils up and down the alleyway, across the College service yard access road and the College car park, to and from the school buildings. This plan raises serious concerns over child safety and well-being, general personal safety, and increased hazards and reduced safety on the highway and footpaths in the vicinity, and increased traffic congestion.

Whilst it is proposed that the school be as 'car-free' as possible, however, estimates of car usage when at full capacity range from 2 per minute per Pell Frischmann, to 90 overall per Herts Highways, to 280-300 per evidence upon visiting other schools in Watford and surroundings even where their stated aim is to be a 'walk-to-school' or a 'car-free' school. Many parents have to go on to their place of work, and walking to school is simply not an option since driving their children and collecting them is a life-style necessity.

Whilst the school claim that hardly any pupils' parents will drive, they say they need this drop-off point since the College will only allow the Hempstead Road entrance to the college car park & service yard and the school to be used for disabled pupils - all others will have to drive past the college and down estate roads to this point.

There are only two roads to and from the estate that give sole access to not only over 1000 homes but also shops, churches, both Cassiobury Schools & nursery, pre-school, the Vets, the Essex Arms pub, the Park and park users, the ever expanding Peace Hospice, Sun Sports Grounds & Social Club, the Fullerians club house and grounds, and so on. With Cassiobury Schools' expansion only half-way completed, morning traffic along Stratford Way often backs down to the Cassiobury Dr junction and forms an extra queue at the Woodland Dr junction at its current usage.

Herts' Highways reports a queue of between 12-35 cars at morning peak period at the traffic signals onto Hempstead Road from Stratford Way. As Hempstead Road is congested in the morning peak the SCOOT system usually allows only around three to four cars to exit at each phase, thus a queue of 35 entails around 8 to 10 phase changes, at least 15 minutes without allowing for existing approved expansion or the increase in traffic from that proposed.

Residents' concerns include: parking around the vicinity of the 4-way junction of Woodland Dr, Cassiobury Dr and Parkside Dr introducing hazards at this 4-way junction, increased hazards at the crossing of Stratford Way and Cassiobury Dr; increased rat-running traffic along Langley Way, Cassiobury Dr and Woodland Dr to escape the Hempstead Road congestion or queues at the traffic signals; increased traffic and queues at the tightly controlled & limited traffic signals phases on Hempstead Rd to get on and off the estate, especially at peak times; increased traffic pollution and congestion; increased safety hazards and obstructions to residents and emergency services access; inconsiderate parking by parents causing hazards and delays.

The alleyway access: presently fenced across, it appears to be part of the adjoining gardens. Whilst some late-night revellers from the town still occasionally try to use it, the fact that it no longer looks like an alleyway, and being overgrown with brambles no longer can even function as same, has led to a great reduction in anti-social behaviour and crime.

The alleyway was formed out of the original plot for No4 Woodland Dr, (a property previously owned by the College and now sold and divided back into its two original plots), and is subject to the same covenants as the estate. For some years it was used by those accessing the college from the estate and as a short-cut until the college started to lock it at both ends each evening until each morning at the police's request from about the mid 1990s onwards, owing to crime and anti-social behaviour (it was always locked just once or twice a year prior to that date). It was finally shut and dis-used the express request of Herts Police Crime Prevention team.

Re-opening it would be against the report of Herts Police Crime Prevention. Using it would be against the 'Zurich guide to School and Academy design'; 'Designing School for Safety and Security' published by the Home Office and BRE; the Best Practise for Infant Schools advice (union and non-union) per Teaching Professionals; and the Police's newly published national 'Secured by Design, 2014' guide for schools.

Residents feel that if school is to be as 'car-free as possible' and only a very few parents would drive children to and from school since vast majority of school children will walk, then they don't need a drop-off point, and surely such could easily be easily accommodated within the existing site. However, if there are to be many more cars used for access then some sensible traffic management scheme providing direct access from

Hempstead Road or sharing the car park with the College, or using the road to Little Cassiobury to form a new and safe off-highway loop, or other method within the curtilage, needs to be devised and enforced. Since both the College and the proposed school are educational places political will and weight needs to be brought to resolve the access matter in order to minimize disruption and maintain safety and well-being.

Should it transpire that the High Court prohibit use of the alleyway - and it would be very foolish and unwise of any professional to second guess their Lordships' decision in matters of nuisance, amenity, public safety and residents' rights against any such powers that HCC may wish to try to exercise to set aside third part rights over Local Authority property where it is intended that the property is to be put to a service purpose, leaving the third party with just compensation rights - very foolish and unwise indeed - then access using a method other than the alleyway and crossing the service road and crossing the car park to the school will have to be devised.

The Residents' Association is not opposed to the idea of the school, and indeed recognizes the need for extra School places and it welcomes the use of the dis-used Lanchester building as a school. However, residents feel that support for the project is conditional on the parent and pupil access and drop-off point being made directly from Hempstead Road to minimize the potential for crime and anti-social behaviour, to minimize general hazards and traffic hazards, to maintain the safety of pupils and parents alike, and minimize road movements, traffic congestion and throughput across the traffic signals in the interests of public safety, amenity and general well-being.

AMENDED AND ADDITIONAL DRAWINGS

An amended drawing no. 3088/140/01 Proposed External Works has been submitted. This shows some amendments to the proposed fencing around the boundaries of the site and within the site. These amendments reflect comments made by your officers and are acceptable.

Additional drawings have also been submitted giving details of the proposed pedestrian guardrails within the car park (drg. no.DG1112), the landscaping around the nursery play area (drg. no.LD08 P1) and the entrance ramp to the nursery (drg. no. LD07).

The list of drawings in Recommendation (A) should read as follows:-

3008/100/01, 102/00, 110/01, 120/01, 140/01, 150/07, 151/01, 155/01, 156/01, 158/01, LD03 PL1, LD05 PL1, LD07, LD08 P1, 130995/E/2210 Rev.T1

AMENDED CONDITIONS

Various conditions are amended to refer to the current up-to-date list of drawings:

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:-

3008/100/01, 102/00, 110/01, 120/01, 140/01, 150/07, 151/01, 155/01, 156/01, 158/01, LD03 PL1, LD05 PL1, LD07, LD08 P1, 130995/E/2210 Rev.T1
9. No part of the building shall be occupied until full details of a soft landscaping scheme, as shown in principle on drawing nos. 3088/140/01 and LD08 P1, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved landscaping scheme shall be carried out not later than the first available planting and seeding season after completion of the development. Any trees or plants whether new or existing which within a period of five years die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, or in accordance with details approved by the Local Planning Authority.
10. No part of the building shall be occupied until (a) full details of a hard landscaping scheme, including both hard surfaced play areas, as shown in principle on drawing no. 3088/140/01, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and (b) the works have been carried out in accordance with the approved details.
11. (i) No part of the building shall be occupied until (a) details (including materials, design, colour and height) of the following means of enclosure have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and (b) all the means of enclosure have been installed in accordance with the approved details:-
 - The railings around the front, side and rear boundaries of the site.
 - The front entrance gate from Hempstead Road and the side and rear entrance gates to the open space.
 - The fencing of the footpath leading to Cassiobury Drive.
 - Gates at both ends of the footpath leading to Cassiobury Drive.

(ii) No part of the building shall be occupied until the following means of enclosure have been installed in accordance with the approved details:-

- The pedestrian guard rails in the car park shall be as shown on drawing no. DG1112 and shall be coloured black.
- The fencing around the nursery play area shall be in Jackson's Venetian timber slats with the posts set on the inside of the fencing and concealed from view.
- The weldmesh fencing shall be as shown on drawing no. LD03 PL1 and LD05 PL1 and shall be coloured dark green (RAL 6005).

14. No part of the building shall be occupied until (a) details of a cycle shelter sufficient to accommodate 60 cycles, and the means of screening this shelter, as shown in principle on drawing no. 3088/140/01, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and (b) the shelter has been constructed in accordance with the approved details.