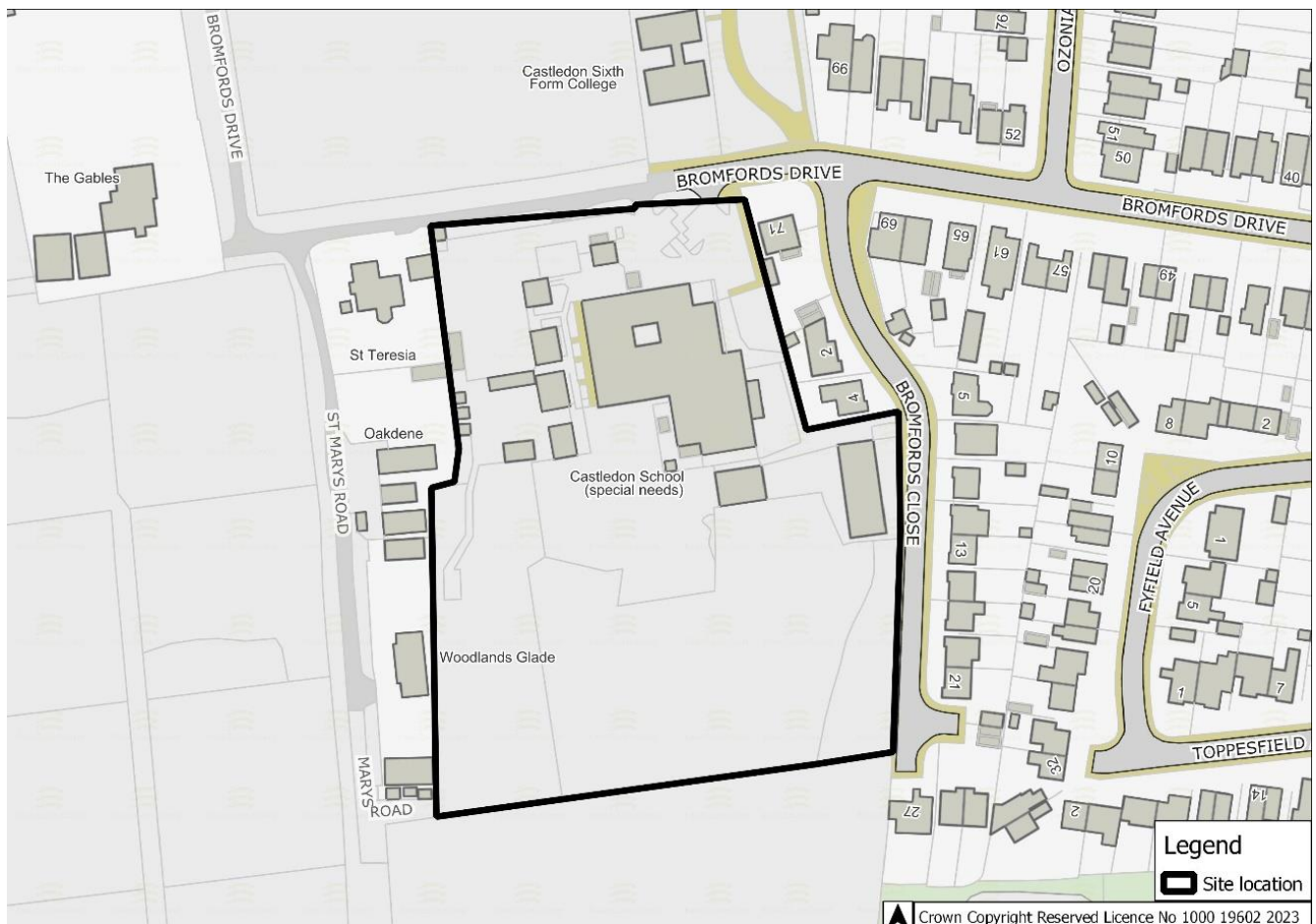


**DR/30/23****Report to:** DEVELOPMENT & REGULATION (25 August 2023)**Proposal:** COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT - Construction of a two-storey standalone building; extension to existing Oriel building; removal of existing temporary classbases, reconfiguration of existing car parking area including the provision of additional car parking spaces, creation of new outdoor play space and associated ancillary development**Ref:** CC/BAS/53/23**Applicant:** Essex County Council**Location:** Castledon School, Bromfords Drive, Wickford, Essex, SS12 0PW**Report author:** Chief Planning Officer (County Planning and Major Development)**Enquiries to:** Rachel Edney Tel: 03330 136815The full application can be viewed at <https://planning.essex.gov.uk>

## **1. BACKGROUND**

There is a reasonably long planning history for the school site relating to the provision of temporary accommodation and the construction of new buildings. The most recent planning permission was granted in April 2013 for the retention of a temporary classbase (CC/BAS/10/13).

## **2. SITE**

Castledon School provides accommodation for pupils with special needs. Year 1-11 pupils are accommodated at Castledon School. Year 12-14 pupils are accommodated at Castledon College which is located on the opposite side of Bromfords Drive and was established in September 2017. All pupils require an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) to be offered a place at Castledon and pupils attend with a wide range of complex needs, including autism and communication difficulties.

Castledon School is situated on Bromfords Drive to the south-west of Wickford. The site comprises a collection of primarily single storey and some two-storey buildings with flat roofs. The school buildings front the street with the school playing field to the south.

Vehicular and pedestrian access is via Bromfords Drive. The school car park is to the north of the school buildings and a minibus drop off and pick up facility is located to the front of the main school building.

Four temporary classbases are located to the west of the main school buildings.

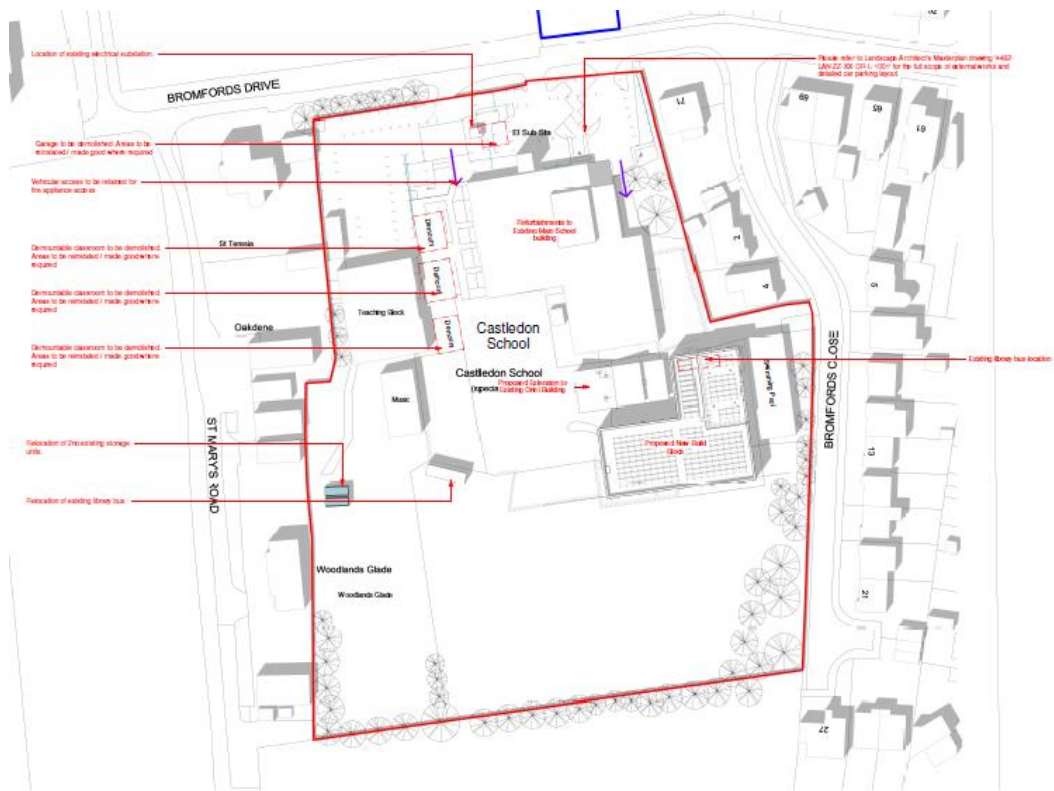
There are residential properties to the east in Bromfords Drive and west in St Mary's Drive. There are further residential properties to the north east of the site in Bromfords Drive. An area of open space is located to the south of the site, separated by established boundary vegetation.

The entire school site is located within the Green Belt. The site is within Flood Zone 1 and the Bromfords Critical Drainage Area.

## **3. PROPOSAL**

This planning application seeks planning permission for the removal of existing temporary classbases; the construction of a 2 storey standalone building; an extension to the existing Oriel building together with the reconfiguration of the existing school car parking area, landscaping; relocation of the library bus, storage containers and play equipment.

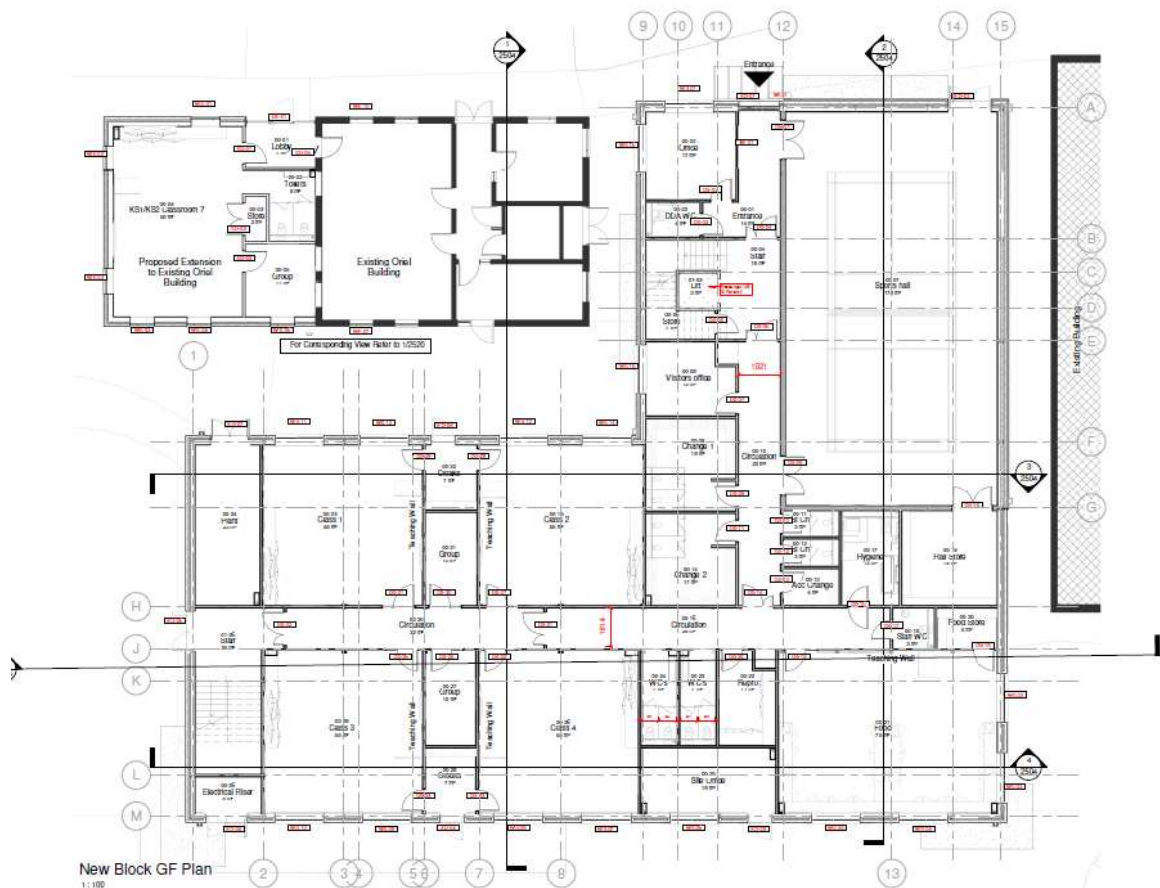
Extract from Drawing Number: CASTL-IW-XX-XX-DR-A-2400 P4 – Proposed Site Plan



The ground floor of the proposed 2 storey building would consist of:

- Double height sports hall
- Office accommodation
- Changing rooms
- 4no. classrooms
- Toilet facilities
- Storage
- Food technology room
- Group rooms
- Ancillary accommodation

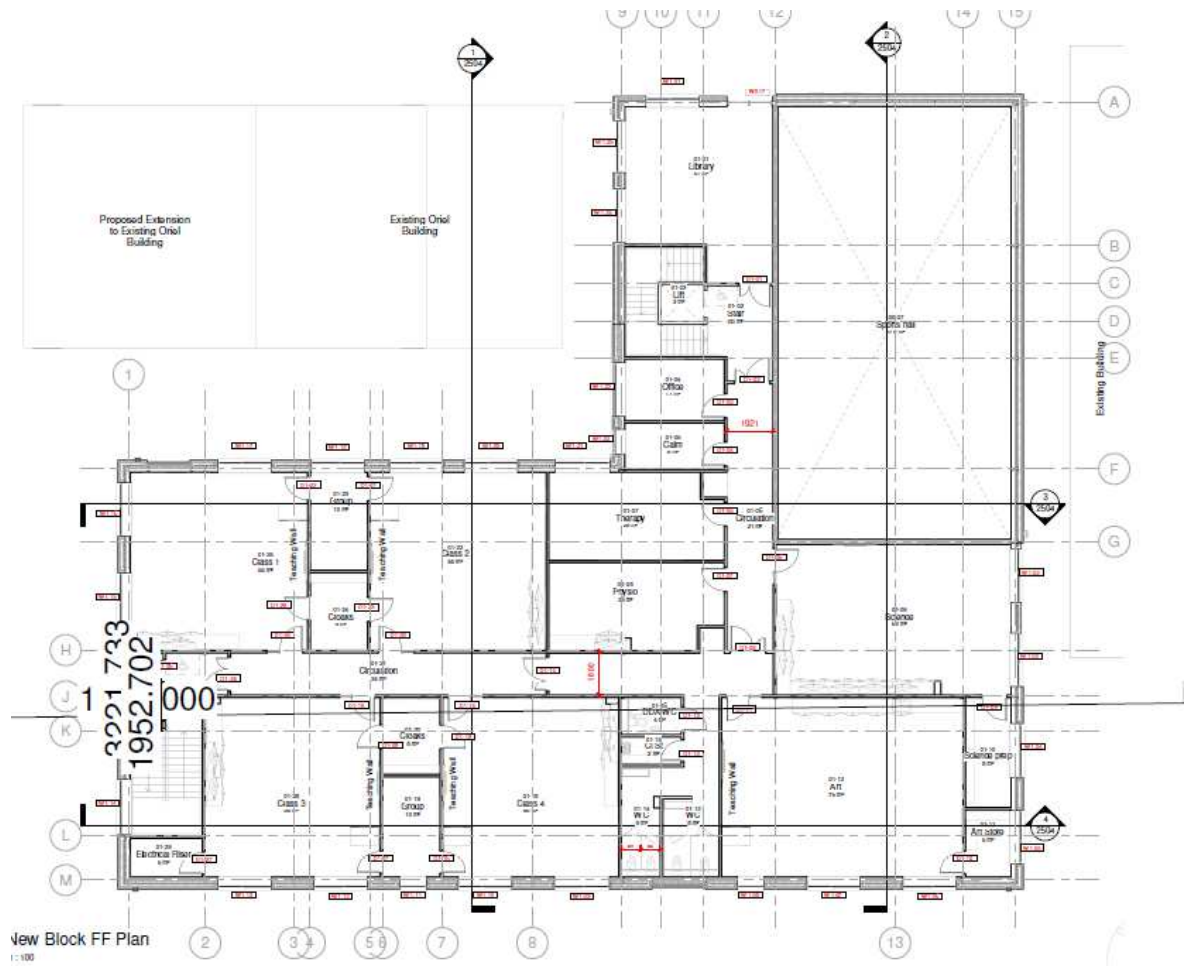
Extract from Drawing Number: CASTL-IW-NB-00-DR-A-2500 P5 – New Block GF Plan



The first floor of the proposed 2 storey building would consist of:

- Library
- Office accommodation
- 4no. classrooms
- Therapy/physio room
- Art room
- Science room
- Storage
- Toilet facilities
- Group rooms

Extract from Drawing Number: CASTL-IW-NB-01-DR-A-2501 P5 – New Block FF Plan

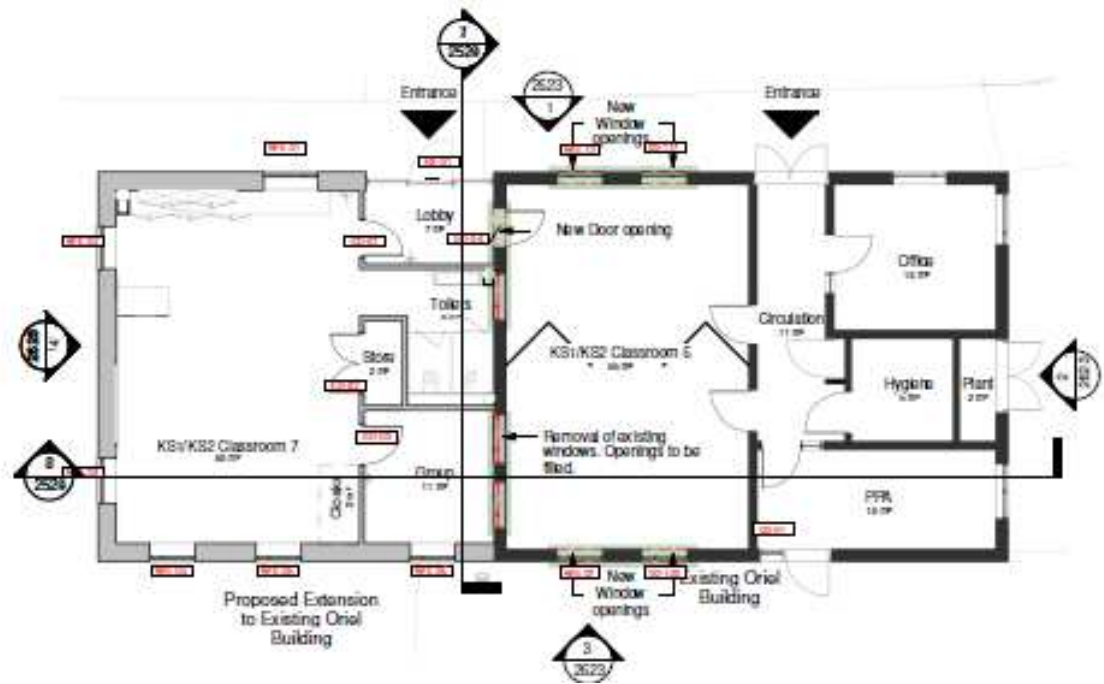


PV panels would be installed on the roof of the proposed two storey building.

It is also proposed to construct a single storey extension to the existing Oriol building. This would consist of 1no. classroom, group room, store room, toilet facilities and circulation spaces.

Extract from Drawing Number CASTL-IW-EB-XX-DR-A-2520 P3 – Extension Block





External works would create outdoor space including a sheltered outdoor play space. Other external works include the relocation of the library bus, storage containers and play equipment which are currently within the footprint of the proposed building.

The existing car parking area to the north of the school site would be reconfigured to provide an additional 29no. car parking spaces and 2no.minibus parking spaces.

Extract from Drawing CASTL-IW-XX-XX-VS-A-2300 PO3 Visuals 1



Visual 1: Axonometric View of the entire site

#### 4. POLICIES

The following policies of the Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007 provide the development plan framework for this application. The following policies are of relevance to this application:

## Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007

Policy R1 – Open Space  
Policy BE12 – Development Control

### NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

There is not an adopted Neighbourhood Plan in place for the area.

The Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 20 July 2021 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The NPPF highlights that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It goes on to state that achieving sustainable development means the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways: economic, social and environmental. The NPPF places a presumption in favour of sustainable development, paragraph 11 parts (c) and (d) states *"For decision making this means: approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless: the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."*

However, paragraph 47 states that *"Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

Paragraphs 218 and 219 of the NPPF, in summary, detail that the policies in the Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications and plans adopted in accordance with previous policy and guidance may need to be revised to reflect this and changes made. Policies should not however be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

The level of consistency of the policies contained within the Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies 2007 is considered further in the report.

Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states, in summary, that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation of the emerging plan; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF.

At a Council Meeting on 3 March 2022 Basildon Council resolved to withdraw the Basildon Borough Local Plan from examination.

Work has continued on the new Local Plan. The Basildon Borough Local Plan Issues and Options consultation runs from 27 June 2023 to 5 September 2023.

## **5. CONSULTATIONS**

**BASILDON BOROUGH COUNCIL-PLANNING DEPARTMENT** – Any comments received will be reported

**BASILDON BOROUGH COUNCIL-ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT** – No objection subject to construction hours in Construction Management Plan being updated in line with Basildon Council's standard hours.

Recommend a condition requiring the rating level of noise from the plant installed not exceeding the existing background sound level at any time at the outside of noise sensitive buildings.

**SPORT ENGLAND** – No objection

**ESSEX FIRE & RESCUE** – Access for Fire Service purposes has been considered in accordance with the Essex Act 1987 – Section 13 and the Building Regulations 2010.

Provided the existing fire appliance access is maintained available at all times both during and then following construction the proposal will not affect Fire Service Access to existing premises in the vicinity and therefore in compliance with Section 13 (1)(b) of the Act (fire access path/road as indicated on 'Landscape Mast Plan' drawing).

Fire Service vehicular access to the new building will be expected to meet the requirements of the Building Regulations Approved Document B Volume 2 Section B5 (and so address Section 13(1)(a) of The Act).

This will require direct and unimpeded vehicular access to at least 15% of the proposed building's perimeter which, within must be a suitable access door that gives access to the whole of the building's interior, from the drawing submitted it is unclear how this will be achieved.

It is also unclear from the drawings submitted if the ability to turn the fire appliances at the end of the fire access path is being maintained (although the visual interpretations of the proposed buildings do suggest in favour); this along with clarification on the 15% access should be sought before approval is given.

In all scenarios any fire access path/road and turning facilities should be capable of supporting fire appliances with GVW of 18 tonnes.

Subject to the above conditions being addressed/confirmed the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority has no objection to the application.



LEAD LOCAL FLOOD AUTHORITY – No objection subject to conditions requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved FRA and Drainage Strategy; submission of a scheme to minimise the risk of offsite flooding caused by surface run-off and groundwater; the submission of a maintenance plan; maintenance of yearly logs of maintenance and the clearance of any existing pipes.

HIGHWAY AUTHORITY – No objection

PLACE SERVICES (Urban Design) – No objection

PLACE SERVICES (Landscape) – No objection subject to conditions requiring the submission of soft and hard landscaping schemes and the submission of a landscape management plan.

PLACE SERVICES (Ecology) – No objection subject to conditions requiring the submission of a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy; and development to be carried out in compliance with ecological appraisal recommendations.

PLACE SERVICES (Historic Environment) – No objection

PLACE SERVICES (Arboriculture) – No objection subject to conditions requiring the submission of a tree protection scheme; the implementation of tree protection prior to the commence of groundworks/development; and prevention of tree damage.

WICKFORD TOWN COUNCIL – No objection

LOCAL MEMBER – BASILDON – Wickford Crouch – Supports

LOCAL MEMBER – BASILDON – Wickford Crouch – Any comments received will be reported

## **6. REPRESENTATIONS**

Thirty one properties were directly notified of the application. Five letters of representation have been received. These relate to planning issues, summarised as follows:

<u>Observation</u>	<u>Comment</u>
School clearly no longer suitable for the main purpose it was designed. Site not big enough to accommodate current amount of students and staff members let alone adding extra classrooms.	Noted. However, the submitted application must be determined on its own merits.
Already granted permission for an excessively large sports complex which if built will not only have an extreme impact on our property value but have	This permission was granted by Basildon Borough Council but has not been implemented. Each application is determined on its own merits. Property

major concerns it will limit daylight on the front of our property.

valuation is not a planning consideration. See appraisal

Needs to be consideration for local residents regarding the congestion caused due to poorly designed entrance of the school via Bromfords Drive. The school has around 72 minibuses dropping off and collecting students which leads to excessive amounts of vehicles blocking Bromfords Drive including the joining roads causing stress to those that have to travel from their properties.

Noted. See Appraisal

Doesn't include the extra problems caused by extremely dangerous and illegal parking from parents at Bromfords and Castledon schools.

Noted. See appraisal

School is no longer a viable option and an alternative site should be considered to build a new school with the correct facilities already planned for

Noted. However, the submitted application has to be determined on its own merits

Appears to be an assumption that the earlier successful planning application for a sports hall supports this new proposal. However, the sports hall was granted with assurances that the temporary access from Bromfords Close would be restored to its earlier state – fencing and shrubbery that had been removed would be replaced and the hard core used as temporary road would be removed. It appears that the new application now proposes pupil access through this temporary gate.

The permission for the Sports Hall granted planning permission by Basildon Council has not been implemented. The temporary access used from Bromfords Close would be closed and the land reinstated to its former condition.

Bromfords Close is an extremely narrow roadway with resident parking which is totally unsuitable for this proposed access and could put pupils in danger due to crossing the road through parked vehicles.

Noted

The proposal states that much construction would be completed off site and delivered to the school site. This would only be possible if the temporary access from Bromfords Close was

Noted. See appraisal

extended by the further removal of trees and shrubs seriously impacting the environment for both residents and animal life in the vicinity.

The green belt in this area does support a mixture of animal life and should be protected. Noted. See appraisal

The travel and transport analysis supporting the proposal appears to take no account of vehicle access for pupils attending Bromfords School using the rear entrance at the junction of Bromfords Drive and Bromfords Close. Noted

As local residents we already experience difficulties leaving Bromfords Close and Drive areas at school arrival or leaving times. Noted

I believe the authority has duty of care to residents and allowing this application with its increase in heavy vehicle traffic during construction and increased traffic to access Bromfords Close at school start and end times will potentially put lives at risk when emergency vehicles cannot access homes in the area. Noted. See appraisal

Already numerous occasions when refuse collection lorries have been unable to make collections in Bromfords Close due to parking related to school drop offs Noted

Application should be rejected due to fact road access is totally unacceptable both for the construction phase and any ongoing increase in traffic in the surrounding area. Noted. See appraisal

Already extremely difficult to leave or enter the estate during school start and finish times due to high volume of traffic queuing to drop off and pick up pupils. Noted. See appraisal

Parking for drop off's and pick up's results in major inconvenience for residents too. Noted. See appraisal

School pulls in students throughout the area and it seems very few from catchment and further expansion will only make situation worse.	Noted. See appraisal
School and its present infrastructure was never designed to be populated to this degree or even further.	Noted
No consideration to how people from estate are affected by this and their daily lives in having to plan around the school times or even safety of residents.	Noted
In an emergency during these times access is severely restricted for fire, ambulance or police.	Noted. See appraisal
Bromfords Drive road surface is deteriorating rapidly notably around the front of the school entrance which leads to access to and from St Marys Road. Roads were never designed to take this volume of traffic.	Noted
The site for proposed development is Green Belt designated. So how can local councils continue to approve applications to this restricted area?	Noted. See appraisal
Noise pollution from school has increased substantially. Not only from the increase in intake but from building and plant use which is and has been ongoing for last 3-4 years.	Noted. See appraisal
School and its planners are completely oblivious to feelings and concerns of its neighbours and seem to be able to develop this site as and when it suits them.	Noted. However, each application is determined on its own merits
Appears that the previous application approved for the building of the sports hall despite assurances to the local community of disruption caused by contractors and the damage caused to a small cul de sac these issues have yet to be resolved.	Noted. The application for the sports hall has not been implemented

We were advised that the temporary gates were for emergency vehicles only. This in fact is not true as in constant use by lorries and similar unsuitable vehicles in the construction of the sports hall as well as general access for events held at the school.	The temporary access would be closed and the land reinstated to its former condition
Bromfords Close is not able to cope with this traffic it is a small cul de sac and at times impossible to access my property due to parked vehicles.	Noted. See appraisal
I understand additional parking spaces have been applied for but will not resolve the situation and at times it is quite unbearable.	Noted. See appraisal
Issues with refuse collection as vehicles cannot access turning due to this continued disruption.	Noted
Residents were advised at meeting that shrubs and bushes destroyed during the build would be rectified. This has not happened. This has had an impact on the local wildlife and environment to a detrimental effect.	Noted. See appraisal
The travel and transport analysis that apparently supports the proposal has not considered the potential danger the above poses to children who are having to cross the roads to parked vehicles and residents who may need emergency vehicles which at certain times of the day cannot access the road due to traffic in the area.	Noted. See appraisal
Request that application is refused due to completely inappropriate access for yet more construction traffic and increase in traffic in small residential area.	Noted
New two storey building an absolute monster the size of the existing main block – is this really necessary? If single storey wouldn't be writing.	Noted. See appraisal

For last couple of years residents of Bromfords Drive had had to suffer the sight of a red double decker bus parked permanently beside our properties blocking the pleasant views of a field and trees.

Noted. However, this is not a material planning consideration

Castledon School currently do a superb job of packing their tiny car park, full to the brim. However this is still woefully inadequate.

Noted. See appraisal

Bromfords Close on a daily basis is packed full of teachers cars and this before the monstrous development which undoubtably will attract far more parked cars from more teachers, more parents not to mention the constructors.

Noted. See appraisal

Local police and Basildon Council have for many years completely ignored resident spleas for Castledon School and Bromfords School provide proper infrastructure for the safe deposit and collection of school children. It will only be when and not if a child dies because of the traffic congestion around Castledon School that anyone will take action. I will be first to point out to press Basildon Council's inadequacies when this happens.

Noted

## 7. APPRAISAL

The key issues for consideration are:

- A. Need and Principle of Development in the Green Belt
- B. Design, Layout and Sustainability
- C. Impact on Playing Field
- D. Impact on Residential Amenity
- E. Traffic and Highways
- F. Impact on Natural Environment
- G. Impact on Historic Environment
- H. Flood Risk

### A NEED AND PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT

#### Educational Need

The school has experienced year-on-year growth due to increased local need. A lack of facilities prevents the school from extending its curriculum to teach a



broader range of subjects including dance, music, drama and offering a range of qualifications that would increase opportunities for future career choices and employability. A lack of small group rooms makes it difficult to manage instances when a pupil needs individual attention in a quiet space.

The incremental growth of the school has meant that, whilst classroom space has expanded, vital related facilities, including the school hall have not grown to the required size required to support the pupil population. This is also the case for specialist rooms to support non-academic needs. The proposed new building and extension would allow the school to offer an extended range of interventions and work with the local education authority to reduce out of county placements as well as continuing to educate students with complex needs. The proposed application would allow the school to continue its journey of success through provision of high-quality teaching that meets an increasingly broad range of needs.

The existing main hall is undersized and is used for assembly, dining and indoor PE which results in significant management constraints and loss of teaching time, impacting on learning outcomes and restricted access to adequate sports and physical activities for pupils.

The school role is 114 pupils. However, there are currently 171 pupils at the school. The proposed new accommodation would increase the school role of 196 pupils (an increase of 25 pupils).

#### Principles of development in the Green Belt

The entire school site is located within the Green Belt as identified on the adopted Basildon Proposals Map.

The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and in this instance is considered particularly important as there are no saved policies relating to the Green Belt relevant to this application.

Paragraph 133 of the NPPF states that the government attaches great importance to the Green Belt. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Educational development does not fall within the limited category of appropriate development in the Green Belt, which is limited to agriculture, forestry and other minor uses.

Paragraph 134 of the NPPF sets out the 5 purposes of the Green Belt, which are:

- To check the restricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states that *“as with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.”*

Paragraph 144 of the NPPF goes on to say that *“when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reasons of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”*

Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states inter alia that *“a local authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:*

- a) Buildings for agriculture and forestry*
- b) The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial ground and allotments, as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it*
- c) The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building*
- d) The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces*
- e) Limited infilling in villages*
- f) Limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
- g) Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings) which would:*
  - i. Not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
  - ii. Not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.*

The proposed construction of a two-storey standalone building and extension to the existing Oriel building would, by definition, be considered inappropriate and therefore ‘very special circumstances’ need to be demonstrated.

Paragraph 95 of the NPPF states that *“it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:*

- Give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and*
- Work with schools’ promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.”*

Castledon School is an established SEND school in Wickford.

Essex County Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of school places for every child in Essex who requires one. Whilst there is no statutory requirement to have special schools or specialist provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), many local authorities do have special schools and specialist provisions.

The following pressures have driven the requirement for significant investment in recent places in Essex:

- A consistently high number of pupils with SEND cannot have their needs met in Essex schools and are subsequently educated in independent schools at high cost to both the High Needs Block of the Essex Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and ECC budgets.
- A year-on-year increase in the number of children and young people who require an Education Health Care Plan and to be educated in a special school.
- The requirement to place pupils and parents/carers at the heart of planning and provision for SEND as stated in Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

The Council's spend on independent special school placements is rising and, if not addressed, this spend will not be containable in the longer-term. This is due to the lack of appropriate facilities and provision to cater for specific types of severe and complex special education needs. With the reduction in funding from central government and the projected growth in the cost of independent placements, there is a need to develop more cost-effective alternatives to ensure that funding for special education needs is sustainable in the future. In addition to this, the pupil forecast for the next 5 years shows a growth in demand for pupils who require places in special schools as well as a change in pattern of the type of special education needs.

There is increased demand for provision for children and young people with moderate learning difficulties in South Essex and the need to replace temporary classrooms, which have reached the end of their life cycle, will place considerable pressure on Castledon School if not addressed. Demand for places at the school has grown over the years, due to population growth and a rise in the number of children and young people who require a special school place, putting pressure on the school's infrastructure. Pupil numbers at the school have been increasing steadily and at the same time the school has accommodated a wider range of special educational need; whilst classroom capacity has expanded the specialist places required to meet both the increased numbers and a wider range of needs is not sufficient and needs to be addressed. The school is dependent on temporary classrooms to accommodate existing pupils and without the new facilities, ECC will no longer be able to meet current needs and have no capacity within the existing building for the forecast increased pupil population.

When considering the 'very special circumstances' it is important to recognise that the sum of a number of considerations can together represent 'very special circumstances'; and it is not therefore necessary for each consideration alone to be considered special.

The purpose of including land within the Green Belt is not necessarily wholly for its openness, given that it is an allocated school site with buildings.

The very special circumstances put forward by the applicant in this case include the necessity for the replacement of existing temporary accommodation with permanent to provide sufficient school places for children with SEND living within the south Essex area.

The school site is an established educational site and the proposed two storey building and extension to the existing Oriel building would replace existing dilapidated temporary accommodation and provide much needed permanent teaching accommodation to help meet demand for SEND places in the county.

Due to site constraints the location for the proposed building and extension are limited. However, the two storey building has been located as close as possible to the main school buildings. The proposed building is two storeys in height and would therefore have some impact on the Green Belt. However, in term of use with the site being specifically designated for use as school, the proposed building is considered to be compatible with this use. This is considered to be a material consideration when considering the acceptability of development in the Green Belt.

The removal of existing temporary accommodation would help increase the open space around the school site. Established boundary vegetation to the south would help screen views of the two storey building from views outside the site.

The proposed extension to the Oriel building would be screened by existing school buildings. The main school buildings would also help screen views of the proposed two storey building.

In terms of the purpose of the Green Belt it is not considered that the building would contribute to urban sprawl. The proposed two storey building and extension to the Oriel building would be located within the confines of the school site and would not result in the merging of Wickford.

The applicant considers that in light of the special status of the school that meets the special needs of pupils from across the borough and beyond that have a wide range of complex needs, including spectrums of autism and communication difficulties that are not readily catered for at other schools, and the building's position grouped alongside existing school buildings on the site and the lack of dedicated indoor sports facilities it is considered that very special circumstances have been demonstrated for the proposed development.

It is considered that the aforementioned justification does represent 'very special circumstances' to justify the development within the Green Belt and this would be considered to hold significant weight in the determination of this planning application. The school is an established educational site and the proposed building and extension would provide much needed additional permanent purpose built teaching and ancillary accommodation to help meet the demand for SEND school places in the country in accordance with Paragraph 95 of the NPPF.

Taking all of the above factors into account, it is not considered that the proposed building would conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt and would have a limited impact on the openness of the Green Belt and would therefore be in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF.

## **B DESIGN, LAYOUT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

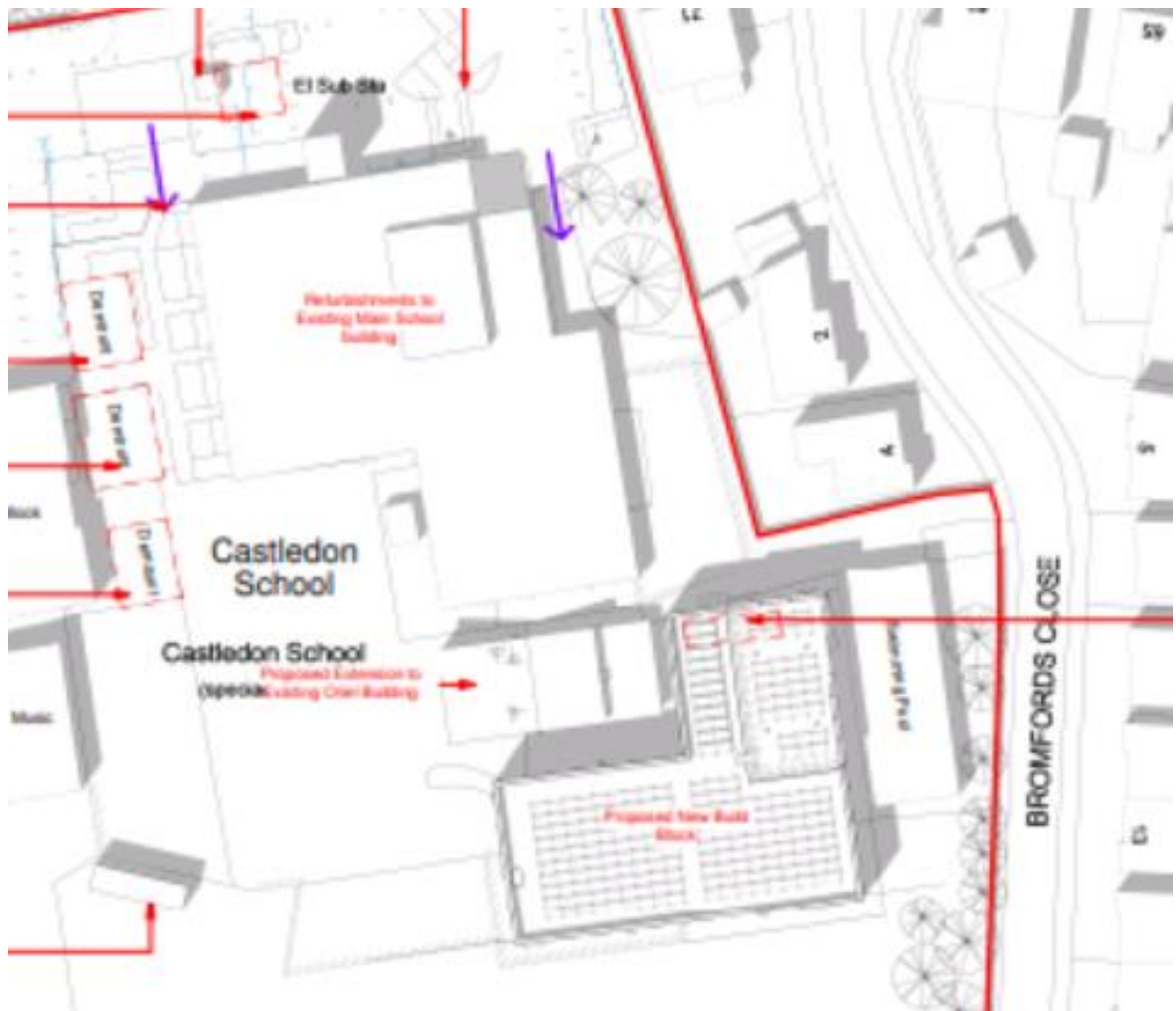
There are no specific policies relating to the development of schools within the Basildon Local Plan (2005), although it is considered reference/advice can be sought from the general development control policy BAS BE12. Policy BAS BE12 details that planning permission for new development will be refused if it causes harm to the character of the surrounding area, including the street scene.

The proposed design of the building has been driven by a number of factors, but fundamentally it has been based on the particular School Specific Brief (SBB), DfE requirements and cost parameters for the project.

A question has been raised about the need for a 2 storey building. In order, to replace the existing temporary accommodation as well as meeting an identified educational and to avoid impacting on the school playing field a 2 storey building is required.

### Design and Layout

The proposed 2 storey building would be located to the south east of the main school building. The school's existing swimming pool building would be located to the east of the proposed building.



Given the sensitive nature of the site, the position of the proposed building has been carefully located alongside the existing building group to minimise any encroachment into the more open parts of the site and on the openness of the Green Belt and playing field.

The orientation of the proposed building has been designed in keeping with the existing built form, with its frontage aligned to neighbouring buildings along the access pathway. This ensures that the building has good linkages with existing access arrangement, both in terms of current circulation routes and secure lines.

As a result of comments made at the pre-application stage a number of amendments have been made to the submitted scheme. These include:

- Reconfiguration to the car parking area to increase the number of car parking spaces on site
- Removal of the proposed MUGA in response to comments received from Sport England
- Addition of a canopy to the main entrance of the proposed 2 storey building
- The introduction of obscure glazing to the active north facing first floor windows of the proposed 2 storey building
- Provision of a pathway to the existing MUGA/hard play area

#### Proposed 2 storey building



Extract from Drawing Number: CASTL-IW-NB-01-DR-A-2501 P5 – New Block FF  
Plan





Extract from Drawing Number CASTI-IW-XX-XX-VS-A-2302 P1 – Visuals 3



### Extension to Oriel Building

The existing Oriel building comprises of 1no. classroom and associated ancillary accommodation.

The proposed extension would provide 1no. classroom, group room, toilet facilities and storage area.

The existing brickwork of the building is considered to be an unattractive, flat textured orange-red blend. A matching red brick would be used for the extension to the existing building together with composite vertical cladding panels. Windows and doors would match existing.



Extract from Drawing Number: CASTL-IW-XX-XX-VS-A-2301-P3 – Visuals 2



Extract from Drawing Number CASTI-IW-XX-XX-VS-A-2302 P1 – Visuals 3



The County's Urban Designer considers the proposed redevelopment of the site to provide a new teaching block, extensions and refurbishment to existing buildings and outdoor facilities to be positive. The removal of ancillary buildings to the site

frontage is welcomed. Further to comments made a pre-application stage, the proposed approach and further justification is generally acceptable. The addition of a protruding canopy feature to provide greater definition to the building entrance and the addition of a pathway to either side of the existing MUGA to facilitate access is welcomed.

The proposed material design approach and justification is considered acceptable, although a high-quality red-brick for the proposed teaching block is considered would help improve the design standard.

It is noted that there would be no alterations to the access arrangements and the car park would be reconfigured. It is considered that an opportunity exists to soften the approach of the car dominated frontage of the site and increase the arrival experience for pedestrians.

It is considered that the proposed 2 storey building may impact the existing light levels within the existing Oriel building. Setting the proposed building slightly back could help increase the natural light within the Oriel building..

The existing play area at the school is considered to be very concrete based and other types of play spaces which could include sustainable water fountains in the summer are encouraged. The use of gardening and habitat opportunities to enable children to interact with nature on a regular basis are also encouraged. It is also suggested that designated areas which aim to provide a quiet space for pupils with sensory issues are considered.

As well as the inclusion of blue spaces into the play areas, the use of SuDs features could help increase the sustainability of the site.

Overall, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in relation to urban design standards.

#### Climate change and sustainability

Basildon Council is fully committed to developing an ongoing programme of greenhouse gas reduction measures, with an ambitious target to deliver zero carbon emissions across the borough by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050.

In the interests of conserving energy, making the most efficient use of water and other resources, the applicant has sought to suggest that the building would be constructed to modern standards in terms of insulation, sustainable energy and water usage. The development takes a 'fabric first' approach to reducing energy demand and CO2 emissions.

A high efficiency heat recovery ventilation plant would ensure comfortable fresh air provision for occupants whilst minimising the heat load for the building. High efficiency LED lighting and automatic lighting controls would help reduce energy consumption, combined with the use of high efficiency air source heat pumps for the building's heating and hot water generation.

With regard to energy consumption, solar panels are proposed across the majority of the 2 storey building roof, which pro-rotas should generate enough energy to ensure the building operates at net-zero carbon.

The combination of on-site generation and the selection of high efficiency equipment would allow the scheme to be projected Net Zero Carbon in Operation.

## C IMPACT ON PLAYING FIELD

The area of land within the school site where the proposed two storey building is to be located is designated as School Playing Field Open Space in the adopted Local Plan.

Adopted Policy R1 (Open Space) states inter alia that “*planning permission will not be granted for development of open space which would cause significant harm to the recreational or amenity value of the open space, or to the contribution which the open space makes to the character of the area within which it is located.*”

As the proposed development would encroach onto the existing school playing field Sport England was a statutory consultee.

Sport England has considered the application in the light of the NPPF and against its own playing fields policy.

It is proposed to construct a new teaching block, an extension to the existing Oriel building, landscaping and a car park reconfiguration at the school. The new teaching block would include a one court sports hall and supporting changing facilities and would be sited on a substantial part of the school's playing field to the east of the site. An extant planning permission already exists for a new sports hall on broadly the same area of the school site (21/01450/FULL).

As the application includes the provision of a new indoor sports facility on the existing playing field, the application has been considered against exception 5 of Sport England policy.

The proposed sports hall within the new building is intended to address an existing shortfall of indoor space suitable for PE at the school. It is understood that there is a significant quantitative deficiency of indoor sports provision for a SEND school of this size. The school currently uses a single space for assembly, dining and indoor PE which presents timetabling challenges due to the multiple demands placed on this space which in turn affects the delivery of the PE curriculum. The school has used the facilities on the adjacent Bromfords School site but this present logistical and safeguarding challenges for the school and the facilities are not suitable for all of the school's students. A one court badminton court sports hall is proposed which would be constructed to current DfE guidance and would provide a modern indoor sports facility that could be used for a range of sports and physical activities suitable for a SEND school. This would address the capacity and qualitative deficiencies of the existing indoor space. This would be supported by modern changing facilities designed for meeting the needs of the students. No reference is made to whether the sports hall would be made available for community use outside of school hours. However, as the previous aforementioned planning



application for a sports hall did not propose community use because of potential highways and residential amenity concerns it has been assumed that no community use is proposed for the sports hall in the current scheme.

In terms of the impact on the playing field, the proposed teaching block which includes the sports hall would encroach onto a relatively substantial part of the school's playing field. However, the area that the building would be sited on is an area made up of construction spoil that is on a different gradient to the rest of the playing field and would therefore be difficult in practice to accommodate most types of playing pitch due to its limited size, irregular shape and gradient changes. The area is not currently marked out for playing pitches and aerial photographs indicate that it has not been marked out for pitches in the past. The mini football pitch which occupies the majority of the playing field would not appear to be affected by the proposal. The siting of the teaching block is also substantially the same as for the sports hall approved by Basildon Council.

Sport England does not wish to raise an objection as it is considered to meet exception 5 of its policy. The benefits to sport are considered to outweigh the detriment caused by the impact on the playing field. No conditions have been requested.

It is not considered that the proposed development would result in significant harm to the recreational value of the school playing field and would be in accordance with Policy R1.

#### D IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

A public consultation was held between 15-29 May 2023. A total of 22 responses were received, a majority of these from local residents. A majority of the respondents generally supported the proposals but had some concerns regarding traffic – exacerbation of existing problems with inconsiderate parking, limited parking, construction vehicles during the construction period, lack of new parking or school drop-off/pick up opportunities and emergency vehicle access. Concerns were also raised about the size of the proposed new building and the loss of views across the school site; and the potential for invasion of privacy from windows on northern elevation of new building overlooking residential properties.

Comments were also received in support of the proposed development with regards to the provision of new accommodation.

A comment was also received regarding the proposed MUGA with associated floodlighting. However, this element of the proposed development has been removed.

Adopted Policy BAS BE12 (Development Control) states inter alia that “*planning permission for new development will be refused if it causes material harm to the character of the surrounding area, including streetscene; overlooking; noise or disturbance to the occupants of neighbouring properties; overshadowing or over-dominance; and traffic danger or congestion.*”

The nearest residential properties are adjacent to the eastern boundary of the school site in Bromfords Close. The close proximity of these properties does render this boundary potentially sensitive. Mindful of the potential impact the proposed 2 storey building could have on the residential amenity of neighbours, the building has been located as far from the boundary as possible without encroaching onto the school playing field. The proposed building would be approximately 10 metres from the nearest residential properties in Bromfords Close (approximately 15m from the façade of the residential property to the façade of the proposed building). The Essex Design Guide references a spacing of at least 10m between opposing house-fronts to ensure no adverse effect on the daylight and sunlight received by neighbouring properties.

In order to reduce the perception of any overlooking, it is proposed to obscure glaze the window in the north facing first floor which would serve a library.

Concerns have been by raised by local residents regarding an increase in noise levels at the school both from increased pupil numbers and external plant. The location of the proposed 2 storey building is currently an outdoor recreational space and it is considered that moving the uses indoors would result in an improvement to the noise experienced by neighbouring properties.

Basildon's Environmental Health Officer has recommended a condition relating to construction working hours for the protection of amenity. It has also recommended a condition with regards to the noise levels of the proposed external plant.

It is understood that community use of the proposed Sports Hall is not proposed as part of this application because of potential highway and residential amenity concerns.

Overall, no objections are raised to the development coming forward from an amenity perspective, subject to the imposition of suitably worded conditions.

## E TRAFFIC & HIGHWAYS

The Transport Assessment submitted in support of the application has sought to assess likely impact of the school expansion on the local highway network by predicting likely vehicular trip rates during the AM school peak (08:00-09:00), PM school peak (15:00-16:00) and network PM peak (17:00-18:00). Primary School rates have been utilised as they best represent the higher vehicular use that is usually associated with SEND schools. The results of this are provided in the table below:

Table 5.1 of the submitted Transport Assessment – Primary School Vehicular Trip Rates

	AM Peak (08:00-09:00)		PM Peak (15:00-16:00)		Network PM Peak (17:00-18:00)	
	Arrivals	Departures	Arrivals	Departures	Arrivals	Departures
Primary School Trip Rate per pupil	0.335	0.284	0.204	0.266	0.014	0.028
Primary School Trips for 25 pupils	8	7	5	7	1	1

As shown within the above table, the school is predicted to generate up to 15 vehicular trips in the AM peak and 12 vehicular trips in the school PM peak. During the network PM peak the proposal would generate 2 additional trips.

In terms of parking provision, the car parking standard for a secondary school, as advocated by the Essex Parking Standards – Design and Good Practice (2009), is a maximum of one space per 15 pupils.

The guidance also sets out that car parking standards with respect to SEND schools can be relaxed to reflect the special circumstances. Special Schools can be varied in their requirements and should be looked at on their own merits. The guidance also states that special school parking/drop off requirements must be taken into consideration as generally extra staff are required and most pupils/students arrive by taxi or car.

As an SEND school, staff numbers are considerably higher than at a normal school with a ratio of around 1 staff member per 2 students, many of whom, due to their specialist expertise, travel in from outside the area.

Due to students' specific requirements, picking up and dropping off outside the site is not considered either appropriate or operationally acceptable and compromises students' safety and wellbeing.

Within the existing car parking area there is marked parking for 37 standard bays plus 2 accessible parking spaces.

With an increase of 25 pupils and proportional increase in staff numbers, it is proposed to increase on-site parking provision. The existing car parking area would be reconfigured to provide 58 car parking spaces (an increase of 21 car parking spaces) plus 2 accessible parking spaces. Two minibus drop off spaces would also be provided together with a vehicle turning and drop off area. Six of the new car parking spaces would benefit from EV charging points.

Extract from Drawing Number 4482-LAN-ZZ-XX-DR-L-1001 P11 – Landscape Masterplan



- The red hatched lines indicate existing parking spaces which would be removed.
- The hatched green spaces indicate existing car parking spaces
- The turquoise blue areas indicate the proposed additional parking spaces.
- The hatched orange spaces indicate the accessible parking spaces
- The solid grey boxes indicate the proposed minibus parking spaces
- The mottled grey areas indicate new areas of asphalt
- The turquoise blue areas with green dots indicate the EV charging points

The parking, access and drop off provision would allow students to be picked up and dropped off clear of the highway within the safety of the school site. It is considered this would have a beneficial impact on the congestion and on-street parking on Bromfords Drive and surrounding residential streets.

The parking for the existing 171 pupils is provided at a ratio of 1 space per 4.6 pupils. The increased parking proposed for the 25 pupil increase represents provision at a ratio of 1 space per 1.3 pupils.

A Framework School Travel Plan (FTSP) was submitted in support of the application. A FTSP is essentially a series of initiatives that are introduced to provide staff, parents and pupils with an enhanced range of transport opportunities.

However, as a SEND school, the Travel Plan would typically be focussed on altering the travel habits and behaviours of staff and employees as a majority of pupils would be driven to school due to their specific circumstances. Additionally, due to the specialist teaching expertise required it is recognised that the teaching and care staff are likely to originate from a significantly wider area and as such may be less likely to be able to utilise sustainable means to access the school.

It is also recognised that cycling may not be considered a suitable form of transport for most of the pupils at the school it could form a viable option for staff. Five cycle parking spaces are currently provided at the school, mainly for use by staff.

The principal aim of the FSTP is to help reduce car usage and increase the use of public transport, walking and cycling.

A Construction Management Plan was submitted in support of the application. The construction of the proposed 2 storey building would utilise off-site construction wherever possible, to reduce disruption for local residents. There would not be any deliveries at school peak times. Car parking for site staff, workforce and visitors would be within the site construction compound within the school site.

The Highway Authority has not raised an objection to the proposed development. The increase in car parking spaces is welcomed; however, it has recommended that the existing number of cycle parking spaces is increased by 11 to 16 to help promote sustainable travel options and accommodate the additional pupil and associated staffing numbers.

The submitted School Travel Plan has been reviewed by the County's Co-ordinator and a number of amendments have been suggested which include a modal shift target for staff as well as pupils; the encouragement of car sharing between staff and the provision of pedestrian road safety lessons for pupils.

## F IMPACT ON NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### Arboriculture

A Tree Survey was submitted in support of the application. No trees would be removed to facilitate the proposed development.

The proposed buildings would be outside the root protection areas (RPAs) of retained trees on site. No impacts are therefore anticipated from the construction of the buildings.

The majority of new hard surfacing would be outside the RPAs of retained trees. A small section of new temporary pathway would be installed on the eastern side of the existing swimming pool building. Some pruning works would be required; however, it is not considered that there would be any long term impact on the visual amenity or health of the adjacent tree.

A no-dig porous footpath solution is proposed for the temporary pathway. This would avoid the need for any excavation thereby protecting the roots of the adjacent tree.

The survey considers that the impacts to retained trees would be minimal.

The County's Arboriculturalist has raised no objection to the proposed development. The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been reviewed. It has stated that an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan would be required to ensure that appropriate working methods and protection are in place throughout the scheme to ensure retained trees are not impacted by the proposed development.

### Ecology

The existing temporary classrooms and an existing garage building proposed for removal were assessed for bat potential. The buildings were inspected and found to have negligible bat roost potential.

The existing Oriel building which is proposed to be extended was also inspected. Again the inspection concluded it has negligible bat roost potential.

Trees on site were also inspected. Only one tree was considered to have low potential to support roosting bats due to thick ivy coverage. However, as this tree is to be retained on site no further surveys were considered necessary.

The proposal would result in the loss of approximately 300m<sup>2</sup> of modified grassland to the relocated library bus and new soft landscaping. There would also be a loss of 800m<sup>2</sup> of sparsely vegetated land to the proposed two storey building and associated proposed hard and soft landscaping.

An existing temporary access road would be removed post-construction and seeded with an Emorsgate EM2 standard meadow mixture. This would create approximately 1,050m<sup>2</sup> of new 'other neutral grassland'. It would be richer in its diversity of wildflowers than the existing modified grassland habitat provided it is managed and a minor positive impact is expected from the proposed change in habitat.

Proposed enhancement measures include the provision of one or more planters around the new building. A native wildflower seed mix or pollinator friendly species is recommended.

The provision of one or more log piles in the retained woodland area is recommended to provide winter refuge for small mammals, amphibians and reptiles.

It is also recommended that at least one 'swift style' bird box is incorporated into the fabric of the proposed new building. The installation of a minimum of 3no. bird boxes and 1no. bat box on trees around the site is also recommended.

The County's Ecologist has raised no objection to the proposed development. It considers that the site is of low ecological value, however, some risk to Great Crested Newt, Common Toad, hedgehog and nesting birds is expected, as well as a requirement for compensation of a large area of modified grassland and sparsely vegetated land.

The submitted Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA) has been reviewed together with the Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool. It is satisfied that sufficient ecological information has been provided.

The County's Ecologist has stated that the mitigation measures identified in the EIA should be secured by a condition and implemented in full to conserve and enhance protected and Priority species.



It is noted that the Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool demonstrates that a total gain of 0.11 habitat units (2.38%) increase would be achieved. This would allow the County Council to demonstrate net gains for biodiversity as set out in the NPPF.

The proposed bespoke biodiversity enhancements set out in the EIA are also supported. It is recommended that these measures and provision of other neutral grassland should be outlined within a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy and secured by condition. Subject to the imposition of the proposed conditions it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable.

### Landscape

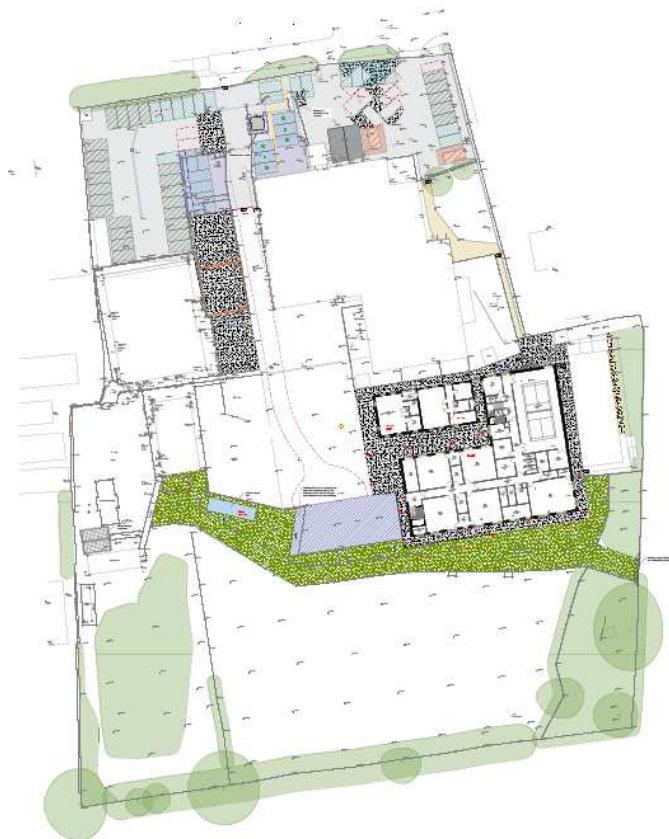
A Landscape Masterplan was submitted as part of the application.

The existing grassland around the proposed new building would be regraded and reseeded with Standard General Purpose Meadow Mixture.

The hard surfaced areas around the proposed new building and Oriel Building extension would comprise of asphalt.

It is proposed to extend the existing MUGA pitch by 2m to the west to replace the 2m lost for a new pathway adjacent to the proposed building.

### Extract from Drawing Number 4482-LAN-ZZ-XX-DR-L-1001 P11 – Landscape Masterplan



The County's Landscape Advisor has raised no objection in principle to the proposed development. It considers that an opportunity to soften views of the new building from adjacent residential properties has been missed.

Whilst the submitted landscape masterplan provides an indication of the proposed layout and landscape scheme it is recommended that more detailed hard and soft landscape information is submitted by the imposition of appropriate conditions.

It has also commented that that rationalisation of the car parking area is proposed which would remove some areas of existing planting and loose stone mulches areas. It considers that the provision of planting/soft landscaping could soften the visual appearance, provide shade and a permeable surface to reduce rainwater runoff and improve biodiversity on site.

It is also noted that the existing MUGA is to be extended to the west to balance the loss to the east. It is recommended that an opportunity to 'square off' the area be taken.

It is also recommended that clear access route to the relocated library bus should be provided.

## G IMPACT ON HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

An Archaeological desk-based assessment was submitted in support of the application.

The Assessment has concluded that evidence indicates that there is a low potential of finding archaeological deposits within the site. The evidence indicates a surviving medieval landscape within the present settlement pattern; however, it is likely that the site remained as agricultural land during this period.

The potential for surviving deposits is further reduced by the amount of development work that has already occurred within the site.

The evidence suggests that there is low potential for any surviving archaeological deposits to be present on the site within the area of proposed development.

Historical and cartographic research has indicated that the site was used as agricultural land outside the settlement of Wickford, until the twentieth century. During the late twentieth century the site was developed into a school to support the growing residential housing within Wickford.

The playing field to the south of the present building which is relatively undisturbed, may contain archaeological deposits, however, the evidence from the desk-based assessment suggests that the potential is low.

The County's Historic Environment Advisor has commented that the desk-based assessment of the site has been reviewed and the Historic Environment Record checked. The conclusion of the submitted archaeological desk-based assessment is supported. There is evidence of modern disturbance on the site since its initial

construction. Therefore, based on the present evidence it is not considered there would be any significant impact on below ground archaeological deposits.

## **H FLOOD RISK**

The site is within Flood Zone 1. A site specific Flood Risk Assessment and drainage information was submitted in support of the application.

The Assessment concludes that the proposed development has been assessed for the risk to the site from fluvial and surface water flooding in accordance with the guidelines of the NPPF.

Assessment has also been made of the impact of the proposed development on the existing floodplain storage and of the risk of pluvial flooding from storm water contribution from the development exacerbating downstream flooding.

The proposed development lies within Flood Zone 1 and is not considered to be a risk from fluvial flooding. The site has also been assessed for overland surface water flooding and sufficient mitigation put in place for the minor risk determined. Other sources of flooding have been assessed and found to pose no threat to development on the site. The proposals do not affect flood storage within the floodplain, nor will the proposals cause any surface water flooding – all hardstanding areas have been accounted for and drained by gravity to the desired point of discharge. The proposed method of surface water drainage by controlled discharge to an Anglian Water adopted surface water sewer is considered to comply with current national and local policies. Anglian Water has been consulted on the proposed drainage strategy and their pre-development report was appended to the FRA confirming acceptance of the principles proposed. It is considered that the level of risk to flooding to and from the proposed development is of an acceptable level and in keeping with current policy.

The Local Lead Flood Authority has raised no objection to the proposed development subject to conditions.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

It is considered that there is an identified need for the proposed removal of existing temporary accommodation at the school and the construction of a standalone two storey building and extension to the existing Oriel building and this should be given great weight in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF.

The key considerations are the acceptability of the principle of such development in the Green Belt, the location and design of the standalone building and the impact on the amenity of the nearest residential properties.

In terms of the principle of development, whilst the site is allocated for Green Belt purposes in the adopted Local Plan, the site is an established special needs school site. This factor, coupled with Government advice in respect of the provision of a wide range of high-quality educational opportunities and the identified need for SEND school places in the area, which together with the limited impact of the proposal on the openness and strategic function of the Green Belt in

this location are considered to represent the very special circumstances required to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

The layout and design of the proposed buildings is considered appropriate for the school site. It is considered it would take account of its surroundings and provide a focal point for the school. Subject to conditions, the development would be in compliance with Policy BAS BE12.

The proposed building would also provide environmental efficiencies.

The development proposes ecological enhancements and new hard and soft landscaping is also proposed.

The development is not considered to have unacceptable impacts on privacy, overlooking, security, noise and disturbance, pollution, daylight and sunlight. It is considered that subject to proposed conditions, amenity would be protected in accordance with Policy BAS BE12.

There are not considered to be any reasons for refusal related to traffic and highway impact.

Finally, the environmental objective of the NPPF is considered to have been met, resulting in a 'sustainable development' for which there is a presumption in favour. The development would also provide the necessary facilities to support sustainable communities and would be accessible and compatible with the character and needs of the local community.

## **9. RECOMMENDED**

That pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiry of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: *To comply with section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).*

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the details of the application dated 22 June 2023 and validated on 22 June 2023 together with Drawing Numbers:

- CASTL-IW-XX-XX-DR-A-2403 P2 – Site Location Plan – 22/06/23
- CASTL-IW-NB-00-DR-A-2500 P5 – New Block GF Plan – 22/06/23
- CASTL-IW-NB-01-DR-A-2501 P5 – New Block FF Plan – 22/06/23
- CASTL-IW-NB-RF-DR-A-2502 P5 – New Block Roof Plan – 22/06/23
- CASTL-IW-EB-XX-DR-A-2520 P3 – Extension Block Drawings - 14/06/23
- CASTL-IW-EB-XX-DR-A-2523 P4 – Extension Block Elevations – 31.07.23

- CASTL-IW-NB-XX-DR-A-2503 P6 – New Block Elevations – 14/07/23
- CASTL-IW-XX-XX-DR-A-2400 P4 – Proposed Site Plan – 22/06/23
- CASTL-IW-XX-XX-VS-A-2402 P4 – Proposed Site AXO – 22/06/23
- CASTL-IW-XX-XX-DR-A-2504 P2 – New Block Sections – 03/03/23
- CASTL-IW-XX-XX-DR-A-2201 P1 – Existing Oriel Block – 14/04/23
- 2304-799\_001 Rev D – Engineering Layout to New Building and Extension -21.04.2023
- CASTL-IW-XX-XX-VS-A-2300 P3 – Visuals 1 – 22/06/23
- CASTL-IW-XX-XX-VS-A-2301 P3 – Visuals 2 – 22/06/23
- CASTL-IW-XX-XX-VS-A-2302 P1 – Visuals 3 – 22/06/23
- 4482-LAN-ZZ-XX-DR-L-1002 PO4 – External Play Spaces – 29.06.2023
- 4482-LAN-ZZ-XX-DR-L-1001 P11 – Landscape Masterplan – 29.06.2023

And in accordance with any non-material amendments as may be subsequently approved in writing by the County Planning Authority, except as varied by the following conditions:

Reason: *For the avoidance of doubt as to the nature of the development hereby permitted, to ensure development is carried out in accordance with the approved application details, to ensure the development is carried out with the minimum harm to the local environment and in accordance with Policy RS1 and Policy BAS BE12 of the Basildon Local Plan 2007.*

3. Demolition and construction work and associated activities shall only be carried out between:
  - 08:00 and 18:00 hours Monday to Friday
  - 08:00 and 13:00 on Saturday

With no working on Sundays or Bank or Public Holidays other than internal works not audible from outside the site boundary.

Reason: *In the interests of limiting the effects on local amenity, to control the impacts of the development and in accordance with Policy BAS BE12 of the Basildon Local Plan 2007*

4. The Rating Noise Level from the external plant associated with the development hereby permitted, when assessed in accordance with BS4142:2014 shall not exceed the representative background sound level at the nearest noise sensitive properties.

Reason: *In the interest of residential amenity and to comply with Policy BAS BE12 of the Basildon Local Plan 2007.*

5. The obscure glazing to the first floor windows to the northern elevation of the development hereby permitted shall be provided as shown on Drawing CASTL-IW-NB-XX-DR-A-2503 P5 – 22.06/23.

Reason: *In the interest of residential amenity and to comply with Policy BAS BE12 of the Basildon Local Plan 2007.*

6. No development above ground level shall take place until a scheme of soft landscaping (drawn to a scale of not less than 1:200) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The soft landscaping details shall include planting plans, written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities. The scheme shall be implemented within the first available planting season (October to March inclusive) following the commencement of the development hereby permitted in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter in accordance with Condition 7 of this permission.

Reason: *To assimilate the development into its surroundings and protect the character and appearance of the area and to comply with Policy BAS BE12 of the Basildon Local Plan 2007.*

7. Any tree or shrub forming part of a landscaping scheme approved in connection with the development (under Condition 6 of this permission) that dies, is damaged, diseased or removed within the duration of 5 years during and after the completion of the development shall be replaced during the next available planting season (October to March inclusive) with an appropriate species of tree or shrub the details of which shall have received the prior written approval of the County Planning Authority.

Reason: *In the interest of the amenity of the local area, to ensure the development is adequately screened and to comply with Policy BAS BE12 of the Basildon Local Plan 2007.*

8. No development above ground level shall take place until details of a hard landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The details shall include proposed finished levels and contours showing earthworks and mounding surfacing materials; means of enclosure; car parking layouts; other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas; hard surfacing materials; minor artefacts and structures (for example furniture, play equipment, refuse and/or other storage units, signs, lighting and similar features), proposed and existing functional services above and below ground (for example drainage, power, communications cables and pipelines, indicating lines, manholes, supports and other technical features), retained historic landscape features and proposals for restoration where relevant. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the beneficial occupation of the development hereby permitted.

Reason: *To assimilate the development into its surroundings and to protect the character and appearance of the area and to comply with Policy BAS BE 12 of the Basildon Local Plan 2007.*

9. Prior to beneficial occupation of the development hereby permitted, the car parking area as shown on Drawing Number: 4482-LAN-ZZ-XX-DR-L-1001 P11 Landscape Masterplan dated 29.06.2023 shall be constructed and laid

out as approved. The electric vehicle charging points within the approved car park area, as shown on Drawing Number: 4482-LAN-ZZ-XX-DR-L-1001 P11 Landscape Masterplan dated 29.06.2023 shall, for the avoidance of doubt, be installed ready for use at the point of beneficial occupation. The parking areas shall be permanently retained for parking and shall be used for no other purpose.

Reason: *To provide a safe level of parking on-site, in the interests of highways safety and to comply with the Parking Standards adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in September 2009.*

10. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (Ref: 2304-799 Rev A dated June 2023 prepared by Ingent Consultants) and the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:

- Limiting the discharge from the site to 2.3l/s
- Provide attenuation storage (including locations on layout plan) for all storm events up to and including the 1:100 year storm event inclusive of 45% climate change

The mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the timing/phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may be subsequently agreed, in writing, by the County Planning Authority.

Reason: *To prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory storage of/disposal of surface water from the site; to ensure the effective treatment of surface water runoff to prevent pollution and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*

11. No development shall take place until a scheme to minimise the risk of offsite flooding caused by surface water run-off and groundwater during construction works and prevent pollution has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented as approved.

Reason: *Construction may lead to excess water being discharged from the site. If dewatering takes place to allow for construction to take place below groundwater level, this will cause additional water to be discharged. Furthermore, the removal of topsoils during construction may limit the ability of the site to intercept rainfall and may lead to increased runoff rates. To mitigate increased flood risk to the surrounding area during construction there needs to be satisfactory storage of/disposal of surface water and groundwater which needs to be agreed before commencement of the development; construction may also lead to polluted water being allowed to leave the site. Methods for preventing or mitigating this should be proposed and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*

12. Prior to beneficial occupation of the development hereby permitted, a maintenance plan detailing the maintenance arrangements, including who

is responsible for different elements of the surface water drainage system and the maintenance activities/frequencies, has been submitted to the County Planning Authority for review and approval in writing.

Reason: *To ensure appropriate maintenance arrangements are put in place to enable the surface water drainage system to function as intended and to ensure mitigation against flood risk as failure to provide the above required information prior to occupation may result in the installation of a system that is not properly maintained and may increase flood risk or pollution hazard from the site and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*

13. All mitigation measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Ecological Impact Assessment Report (Lanpro, June 2023) as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the County Planning Authority prior to determination.

Reason: *To conserve protected and Priority species and allow the County Council to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species) and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*

14. Prior to commencement of development, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected and Priority species (prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority.

The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

- a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;
- b) Detailed designs or products descriptions to achieve stated objectives;
- c) Locations, orientations and heights of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans (where relevant);
- d) Persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures; and
- e) Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance

The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: *To demonstrate measurable biodiversity net gains and to allow the County Planning Authority to discharge its duties under the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).*



15. No works or development shall take place until a scheme for the protection of trees to be retained has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The scheme shall include:
- a) Details and positions of the Ground Protection Zones in accordance with section 9.3 of Page 32 of 59 BS:5837
  - b) Details and positions of Tree Protection Barriers identified separately where required for different phases of construction work (e.g. demolition, construction, hard landscaping) in accordance with section 9.2 of BS:5837). The Tree Protection Barriers shall be erected prior to each construction phase commencing and remain in place and undamaged for the duration of that phase. No works shall take place on the next phase until the Tree Protection Barriers are repositioned for that phase.
  - c) Details and positions of the Construction Exclusion Zones in accordance with section 9 of BS:5837
  - d) Details of the working methods to be employed for the installation of drive and paths within the RPAs of retained trees in accordance with the principles of “No-Dig” construction
  - e) Details of the working methods to be employed for the access and use of heavy, large, difficult to manoeuvre plant (including cranes and their loads, dredging machinery, concrete pumps, piling rigs, etc) on site
  - f) Details of the working methods to be employed for the site logistics and storage, including an allowance for slopes, water courses and enclosures, with particular regard to ground compaction and phytotoxicity.

Reason: *To ensure that retained trees are protected from damage in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*

16. No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained trees' branches, stems or roots be pruned.

Reason: *In the interest of the amenity of the local area and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*

17. No development or any preliminary groundworks shall take place until:
- a) All trees to be retained during the construction works have been protected by fencing of the ‘HERAS’ type. The fencing shall be erected around the trees and positioned from the trees in accordance with BS:5837 “Trees in Relation to Construction”; and
  - b) Notices have been erected on the fencing stating “Protected Area (no operations within fenced area)”. Notwithstanding the above, no materials shall be stored or activity shall take place within the area enclosed by the fencing. No alteration, removal or repositioning of the fencing shall take place during the construction period without the prior written consent of the County Planning Authority.

Reason: *In the interest of visual amenity, to ensure protection for the existing natural environment and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*

Informative

Prior to the first occupation of the development, the applicant, in association with Essex County Council's School Travel Planning Advisor, shall agree the frequency of reviewing and, where necessary, updating the School Travel Plan. To this end, the School Travel Planning Advisor will provide assistance in identifying measures that should help mitigate the overall impact of the proposal.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Consultation replies  
Representations

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## **THE CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND SPECIES REGULATIONS 2017 (AS AMENDED)**

The proposed development would not be located adjacent to a European site.

Therefore, it is considered that an Appropriate Assessment under Regulation 63 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) is not required.

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## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

This report only concerns the determination of an application for planning permission. It does however take into account any equality implications. The recommendation has been made after consideration of the application and supporting documents, the development plan, government policy and guidance, representations and all other material planning considerations as detailed in the body of the report.

**STATEMENT OF HOW THE LOCAL AUTHORITY HAS WORKED WITH THE APPLICANT IN A POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE MANNER:** In determining this planning application, the County Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application by liaising with consultees, respondents and the applicant/agent and discussing changes to the proposal where considered necessary or appropriate. This approach has been taken positively and proactively in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

## **LOCAL MEMBER NOTIFICATION**

BASILDON – Wickford Crouch  
BASILDON – Wickford Crouch