

<b>App.No:</b> 140288 (PPP)	<b>Decision Due Date:</b> 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2014	<b>Ward:</b> Meads
<b>Officer:</b> Leigh Palmer	<b>Site visit date:</b> 25 March 2014	<b>Type:</b> Planning Permission
<b>Site Notice(s) Expiry date:</b> 11 April 2014		
<b>Neighbour Con Expiry:</b> 03 April 2014		
<b>Weekly list Expiry:</b> 03 April 2014		
<b>Press Notice(s):</b> 01 April 2014		
<b>Over 8/13 week reason:</b> Brought to Planning Committee within statutory timeframe.		
<b>Location:</b> St Andrews School, 72 Meads Street, Eastbourne.		
<b>Proposal:</b> Erection of a new sports hall (including changing facilities. WCs, office, storage and dance studio) located on existing playing field.		
<b>Applicant:</b> Mr Stephen Henderson-Reid		
<b>Recommendation:</b> Approve conditionally and completion of Unilateral Undertaking Relating to employment initiatives		

### **Executive Summary:**

Application proposes a new sports hall complex providing essential sporting accommodation for St Andrews School.

The application has been the subject of significant pre application discussion including Public Consultation event, the Councils Design Review Panel, Conservation Area Advisory Panel and officers.

It is clear that the sports hall complex would meet the applicants sporting needs, whilst freeing up existing school buildings for enhanced curricular activities.

The building is located sensitively, separated sufficiently from residential properties to minimise impacts; whilst it is acknowledged there may be impacts during the construction period these are likely to be short lived and not substantial to substantiate a refusal.

In addition it is accepted that with of building of this scale and size it will be visible from a number of vantage points and as such both long and short range view of the site will alter, however the design and size of the sport hall complex is considered acceptable, and the proposal will not materially impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area; therefore it is recommended that planning permission is granted.

## **Relevant Planning Policies:**

### Conservation Area

Meads Conservation Area

### National Planning Policy Framework

1. Building a strong, competitive economy
4. Promoting sustainable transport
7. Requiring good design
8. Promoting healthy communities
11. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan Policies 2013

B1 Spatial Development Strategy and Distribution  
B2 Creating Sustainable Neighbourhoods  
C11 Meads Neighbourhood Policy  
D10 Historic Environment  
D10A Design

### Saved Borough Plan Policies 2007

UHT1 – Design of New Development  
UHT4 – Visual Amenity  
UHT15 – Protection of Conservation Areas  
HO20: Residential Amenity  
LCF18: Extension to Educational Establishments

## **Site Description:**

St Andrews School lies within the heart of the Meads area of the town and commands a significant campus containing a range of buildings of differing age and architectural styles along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site which lay adjacent to an expanse of recreational space (both hard surface and turf).

The application site forms part of the open space of St Andrews School. The position of the proposed sports hall is to the south side of the playing fields and adjacent to the rising ground boundary to the site and would not result in the loss of space used for active recreation/sporting activity.

To the rear of the proposed sports hall the land rises to surrounding streets; this rising ground level contains a mature belt of trees and shrubs.

There are numerous access points to the school campus with the main one being directly off Darley Road.

## **Relevant Planning History:**

There is an extensive planning history for this school site, with application reference 130756 *Erection of a new sports hall (to include changing facilities, WC's, office, storage and dance studio) on existing playing field.* Being withdrawn in order to secure an improved design.

## **Proposed development:**

The scheme proposes a new sports hall complex containing the main sports hall building (4 x badminton court) 39m X 21m x 9.2m high; this building forms the bulk of the new complex and is capped in a flat roof.

To the front/side of the main building is the service and support accommodation including reception/office, changing facilities, plant and equipment store and dance studio. This is a 'L' shape range of buildings which are all single storey but incorporating contrasting heights with the main entrance and the dance studio forming bookends to this range of buildings.

The height of the main building is approximately 2.5m above the ridge line of the existing adjacent pavilion building and predominantly set below the ground level at the boundary of the site.

In order to reduce the scale of the development the scheme uses the existing rising ground in this part of the site and sets the bulk of the building into the ground. The building is set into the existing bank by approximately 3m.

The scheme proposes a new vehicular roadway (surface details to be controlled via condition) across the school campus to the new building; this access will facilitate access for emergency & service vehicles, it would also provide access to disabled parking spaces adjacent to the building.

No trees are proposed to be removed as a result of this application, there are some works to trees and tree protection measures proposed.

The external materials are proposed to be:-

- Flat roof : membrane grey in colour
- Main sports hall : Vertical Timber boarding
- Plinth to sports hall : facing block work
- Single storey accommodation : slate effect panelling
- Windows : Powder coated aluminium
- Rainwater goods : hidden gutters within flat roof and galvanised steel hoppers and down pipes.

## **Consultations:**

### Design Review Panel

The scheme at pre application stage was reported twice to the Design Review Panel, each time the application was amended in an attempt to meet the panels' requirements. These changes include a rationalisation in the palette of materials used in the external appearance, introduction of articulation and fenestration where appropriate and the utilisation of the rising land level and sink the building into the ground.

### Public Consultation:-

The scheme at pre application stage formed the subject of a Public Consultation Event where a number of issues were raised. Answers/comments to the main issues raised are outlined below:-

- There will be no increase in student or staff numbers as a result of this development.
- Outside of school hours parking spaces will be available for sports hall visitors
- Outside school hours visitors are likely to be used by/for badminton and cricket nets
- Scheme has been modified to bring more interest into the building to improve the visual impacts.

### Conservation Advisory Committee

The Group raised no objections in principle to the provision of a sports hall, and considered that it would be an improvement to the facilities and therefore good for the town.

The Group was pleased to note that there have been negotiations with officers and that the proposed building had been dug down into the ground, but remain concerned that the design had not gone as far as it could to ensure that it would blend in with the environment and the conservation area.

The overall height is still of concern, and the Group suggested there should be some relief to the boxy shape and bland façade, and that a green roof should be considered.

### External

ESCC Archaeological Advisor:- No objections subject to conditions requiring further investigation.

Environment Agency:- No objections subject to conditions over unsuspected contamination and foul and surface water drainage.

### Internal:

Specialist Advisor Design and Conservation :- It is recommended that although the provision of a sports hall, which must be necessarily approx 9m high internal volume, is acceptable in principle its height and street presence is considered dominant. The siting of it in plan is acceptable. Any building should respond to the topography and character of the conservation area to which it is sited

Specialist Advisor Planning Policy:- no objections to this application from a planning policy perspective.

### Neighbour Representations:

Those residents who have commented on proposal have commented in the main the following issues:-

- Construction traffic conflict with school drop off
- Area has parking problems, heavy congestion locally
- Highway conflict when large vehicles are looking to pass each other in Darley Road
- Alternative construction access should be sought.

## **Appraisal:**

### Principle of development:

There is no objection in principle to the erection of the sports hall complex within the school campus.

The applicants state that the school does not currently have a dedicated sports hall, only a gymnasium that also serves as a school hall. This does not meet the school's sporting requirements and it would not be possible to improve the existing facilities it is considered therefore that the provision of an intensive use facility in the form of indoor sports space would benefit the wider school ambitions

It is accepted that there has been significant pre-application discussion which has led to the location and design of the proposed building, and as a result the development would not have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of surrounding residents or the character of the conservation area in accordance with policies of the Core Strategy 2013, and saved policies of the Borough Plan 2007.

There are no objections in principle to a sports hall being located within the school campus.

### Impact of proposed development on amenity of adjoining occupiers and surrounding area:

Visual Impact: It is considered that the sports hall complex is located sensitively having regard to the occupiers of adjoining/adjacent properties. Given the size of the new development it will have an impact upon both long and short range views to and through the site. It is accepted that the loss of a view is not a material planning consideration, notwithstanding this however the building has been set into the ground as much as is practicable to do so and will be viewed against the backdrop of existing buildings and wooded rising ground.

The operational use of the sports hall complex should not result in any loss of residential amenity through noise and activity disturbance given the distances involved.

Car parking and Access:- It is accepted that there will be impacts upon residential amenity and access to and around the site during the construction period; this is common with large construction projects. The applicants are proposing to use Darley Road access for all construction and operational traffic. It is considered that a refusal based on this relatively short lived impact could not be substantiated.

The operational use of the facility would take place primarily during school opening times by existing school role, as such there should not be any greater demand for parking. In addition if the sports hall develops their extra curricular activity to non school activity outside of school times then there would be the potential to use hard surface areas within the school campus for informal parking. This should mitigate indiscriminate on-street parking in the locality.

### Design issues and Impact on character and setting of a conservation area:

Good design is indivisible from good planning and seeks to ensure that planning decisions realise developments that improve the overall quality of an area, and strike an appropriate balance between innovative design contextual responses that respect local distinctiveness, as identified in NPPF (paragraph 58; 131). It is considered that the scheme has been through an iterative design process and has evolved into the scheme as submitted. It is considered that the proposal makes a positive attempt to resolve a number of design issues as outlined below.

The proposed sports hall complex is the amalgamation of cubic forms and their configuration is a result of the internal uses. There is a sporting need for the main sports-hall not to have natural light so this element of the building is not punctuated by window openings, however there are large areas of glazing incorporated into the main entrance to the complex and also the dance studio. The elements of glazing not only provide an architectural reference point for the entrance to the building but also provides visual interest and interaction between the sports hall complex and the rest of the site.

The application has responded to requests of the DRP, CAAG and the Specialist Advisor Conservation by setting the building as deep into the ground as is practicable to do so without the need for significant engineering works to gain access to the complex (disabled ramps and chair lifts for example).

The issue of installing a green roof (request from CAAG) has been put to the applicant and has been dismissed to deliver it over this size of roof would make the scheme unviable and therefore would not proceed.

The external materials are to be controlled via planning condition, it has been a conscious decision to limit the range of materials used so that the building has some unity in its external appearance. The timber cladding is not proposed to be stained so will weather over time and will settle against the setting of mature trees to the rear. In addition the contrasting materials to the plinth and single storey building will reference the ancillary/supporting accommodation.

It is accepted that the proposed building is large and is a manifestation of the internal sporting requirements, it is considered that the scale and bulk of the building has been mitigated by its sensitive location and both the long and short range views will be seen against the backdrop of the existing buildings and mature tree belt within the school campus. Given this it is considered that the proposal will have an impact upon the site and surrounding conservation area however it is considered that the operational needs of the school for this accommodation outweigh the harm caused by way of visual intrusion.

It is clear therefore that a refusal based on the impacts upon the visual character of the wider Meads Conservation Area could not be substantiated.

The detailing of the new access to the site would be controlled via planning condition, notwithstanding this it is considered that the routing of the access-way, its design and appearance would not give rise to any significant impacts upon the character and appearance of the conservation area.

#### Impacts on trees:

There are no tree related issues connected with this application.

**Human Rights Implications:**

The impacts of the proposal have been assessed as part of the application process. Consultation with the community has been undertaken and the impact on local people is set out above. The human rights considerations have been taken into account fully in balancing the planning issues; and furthermore the proposals will not result in any breach of the Equalities Act 2010.

This development would enhance the potential for disabled people to play an active recreational part in the school curriculum.

**Conclusion:**

It is considered the sports hall complex would meet the applicants sporting needs, whilst freeing up existing buildings for enhanced curricular activities.

The building is located sensitively, separated sufficiently from residential properties to minimise impacts; whilst it is acknowledged there may be impacts during the construction period these are likely to be short lived and not substantial to substantiate a refusal.

The design and size of the sport hall complex is considered acceptable, and the proposal will not materially impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area; therefore it is recommended that planning permission is granted.

**Recommendation: Approve conditionally. and completion of Unilateral Undertaking Relating to employment initiatives****Conditions:**

- 1) Time for commencement
- 2) In accordance with approved plans
- 3) Scheme for the implementation of archaeological works
- 4) Use shall not be brought into use until the site investigation and post archaeological investigation assessment has been supplied
- 5) Unsuspected contamination is encountered
- 6) Foul and surface water disposal
- 7) Tree protection
- 8) Samples of external materials
- 9) Construction method statement (including information over excavated spoil and routing and locaton for its disposal.
- 10) Access way details location and external finishing
- 11) Car parking layout including disabled parking spaces

**Appeal:**

Should the applicant appeal the decision the appropriate followed, taking into account the criteria set by the Planning Inspectorate, is considered to be **written representations**.