

## Development Control Committee

<b>Report Title:</b>	8 no. class base standalone block including toilet facilities, group room and all associated landscaping. Hall extension to north boundary of main school. Coupals Primary School, Chalkstone Way, Haverhill
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	19 October 2016
<b>Lead Councillor(s):</b>	Councillor Peter Beer
<b>Local Councillor(s):</b>	Councillor Tony Brown
<b>Director:</b>	Geoff Dobson, Director of Resource Management
<b>Assistant Director or Head of Service:</b>	John Pitchford, Head of Planning
<b>Author:</b>	Mark Barnard, Planning Officer (County Development). Telephone: 01473 264755

### Brief summary of report

1. It is proposed to construct a detached two-storey building at the rear of Coupals Primary School, comprising eight additional classrooms and ancillary accommodation. There would also be an extension to the school dining hall at the front of the building.
2. The accommodation is required to provide for additional pupil numbers resulting from housing growth in the town. The additional classrooms would be brought into use over a four-year period, raising the school's capacity from 270 places in 2016-17 to 420 places by 2021-22.
3. The current school Travel Plan (dated May 2016) proposes a number of initiatives to encourage sustainable modes of travel, including a walking bus, in anticipation of the expansion of the school. The Plan's travel survey shows that 82% of pupils walk to school and only 12% travel by car.
4. An objection has been received from Councillor John Burns, a County, Borough and Town Councillor. He claims the Travel Plan is inaccurate, with no obvious plan to deal with increases in car usage and not providing sustainable travel options.

### Action recommended

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. That planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions.           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The development shall commence within three years of the date of this permission.<br/><i>Reason: Imposed in accordance with Section 91 of the Town &amp; Country Planning Act 1990.</i></li> </ol> </li> </ol> |
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- 2) The development uses and associated activities hereby approved shall only be carried out in accordance with:
- a) The application dated 21 July 2016 and accompanying Planning Application Supporting Statements;
  - b) The approved plans Nos:
    - i) A02-01B Proposed location plan
    - ii) A02-05 Existing hall
    - iii) A02-03C Proposed elevations
    - iv) A02-06 Proposed hall extension
    - v) A02-02B Proposed floor plans
    - vi) L02-01B Landscape plan - external works
    - vii) P2604.1 – 001 Tree constraints
    - viii) P2604.1 – 002 Tree protection

*Reason: To ensure that new development is completed in accordance with submitted details.*

- 3) Within one month of commencement of development, details of both hard and soft landscape works, and implementation programme, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority and these works shall be carried out as approved.

Soft landscaping shall include:

- a) planting plans which provides for native tree and shrub planting, and neutral grassland;
- b) written specifications for remedial works and preparation of soil particularly to remove compaction (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); and
- c) schedules of plants, noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate and implementation programme.

The approved works shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed implementation programme.

Hard landscaping works shall include:

- a) Proposed finished levels or contours;
- b) Means of enclosure;
- c) Car park layouts;
- d) Other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas;
- e) Hard surfacing materials; and
- f) Minor artefacts and structures (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting).

*Reason: To ensure the site is properly planted and in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Development Plan Policies CS3 and CS16.*

- 4) All hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out before any part of the development is occupied or in accordance with the programme agreed with the County Planning Authority and thereafter retained in accordance with the approved details.

*Reason: To ensure the site is properly planted and in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 11 and Development Plan Policies CS3 and CS16.*

- 5) All planting shall be maintained for five years after initial planting has been completed by:
- a) keeping the new planting free from competing grass and weeds. Where herbicides are used, they must be an appropriate "translocated" type;
  - b) replacing any trees and shrubs on a one to one basis each year which are substantially damaged, seriously diseased or dead, with plants of a similar species and size;
  - c) checking, adjusting and repairing all stakes, ties, shelters or fencing used in the scheme;
  - d) removing tree protection no later than five years after planting of any section.

*Reason: To ensure planting is properly maintained and in accordance with Development Plan Policy CS16.*

- 6) The method of protection of trees to be retained on the site shall be carried out in accordance with BS5837 2012 (Trees in Relation to Construction) and retained until construction work has been completed.

*Reason: To ensure trees to be retained are properly protected during the construction period and in accordance with NPPF Section 11 and Development Plan Policies CS3 and CS16.*

- 7) No development shall take place until a Precautionary Method Statement for Biodiversity has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The approved actions, requirements and other measures shall be implemented in their entirety in accordance with the approved Method Statement.

*Reason: In accordance with NPPF Section 11.*

- 8) No development shall take place until samples of all external facing and roofing materials to be used shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

*Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Development Plan Policy CS3.*

- 9) No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for the implementation of:
- a) Parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
  - b) Loading and unloading of plant and materials;
  - c) Storage of plant and materials used in construction and development;
  - d) Erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate;
  - e) Wheel washing facilities;
  - f) Measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction;
  - g) A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works.

*Reason: To minimise the risk of nuisance and inconvenience caused by construction works.*

- 10) No construction work shall take place before 07:30 and after 17:30 hours Monday to Friday, before 08:00 and after 13:00 hours on Saturdays, and not at all on Sundays or Bank Holidays. Noisy activities such as breaking of concrete or cutting of hard materials shall be restricted to Monday to Friday 08:30 to 17:00 hours and Saturdays 08:30 to 13:00 hours.

*Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.*

- 11) All compressors shall be 'noise reduced' models fitted with properly lined and sealed acoustic covers which shall be kept closed when the machines are in use, and all ancillary pneumatic percussive tools shall be fitted with mufflers or silencers of the type recommended by the manufacturers.

*Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.*

- 12) All vehicles and mechanical plant used for the purpose of the Works shall be fitted with effective exhaust silencers and shall be maintained in good and efficient working order so that extraneous noise shall be reduced to a minimum.

*Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.*

- 13) Machines in intermittent use shall be shut down in the intervening periods between work or throttled down to a minimum.

*Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.*

- 14) The new classrooms shall not be occupied until a Travel Plan has been approved in writing by the County Planning Authority. The Travel Plan must include:

- a) a survey of existing arrangements for travel to and from the site for employees, pupils and visitors;
- b) targets for the shift of transport modes into sustainable modes, for all users of the site;
- c) proposals for rectifying failures to meet modal shift targets for a period of two years following the occupation of the building; and
- d) the proposed arrangements for the monitoring of the Travel Plan.

The Travel Plan shall be kept up to date through regular review and shall be available for examination by the County Planning Authority at any time.

*Reason: To encourage sustainable modes of transport and in accordance with Development Plan Policy DM45.*

- 15) Prior to the commencement of development details of secure cycle parking shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing by the County Planning Authority. The approved cycle parking shall be implemented before occupation of the building and thereafter retained.

*Reason: To encourage alternative modes of transport and in accordance with Development Plan Policy DM46.*

- 16) The areas to be provided for storage of Refuse/Recycling bins as shown on Drawing No. L02-01B shall be provided in their entirety before the development is brought into use and shall be retained thereafter and used for no other purposes.

*Reason: To ensure that refuse and recycling bins are not stored on the highway causing obstruction and dangers for other users.*

- 17) The use shall not commence until the areas within the site shown on Drawing No. L02-01B for the purposes of loading/unloading, manoeuvring and parking of vehicles, cycles and scooters has been provided and thereafter those areas shall be retained and used for no other purposes.

*Reason: To ensure that sufficient space for the on-site parking of vehicles, cycles and scooters is provided and maintained where on-street parking and manoeuvring would be detrimental to highway safety.*

### **Reason for recommendation**

- 6. The new classroom block would relate well to the existing building and would not result in harm to visual or residential amenity. The extension to the school hall would also be in keeping. Travel issues would be addressed through a revised school Travel Plan to be approved before occupation of any of the new floor space.

### **Alternative options**

- 7. To refuse consent or approve with alternative conditions.

## **Main body of report**

### **Site**

8. Coupals Primary School is located within a residential suburb to the east of Haverhill town centre. The school is surrounded by medium-density housing with much tree planting and areas of open space. Access is from Chalkstone Way, a distributor road.
9. The school was built in 1982. It is single storey, of white brick with a metal-clad roof. The school site slopes down from the road frontage, and the main building is set lower than Chalkstone Way, reducing its visual impact. Behind the school building is an area of hard play and, at a lower level, the school playing field. There is a good deal of boundary planting comprising trees and shrubs, providing an effective visual screen.
10. To the south of the main building is a temporary classroom unit occupied by Stepping Stones Pre-School. This was sited here in summer 2016 and replaced accommodation in the main school. It has planning permission until January 2021.

### **Proposal**

11. It is proposed to construct a two storey annexe building comprising eight classrooms with unisex toilets, storage, three group rooms and a plant room. This would be placed centrally immediately to the rear of the existing building, set just over one metre lower, linked by steps and a ramp. In order to construct the new annexe, an existing detached music room, together with a covered link, would be demolished. Part of the hard play area, and a small part of the playing field, would also be lost.
12. The annexe would be finished in a mix of render and vertical timber cladding. There would be a flat roof covered in single-ply membrane. Windows and doors would be in powder-coated aluminium. The hard play surface would be extended around the rear of the annexe to form a terraced area.
13. It is also proposed to enlarge the school hall, extending it forward of the main building by 3.7m. The extension would be in white brick, in matching style with a flat single-ply membrane roof. The work would require the removal of two small trees.
14. An area of grass adjacent to the vehicular entrance would be hard surfaced to provide an extra nine car parking spaces, making 31 in all. This would require the removal of two minor trees. Additional parking for 14 cycles and 20 scooters would also be provided.
15. A temporary classroom unit close to the school entrance would be removed once the development is complete and the area surfaced for informal play.
16. The landscaping scheme includes replacement tree planting to compensate for those removed.
17. The additional accommodation is required to cater for planned growth in pupil numbers between 2017-18 and 2021-22. From September 2017 the Pupil Admission Number (PAN) for the Reception intake will be published as 60. This will mean that the school's capacity will grow from 270 in 2016-17 to 420 in 2021-22 in increments of 30.

## **Consultations**

### **St Edmundsbury Borough Council**

18. No objections.

### **Haverhill Town Council**

19. No objection, but concerned with safety at drop-off and pick-up times and request that a traffic management scheme is put in place.

### **County Highways**

20. No objection. Recommends conditions covering storage of refuse bins; provision of on-site parking areas; approval of revised Travel Plan, to be submitted within six months of the date of the planning permission.

### **County Flood & Water Engineer**

21. No comment.

### **Local Councillor**

22. Supports the application, but wishes to see a robust Travel Plan and peak time car parking arrangements dealt with by conditions.

## **Representations**

23. As a result of the site notice and notification letters to 36 neighbours, no representations have been received.

24. Councillor John Burns (Suffolk County Councillor for Haverhill Cangle and Borough and Town Councillor for Haverhill East) objects to the application. He draws attention to a number of traffic issues including:

- a) the accuracy of figures in the Travel Plan stating that over 80% of pupils walk to school and just 29 pupils arrive by car. His own observations suggest far higher car usage;
- b) the Travel Plan fails to describe a method to negate the effect of a 100% increase in pupil numbers on traffic on Chalkstone Way;
- c) the Travel Plan makes no mention of the traffic impacts of the Pre-School;
- d) the proposed Great Wilsey development will generate additional traffic going past the school on Chalkstone way, adding to congestion outside the school at peak times;
- e) the requirement that a Travel Plan will not be needed until six months after the expansion has been completed, which is at odds with Travel Plan requirements relating to housing development.

## **Policy**

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

25. Paragraph 72 of the NPPF states that local authorities should 'give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools'.

### **St Edmundsbury Borough Council Joint Development Management Policies**

26. Policy DM2 (Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness) sets out requirements for all development to meet, as appropriate, to achieve high quality design.

27. Policy DM41 (Community Facilities and Services) states that the provision and enhancement of community facilities and services will be permitted where they contribute to the quality of community life and the maintenance of sustainable communities.

### **Comments of Head of Planning**

28. The visual impact of the new classroom block has been kept to a minimum by taking advantage of the fall in ground level across the site, so that although of two storeys, it would be only marginally higher than the main roof over the existing building. The use of a flat roof also minimises its bulk. Building over two storeys would ensure the loss of hard play space and playing field is kept to a minimum. I consider the design to be acceptable.
29. The classroom block would be at least 85m from the nearest residential property. The existing planting on the rear boundaries of the school site would prevent overlooking. For these reasons there would be no material impact on residential amenity.
30. The extension to the school hall follows the design and materials of the existing elevation, and although at the front of the school, its visual impact would be minimal because of the fall in ground level and existing planting.
31. The school Travel Plan was written in May 2016 and contains useful and relevant background information on the school's travel arrangements and needs. The action plan proposes a number of sustainable travel initiatives in anticipation of the expansion of the school. These include a walking bus from East Town Park, which is to be trialled in November 2016; bike ability training for older children; encouragement of car sharing for all users of the site. Taken as a whole, I consider the Travel Plan shows that the school takes its travel responsibilities seriously.
32. The head teacher has confirmed that the travel survey in the Travel Plan was carried out at the end of April 2016, class-by-class by a show of hands, so that all pupils responded. The proportion of pupils walking to school is high, but this may reflect the better weather at the time. The Travel Plan states that the 'vast majority' of pupils come from within catchment, and the surrounding housing has a good network of footpaths.
33. The school's current capacity is 270 places. The additional classrooms would raise capacity to 420 places by 2021-22, an increase of 56%. These figures exclude the pre-school, which has two daily sessions of up to 20 children per session. The later session finishes 30 minutes before the main school, and thus avoids the afternoon peak.
34. Chalkstone Way carries relatively light traffic for a residential distributor road, through traffic being deterred by extensive traffic calming. The potential for increased traffic generated by new development is a matter for consideration when such developments come forward for planning permission. No such application has yet been made for the Great Wilsey development.
35. A condition is proposed for a revised Travel Plan to be approved by the County Planning Authority. This approval is required before occupation of any of the classrooms, not after 100% occupation (which is not due until 2021-22). The present Travel Plan is due for revision in May 2017. This date should enable the proposed condition to be met, as first occupation is due in September 2017.



36. County Highways has no objection to the application.

## **Conclusion**

37. The proposed development is required to serve the planned increase in pupil numbers to 2021-22, and meets current national and local planning policy which in principle supports new educational provision. Its visual impact would be acceptable and there would be no adverse impact on residential amenity.

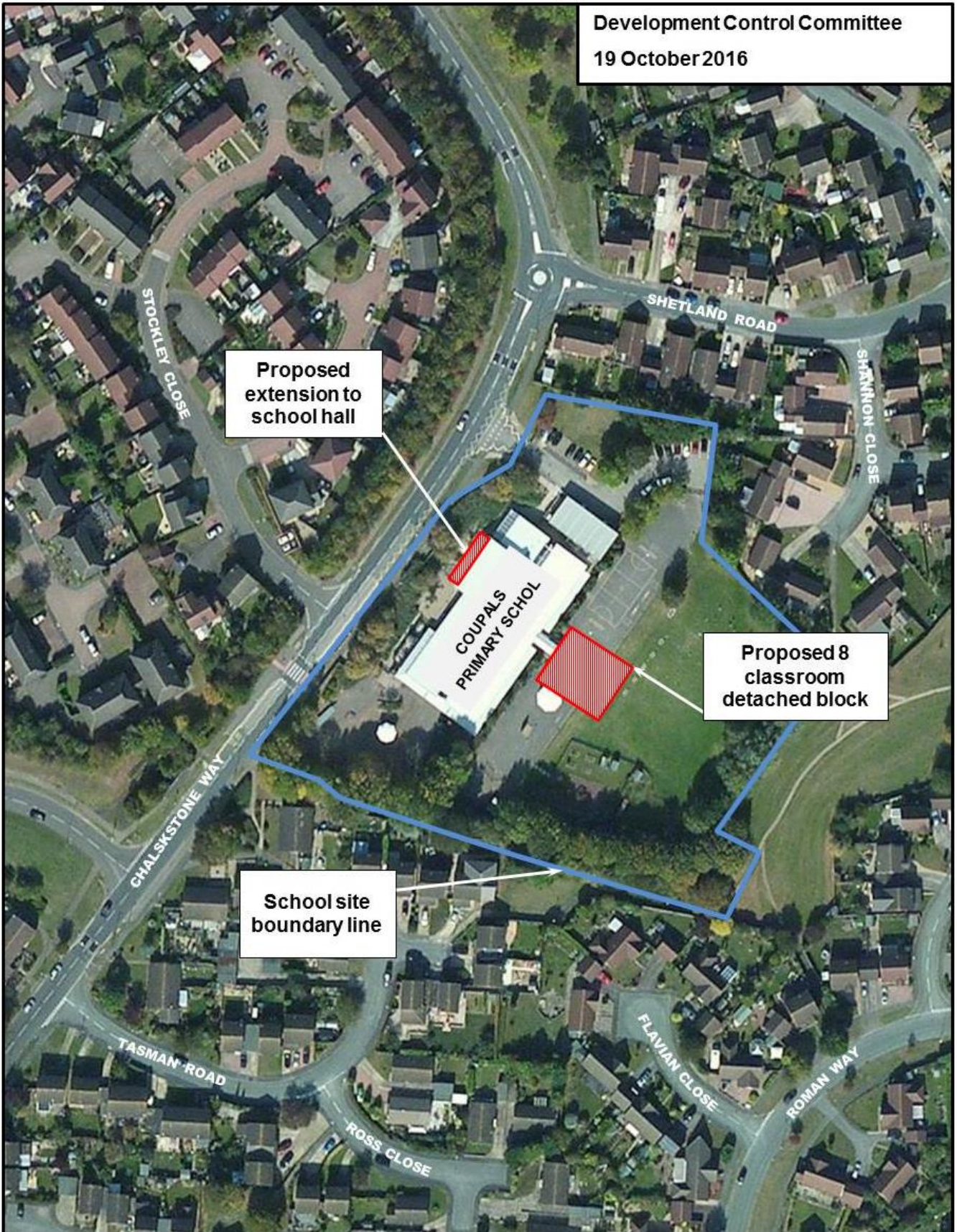
38. The school has already demonstrated a pro-active approach to planning for increased pupil numbers, as well as addressing the travel impacts of the existing school roll. I am therefore satisfied that the impact of the school expansion on peak-time traffic can be successfully mitigated by actions and targets to be confirmed in a revision to the current Travel Plan.

### **Sources of further information**

a) File reference SCC\0171\16SE

b) The application and consultee responses can be viewed at:

<https://secure.suffolkcc.gov.uk/ePlanning/loadFullDetails.do?apId=22109>

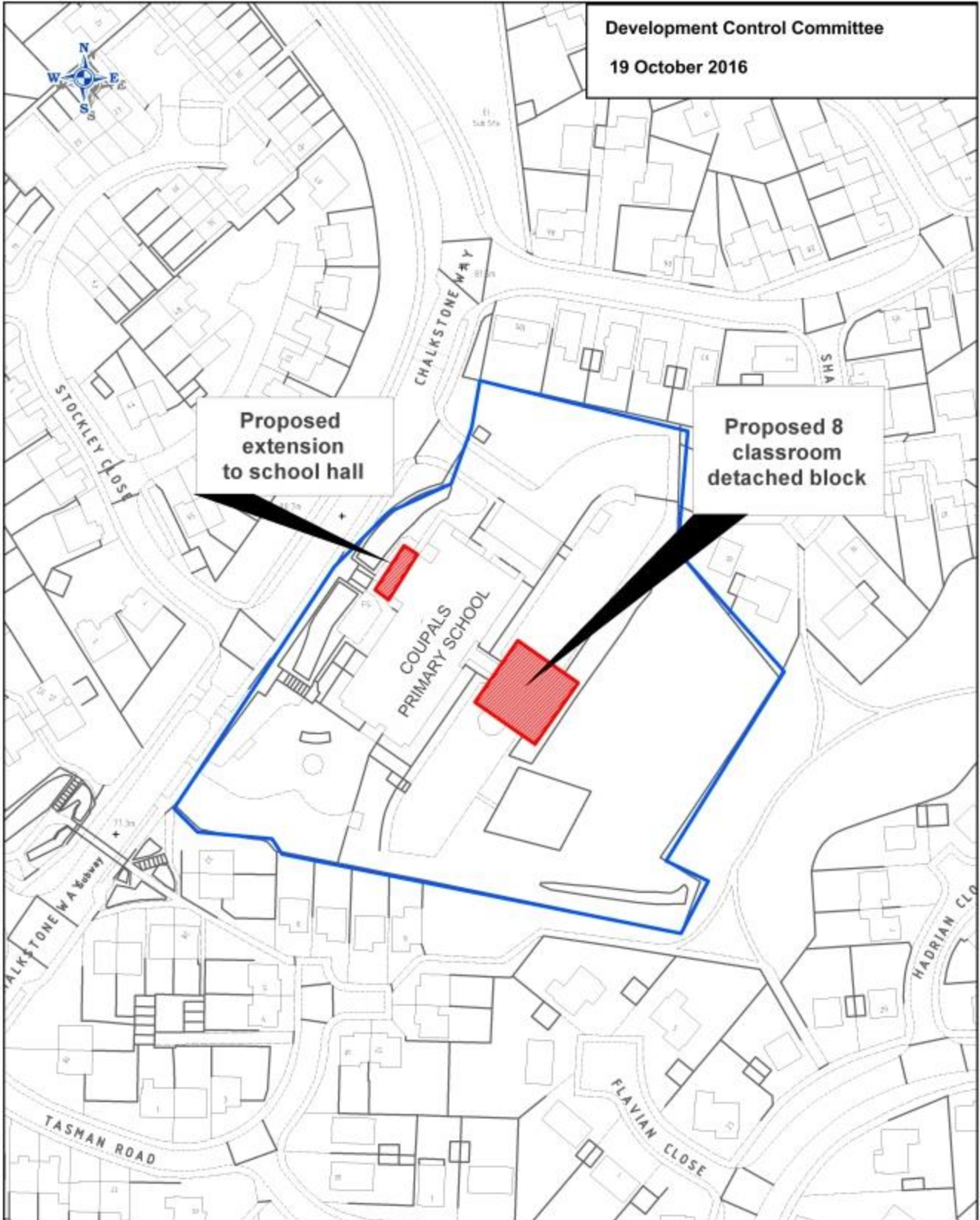


Strategic Development  
Resource Management  
Endeavour House  
8 Russell Road  
Ipswich, Suffolk  
IP1 2BX

AERIAL PHOTO – COUPALS PRIMARY SCHOOL,  
HAVERHILL







**Key**  
— Boundary of School Site

SCC\0171\16SE  
COUPALS PRIMARY SCHOOL,  
CHALKSTONE WAY, HAVERHILL.. CB9 0LD

 **Suffolk  
County Council**  
Scale 1:1500

Strategic Development,  
Resource Management,  
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8 classroom standalone block including toilet facilities, group room and all associated landscaping. Hall extension to the north building of main school.