

**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING COMMITTEE  
1 November 2012 at 6:00pm**

**SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

**Part A**

(open to the public including the media)

	<b>Pages</b>
<b>9. Construction of a new 300 place primary school with external hard and soft play areas, canopy and 20 space car park (New Town)</b>	<b>23 - 44</b>
See report by the Head of Environmental and Protective Services.	
<b>The Chairman has agreed pursuant to the provisions of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 to consider this item at the meeting as a matter of urgency because the deadline date for a response to consultation by Essex County Council is 26 October 2012.</b>	
<b>10. Amendment Sheet</b>	<b>45 - 53</b>
See Amendment Sheet attached.	





**Application No:** 121762

**Location:** Garrison Area E, Circular Road East, Colchester

**Scale (approx):** 1:1250

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## Planning Committee

Item  
**9**

1 November 2012

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Head of Environmental &amp; Protective Services</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Alistair Day</b> ☎ 01206 282479
<b>Title</b>	<b>Construction of a new 300 place primary school with external hard and soft play areas, canopy and 20 space car park.</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	<b>New Town</b>		

### 1.0 Decision Required

- 1.1 Members are asked to endorse the holding letter of objection that the Planning Service has sent to Environmental Planning at Essex County Council in respect of the proposal to erect a new 300 place primary school on land off Circular Road East, Colchester.

### 2.0 Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 Essex County Council has consulted Colchester Borough Council on the planning application for a new primary school at the Garrison that is currently under consideration by them. The County Council has requested this Council's observations no later than 26 October 2012 (21 days from their notification letter) and has advised that our reply will be taken into account by them in determining the application.
- 2.2 Following internal consultation, the Planning Service has issued a holding letter of objection to current application; a copy of this letter which is set out in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 2.3 Given the strategic importance of this development to the local area, Planning Service Manager considers it prudent to seek the Planning Committee's endorsement of the observations that have been made and the officer recommendation that the current application should be refused. Members are also asked to agree to send an officer to attend the County Council's Planning Committee so that representation can be made directly to their Members. If Members have strong feelings in respect of the current development proposal, they may also wish to send a representative to the County Council Planning Committee.

### 3.0 Alternative Options

- 3.1 Members may consider that the design and layout of the proposed school is appropriate for this location; if this is the case the Council will need to withdraw the current holding letter of objection and issue a no objection letter to the County Council.

## **4.0 Supporting Information**

- 4.1 The submitted planning application is for the construction of a new 300 place primary school with external hard and soft play areas, canopy and 20 space car park. This application is to be determined by Essex County Council.
- 4.2 The Planning Service has issued a letter of representation in respect of this application. The letter provides an assessment of the development in relation to central government guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Council's adopted development plan policies. It is the view of officers that the proposed new school fails to meet the high standard of design that the Council has been striving to achieve in redeveloping the Garrison. Officers are also of the view that the proposed school in its current form would cause material harm the appearance of this part of the Garrison Conservation Area. The letter provides an officer recommendation that the planning application should be refused in its current form.
- 4.3 The letter to Essex County Council acknowledges the importance of the school to the local area and explains that, for this reason, the officers wish to seek the formal endorsement of this Council's Planning Committee in respect of this proposal.

- 4.4 A summary of the main planning issues set are set out below:

### The Site and its Context

- 4.5 The application site is broadly rectangular in shape and extends to some 11.9 hectares.
- 4.6 The site is bounded to the east by Mersea Road and to the west by Circular Road East, from which vehicular access into the site is gained. Beyond Circular Road East is Abbey Field, a large area of public open space. To the north of the site is the garrison cricket pitch; the south of the site is bounded by a public footpath beyond which is the Territorial Army site.
- 4.7 The application site is located within the Garrison Conservation Area. Mature trees define the east, south and west boundaries of the site. The retained frontage garrison buildings to the east (within the Hyderabad and Meeanee Barracks) and to the north (within the Flagstaff Complex) are clearly visible from the site; these buildings are of high architectural / historic quality and have been included (along with the garrison cricket pavilion) on a Local List of building of architectural or historic interest. It is understood that within the eastern part of the application site are former military bunkers, which are also included on the Council's adopted local list of buildings of interest.

### Principle of the Development

- 4.8 The application site falls within the Adopted Borough Site Allocation Area SA GAR1. This policy identifies appropriate land use and notes that further guidance on approved uses and layouts is provided in the approved Master Plan for the Garrison.
- 4.9 The application site is identified within the adopted Garrison Master Plan and Artillery Barracks Development Brief, for a primary school that is to be delivered as a part of the Garrison Urban Village Development.
- 4.10 In view of the above, there is not an objection, in principle, to the proposal to erect a school on this site.

## Design and Layout

- 4.11 The primary school is an important civic building and it is considered essential that it is of a high quality design that befits this prominent and historically sensitive location.
- 4.12 The submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) acknowledges that the retained garrison buildings have a strong character and that the new primary school should reflect and complement the Conservation Area within which the site is located.
- 4.13 The proposed primary school is set on a north / south alignment with the main entrance facing Circular Road East; this forms a logical design response to the site and its context.
- 4.14 The design of the proposed development is of a contemporary design and Officers do not have an objection in principle to this design approach. Officers have however expressed serious concern regarding the design solution currently proposed.
- 4.15 The main public (west) elevation to proposed primary school is composed of a series of unarticulated asymmetrical gables which create a saw tooth roof pattern. The roof of the school is an alien form within the Garrison Conservation Area and appears visually very 'aggressive' when compared to the roofs of the historic garrison buildings. It is acknowledged that gables are a feature of many of the surrounding buildings; however the method in which they are employed is totally different – i.e. the gables are expressed / articulated and well ordered. The main public entrance is set at the junction of the recess between the classroom block and hall / communal area. The entrance, by virtue of its siting, width and general design, is not clearly expressed and, as such, lacks an immediate presence when viewed from the street. The building is clad in red brick with vertical banding of gault brick used to break down the form / bulk of the elevation. The resulting effect of the contrasting brickwork, the arbitrary brick diamond pattern and the random window arrangement, all combine to create an elevation that lacks visual repose.
- 4.16 The school is an important civic building that will have major significance to the life of the new community. It is therefore of fundamental importance that it integrates well with the surrounding townscape and its historic context. There is a very strong legibility between the retained historic assets and newer buildings; the proposed school must maintain this principle if the building is to integrate with higher quality elements of the established townscape. Homogeneity within the area is maintained by a common design language that employs a menu of materials and building forms that have their roots in the past. The design of the school as proposed fails to pay sufficient homage to the important architectural and historic legacy of the Garrison.
- 4.17 The design and layout of proposed school is considered to conflict with Core Strategy Policies UR1 (Regeneration Areas) and UR2 (Built Design and Character) which requires the design of development proposals to be sympathetic to the character of the area and seek to secure high quality design. The proposal is also considered to conflict with Development Plan DP1 which requires all development to be designed to a high standard and respect the character of the site and its context in terms of its architectural approach, height, size, scale, form, massing, density, proportions, materials, townscape and/or landscape setting, and detailed design features. The new school would be contrary to paragraphs 56 of the NPPF which attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. More generally, it would be an overall conflict with the definition of sustainable development due to the harm caused to the built environment.

## Heritage Issues

- 4.18 The application site is located within a designated conservation area. The bunkers located at the east of the site are included on the Council's adopted Local List of buildings of architectural or historic interest. It is considered that other Garrison buildings that have been identified as being of architectural or historic interest (either nationally or locally) are too distant from the application site for this development proposal to have a significant impact on their setting.
- 4.19 The application site was formerly used for sport pitches and as a grassed area has a neutral impact on this part of the Garrison Conservation Area. The locally listed bunkers have a positive contribution in terms of the history of the area. The trees that surround the boundary of the site make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the Garrison Conservation Area.
- 4.20 The impact that the proposed development will have on the locally listed bunkers is unclear. The bunkers, as a non-designated historic asset, must be retained and safeguarded from inappropriate alteration. Officers have recommended that a strategy for their preservation and long-term maintenance needs to be secured as a part of this development.
- 4.21 The site faces Abbey Field which should be regarded as the centre-piece of the Garrison Conservation Area. Encircling Abbey Field are the various barracks built from the mid C19 onwards. This fabric and the historical association they have with each other are the backdrop for the Garrison Urban Village. The Primary School proposal is another piece of infill that will be of major significance to the life of the new community. As such, and in consideration of the significance of the location of the site, the proposal must attain a high standard of design and sensitivity to its context. The scheme as submitted fails to achieve this.
- 4.22 Development Plan Policy DP 14 states that development affecting the historic environment should seek to preserve or enhance the historic asset. In all cases there will be an expectation that any new development will enhance the historic environment and notes that planning permission will not be granted if it would adversely affect an historic asset.
- 4.23 The Framework's core principles recognise that development should contribute to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm this harm needs be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 4.24 This Council is of the opinion that the adopted design solution will fail to enhance the appearance of this part of the Garrison Conservation Area and therefore conflicts with DP14. With regard to the guidance set out in the Framework, the current proposal is considered to cause less than substantial harm to the heritage asset. The harm to the asset therefore needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The proposed school will constitute a public benefit; these benefits include the provision of local employment and schooling in a sustainable location. This Council has no objection to the principle of a school in this location and it therefore follows that these benefits could be achieved by a design which would not cause the harm to the conservation area. For this reason it is considered that the proposed public benefits of the current application would not out weigh the long term harm caused to the conservation area.

- 4.25 The application submission indicates various highway improvements between the existing school and the application site; these works include the installation of a zebra crossing on Circular Road North. Some of the proposed highway improvement will affect the Roman Circus (a scheduled ancient monument) and Officers have recommended that the advice of English Heritage is sought in respect of this matter.

#### Landscape and Arboricultural Issues

- 4.26 The Council's Landscape Officer has advised that the landscape proposals do not adhere to this Council's standard landscape guidelines. In particular the Landscape Officer has recommended changes to the hard landscaping detailing, the strengthening of the boundary treatment with appropriate species of trees and shrub planting and that the boundary enclosures are set at an appropriate distance from planting.
- 4.27 The Council's Arboricultural Officer has advised that insufficient information has been submitted to enable an informed assessment of the likely impact of the proposed development on the trees identified for retention.

#### Community Use

- 4.28 The school has the potential to form a key asset of the Garrison Development and should add to the social and community facilities that are being provided as a part of the wider garrison development. Officers have recommended that the provision for additional social and community uses should be provided from the outset and the design / layout of the school should reflect this. Officers have recommended that community use of the building is secured through a legal agreement.

#### Impact on the surrounding area and neighbouring properties

- 4.29 The nearest residential dwellings are located some 40m away from the proposed application site. The Council's Environmental Control Officer has advised that, assuming the school and its playing fields are only used during 'normal' school hours and given the existing ambient noise levels from the road it is anticipated that noise from the school / sports area will not cause a nuisance to nearby residents.

#### Air Quality

- 4.30 The proposed school site is located close to Mersea Road Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and this development has the potential to create significant increase in traffic, particularly at dropping off and picking up times. It is unclear from the submitted information whether the proposed development will have an impact on the AQMA. Officers have recommended that this issue needs to be clarified prior to the determination of this application.

#### Contamination

- 4.31 The Council's Contamination Land Officer has advised that the submitted survey reports relate to the current condition of the unmanaged playing field and provide recommendations for returning the field into a useable condition. It is therefore not a contaminated land risk assessment for the development as a whole.
- 4.32 Consequently, since the land is recorded as being former MoD land, it is recommended that suitably worded conditions are attached to any permission to cover for the potential for contamination.



## Highway and Transportation Matters

- 4.33 It is understood that the Local Highway Authority are content that this proposal will not have an adverse impact on the local highway network in terms of capacity or safety.
- 4.34 The application proposes 20 car parking spaces (which include one disabled parking space) and 20 cycle parking spaces.
- 4.35 The adopted parking standards require 1 space per 15 pupils for vehicles and 1 space per 5 members of staff plus 1 space per 3 pupils for cycle parking. One disabled parking bay or 5% of the total capacity, (whichever is greater) should be provided.
- 4.36 The above parking requirements equate to 21 car parking spaces and over a 100 cycle parking spaces. The level of car parking is considered adequate (given the site's edge of centre location); Officers do not however consider that the substantial reduction in the level of cycle parking is justified.

## Conclusion

- 4.37 There is not objection in principle to the erection of a new school on this site; nor is there an objection in principle to the proposed new school adopting a contemporary design. The design and layout of the new school as currently proposed is not however considered to achieve a high quality design that is sympathetic to the established character of the Garrison Conservation Area.
- 4.38 Members will be aware that officers have worked hard to secure the retention and sensitive repair of historic garrison buildings and that new development is of a high standard of design and reinforces the locally distinctive architectural character of the Garrison site. This has involved close collaborative working between this Council, the developers, Essex County Council and other relevant agencies.
- 4.39 The proposed new school primary forms an integral part of the redevelopment of the Garrison and will be of major significance to the life of the new community. Given this, it is considered of fundamental importance that the proposed school attains a high standard of the design and is sensitive to its historic context. The scheme as submitted fails to achieve; moreover, should this scheme be permitted there is concern that it will act as a precedent and thereby undermine the overall quality and character of the Garrison development that has been achieved to-date.

## **5.0 Consultation**

- 5.1 Essex County Council, as the Local Planning Authority for this application, has made arrangement to publicise the application by local press advertisement and undertaken the necessary neighbour notifications.
- 5.2 The Council's Urban Design Officer has advised that the buildings within the Garrison Conservation Area have a common design language and that the design of the proposed school fails to respect / reflect this. The Design Officer has recommended that this application is refused in its current form.

- 5.3 The Council's Conservation Consultant has advised that there is a strong legibility between the retained historic assets and the newer buildings; the proposed school fails to pay sufficient homage to the important architectural and historic legacy of the Garrison and, as such, will appear out of context and detract from the character and appearance of this part of the Garrison Conservation Area.
- 5.4 The Landscape Officer and Tree Officer have advised they do not support the application in its current form.
- 5.5 The Council's Transportation Officer has expressed concern at the level of cycle parking proposed and the connectivity that this development will have (in terms of pedestrian and cycle movements) with the surrounding highway network.
- 5.6 Environmental Control has not raised an objection to the current application subject to appropriate being attached to the grant of any consent.
- 5.7 The Council's Air Quality Officer has noted that the proposed development has the potential to result in a significant increase in traffic movement and that this could have an impact on the Mersea Road Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).
- 5.8 The Ward Councillors, the Planning Portfolio Holder and the Council's Design and Heritage Champions have been consulted / advised of this proposal.

## **6.0 Publicity Considerations**

- 6.1 None directly arising from this report.

## **7.0 Financial Implications**

- 7.1 There are no additional financial implications for this Council arising from this report.

## **8.0 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications**

- 8.1 None directly arising from this report.

## **9.0 Community Safety Implications**

- 9.1 None directly arising from this report.

## **10.0 Health and Safety Implications**

- 10.1 None directly arising from this report.

## **11.0 Risk Management Implications**

- 11.1 None directly arising from this report.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Letter of representation to Essex County Council



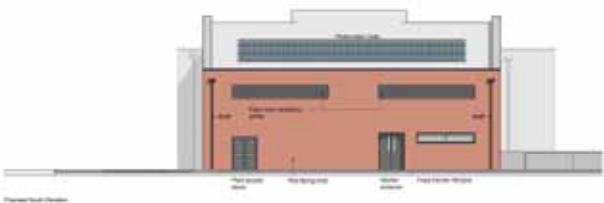
Proposed West Elevation



Proposed East Elevation



Proposed North Elevation



Proposed South Elevation

**Notes:**  
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 All dimensions are in millimeters unless otherwise specified.  
 Architect notified of any discrepancies.  
 Do not scale from this drawing for Construction Documents.

1:00	03/20/12	Issued for Permitting
Rev. No.	Date	Revision Notes

		10000 10th Street East Suite 100 Edina, MN 55425 Tel: 763.835.1234 www.architect.com
Project Name:		10000 10th Street East Suite 100 Edina, MN 55425
Project Number:		2023 / 300

**Environmental & Protective Services**

Ms S Bailey  
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Your ref: CC/34/12/COL  
Our ref: 121762  
Date: 24 October 2012

Dear Ms Bailey

**Proposal:** Construction of a new 300 place primary school with external hard and soft play areas, canopy and 20 space car park.

**Location:** Garrison Area E, Circular Road East, Colchester

I write reference to the above planning application that is being considered by your Authority for the above development.

This Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on this proposal for the new school as this development forms an integral part of the Garrison Urban Village, a strategic mixed use scheme that is located in the heart of Colchester. In view of the importance of the new school to the local area, the decision has been taken to seek formal observations of this Council's Planning Committee on 1 November 2012. I appreciate this date is after the 21 day period for representations stipulated in your letter; I would therefore ask that you accept this letter as a **holding letter of objection** in respect of the application for the erection of a new school at the Colchester Garrison site.

In the meantime, I set out below my observations (which incorporates those of other officers that have been consulted internally) in respect of the proposal for the new primary school.

### **Relevant Planning History**

The adopted Garrison Master Plan identifies this site for a new primary school that is to form part of the redevelopment of the alienated garrison land. This allocation is reflected in the outline planning application for the Garrison Urban Village development, which was approved by this Council in June 2003.

The current proposal has not been the subject of pre-application discussions with planning officers at Colchester Borough Council. Had Essex County Council sought a more collaborative approach with Colchester Borough Council we would have raised our concerns much earlier in the process. Our Planning Service was disappointed to learn that Essex County Council Officers had been negotiating this scheme for the last nine months without seeking any views from Colchester's Planning Officers.

## Relevant Policy Information

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the development plan comprises: the East of England Plan (RSS14); the Core Strategy (adopted Dec 2008); the Site Allocations (adopted October 2010); Proposals Map (adopted October 2010); and Development Policies (adopted October 2010).

The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is a material consideration. Guidance contained in the Framework reaffirms that planning decisions are to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the adopted local development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Government has announced its intention to revoke Regional Plans and, as such, this Council has not given significant weight to plan policies set out in RSS14.

The following policies from the adopted Colchester Borough Core Strategy (December 2008) are relevant:

- SD1 - Sustainable Development Locations
- SD2 - Delivering Facilities and Infrastructure
- SD3 - Community Facilities
- UR1 - Regeneration Areas
- UR2 - Built Design and Character
- PR1 - Open Space
- PR2 - People-friendly Streets
- TA1 - Accessibility and Changing Travel Behaviour
- TA2 - Walking and Cycling
- TA3 - Public Transport
- TA4 - Roads and Traffic
- TA5 - Parking
- ENV1 - Environment
- ER1 - Energy, Resources, Waste, Water and Recycling

In addition, the following are relevant:

Adopted Colchester Borough Development Policies (October 2010):

- DP1 Design and Amenity
- DP2 Health Assessments
- DP3 Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy
- DP4 Community Facilities
- DP14 Historic Environment Assets
- DP17 Accessibility and Access

- DP18 Transport Infrastructure Proposals
- DP19 Parking Standards
- DP20 Flood Risk and Management of Surface Water Drainage
- DP25 Renewable Energy

Adopted Borough Site Allocations Policies (October 2010)

- SA GAR1 Development in the Garrison Area

Regard should also be given to the following Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents:

- Garrison Master Plan
- Artillery Barracks Development Brief
- Vehicle Parking Standards
- Sustainable Design and Construction
- The Essex Design Guide
- External Materials in New Developments

### **Site Context Considerations**

The site has been analysed on site, as well as through a desk top exercise considering the information submitted, the available planning records, mapping and aerial photography.

The existing site is relatively flat and is located in a prominent position within the former Garrison site.

The site is bounded to the east by Mersea Road, one of the main arterial routes into the town centre, and to the west by Circular Road East, from which vehicular access into the site is gained. Beyond Circular Road East is Abbey Field, a large area of public open space which is important both in terms of its historic context (it was used for training cavalry and light infantry) and as the focal point for the new urban village. To the north of the site is the garrison cricket pitch; the south of the site is bounded by a public footpath beyond which is the Territorial Army site.

The application site is located within the Garrison Conservation Area. Mature trees define the east, south and west boundaries of the site. The retained frontage garrison buildings to the east (within the Hyderabad and Meeanee Barracks) and to the north (within the Flagstaff Complex) are clearly visible from the site; these buildings are of high architectural / historic quality and have been included (along with the garrison cricket pavilion) on a Local List of building of architectural or historic Interest. It is understood that within the eastern part of the application site are former military bunkers, which are also included on the Council's adopted local list of buildings of interest. The Territorial Army buildings to the south of the site are located outside the designated conservation area and are non-descript in terms of their architectural character.

The site due to its proximity to the town centre and the known heritage assets is considered to of potential archaeological interest. The Roman Circus and St Johns Abbey Precinct are located to the north of the site and are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

## **LPA Case Officer Opinion on the Proposal**

### Principle of the Development

The application site falls within the Adopted Borough Site Allocation Area SA GAR1. This policy identifies appropriate land use and notes that further guidance on approved uses and layouts is provided in the approved Master Plan for the Garrison. Paragraph 5.101 of the supporting text states that “the Garrison area incorporates a number of important historical and archaeological features such as the historic buildings of the Garrison itself as well as underlying remains, including the only Roman circus ever found in Britain. Redevelopment of these sites needs to ensure enhancement and preservation of these features, which in the case of the Roman circus has involved reworking of plans to avoid building over the site”.

The application site is identified within the adopted Garrison Master Plan and Artillery Barracks Development Brief, for a primary school that is to be delivered as a part of the Garrison Urban Village Development.

In view of the above, there is not an objection, in principle, to the proposal to erect a school on this site.

### Design Issues

The primary school is an important civic building and it is considered essential that it is of a high quality design that befits this prominent and historically sensitive location.

It is of fundamental importance that the proposed school both respects and responds positively to its context and draws of the best architectural qualities of the historic garrison buildings. The relationship of the proposed school to the street, the provision of good drop-off space and design of approach routes, for both cars and pedestrians, are also critical elements of the design.

The site faces Abbey Field which is of significance both as an attractive piece of urban space and for its former historic garrison function. Encircling Abbey Field are the various barracks built from the mid C19 onwards; this fabric and the historical association they have with each other form the backdrop to the Garrison Urban Village which has largely created a new inner suburb of great character. The Primary School proposal is another piece of infill development that will be of major significance to the life of the new community.

The retained garrison buildings, whilst exhibiting variation, have an architectural consistency (ordered composition, solid / void rhythm; robust construction; use a limited

pallet of materials and typically based on classical principles, with the more important (civic) buildings exhibiting greater detailing and embellishment).

The submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) acknowledges that the retained garrison buildings have a strong character. The DAS (para 5.2 ) states that the “proposals for the new St John’s Green Primary School site should reflect and complement the Conservation Area within which the site is located. The design should be informed by the surrounding context and ..... its frontage onto Abbey Field”. The DAS goes on to note that the retained buildings signify a clearly defined entrance, through the use of a portico and there is potential for proposed school to follow a similar architectural language.

The proposed primary school is set on a north / south alignment with the main entrance facing Circular Road East; this forms a logical design response to the site and its context.

The main public (west) elevation to proposed primary school is essentially composed of two distinct parts: namely the teaching block to the north and the entrance foyer / communal areas to the south.

The west elevation of the teaching block is composed of a series of unarticulated asymmetrical gables which create a saw tooth roof pattern. The roof of the school is an alien form within the Garrison Conservation Area and appears visually very ‘aggressive’ when compared to the roofs of the historic garrison buildings. It is acknowledged that gables are a feature of many of the surrounding buildings; however the method in which they are employed is totally different – i.e. the gables are expressed / articulated and well ordered. The west elevation of the classroom block is clad in red brick with vertical banding of gault brick used to break down the form / bulk of the elevation. The resulting effect of the contrasting brickwork, the arbitrary brick diamond pattern and the random window arrangement, all combine to create an elevation that lacks visual repose.

The main entrance on the west elevation is set at the junction of the recess between the classroom block and hall / communal area. The entrance, by virtue of its siting, width and general design, is not clearly expressed and, as such, lacks an immediate presence when viewed from the street. It is noted that amended drawings have been submitted that seek to improve the approach to the entrance school; however these amendments do not address the fundamental issues associated with the design of the actual entrance. The roof form of the hall / service block is composed of a stretched asymmetrical gable which is adjoined to a flat roof. The asymmetrical gable is constructed approximately of 2/3 redbrick and 1/3 gault brick and incorporates windows that have a stronger vertical emphasis (when compared to the teaching block); the remainder of the building is constructed of red brick and has no articulation or visual interest.

The east elevation of the school adopts a similar composition / detailing to the west elevation; the classrooms are however articulated on this elevation which helps considerably in terms of breaking-up the visual mass of this part of the building.

In short, the saw-tooth roof gives the building something of a warehouse feel whilst the detailing of the elevations appear akin to dwelling houses that were frequently produced in



the 1960 / 70s as a part of the New Town expansion programme; what the proposed building does not appear as is a school.

Regarding the general layout of the school, it is disappointing that the front of the school is dominated by the staff car park and that the opportunity has not been taken to create a more civic, pedestrian friendly approach to the main entrance. It is noted that amended drawings have been submitted that reconfigure the parking arrangements and that these reduce the amount of parking immediately in front of the school and seek to improve the pedestrian approach to the main school entrance. However when considering some of the pedestrian paths there still appears to be some conflict with natural direct desire lines.

The historic boundary treatments within the Garrison site make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area; existing boundary treatments include: brick walls and gate piers, brick walls and railings and metal railings. In order to build upon the local distinctiveness of the area and reflect the character of the conservation area, the boundary enclosure to the proposed school should follow one of the existing boundary treatments typologies rather than using a 'standard' metal mesh school fence.

As stated above, the school is an important civic building that will have major significance to the life of the new community. It is therefore of fundamental importance that it integrates well with the surrounding townscape / its historic context. There is a very strong legibility between the retained historic assets and newer buildings; the proposed school must maintain this principle if the building is to integrate with higher quality elements of the established townscape. Homogeneity within the area is maintained by a common design language that employs a menu of materials and building forms that have their roots in the past. The design of the school as proposed fails to pay sufficient homage to the important architectural and historic legacy of the Garrison.

It is considered that the design of the proposed school is not sensitive to its context. There is also concern that, by failing to respect / reflect the architectural language established by the retained (higher quality) Garrison buildings, the adopted design solution for the proposed school will quickly date.

Given the above, the proposed school is considered to conflict with Core Strategy Policies UR1 (Regeneration Areas) and UR2 (Built Design and Character) which requires the design of development proposals to be sympathetic to the character of the area and seek to secure high quality design. The proposal is also considered to conflict with Development Plan DP1 which requires all development to be designed to a high standard and respect the character of the site and its context in terms of its architectural approach, height, size, scale, form, massing, density, proportions, materials, townscape and/or landscape setting, and detailed design features. The new school would be contrary to paragraphs 56 and 132 of the Framework which attach great importance to the design of the built environment. More generally, it would be an overall conflict with the definition of sustainable development due to the harm caused to the built environment.

If the proposed new school is to integrate successfully into this location, it is recommended that its design respects and reinterprets the key architectural characteristics of the higher quality Garrison buildings – namely a well balanced order composition with a clear solid /

void rhythm, vertically proportioned (or grouped) windows, the use of high quality materials (with changes in materials employed in a logical fashion). The main entrance should be redesigned so that it is given a distinctive character that is easily identifiable from the street; the main school entrance should be further reinforced by a wide paved path that leads to a paved gathering space protected by a canopy at roof level. There is also the opportunity to design the hall so that it highlights the importance of the school as a community / civic building, defines the south corner of the site and identifies the primary school from various approaches.

### Heritage Issues

The application site is located within a designated conservation area. The bunkers located to the east of the site are included on the Council's adopted Local List of buildings of architectural or historic interest. It is considered that other Garrison buildings that have been identified as being of architectural or historic interest (either nationally or locally) are too distant from the application site for this development proposal to have a significant impact on their setting.

The main conservation issues raised by this application are: whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance of the character or appearance of this part of the conservation area; the effect that it would have on the setting of the locally listed bunkers and whether the proposed development would have an adverse impact on archaeological remains within the site. The conclusions drawn below incorporate the advice provided by the Council's Conservation Consultant, David Balcombe.

The archaeological evaluation undertaken at this site has identified a Roman farmstead set within a ditched enclosure. Should your Authority be minded to approve the current application it is recommended that conditions are attached to secure an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy.

The application was formerly used for sport pitches and as a grassed area has a neutral impact on this part of the Garrison Conservation Area. The locally list bunkers have a positive contribution in terms of the history of the area. The trees that surround the boundary of the site make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the Garrison Conservation Area.

The impact the proposed development will have on the locally listed bunkers is unclear; the DAS does not appear to refer to them and they are not shown on the site layout drawings. It is however noted that the Governors consider the bunker to be a significant safety issue. The bunkers, as a non-designated historic asset, must be retained and safeguarded from inappropriate alteration. A strategy for their preservation and long term maintenance should be secured as a part of this development proposal and conditioned accordingly.

The site faces Abbey Field which should be regarded as the centre-piece of the Garrison Conservation Area. Encircling Abbey Field are the various barracks built from the mid C19 onwards. This fabric and the historical association they have with each other are the

backdrop for the Garrison Urban Village. The Primary School proposal is another piece of infill that will be of major significance to the life of the new community. As such, and in consideration of the significance of the location of the site, the proposal must attain a high standard of design and sensitivity to its context. The scheme as submitted fails to achieve this.

Development Plan Policy DP 14 states that development affecting the historic environment should seek to preserve or enhance the historic asset. In all cases there will be an expectation that any new development will enhance the historic environment and notes that planning permission will not be granted if it would adversely affect an historic asset.

The Framework's core principles recognise that development should contribute to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. When assessing the impact on the significance of a heritage asset great weight should be given to the asset's conservation on the basis that the more important an asset is the greater the weight should be attached. It is made clear that significance can be harmed by development within the setting of a heritage asset. Where a development would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, permission should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm. In the situation where development would result in less than substantial harm this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

This Council is of the opinion that the adopted design solution will fail to enhance the appearance of this part of the Garrison Conservation Area and therefore conflicts with DP14. With regard to the guidance set out in the Framework, the current proposal is considered to cause less than substantial harm to the heritage asset. The harm to the asset therefore needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The proposed school will constitute a public benefit; these benefits include the provision of local employment and schooling in a sustainable location. This Council has no objection to the principle of a school in this location and it therefore follows that these benefits could be achieved by a design which would not cause the harm to the conservation area. For this reason it is considered that the proposed public benefits of the current application would not out weigh the long term harm caused to the conservation area.

It is understood that English Heritage has been consulted on this proposal but you have not to-date received a response. Given the importance of this development to the conservation area, it is recommend that a decision is not made in respect of this application until their view has been provided.

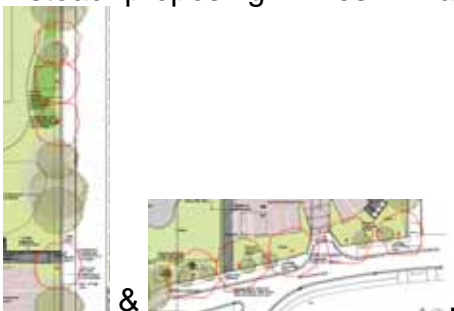
It is noted that pedestrian improvements are proposed between the existing school and the application site; these works included the installation of a zebra crossing on Circular Road North. You are advised that this part of the highway is affected the Roman Circus, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent is required for any works to a Scheduled Ancient Monument or its setting. It is recommended that this aspect of the proposal is discussed with Debbie Priddy ([Debbie.Priddy@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:Debbie.Priddy@english-heritage.org.uk)) as soon as possible.


## Landscape and Arboricultural Issues

The Council's Landscape Officer has advised that the landscape proposals should be amended so that they adhere to Colchester Borough Council's standard landscape guidelines – see the following link: <http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/2544/Landscape-Guidance-for-Developers>. In particular the Landscape Officer has advised that clauses 5.2 of LIS/A needs to be adhered to. To achieve this, the three proposed types of hard landscape need to be easily read as serving different functions, e.g. the car parking surface might have a soft coloured tar & chip surface to help define it from the main carriageway, the new footpaths in a block pave defining it clearly as a pedestrian area and the hard play areas in a buff or natural macadam to give it a softer more 'stand alone' character.

In addition to the above generic requirements it is recommended the following site specific requirements be applied to any revised proposals:

- The proposed development needs to take the opportunity to 'gap-up' the linear feature of mature Lime Trees that enclose the site and the area immediately to the north thereby reinforcing a strong landscape feature within the Abbey Fields area. This can be achieved by deleting the trees currently proposed to the frontage and instead proposing Limes: *Tilia cordata* to the following locations (outlined red)



- The group of 3 trees would be best replaced by a single large, vibrant specimen tree (e.g. red oak: *Quercus rubra*) here: , which would at maturity act as a focal point to the school and a dominant feature to the cricket pitch immediately to the north of it.
- The naturally regenerating shrubs, brash and epimorphic growth alongside the public footpath needs to be cut back and/or cleared and gapped up/planted up with a native evergreen screen, e.g. one comprising laurel: *Prunus laurocerasus*, to help screen the back of the school and the parked car.
- As a rule of thumb any proposed fencing over 1.2m high needs to be set a minimum 1m from the main stems of existing trees to allow room for future growth and 2m from proposed trees to allow room for them to establish.

This Council's Landscape has recommended that unless the above points are satisfactorily addressed, the current application should be refused as being contrary to Development Plan Policy DP1.

This Council's Arboricultural Officer has advised the following:

- The tree survey is incomplete - the Limes are ivy covered and therefore cannot be accurately assessed. The assumption is they are ok but this may be inaccurate. Before suitability of design can be confirmed the actual condition of the trees needs to be addressed.
- Details of boundary fencing do not appear to be addressed within the report; it is therefore unclear whether this development will adversely affect the nearby tree.
- The 'No Dig Construction' solution proposed for the car park will result in an oddly sloped or stepped surface; it is also unclear whether the car park will require a retaining kerb and, if so, what impact this will have on the adjacent trees. It should also be noted that the Lime trees will excrete a significant amount of sap.
- There is a footpath beneath T1-3 despite the large gap created as a result of adjacent trees being felled. Sense would dictate that it would be better to have this footpath in the location of the felled tree..
- T24 may present a risk to the highway and the school playing field.
- The bin store adjacent to T8 should be relocated to avoid any potential conflict with the near by trees. The cycle store should also be located outside the root protection zone of the retained trees.
- It is proposed to upgrade the footpath to the south of the application site to a 3.5m footpath / cycleway. The reconstruction of the footpath / installation of lighting is likely to have an adverse impact on the adjacent trees; no details have been submitted in respect of this matter.

In conclusion, this Council's Arboricultural Officer has advised that insufficient information has been submitted to enable an informed assessment of the likely impact of the proposed development on the trees identified for retention. Unless additional information is submitted in respect of this above, it is recommended that this application is refused.

### Community Use

The school has the potential to form a key asset of the Garrison Development and should add to the social and community facilities that are being provided as a part of the wider garrison

development. Provision for additional social and community uses should be provided from the outset; it is therefore essential that the design of the school is such that access arrangements are clear and easy to manage. It is recommended that the social and community provision at the school is secured through a s106 agreement.

### Amenity Issues

The Council's Environmental Control Officer has advised that the nearby residential units are located some 40m away from the proposed application site. Assuming the school and its playing fields are only used during 'normal' school hours and given the existing ambient noise levels from the road it is anticipated that noise from the school / sports area will not create a nuisance.

The Environmental Control Officer has recommended that, should your Authority be minded to grant planning permission, the approval is subject to appropriately worded conditions to cover: limits to hours of work, site boundary noise levels (they should not exceed 0dBA above the background), external noise levels, the requirement for noise sound insulation on any building used for noisy events, e.g. halls, the control of fumes and odours (Food), light pollution and the control thereof and that no floodlighting to be erected. The Environmental Control Officer has also recommended that the proposed 1.8 metre high close-boarded fence around the playing field is conditioned.

In addition to the above, the Environmental Control Officer has also requested that advisory notes are added to the decision notice setting out good practice in relation to the Control of Pollution during Construction & Demolition Works.

A suite of recommended conditions / informative can be provided on request.

### Air Quality

The proposed school site is located close to Mersea Road Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and this development has the potential to create significant increase in traffic, particularly at dropping off and picking up times. It is unclear from the submitted information whether the proposed development will have an impact on the AQMA; this needs to be clarified prior to the determination of this application.

Environmental Control (Air Quality) Officer has advised that a more robust Travel Plan will need to be formulated and that this will need to be informed by an assessment of the existing and future situation in terms of:

- how many pupils currently walk or cycle;
- how many pupils are anticipated to walk or cycle and how walking and cycling will be encouraged;
- how many pupils currently use public transport and how many are driven;
- what provisions will be made for those arriving on public transport;
- what is the existing catchment area, and what is the proposed catchment area

- Where parents have no option but to drive, are there any plans to encourage parents to share journeys

As a part of the Travel Plan provision will need to be made for adequate secure dry cycle parking for teachers; provision of changing facilities, arrangement for encouraging car sharing and a more detailed description of encouraging walking and cycling to school and between sites.

It is noted that arrangements are to be made with this Council for the use of the nearby public car parks by parent for dropping off and picking up children. It is stated that discussion have taken place with this Council but no formal arrangements have been secured. Traffic at the start and close of the day needs to be carefully controlled so as to avoid potential problems of indiscriminate parking and the knock-on implications that this has for highway safety. If the public car parks are to form part of the traffic management proposals, formal agreement with this Council needs to be secured prior to the grant of planning permission.

### Contamination Issues

The Council's Contamination Land Officer has reviewed the submitted *Wynne-Williams Associates Ltd Initial Recommendation report, ref WWA/1231/Doc 601, dated July 2012*, including the *Herts and Essex Site Investigation letter report, dated 13 July 2012*. This is stated to have been produced to assess the current condition of the unmanaged playing field and to provide recommendations for returning the field into a useable condition. It is therefore not a contaminated land risk assessment for the development as a whole.

Consequently, since the land is recorded as being former MoD land, it is recommended that suitably worded conditions are attached to any permission to cover for the potential for contamination.

### Highway Matters

Essex County Council is the Highway Authority for Colchester and, as such, it is recommended that you seek advice from your own relevant highway engineer in respect of the highway implications (capacity / safety) associated with this proposal.

The Council's Transportation Officer has made the following general comments:

- The cycle parking standards have not been met, and they say they have. Should be 1 space per 5 staff plus 1 space per 3 students. This would mean over 100 spaces, and the Vehicle Parking Standards do indicate that fewer spaces can be provided in urban areas. However the developer is proposing 20 spaces which will include scooters. Such a substantial reduction is not justified. (Millfield School, Wivenhoe has around 30-40 bikes parked per day and the school size is 210 pupils). From experience children of this age will want to bike to school as part of their cycling practice and they must be provided for.
- The south side cycle and footpath 90° junction with the school's internal path is not sensible as this creates a possible conflict with parents chatting/prams/cyclists etc

- The internal path from the south side cycle parking looks very narrow – there is a potential issue with the number of people using this route.
- The DAS makes lots of reference to footpaths and pedestrian route/ walkway, but little mention of ‘cycle routes’

### **Recommendation**

For the reasons set out above, this Council considers that the current application conflicts with central government guidance, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, and this Council’s development plan policies and supplementary planning documents as described above. This Council would therefore respectfully request that this application is **REFUSED** in its current form. Should you wish to refer to any of the policies or documents mentioned then these can be accessed via our website at [www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk)

In view of the importance of the proposed school to the Garrison development and surrounding area, this Council would welcome the opportunity to enter into a positive dialogue with Essex County Council in order to find a design solution that is befitting this important location.

In the meantime, should you wish to discuss further any of the points raised please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Alistair Day

Alistair Day  
**Planning Officer**



# AMENDMENT SHEET

Planning Committee  
1 November 2012

## AMENDMENTS OF CONDITIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

**LATE AMENDMENTS HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED INTO THIS  
AMENDMENT SHEET AND ARE SHOWN AS EMBOLDENED**

### **7.1 121547 – 14 Honywood Road, Colchester**

**After further objections, and discussion with neighbours, a further amendment has been proposed.**

**The proposal for brick piers and railings has now been removed and is to be replaced by a feather-edged timber fence of 1.2 metres back-planted by Hornbeam/Beech planting.**

**The existing corner fence is to be chamfered down at an angle of 45 degrees to meet the new fence, amended drawings on the Committee presentation illustrate this point.**

**The bank of existing planting to be retained on Ireton Road will have to be thinned out because it is two trees deep and very close to the building.**

**The question of height has been raised. It is felt that the planting does need to be tidied up, and thus there will have to be pruning. It is therefore suggested that a minimum height of three metres be retained at all times.**

**An additional objection has been received from the occupier of the host dwelling 14 Honywood Road complaining that they had not been consulted and also stating concern that there was a proposed removal of their front and side fences.**

**OFFICER'S RESPONSE – *By an oversight the original 14 Honywood Road was not consulted.***

***The applicants have indicated that some references from the original application have been left on the plans by mistake and that these fences will not be touched in any way.***

**PROPOSED CONDITIONS:**

All conditions to be restated from application 112480, and condition 16 of that permission to be re-worded as follows:

**“The development hereby approved shall comply in all respects with the amended drawings WA/LP-1 Rev C, WA/LP-2 Rev B WA/1A REV A, WA.2A REV A and WA.3A REV A, and the drawing marked “Miscellaneous” unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

**Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to the scope of this permission.”**

Condition 18 to be re-worded as follows:

**“The fence and existing planting to the north-western corner shall be retained at a minimum height of three metres as indicated on the approved drawings. The new 1.2 metre high feather edged fencing on the Ireton Road side shall match the existing in type and colour and shall be back-planted with a native type of hedge of a species and height to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall be planted within 56 days of this permission and shall be retained at all times thereafter.**

**Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area.”**

7.3 121289 – Colchester Leisure World, Cowdray Avenue, Colchester

1<sup>st</sup> line of Paragraph 4.2 should read:-

**“The entrance and café extension projects forward of an existing tower feature and consists of flat roofed and mono-pitch elements with bonded brickwork.....”**

7.4 121762 – Garrison Area E, Circular Road East, Colchester

**English Heritage the following advice in respect of this development proposal:**

**“The site is prominent within the Garrison conservation area. It is close to the nineteenth century Hyderabad Barracks to the east in Mersea Road and overlooks Abbey Field, a notable green space to the west.**

**As such we see the opportunity to create a new land mark building which, in accordance with paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework, should seek to take account of “the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness”.**

The NPPF also requires (128) that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. English Heritage has not seen, in the documents received with this consultation any heritage statement, nor have we been consulted at pre-application stage. We must therefore raise concerns that the submitted design for this school does not appear to have been informed by its historic surroundings.

This is, we feel, particularly evident in terms of the use of arbitrary building forms, and the uncharacteristic elevational treatment with random patterns of openings and an unresolved relationship of solid to void. There is a failure to create strong entrance features that would reflect the verticality of the garrison buildings and emphasise the relationship of the building to the pedestrian routes across Abbey Field.

We do not think that these issues preclude a contemporary design approach and we welcome the use of brick. However as submitted, we do not consider the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the designated conservation area and advise that it would cause harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset.

Michael Munt | Historic Areas Adviser”

The agent for this planning application submitted via email (timed at 16:15 on 31 October 2012) a series of amended drawings and a response to the officer holding letter of objection. Comments / observations follow the same headings as this Council’s letter of representation; the contents of which are summarised below:

#### **Relevant Planning History**

Colchester Borough Council was consulted during the pre-planning application process by way of the following:

- Notice of the proposed planning application was advertised in local press
- The Public Consultation event was held at the school on 24th April 2012, which was advertised locally in the library to which local officers could have attended
- Council Members were personally invited by ECC to the Public Consultation event

#### **Relevant Policy Information**

The relevant policies and supplementary planning guidance quoted in the letter is acknowledged.

### **Site Context Considerations**

**We concur with the description of the site and the relevant context.**

### **LPA Case Officer Opinion on the Proposals**

#### **Principle of the Development**

**We note that you agree in principle to proposal.**

#### **Design Issues**

**We have carefully considered the significance that the new school will have in its historical and immediate context.**

**The design has been based on meeting a stringent educational brief, while adopting key principles of the Garrison Conservation Area.**

**The scale is appropriate to its context and the form, mass and repetition reinforces the use of the building as a primary school.**

**The outward appearance of the building is a direct result of the plan layout**

**The issue is whether the outward expression of proposed design is in keeping with Garrison Conservation Area.**

#### **Modifications**

**We acknowledge the more successful aspects of the Garrison Conservation Area are order, composition and rhythm, solid to void ratio, materials and suitable detailing.**

**While the current proposals exhibit these qualities, we think they should be enhanced and reinterpreted to emphasise more consistency and be more sympathetic with the Garrison Conservation Area.**

**An explanation of the proposed modifications is given below.**

#### **1) Entrance**

**The width of the circulation entrance foyer has been increased to give more dominance and be more easily identifiable. The panels of glazing above the entrances have been simplified. The visitor entrance is expressed on the principal elevation with a single storey projecting canopy.**

**The layout of the entrance area in front of the school has been improved**

**The pedestrian entrance has been defined with a wider path and brick piers either side of a gate to reflect the character of the Conservation Area.**

**It should be noted that parent/pupil drop off/pick up will happen to the rear of the school and within the foundation play area to the front.**

## **2) Hierarchy and order**

In order to relate more to the principals of the Conservation Area, emphasis has been given to convey more hierarchy and order within the elevations.

Each classroom module has been defined with a projecting gable and brickwork return to give relief from the adjacent ancillary spaces and emphasise hierarchy.

In addition, the hall has been pulled forward to demonstrate its importance.

The stepped facade evident on the east elevation has been introduced to the principle west facade facing Abbey Field to give articulation and expression.

## **3) Rhythm and Repetition**

The 'A/B/A/B/A' rhythm created as a result of the educational brief has followed through in the elevations.

The random/offset positioning of windows has been omitted in favour of order and unity. The arrangement of fenestration and the position of the ventilation louvre to each classroom are also repeated for consistency.

## **4) Verticality**

The plan form has been stepped to articulate the gables and break up the visual mass while introducing verticality.

Further vertical emphasis is introduced in the relief between the classrooms and the adjacent ancillary spaces which is manifested in a change of brickwork colour at these points.

The fenestration has been rationalised so that all window modules are repeated.

The proportions of the recessed tall windows, the vertical vent and their relationship to the facade have been repositioned to give a much more vertical emphasis.

The ratio of openings to brick has been also been improved to give a clearer solid to void rhythm (2/3rd solid and 1/3rd opening) and follows similar characteristics to the Conservation Area.

## **5) Detail and decoration**

More attention to imbedded detail has been introduced in the proposals to better reflect the character of the Conservation Area and further articulate the design.

Soldier courses have been introduced above every window opening to emphasise traditional detailing.

Brickwork is stepped out below the top of the parapet to replicate traditional features of the Garrison Conservation Area.

An emphasis of colour to deep window reveals provides detail at human scale.

### **Retained aspects of the design**

We do not feel it is appropriate to alter the roof form and pronounced gables.

The four projecting roof cowls in the centre of the roof plan is a fundamental aspect of the environmental design.

We propose that each ridge is broken to lessen the impact of the asymmetrical roofline.

### **Heritage Issues**

It is acknowledged that the locally listed bunkers to the east of the site are not referred to in the Design and Access Statement or on the site layout drawings.

It is intended that these bunkers remain intact and unaltered

It should be noted that ECC do not own of this area of land and that Taylor Wimpey are retaining ownership.

It is considered that the fore mentioned modifications will greatly improve the design and achieve a building which is much more sensitive to its context.

It should be noted that the proposed pedestrian improvements to Circular Road North are outside the scope of this application and in fact the subject of a separate application by ECC and Taylor Wimpey.

### **Landscape and Arboricultural Issues**

The suggestions prepared by Colchester's Landscape Officer have been considered as an integral part of the proposed modifications. In particular we draw attention to the following amendments.

More colour definition in the proposed types of hard landscaping will be introduced.

Additional small lime trees will be introduced to 'gap up' the more open portions of the mature trees to the southern boundary.

The group of three trees proposed to the northern boundary will be omitted in place of a more mature and robust single tree.

The entrance approach and setting of the building frontage facing Abbey Field has been improved to offer a more integrated design appropriate to its location.

The pedestrian entrance has been defined with a wider path and brick piers.

With regard to the Arboricultural issues mentioned, we have the following comments.

A further more detailed survey of the trees will be carried out. It is proposed that the details of this report are conveyed in a pre start planning condition.

The proposed boundary fence is described in section 8.4 of the Design and Access Statement.

The car park will incorporate a small retaining kerb and in order not to affect the existing tree routes.

The location of the cycle stores and their pedestrian access has been repositioned to fall outside the root protection area of the adjacent trees.

The proposed low level mound adjacent to T2 and T3 has been reduced and repositioned to avoid any detrimental effect on these root protection areas.

Please refer to the accompanying updated site and landscape plan.

It is also proposed that all aspects of landscaping are conditioned on approval.

### **Community Use**

The school's governing body will determine which areas of the school will be available for community use and lettings.

### **Environmental Control Issues**

#### **Amenity Issues**

We acknowledge the comments made by CBC Environmental Control Officer. It should be noted that ECC will not be providing a close boarded fence.

#### **Air Quality**

With regard to the comments on air quality, we recommend that a suitably worded condition forms part of the planning approval and that an updated School Travel Plan is prepared in advanced of work commencing on site.

#### **Contamination Issues**

We acknowledge that suitable conditions will be developed on permission.

### **Highway Matters**

Essex County Council Highway Authority has been consulted prior to the submission of this application.

The cycle provision indicated in the proposal is proportionate to the number of pupils who will initially attend the school

There are no designated cycle routes within the boundary of the site and the proposed cycle route serving the site will be cited in more detail in the amended Design and Access Statement.

The zebra crossing and footpath widening are being carried out as a direct contract with ECC highways and does not form part of this planning application.

## **Summary**

The proposed modifications have been generated as a result of feedback received from Colchester Borough Council's 'holding letter of objection'.

In putting forward the suggested amendments as an alternative expression of the design strategy, we have held onto the integrity of the original scheme, while relating to the key characteristics of the Garrison Conservation Area and principles of successful urban design.

The amendments result in a building that has an appropriate balance of objectives, it is fit for education purpose, it is responsive to the site and is more appropriate to the established character of the Conservation Area.

The proposed amendments, despite representing a noticeable increase in cost in the region of £100,000 to the project, have been endorsed by ECC.

We are of the opinion that they retrospectively enhance the scheme, and consequently, we commend these modifications for your approval."

## **Officer Response**

*In view of the late nature of the amendment submission, it has not been possible to re-consult all the relevant officers on the suggested changes. This Council's Urban Design Officer has provided the following initial response:*

*The amendments to the school appear unsuccessful.*

*I would suggest that the fenestration remains domestic and unsympathetic to the CA, the attempt has not removed the horizontal emphasis which is alien to the CA.*

*The canopies over the front of the building still appear to disrupt the architectural composition and the addition to the entrance on the front fails to appear integral to the design.*

*I would be minded to point out that the CGI sent to illustrate the amended scheme are misleading. The glazed section above the front entrance would not read as illustrated and is another tokenistic attempt to give more sympathy to the principles it should have contained initially. The minimal amount of articulation between modules as shown on the plans is only a brick width yet the CGI's show a much larger shadow than the articulation would actually achieve.*



***Soldier courses have been proposed as window headers but this is an alien and crude means of detailing that is not sympathetic or common on principle elevations in the CA.***

***The contrasting brick work details, both the vertical bands of buff and the red diamond patterns remain in the scheme and are both crude and alien to the Conservation Area. The architect has submitted a photo of one of the 1960s buildings that is intended to be demolished which has this diamond patterning. It would appear a strange justification for the retention of this detail.***

***In summary I would suggest that the amendments do not go far enough in making the building appear appropriate in the Garrison Conservation Area and that there has been an element of insincerity in the way some of the amendments have been visually portrayed.***

**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING COMMITTEE  
1 November 2012 at 6:00pm**

**SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

**Part B**

(not open to the public or the media)

**Pages**

**There are no Section B Items**