

Reference:	16/00026/ECREM
Site Address:	Neighbourhood Centre Castle Hill, Eastern Quarry Swanscombe DA10 0EX
Proposal:	Submission of reserved matters pursuant to condition 02, 25, 28, 32, 33 of planning permission DA/12/01451/EQVAR for erection of a 2 form entry primary school including play areas and sports pitches, community centre, associated parking, village square and landscaping
Applicant:	L S Eastern Quarry Ltd
Parish / Ward:	Swanscombe & Greenhithe

SUMMARY

The application seeks permission for the erection of a large, striking, contemporary style building in the neighbourhood centre of Castle Hill, the first of the villages in Eastern Quarry to commence construction. Permission is sought pursuant to the outline application for Eastern Quarry for reserved matters in respect of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.

The building would provide a 2FE primary school for 420 pupils, 26 nursery places and 15 special needs pupils, together with 422m² floor area for a community centre within the same building. In front of the building a terraced area would provide space for an open village square, together with associated circulation spaces and an open area made available for parking. The open areas are enhanced by soft landscaping and use subtle way markers so as not to detract from the open design. The proposal provides an open space which delivers a meeting place and opportunities for community functions. The terracing of levels from north to south together with the massing of the new building would create a dramatic site profile and interesting sequence of spaces to create a good quality space.

The building has been designed to meet the BREEAM 'very good' category and with sustainable energy in mind has been orientated to maximise passive solar gain overlooking south facing hard and soft play areas and wild flower and sedum roof sections for thermal gain and visual amenity for properties that look down on the site. The depth, texture and rhythm of the different materials used in the elevations create an animation to the external appearance through the passing shadows during the day and from occupation during the evening.

The application presents an important stepping stone in provision for community infrastructure in Eastern Quarry which is essential for the creation of a neighbourhood within Castle Hill and to provide much needed school spaces for the area. It would provide a focus and centre to the community which would be enhanced by other surrounding commercial uses which are proposed in later phases.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to the following conditions with delegated authority to the Chief Planning Officer to make minor changes to the wording:

Time

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of two years from the date of this reserved matters approval.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 92(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Approved Plans

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

Layout Drawings:

08185-CHS-LEP-0-A-(00)001; 08185-CHS-LEP-0-A-(00)002C

Plans & Elevations:

08185-CHS-LEP-0-A-(00)003B; 08185-CHS-LEP-0-A-(00)004A; 08185-CHS-LEP-0-A-(00)005; 15-0760-SK204-C; 08185-CHP-LEP-X-A(00)006C; 08185-CHP-LEP-X-A(00)008; 08185-CHP-LEP-X-A(00)009; 08185-CHP-LEP-X-A(00)010; 08185-CHP-LEP-X-A(00)011; CHPS-MLM-00-XX-DR-YP-SK09 Rev E

Landscape Plans:

OX4950-4-111 Rev 01; OX4950-9-100 Rev 02; OX4950-9-101 Rev 02; OX4950-9-102 Rev 01; OX4950-9-103 Rev 01; OX4950-9-200 Rev 02; OX4950-9-300 Rev 01; OX4950-9-301 Rev 01; OX4950-9-400 Rev 01; OX4950-9-401 Rev 01; OX4950-9-402 Rev 01; OX4950-9-505; OX4950-9-506; OX4950-8-100 Rev 05; OX4950-8-110 Rev 03; OX4950-8-120 Rev 03; OX4950-8-400 Rev 01; OX4950-8-401 Rev 01; OX4950-8-402 Rev 01; OX4950-8-403 Rev 01; OX4950-8-404 Rev 01; OX4950-8-500 Rev 01; OX4950-8-502 Rev 01

Drainage Details:

CHPS- MLM-00-XX-DR-C-003 P2

Cut and Fill Drawings:

616735-CHPS-MLM-00-XX-DR-C-004 Rev P1; 616735-CHPS-MLM-00-XX-DR-C-005 Rev P1; 616735-CHPS-MLM-00-XX-DR-C-006 Rev P1

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory form of development.

Prior to Commencement of Development

3. No development (including site preparation) or the delivery of any associated machinery or materials shall take place until the site has been re-surveyed for reptiles and an up-to-date mitigation strategy and monitoring scheme (to include a programme of implementation) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in

accordance with the mitigation strategy, monitoring scheme and programme of implementation.

Reason: To ensure the continued preservation of any protected species identified on the site and to avoid irreversible effects.

4. No development (including site preparation) or the delivery of any associated machinery or materials shall take place until a detailed scheme to ensure that the playing fields hereby approved will be provided to an acceptable quality (including appropriate drainage where necessary) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme within a timescale to be first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England.

Reason: To ensure that site surveys are undertaken for new or replacement playing fields and that any ground condition constraints can be and are mitigated to ensure provision of an adequate quality playing field.

5. No development (including site preparation) or the delivery of any associated machinery or materials shall take place until details of the existing levels and contours together with finished slab levels for the proposed building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development and enable it to be monitored.

Prior to Development above Foundation

6. No development above foundation level shall take place until details and samples of materials to be used in the external surfaces of the school/community centre building hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in accordance with policy B1 of Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

7. No development above foundation level shall take place until details and samples of the hard surfacing materials to be used in the external finishes of all roads, footpaths and the public square have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development policy B1 of Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

8. No development above foundation level shall take place until details of all walls (including retaining walls), fences, gates or other means of enclosure (including car park barrier) to be erected in or around the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include

location, appearance, materials and finish. The details as approved shall be implemented prior to the first opening of either the school or community centre to the public.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and in the interests of residential amenity policy B1 of Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

9. No development above foundation level shall take place until details for the extraction and treatment of cooking fumes, including details for the control of noise and vibration from the system and details of any external flue, shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented before the development is brought into use and thereafter be maintained in accordance with the approved details. No cooking of food shall take place unless the approved extraction system is being operated.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the occupants of the school and community centre and future surrounding properties.

10. No development above foundation level shall take place until details of the mechanical ventilation system for the school and community centre have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved schemes shall be implemented before the development is brought into use and thereafter be maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the occupants of the school and community centre and future surrounding properties.

Prior to Occupation of the Development

11. The playground and playing fields as shown on the approved plans shall be made ready and available for use prior to the first opening of the primary school hereby approved.

Reason: In the interests of amenity for the school children.

12. Prior to the first opening of the school/community centre to public, details of the street furniture shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development in the interests of visual amenity.

13. Prior to the occupation of the school or community centre hereby approved, details of the facilities for the storage and collection of waste and refuse site shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out and thereafter maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the appearance of the locality and that adequate access can be gained by collection vehicles in accordance with policies B1 of the Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

14. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved, details of any proposed external lighting or floodlighting to be attached to the buildings or erected within the car park or around the external sports pitches and within the public highway shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include siting, angles, levels of illumination and any shields. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the area and in the interests of road safety in accordance with policy B1 of the Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

15. Prior to the first use of the community centre hereby approved, details of a management strategy for the use of the main hall space shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include hours of opening and a typical timetable and accord with the 'Shared community Facilities' document submitted with this application. The use of the community centre shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved management strategy and shall be only for activities beneficial to the community falling within Use Class D2 of Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, (or for any order amending, revoking and re-enacting that Order) unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. A 6-monthly report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority showing the level of compliance with the approved strategy.

Reason: In the interests of amenities and highway safety.

Parking

16. Details of cycle parking shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and provided in accordance with the approved details prior to the first opening of either the school or community centre to public. The cycle parking shall be maintained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure the provision and retention of adequate off street parking facilities for bicycles in the interests of highway safety and to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport.

17. Prior to the first use of either the community centre or school hereby approved, the public parking area to the front of the building together with the staff car park to the south of the site shall be made available in accordance with the approved plans. The spaces shall be maintained and kept available for such use at all times and no development, whether permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 or not, shall be carried out on that area of land or to preclude vehicular access thereto.

Reason: To ensure the permanent retention of satisfactory car parking facilities in accordance with the Local Planning Authority's standards and Policies B1 and T23 of the adopted Dartford Local Plan.

18. Prior to the first occupation of the school or community centre hereby approved, a detailed Management Strategy, to be informed by the Traffic Management Plan submitted with the application, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Management Strategy shall include details such as allocation of spaces and 2-hour traffic controls to the public car parking area to the west of the site together with controlled access and a phasing plan and management details for the staff car park to the south of the site. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved strategy and maintained thereafter. Thereafter, a 6-monthly review of the Strategy together with details of any further measures that maybe required as a result of the review shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for agreement for a period of 5 years following the first opening of the nursery. Any further measures agreed shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

19. Prior to the first occupation of the school hereby approved, details of measures to alleviate parking demand and encourage sustainable travel to and from the site, building on the principles of the initial Travel Plan submitted with the application, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development carried out in accordance with the approved details. Details should include consideration of lift-sharing for pupils and park-and-walk (i.e. not loading and unloading children at the school). Thereafter, a yearly review of travel to and parking at the site together with details of any further measures that maybe required as a result of the review shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for agreement for a period of 5 years following the first opening of the nursery. Any further measures agreed shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To ensure the free flow of traffic and in the interests of sustainability.

Other

20. Prior to installation, details of any public art to be displayed within the open spaces hereby permitted, including location, design, appearance, dimensions, materials, lighting, method of erection, mounting/plinth, shall be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development implemented in accordance with the approved details. Any item of public art removed shall be replaced within 6 months of the date of its removal by an item of public art, details of which shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visual appearance.

21. Prior to installation, details of any TV receiver equipment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include size and location of the equipment and the development carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visual appearance.

22. Prior to installation, details of any signage to be displayed on the building or within the open space hereby permitted, including location, design, appearance, dimensions, materials, lighting, shall be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visual appearance.

Informatives

- 1 Your attention is drawn to the need to contact Dartford Borough Council's Street Naming and Numbering Officer in order to have the new properties formally addressed.
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1.0 SITE CONTEXT AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1. The application site is formed of an area of brownfield land approximately 2.64ha in area situated within the Eastern Quarry (EQ) development site in Ebbsfleet Garden City. EQ, which measures some 270ha in area, is bounded to the south by the A2, the B255 and Bluewater shopping centre to the west, and Alkerden Land and the settlements of Greenhithe and Swanscombe to the north. The topography across EQ slopes considerably, notably from north to south, towards a lake with chalk cliffs beyond, which mark the significant change in the surrounding land levels.
- 1.2. Outline planning permission has been granted for EQ in which development takes the form of three connected villages. The first to come forward is 'Castle Hill' at the eastern end of EQ. The current application sits within the Castle Hill area. A previously permitted phase in Castle Hill for 150 dwellings is currently under construction by Ward Homes to the northwest of the application site. Permission has recently been approved by the EDC Planning Committee for the development of 170 dwellings plus 125 affordable homes in the second phase of development immediately to the north of the application site beyond the proposed Fastrack route, a dedicated public transport corridor for bus, cycles and pedestrians only. Public vehicular roads bound the application site to the west, south and east, as secured by EQ strategies and permissions granted for EQ infrastructure, but have largely yet to be constructed. Further development sites to the south of the application site are forthcoming but no detailed permissions have yet been granted. Outside the boundary of EQ, the Northfleet West Sub Station site (known as Ebbsfleet Green) which is being developed by Redrow, is located to the southwest.
- 1.3. The application seeks permission for reserved matters from the original outline permission for Eastern Quarry pursuant to condition 2 of DA/12/0141/EQVAR. The reserved matters relate to access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the erection of a community building and associated external areas. The building would large comprise a 2FE primary school. The school would have a gross internal floor area of 2679m². The school operator has been confirmed as

the Leigh Academies Trust (LAT) and will provide spaces for 420 pupils, 26 nursery places, and 15 special needs spaces. Formal and informal play areas would be provided within the grounds including a netball court and no under 7/8 sports pitches. The school is programmed to be open in September 2017.

- 1.4. Within one of the branches to the front of the proposed building would be located a community centre. The community centre is comprised of a reception area, main hall/activity space (capable of accommodating 150 people and being sub-divided), a secondary activity spaces, catering area, office, meeting room, WCs and a 'changing places' standard facility. The main hall space has been designed with double height in the central area to accommodate sports such as badminton. While both within the same building complex the school and community centre are internally separate.
- 1.5. Immediately to the front of the building would be a public amenity square designed as a terrace with landscaping measuring approximately 700m². A parking area has been located across the front of the site accessed from a principal access road to the west (the 'North-South Boulevard'). Primarily, pedestrian routes will be from Fastrack through the neighbourhood centre to the front of the school with other pathways leading from the south and west and cycle routes from Fastrack and along the North South Boulevard with a pathway made through the car park. A second car park is proposed to the south of the school to provide parking for staff members of the school. It is intended this second car park will serve staff at the health centre proposed to the southwest corner of the neighbourhood centre, when it comes forward in the future. The health centre does not form part of this application.
- 1.6. While the community centre and school have been designed independently, some crossover is possible between the facilities where appropriate. The application states that there is opportunity for access to the school grounds to be made available out of school time for the use of the 2No. junior size football pitches or single hockey pitch, netball court and hard play area. Other uses of the sports areas may be possible over the course of the seasons, subject to the operator's preference for key school sports as well as local demand from community groups. The school hall is also identified as being utilised for multi-functional purposes from meetings, to gym and dance classes to rehearsals, polling station and yoga classes. The community hall may also be used for occasional school activities and where a public event may take place in the square, part of the main car park may be utilised, with additional flexible parking provision made available within the staff car park, for example, for events held outside school time.
- 1.7. Pursuant to condition 25 of the outline permission for EQ which requires the submission of details to be provided with any Reserved Matters application, details of the following sections in relation to the condition have been provided in the submission and will be discussed in the appraisal section below:
 - a) Updated area plan
 - b) Landscaping
 - c) Materials
 - d) Street lighting and furniture
 - e) Boundary treatment

- f) Surface finishes and hard landscaping
- h) External lighting
- i) Public art
- j) Cycle Parking
- k) Television receivers
- l) Signage and interpretation
- m) Internal layout of community facility building

1.8. In addition, approval is sought pursuant to condition 28 of the outline permission in relation to noise assessment and mitigation strategy, condition 32 in relation to areas of open land and condition 33 relating to details of community facility buildings.

1.9. The application is supported by several documents:

- Planning Design and Access Statement
- Planning Application Supporting Summary
- Acoustic Assessment Report
- Archaeological Statement
- Transport Assessment, Travel Plan, Transport Strategy and Traffic Management Plan
- Shared Community Facilities (including Management)
- Ecological Appraisal
- Public Consultation Event Report
- Landscape Maintenance Schedules and Programme
- Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy
- Sustainability Statement and BREEAM Accreditation Pre-assessments
- Surface Water Drainage Scheme Design
- Landscaping Schedules

2.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

2.1. DA/03/1134/OUT - Outline permission for a mixed development comprising up to 6,250 dwellings and up to 231,000sq metres of built floorspace for: business premises; education; community & social facilities; hotels; theatre; & supporting retail & leisure facilities & associated works. Approved 13.11.07.

2.2. DA/12/01451/EQVAR - S73 application for the variation of conditions of DA/03/1134/OUT to reflect a revised disposition of land uses across the site. Approved 18.01.13.

2.3. The outline planning permission reserved all matters for future development but fixed certain elements:

- A 'Land Use Disposition Plan' was approved as part of the permission and this shows spatially how the development should come forward
- Several strategies (covering landscaping, design, phasing, public art, community participation and transport) which form a framework for the

development as it comes forward were secured by the planning permission and S106 Agreement.

2.4. The outline permission sets a structured approach to the consideration of planning matters as phases come forward over time. The structure of the required documents are set out in the following hierarchy:

- Site Wide Master Plan – originally granted in 2008 and revised 14.03.13 (12/01452/EQCON) which identifies the broad location and approximate disposition of land uses across the site.
- Area Master Plan (AMP) – required for each parcel of land for each phase as the development proceeds. Each AMP shall generally accord with the SWMP and provide greater detail on matters such as land use, building heights, density and indication of private/affordable sub areas.
- Area Design Code – The design code follows on from the relevant AMP and should provide the necessary detail to inform final design, being such matters as, architectural style and treatment, surface finishes, materials pallets, building forms and soft landscaping.

2.5. The AMP for Castle Hill was originally approved in March 2008 (DA/07/01326/EQCHC) but the boundary was extended and subsequently subdivided into 3 parcels (Castle Hill Central/Castle Hill East/Castle Hill and North East Local Park) following amendments to land use at the eastern end of the site. The AMP for Castle Hill Central in which this application site is located was granted in October 2014 (DA/14/00584/EQCHC). For the most part, the area is designed to be low to medium density residential development punctuated with village and neighbourhood greens, with higher density along the Fastrack public transport corridor which runs through the middle of the area with mixed use high density, public square and primary school to the southeastern corner.

2.6. The Design Code for the south eastern corner of Castle Hill Central, the Castle Hill Central Neighbourhood Area, was approved 28.01.16 (15/01876/ECCDNA) for a small block which encompasses a primary school, neighbourhood square, commercial uses including retail stores, health centre and some residential. It identifies a contemporary approach to the buildings and the methodology for the formation of an active and social centre to serve the immediate community.

3.0 PUBLICITY

3.1. Neighbours notified by letter. Expiry date 29.02.16.

3.2. Site notice. Expiry date 01.03.16

3.3. Press notice. Expiry date 03.03.16

4.0 REPRESENTATIONS

4.1. None received.

5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

5.1. The following organisations have been consulted on the application:

Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council; Kent Highways; Dartford Borough Council; Environmental Health; Environment Agency; Education and Libraries – KCC; Economic Development Officer – KCC; Lead Flood Authority – KCC; Landscapes – KCC; Sport England; Kent Police Crime Prevention; Southern Water; Thames Water Utilities.

5.2. The following responses have been received and summarised as follows:

5.2.1. Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council

No observations made

5.2.2. Kent Highways

Initial concerns were raised in respect of the original layout of the public square and the car parking area. This has been resolved following submission of amended plans with a revised layout. While there is uncertainty on the parking space provision given that data relating to the surrounding future phases of the neighbourhood centre are currently unknown, Highways consider there is insufficient evidence to suggest the development would result in conditions that would be significantly severe to recommend refusal, subject to appropriate conditions.

5.2.3. Environmental Health (Dartford Borough Council)

No comments made on the acoustic assessment for the school but wish to note that it is not possible to make an assessment while there are currently no surrounding buildings. It was noted there appeared to be nothing in the application that demonstrated the community centre had been designed to mitigate noise.

5.2.4. Environment Agency

No comments to make on the drainage details submitted as drainage is going via surface pipework to the attenuation lake and agreed discharge via Swanscombe or mains sewer at Southfleet. It is recommended that Kent County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, be consulted on the surface water aspects of the drainage proposals.

5.2.5. KCC Education

Kent County Council has provided a co-ordinated response from the relevant officers of each department. It confirms the procedures that have been followed through the Education Review Group and the submission of an Initiation Notice to KCC advising of the proposal and confirms the need for the school. Confirmation that the proposal meets KCC requirements in respect of noise, design parameters of the school building and layout of the sports pitches to KCC specification.

5.2.6. KCC – Lead Flood Authority

Refer to the previously approved Eater Management Plan under condition 12 of the outline permission. Previously made comments highlighting the concerns in relation to reliance of phased delivery within a strategic plan which is now 9 years old, may not be reflective of current legislation and regulation and does not provide sufficient detail of subsequent phases to clearly show how surface water drainage is to be provided in each phase.

Concerns raised regarding discharge rates and the current approach to surface water management. Notwithstanding this, no formal objection is raised given the greater provision within the site but provides recommendations for the LPA to consider. Identifies EQ permitted prior to KCC's statutory role.

5.2.7. Sport England

Sport England has a non-statutory role and policy position in respect of this application. Recommends a ground conditions assessment is undertaken by a sports turf specialist/agronomist who can recommend a scheme for preparing the playing fields to the required specification. Notes that there is no detail on the design of the sports hall in the application but the overall area does not appear to meet the required size in accordance with Sport England design guidance. Suggests that a single sports hall is provided instead of two separate halls for the community and for the school and which should include adequate changing facilities. Sport England cannot ascertain whether the play area to the rear would be a 'MUGA' sports facility or simply an additional area of hard play. Where it is intended to be a MUGA, it should be fit for purpose and designed in line with Sport England design guidance in respect of size, surface and fencing.

While they are unable to support the proposal because the design of the pitches and hall do not meet their own standards, they recommended conditions relating to assessment of ground conditions, Use Class limitation, and provision of a community use scheme.

Following additional information from the Football Association which advises there is local club, Swanscombe Tigers, has demand for mini soccer pitches to enable the club to grow. Toilet facilities should therefore be made available to the users of the pitches in close locality.

5.2.8. Southern Water

No comments to make.

5.2.9. Thames Water

Area is covered by Southern Water. No comments to make.

5.2.10. Dartford Borough Council

Raises concerns no reference is made to the Transport Strategy which forms part of the outline permission and that no details of the wider safe routes to the school have been identified including a safe cycle route. Concern raised that the route along North-South Boulevard has been made difficult for pedestrians and cyclists. No assessment is made on the impact of the surrounding roads at peak times of school drop off,

community centre uses. Potential problems are identified by the separation of the parking spaces for the health centre and services area.

6.0 PLANNING POLICY

6.1. National Policy & Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

6.2. Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Core Strategy (2011):

CS1 - Spatial Pattern of Development
CS4 - Ebbsfleet to Stone Priority Area
CS5 - Ebbsfleet Valley Strategic Site
CS15 - Managing Transport Demand
CS21 - Community Services
CS22 - Sports, Recreation and Culture Facilities
CS23 - Minimising Carbon Emissions
CS25 - Water Management
CS26 - Delivery and Infrastructure

6.3. Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011):

T18 - Traffic Management
T23 - Parking
T27 - Pedestrians and the Environment
T33 - Provision for Disabled People and the Less Mobile

6.4. Dartford Development Policies Plan (DDPP) (draft December 2015) as emerging policy:

DP1 - Sustainable Development
DP2 - Good Design
DP3 - Transport Impacts
DP4 - Transport Access and Design
DP5 - Environmental and Amenity Protection
DP11 - Sustainable Technology and Construction
DP21 - Securing Community Facilities
DP25 - Nature Conservation and Enhancement

6.5. Other Guidance:

Parking Standards SPD

7.0 APPRAISAL

7.1. The main issues to be considered in connection with this proposal are the principal of development, each of the Reserved Matters (access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale), together with parking/highway issues, sports pitch provision, noise, ecology, drainage and archaeology, neighbouring amenity.

Intrinsic to the assessment of these issues is whether the proposal complies with local and national policy and the overarching aims of the AMP, the Castle Hill Central Neighbourhood Area Design Code and the Education Delivery Strategy and Community and Leisure Facilities Strategy.

Principle of Development

- 7.2. Paragraphs 70 and 72 of the NPPF endorse a positive approach to the provision of community facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. It seeks to ensure that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, giving great weight to the need to create new schools. Core Strategy policy CS21 seeks to ensure that community needs for services are provided in an appropriate location and in a timely and effective way. Policy CS5 sets out development aspirations for the Ebbsfleet Valley Strategic Site. These include the need for facilities required to support the community, in particular provision of infrastructure including schools, sports and leisure facilities, community meeting places, provided at an appropriate stage of development in appropriate locations which complement the existing provision in adjoining communities. This policy also sets out the need for a mixed use centre at the heart of each residential village to include community facilities. This is reiterated in emerging policy DP21 of the DDPP which states that new community facilities will be permitted where they are in an appropriate location and of a type and scale to reflect the needs of the communities they will serve.
- 7.3. Planning permission has already been secured for the site under the outline application for the whole of Eastern Quarry and its provision drawn down through the suite of documents (Site Wide Master Plan, Castle Hill Central Area Masterplan and Castle Hill Central Neighbourhood Area Design Code) that have all been approved pursuant to the outline permission and form a comprehensive strategy and set of objectives for delivery of a primary school, community centre, associated open space, parking and public square in this location.
- 7.4. The outline planning permission was subject to a S106 legal agreement that sets out the specification for primary schools up to 2FE in EQ and secures their delivery. The S106 also requires that an Education Review Group (ERG) is established as a platform for discussion on the methodology for the delivery of education facilities, identifying demand for the education facilities and any other matters, as agreed, and consisting of a panel of 6 members comprising 3 appointed by the Owner and 3 appointed by the Council. The ERG was established comprising representatives of KCC, Land Securities and attended by Dartford Borough Council Planning with other invited parties attending as and when necessary.
- 7.5. The S106 agreement set out triggers for their delivery and requires an Initiation Notice to be served to the County Council. The trigger for the first primary school Initiation Notice was set out in the S106 as being within 4 weeks of 'Implementation' (defined within the S106 as being the commencement of development pursuant to the outline planning permission save for certain excepted preparatory works). These can be varied by the ERG and in respect of the first primary school, an Initiation Notice was served by Land Securities to

KCC on 24 November 2014. KCC commenced the formal Operator procurement with the first public consultation meeting held on 9th December 2014.

- 7.6. It was agreed by the ERG that the School in Castle Hill Neighbourhood Centre should be a Two Form Entry School (2FE). A Design Team was appointed and various discussions held with KCC including special needs and sports pitches, and monthly reviews were presented to the ERG. On 21st October 2015, KCC advised that the Secretary of State for Education had appointed Leigh Academies Trust as the school operator. Presentations were subsequently made to the Trust who has been presented with the scheme now the subject of the planning application.
- 7.7. Various strategies were also secured by the S106, including the Education Delivery Strategy. This document seeks to support the process for delivery of the schools, identify regimes for delivery, ensure that appropriate education facilities are available and that sufficient land is allocated to cope with the number of pupils predicted to be resident at EQ and seeking a place at a local maintained school. This document identifies the provision of the 2FE primary schools at EQ to provide for 420 pupils.
- 7.8. In response to consultation on this application, KCC have confirmed that there is a significant need for additional school places in the area. Their annual commissioning plan outlines the forecasted demand and measures KCC will put in place to mitigate demand. Over the last six years, primary demand has grown with the result of the existing school stock being extremely limited in this part of North Kent. The effect of this is that any additional demand (even a small number of children) that is created by new development must be met with new provision due to the capacity of the existing infrastructure. Furthermore, the Supporting Summary submitted by the applicant includes supporting statements from Donald Farquhason, Head of Capital Programmes, Property and Infrastructure at KCC; Sue Crocker, Business Director, Leigh Academies Trust; Ian Watts, Area Education officer for North Kent at KCC; Julie Ely, Head of SEN Assessment & Placement, EYPS at KCC; and Chris Metherell, Venues Development Manager at KCC. All comments acknowledge involvement with pre-application discussions and support for the principle.
- 7.9. In respect of community facilities, the outline permission sets out that these are to be provided on a 'hub and spoke' principle. The 'hub' space will be provided in the market centre and will be run by KCC and provide a focus for their community services. The 'spokes' will be provided in each village and will provide more traditional community halls. The Community and Leisure Facilities Strategy, identifies the provision of community centres at the western and eastern villages of up to 835m² gross external floors space in total for the two centres. The floor space of the community centre is approximately 422m² which is considered an appropriate split between the two proposed centres based on the relatively equal size of the residential community which they would serve.
- 7.10. It is considered the applicant has followed the necessary procedures for establishing a school and community centre at this site which had been secured in principle within the higher level documents for the EQ strategy. Development of residential units has commenced at Castle Hill, being 85 completions at the time of writing this report, and the high demand for the school has been identified

by KCC. The provision of a school, community centre and village square in this location, which is geographically located in the middle of Castle Hill village and largely isolated from the surrounding locality by virtue of the nature of the EQ development, is coming forward with a confirmed need in an appropriate and sustainable location to meet the needs of existing and future residents to provide a heart to the community, consistent with local and national policy and the established outline planning permission with its supporting documentation.

Reserved Matters:

Access

- 7.11. Matters relating to access including consideration of the accessibility to and within the site for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians in terms of the positioning and treatment of access and circulation routes and how these fit into the surrounding access network. Matters relating to parking provision will be considered separately under the Highways section below.
- 7.12. Paragraphs 29 and 30 of the NPPF support the favourability of sustainable transport modes and solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy encourages mixed use development and close interrelationship between different land uses and the provision of Fastrack to minimise car use and make effective and sustainable use of the transport network and policy T33 encourages consideration to those disabled people and the less mobile. Emerging policy DP3 of the DDPP requires development to be appropriately located to minimise and manage arising transport impacts and DP2d) and DP4 promote the prioritisation of walking, cycling and public transport through clear linkages and permeability.
- 7.13. The principle routes and junctions through EQ and the spine roads that surround the application site have already been approved at the outline stage. While the red line boundary submitted with the application includes a section of the North-South Boulevard, access to the site from the wider area as already been secured by the higher level documents and previous permissions for highway infrastructure and is therefore outside the remit of this application. The site is immediately adjacent to and accessible from the North-South Boulevard which links to the surrounding roads, and is close to the Fastrack corridor.
- 7.14. From within the site, accessibility for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians is clearly set out and simple. Vehicular access to the car park is accessed from the North-South Boulevard via a single entry-only point at the north of the car park, with a central one-way route through the car park to a single exit-only point to the southern end of the car park. The single direction of travel within the car park provides legibility and simplicity as well as taking traffic off the main road for those parents dropping their children off in the morning (discussed in more detail below).
- 7.15. Priority has not, however, been given to the car. The site is in very close proximity to the Fastrack public transport corridor approximately 6m to the north. Established cycle routes from the Fastrack corridor have been incorporated along the North-South Boulevard within the site boundary and local cycle/pedestrian paths created across the top, through the middle and along the bottom of the

proposed car park to give access routes across the site to and from the school and community centre and public square. Provision has also been made to accommodate the proposed pedestrian link from the Fastrack corridor through the adjacent mixed use site (currently under discussion) which would open up directly onto the village square.

- 7.16. Despite difficulties with the sloping topography, there are no steps within the development and level changes dealt with by a series of slopes. Full accessibility around the site is therefore available to people with disabilities and those who are less mobile.
- 7.17. Footpath connections have been provided from the staff car park located to the south of the school straight into the playground providing a direct route into work for teachers travelling by car.
- 7.18. The scheme presents wide open spaces and lack of physical boundaries which allows for easy legibility and freedom of movement for all. There is a clear distinction between car routes and safe pedestrian and cycle-only routes. Access to and within the site are direct and create straightforward journeys. The scheme provides good permeability, inclusive movement and promotes the use of alternative modes of transportation for both staff and pupils and the general public. The accessibility within the site accords with the principles of the site becoming the neighbourhood centre, serving as a location to provide a heart to the surrounding community, in accordance with local and national policy and in accordance with the principles of a Garden City and Healthy New Town initiative as well as the aspirations for the centre as set out in the AMP and the Design Code.

Appearance

- 7.19. Matters of appearance refer to a building or place within the development which determine the visual impression the building or place makes, including the external built form of the development, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture.
- 7.20. The NPPF sets out the importance for good design as being indivisible from good planning (paragraph 56), gives weight to achieving high quality designed buildings and spaces (paragraph 57) and states that planning permission should be refused for 'development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions' (paragraph 64). Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy on the Ebbsfleet to Stone Priority Area promotes the creation of a chain of distinctive and individual but linked communities with built development 'reflecting the varied heritage of the area in order to create a sense of place'. Emerging policy DP2 of the DDPP sets out design principles for Dartford which includes a response, reinforcement and enhancement of positive aspects of the locality including cliff faces, facilitation of a sense of place with social interaction, use of public art and use of materials which should be sourced locally.
- 7.21. The proposed building is large. The architectural form is contemporary as advocated by the Castle Hill Central Neighbourhood Area Design Code. It has an irregular rectilinear form with flat roof and is arranged in stepped sections to

respond to the gradient across the site. The applicant refers to the architecture responding to the historical context of the quarry through the mass of the building being 'stepped and broken via a series of stratified elements in the form of wild flower and sedum covered cantilevered roofs and canopies'.

- 7.22. A wide pallet of materials has been used in varying ways giving the elevations an irregular rhythm and distinct appearance. The horizontal massing of the building has been broken up by employing a vertical emphasis to the elevations in the arrangement of the various materials in vertical strips. Slim larch fins run down sections of the building separated by areas of coloured cladding. Large vertical glazing sections in powder coated aluminium which serve the classrooms are flanked by perforated copper screens which add another dimension to the texture of the building. The elevations are punctuated by horizontal cantilever canopies at differing heights, proposed to be in white fibre cement cladding panels to add contrast and interest and reference the local chalk landscape. The materials project at different levels from the building, creating a textured surface to the elevations. The variation of reveal depths and rhythms in the elevations in the arrangement of the materials and window openings have been chosen to ensure that the external appearance of the building is animated by passing sunlight throughout the day and from occupation during the evening. The double height internal ceiling level of the community centre is the tallest element of the whole building and is proposed to be clad in vertical larch strips with polycarbonate in-between to allow the light from within the hall to shine through when in use in the evening and indicating activity within, creating a visual beacon from the square. The indicative materials include cladding in coloured fibre cement, copper and zinc. Indicative colours in natural 'hessian', 'sandstorm', 'pebble' with a contrasting brighter yellow for the insulated curtainwall panels above the glazing units have been suggested for the cladding panels but can be secured by condition.
- 7.23. The open space and public square provide a sense of space and invite views into the site towards a striking and distinctive building which provides a strong edge to the neighbourhood centre. In light of its size, design and position, the building would have a strong visual presence and would create a focal point for this neighbourhood centre. Its bright and fun appearance appeals to its function as a public building and gives character to the area. The overall appearance of the site therefore would provide a sense of place and distinctiveness. It is considered the site has been well designed with an attractive appearance which provides distinctive character and incorporates references to the heritage of the quarry in the materials and architectural concept, in accordance with local and national policies.

Landscaping

- 7.24. This reserved matters considers the treatment of land (other than buildings) for the purpose of enhancing or protecting the amenities of the site and the area in which it is situated including screening by fences, walls or other means; the planting of trees, hedges, shrubs or grass; formation of banks, terraces or other earthworks; the laying out or provision of gardens, courts, squares, water features, sculpture or public art; and the provision of other amenity features.

- 7.25. The NPPF states that planning decisions should aim to ensure developments are visually attractive as a result of appropriate landscaping (paragraph 58), identifying the importance of good landscaping being intrinsic to good quality design, as advocated by policy DP2 of the emerging DDPP, which states that within large developments, public art reflecting local character and heritage should be included where possible and that spaces should be designed to be inclusive, safe and accessible for all Dartford's communities, including young, elderly, disabled and less mobile people.
- 7.26. The site will form the community centre and the heart of the local neighbourhood. In response to this, it has been designed to be open with no solid physical boundaries or screening which would obstruct views or enclose the space. In light of the level change across the site which requires a typical gradient of 1:21, some terracing has been provided at the public square. However, the lack of steps in the landscape design in favour of gentle slopes and flush kerbs has been developed to consider flexibility of use and inclusive access to the community centre and primary school creating a gentle appearance to the landscape.
- 7.27. The landscape design focuses on the village square as the arrival space to key community buildings. It would be defined by rows of trees and low shrubs, with extensive seating and ornamental planting. Built on a terrace with a gentle gradient, it has been identified as suitable for community events and a social meeting area as well as providing a safe space for children and parents to meet after school. The application identifies the potential for the provision of a piece of public art within the square which would create a focal point and landmark. Though no specific details have been provided, this can be secured by condition.
- 7.28. The public car parking area has been softened with areas of planting providing banks to respond to the topography and which have a functional role in serving as way markers for pedestrians and vehicles as well as contributing to the visual amenity of the area. An appropriate mix of shrubs and trees line the edge of the highway and parking bays including lime trees (*Tilia cordata* 'Greenspire') and Flowering Cherry (*Prunus avium* 'Plena') would be planted at semi mature sizes to provide immediate structure and create a green leafy environment. Discreet marker studs almost flush with the ground would be used to identify the parking bays.
- 7.29. Street furniture would be contemporary in style with natural warm finishes such as timber slatted seating, as set out in the Design Code. Indicative materials suggest warm grey coloured paving would be used to the parking areas in contrast to the buff coloured paving of the surrounding pavements and a different material to the highway in front of the square used to mark the change in character along the North-South Boulevard. While indicative details have been provided, these also need to be secured by condition.
- 7.30. Softening landscaping strips have also been used in the staff car parking area, around the perimeter and in between the rows of parking which would provide screening from the public realm and soften the appearance from within the space.
- 7.31. Within the school grounds, extensive planting has been used. A variety of planting including grass pitches, native shrub mix, bulb planting and the opportunity for a children's gardening area has been set out. The planting is

varied and provides the opportunity for the children to benefit from and attractive sensory environment. Landscaping within the school also includes areas for playground and integrated seating areas and areas of formal and informal play, together with opportunities for external teaching environments.

- 7.32. Comments are awaited from Kent Highways in respect of any landscaping matters that arise in relation to highway safety. Any issues that arise will be reported separately.
- 7.33. It is considered that strong and extensive landscaping has been used to compensate the expanse of parked cars, especially fronting the road and public square and to create an attractive and inviting environment, consistent with the aims of the Area Master Plan and Design Code and national and local policy.

Layout

- 7.34. Issues for consideration in respect of layout include the way in which buildings, routes and open spaces within the development are provided, situated and orientated in relation to each other and to buildings and spaces outside the development.
- 7.35. The NPPF encourages the provision of safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians and avoiding street clutter (paragraph 35). The provision of a successful layout is intrinsic to good design which is at the heart of the NPPF core planning principles (paragraph 17) and policy DP2 of the emerging DDPP. Part 1c) of policy DP2 states that good design should 'facilitate a sense of place, with social interaction, walking/ cycling, health and wellbeing, and inclusive neighbourhoods, through a mix of uses and careful design and layout', while part 1d) requires the provision of clear pedestrian and cycle linkages and permeability, active frontages, and a fine grain mix of buildings and spaces. Part 4 of the policy requires spaces to be designed to be inclusive, safe and accessible for the whole community, reducing the fear of and opportunities for crime. Emerging policy DP4 of the DDPP requires that the layout should promote walking and cycling and public transport use through provision of attractive and safe routes which address the needs of users.
- 7.36. The layout of the site is orientated with the school/community centre in the middle, enclosed school grounds, playground, sports pitches and play areas extending to the rear (east), staff car park to the south and public realm with public car park to the front (west) of the proposed building, adjacent to the North-South Boulevard. In the initial design, the public square had been positioned in the middle of the public car park, creating two separate parking areas, each with an in and out access. It was considered that this layout did not provide a useable public square since it was separated from the principal building and away from the commercial area of the neighbourhood centre (which will be coming forward in a later phase) to the north. The provision of separate access and egress points for both car parks was also considered convoluted and problematic. While it visually broke up the car park area, it did not provide an attractive space that would be used to its maximum potential as a public square. Following discussions with EDC officers, the location of the square was amended and relocated in front of the community centre. While a pedestrian/cycle link has still been maintained

through the car park it does not compromise the function of the car park as a single entity and maintains the sustainable access routes through the site.

- 7.37. The open character of the site allows for ease of access with clearly defined routes, prioritising pedestrian and cycle paths and entrances to the school and community centre. The omission of steps through the site to tackle the topography provides inclusive access for all users and there are clear routes from Fastrack to the north. The promotion of cycle and pedestrian routes and links to sustainable transport links is encouraged in connection with principles for Healthy New Towns initiatives. The site opens up onto the public square from all directions which makes it the focus of the area. It would be formed of a slightly raised terrace and function as a meeting place and general amenity area by virtue of its position and interaction with its surroundings.
- 7.38. There is clear hierarchy of routes through the site. The clearly defined areas and open character provides an easy mental map of the site allowing easy navigation. The open layout also lends itself to multi-use possibilities including public events which would be run by the management company controlling the public square, which is consistent with the role of the neighbourhood centre as set out in the AMP and Design Code.
- 7.39. The school building and community centre face outwards onto the public square providing a welcoming entrance space and there are no enclosed spaces. While comments have not been received from Kent Police Crime Prevention, it is considered the overall layout would create a sense of security for users in light of the active frontages and open spaces.
- 7.40. The layout of the building is generally over two storeys, which has been broken down into three blocks in a rough 'Y' shape with the two front 'branches', the first comprising the community centre with its double height internal ceiling level and the second comprising the school entrance, reception, school hall and offices. The third longer branch which extends towards the rear of the site is formed of two floors of classrooms and other ancillary accommodation. Separate entrances are provided into the school: for older children there is an access via the front door facing the public square or alternatively via the playground to the side, and another access to the northern side of the school which leads to the nursery classrooms where younger children may be handed over by their parents in a more protected environment. The application states that internal areas of the school will be colour-coded for the children to navigate their way easily. The internal organisation has been designed to be in a coherent journey through the two storey building with Nursery at one end, moving through to Year 2 downstairs and Years 3 to 6 upstairs. The orientation of the buildings has been designed in the layout to maximise thermal and lighting efficiency. The teaching block has been situated to the east (rear) of the site to maximise the south facing junior playground and the smaller infant playground is located to the north of the teaching block, separate from the larger junior playground.
- 7.41. The application states that the site layout of the school and community building site has been developed in conjunction with KCC Education and Young People's Services and also the school's sponsor, the Leigh Academies Trust. While it is recognised that the layout of the school provides long corridors, KCC have confirmed the assertion in the application and have confirmed they are in support

of the scheme and the layout of the building and sports pitches complies with their requirements. The layout of the school accords with the indicative layout provided in the Education Delivery Strategy and Community and Leisure Facilities Strategy. Issues have been raised in respect of the size of the sports provision from Sport England and this is discussed in more detail below under 'Other Issues'.

- 7.42. The proximity of the school and community centre provides a community focus and lends itself to multiple use opportunities. The open square provides an urban space which creates a sense of place for community activities in an environment that prioritises the pedestrian and feels safe. At present there are no comments to be made on the layout of the site in relation to the surrounding development since they have yet to be determined. However, the site is outward-facing which lends itself to future phases. Furthermore, the principal routes through the site do line up with the major access routes through EQ, which have been secured through separate permissions.

Scale

- 7.43. The matter of scale relates to the height, width and length of each building proposed within the development in relation to its surroundings.
- 7.44. Matters of scale are intrinsically linked to good design quality as set out in NPPF Paragraph 58 and policy DP2 of the emerging DDPP, which require developments to be visually attractive, function well and add quality to the area to making high quality and inclusive design for all developments.
- 7.45. The proposed building is of a substantial size but is necessarily big in light of its function. Largely covering two floors, the gross internal floor area for the school is 2,679m² and the gross internal floor area for the community centre is 422m². The building sits within an external area (including public realm and school grounds) of 23,299m². The length of the building (front-W to back-E) is over 42m and more than 26.5m wide across the front of the site.
- 7.46. Given the change in levels at the site, it is difficult to give overall heights. However, the tallest element of the building which forms the community centre measures some 10m in height with the teaching block to the rear of the building having a typical height of approximately 8.5m.
- 7.47. The mass of the building has been broken down in its design formation in a series of blocks which do not follow straight, regular lines. While the building is large in footprint and has a dominant appearance, this has been considered in its appearance. This has particularly been expressed in the vertical rhythm in the use of materials to counter the strong horizontal form of the structure. The use of planted roofs would also soften the appearance of the building from view above when positioned further up the sloping ground. To the front of the building, the public square and car park open out across an area of around 60m to the back edge of the pavement (i.e. not including the highway). The height to width ratio is therefore approximately 1:6 which is appropriate for a square, creating a strong perimeter block with appropriately scaled buildings against the spatial enclosure.

- 7.48. There are no other buildings proposed in the application and no other buildings constructed on or immediately near the site against which a comparison can be drawn. However, earlier phases of development have secured a 4 storey height along Fastrack. This has also been secured in the Design Code for the Neighbourhood Centre in which this site is located. The forthcoming schemes will therefore have a height relative to the school and will also be situated on slightly higher ground as a result of the topography.
- 7.49. It is therefore considered that while the size of the building would present a prominent structure, it would be largely obscured from surrounding development following later phases of development. The amount of space surrounding the building is of an appropriate scale and would not result in an overdevelopment of the site, consistent with the design of a neighbourhood centre and open space public square. The scale of the proposal is appropriate and the building would sit comfortably within it.

Highways/Parking

- 7.50. The NPPF strongly advocates sustainable transport methods. The reduction of pollution and use of public transport, walking and cycling are at the heart of the policy document as part of the core planning principles (paragraphs 17 and 35). The submission of Transport Assessment and Travel Plans is encouraged for all developments generating significant transport movements (paragraphs 32 and 36). Policy CS5 of the Dartford Core Strategy in respect of the Ebbsfleet Development Strategic Site sets out the provision of a walking and cycling network and a Fastrack route across the area encouraging a high proportion of trips by sustainable means in part 4d). Policy CS15a) encourages the reduction in car travel and promotes mixed use developments and close interrelationship between complementary land uses. Part g) sets out an integrated approach with developers to implement an integrated walking and cycling network joining communities with the facilities they need to access. Part j) states that a parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be developed to provide guidance on parking space requirements, design and the management of parking provision. A Parking SPD has been published and was adopted by Dartford Borough Council 26 July 2012.
- 7.51. Two car parking areas are provided in the proposal, a public area to the front of the school/community centre, and a controlled staff car park to the south of the site.
- 7.52. In the initial documents submitted with the application, the layout of the public parking area was sub-divided into two by the village square. It was considered by Kent Highways that this would cause unnecessary operational difficulties and there were perceived issues of the functionality of the square where it was located away from the community buildings. Alterations were made to the layout and amended plans received. The amendments which relocate the square in front of the community centre have also resulted in the provision of 2 additional spaces. Access to the public parking area is off the North/South boulevard. A central one-way route leads through the car park from the northern end, finishing in a loop at the bottom which leads to the exit-only point at the southern end of the car park.

7.53. It is proposed the public car park would provide parking on a shared basis for the school, community centre and surrounding commercial units which will form future phases of the neighbourhood centre, as well as functioning as a drop-off route off the public highway for parents travelling by car to drop their children off at school. The shared use principle builds on the advice set out in the Dartford Borough Council Parking Standards SPD which states that there may be opportunities for shared parking a) where a school is part of a local centre with shops and community facilities and b) for community halls/centres where they are part of a local centre with shops and other local facilities. The character of the neighbourhood centre with its mixed uses lends itself to this function.

7.54. A total of 84 parking spaces would be provided in the public car park based on the following shared uses:

14 spaces – school

2 spaces – nursery

24 spaces – food retail (future phase)

10 spaces – non-food retail (future phase)

15 spaces – residential apartment visitors (future phase with residents parking to be provided within the adjacent residential site outside the area of this application)

36 spaces – mixed retail

30 spaces – health centre (future phase)

TOTAL – 131

N.B. 2 van spaces have been provided which have not been included in the allocation. The allocation includes 4 disabled parking spaces.

7.55. A total number of 50 parking spaces would be provided in a separate private car park to the south of the site to be used by staff only on a non-shared basis:

28 employee spaces – school

15 employee spaces – health centre

7 employee spaces – community centre

TOTAL – 50

N.B. 2 disabled parking spaces are included in this provision.

The dedicated area for school staff and health centre staff relieve pressure on parking in the central area and accessed by a controlled barrier.

7.56. In addition, 30 cycle parking spaces will be provided for the school consisting of 15 covered stands plus associated covered storage for scooters and 10 covered cycle parking spaces to be provided for the community centre.

7.57. On the basis of the current application and the future phases bringing forward neighbourhood centre providing a health centre (in the region of 1500-1600m² to provide for 8GPs, nurse practitioners, community nurses, specialist clinics; dentist, optometrist, as required by the S106), food retail of 418m², non-food retail of 697m² and 50 residential units, the total parking standard requirement is 182 spaces. The total number of physical spaces provided is 134. The

number of spaces provided on the shared basis and the staff parking is 181. It is on this basis the applicant argues that sufficient parking provision has been made on site. While number of spaces has been assigned in principle to a particular use, it is not intended there would any specific allocation on site.

- 7.58. The applicant argues that the location of the development and the division of EQ into three villages with their own centre means the majority of visitors to the neighbourhood centre will be from Castle Hill. They also draw on the promotion of sustainable transport links, which is a major component of Ebbsfleet Garden City. The parking provision has been made on the anticipated mix use of the neighbourhood centre, the different peaks associated with each use and the likely linked trips (e.g. parents from the school using the local retail units before/after collecting children). Kent Highways identify issues in the use of TRICS data set out in the submitted Transport Assessment in determining the required number of spaces since it gives only a snapshot of a particular point in time and does not cover in detail the specific movements that would be identified with the busiest times of day i.e. school open and close. Hours of 0800 and 0900 have been provided for the peak hours but nothing in-between. It is also noted that it is incredibly difficult to make an assumption based on figures that include provision for future phases of development outside the envelope of this application for which conditions such as floor area are not certain.
- 7.59. However, Kent Highways cannot conclude that the shared use of the parking would result in conditions that could be described as having a severe impact on congestion or safety and do not object to the proposal. Due to the design and layout of the community centre, parking provision for the surrounding uses has necessarily been provided alongside the provision for the school and community centre. However, it is considered that the situation will be reviewed accordingly for each subsequent phase of development which comes forward.
- 7.60. It is not considered the proposed layout and provision would not be without its difficulties, particularly during the busiest times of day during school opening and closing times. Following a request from EDC, a basic Travel Plan was prepared to identify initiatives for staff at the school to use sustainable transport methods. A number of suggestions have been set out including limiting car parking permits, promoting car sharing and promotion of sustainable travel methods. This can be conditioned for monitoring and review together with a management strategy to introduce parking controls to avoid long-term and commuter parking to be monitored and reviewed accordingly.

Sports Provision

- 7.61. Sport England has raised objections relating to the size of the sports halls and the standards not meeting their design criteria. While they are unable to support the proposal, recommended conditions relating to assessment of ground conditions, Use Class limitation, and provision of a community use scheme have been provided.
- 7.62. In respect of the sports hall provision, it is noted that their assessment has been made on the basis that the school would provide dual use between the school and community. However, this is not the case. The response from KCC clearly sets out that neither the community centre nor primary school have been

designed as a primary facility for community sports provision. While the layout allows for some flexibility for multi-use that would benefit the wider community, the specification for each of the community facilities has been focused on their primary function. KCC have set out in their response that the dual use provision is covered within the S106 agreement for EQ and that there is adequate provision for community sports facilities that should meet Sport England's requirements within the context of the wider EQ development.

- 7.63. The applicant confirms that the area within the playground is not intended as a MUGA but a multi-use netball/basketball court as part of the hard games play area. It is not intended as a MUGA to meet S106 obligations but as a feature for use by the school. KCC are satisfied with the design of this facility and it is not considered necessary the area need meet the design parameters set out by Sport England.
- 7.64. Sport England note that the creation of the playing field would require considerable cut and fill in light of the sloping land. As such, they recommend a condition that includes a detailed assessment of ground conditions to identify constraints that could affect the quality of the playing field. The applicant argues that this is not worthwhile since detailed soil assessments of the wider site have already been prepared. They identify the site is a former minerals quarry and the remaining soils present consist of Thanet sand which is a by-product of the minerals extraction, with very poor structure and permeability, and which lacks any organic content. There are no top soils present. A cut and fill exercise will be undertaken to form the pitches to the levels on the submitted drawings therefore believe there is little value in assessing the existing conditions. Top soil will need to be, either imported or manufactured. The pitch will need a full pipe drained system, in line with Sport England Guidance. They agree to the condition requiring a detailed scheme to be carried out to identify the field will be provided to an acceptable condition and raise no objection to the recommendation to conditions relating to the use of the playing field for outdoor sport or for the submission of a community use scheme to be secured.
- 7.65. The applicant's response to the soil assessment is considered reasonable. The other recommended conditions in relation to restricting the use class and controlling management are not considered relevant where the pitches will be ancillary to the primary school.

Noise

- 7.66. In light of the impact from A2 issues on the school as receptor to noise from the forthcoming development of the community centre, the school cannot use natural ventilation. High level louvre panel connected to mechanical ventilation units have therefore been designed within the school rooms and this is acceptable to the education authority.
- 7.67. EDC have specifically sought comments from Dartford Council's Environmental Health section. Environmental Health officers do not raise any objection to the noise assessment submitted with the application which relates to the school building but recommend that the noise arising from the school in terms of outside play noise should be considered when the layout and design is submitted on the surrounding residential areas.

- 7.68. Initial concerns were since there did not appear to be any detail to demonstrate that the community centre design will adequately mitigate any noise arising within the building. The applicant has confirmed the centre will be mechanically vented with no openable windows so there will no potential for noise spill or ingress. Dartford Council officers were satisfied with this provided it was built into the permission and can therefore be secured by condition.

Ecology

- 7.69. Ecology across the EQ site has previously been considered in earlier applications in connection with the outline permission for EQ. An updated ecological appraisal was carried out and a Phase 1 Survey accompanies the application. It was identified that the poor grassland, dry ditches and scattered scrub identified on site were not of notable consideration through they had the potential to support protected species. A common lizard presence was identified and a subsequent translocation exercise carried out. This occurred over a period of 80 trapping days and 55No. common lizards were relocated to an adjacent receptor site. The report did not consider that works would impact on nesting birds at the time of the survey but identified potential harm if the site was left undeveloped until 2016 since there would be a risk of ground nesting birds colonising in the spring.
- 7.70. Recommendations have been set out in the report including the incorporation of biodiversity enhancement measures into the landscaping scheme, the protection of the hedge, trees and grassland to the north of the site (the location of which has not been identified), and a re-survey in 2016 and renewed mitigation strategy if the site is not developed by 2016.
- 7.71. It is not considered there is significant ecological value at the site and it is acknowledged that the extensive planting will provide biodiversity enhancements. In light of the time since the ecological survey, it is considered necessary to condition a re-survey. Should it be considered necessary upon identification of the hedge, trees and grassland to the north of the site, this will be reported separately.

Drainage

- 7.72. Neither Thames Water nor Southern Water have any comments to make in respect of the proposal. The Environment Agency have reviewed the surface water treatment details and raise no objection since it is proposed the drainage is going via surface pipework to the attenuation lake and agreed discharge via Swanscombe or mains sewer at Southfleet. This complies with the broad requirements of the Water Management Plan secured under condition 12 of the outline permission. KCC have identified potential issues in relation to the amount of information provided in respect of discharge rates and would like to see sustainable drainage principles within the design layout of the school site. However, they identify that EQ was permitted prior to KCC's statutory role as Lead Flood Authority and raise no formal objection given the greater provision provided in the wider site. In this instance, it is not considered beneficial for the benefit of the delivery of the school to implement changes at this stage but it is identified that there are opportunities for engaging developers at early stages of

pre-application discussions with EDC on more sustainable drainage strategies, with the advice of KCC.

Archaeology

- 7.73. Archaeological investigation has been carried out in accordance with the outline permission and a Historic Environment Framework secured under condition 13 of the outline permission. The site is identified as having no potential archaeological interest and being of no archaeological importance, as set out in the Historic Environment Framework secured by condition 13 of the outline permission for EQ. A supplementary report has been provided with the application which identifies that the surviving archaeological horizons are confined to an area along the northern and north-eastern extents of the Site where archaeological work has been on-going since the first test pits were excavated in 2002. Other archaeological investigations close to Southfleet Road produced significant remains but were again at the very eastern edge of the quarry outside of the extraction areas.
- 7.74. The application site is identified as being located within an area of deep excavation; the level of truncation below the former ground surface at the location of the school is of 25 m and greater. It is therefore identified that any archaeological potential has already been removed and the impact of the proposed development is negligible.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 7.75. The application site is brownfield land that is currently part of a large re-development site, parts of which are already under construction with ground preparation works being carried out in anticipation of previously approved schemes. There are no immediately adjoining residential neighbours, the closest being those in the first phase of Castle Hill. There is an established works entrance which does not interfere with the existing residential development and there would be no issues arising with the organisation of works compound or storage of materials on site that would cause a disturbance to local amenity. A Code of Construction Practice has previously been secured under condition 36 of the outline permission with which the developer is required to comply with. As such, it is not considered necessary to impose further conditions in relation to construction practices.

Other Issues

EIA

- 7.76. The outline permission was identified as being EIA development and the requisite assessments made. It follows that subsequent application made pursuant to the outline permission, including Reserved Matters such as this application are also in respect of EIA. However, it is EDCs opinion that all matters pursuant to EIA in respect of EQ have been satisfactorily identified and assessed as part of the outline permission application process and a further Environmental Statement is therefore not required as a result of this application.

Condition 25 – Outstanding Issues:

- 7.77. The majority of matters listed in condition 20 of the outline permission have been addressed in the submission of the application. There are, however, outstanding details that need to be secured in respect of the final design of the street lighting and furniture (e), boundary treatments (e), external lighting (h), public art (i), cycle parking (j), television receivers (k), signage and interpretation (l). The particular design of these items, together with the specific materials for the building and hard landscaping, can be secured by condition.

Community Centre Management

- 7.78. The S106 for the outline permission requires the submission of a maintenance protocol, guidelines and specification manual to ensure that the community centre is available for community use at all times and not dominated by any particular managing body. Condition 33 of the outline permission requires details to be submitted with the planning application identifying details of the management and maintenance of community facility buildings. A 'Shared Community Facilities' document has been provided with the application which outlines the broad strategy for management and maintenance of the community centre which will be developed once an operator has been identified. It is considered therefore that while the requirements of the S106 and condition have been complied with, further details will be required as necessary and a condition is recommended to this effect.

8.0 HUMAN RIGHTS

- 8.1. The application has been considered in the light of the Human Rights Act 1998 and it is considered that the analysis of the issues in this case, as set out in this report and recommendation below, is compatible with the Act.

9.0 PUBLIC SECTOR DUTY

- 9.1. In determining this application, regard has been had to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set down in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, in particular with regard to the need to –
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. It is considered that the application proposals would not undermine objectives of the Duty.
- 9.2. It is considered that the application proposals would not conflict with objectives of the Duty.

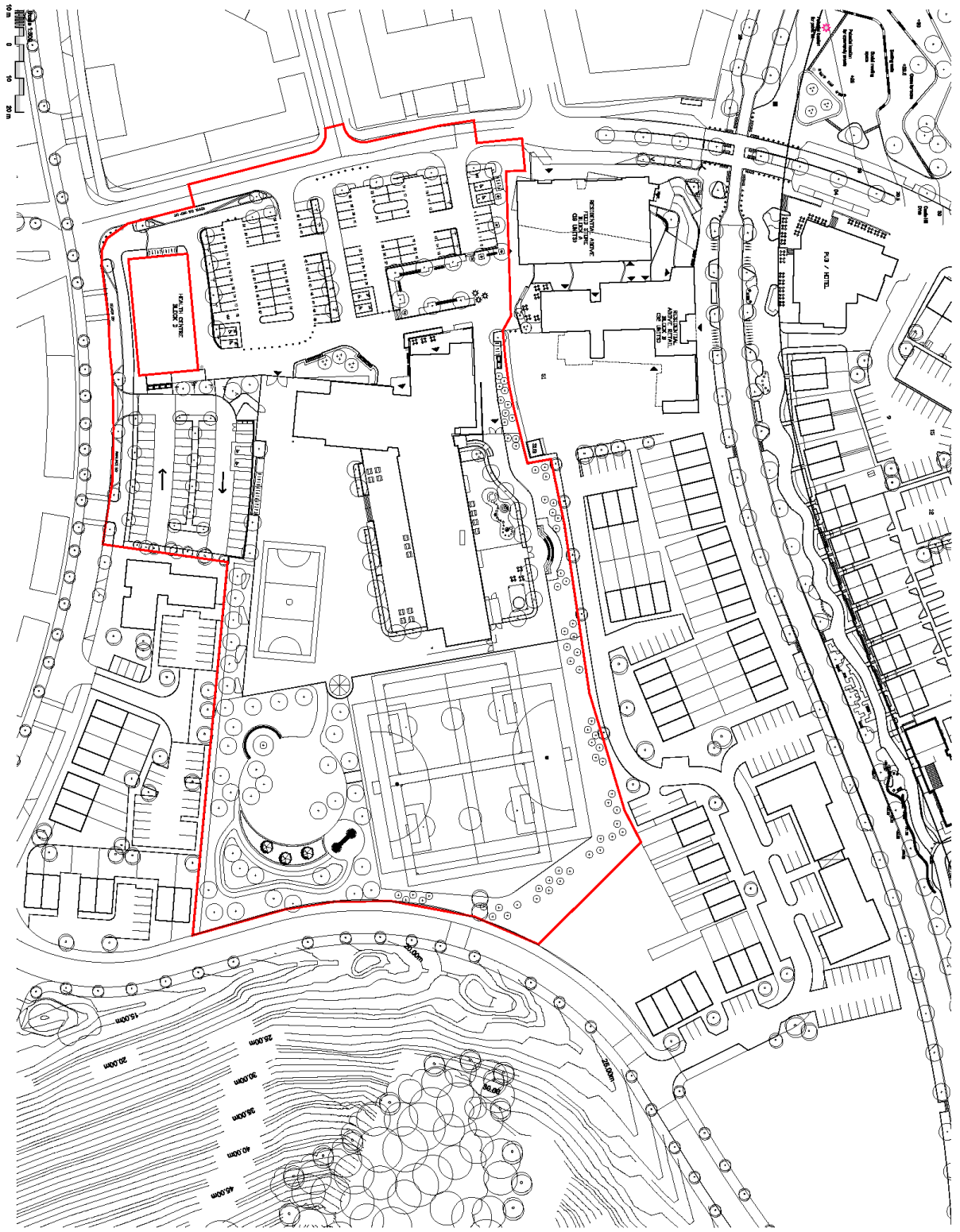
10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1. It is considered that the proposal is in accordance with the framework for the Eastern Quarry outline permission, the approved Area Master Plan for Castle Hill

and follows the design parameters as set out in the Castle Hill Central Neighbourhood Area Design Code. The proposal represents a high quality development that will contribute to making of a place that will serve as the heart of Castle Hill community, providing attractive open spaces and essential community services with an emphasis on sustainable travel, consistent with the principles of a Garden City and the Healthy Towns Initiative. It marks an essential provision in the continued development of Eastern Quarry and is considered to comply with the relevant development plan policies and guidance. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

APPENDIX 1:

SITE LAYOUT PLANS



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Figure 7. Neighbourhood Area Public Realm and Primary School Plan