



LAND REAR OF 248 HART ROAD,
THUNDERSLEY, BENFLEET, ESSEX

ADDENDUM TO LVA AND GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

Prepared for

L & G Affordable Homes

March 2023

Ref: A341-AS03c

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This short report is to be read as an addendum to the both the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) (Ref. A341-AS01A) and the Green Belt Assessment (Ref. A341-AS02a) in respect of the proposed development at the Site on land to the south of 248 Hart Road in Thundersley which was submitted to and refused planning permission in June 2022 for 44 new homes and associated open space on the Site. (Application Ref 21/1137/FUL).
- 1.2 The two previous reports referred to above, were prepared as supporting information submitted as part of an appeal to the Secretary of State, against the refusal of planning permission by Castle Point Borough Council. This Addendum has been prepared to address the effects and change in context as a result of the works currently being implemented on the adjacent site that will see the erection of a two storey teaching block, removal of existing temporary classrooms and an extension to an existing hard surface play area within Cedar Hall School (application reference CC/CPT/52/22). This application was submitted in June 2022 and approved under delegated authority in August 2022 and did not form any part of the considerations within either the LVA or Green Belt Assessment referred to above.
- 1.3 The Addendum has been commissioned by Legal and General Affordable Homes, (the appellants) and the appraisal been undertaken by Vanessa Ross FLI, a Chartered Landscape Architect, Fellow of the Landscape Institute and Director at Arc Landscape Design and Planning Ltd.

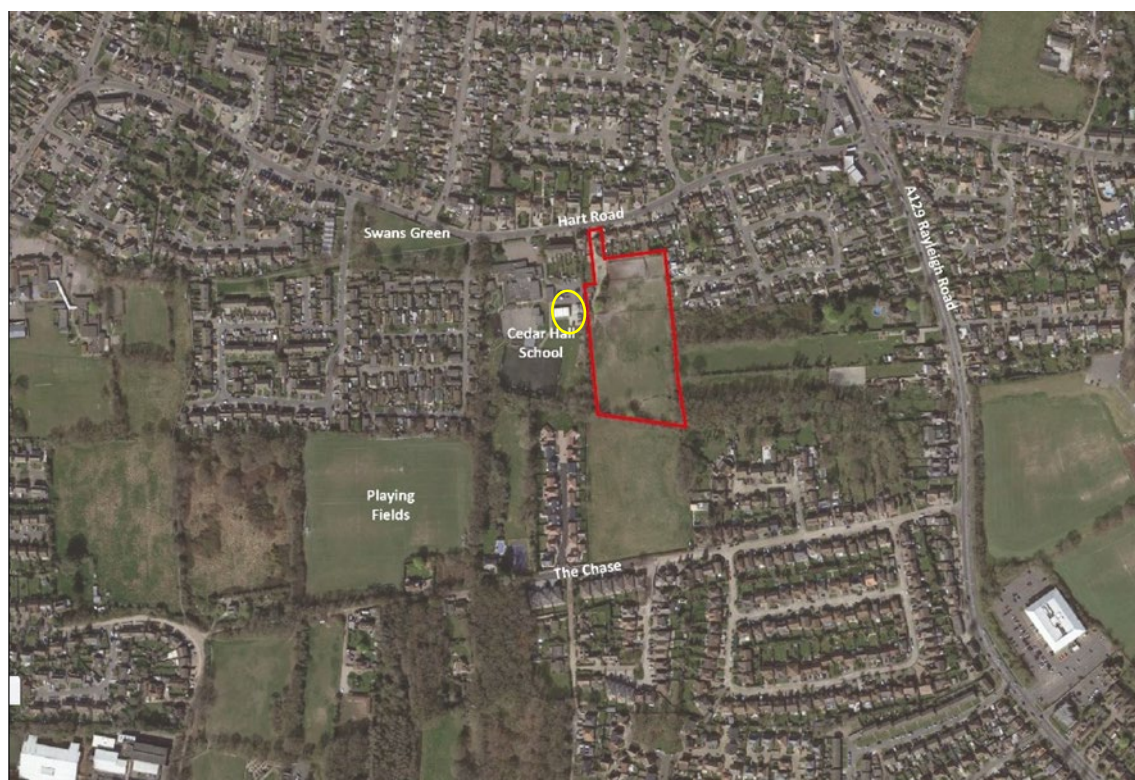


Figure 1 - Site Location (shown in red) with location of proposed school building (shown in yellow) (NTS)

- 1.4 The proposals for the school, as per the application description, will include a new two storey teaching building along with associated surfacing and an extension to the existing play area with an application area of 0.36 hectares. Figure 2 below, shows an extract of the Existing Site/Block Plan (Ref. 121229-CPD-ZZ-XX-DR-A-0105-P2) alongside the Proposed Block Plan (Ref. 121229-CPD-ZZ-XX-DR-L-2002-P3), both prepared by prepared by Concertus and submitted as part of the application for the school.



Figure 2 – Existing Site Plan (left) and Proposed Site Plan (right) (Concertus) (NTS)

- 1.5 The school building is currently under construction and once complete will comprise a two storey block with a staircase tower extending to 10.2m to the northern end. The main part of the building¹ is 18x32 x 9.5m high and will include a range of classrooms, a library, office space and other ancillary facilities.



Figure 3 – Proposed Visual taken from the Design and Access Statement prepared by Concertus. View looking east with the appeal site beyond.

¹ Section 3 – Delegated Report Dated 9th July 2022

2. Addendum to Landscape and Visual Appraisal

- 2.1 This section considers the likely effects in regard to the school proposals when considered alongside the appeal scheme on the adjacent site to the east.
- 2.2 No LVIA/LVA was prepared to accompany the application for the school building, and due to the scale and context of the proposed school building it is assumed that one was not required as part of the application.

Landscape/Townscape

- 2.3 The LVA prepared for the adjacent appeal site included consideration of both landscape/townscape effects and effects on views and visual amenity.
- 2.4 In respect of landscape/townscape character, the new school building will sit within the existing school grounds, and whilst it will be distinct from the existing buildings in respect of materials, it will form a cluster of development within the grounds in such a way that is typical of many schools which evolve and develop over time and it would therefore not be considered to be in any way out of character. Similarly, its relationship with the surrounding area is considered to be appropriate in respect of both landscape and townscape.
- 2.5 It is not considered that the new school building will significantly change the context of the appeal site in terms of townscape character albeit it is noted that there will be an additional perception of built form due to the scale and massing of the building. When considering this alongside the appeal scheme, the effects on landscape and townscape character remain as per the assessment set out in section 4 of the LVA.

Visual Effects

- 2.6 With regards to views and visual amenity, the baseline assessment within section 3 of the LVA concluded that there were very limited publicly available views towards the site from areas to the west with most views being screened or filtered by intervening trees and/or buildings. Section 4 considered the effects on views towards the development and again found that the views from the west would be limited and where visible the effects would be neutral on visual amenity.
- 2.7 It is possible that the new school building may be visible in some views from the west and therefore may contribute to screening views towards the appeal scheme, however it is unlikely that this will be discernible to any extent and therefore the effects as assessed in the LVA remain unchanged.
- 2.8 Due to proximity, the school was considered as a separate visual receptor (B) and the LVA concluded that views from it towards the appeal scheme would result in a minor and neutral effect. In considering first the potential impact of additional views resulting from the ability of those within the school to see out towards the appeal scheme, it is noted that the main east facing

elevation will be set back some 30m from the proposed houses within the appeal scheme and as a result whilst visible from the upper floors, the proposed houses will be seen in the context of the wider townscape setting. Notwithstanding the additional visibility the overall change in view from this receptor remains as previously assessed and therefore the effects remain unchanged.

- 2.9 Views looking south from residential areas to the north may perceive both the new school building and new houses, however it is not considered that this will have any notable effect or change the conclusions reached within the LVA.
- 2.10 Similarly views from the east and south were also assessed as being limited by intervening features and the views will remain unchanged as a result of the addition of the school building.
- 2.11 In overall conclusion, the introduction of the school building on land adjacent to the appeal scheme does not change the findings or conclusions set out within the LVA.

3. Addendum to Green Belt Assessment

- 3.1 The following section includes a review of the potential effects on Green Belt as a result of considering the emerging context of the proposed school building in respect of the Appeal Scheme.
- 3.2 Whilst the school building was granted approval, it was accepted that it would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, however very special circumstances were found to apply.
- 3.3 The following plan illustrates the proposals for the school building superimposed alongside Appeal Scheme (prepared by Ashby Design).



Figure 4 – School Proposals and Appeal Scheme combined drawings (Ashby Design) (NTS))

- 3.4 Section 3 of the Green Belt Assessment (A341-AS02a) included a description of built form and nearby settlement and noted that the school was a single storey building; no specific reference was made to the temporary classrooms which will be removed as part of the school proposals. In the context of the emerging development on the school site, the description of the school should rightly be updated to refer to both single and two storey buildings.
- 3.5 In respect of site visibility, as noted within section 2 above, it is not considered likely that the proposed school building will change the visibility of the existing appeal site or as proposed were the appeal scheme to be built out and therefore in this regard there will be no change to the views described. In respect of the visual context, however, the introduction of a two story teaching block will result in a localised change in context not just in respect of height but also in mass, as the proposed building will be substantially larger than the temporary classrooms it is replacing. As noted in section 2, it is possible that there may be some views from the north and south that take in the school building and this will therefore result in the perception of the school site having a greater amount of development within it.
- 3.6 The Green Belt Assessment (A341-AS02a) addressed policy in respect of the NPPF as well as the specific local context in regard to the Council's intention to remove the site from Green Belt within the previous draft local plan. In respect of the NPPF, the Assessment reviewed the appeal scheme proposals alongside the 'five purposes' as well as the effects on 'openness' of the Green Belt.

Effects on the five purposes of Green Belt

- 3.7 **A) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.** The appeal scheme was previously assessed as not significantly affecting this purpose (para 4.5). The emerging context of the new school building introduces additional built form to the surrounding area and to the Green Belt. Notwithstanding this change to the local context, the appeal site still continues to make a minor contribution to this purpose and the conclusions regarding effects of development remain unchanged.
- 3.8 **B) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.** This purpose was not considered to be specifically relevant to the appeal site and this remains unchanged.
- 3.9 **C) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.** The Green Belt Assessment (paras 4.9-4.10) concluded that the Appeal Site did not make any notable contribution to this purpose noting that *"Notwithstanding the partially 'greenfield' nature of the Site and some of the land around it, it no longer retains the characteristics typically associated with the countryside. This is largely due to the proximity to busy roads (and associated traffic noise) and to the residential streets within the surrounding area of Thundersley."* This context, noted as being more akin to an area of 'urban fringe', also includes the school and whilst the proposed building also falls within Green Belt, it's presence reinforces this assessment and the conclusion previously reached.

- 3.10 Purposes D and E in respect of historic towns and promoting urban regeneration where not considered relevant to the appeal scheme site.

Openness

- 3.11 In considering the implications of the proposals with regards to the assessment of 'openness' (in Green Belt terms), the introduction of a new two storey building adjacent to the site will reduce the sense of openness as perceived from within the appeal scheme as well as reducing openness within the school grounds.
- 3.12 Para 4.24 of the Green Belt Assessment concluded that the appeal scheme would result *"an increase in built form on the Site... which will have a physical impact on the openness of the Site. In respect of the visual aspects, the Site is a clearly defined plot and is largely enclosed by existing vegetation and other buildings"*. This conclusion will be reinforced by the addition of the two storey building to the west.
- 3.13 The conclusion goes on to state *"The Site is only viewed, in its current form, from land immediate adjacent to it; from further afield it is largely indiscernible. The introduction of new houses will inevitably be experienced from the rear gardens of adjacent properties and from the school car park, however from public viewpoints, the change in visibility will only be experienced from close proximity to the proposed entrance, from elsewhere, the change in view will be largely imperceptible."* This conclusion remains the case albeit there will be some additional views from within the new school building as highlighted in section 2 above.
- 3.14 In overall conclusion, the introduction of the new two storey school building to the west of the appeal site will reinforce the urban fringe characteristics of the area which whilst within land designated as Green Belt, was previously identified as making a limited contribution to the five purposes of Green Belt. This conclusion remains. Similarly with regards to openness, the presence of the new school building will locally reduce the sense of openness within the area within which the appeal scheme is proposed particularly in the northern-central part of the site.



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