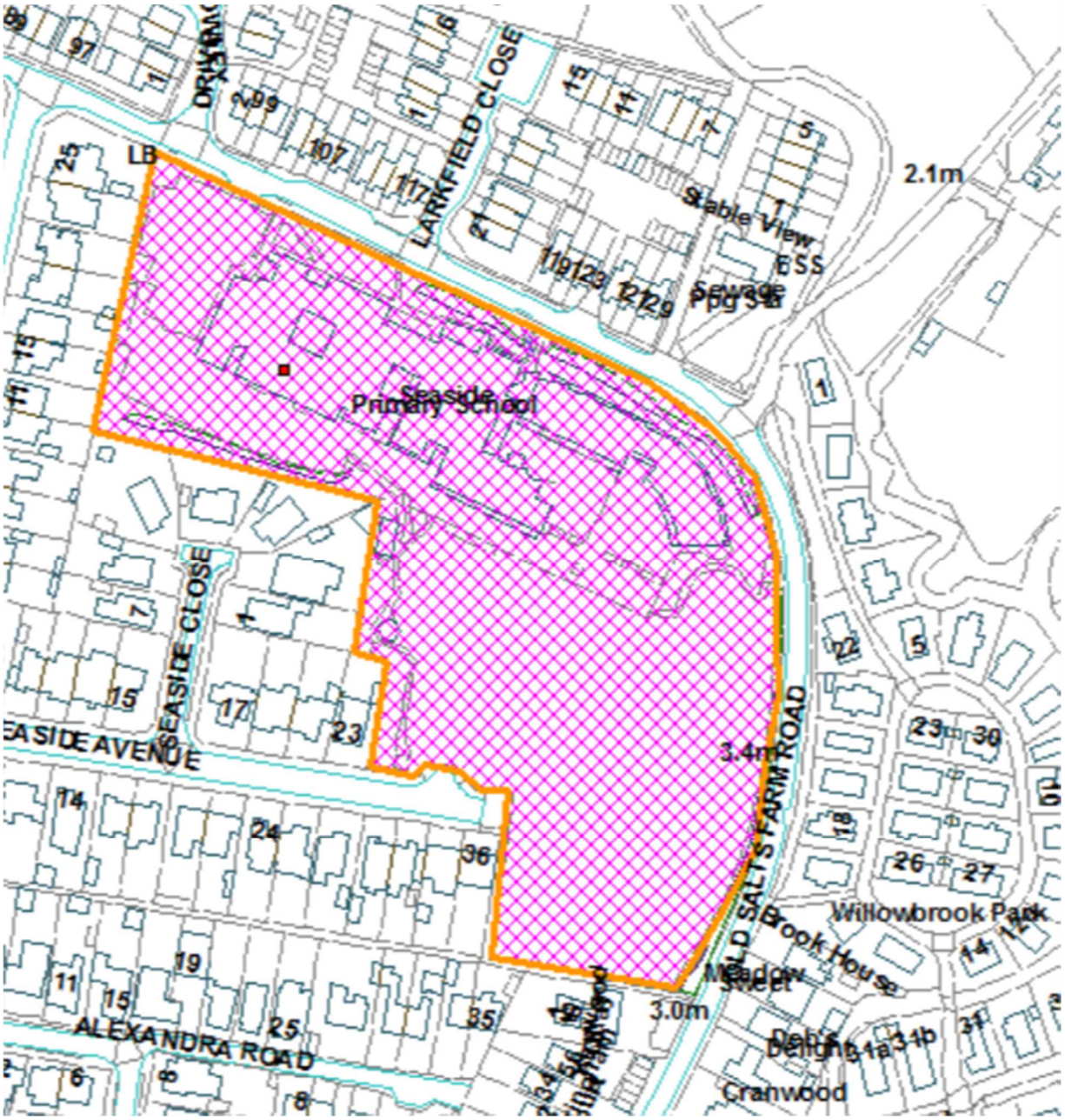
Application Number:	**AWDM/1732/21**	**Recommendation - Approve**
Site:	**Seaside Primary School, Freshbrook Road, Lancing**	
Proposal:	**Construction of a new sports hall with dry changing rooms, sports storage, accessible WC, and plant room, open air-source heat pump enclosure, and minor modifications to the existing footpath.**	
Applicant:	New Horizons Academy Trust	Ward: Widewater
Agent:	Melissa Hitchcock - Burns Guthrie and Partners	
Case Officer:	Peter Barnett	



Not to Scale

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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to Seaside Primary School which has an entrance off Freshbrook Road but which also backs onto residential properties in Seaside Road, Seaside Close and Seaside Avenue. It is proposed to construct a sports hall on the school playing field close to the western boundary with Seaside Close. The playing field slopes down from west to east and the hall will be located on the higher ground to the west.

The Design and Access Statement sets out the background and reasoning behind the proposal. It states that there is an educational need for the facility. In 2014 the school was increased from a 2FE school of 420 to a 3FE school with up to a maximum of 630 pupils. The school has 21 classes of children who each need 2 hours of dedicated Physical Education a week as determined by the National Curriculum. In fine weather the pupils can use the playing field but during the Autumn and Spring Terms the provision for PE is greatly reduced due to inclement weather. The use of the school hall for PE is further affected by its use as a lunch hall.

The proposed hall will enable all pupils to have "*at least 2 hours of PE a week all year round and this will in other ways free up the hall space at certain times of the year for events such as school nativities and visiting curriculum providers, such as the Planetarium or Rainbow Theatre. It will not impact negatively on any of our existing sports pitches or tracks and will enable PE equipment to be stored near the activities that will take place on the school field*."

The location for the hall has been selected as it is close to pupil circulation routes and the heart of the school, is a relatively 'flat' site which will make construction easier, an existing ramp access can be utilised and existing pitches on the playing field will not be adversely affected.

An alternative location was considered further east, at the bottom of the slope and closer to Old Salts Farm Road, but it was discounted due to sloping ground, with a fall of 1.25m across the site which would affect construction, a poor site shape would affect the building arrangement, it would be potentially more prominent and had less easy access for Junior School pupils and staff.

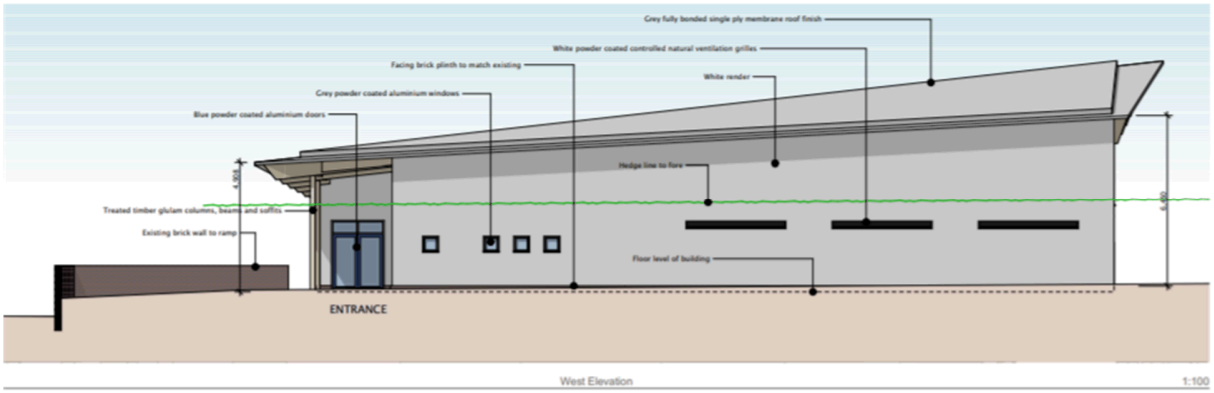
The building will provide a sports hall together with ancillary accommodation comprising foyer/lobby, accessible toilet, 2 dry changing rooms each for 15 pupils, a store for sports hall and outdoor activity equipment, a dedicated mat store and a plant room. Gross internal floor area is 284.6 square metres with the hall being 180 square metres. The D&A Statement sets out the design brief:

"*The client confirmed that the building should have a pitched roof rather than flat to obviate potential problems associated with flat roof construction. With a minimum height of 4.5m clear height required, this means that inevitably some elements of the roof will need to be higher to achieve roof falls. The form of the roof, with a diagonal arranged sloping ridge means that the highest point on the roof is at the south east corner, furthest away from neighbouring properties. However, in the light of concerns by neighbours (at pre-planning stage), the design for this application has been changed. It has been possible to reduce the pitch on the ridge from 8 degrees to 6 degrees, pivoted about the 4.5m height at the north end of the sports hall. This has reduced the height at the highest point by approximately 1 metre and is now 8.7m above adjacent ground level*."

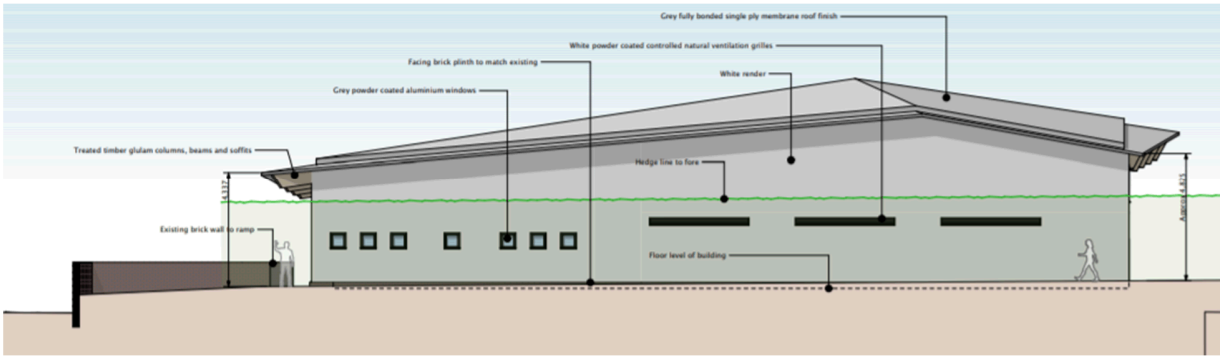
The application has been further amended following the initial round of public consultation in an attempt to address concerns raised.

The entrance has been relocated to the east side of the building away from neighbouring

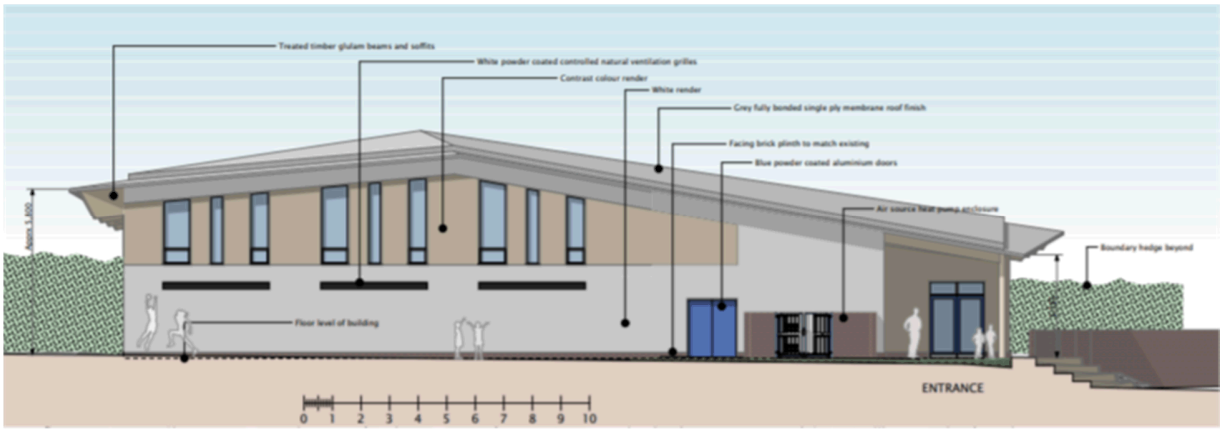
residents, the building has been moved 2.5m further away from the western boundary and the roof design has been reconfigured so that it drops down at its southern end rather than continue to rise up to a high point.



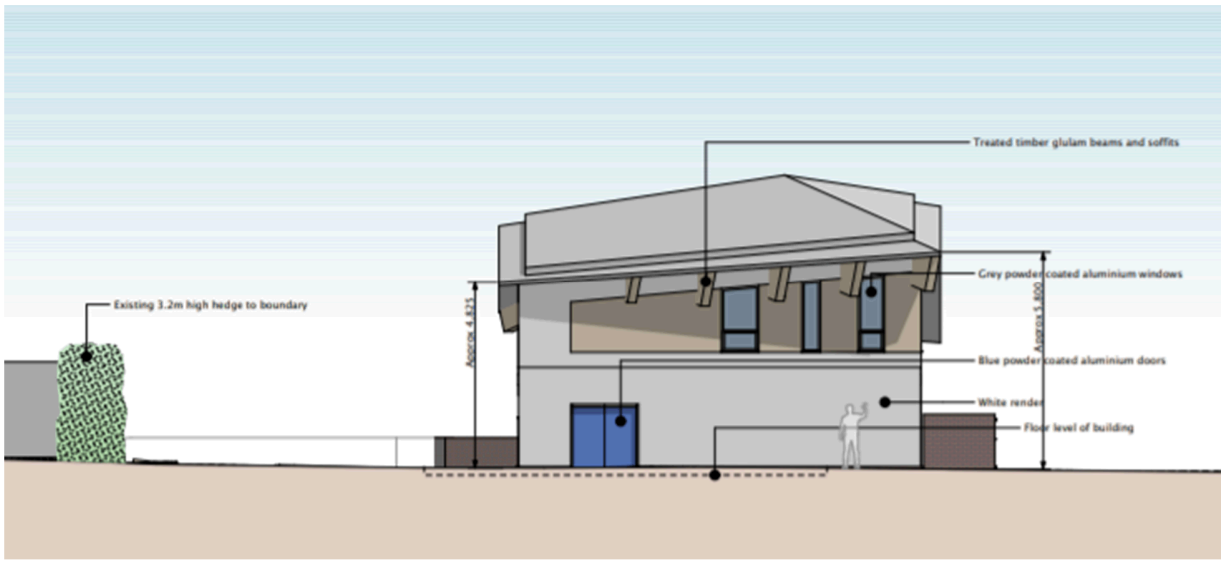
Original Plan West Elevation



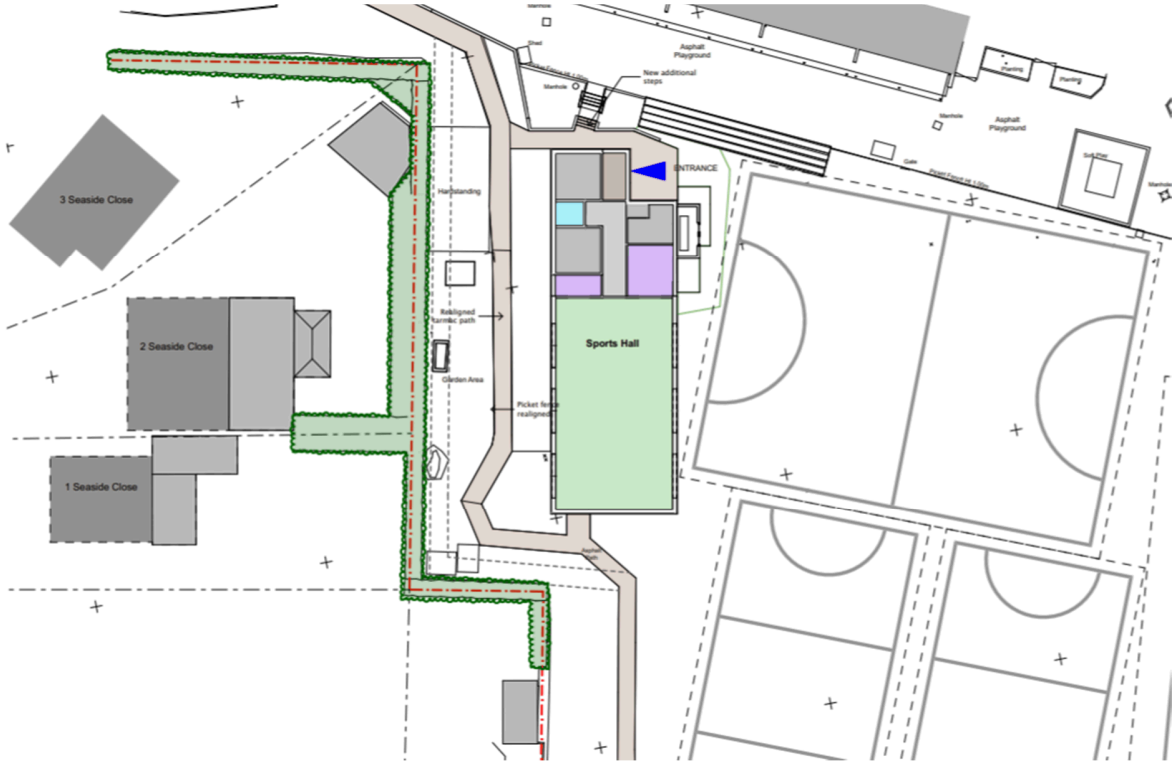
Amended Plan West Elevation facing Seaside Close



East Elevation



South Elevation



Site Plan

The building has an irregular roof shape and measures 7.7m high at its highest point, with an eaves height of 4.8m in the SW corner, 4.3m in the NW corner, 3.6m in the NE corner and 5.8m in the SE corner. It is 31m long and 10.7m wide. The original plans showed a building 30m long, 10.7m wide and 8.7m high.

With regard to its design, the D&A Statement states:

"Design intent is to provide a building that is 'light' in appearance to reduce visual impact. Render has been used in a number of locations in the existing school extensions and this finish is proposed for this project. Roof material will be light grey membrane. The dynamic form of the roof is reflected in the incorporation of a contrast render panel which integrates the hall fenestration. Our objective in the design has been to create a quality interesting design in form and appearance. Facias, soffits and rainwater goods will be white. Windows and external doors will be double glazed aluminium. To mitigate intrusive impact the building 'turns its back' on adjacent residential properties. There are no windows that would be overlooking residences to the west, to ensure that privacy of adjacent rear gardens is maintained. The windows on the west elevation are restricted to small windows to one changing room and an accessible WC below the height of the boundary hedge. These provide natural ventilation only and all glazing to these windows will be obscure glass. Hall opening windows will be limited to the east and south elevations."

The application is supported by a Design and Access Statement, Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, Noise Impact Assessment, Energy Statement and Indoor Environment Assessment.

The application has been called in by Cllr McGregor.

Relevant Planning History

ADC/0159/07 Enlargement and re-modelling of school including extensions on east side and enlarged car park (WSCC Reg 3 application)

AWDM/1017/13 New single storey extension providing new teaching wing comprising 7 no. classrooms, 2 no. group rooms, and extension to the main hall and other ancillary works and accommodation.(West Sussex County Council Consultation)

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: No objection from a transport/highways aspect subject to conditions requiring a Construction Management Plan. Comments that this proposal will not affect pupil numbers or staff levels. There are also no proposed changes to access or parking / servicing arrangements. Apart from the construction phase this development is not expected to attract any additional vehicular trip to or from the school access or on the highway network. The LHA would raise no objection to the application but would advise a Construction Management Plan is submitted to make sure safe and suitable access is adhered to throughout the construction phase. The Local Highway Authority (LHA) does not consider that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 109), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Adur & Worthing Councils: The ***Environmental Health*** officer has the following comments. A Noise Impact Assessment (Ref: 5343_002R_1-0_JE dated August 2021)

has been submitted in support of this application. This assessment considers the impact of noise from the air source heat pumps located to the east of the proposed sports hall and also noise break out from the hall when in use. I am satisfied that noise from the air source heat pumps should not affect amenity of the nearest noise sensitive properties, but I would recommend a condition limiting their hours of use to between 06:00hrs - 18:00hrs Monday - Friday. With no use during the weekends. I would also recommend that the units are mounted on anti-vibration mounts. To ensure compliance with the levels specified within the Noise Impact Assessment I would also recommend the following condition:
The cumulative noise level from the air source heat pumps hereby permitted shall comply with the levels specified within the Noise Impact Assessment (Ref: 5343_002R_1-0_JE dated August 2021). A test to demonstrate compliance with the scheme shall be undertaken within one month of the scheme being implemented. All plant shall be maintained in accordance with manufacturers 2 guidance and any future plant shall also meet the specified levels within the approved scheme.

With reference to the assessment of noise break out from the hall I would like some further information: Is there a reason why the louvres are positioned on this western facade? Could they be moved to a different facade further from noise sensitive receptors? The assessment uses measured sound levels within a typical school swimming pool to represent activity noise levels within the hall. This is a reasonable basis to assess vocal noise. However, I assume that music will also be played within the hall, this has not been considered within the assessment. Please could this be considered?

Subsequent Comments:The consultant has confirmed that the noise assessment allows for a reasonable level of amplified music as well as vocal noise. The applicant has also confirmed that the sports hall will not be used for events or in general playing amplified music. I would like to set a maximum boundary noise level condition which will be easier for the school to monitor than a noise level at the facade of the nearest property. Please could the applicant provide the modelled noise break out from the hall so the level at the boundary with 2 Seaside Close can be confirmed?

It is noted that no response has been given for my query about the ventilation louvres. Could those on the western facade be moved to the southern facade to minimise noise break out along the western facade further?

The **Engineer**: Flood risk- The application is within flood zone 1, and is not shown to be in an area at risk of surface water flooding. We therefore have no objections on flood risk grounds. Surface water drainage- the application includes a surface water drainage strategy which indicates that it is proposed to discharge surface water to soakaway, this is acceptable in principle. It should be noted that there are no public surface water sewers in the vicinity. Surface water must not discharge to the foul sewer. If you are minded to approve the application we request that the drainage strategy/ FRA is NOT listed as approved, and that the standard drainage conditions are applied to ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

Environment Agency: No objection

Sport England: No objection

Subsequent Comments: We understand the proposed sports hall building has been moved slightly further to the east towards the grass playing pitches and the proposed entrance to the building has been reconfigured. Sport England is satisfied that the amendments do not result in a change that would cause us to alter our previous assessment. Therefore we do not object to the proposal as amended.

West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service: There is a requirement for an additional fire hydrant. Currently the nearest Hydrant to the proposed new sports hall is 260 metres away. The supply of water for firefighting for a commercial premises should be within 90 metres. Evidence will also be required to show that Fire Service vehicle access meets with requirements

Lancing Parish Council: Concerns were raised over the proposed location and height of the new sports hall by residents, along with the potential increase in noise and traffic associated with the use of the building. While there was support for schools offering a full range of facilities, it was felt this was a step too far in an already difficult location. These comments and concerns were supported by Members

Comments on Amended Plans: The council considers that the application has not altered significantly and reinforces its previous objection due to the overdevelopment of the site

Representations

Original Plans: 19 letters of objection received from residents in Seaside Close, Seaside Road and Seaside Avenue plus objection from Cllr Ann Bridges (Widewater):

- Why does the building need to be so tall (8.75m) when it only needs to achieve an internal floor to ceiling height of 4.5m?
- A simpler roof form would result in a lower building
- Building will be substantially taller than adjacent bungalows
- Loss of amenity, privacy and light
- School has grown significantly over the years
- Alternative location identified by the school, closer to Freshbrook Road, would be better as it is further from residential properties, does not affect existing pitches, lower ground level would reduce visual impact
- Position identified is too close to dwellings and will encourage more traffic into cul de sac
- Existing hedges not owned by the school so cannot be relied upon to provide long term screen
- Building is too tall and too close to bungalows in Seaside Close
- Hall could be rented out in the evenings and at weekends causing noise disturbance and increased traffic congestion in Seaside Avenue
- Inconsiderate development
- Building out of proportion with its neighbours
- Why choose to site the building on the highest part of the school field and at the

closest point to neighbours?
- Inaccurate noise assessment - a sports hall is far noisier than a swimming pool
- No guarantee that the hall will not be used by outside groups in the future
- Poor level of public consultation prior to this application being submitted including inaccurate and misleading plans
- Building is less than 22m from the rear of nearest bungalow (No.2 Seaside Close), contrary to Council's guidelines
- Entrance to hall should be moved to other side, away from residential boundary
- Building looks like an industrial warehouse
- A primary school doesn't need a hall of such height
- Why not site it where the tarmac playground of the Infant school currently exists?

Amended Plans: 14 letters of objection received

- Original objections remain as amended plans have not addressed original concerns
- Much lower roof could be achieved in order to gain 4.5m internal height
- Taller than surrounding properties
- Excessive height
- Height has increased at roof intersection
- Highest point directly in front of rear windows of 2 and 3 Seaside Close
- Out of keeping
- Increased traffic
- Building should be moved to eastern boundary
- Poor effort from school to liaise with neighbours about this proposal
- Residents' concerns have not been addressed
- Amendments do not go far enough
- Seaside Avenue should not be used for site access
- Moving building 2.5m eastwards now makes it more visible from Seaside Avenue
- Building has increased in length by 1m
- Why not sink it into the ground?
- Residents would not be allowed to extend their homes to this height
- Taller than existing school buildings
- More like a warehouse than a sports hall
- Could be moved further away and reduced in height

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur Local Plan 2017 policies 15,18,19,33
Sustainable Energy SPD (August 2019)
Adur Planning and Climate Change Checklist (June 2021)
WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (Sept 2020).
National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

Relevant Legislation

The Committee should consider the planning application in accordance with:

Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that the application may be granted either unconditionally or subject to relevant conditions, or refused. Regard shall be given to relevant development plan policies, any relevant local finance considerations, and other material considerations; and

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that requires the decision to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Assessment

Principle

Policy 33 of the Adur Local Plan states that the Council will protect, and support improvements to, social and community facilities, including education facilities.

The proposed sports hall would meet an educational need and, as such, there is no objection in principle to the proposal.

Visual amenity

The sports hall will sit close to the western boundary approximately 95m from Old Salts Farm Road. The ground level is higher at that point than the road but at the distance involved it is not considered that it would be unduly intrusive or dominant. Many of the objections from residents query why the building cannot be located on the lower ground, closer to the road and further from residential dwellings in Seaside Close and Seaside Avenue. The applicants have explained their reason for discounting that as an option which is set out earlier in this report. There is no doubt that a building positioned on the lower ground would have a much greater impact on the street scene due to its proximity to the road.

The building has a contemporary design with a roof shape which has been designed to rise up to its highest point above the sports hall but which is lower at each end, particularly at the north end where the building contains changing rooms, storage and plant which do not need as much floor ceiling to height as the main hall. The hall needs to be a minimum 4.5m high internally but the building rises to 7.7m tall at its highest point and this has been questioned in the objections as being unnecessary and excessively tall. It is the equivalent of a two storey house and is taller than the bungalows which abut the site to the east and south.

The amended roof design has attempted to reduce its impact by reaching a peak height towards the middle of the building and dropping down at either end, as opposed to continually rising to a peak at the southern end on the original plan. While it remains a relatively tall structure it is considered that its position close to the existing school buildings and set back from the road (both from Old Salts Farm Road and Seaside Avenue) reduces its impact sufficiently and it will not cause undue visual harm to the area.

Residential amenity

The main residents to be affected are those in the bungalows in Seaside Close to the west and Seaside Avenue to the south. As amended, the building is 12m from the western boundary and 6.7m from the southern boundary. 2 Seaside Close is the most affected being directly behind the proposed hall at a distance of approximately 18.9m from its ground floor extension and 27.6m from its upper floor dormer window. That property currently has a tall hedge along its boundary with the school which does provide a reasonable screen. It is outside of the applicant's control though and its retention cannot be secured by condition. The owner of 2 Seaside Close has suggested that he might wish to remove the hedge in the future but that would be their choice and the application should be assessed in the light of the existing site conditions.

At 18.9m, the building would be nearer than the 22m separation distance required for new homes. However, that distance is set to avoid harmful overlooking between properties, and if there is no conflict in that respect, then buildings are often located in closer proximity in the urban area. In this case the hall will have no windows other than at low level and these can be required to be obscure glazed. As such, no harmful loss of privacy will occur.

At 18.9m the building will also not result in loss of light for the residents in Seaside Close as the hall does not fall within a 25 degree line measured from the nearest windows at No. 2. There would be no loss of outlook from ground floor windows at No.2 because of the existing hedge screen but at first floor outlook across the school playing field would be affected. As to what extent this could be considered to be harmful is the main consideration here.

The hall would be a long structure and would rise to a height of 7.7m. It will be a tall structure and the concerns of residents are understood. The alternative would be a flat roof or a domed or pitched roof. The applicants do not wish to have a flat roofed hall and the addition of a traditional pitch would result in a bulkier roof across its entire length.

There will be some reduction in outlook from the rear dormer windows of 2 Seaside Close but at 18.9m it is not considered that this would be to such an extent as to warrant refusal. The distance between the rear of 2 Seaside Close and the sports hall is considered sufficient to avoid a harmful overbearing impact on the occupiers of that bungalow.

To the south, 23 Seaside Avenue had previously directly faced the southern end of the building, where the roof was at its highest point, at a distance of approximately 19.5m. The amended plans have moved the building eastwards by 2.5m and lowered its height at the southern end, the result of which is to reduce the impact on the occupiers of No. 23 as they no longer directly face the end of the building as it is offset to the east. The lower roof reduces the mass of the building while high level openings will not result in overlooking. An emergency access door can be required by condition to remain closed except in emergencies, to prevent noise disturbance.

The main entrance has been relocated to the east side of the building, away from residential boundaries, and the building itself will provide a noise screen from the school playing field. Ventilation grilles are shown on the western elevation and the Council's Environmental Health Officer has queried whether these can be relocated to minimise

noise breakout. The applicant's response is awaited.

Two air source heat pumps are proposed on the eastern side of the building (away from residential boundaries) which could potentially operate from as early as 06:00 hours and would typically operate during cooler months until approximately 18:00. The report states "*The plant room itself will contain low noise emission plant such as electric immersion heater, water storage vessel and control equipment; all of which will be enclosed behind louvered doors. For the purpose of this acoustic assessment, only noise arising from the operation of the ASHPs is being assessed, as these will be the only significant source of plant noise*." the results of the noise assessment have found that the predicted plant sound emission levels are significantly below the background level and, as such, will not cause noise disturbance to nearby residents.

With regard to noise breakout from activities within the hall the report concludes that this "*would be low and would not have any more influence on the ambient acoustic environment than the existing sports field already has*." The applicant has also confirmed that the sports hall will not be used for events or playing amplified music and a maximum noise level at the boundary condition is proposed to be imposed by the EHO. Overall, noise from the hall is not expected to be harmful or cause a loss of amenity to residents.

On balance, it is considered that the amendments to alter the roof shape and the moving of the building further east are sufficient to overcome previous concerns and, while still a tall building at its highest point, overall the proposed sports hall is not considered to cause harm by way of noise, loss of light, outlook or privacy. As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in residential amenity terms.

Accessibility and parking

Residents in Seaside Avenue in particular have expressed concern at increased traffic using the cul-de-sac and causing increased congestion and disturbance. However, the applicant has confirmed that the hall will serve existing pupils at the school and will not be used outside of school hours or offered to outside groups. As such, there are no changes to existing parking arrangements and the proposal will not generate any additional vehicular trips to or from the school access or on local roads.

The use of the building can be controlled by condition to protect residential amenity and, in the absence of an objection from the local highway authority, it is not considered that there are reasonable or sustainable reasons to refuse the application on traffic or highway grounds.

A Construction Management Plan shall be required by condition to ensure there are controls over site access and deliveries, hours of working, etc in the interests of minimising the impact on residents.

Sustainability

The building will have a sustainable design and will be energy and water efficient. A 'fabric-first design approach will minimise heat loss while 2 air source heat pumps will

provide a sustainable heat source, resulting in a reduction of 13.96% of CO2 emissions, in accordance with Policies 18 and 19 of the Local Plan.

Conclusion

The concerns of residents are noted and the application has been amended to attempt to address those concerns, although it is evident that the concerns remain. However, your officers feel it difficult to justify a refusal on the amended scheme and when balanced against the clear benefits to the school that the facility will provide, it is considered the application can be supported.

Recommendation

Approve

Subject to conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. Standard Time Limit
3. Construction Management Plan
4. The sports hall hereby approved shall not be used outside of the hours of 7.30am -6pm Monday to Friday during school term time.
5. The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the Noise Impact Assessment by Anderson Acoustics dated November 2021
6. Drainage 1
7. Drainage 2
8. Materials
9. No external lighting or floodlighting shall be installed except in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
10. The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the Energy Statement by Delta Green dated 28th July 2021
11. The windows in the west elevation of the building hereby permitted shall at all times be glazed with obscured glass.
12. The door in the south elevation of the building hereby permitted shall remain closed except in emergencies and shall not be used for general access or ventilation.
13. Fire hydrant to be provided