

Planning Officer's Report – LDCA SEPTEMBER 2025

APPLICATION	2025/59 – Proposed Redevelopment of St Paul's Primary School
PERMISSION SOUGHT	Full Permission
REGISTERED	16 th July 2025
APPLICANT	Education, Skills & Employment Portfolio, SHG
LOCALITY	St Pauls' Primary School
ZONE	Intermediate
CONSERVATION AREA	None
CURRENT USE	School
PUBLICITY	The application was advertised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Independent Newspaper on 18th July 2025▪ A site notice displayed in accordance with Regulations.
EXPIRY	1 st August 2025
REPRESENTATIONS	None Received
DECISION ROUTE	Delegated / LDCA / EXCO

A. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

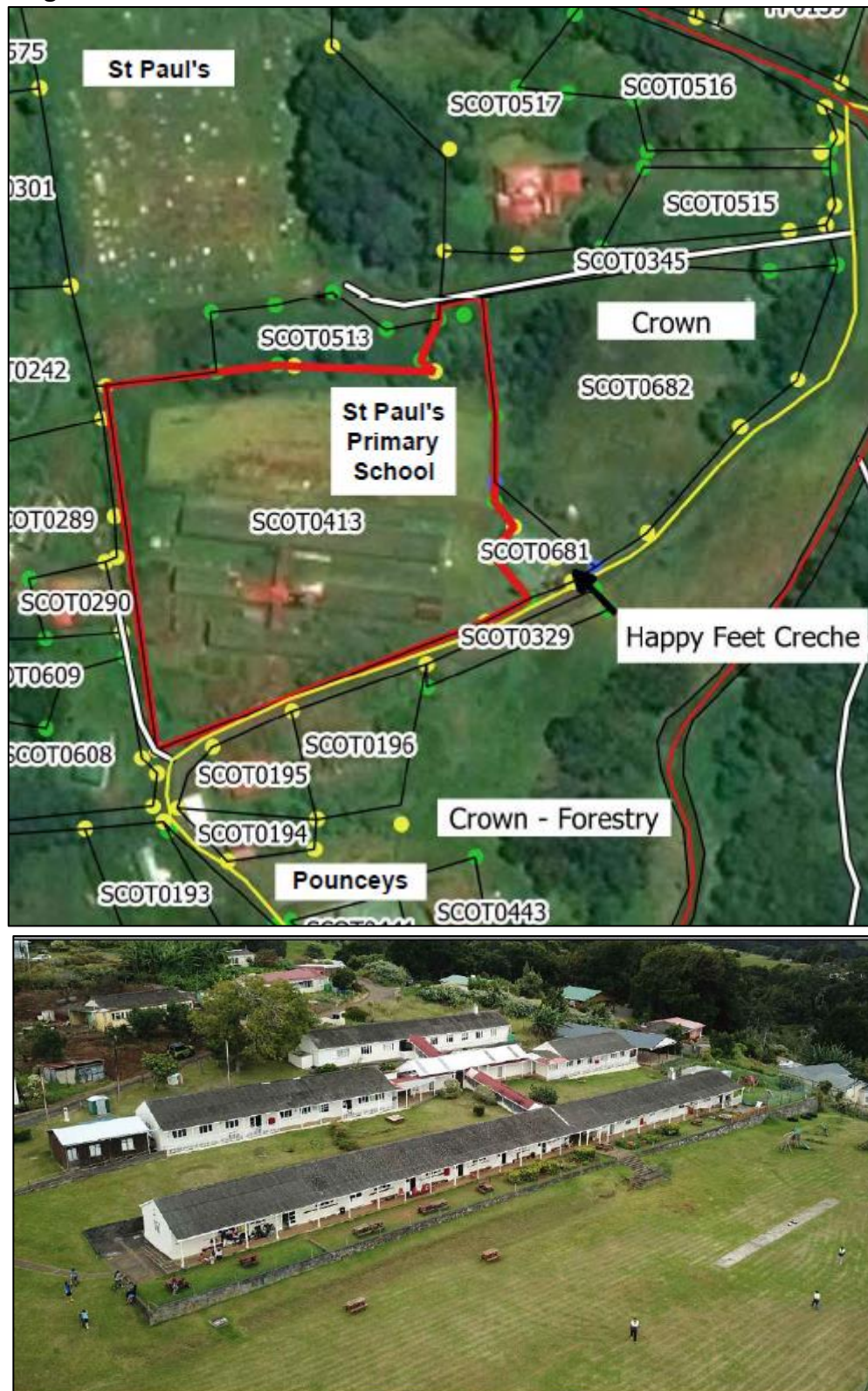
1. Sewage & Water Division	No Objection
2. Energy Division	No Response
3. Fire & Rescue	No Objection - Comments
4. Roads Section	No Objection
5. Property Division	No Objection
6. Environmental Management	No Response
7. Public Health	No Response
8. Agriculture & Natural Resources	No Response
9. St Helena Police Services	No Response
10. Aerodrome Safeguarding	Not Consulted
11. Economic Development	No Objection
12. National Trust	No Response
13. Sure SA Ltd	No Objection
14. Heritage Society	No Objection - Comments
15. Maritime	Not Applicable

B. PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL

LOCALITY & ZONING

The application site is at St Pauls Primary School, where the plot is designated within the Intermediate Zone, and has no conservation area restrictions.

Diagram 1: Location Plan & Aerial View



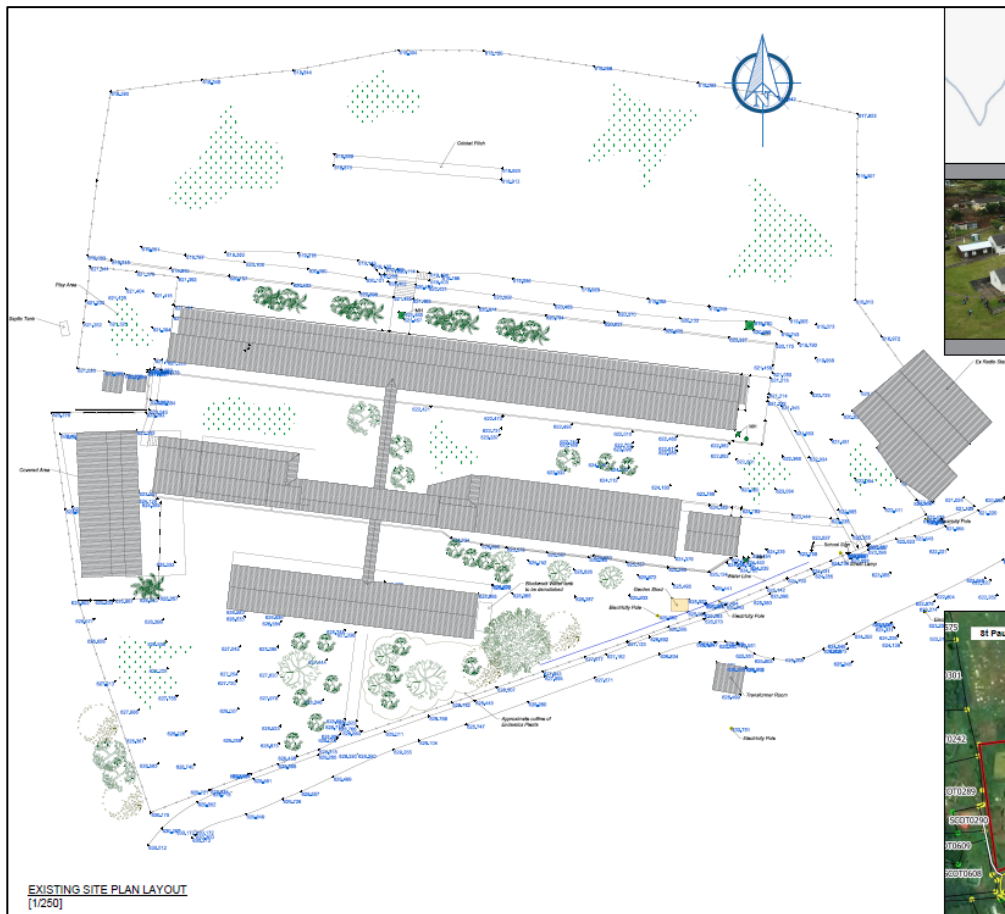
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicants indicate that the reconfiguration of St Paul's Primary School forms part of a strategic initiative to modernise and improve the education infrastructure on St Helena, like that of Harford School. This project specifically focuses on transforming St Paul's Primary into a dedicated Key Stage 2 (KS2) learning environment, aligned with COBIS (Council of British International Schools) and UK educational standards.

Reconfiguration of St Paul's Primary was formally approved by the SHG steering committee on 6 March 2025, following a detailed review of the Island's education provision. This review recognised the need for age-appropriate, high-quality learning environments that support the cognitive, emotional and social development of younger learners. Subsequently, on 18 March 2025, the Education, skills and Employment (ESE) Portfolio announced a broader structural change to the primary school education system. This included the closure of all three existing primary schools at the end of the 2025-26 School year and reopening in September 2026 as restructured, age-specific schools. St Paul's was identified as the designated site for KS2 Education, serving as a foundational setting within the revised education framework.

The reorganisation project involves comprehensive internal refurbishment and spatial redesign to create a safe, inclusive, and stimulating learning environment tailored to the developmental needs of children in their early stages of education. The design prioritises flexibility, accessibility, and safeguarding, ensuring that all facilities meet current best practice standards in early childhood and primary education.

Diagram 2: Existing Site Layout



PROPOSED SITE PLAN LAYOUT
[1/250]

SECTION A-A'
[1/250]

SECTION B-B'
[1/250]

There will be some alterations to the **roof pitches** on the buildings with the overall aim to create a more coherent design.

Report Author: Shane Williams (Senior Planning Officer)
 Authorised by Patricia Coyle (Chief Planning Officer)
 Application 2025/59

Diagram 4: Existing Layout

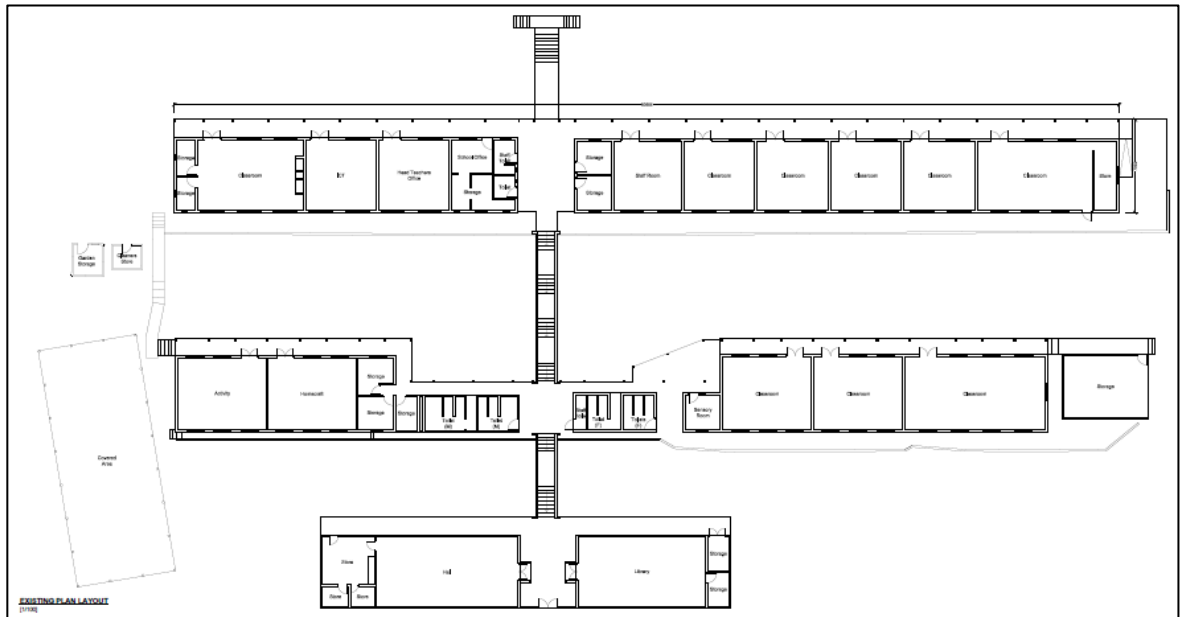


Diagram 5: Proposed Floor Layout



Inclusivity & Accessibility

To ensure the school environment is more accessible for the anticipated number of users including wheelchair users and those with additional needs, provisions has been made in this proposal in the form of wheelchair platform lifts at each level and wheelchair compliant access toilets to enhance the convenience and dignity for all users.

To further support students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), the scheme includes a purpose-designed sensory room with direct access to an outdoor area/verandah to support a range of learning and wellbeing activities. In addition, the existing verandah on the middle and lower tier buildings has been widened to provide clear, unobstructed circulation space, allowing safe and comfortable movement for wheelchair users throughout the school. This has the added benefit of providing the much-

needed space for the anticipated increase in the number of children, particularly when travelling between classrooms. This also has been considered with the widening of the staircases linking each building.

Diagram 6: Existing Elevations

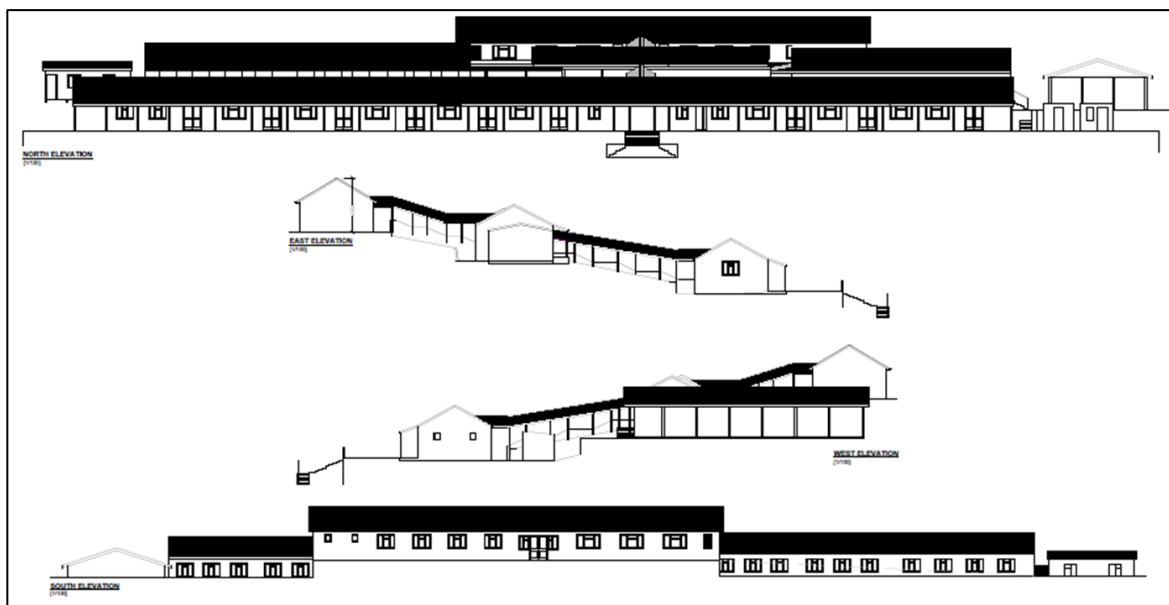
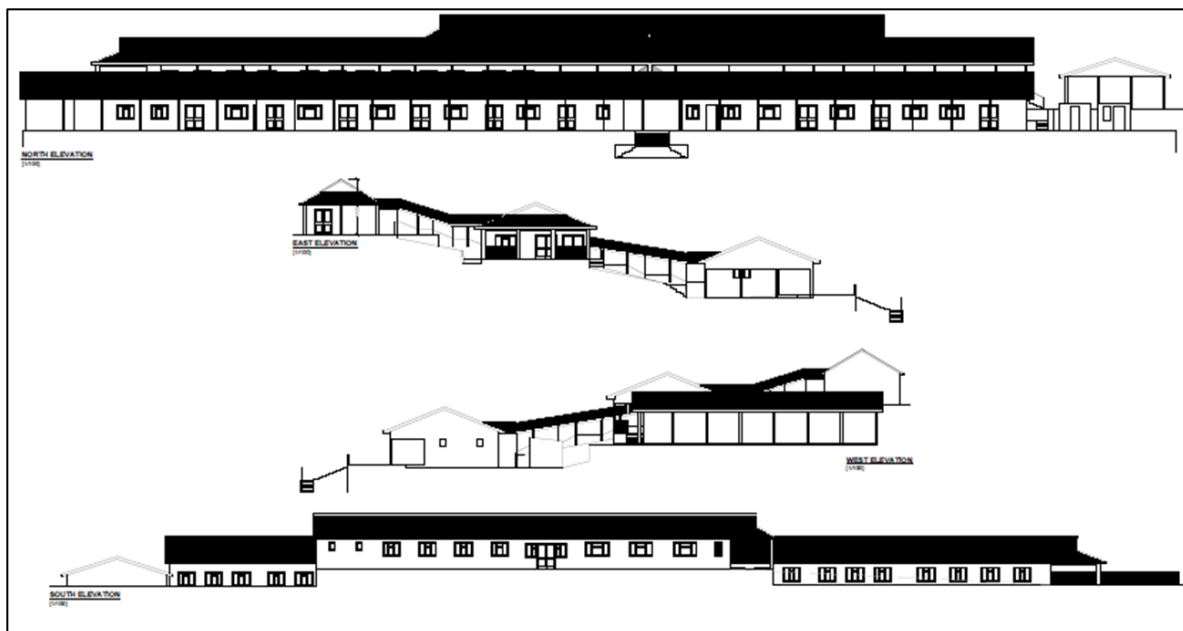


Diagram 7: Proposed Elevations



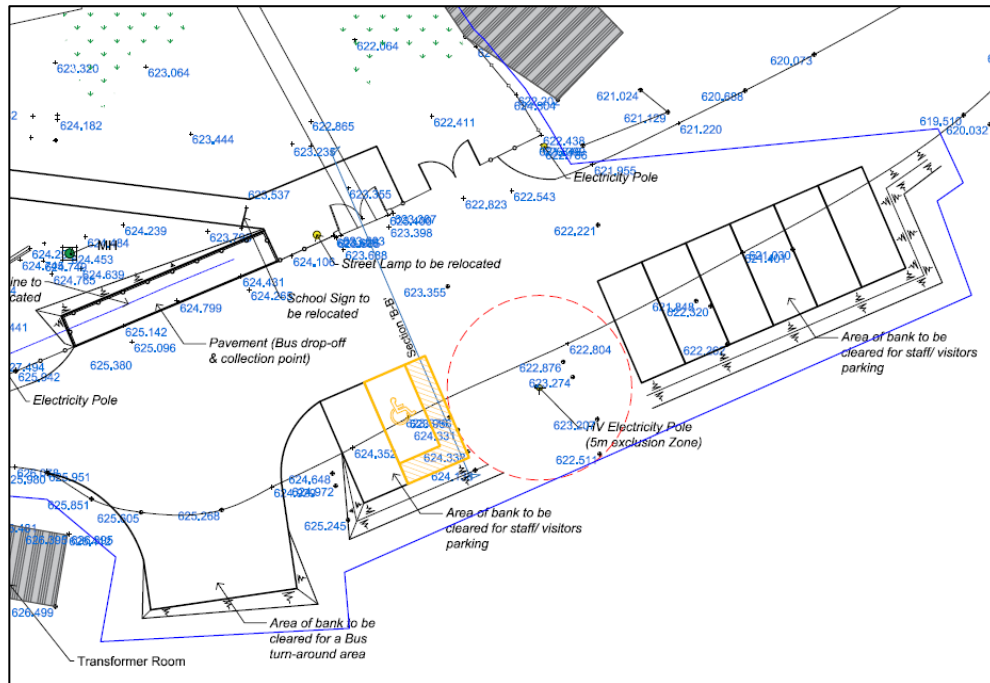
Improved Vehicular Access & Parking Arrangements

The proposal includes the formation of a bus drop off/collection point next to the school entrance that will require some minor infilling. To provide appropriate turning area for buses and demarcated parking to the south of main road, land will be cleared to allow

space for two-way traffic to pass.

This area also will provide a dedicated disabled access car park. The location of the disabled access car park was chosen due to being level with the entrance into the school, providing ease of access for wheelchair users.

Diagram 8: Proposed Parking Arrangements



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK & REPRESENTATIONS

There were no objections received from stakeholders during the consultation period. No representations were received from any members of the public. Comments were received from Fire & Rescue Services as well as Heritage Society.

Fire & Rescue – No Objection: ‘The St Helena Fire & Rescue Service will need to have sight of a scale plan, for the installation of passive & active firefighting media, for this building, including an operational fire hydrant/s that complies with the minimum requirements in accordance with UK fire hydrant regulations.’

Heritage Society – No Objection: ‘A comprehensive landscaping scheme should be required by Planning Condition to blend the development into its setting.’

LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The relevant policies of the Land Development Control Plan (LDCP 2012 - 2022) that are applicable in the assessment of the proposed development are set out below:

- Intermediate Zone Policies: IZ1 a, b, f, g, h

- Social Infrastructure Policies: SI1, SI.5 & SI.12
- Energy Policies: E.4 & E.8
- Water Policy W2
- Sewage, storm and Drainage Policies SD1, SD6 & SD7
- Roads & Transport Policies: RT1 & RT.7

OFFICER'S ASSESSMENT

The proposed upgrade and reconfiguration of St Paul's Primary School forms part of a strategic initiative to modernise and improve the education infrastructure on St Helena. This project specifically focuses on transforming St Paul's into a dedicated Key Stage 2 (KS2) learning environment, aligned with COBIS (Council of British International Schools) and UK educational standards.

In assessing the proposed development, Policy SI.5 indicates that a site would be kept available for a central primary school for the island. Given the recent decision by Education in light of a falling school population, to reduce the number of primary schools and concentrate the remaining (and expected) school population in 2 of the existing 3 primary schools. Harford (in Longwood) and St Pauls Primary Schools are to be retained/extended. It is now unlikely that space at St Helena Secondary School would need to be retained for a new primary school in future.

The proposal results in a material change in the need for additional primary schools on Island and the proposal to extend existing school is therefore acceptable in principle taking into account these material circumstances.

LDCP policies SI1 & SI.12 requires all development reasonably needed for the social development of the island to be designed to be sustainable in all services, to which this development will comply as provisions are already in place. The improvement of making the school more inclusive and accessible with the installation of wheelchair lifts and disabled friendly toilets is in compliance with policy SI.12.

In terms of the buildings' use as a school, this has been established for a number of years and will intensify slightly. Provisions in the form of a suitable and safer drop-off and pick up point for buses has been proposed, where there is sufficient turning radius, that will not negatively impact on the existing public road and therefore is compliant with policy RT1. Parking is limited and therefore the addition of demarcated spaces is welcomed, without adversely impacting on highway safety.

The layout of the building will provide a more secure facility and therefore conform with COBIS standards relating to safeguarding.

The appearance of the works to be carried out is not considered to adversely impact the functionality or appearance of the building. There is no adverse impact on adjoining residential or visual amenities. Overall the design will be coherent within itself and is therefore in compliance with policy IZ1.

To ensure appropriate planting is carried out a landscaping condition is proposed with another condition requiring details on the fencing to be submitted for approval to ensure there is no adverse impact on existing development.

Overall, the development will sensitively enhance the existing site while delivering a safe, inclusive, and engaging environment for all proposed future users. The scheme will support the educational needs of the school community both now and into the future. Accessibility, wellbeing, and sustainability have been key drivers throughout the design process, ensuring the final outcome reflects the values and aspirations of the school and wider community.

The proposal will accord with Intermediate Zone, Social Infrastructure and other relevant policies of the LDCP and can therefore be supported.