



Planning and Heritage Statement

McCormack House, 56A East Street, Havant

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Alder King Planning Consultants

Pembroke House, 15 Pembroke Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3BA

Email: planning.consultancy@alderking.com

Tel: 0117 317 1000



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Appendix 1: Holloway, Iliffe & Mitchell Correspondence, dated 21 September 2023

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning and Heritage Statement has been prepared by Alder King Planning Consultants on behalf of Acorn Education and Care ('the Applicant') in connection with an application seeking planning permission for the change of use of McCormack House, 56A East Street, Havant from office use (Class E) to education use (Class F1). Planning permission is also sought for external works to the building and limited works to the curtilage, including demolition of an existing outbuilding, provision of a multi-use games area (MUGA) and new fencing.
- 1.2 This Planning and Heritage Statement describes the application proposal, relevant planning history and planning policy and assesses the proposal having regard to the policies in the development plan.
- 1.3 The planning application comprises the following documents and drawings, in addition to this statement:
- Covering letter
 - Completed application forms and certificates
 - Completed Community Infrastructure Levy: Form 1 – Additional Information
 - Application drawings
 - Transport Statement – prepared by Paul Basham Associates
 - Travel Plan – prepared by Paul Basham Associates
 - Arboricultural Implications Assessment – prepared by Broad Oak Tree Consultants Limited
 - Ecological Impact Assessment – prepared by Ecological Survey & Assessment Limited (ECOSA)
 - Biodiversity Checklist for Full Applications

2.0 Application Site, Surroundings and Planning History

- 2.1 The application site comprises McCormack House, 56A East Street, Havant. The site is situated approximately 450m to the east of Havant town centre. It is located within the administrative area of Havant Borough Council.
- 2.2 The property itself is a large detached two storey building set within a large plot. It extends to approximately 0.57ha and the building provides 1,819sqm of office floorspace.
- 2.3 The application site is accessed directly from East Street which has direct access onto the A27 (approximately 960m to the east). The property has a shared entrance and car parking to the east. There is a public car park known as 'Town End House Car Park' and then the private car parking for McCormack House is further to the south.
- 2.4 The site is bounded mostly on the eastern and southern boundaries by mature trees and hedgerows. The built form of the site is adjacent to the western boundary. The site is located to the south of East Street, 'The Spring Arts and Heritage Centre' is located directly to the north west of the site. Directly south of the site is a pedestrian footpath and further south is a residential area. Beyond the car park to the east is also a residential area.
- 2.5 There is a Public Right of Way that follows the southern boundary from west to east of the site and continues further to the east (reference 108/57/1). There is also a further Public Right of Way that starts to the south of the car parking area outside of the site's boundary (reference 108/58/1). A disused railway line runs to the east of the site along the car parking area, this is identified as a National Cycle Network.
- 2.6 The site is within Flood Zone 1, and therefore at low risk of flooding. The site sits within the St Faith's Conservation Area.

Planning History

- 2.7 A review of the Council's online planning application database has resulted in limited planning history being identified in relation to the application site. A summary of the applications available is set out below:
- Retrospective planning application for erection of a free-standing, open front, smoking shelter (reference: APP/18/01161) was approved in February 2019.
 - Planning application for the erection of free-standing open fronted smoking shelter (reference: APP/16/01270) was approved in April 2017.
- 2.8 There have also been a number of planning applications submitted in relation to works to the trees on the site due to their location within the conservation area.

3.0 Application Proposals

3.1 The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the application site from office use (Class E) to education use (Class F1) with associated external alterations to the building and its curtilage.

3.2 The formal description of the proposed development is as follows:

Change of use from office use (Class E) to education use (Class F1) and associated external alterations to the building and its curtilage, including provision of a multi-use games area (MUGA) and new fencing.

3.3 In summary the proposals consist of:

- A change of use of the site to education use.
- Retention of existing private car parking area to the east of the site to provide approximately 42 parking spaces and a turning area.
- Demolition of outbuilding.
- Provision of new fencing and gates to the site's perimeter.
- The provision of a fenced MUGA (approx. 10m x 22m) to the south of the building.
- Replacement of existing windows on a like for like basis.

3.4 The proposed school would be registered with Ofsted for up to 70 students and would have about 40 staff.

3.5 Acorn Care and Education provides education to young people with behavioural, emotional, social or learning needs, or a combination of them. The proposed school at Havant will be a school for Special Educational Needs (SEN).

3.6 The age range of the pupils would be 11 – 18 years. The pupils would be located at the school throughout the school week (i.e. Monday to Friday between 9am and 3pm, 36/37 weeks per year, term time only). Principally the pupils will arrive on site either via private vehicles or mini-bus.

3.7 The intention is that the school will help meet both the existing and future needs for specialist education in the area. This would reduce the number of children needing to travel 'out of area' to find an appropriate education environment and reduce overcrowding in existing settings. The proposal will therefore improve the learning outcomes of children in Hampshire (and potentially Sussex) who require specialist education.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”

4.2 The application site falls within the administrative area of Havant Borough Council. The ‘Development Plan’ for the site consists of the Havant Local Plan (Core Strategy) (adopted March 2011) and the Havant Local Plan (Allocations) (adopted July 2014).

4.3 Other material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD’s).

4.4 The application site is located within the settlement boundary and within the defined town centre boundary.

Havant Local Plan (Core Strategy)

4.5 The Havant Local Plan (Core Strategy) was adopted in March 2011. The following policies are relevant considerations for this planning application.

- **Policy CS1** states that planning permission will be granted for development which supports improving the educational and life changes for young adults especially by facilitating access into employment.
- **Policy CS6** states that planning permission will be granted for development which positively contributes to the type of use and design and by its comprehensive approach to the social, economic and/or physical regeneration of the whole borough.
- **Policy CS7** states that planning permission will be granted for development that provides educational and training improvements including Building Schools for the Future.
- **Policy CS11** states that planning permission will be granted for development that protects and where appropriate enhances the borough’s statutory or non-statutory heritage designations by appropriately managing development in or adjacent to conservation areas.
- **Policy CS16** states that planning permission will be granted for development that is designed to a high standard, which helps to create places where people want to live, work and relax. This includes development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbours through smell, the loss of privacy, outlook, noise and overlooking.
- **Policy CS20** states that development will be permitted that does not increase congestion and promotes better use of existing transport; ensures highway design responds positively to the characteristics of the area and delivers a high-quality public realm for all users.

- **Policy DM3** states that the change of use or development of land or premises currently or last used for B use class employment purposes to non-B use class employment will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that the land or premises are not fit for purpose and financially unviable for B use class purposes. Where it is clearly demonstrated that the site is no longer suitable for B use class employment, other types of economic development should be considered in the first instance. These uses will be expected to provide employment opportunities of similar quality and quantity as those which previously existed. Only if another type of economic development cannot be found which provides similar quality and quantity of employment opportunity, will other uses then be considered.
- **Policy DM8** states that development will only be permitted where it protects and enhances local habitats and landscape distinctiveness and which addresses criteria such as protects natural features of nature conservation and/or amenity importance on the site, for example trees.
- **Policy DM9** states that planning permission will only be granted for development in the coastal zone which addresses all of the relevant criteria including where it can be demonstrated that there will be no harmful effects on designated sites.
- **Policy DM12** requires new development to mitigate their travel impact, including the environmental impacts of travel (such as noise, air and visual pollution) and impact on amenity, health and climate change.

Havant Local Plan (Allocations)

4.6 The Havant Local Plan (Allocations) was adopted in July 2014. The following policies are relevant considerations for this planning application.

- **Policy AL1** has regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF.
- **Policy HB3** allocates the site for mixed-use development (site reference: H72). The allocation suggests that the opportunities for the site are new homes including affordable housing or potential for retirement apartments/extra care housing.

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.7 The NPPF was updated in September 2023 and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The relevant paragraphs within the NPPF are set out below.
- 4.8 At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 confirms that there are three overarching objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways, the objectives are economic, social and environmental. Sustainable development is a

consistent theme running through both plan-making and decision-taking. The NPPF advises that development proposals should be approved without delay where they accord with an up-to-date development plan (Paragraph 11c).

- 4.9 Paragraph 47 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible.
- 4.10 Paragraph 95 of the NPPF confirms the importance of there being sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities are encouraged to take a proactive and positive approach to meeting this requirement and widening the choice in education. Further, *great weight* is to be given in the decision-making process to the need to create, expand or alter schools.
- 4.11 Paragraph 123 of the NPPF confirms that local planning authorities should take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is developed but not allocated for specific purposes to help meet identified needs.
- 4.12 Section 16 of the NPPF sets out the national policies in relation to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 195 requires local planning authorities to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including development affecting the setting of a heritage asset).
- 4.13 Paragraph 202 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 4.14 The Parking SPD was adopted in July 2016 (and partially updated September 2019), it sets out the Council's off-street parking standards relating to new development in the Borough. Table 4.1 provides the adopted parking standards for school uses.

Table 4.1: Adopted Parking Standards D1 - Educational Establishments

Use	Car Parking Standard (minimum)
Schools	1 space per teaching member of staff
	2 spaces per 2 non-teaching staff

Source: Havant Borough Council: Parking SPD (adopted July 2016)

- 4.15 The Parking SPD states that all new educational establishments or expansions of more than 50sqm will require a transport appraisal and school or college travel plan to determine provision and facilities. The plan and transport appraisal or assessment is required to identify and justify any allocation to staff, students or community users.

5.0 Heritage Assessment

5.1 The site lies within the St Faith's Conservation Area. The St Faith's Conservation Area designation date is unknown. An Appraisal and Management Plan was published in July 2007.

5.2 Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:

"in the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in the conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area".

St Faith's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

5.3 The St Faith's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was published in July 2007. It aims to identify the elements of St Faith's which contribute to its character; identify elements which detract from the character; and proposes measures to maintain or improve the positive character, local distinctiveness and sense of place.

5.4 A summary of the relevant detail to the application site is set out below.

- East Street has a mix of two and three storey buildings and variation in how the buildings address the street – some with parapets, some with pitch roofs and some projecting gables.
- The tree belt lining the eastern edge along the former railway line make a highly significant contribution to the quality of Havant's townscape and the general high-quality amenity and appearance of the town and its suburbs.
- East Street has far more of service based commercial businesses performing a secondary (but important) role to the primarily shopping core.

Heritage Assessment

Assessment of Significance

5.5 McCormack House is located within the St Faith's Conservation Area. As described under Section 3, the proposed development includes a change of use from office to education use and external alterations to the building and its curtilage.

5.6 McCormack House is not identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and is not a listed building or building of local interest. The proposals include the demolition of an outbuilding, along with replacement of windows on a like-for-like basis, there are also amendments to the perimeter gates and fencing. These works are minimal. Therefore, the proposals will not affect the building's significance as a result of the works.

Impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area

- 5.7 The proposals have been carefully considered so that the character and appearance of the conservation area will be preserved.
- 5.8 The exterior of the building (beyond the amendments mentioned above) will essentially remain unchanged. There are some proposals to install security gates and fencing around the perimeter of the building for security for the proposed use. The views of the security gates and fencing will be limited owing to the large mature trees on the application site. There will therefore be limited impacts on the appearance of the conservation area in relation to the use of the building as a school.
- 5.9 The important boundary trees are a positive contributor to the character and appearance of the conservation area and will be retained.
- 5.10 The proposed use of the building is entirely compatible with the conservation area location. Indeed, the current occupier is shortly to fully vacate the building and without finding a viable new use for the building it could remain unoccupied for a significant period of time, with the potential for its appearance and condition to deteriorate causing harm to the conservation area.
- 5.11 The proposed education use will not give rise to any impacts beyond the existing lawful Class E use that would harm the character of the conservation area. Indeed, maintaining the building in a viable and active use will preserve the current character.
- 5.12 Taking the above into account, the proposals would have a neutral effect on this designated asset (the conservation area) – i.e. there would be no harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

6.0 Planning Assessment

Introduction

- 6.1 This section of the statement assesses the principle of the use of McCormack House, Havant for education purposes (Class F1), having regard to the development plan and material considerations. It also provides an assessment of the other aspects of the proposed works which require planning permission.

Loss of Employment Floorspace

- 6.2 The existing building is used as offices (Class E) but is currently only occupied by five users, given that the occupier is in the process of vacating the property.
- 6.3 Whilst the site is allocated for an alternative mixed-use development (Policy HB3 of the Local Plan (Allocations)), there is a policy within the Local Plan (Core Strategy) (Policy DM3) seeking to protect where appropriate land or premises currently or last used for B use class employment. The policy states that the change of use to non-B use class employment (formerly Class B, now Class E) will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that the land or premises are not fit for purpose and financially unviable for B use class purposes. It also states that where it is clearly demonstrated that the site is no longer suitable for B use class employment, other types of economic development should be considered in the first instance.
- 6.4 As mentioned above, the site is allocated in the Havant Local Plan (Allocations) (Policy HB3) for new housing or retirement apartments/extra care housing. It has, therefore, been accepted by the LPA that alternative land uses are acceptable at the site. Nevertheless, the proposal will provide an element of employment by retaining 40 direct jobs (and many other indirect) at the site. Regardless of the allocation, the loss of employment floorspace as detailed in the adopted policies is considered below.
- 6.5 The importance of protecting valuable employment land and premises is understood and the following paragraphs identify how the proposed change of use of the site to provide a specialist education facility is both appropriate and accords with Policy DM3.
- 6.6 The proposed development would result in the change of use of Class E floorspace to Class F1 floorspace. The school would provide about 40 direct jobs and would, therefore, retain a significant amount of employment at the site. This would make a meaningful contribution to employment opportunities and the diversity of opportunities in the town.
- 6.7 There would also be a number of indirect employment opportunities arising from the proposals. It is, therefore, concluded that there would not be a loss of existing jobs associated with the proposal. Indeed, there are only five people currently working in the building. The proposal would provide an alternative form of employment that would contribute to the economic productivity of the Borough as encouraged by Policy DM3.

- 6.8 Holloway Iliffe & Mitchell were engaged to market the property in December 2022. The details of the marketing exercise are provided within their letter provided at **Appendix 1**. The letter confirms the extent of marketing undertaken. It confirms that their client had originally 60 – 70 members of staff operating in the building and since the pandemic now had only 5 people operating on site and therefore the building is no longer required for their operation. It confirms that Havant is generally not an established office location and in their view the use of the site by Acorn Care and Education would be a better fit for the building rather than spending more time trying to let it as an office which would mean the building would be left vacant for an extended period of time.
- 6.9 It is also noted that the lawful use of the building, now being within Class E, is one that could be used for a multitude of non-employment purposes without the need for planning permission – i.e. the site could be occupied by uses that generate very few employment opportunities without the need for LPA approval. Therefore, there is a lack of planning control regarding many alternative use and this is a material consideration in considering the current proposal.
- 6.10 Furthermore, it should be noted that permitted development rights under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class T of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended, allows changes of use from Class E (commercial, business or service) to a state-funded school via the Prior Approval process. Under these rights, the LPA is unable to consider the loss of employment floorspace. This is another material consideration when assessing the loss of Class E floorspace, as a state-funded school at the site could be brought forward without the LPA being able to seek to resist the loss of the existing use.
- 6.11 In light of the above, it has been demonstrated that the proposal will provide about 40 direct jobs (and many indirect) and would retain a significant amount of employment at the site. The marketing agents have confirmed that that building is no longer required for the previous occupiers and only currently provides for five workers, despite its size. They also confirm that the location of the site is not generally an established office location, and conclude that the proposal will not limit the range, choice and quality of employment sites within the area. It is concluded that the proposed change of use of the application site accords with the relevant requirements of Policy DM3.

Principle of Education Use

- 6.12 The proposed use of the building is as a specialist school operated by the applicant. The school will provide an appropriate specialist education setting to meet the needs of up to 70 children. There will be approximately 40 staff on site when the school is fully occupied. The children who will be educated at the school will have Special Educational Needs (SEN). These needs often mean that they have learning and communication difficulties. The school offers the opportunity for children to be educated and supported in small groups by specialist teachers in an appropriate setting, seeking to maximise the learning outcomes for children.

- 6.13 The intention is that the school will help meet both the existing and future needs for specialist education in the local area, primarily Hampshire and Sussex. This would reduce the number of children needing to travel 'out of area' to find an appropriate education environment and reduce overcrowding in existing settings.
- 6.14 The development plan, notably Policies CS1 and CS7, is supportive of development that improves the educational and life chances for young adults. The catchment area for the applicant's schools (and all SEN schools in general) are slightly larger than for a conventional school and there is a need for the schools to be located in accessible locations. The site at McCormack House meets these requirements. There are good opportunities to access the site by public transport, cycling, walking and by car. Car parking will be provided on site commensurate with the school's requirements.
- 6.15 The existing two storey building offers a workable footprint that can provide classrooms and other spaces required to achieve Ofsted standards. In addition, there is adequate outside space to provide the required levels of recreational space which would be used by the children under supervision.
- 6.16 The commercial and residential character of the general area would not result in any conflict with the proposed education use. A school is an acceptable and compatible land use in an area such as the locality proposed. Most schools are located in such areas. The intended use would work in harmony with existing neighbouring occupiers. Furthermore, reusing an existing building in a sustainable and accessible location is clearly suitable.
- 6.17 There has been an incremental increase in demand for specialist education year-on-year. There are two factors contributing to this; an increase in children requiring specialist provision as a result of increased complexity of need and a rise in the number of children and young people moving into the area that require special school provision.
- 6.18 There is demand and need for specialist education services as being proposed. Such provision will assist in meeting needs both now and in the future. Without further specialist provision, there is the risk that a greater number of children from the local area will need to be sent 'out of area' to receive the specialist education that they require. This is inherently unsustainable and has the potential to reduce the learning opportunities for those young people.
- 6.19 As noted above, permitted development rights under Part 3, Class T of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended, allows changes of use from Class E (commercial, business or service) to a state-funded school. Although the proposed use is not a state-funded school, this confirms that if it was, then full planning permission would not be required for the same type of use.
- 6.20 In addition to the development plan policies, it is noted that the NPPF requires local planning authorities to place 'great weight' (our emphasis) on the creation of schools in determining planning applications. This is a key factor weighing in favour of the proposals.

- 6.21 Having regard to the above, it is clear that the proposed use would accord with the relevant aspects of Policies CS1 and CS7, as well as the NPPF. Accordingly, the use of the building for a school in this location is acceptable in principle.

Residential Amenity

- 6.22 The application site is set within a mixed-use area of commercial and residential use. The current use of McCormack House is as offices, although as mentioned above, it could be used for any purpose within Use Class E without the need for planning permission.
- 6.23 When compared with the range of existing lawful uses, the proposed use as a small specialist education facility is unlikely to result in any material change in activity levels on the site. Vehicle movements are likely to be concentrated at pick-up and drop off times in the morning and mid-afternoon, with limited other movements during the day.
- 6.24 Student activity on the site would again be limited to the hours of the school day in term times and only then generally at limited times when students utilise the outside space at lunch and break times. In both respects, it should be noted that activity on the site would be focussed between Monday to Friday and during term time only. At other times, notably the evenings and weekends when local residents are likely to be more sensitive to noise and disturbance, the school would result in significantly less activity than might occur under the current lawful use.
- 6.25 A school in such a location is an entirely acceptable relationship in land use planning terms and is a situation that prevails throughout most settlements across the country.
- 6.26 The exterior alterations to the building are minimal. There will be no loss of privacy or overlooking impacts introduced to adjacent residential occupiers.
- 6.27 As noted above, the lawful use of the building, now being within Class E, is such that it could be used for a multitude of other purposes without the need for planning permission. This is a material consideration in considering the current proposal.
- 6.28 Based on the above, it is clear that the proposed change of use of the site will not harm the amenities of adjacent residential occupiers and complies with Policy CS16.

Transport, Parking and Access

- 6.29 There are a number of transport related policies of relevance to the proposal. A separate Transport Statement and Travel Plan have been prepared by Paul Basham Associates (PBA) and accompany this planning application. These assess the proposals in full. However, the paragraphs below summarise key matters in relation to transport, parking and access matters.
- 6.30 The Parking SPD sets out the Council's parking requirements for schools (for former Class D1, now Class F1). As set out in the accompanying Transport Statement, the provision of 42 spaces on the site provides

sufficient parking to meet the anticipated needs of the school for both staff and visitors. The level of parking proposed accords with the Parking SPD.

- 6.31 Policies CS20 and DM12 seeks to promote better use of existing transport and minimise travel impact of new development. As noted above, whilst pupils at the school may come from a slightly wider catchment, there are opportunities for pupils (where appropriate) and staff to access the site by public transport, with bus routes close by and Havant Railway Station approximately an 800m walk away. In addition, secure cycle parking will be provided on site, encouraging staff in particular to access the site by sustainable travel modes. The proposals therefore accord with Policies CS20 and DM12 in that sustainable opportunities to access the site are available.
- 6.32 The Transport Statement anticipates that for the staff, 75% of journeys made to their developments are by car with the remaining 25% using sustainable transport methods (i.e. public transport, cycling and walking). Resulting in 26 staff travelling by car. It is anticipated that 90% of pupils will travel by shared taxi/minibus and 10% assisted by sustainable transport modes (walking or public transport). The proposal would create a net increase in vehicle trips in the AM peak (i.e. 08:00-09:00) but would create a net decrease in vehicle trips in the PM peak (i.e. 17:00-18:00). The Transport Statement confirms that pupil trips and a small number of staff trips would be generated in the traditional PM peak hour. However, it is concluded that the proposed education facility would not have a severe impact in the surrounding highway network when compared to the existing office use.
- 6.33 Outside of term time and during the evenings and weekends, the number of trips would be significantly reduced from those resulting from the lawful use of the property. The site will not be used at these times, unlike an office (or some other Class E) use.
- 6.34 Given the nature of the school, pupils will not be able to travel independently, and the Travel Plan focuses on travel patterns and how to promote sustainable travel to staff members. It sets out a target to reduce the number of staff travelling by private car by 5% over 5 years. Measures are outlined for each individual travel mode to encourage the use of sustainable modes, this includes walking and cycling, public transport (bus and rail) and sustainable private vehicle use (electric vehicles and car sharing). It states that a Travel Plan Coordinator will be responsible for raising awareness and encouraging changes in travel behaviour. The Travel Plan is intended to demonstrate how the proposed development can deliver sustainable travel.
- 6.35 As noted above, the lawful use of the building, now being within Class E, is such that it could be used for a multitude of other purposes without the need for planning permission. The site could be occupied by a creche, day nursery or day centre which would have very similar traffic impacts without the need for LPA approval. This is a material consideration in considering the current proposal.
- 6.36 The Transport Statement confirms that the development would not have a severe impact on the local highway network when compared to the site's existing use as an office and that there are sustainable travel options for staff. Therefore, the proposal complies with Policies CS20 and DM12, and the Parking Standards SPD.

Ecology

- 6.37 An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) has been prepared by ECOSA in support of the planning application.
- 6.38 Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy seeks the protection and enhancement of designated sites and features of ecological interest including wildlife habitats and corridors. Policy DM9 states that permission will only be granted in the Coastal Zone where it can be demonstrated that there will be no harmful effects on designated sites.
- 6.39 The EclA comprises data from a desk study as well as a field survey (carried out on 11th September 2023). From the desk study, it was determined that the site is not within any designated sites for wildlife interest. There are four statutory designated sites within 1km of the site. This includes the Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar and Special Protection Area (SPA), the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Chichester Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The closest Priority Habitat to the site is Deciduous Woodland, located approximately 10m to the north of the site.
- 6.40 The main findings from EclA are the following:
- The site is dominated by urban habitat types, with modified grassland, scattered trees, and hedgerows surrounding the main building, with further grassland, ruderal/ephemeral and a line of trees within the surrounds.
 - The site has been assessed as being of low suitability for roosting bats within the main building, low suitability for foraging and commuting bats, and suitable for badger, breeding birds, reptiles, great crested newt in their terrestrial phase, and European hedgehog.
 - Appropriate mitigation and compensation measures have been proposed, including protective barriers to shield vegetation, a sensitive lighting strategy, continued permeability for European hedgehog, and compensatory grassland planting.
 - The site will be enhanced for bats and birds through the installation of additional bat roosting and bird nesting features, in addition to native species planting throughout
 - Given the impacts identified, and the mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures proposed it is considered that the proposals accord with all relevant local and national planning policy.
- 6.41 The proposed mitigation and enhancement measures, that have been outlined in the submitted EclA, conclude that no significant residual effects are anticipated on any of the species considered. There will be no cumulative effects on local populations as a result of the proposed development. Thus, it can be readily concluded that the proposed development is compliant with Policy CS11 and Policy DM9 of the Core Strategy.

Design and Landscaping

- 6.42 The proposed application includes the creation of a new MUGA and associated works to landscaping and boundaries. The works proposed have been designed to complement the existing character of the site, whilst ensuring the delivery of a high-quality education establishment to meet the specialist needs of pupils.
- 6.43 The site benefits from established landscaping, including a number of mature trees predominantly located towards the site boundaries. An arboricultural implications assessment (AIA) prepared by Broad Oak Tree Consultants Limited accompanies the planning application. The report considers the impact of the proposals on the trees and makes recommendations for the sensitive delivery of the development so to minimise impacts on trees of value.
- 6.44 The majority of the trees that surround the site are proposed to be retained. Four trees are required to be removed to facilitate the development. All four trees are classified as category C trees, so of relatively low importance.
- 6.45 The AIA states that the removal of the trees will not have a noticeable impact on public visual amenity given the retained trees and the removal of two of the trees will allow more space for future development of the canopies of the retained trees. The proposed MUGA will not impact any of the retained trees.
- 6.46 Finally, the AIA sets out that measures to ensure the installation of the proposed perimeter fence does not impact on retained trees and details are included on the Tree Protection Plan.
- 6.47 It has been demonstrated that the development will be of high quality and will protect and enhance local habitats and trees on the site, where possible, in line with policies CS16 and DM8.

Social and Community Benefits

- 6.48 Acorn Care and Education work as part of therapeutic communities, supporting children with various packages of education. The education facility will provide a stable environment for young people who require a range of support and training to allow them to develop social, independence and daily living skills.
- 6.49 The majority of the children to be educated at the school will be those who are currently living in the catchment area discussed previously and for whom a dedicated specialist facility is required to meet their specific education needs. Many pupils are currently either supported where they live or attend mainstream services. Mainstream placements are not particularly suitable, hence the need to create a suitable education environment where pupils can catch up and thrive in their education.
- 6.50 The NPPF notes that it is important that sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities and that LPAs should take a proactive approach to meeting this requirement and to development proposals that will widen choice in education. Furthermore, LPAs are required to give “great weight” to the need to create schools through decisions they take on applications.

- 6.51 The proposals will provide employment opportunities for local people and there are also likely to be opportunities for local tradespersons.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The application seeks planning permission to change the use of McCormack House, 56A East Street, Havant from office use (Class E) to education use (Class F1) with associated external alterations to the building and its curtilage.
- 7.2 There are limited external changes proposed to the building and the application proposes alterations to the external layout of the grounds, primarily to allow for recreation space.
- 7.3 When assessed against policies in the development plan and national guidance in the NPPF, it is clear that the application proposals are acceptable. In summary, this statement concludes that the application proposals:
- Are acceptable in land use terms.
 - Will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and are acceptable in design terms.
 - Will not give rise to any adverse transport or parking impacts.
 - Will not harm the amenities of nearby residential occupiers.
 - Will provide community benefits through the provision of a school for children with specialist education needs which cannot be met by other schools in the local area.
 - Will provide increased employment opportunities for local people.
- 7.4 The proposals are in full accordance with the pertinent policies of the development plan as well as guidance in the NPPF, which requires “great weight” to be given in the decision-making process to the creation of new school places. As such, the proposals should be approved without delay in accordance with Paragraph 47 of the NPPF.

Appendix 1: Holloway Iliffe & Mitchell Correspondence, dated 21 September 2023

Our Ref: TH/JMC/210923
21st September 2023

Acorn Care & Education
C/O Group Head Office
Atria
Spa Road
Bolton BL1 4AG

FAO: Tim Brown

10 ACORN BUSINESS PARK
NORTHARBOUR ROAD
PORTSMOUTH
HAMPSHIRE
PO6 3TH

Portsmouth: 023 9237 7800
Southampton: 023 8011 9977

info@hi-m.co.uk
www.hi-m.co.uk

Dear Tim,

Re: McCormack House, 56a East Street, Havant, Hampshire

We have been asked to report on our marketing activity and to provide a market view on the above mentioned premises. I can confirm that we first engaged with our client who currently owns McCormack House in December 2022. Our client engaged us to market the property. However, the current interest from Acorn Care and Education (as well as interest from one other party) came along before marketing had formally started. Consequently, a typical marketing exercise has not been undertaken in this instance.

What we do have is our professional views on the site, having significant experience of the local market, that we reported to our client. We initially advised that the building lent itself to alternative uses immediately as this was a large office in the centre of Havant with a cellular layout which, in our professional opinion, would have very little demand in the office sector. It is also worth pointing out that our client originally had 160 members of staff operating in the building daily and since the pandemic now has only 5 people operating on site daily and therefore the building is no longer required for their operation. They are now looking for alternative premises to rent in the vicinity for a very much smaller operation.

Havant in general is not an established office location. The majority of larger enquiries gravitate towards Northarbour in Portsmouth where Lakeside, Harbour Court, National Maritime Centre (details attached) to name but a few attract the majority if not all the enquiries. We are aware that Langstone Technology Park, which has recently been acquired by XLB The Fund, has reduced the office content of the park and is slowly but surely redeveloping the site to include an industrial element which of course we cannot accommodate at the subject site.

Our client did look at the possibility of splitting the building to create smaller suites but this was not likely to be viable or practical on costs grounds. When we came across the interest from Acorn Care and Education we felt this was a much better fit for the building and the community and feel that this would be a much better use of the building than trying to get it let as an office which, in our professional view, will be a thankless task given its layout and configuration, and will mean that it is left vacant for an extended period of time rather than contributing activity and employment opportunities to the local area.

We have also been in talks with another interested party but this would be for a medical use, and therefore further cements our professional opinion that the building is no longer fit to be an office.

Cont/...



-2- **Livelihood House, 56a East Street, Havant**

You will be aware that office use now falls within Use Class E, which means that many alternative and 'non-employment' uses of office buildings do not even require planning permission. This would have been the case with the proposed medical use, also being a Class E use.

I trust this provides you with sufficient information for the time being, should you any questions regarding the information I have provided then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Tom Holloway BA (Hons) MRICS
HOLLOWAY ILIFFE & MITCHELL
tom@hi-m.co.uk

Enc. Marketing details

QINETIQ



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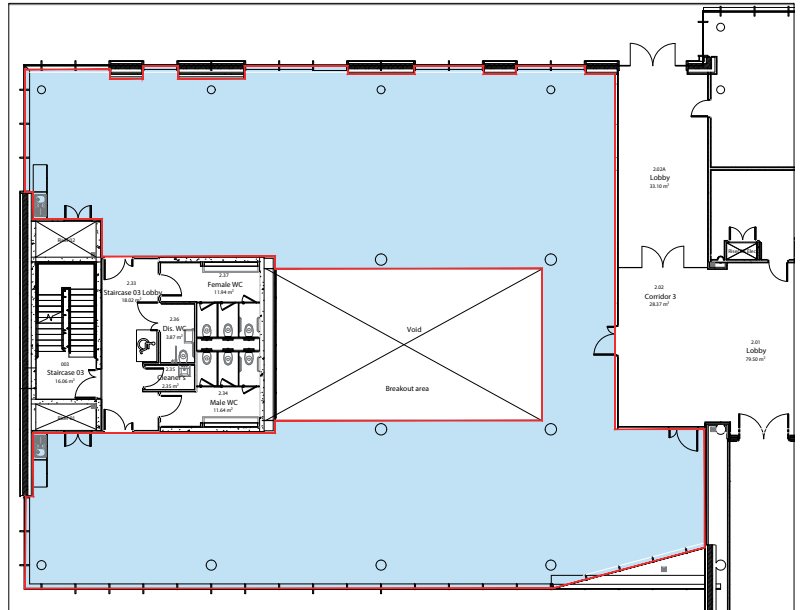


Accommodation

Approximate Net Internal Areas are as follows:

Ground Floor	NOW LET	
First Floor	NOW LET	
Second Floor North Wing	219 sq.m	2,352 sq.ft
Second Floor South Wing	223 sq.m	2,400 sq.ft
Third Floor	498 sq.m	5,361 sq.ft

Note – Dimensions taken from CAD plans.



Not to Scale. Typical Layout - Second Floor.





Terms

Available on new effectively fully repairing and insuring leases.

Rent

On application

Viewing

By appointment with the joint agents.
As a secure site, estate regulations apply.

EPC

Available on request

Legal Costs

Each party to bear their own costs incurred in the transaction.

Other Costs

Service Charge is payable in respect of the maintenance and management of the building and common parts including security.

Business Rates

Further details available on application.

Dataroom

An online dataroom containing technical information and floorplans is available on request.

Contact: cdoidge@vailwilliams.com.

PORTSDOWN TECHNOLOGY PARK, PORTSMOUTH

For more information please contact the QinetiQ Group Property.

Real Estate Team at commpropteam@QinetiQ.com.



Alex Gauntlett
Vail Williams LLP
Tel: 023 9320 3200
Mob: 07584 657826
Email: agauntlett@vailwilliams.com

Or call our Joint Sole Agents



Tom Holloway
Tel: 023 9237 7800
Mob: 07887 602603
Email: tom@hi-m.co.uk

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