



APP/W0340/W/20/3265460

**Sandleford Park, Newbury**

**Specifically in relation to Park House Secondary School Expansion**

Bloor Homes and Sandleford Farm Partnership

Proof of Evidence prepared by James Hinde BA (Hons) Arch, Grad Dip Arch, RIBA, ARB

**(APP/28)**

April 2021

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## 1.0 PREAMBLE

1.1 My name is James Hinde and I am qualified Architect and member of both the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and Architects Registration Board (ARB) since 2001. I hold a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Degree in Architecture from the Greenwich University and a Post Graduate Diploma in Architecture from the University of Huddersfield and I completed my RIBA Part 3 professional examinations at the University of Sheffield.

1.2 I am a Director of IDP Central Limited, an architectural practice within a wider group of construction consultancy companies. I joined IDP in 2008 and became a Director of the company in 2014. Prior to joining IDP I spent eight years (2000-2008) working as an Architect for Aedis (formerly AHR) Architects within their Education Team. I was also employed by James Totty Partnership (Architects) between 1998 - 2000, working on a variety of schemes within the public sector. During my architectural training I spent my first year out working for David Robothams Architects between 1995 – 1996.

1.3 Prior to becoming an architect I trained as an Architectural Technician between 1989 – 1993 gaining a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Construction Studies at Coventry University and an Ordinary National Certificate (ONC) in Construction Studies from North Warwickshire College between 1989-1991, whilst under the employ of Corstorphine & Wright Architects.

1.4 I was a Construction Industry Council (CIC) approved Design Quality Indicator (DQI) Facilitator between 2006 – 2014, where I specialised in the Education sector working alongside Local Education Departments to develop initial briefing documents and review contractor design proposals within the context of central government school building programmes.

1.5 I regularly act as the RIBA Office Mentor for RIBA Part 3 students working at the IDP, which entails supporting the students with their ongoing professional coursework, examinations, providing relevant professional experience on projects alongside offering advice and support to the students during this critical time in their qualification route.

1.6 I am also a Co-opted School Governor at St Christopher Primary School, which is a Local Authority funded school in Coventry, having joined the governing board in 2008 as a parent Governor. I was also a parent governor at Westwood Academy Secondary School between 2014 – 2020, the school was a standalone academy until joining the Kenilworth Multi Academy Trust in early 2020.

1.7 I have over 20 years' experience of working alongside public and private sector clients across a wide variety of procurement routes and project types, but with specific experience in delivering education projects.

1.8 I have previously worked alongside developers to successfully deliver new build schools, community centres and changing room facilities as part of large scale housing development projects, for instance the new 1 FE extension to Great Rissington Primary School, Cotswolds and the 3FE Floreat Montague Park Primary School, Wokingham.

1.9 I am currently leading the team that secured circa £15m funding directly from the Department for Education (DfE) for the new build, refurbishment, remodelling and demolition works required at Hinckley Academy and John Cleveland Sixth Form, as part of its transfer to The Futures Trust Multi Academy Trust. The award was based on condition surveys, revised pupil numbers and a phased approach to minimising disruption to teaching and learning all within the context of the DfE's Building Bulletin Guidelines and published cost data.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 I have been instructed by Bloor Homes Limited to provide a Proof of Evidence relating to the appeal and Public Inquiry concerning the decision by the West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) to refuse the planning application on land at Sandlesford Park, Newbury.

2.2 An outline planning application was submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on 28th May 2020 for the following proposed development:

*The construction of up to 1,000 new homes; and 80 extra care housing units (Use Class C3) as part of the affordable housing provision; a new 2 form entry primary school (D1); expansion land for Park House Academy School; a local centre to comprise flexible commercial floorspace (A1-A5 up to 2,150 sq m, B1a up to 200 sq m) and D1 use (up to 500sq m); the formation of new means of access onto Monks Lane; new open space including the laying out of a new country park; drainage infrastructure; walking and cycling infrastructure and other associated infrastructure works.*

2.3 The application was refused on the 13th October 2020. One of the reasons for refusal (no. 10) relates to the Park House Secondary School site area and location of the proposed sports pitch.

2.4 I confirm I was the lead consultant within the IDP team which developed the design proposals for the Park House Secondary School site, and I visited the site and met with the Local Education Authority team and the school's Senior Management Team regularly in the development of the design proposals from IDP's appointment by Bloor Homes in the spring of 2017 through to the submission of the outline planning application on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

2.5 I led the IDP team instructed by Bloor Homes to review the West Berkshire Council commissioned design proposal, prepared by the consultants Corde, for the expansion of the Park House Secondary School, and where applicable propose alternative solutions all within the context of the DfE's Building Bulletin Guidelines, the school and Local Education Authorities comments alongside current education sector cost data.

2.6 Lastly, my evidence, set out herein, is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

## 3.0 SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

3.1 Summary of IDP conclusions following review of the West Berkshire Council commissioned school expansion feasibility proposals, provided by the consultants Corde, for Park House Secondary School expansion based on 2,000 new homes.

3.2 Summary of the IDP methodology in providing a revised design for Park House Secondary School expansion, based on 1,500 new homes.

3.3 Review of the reason for refusal (no. 10) in relation to the Park House Secondary School proposal.

### 3.4 Reference Documents:

3.4.1 To substantiate my statements within this report I shall reference the following documentation:

- West Berkshire Council commissioned Feasibility Report for the Expansion of Park House School, produced by the consultants Corde.
- The Department for Education's Building Bulletin 103: Area Guidelines for Mainstream Schools
- The IDP issued Summary of Proposals & Phasing Proposal for Park House Secondary School. Document reference C3289 – 1503/ 12.05.2020, issued for inclusion within Bloor Homes outline planning application which was submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on 28th May 2020.
- IDP drawing Alternative Pitch location Sketch, issued to Bloor Homes via email on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Document reference C3289 001-01122020 E. This drawing was developed in conjunction with Bloor Homes and Barrell Tree Consultancy following review of West Berkshire Council's reasons for refusal (no. 10).

## 4.0 PARK HOUSE SECONDARY SCHOOL

### *4.1 Summary of IDP conclusions following review of the West Berkshire Council (WBC) commissioned school expansion feasibility proposals, provided by the consultants Corde, for Park House Secondary School expansion based on 2,000 new homes.*

4.1.1 IDP were commissioned by Bloor Homes in the spring of 2017 to undertake a detailed review of the proposed area requirements for both the school buildings and school site, based on the WBC commissioned feasibility proposals produced by the consultants Corde. These proposals were based on a total of 1641 pupils, with a 9forms of entry (FE) secondary school and a post 16 6<sup>th</sup> Form, split as follows:

- Ages 11-16: 1340 pupils. This total number is slightly below the standard DfE model of 1350 pupils within a 9FE school, based on the report stating each FE will consist of 268 pupils rather than the standard 270 pupils (30 pupils per class, 9 classes per form of entry = 270 pupils as per standard DfE model)
- Post 16: 301 pupils. This equates to 18.3% of overall pupil numbers being within the post 16, 6<sup>th</sup> Form. By attributing 300 pupil spaces to the 6<sup>th</sup> Form the Corde feasibility increases the number and size of rooms as follows: 1no. Art class room @ 83m<sup>2</sup> and 1no. Technology classroom @83m<sup>2</sup>.

### **4.2 Buildings:**

4.2.1 The Corde feasibility study provides a high level Schedule of Accommodation (SoA) based on a total of 1641 pupils, it does not detail the support and ancillary spaces within the SoA. The SoA was developed through the use of the DfE's Schedule of Accommodation tool available at the time, this SoA relates to the area guidelines within the aforementioned DfE's BB103 document. This is understandable as the existing buildings have been constructed over a number of years in line with differing area guidelines from the DfE, & as such a balance must be struck in regard to these legacy spaces in relation to remodelling the school building stock.

4.2.2 The Corde proposals provide 3no new build blocks, major refurbishment to 4no. existing zones and partial refurbishments to 7no existing zones within the existing buildings, across a series of phases of works that could be tied to the numbers of houses delivered by the housing developer.

### **4.3 Site:**

4.3.1 To set the context for this element of my analysis it should be noted that the existing total site area is approximately 93,340m<sup>2</sup> and that this figure has been measured from drawing ICS/0749/01 Park House School Topographical Survey (site) dated June 2014 by ISIS Surveyors Ltd and supplied to IDP via Bloor Homes, by WBC on 17th April 2007. The aforementioned measured site figure was agreed for use with WBC during the development of the IDP feasibility proposals.

4.3.2 The Corde feasibility provides an external area schedule for the school site, based on a total of 1641 pupils, in line with the DfE's BB 103 area guidelines. The Corde feasibility confirms the minimum total site area to be 91,050m<sup>2</sup> and the maximum total site area to be 114,383m<sup>2</sup> for the 1641 pupils, to which IDP are in agreement with. To meet this increase in site area, from 93,340m<sup>2</sup>, the Corde feasibility proposes the incorporation of 1,600m<sup>2</sup> (1.62 Ha) of additional land to the south east of the site, into the school site boundary, to provide an additional area for a soft play sports pitch alongside a new all-weather sports pitch for age ranges up to U15/16.

4.3.3 When using the minimum area requirements from BB 103 the additional land area would create a new overall site area of 107,250 m<sup>2</sup> (91,050 + 16,200), which sits within the minimum and maximum area ranges.

4.3.4 IDP are in agreement with this approach for the following reason stated in the Corde report:

*The BB103 recommendations specify a range in site dimensions to allow for variation in the shape and contours of the site, and the size of the existing building footprint. The nature of the Park House School site and its recognised constraints (trees, levels, expanse of single storey buildings) would push the site size towards the upper limits of what is recommended.*

4.3.5 It should also be noted that the new all-weather sports pitch can, in line with BB103 guidelines be counted twice within the context of external soft play as it is deemed to be usable throughout the year, rather than be affected by flooding and other weather events.

4.3.6 The Corde proposal also proposes reconfiguring the existing car park and adding an additional area of car parking via a new vehicular access to the southern boundary of the site. These proposals are to allow for the increase in staff numbers in relation to pupil number increases.

#### **4.4 Summary of the IDP methodology in providing a revised design for Park House Secondary School expansion, based on 1,500 new homes.**

##### **4.4.1 General:**

The IDP feasibility proposal relates to a development of 1500 homes, generating a total number of pupils at Park House School of 1503 pupils. The process to agree the revised total pupil numbers for the school generated by the 1500 homes development is described in detail by Mr. Owen Jones of LRM Planning, who undertook these discussions directly with WBC's Education Department.

The 1503 pupils were agreed to be split as follows:

- Ages 11-16: 1202 pupils. This total number is 2 no. pupils above the standard DfE model of 1200 pupils within an 8FE school.
- Post 16: 301 pupils. This equates to 20% of overall pupil numbers being within the post 16, 6th Form. By attributing 301 pupil spaces to the 6th Form the IDP feasibility increases the number and size of rooms as follows: 1no. Art class room @ 83m<sup>2</sup> and 1no. Technology classroom @83m<sup>2</sup>. This reflects the Corde feasibility.

##### **4.5 Buildings:**

4.5.1 The IDP feasibility provides a high level Schedule of Accommodation (SoA) based on a total of 1503 pupils. The SoA was developed through the use of the DfE's Schedule of Accommodation tool available at the time, this SoA relates to the area guidelines within the aforementioned DfE's BB103 document.

4.5.2 IDP undertook a detailed analysis of the existing buildings in relation to the existing number, size and uses of these rooms, to help inform the development of design proposals. The analysis classified rooms in regard to their current suitability to meet the DfE's SoA tool, for instance IDP identified, and agreed with WBC and the school, that there are currently 4no. Art Classrooms identified within the existing school, however only 1no. achieves the 83m<sup>2</sup> required for a general art room and only 1no. achieves the 97m<sup>2</sup> required for a specialist 3D art room, with the two remaining rooms being 55m<sup>2</sup> & 29m<sup>2</sup> respectively. The number & size of Art Classrooms required within the proposed 1503 pupil capacity school is as follows:

- General Art: 3no. @ 83m<sup>2</sup>
- 3D Art: 2no. 97m<sup>2</sup>
- Total Area: 443m<sup>2</sup>

The IDP proposal retained the existing art classrooms and added 2no. new larger 97m<sup>2</sup> 3D art rooms, and therefore providing the school with:

- General Art: 1no. @ 83m<sup>2</sup>, 1no. @ 55m<sup>2</sup> and 1no. @ 29m<sup>2</sup>
- 3D Art: 3no @ 97m<sup>2</sup>
- Total Area: 458m<sup>2</sup>

4.5.3 This proposal was agreed with WBC and the school as it acknowledge the legacy issues of the existing building areas and uses whilst also providing new accommodation to meet the requirements of the BB 103 SoA.

4.5.4 This process was undertaken in relation to all teaching spaces and large spaces, i.e. dining hall, sports hall, studio etc. and allowed a bespoke SoA for the school to be developed and agreed by all parties. Again, as per the Corde proposal, this is understandable as the existing buildings have been



constructed over a number of years in line with differing area guidelines from the DfE, & as such a balance must be struck in regard to these legacy spaces in relation to remodelling the school building stock.

4.5.5 IDP were then able to transfer the area and space requirements of the SoA into a design masterplan proposal for the layout of the school, which could be delivered in a series of phases to suit the developers programme of delivery of new homes, as per the principle of the Corde feasibility proposal. The IDP phased proposal consists of 1no. new build block, relocation of the Wellness Centre, major refurbishment to 3no. zones and partial refurbishment to 4no. zones within the existing buildings.

4.5.6 Both the SoA and the feasibility design proposal were developed alongside direct dialogue and consultation with WBC's Education Department and Park House Secondary Schools, Senior Management Team. Records of all meetings, consultations, and developments are recorded in minutes produced by Mr. Owen Jones of LRM Planning and can also be seen through the proposals presented to all parties by IDP in the form of updated feasibility reports.

#### **4.6 Site:**

4.6.1 The IDP proposal is set within the aforementioned context of a total existing site area of 93,340m<sup>2</sup>.

4.6.2 The IDP feasibility proposal provides an external area schedule for the school site based on a total of 1503 pupils, in line with the DfE's BB103 area guidelines. The IDP feasibility confirms the minimum total site area to be 84,150m<sup>2</sup> and the maximum total area to be 105,689m<sup>2</sup>.

4.6.3 The IDP feasibility proposes the incorporation of an additional 19,342m<sup>2</sup> (1.93Ha) which would bring the overall site area above the maximum recommendation within the BB103 area guidelines to 112,682m<sup>2</sup>.

4.6.5 Due to the reduced pupil numbers from the Corde feasibility report, the overall site area as existing at Park House School would meet the BB103 guidelines as set out above. However, the reason the additional land is still required is the type of area 'soft outdoor PE' as existing would be below the BB103 recommendation (of 58,605m<sup>2</sup>). The existing area is 46,044m<sup>2</sup> - this includes the existing artificial sports pitch area twice as per the BB103 recommendations, as it is deemed to be usable throughout the year, rather than be affected by flooding and other weather events. The proposed new additional grass pitch would add an additional 8,512m<sup>2</sup> area, which brings the soft outdoor PE area up to 54,556m<sup>2</sup>

4.6.5 The new grass sports pitch has been designed to meet the dimensions for a U17/U18 and senior pitch size. This was an increase from the WBC Corde feasibility proposal which had included a pitch suitable for age ranges up to U15/16. This increase was agreed by Bloor through discussions with WBC and Park House School, in particular due to the school's status as a sports college.

#### 4.7 Review of the reason for refusal (no. 10) in relation to the Park House Secondary School proposal.

*The proposal seeks to set aside part of the site to form an extension to Park House School in order to mitigate the impact of the development proposed on secondary education provision, as required by Policy CS3 of the Core Strategy. The applicants have proposed that the expansion land to be provided is used to facilitate the identified need for an additional sports pitch. The proposal however will result in the loss of the ancient tree (T34), as well as a number of trees and hedgerow along its western boundary, while also encroaching onto the buffer of the Barns Copse ancient woodland. It is apparent that these impacts could be avoided by a small increase in the area of proposed expansion land to be secured, the size of which remains inadequate, or, through an alternative proposal for the alterations to the school.*

4.7.1 Following detailed discussions with Mr Barry Groves, Design and Planning Project Manager at Bloor Homes and Mr. Chris Alder, Associate Director at Barrell Tree Consultancy, IDP have been able to coordinate the relocation of the proposed new sports pitch, alongside changing the new sports pitch from an artificial pitch into a grass pitch as requested by WBC via an email from Mrs. Fiona Simmons of the Education Department received on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021, to ensure that it allows:

- Retention of tree T34 by moving the new grass sports pitch outside the required 19.5m Root Protection Area (RPO)
- Retention of trees T33 and T31 by moving the new grass sports pitch outside the required 15m and 16.5m Root Protection Areas (RPO's) respectively
- Retention of boundary hedgerows along the western boundary (containing trees T33 and T31) are also achieved as Mr. Chris Alder explains in more detail.
- Encroachment onto the buffer of the Barns Copse ancient woodland is also avoided as the new grass pitch is located outside of the 15m buffer zone specified by Mr Chris Alder.

4.7.2 The relocation of the new grass sports pitch alongside its associated groundworks and footpath will increase the amount of additional land required to be provided from the originally proposed 16,233m<sup>2</sup> (1.62Ha) to 19,342m<sup>2</sup> (1.93Ha).

4.7.3 This in turn will increase the overall Park House Secondary School site area to 112,682m<sup>2</sup>, which is 6,993m<sup>2</sup> larger than the DfE's BB103 guideline requirements

4.7.4 The overall dimensions of the new grass sports pitch have been increased as part of the revised proposal to 112 x 76m, this now meets the required size for a U17/U18 and senior pitch including the required run off zones. The additional land brings the combined area for 'soft outdoor play' alongside the 'soft informal and social area' to 69,556m<sup>2</sup> which gives an additional area of 7,345m<sup>2</sup> when compared to the DfE's guideline requirements, and therefore provides Sandleford Park Secondary School with flexibility in use of the additional soft play space into the future.

4.7.5 As with the Corde report and the legacy issues within the building IDP believe the proposed overall site area now proposed is acceptable due to the existing site constraints and the revisions to the external site areas design needed to meet the reasons for refusal, and IDP would again refer to the statement within the Corde feasibility study.

*The BB103 recommendations specify a range in site dimensions to allow for variation in the shape and contours of the site, and the size of the existing building footprint. The nature of the Park House School site and its recognised constraints (trees, levels, expanse of single storey buildings) would push the site size towards the upper limits of what is recommended.*

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 In response to the reason for refusal (number 10), IDP have worked with Bloor Homes and Barrell Tree Consultancy to produce a revised design for the layout of the grass sports pitch on the additional school land.

5.2 This revised proposal retains the ancient tree T34, and has no effect upon the trees and hedgerows along the western boundary, or the buffer to the Barns Copse ancient woodland.

5.3 To achieve this, additional land is being given to Park House School.

5.4 This report also sets out the IDP methodology in providing proposals for the expansion to Park House School. The proposals and schedule of accommodation for the school buildings were not disputed within the reasons for refusal.

5.5 In conclusion, the secondary school building and site area provision is satisfactory, and exceeds the BB103 recommendations in terms of site area, to the school's benefit. Therefore, the reason for refusal (number 10) would now be ill-founded.



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