# WOODLANDS MEED COLLEGE

# SPORT ENGLAND PLANNING STATEMENT



27/11/2020



5190243-ATK-XX-XX-REP-L-5000 REVISION P02

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# THE SITE

Woodlands Meed is one of the largest special needs schools in the country, catering for over 264 young people with a wide range of physical and learning disabilities. The school is split into two sites; the school site for SEND children from nursery up to 14 years of age, and the College with 100 SEND children and young adults from 14 to 19 years.

The existing college site has several suitability and building related challenges that prevent the delivery of a full curriculum. In addition the steep topography of the playing field forces the College to undertake various sporting activities off-site (refer to appendix for College receipts as evidence).

# **PHASING**

The existing school building is required to stay operational until the new building is constructed. This means the only feasible location for the new building is on the existing playing field, south west of the existing school site.

#### SITE LEVELS

The existing playing field has a steep diagonal gradient of 1:13, which renders it incompatible for formal sport. These steep gradients also makes a lot of the site inaccessible for non-ambulant students.

College Address: Woodlands Meed College Birchwood Grove Road Burgess Hill West Sussex

RH15 0DP





# 2.0 SITE EVOLUTION

The following satellite images taken from Google Earth highlight how the school and its surrounding context has developed over the last 15 years.

In 2006 the adjacent primary school (Birchwood Grove County Primary School) was based in a small building to the north east of the college site.

In 2009 Birchwood Grove Primary had completed a new school building, occupying an area of existing playing field to the south east of the college site.

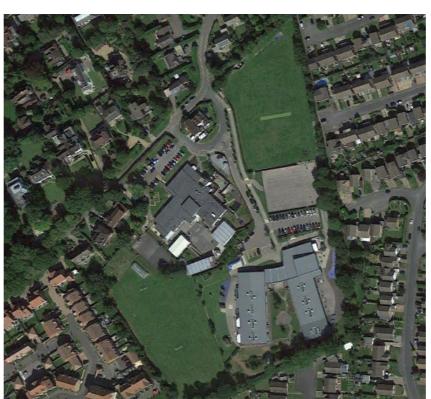
The 2015 image highlights that the original loss of playing field to the south east was mitigated by providing a new playing field to the north east of the primary school.

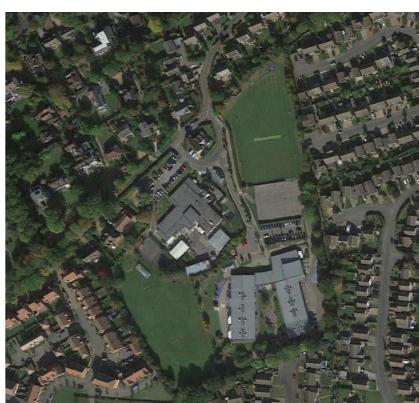
Development over the following years from 2009 to current did not impact on the college site's facilities.

Running track markings can be seen painted on the grass to the south west of the college in the 2006 and 2009 images. The school has confirmed that this was not used for any sports lessons due to the steep slope, It was only used informally for sports day / family fun type events.









2015 2018 (Latest)

# SUMMARY OF EXISTING SPORTS FACILITIES



This plan shows the existing school site broken down into BB104 areas. The green and red hatches highlight the current external sports facilities.

The green hatch shows the existing grassed area to the south west of the college building. The total area is approximately 6000m2, although the usable area for sports is less at 4000m2. This is due to dense shrub planting around the perimeter of the field and a horticultural area and polytunnel to the north.

The existing hard play space has an asphalt surface with weldmesh fencing, however access is only possible via steps so it is unusable for non-ambulant students.

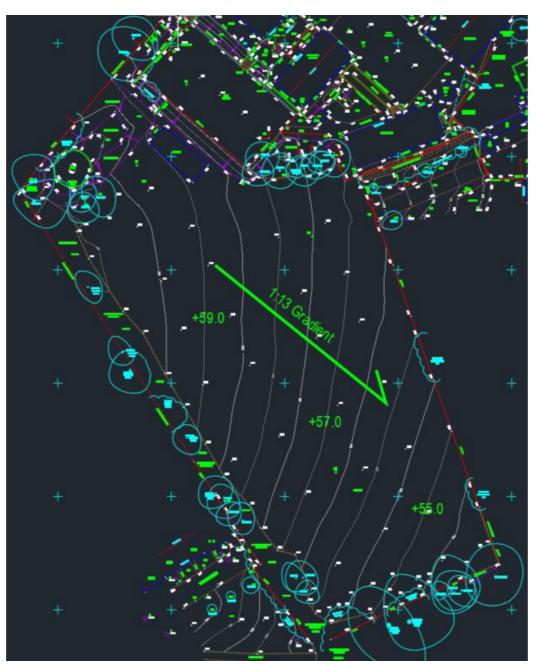
In addition to external facilities there is an existing hall that is 130m2. This is too small for the school to use for many of their activities so it is solely used for dining and assembly and not for sporting activities.



The school are currently forced to undertake various sporting activities off-site due to the steep 1:13 gradient of the existing 'playing field'. The sloping profile of the field makes it incompatible for formal sport and inaccessible for non-ambulant students.

The diagrams to the right shows an extract from the topographical survey, indicating the steep profile. The full topographical survey is included within the appendix.

There are two existing football goal posts on the college playing field, although these are not used for any sports activity. The goal posts were gifted to the school by the neighbouring Birchwood Grove Primary when their new school building was developed in 2009. The goal posts are not suitable for formal games or matches as they are positioned on the steeply sloping field.



Topographic survey evidence of steep gradient



Google Earth extract showing existing goal posts



Site photo - existing steeply sloping 'playing field'

# SEND COLLEGE STUDENTS

Set out below is a breakdown of the SEND students within Woodlands Meed College and their specific requirements for sports. The design proposals for the new college are based on the specific needs of the students.

#### Currently 100 students at the college 14-19yrs

#### Proposed 100 students at the College 14-19yrs

#### PMLD (Profound and multiple learning disability)

#### 10% = 10 students

#### Sports played:

4.0

- Swimming/therapy Hydrotherapy
- Motor therapy generally internally and externally
- Wheelchair rugby
- Wheelchair basketball (indoor and outdoor)
- Wheelchair cricket
- Boccia (indoor)
- Gymnastics (indoor) but externally with external gym
- Trampolining (indoor)

#### SLD (Specific learning disability)

#### 20 % = 20 students

#### Sports played:

- Swimming/therapy Hydrotherapy
- Motor therapy generally internally and externally
- Wheelchair rugby
- Wheelchair basketball (indoor and outdoor)
- Boccia (indoor)
- Basketball (indoor and outdoor)
- Football
- Netball
- Rounders
- Cricket
- Gymnastics (indoor) but externally with external gym
- Trampolining (indoor)

# ASC (Autism spectrum condition)

#### 40% = 40 students

# Sports played:

- Swimming Hydrotherapy
- Basketball (indoor and outdoor)
- Football (indoor and outdoor)
- Netball
- Rounders
- Cricket
- Gymnastics (indoor) but externally with external gym
- Trampolining (indoor)

#### Other MLD (Moderate learning difficulties)

#### **30% = 30 students**

#### Sports played:

- Swimming Hydrotherapy
- Basketball (indoor and outdoor)
- Football (indoor and outdoor)
- Netball (indoor and outdoor)
- Rounders
- Cricket
- Gymnastics (indoor) but externally with external gym
- Trampolining (indoor)

Woodlands Meed partners with numerous external organisations who utilise the school sports facilities, both at the junior school and at the college site.

The college is currently at full capacity and the wider school has been turning down requests from numerous sports groups for use of the sports hall and swimming pool. This shows there is an existing and proven demand for use of the new facilities once they are up and running.

Multiple schools in the local area have 3G pitches, however, the polymeric surface proposed for Woodlands Meed is unique in that it is fully wheelchair accessible.

Haywards Heath community 3G pitch is an example of one of the local pitches, five miles north of Woodlands Meed. The pitch is currently fully booked for all weekends and most evenings beyond the end of the year (2020). See link below to live booking calendar: <a href="https://www.haywardsheathtownfc.co.uk/a/all-weather-3g-training-area--book-direct-here-46080.html">https://www.haywardsheathtownfc.co.uk/a/all-weather-3g-training-area--book-direct-here-46080.html</a> This further shows the need for additional community football pitches in the local area.

The following table sets out the range of organisations who currently use the school's facilities and those who have shown interest in making use of the new / extended facilities once they are complete. A number of the groups are specifically disability groups such as Sussex Cricket, Kangaroos, Extratime and Signposts.

Kangaroos is a local charity that offers after school activities and school holiday play schemes in the local area using our facilities. Their aim was to ensure that the same opportunities are available to pupils with SEND as their mainstream counterparts. They currently use the hall and swimming pool along with the grassed areas during the summer.

In addition the school have contacted several other local SEND groups to ask if they are interested in using the new facilities:

- Little Kickers
- Mid Sussex Marlins
- Kinder Musik
- JK Theatre Arts
- Active Sussex
- Mid Sussex Find It Out Centre
- Adur Special Needs Project
- Chanctonbury Community PlayScheme
- Girls Brigade

COMMUNITY ORGANISATION	CURRENT USE OF SCHOOL / COLLEGE FACILITIES	INTEREST IN NEW FACILITIES					
Sports groups							
Waterbabies (baby swimming lessons)	Use pool at school site	would like to expand timings into new college pool					
Floaters (swim school)	Use pool at school site	would like to expand timings into new college pool					
Kangaroos (SEND activity group)	Use hall, pool at school site and various outdoor areas	Continuation of use of all new facilities					
Signposts (Learning difficulties activity group)	Not currrently using facilities	expressed interest in use of all new facilities					
Aerial Dance	Not currrently using facilities	expressed interest in use of sports hall					
Puddle ducks (baby swimming lessons)	Not currrently using facilities	expressed interest in use of new college pool					
VB Dance (dance school)	Use hall and dance studio at school site	want to expand use in new college hall					
Niki Laing Pilates Classes	Use hall currently - unable to offer additional use requested as at capacity currently	want to expand use in new college hall					
Star Phsyio	Pool and physio room	would like to expand timings into new college pool					
Kelly Swim School	Use pool at school site	expressed interest in use of new college pool					
Albion in The Community (disability football coaching)	Use school hall	expressed interest in use of all weather pitch					
Sussex Disability Cricket (cricket coaching)	use school hall	expressed interest in use of all weather pitch					
Other groups							
Drusilla Dufill *occasional use	Theatre group use hall	want to expand use in new college hall					
Extratime (SEND family fun days)	Not currrently using facilities	expressed interest in use of all new facilities					
Head to Head theatre *occasional use	Theatre group use hall	want to expand use in new college hall					
Kingdom Faith (Church group)	use hall – have expressed interest in expanding hirings but we do not have capacity currently	want to expand use in new college hall					
Women's Institute (community group)	use hall	want to expand use in new college hall					

Disability / SEND group

# LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN

The external strategy aims to create a series of cohesive, vibrant and high quality exterior spaces for the SEN students. The steep topography of the site has been rationalised to create an accessible, usable and comfortable external environment.

A range of sports facilities are provided for the college students based on their needs for sport set out on page 8. An outline is provided below of the new facilities with more details on the specification on the following page.

- ALL WEATHER PITCH
- MUGA
- SPORTS HALL
- HYDROTHERAPY POOL
- OUTDOOR GYM EQUIPMENT
- PLAY EQUIPMENT FOR BALANCE AND MOBILITY

The new location for the school building has been determined by the requirement to keep the current school building operational during construction. Therefore, it had to be positioned on the existing playing field.

The proposed all weather pitch has been designed to the maximum size possible within the site constraints and has been positioned as far as possible from surrounding residents to minimise noise and visual impact.



# PROPOSED SPORTS FACILITIES AND SPECIFICATION

The following table sets out the specification of the proposed new college sports facilities. It clearly demonstrates that the facilities have been designed with the needs of the SEND students first and foremost. All of the new facilities are designed to be accessible and inclusive to ensure all students can gain access for a variety of different sports and uses, including fully accessible changing facilities.

The sports played within each facility are listed, though these may change depending on the evolving needs of the school and the students.

The all weather pitch has been designed to mitigate against the loss of the playing field. Type 4 MUGA Polymeric surfacing has been specified as it provides the perfect balance between accessibility and safety. A wheelchair friendly surface with greater shock absorbency than other hard surfaced courts.

The hydrotherapy pool is a key resource for the children and young people with complex physical needs. It involves stimulation and gentle exercise in warm water at a constant temperature of 32 degrees. Hydrotherapy has very tangible benefits:

- the warmth of the water has an effect on the individual neuro-muscular junctions which results in decreased muscle tone and decreased spasticity;
- buoyancy of the water is used to assist movement of joints
   which is either more difficult or painful on dry land;
- movement in the water and water pressure helps to reduce residual lung capacity for children and young people with chest problems - this enables more efficient lung function and reduces the risk of chest infections developing;
- creating turbulence around an extremity (i.e. arm or leg) can increase their awareness of the limb and help with mobility - both in the water and later on dry land, and
- multi-sensory environment helps stimulate the senses whilst calming children with sensory and learning difficulties.

The Hydrotherapy is a unique facility in the area and will therefore be of great benefit to the local community.

NEW SPORTS FACILITY	SPORTS PLAYED	SIZE / LOCATION	SPECIFICATION	STUDENT USE	POTENTIAL COMMUNITY USE
ALL WEATHER PITCH	Primary sport: football. Secondary: cricket, physical education, rounders, gymnastics and wheelchair rugby	55 x 33m (1815m2)	Sport England Type 4 MUGA with Polymeric surfacing. Suitable for wheelchair use. 3m high weldmesh fencing with timed floodlighting. Line markings: 7v7 football (50 x 29m), 2 no. 5v5 (29 x 23m) and cricket square. 2m run off to sides, 2.5m run off to ends. Movable goals (1.83 x 3.66m). Pitch divider nets	All students	Sussex Disability Cricket, Albion in the Community football and private rental
MUGA	Primary sports: Netball, basketball / wheel chair basketball. Secondary: tennis and ball skills	37 x 18.5m (684.5m2)	Sport England Type 2 MUGA with open textured porous macadam. Suitable for wheelchair use. 3m high weldmesh fencing with fixed hoops. Line markings: netball and basketball. 3.25m run off to ends only.	All students	Kangaroos, Extratime and Signposts SEND groups
SPORTS HALL	Wheelchair basketball, basketball, boccia, physical education, volleyball, dance, trampolining, gymnastics (plus non sports related use such as assembly, meetings and community groups)	15.8 x 19.4m (306m2)	Surfacing - Gerflor Taraflex (or sim) Multi-Purpose for Sport and non- Sport Activity. Supports the Sports provision / performance and accounts for high indentation resistance in terms of setting up the hall with tables and chairs. Line markings to be agreed with school based on prioritised sports. Accessible changing facilities.	All students	Kangaroos, Extratime and Signposts SEND groups, VB Dance school, Niki Laing Pilates (Plus non- sport community groups), Aerial Dance
HYDROTHERAPY POOL	Swimming / therapy	90m2	Associated facilities include changing rooms, WCs and hygeine area.  Hydrotherapy pool specialist to be engaged post Stage 3 to establish detailed specification.	All students	Waterbabies, Floaters, Kelly, Puddle Ducks and Tracey Lane swim school
OUTDOOR GYM EQUIPMENT	Strength, mobility, fitness and balance training. Gymnastics	Positioned adjacent to MUGA for ease of use during lessons	Ten pieces of varied gym equipment suitable for both ambulant and non-ambulant students.	All students	Kangaroos, Extratime and Signposts SEND groups
PLAY EQUIPMENT (Balance and mobility)	Wheelchair trampoline, fitness and balance trim trail, table tennis.	Trim trail to south of informal grassed area. Table tennis to central coutryard.	Six pieces trim trail equipment in timber and steel. Sunken wheelchair trampoline. Two fixed concrete table tennis tables.	All students	Kangaroos, Extratime and Signposts SEND groups







All weather pitch with polymeric surfacing

Outdoor gym equipment

Sunken trampoline







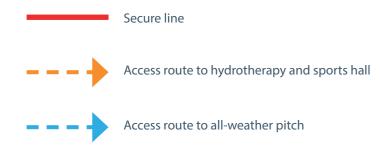
Play Equipment for balance and mobility

7.0 COMMUNITY ACCESS

# **CAR PARKING AND ACCESS**

The car park area is located to the northern edge of the site for ease of access for community use. Direct and accessible routes are provided to all of the community sports facilities.

An external secure fence line can be locked to prevent access beyond the car park areas when access isn't required to the sports hall or hydrotherapy pool. A dedicated pedestrian route is provided from the car park to the all weather pitch outside of this secure perimeter line.







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# **COMMUNITY USE ZONES**

The groundfloor layout plan to the right shows the areas of the building that will be accessible for community use for access to the sports hall and the hydrotherapy pool. It also highlights the locations of associated changing and WC facilities.

The orange line indicated the secure internal perimeter where doors can be locked to prevent public access.



Community Entrance





Pitch line markings have been designed to best suit the college's and student's needs based on their priority of sports.

Line markings and pitch sizes are not designed to meet FA / FIFA standards. This is because the accessible polymeric surface would not be suitable for official matches. Football pitch sizes have been based on recommendations in the superseded FA document: "Guide to outdoor area for small sided football and mini-soccer 2010". The following markings are proposed:

# **ALL WEATHER PITCH**

- 7v7 football (50 x 29m)
- 2 no. 5v5 football (29 x 23m)
- Cricket square (for disability cricket)
- 2m run off to sides
- 2.5m run off to ends

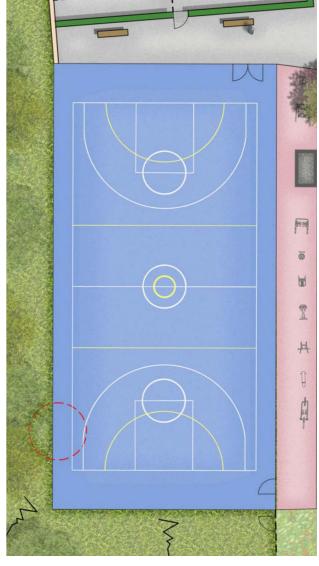
# MUGA

- Basketball (30.5 x 15.25m)
- Netball (30.5 x 15.25m)
- 1.6m run off to sides
- 3.25m run off to ends

In addition to the marked out pitches, the school also intend to use both pitches for a range of other sports including wheelchair basketball and rugby, rounders, PE lessons and general ball skills.



**ALL WEATHER PITCH** 



MUGA

#### 9.0 SUMMARY

This document demonstrates the significant improvement in sports facilities that will be provided with the proposed scheme.

The existing playing field is too steep for formal sports, forcing the school to undertake sports activities off-site, and the existing hard play area is inaccessible for non-ambulant students.

The new site layout aims to provide an inclusive and accessible external environment. A range of high quality sports facilities have been designed to provide for the specific needs of the SEND students within the college.

The new all-weather pitch will provide a year-round usable pitch for ambulant and non-ambulant users, in vast contrast to the existing virtually unusable field.

In addition the facilities will provide a great benefit to the wider community, with an existing demand already being shown by various local groups and organisations.

Therefore it is hoped that Sport England will support the new scheme in line with Policy Exception E5:

"The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields"



#### Sport England's Playing Fields Policy - 'A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England'

#### Policy Exception E5:

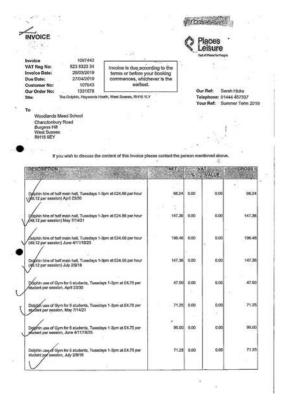
'The proposed development is for an indoor or outdoor sports facility, the provision of which would be of sufficient benefit to the development of sport as to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of the playing field or playing fields'.

When assessing an application against this policy exception Sport England is likely to require information which helps to answer the following questions:

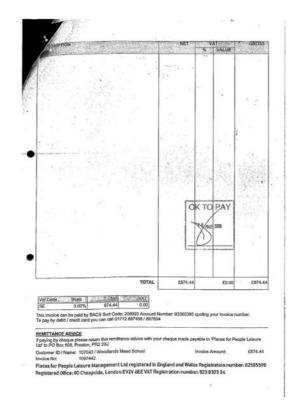
- What is the impact on the existing playing field land in terms of the number of pitches the site can accommodate and their capacity?
- Will all existing users of the playing field land still be adequately accommodated within the site?
- What is the view of the sports national governing bodies whose playing pitch provision may be adversely affected?
- Is the playing field land proposed for development of a particularly high quality or of particular importance to the development of sport in the local area?
- Is there evidence that the proposed facility has been carefully located to minimise any adverse impact on the playing field land? For example, has an assessment of alternative sites been undertaken?
- Will the proposed facility help to meet an identified sporting need i.e. as set out in a needs assessment or Playing Pitch/Sports Facility Strategy?
- Does the proposed facility help to deliver the plans and strategies of the relevant sports national governing bodies and does the application have their support?
- Will the proposed facility duplicate any existing provision within the local catchment area?
- Does the proposed facility meet with Sport England's and the relevant sports national governing body design guidance?
- Will the proposed facility be available for use by the local community? Will this use be secured and managed on a formal basis i.e. through the development and implementation of a community use agreement?
- Does the design of the proposed facility allow for adequate storage, changing provision and access to allow for community use?
- Is the proposed facility supported by the existing and potential future users of the site e.g. local sports clubs?
- Is there evidence that the proposed facility will be linked into the wider sports development network? Will a sports development plan be produced and implemented for the facility?
- Has the applicant consulted the County Sports Partnership, Community Sports Network and relevant sports national governing bodies in the preparation of the planning application?
- For applications on school sites, is there evidence that the proposed facility will lead to an increase in PE in the curriculum and the development, or further development, of after school sports clubs and school club links?
- Are appropriate arrangements proposed to ensure the long term maintenance of the facility?
- Is there evidence to suggest that the sporting benefits that will arise from the proposed development are unlikely to be obtained in any other way in the foreseeable future?

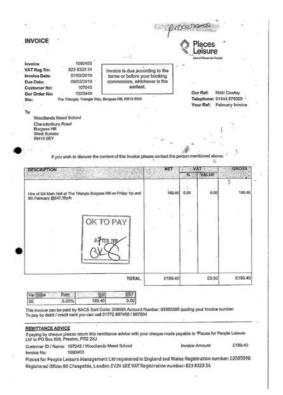
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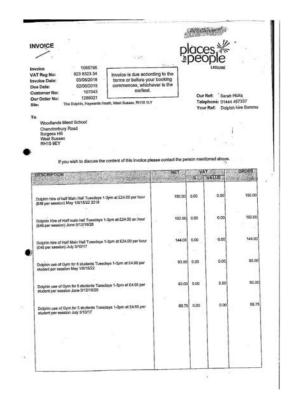
# APPENDIX - RECEIPTS FOR OFF-SITE SPORTS ACTIVITIES

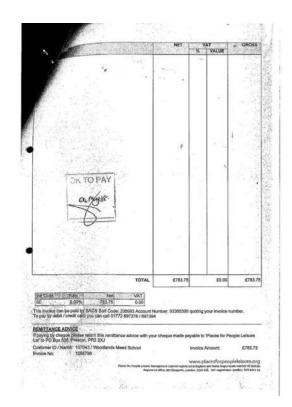


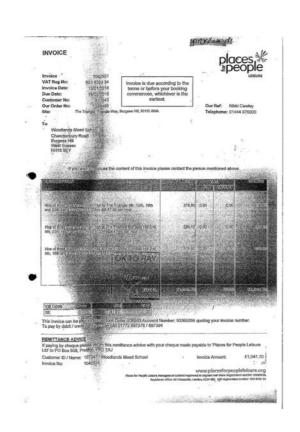
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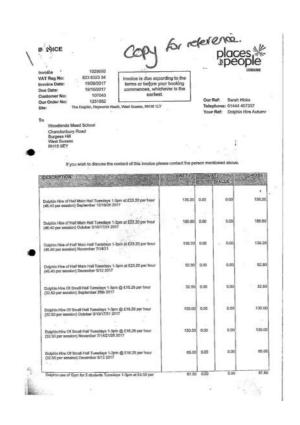


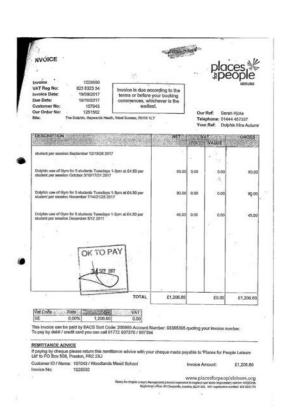




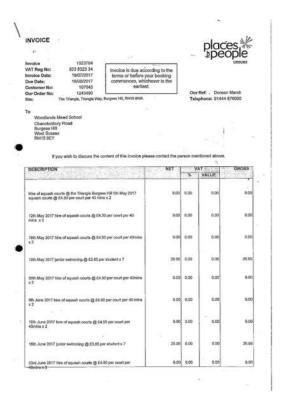




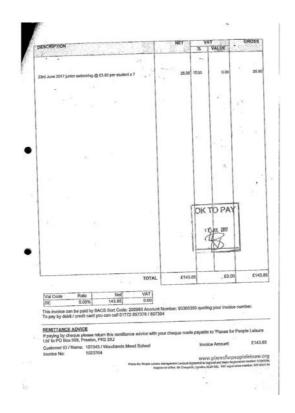


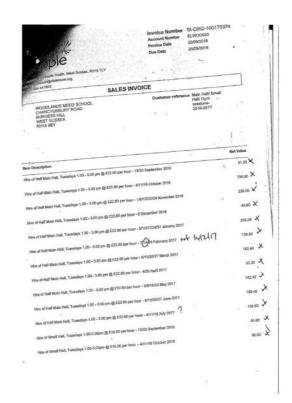


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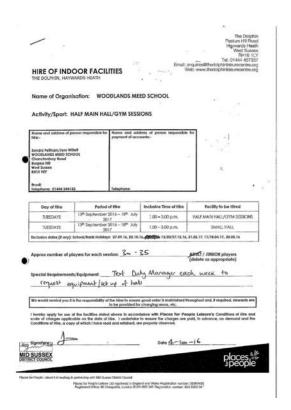


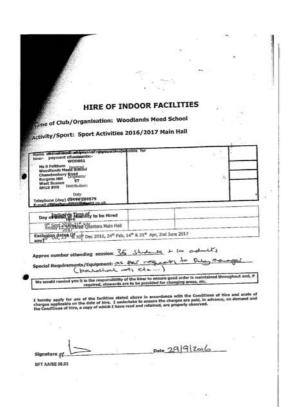
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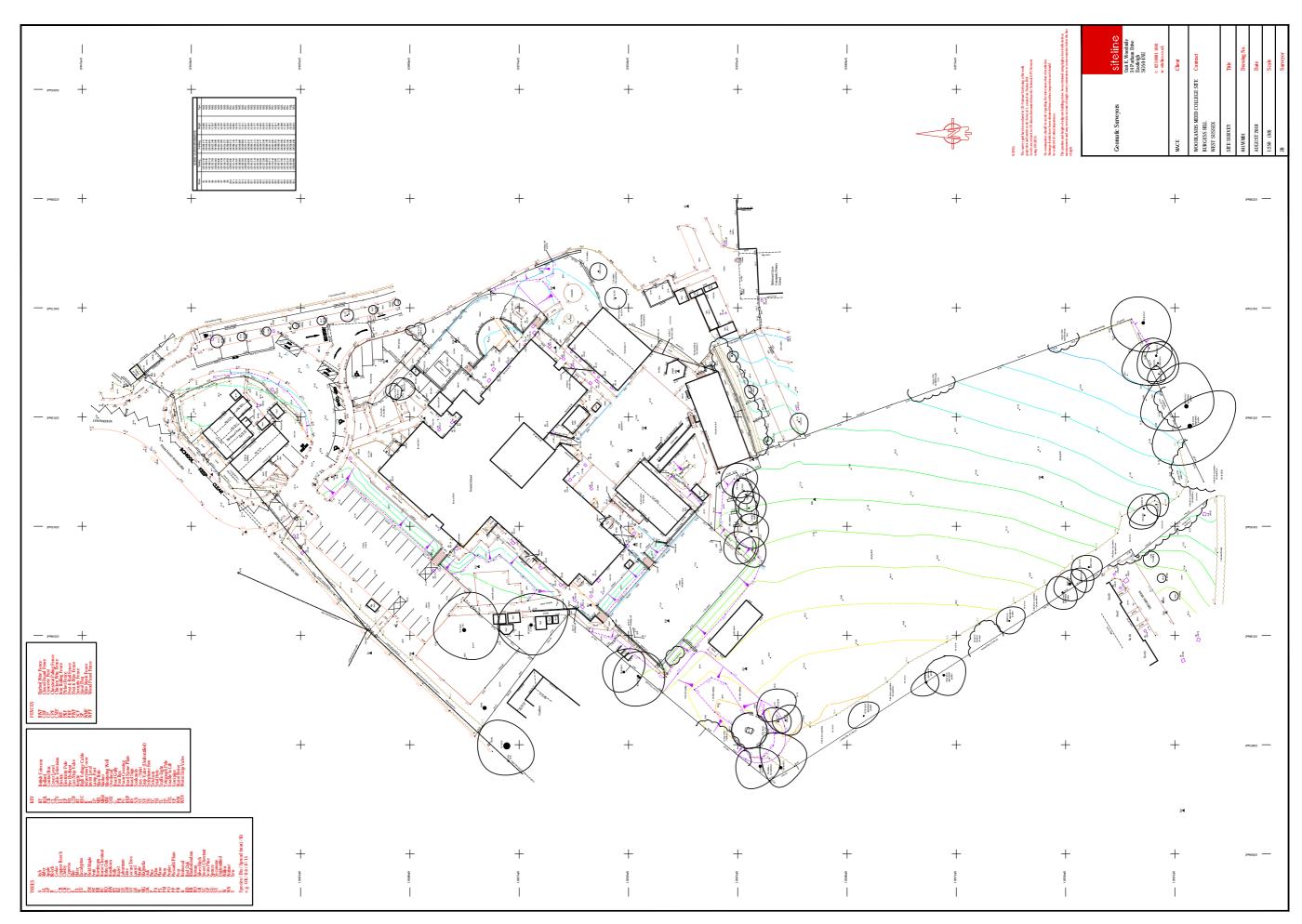














# <u>Proposed new college building at Woodlands Meed Birchwood Grove Road, Burgess Hill,</u> West Sussex, RH15 ODP

#### Supporting Statement from Governors Woodlands Meed

This is an atypical application and would provide accessible sports facilities to a vulnerable group of children, who currently have little or no access to such facilities on site. It would also enable full community use, not currently available.

#### Background

Woodlands Meed is one of the largest Special Needs Schools in the country, providing education for wide range of special needs from Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties with students in wheel chairs to various ranges of Autism, aged between 4 – 19 years.

The school is a Foundation School, so although a "maintained" school reliant on the County Council for capital funding, the land and buildings belong to the Governing Body.

It is on a split site with a new school building for students 4 – 14years completed in 2012. This site has a hall and hydrotherapy pool, both of which are shared extensively with local disability and community groups. These facilities are let to maximum capacity with a waiting list.

Students aged 14- 19 yrs are currently accommodated "temporarily" in a prefabricated building and a series of portacabins. These do not need the requirement of BB104 (Area Guidelines for SEND and Alternative Provision). The governors have fought for six years to persuade WSCC to provide a new college building, meeting their statutory obligations.

Following a series of feasibility studies it is accepted that the only available solution is to construct the new building on the existing "playing field" and, once the students are transferred to the new building, provide sporting facilities on the site of the demolished buildings.

#### **Present Facilities**

There is no suitable indoor accommodation for PE. There is an area curtained off from adjoining open corridors which is of insufficient height and size and which is also used for

dining. There is no hydrotherapy pool. As a consequent students are bussed to use the public facilities at the Dolphin (5 miles away) and Triangle (3 miles away).

There are no formal outdoor laid out sports pitches. There is a field on which it is proposed the new building should be constructed. However, this area is not accessible to most of the students. The ground slopes steeply so it not suitable for pitch games. The surface is uneven so unsuitable for the many students with unstable mobility and totally inaccessible to those in wheel chairs.

As will be apparent from the plans provided by the Architects this area is set at an angle to the existing buildings. The prefabricated building and huts are set into the ground, so the field is at a significant greater height, so is not a green area readily visible to students.

In contrast to the school site there is no community use at this site, because there are no facilities to share.

#### **Existing Sports Activities at School**

The school shares the view that there is enormous benefit to the students, both physically and mentally, in physical activity and taking part in team sports. It therefore takes every opportunity to encourage this with what limited facilities are available. It works closely with organisations who support disability sport such as Albion in the Community and Sussex

In November 2018 it received a Gold School Games Mark Award.

The provision of sporting facilities at the new college has been warmly supported by our MP Sir Nicholas Soames and arrangements are being made for a visit from Mims Davies, Minister for Sport and Civil Society.

#### Proposal

The building would provide a college which meets statutory requirements. It would include an indoor sports hall in which team games could be played, together with a hydrotherapy pool. It would also provide outdoor hard surfaced MUGAs which would be accessible to the whole school cohort.

These facilities would, as at the school site, all be made available for community use.

#### **Policy Considerations**

The school recognises that Sport England as part of the planning consultation process would normally oppose a change of use of a "playing field". However, this is an atypical proposal. The provision of a building on land which is currently inaccessible would in fact result in better, more appropriate sporting facilities being made available resulting in enhanced provision.

When considering exceptions to the over arching policy the governors would ask Sport England to take into account the following factors:

- The "playing field" cannot be used as a "playing pitch". As stated above, it is steeply sloping and uneven. It is not physically accessible to many of our students. It is not and never has been, marked out for playing games. It may have a set of goal posts present which have been there historically for many years, simply because no one has bothered to take them down. The school can confirm these are not used as either formal or informal sport.
- Although the area of outdoor sport facilities may be slightly smaller, it will be of
  better quality being capable of use by the whole school cohort; in a better location,
  being immediate adjacent to school buildings it has better proximity and
  undoubtedly will have better accessibility in terms of students actually being able to
  use it.
- The new building will have proper indoor facilities where there are none at present, allowing for year round exercise and sporting activity.
- The new building will also allow for physiotherapy activities such as "Jump Ahead", the programme for encouraging sensory motor integration and perceptual motor skills for the many students we have with motor co-ordination difficulties.

#### Conclusion

The proposed development is for both an indoor and outdoor facility for sport, the provision of which would transform the development of sport at the college and massively outweighs the loss of a little used, inaccessible field. The Governors would invite the support of Sport England for this project.

#### <u>Addendum</u>

As part of the planning for the new building, students were interviewed to find out what they would like to see provided. One young man said he would like a football pitch that they could practice on so the school team could play other schools. This is exactly what we are trying to provide for our students.