



AMENDED

Design & Access Statement

Heather House, Parkwood,
Maidstone, ME15 9PL

[K190434](#)

[October 2021](#)



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Aerial view of site - Google Earth

1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement forms part of the planning submission for detailed planning consent to redevelop two existing facilities known respectively as Heather House Community Centre and The Pavilion Building. Both premises are located in close proximity to one another and border the Parkwood Recreation Ground.

The development sites are formed from two individual parcels of land, separated by various play park facilities with frontages onto Bicknor Road, Parkwood, Maidstone.

The developer of both sites is Maidstone Borough Council, whom play an active role in the regeneration of the borough through the provision of affordable housing, homes for private rent and private sale development schemes.

It is proposed that the sites be redeveloped to provide a new community centre on the Heather House site and a residential housing scheme on the Pavilion site. The development proposals for the residential site are for the introduction of 11 properties, providing a mix of 3 & 4 bedroomed homes with associated parking.

The homes will be developed for market rent and market sale, with the funds generated from the sale of the private units used towards the cost of constructing the new community centre.

Due to the age and construction of Heather House it has now reached the end of its useful life. As well as its general poor condition, the buildings layout and internal structure remains dated and therefore limits its use and ability to attract new users. Following the results of the Condition Survey and Resident and Stakeholder Survey of Heather House, the Communities Housing and Environment Committee approved the Council pursuing a comprehensive redevelopment of the site (including Heather House and the Pavilion Building). The Council's approach to the redevelopment of both the Heather House and the Pavilion Building sites has been to find the most cost effective, viable and long-term option that would allow for long-term future sustainability.



Site plan

2.0 Context

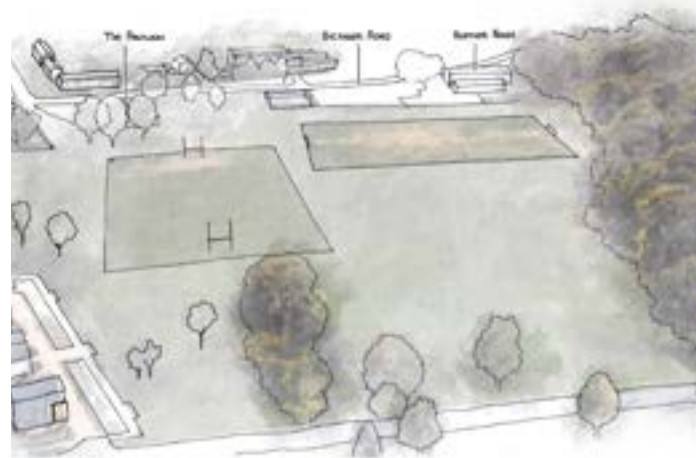
The sites are located to the southeast of Maidstone Town Centre and are within easy walking distance of a range of local facilities and services.

The surrounding area has a mixed use but the predominant theme combines 2 storey dwelling constructed in terraced rows and adjoining single storey retirement bungalows (Rosemary Gardens) formed around a central courtyard.

Materials used in the construction of the immediate surroundings include interlocking concrete roof tiles, buff brickwork and UPVC windows. Features include chimneys, render, timber cladding and mono-pitched roofs.

The land form for both sites is best described as level plains, the topography across the Heather House site changes by approx 100mm (East-West) and the level change for the Pavilion site is approx 300mm (North - South). The geological survey indicates that the site is underlain by solid deposits of the Hythe Formation, which have a thickness of 18m to 100m and expected to comprise inter bedded clays, silts and sands.

The application sites are not located within a conservation area and are defined by the governments website 'Flood map for planning' as being located in Flood Zone 1. *"An area with a low probability of flooding"*. The phase 1 desk study identifies drain covers in the car park and assumes that both sites are connected to normal drainage facilities, there are no reports of surface water flooding on these sites.



Open space



Ancient woodland boundary



Repeated terrace row



Street scene



Typical house type



Grid pattern of development

3.0 Identity

The abundance of mature trees and significant area of green open space are strong recognisable features of this location. The designated Ancient Woodland provides a boundary to the edge of the recreation ground and residential housing developments beyond.

The composition of the street scene features a predominant 2 storey house type that has been repeated in straight rows. Constructed either side of wide estate roads, there is little distinction or individuality between this 1970's housing and as such the appearance offers little variety or character to define one road from another.

The existing properties use a standard design and materials that were cheap and readily available at the time. The roofs are pitched front-to-back and covered in interlocking concrete tiles, buff coloured brickwork and UPVC windows. The only noteworthy detailing is the hanging tile feature to the 1st floor and the chimney.

The pattern of development follows a typical 1970's precedent for large housing schemes to be arranged in grids of terraces, set back from the road with generous front gardens, as such the estate housing represents an urban arrangement but suburban spacing, where land was not considered as precious as it is today.



3D Aerial plan indicating sites and surroundings

4.0 Assessment

4.1 Physical

The application sites total approximately 0.46 hectares and are both located within the settlement confines; Parkwood is a neighbourhood in the southeast of Maidstone, which is formed predominantly of social and other types of housing.

At the north end of Bicknor Road is the local centre, providing a variety of community facilities including retail and convenience shopping. A school & church can be found directly opposite the site.

The site is situated on the South East boundary of Parkwood recreational ground along Bicknor road. The topography of the site is relatively flat and is situated 100m above sea level.

4.2 Social

The following demographical and social characteristics of the area have been taken from the 2011 census and identify:-

- A higher than average level of social housing at 75% contrasting with a national average of 18%.
- The majority of dwellings in the area are occupied by only 1 or 2 people.
- Records indicate the majority of people from this area are semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers; those on state benefit/unemployed and lowest grade workers.

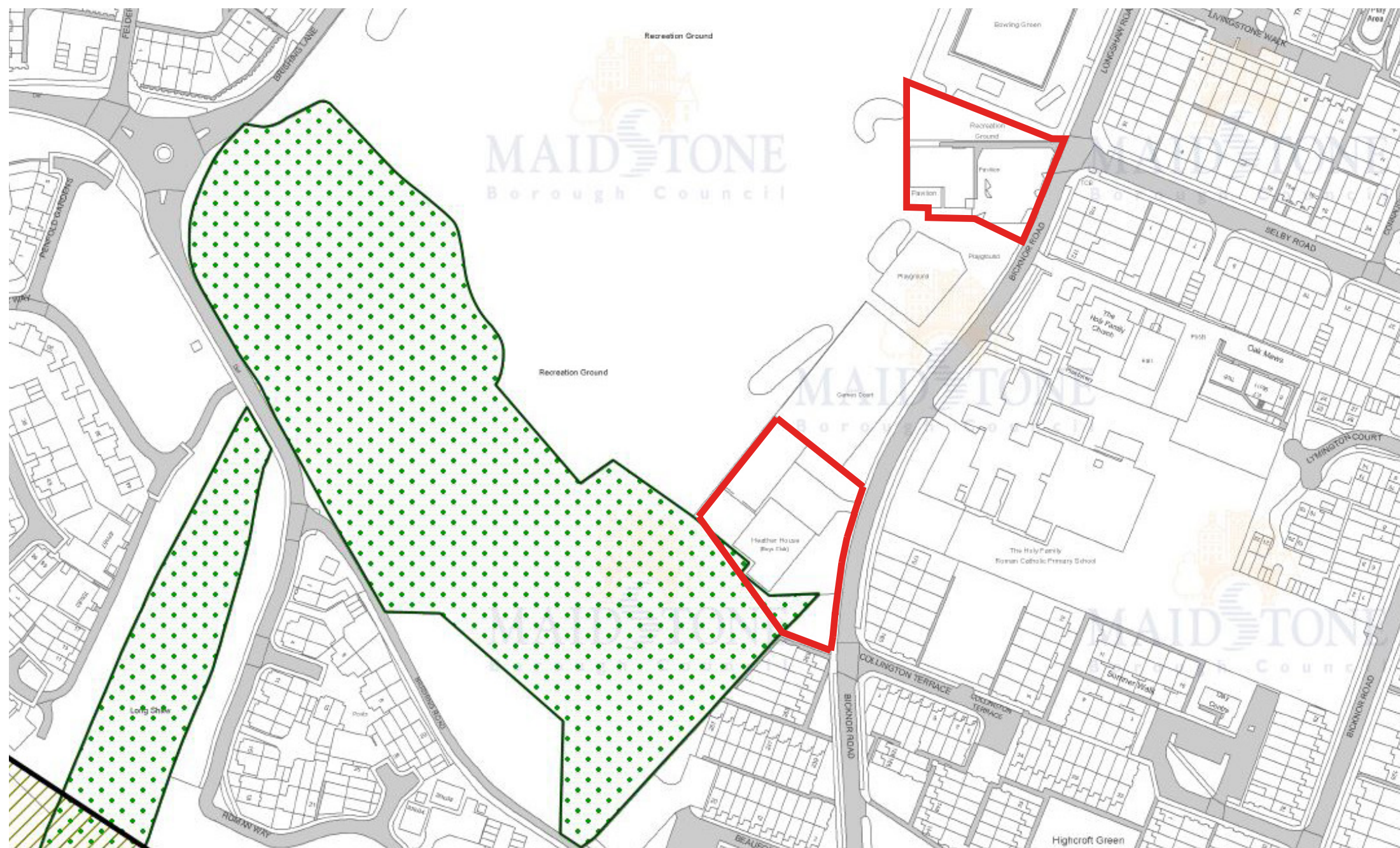
- The highest recorded age group for this area is between 30-44 and the majority are identified as married.
- Bicknor Rd and the surrounding area has a higher than average concentration of residents having no qualifications (43%).
- This area can be considered less ethnically diverse than the UK average.
- The health of residents from this area is lower than the UK average.
- There were 103 reported crimes in October 2020 which covers an area within half a mile of the site(s) post code.

4.3 Economic

Due to the value of land attributed to residential development in this area, it is considered that few alternative solutions are available that would generate sufficient funding to subsidise the construction of a new community centre.

The decision to pursue residential development is supported by the prevailing character of the area with the proposal representing long term sustainable and cost effective solution to replacing the community centre as well as providing new accommodation to assist in addressing the pressing requirement for new housing within the borough.

The financial model and cost analysis for the scheme has been continually updated as the project has developed and is included as part of the planning submission.



Maidstone Borough Council- Proposals Map

4.4 Planning Policy

Due to the sites current uses, the land is considered a previously developed brown field site, which in planning terms has a priority for redevelopment.

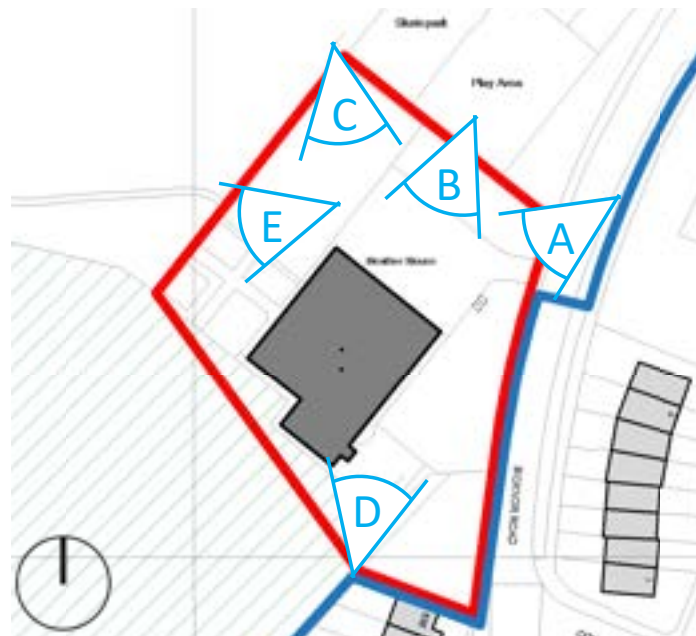
Located within the Maidstone Borough Council parks site is a Ancient Woodland area, the location of this woodland area adjoins the boundary of Heather House. Under planning legislation any proposed development is to be no closer than 15 meters from the Ancient Woodland boundary.

A specialist consultant has been appointed to provide a planning statement to accompany the application, he has identified the following planning policies as being pertinent to this application site:-

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019.
- Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2011-2031

Specific Maidstone Local Plan Policies include:-

- SS1: Maidstone borough spacial strategy
- SP1: Maidstone urban area
- ID1: Infrastructure Delivery
- DM1: Principles of good design
- DM3: Natural environment
- DM6: Air Quality
- DM12: Density of housing development
- DM19: Open space and recreation
- DM20: Community facilities
- DM21: Transport impacts
- DM23: Parking standards
- SP20: Affordable Housing
- SP 19: Housing mix



Key Image- Heather House Site



Image A



Image B



Image C



Image D



Image E

4.5 Site images - Heather House

Images shown on this page were taken during a site visit in November 2019. The image key indicates the position from which the pictures were taken.

Image A
Shows the vehicle entrance to Heather House from Bicknor Rd with the building in the background. The building has minimal street presence.

Image B
Shows the entrance and bulk of the main building together with the parking area to the front of the Heather House- The main entrance is not welcoming or immediately obvious to new visitors.

Image C
Shows the main building in relation to the single storey hall, together with a secondary parking area located to the side of the building- The valley gutter between the two buildings is an area prone to maintenance issues.

Image D
Shows the blank asbestos clad elevation to the side of the main building which faces onto Bicknor Rd, together with a fenced off garden area - Little relationship or engagement with the surroundings.

Image E
Shows the relationship between the car park and recreation ground together with the track that leads into the wooded area - Parking is split between different areas and spaces are not clearly identified.



Image F- Evidence of leaking internal rainwater pipes

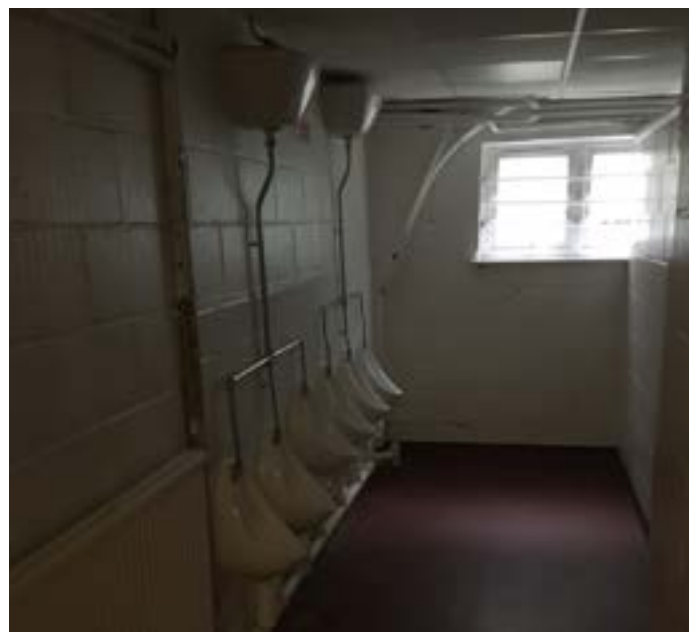


Image G- Dark and dated toilet facilities

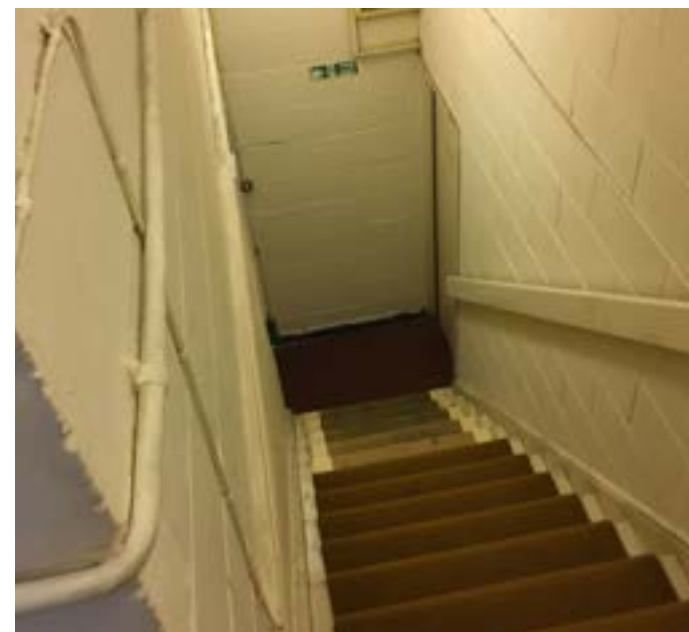


Image H- Narrow inappropriate access to first floor

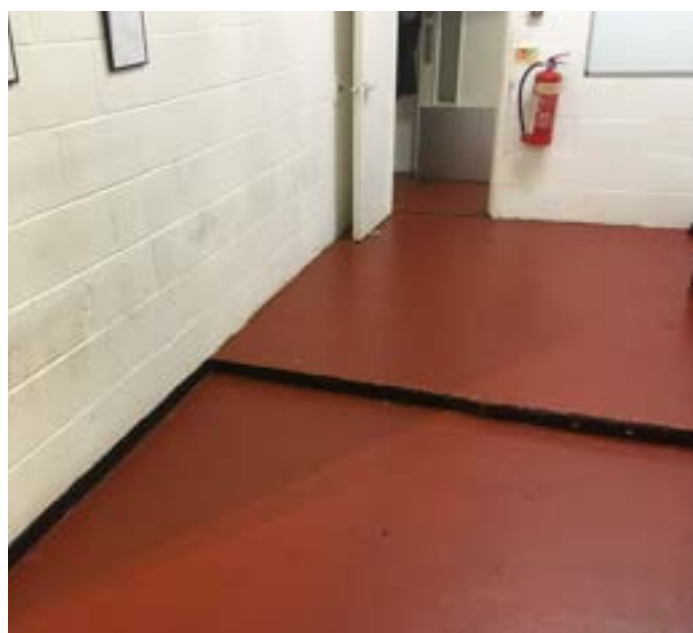


Image I- Changes in floor level



Image J- Unused first floor storage area



Image K- Security measures to prevent access to roof

4.6 Existing Building - Heather House

The existing building was constructed in the early 1970's and comprises two large concrete portal framed structures forming one building, the main structure houses the sports hall, offices and storage (Image J). The second smaller structure accommodates a boxing gym together with toilets (Image G) and shower facilities.

The building has been constructed from standard materials readily and cheaply available at the time and finished to a very basic level internally (Image I). The ground floor is traditional cavity construction with brick outer skin and painted block work inner skin. The first floors and roof are clad with corrugated asbestos cement sheets.

The assessment of the building concludes that the asbestos cladding, roofs, windows and doors have all reached the end of their useful life and should be considered for replacement, these measures alone would not deal with the unaffordable ongoing maintenance issues (Image F), dated/inefficient heating system, the uninsulated floor slab, the de-funked showers and the poor layout of the existing building (Image H).

It was suggested that instead of spending a considerable amount of public money to upgrade an essentially old building, a better decision would be to demolish and replace the building with a modern purpose built community facility that would provide for current and future needs whilst being sustainable and economical to run and efficient to maintain.

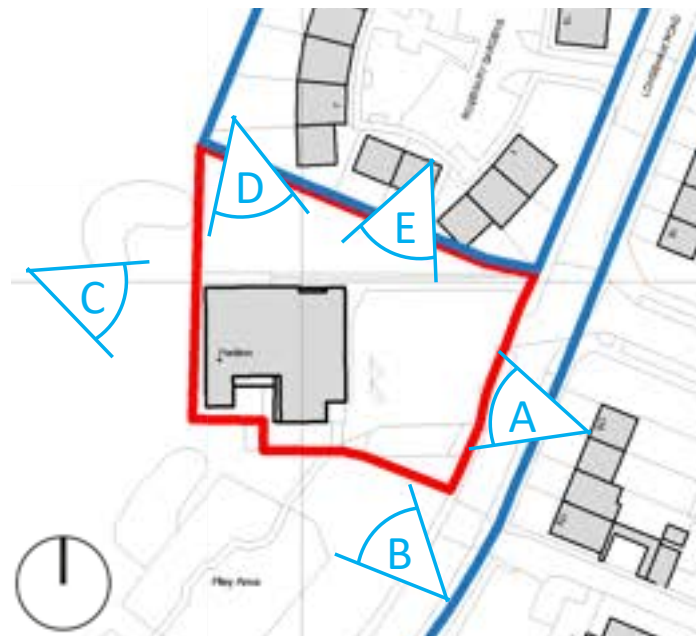


Image Key- Pavilion Building



Image A



Image B



Image C



Image D



Image E

4.7 Site images - Pavilion Building

Images shown in this page were taken during a site visit in November 2019. The image key indicates the position from which the pictures were taken.

Image A

Shows the bland main elevation of the Pavilion building which fronts onto Bicknor Rd- Its difficult to determine the location of the main entrance.

Image B

The side elevation which identifies the flat roof of the original building and the pitched roofs of the later addition- The building height is relatively low and the building has obviously suffered from unauthorised access to the roof areas in the past.

Image C

Shows the rear of the Pavilion building which overlooks the recreation ground - Barbed wire fencing and security grilles to windows present a building that is not visually appealing.

Image D

The side elevation which identifies the flat roof of the original building and the pitched roofs of the later addition which are pitched to form a valley gutter - These gutters are notorious for maintenance issues.

Image E

The front/side elevation of the building which is dominated by the enhanced security measures to prevent unauthorised access onto the flat roof - The building is devoid of any curb appeal.



Existing Site Analysis

5.0 Evaluation

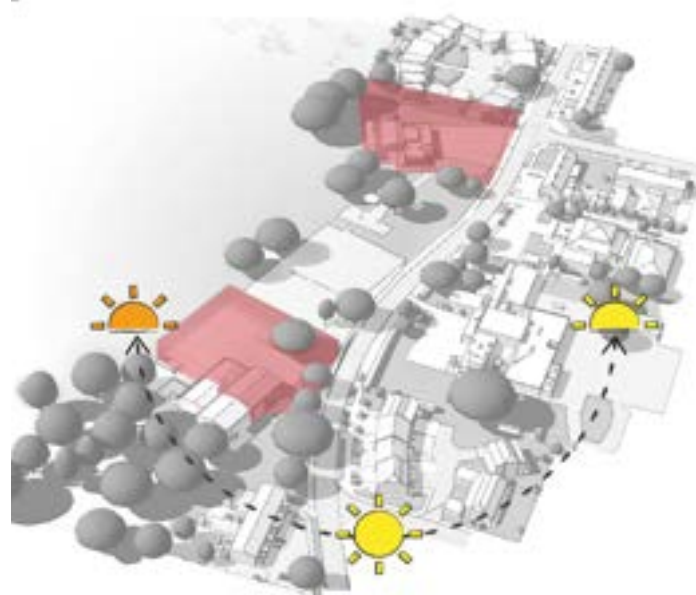
It is evident that there are a number of constraints and opportunities associated with the development of the sites, in terms of their physical and social characteristics:-

Constraints

- Concern regarding impact upon the open space.
- Influence of the trees/woodland on any proposals.
- Producing a scheme that provides the necessary funding to rebuild the community centre.
- Satisfying the requirements of many different stakeholders.

Opportunities

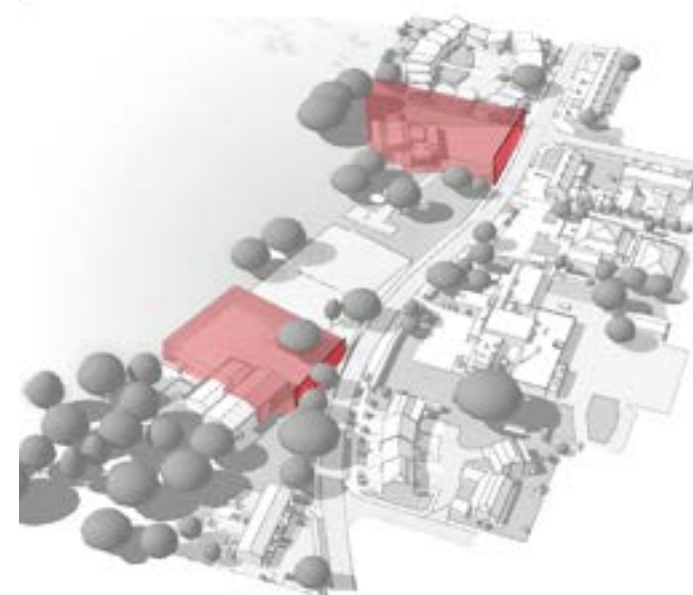
- The provision of much needed housing and a new community building on previously developed land (brownfield site) within an existing settlement.
- The redevelopment of an under used site to provide a new high quality residential development.
- To provide a comprehensive scheme on a self contained site.
- To significantly improve the image, visual appearance and public perception of the community centre and contribute towards the regeneration of the area.
- To provide a new modern multi-purpose community facility to accord with the latest accessibility and energy efficiency standards, resulting in lower long term maintenance and running costs.
- To introduce a community facility that will appeal to other clubs and organisations, providing opportunity for local community involvement of all ages.
- The ability to increase more usable open space provision by repositioning the new community centre further away from the area of ancient woodland on the southern/western boundary. Establishing the required buffer zone of 15m and giving back areas of existing small underused open space taken up on the Pavilion Building development site area.



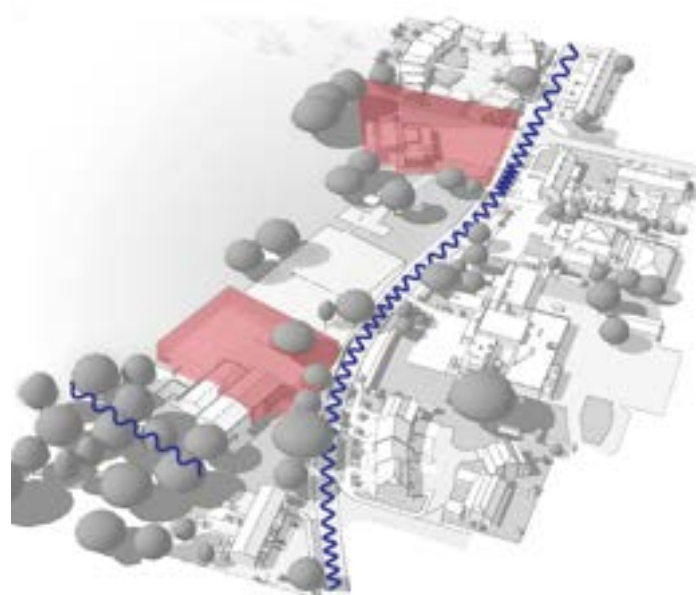
Sun Path



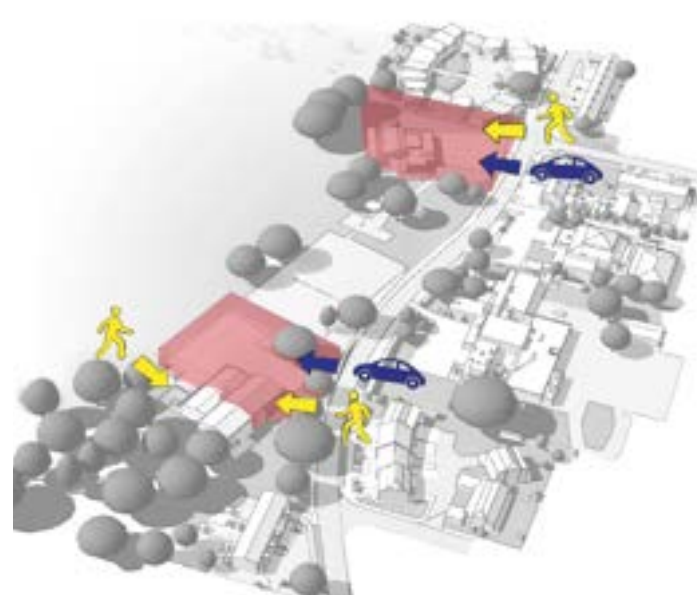
Green Spaces



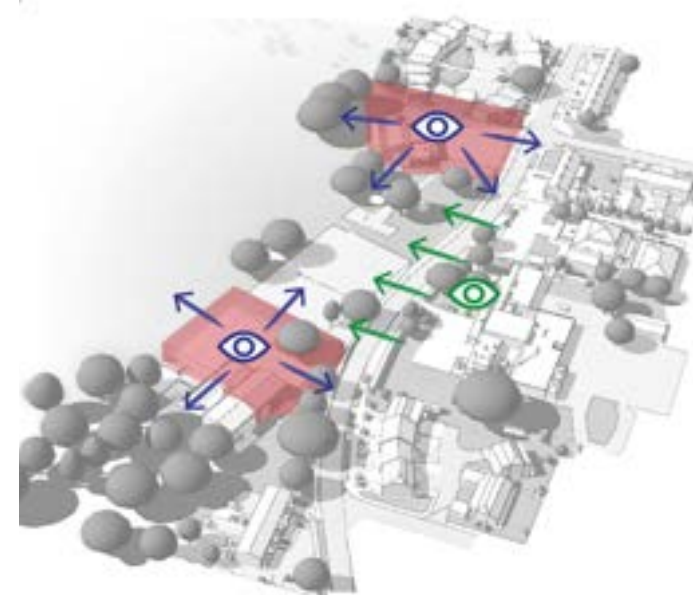
Active Frontages



Barriers



Access



Views

Design Principles

The following design principles have been adopted:

- A proposal that has been designed to respect the existing topography;
- The provision of a scheme that brings back into use an underused site;
- A development that provides housing in a sustainable location (on brownfield land within the confines of an existing settlement);
- The provision of a development that has regard to the location of the site and optimises upon the close proximity of local facilities and transport services;
- The provision of a development that will respond positively and contribute to the surrounding built environment. Continuing to enhance an area of deprivation that has recently benefited from major regeneration programmes by Golding Homes and new developments in the surrounding areas.
- Providing high quality family homes that meet Nationally Described Space Standards
- A development that rationalises the two dated buildings situated on Bicknor Road to create a better combined community resource that could provide a wider range of activity and potential outreach work to serve the local community.
- A proposal that will not involve the loss of any existing open space amenity land or the alteration of the existing play areas within the middle of the site of which are already benefiting from upgrade and improvement works that are not part of this application.



1st Pre Application 04/06/2020- Community Centre



1st Pre Application 04/06/2020- Housing Scheme



2nd Pre Application 12/10/2020

6.0 Involvement

Specialist consultants were instructed at an early stage to provide expert assessments/reports which have been used to inform and develop the design. The following documents are included in support of the planning submission:

- **Acoustic Assessment** (Able Acoustics)
- **Tree Survey to BS 5837:2012** (Down to Earth)
- **Arboricultural Implications Assessment** (Down to Earth)
- **Asbestos Demolition Surveys** (Alpha Surveys Ltd)
- **Geotech Phase 1&2 Reports** (JOMAS)
- **Daylight Study** (calfordseaden)
- **Air Quality Assessment** (Aether)
- **Transport Assessment** (GTA Civils)
- **Energy Consultant** (Energy Test)
- **Ecological Appraisal** (Greengage)
- **Archaeological Assessment** (SWAT Archaeology)
- **Planning Statement** (KLW Ltd)

In accordance with good practice guidance, the design team engaged in pre-application discussions with the planning department during the course of developing site proposals.

Three formal pre-application meetings have been held with the planning department during the evolution of the project. The first meeting was held on 04/06/2020 (20/502204/PAMEET) where sketch proposals were tabled to identify how the land could be developed to provide a 435sq.m Community Centre and a residential scheme comprising 12 houses.

The feedback from the planning officer highlighted the following issues:

- Quantitative loss of community facilities.
- Sustainable range of house sizes, types and tenures is required.
- Affordable housing @ 30% will be required.
- Cramped layout due to over provision of on plot parking.
- High Density scheme @ 49 dph
- Improve the street scene and pedestrian environment.
- Concerns over privacy and outlook.

The scheme was developed further in light of the issues raised and a revised set of drawings were shared at a second meeting held on 12/10/2020 (20/503946/PAMEET). The written advice from the planning officer highlighted the following issues:

- Open book financial viability assessment required due to no affordable housing provision being proposed.
- The application will need to provide assurance that the Community Centre will be built.
- A new wall is required to protect the neighbouring residents from unacceptable disturbance.
- Home zone softened with more landscaping.
- Tracking diagram for a refuse vehicle.

A third meeting was held on 08.10.2021 (21/505059/PAMEET). The written advice from the planner:

- Community centre area increased to 580sqm to include communal area with viewing to hall and field and to meet the needs of the current stakeholders.
- Increased the number of larger residential units types and tenure to meet local needs SP19.
- Further open book financial viability assessment due to no affordable housing provision being proposed.



Stakeholder Engagement 02/11/2020



Public Consultation 22/06/2021

6.0 Involvement - continued

Stakeholder Engagement

The proposal was refined to address the latest planning advice and on 2/11/2020 a revised scheme was presented to stakeholders from Heather House and members of the Weaving Warriors and Invicta Panthers Rugby Club as well as the Parkwood Junior Running Club who use the toilet and changing room facilities within the Pavilion Building. The feedback included:

- 4 Changing rooms are required.
- Separate storage for rugby club equipment.
- Additional space to accommodate more referee changing.
- Bar area.
- Physiotherapy room.

Again, the design team worked to develop the scheme to respond to the issues raised in both pre-application meetings and from stakeholder engagement. A new proposal was developed taking forward the most favourable elements and combining these with analysis from the specialist reports.

In response to stakeholder needs the client instructed that the community centre be extended by 87sq.m, at this point the scheme provided a 522sq.m Community Centre and a residential scheme comprising 11 houses.

Secured By Design

Drawings were issued to the local Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO) at various stages of the project. The scheme has been developed to address the officers

comments for both the residential development and the community centre.

Due to the two different use classes the residential scheme will be assessed against (SBD) Homes 2019 and the community centre against (SBD) Commercial 2015. It is anticipated that both developments will achieve the 'Silver Award' and be accessed under SBD ref. MA-466/PRE/SBD/AF1.

Resident and Stakeholder Survey

A Parkwood Resident and Stakeholder survey was carried out in February and March 2019. Both consultations sought to establish how the Heather House Community Centre facility is used, its importance to the local community and to understand what support stakeholders and residents are willing to give to the project going forward. The results of this feedback have been fed into the evolution of the design proposals going forward.

Further Stakeholder Engagement

On the 14/06/2021 a further consultation event was held with representatives from the Weaving Warriors Rugby Club. The meeting focused on the financial impact that the club would experience from the lack of a bar/lounge area.

Further to this final stakeholder meeting the client instructed the design team to extend the building for a second time by an additional 60sq.m. In the latest proposal the Community Centre now provides 580sq.m.

A further financial viability assessment was undertaken by RedLoft in December 2021 to include additional 60sqm.



Proposed CGI- Aerial view of site development

7.0 Design

The Local Authorities intention to improve the Heather House facility and provide new residential accommodation has been in the making for a number of years, initially the proposal was to demolish the Pavilion building and construct a stepped block providing 36 flats with rear courtyard parking. The subsidy generated from the residential development would be used to fund the refurbishment and possible extension of Heather House.

After much consideration, it was felt that Heather House had reached the end of its useful life and a new facility would be the best option in terms of providing for current and future needs of the local community.

The proposed block of flats to be constructed on the pavilion site was also called into question, as it was felt that the area had seen an influx of flats originating from the Golding Homes (Wallis Fields) development, which is only 250 meters away, a better proposal would be to investigate family homes.

The design team have explored many options to reach a proposal that is not only acceptable in planning terms but will also fit comfortably within the urban grain of the surrounding built environment, whilst responding to a local housing need. Every proposal had to be evaluated to ensure it was financially viable and would provide the necessary funds to cross-subsidise the construction of a new community facility.

Pavilion Site

The submitted scheme seeks to demolish the Pavilion building and introduce 11 dwelling incorporating private parking spaces and parking court, together with semi-public landscaped spaces, private rear gardens and home zone.

The proposed properties include a row of 5 terrace homes which face onto Bicknor road and mirror the rhythm of surrounding properties. Towards the rear of the site are 6 detached homes formed around an informal cul-de-sac, with each property benefiting from a view over the recreation ground.

To make best use of the site whilst respecting the amenities of adjoining neighbours we have used the access road and parking areas to provide the necessary separation we have also carefully considered the location of window & door openings to control overlooking and protect resident privacy.

Heather House

The submitted application includes the demolition and re-provision of the community centre which has been designed to accord with guidance produced by Sports England for community/village halls, together with RFU design guide to changing rooms and clubhouses.

We have consulted with all necessary stakeholders to ensure their current and future needs are provided for and incorporated in the design where possible to do so taking into account the site space and financial viability constraints.



Holy Family Catholic Church- 0.14 mile (3 minute walk)



Wallis Avenue Surgery - 0.26 mile (6 minute walk)



McColl's Convenience Store - 0.28 mile (7 minute walk)



Primary School- Tree Tops Primary Academy- 0.30 mile (7 minute walk)



Secondary School - New Line Learning Academy - 1.6 miles (38 minute walk)



Maidstone West Railway Station - 2.8 mile (1hr 7 minute walk)

8.0 Uses

The proposal is for the introduction of 11No. Properties together with a new community centre, both developments will provide off street parking provision.

The location of the site is within a long established residential neighbourhood resulting in a broad range of existing facilities within a 300m radius. It is therefore considered that the proposed dwellings are ideally located to provide residents with the ability to walk to a range of essential facilities.

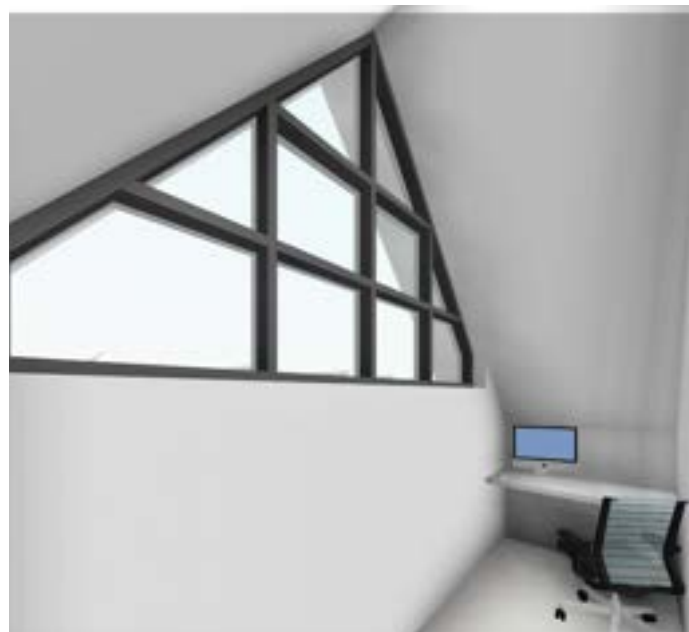
The new community centre will replace the existing building that has surpassed its life expectancy. The current building was well used by a small number of clubs and societies prior to its closure due to COVID and staff caretaker changes. It is expected that all the existing clubs can make use of the new facility together with the local rugby club (Weaving Warriors) with the exception of the Maidstone Boxing Club, of whom the Council are trying to assist in finding an alternative venue to support their future activities'

Residents will benefit from easy access to alternative means of transport, due to the proximity of bus stops and access to the dedicated cycle network, these existing facilities will provide a feasible alternative to using a motor car.

The location of the site is within an established community, adjoining the playground, MUGA and skate park and close to schools, recreation grounds, shops and public transport nodes are positive characteristics, with obvious advantages to residents and supporting local facilities.



Balconies included on plots 6- 11



Office/Study incorporated on plots 6- 11



Community centre- Circulation space



Community centre - Changing places toilet

9.0 Homes & Buildings

The Covid-19 pandemic has emerged during the course of this project and the designs have evolved to address a shift in the dynamic of the housing market.

Data collected from national bodies has identified a change in the requirements from house hunters in response to spending more time at home. Top of the 'Must haves' as reported in 2020 include:

- An extra bedroom/study
- A Garden, roof terrace or balcony
- Proximity to green space

9.1 Functional

The homes are designed to meet the needs of a diverse range of users, providing for the current and future needs of an ageing population and cultural differences.

The properties accord with the nationally described space standards (NDSS), they are fit for purpose and provide flexibility to respond to the changing needs of their occupants over time.

The community centre has been designed to include a central circulation space which provides access to all areas within the centre, this was the most economic use of space to cater for the changing needs of the stakeholders.

9.2 Healthy

The proposals are high quality designs that will promote quality of life for the occupants and users. A 'changing places' facility has been incorporated into the community centre to encourage inclusion and cater for a diverse range of specific needs.

For the residential development, natural daylight has been a key consideration which has informed the orientation of the homes, the position of the gardens and the location and size of all glazing.

9.3 Sustainable

The sites are well located for access to a frequent bus service and within easy walking distance to local services and facilities, this ensures the development is sustainable in terms of reduced dependency upon motor vehicles.

An energy consultant has been appointed to provide guidance on achieving the necessary thermal requirements and energy efficiency measures across both schemes.

The residential scheme will benefit from 4 photovoltaic panels per home, these will provide renewable energy from sunlight.

The new community building will incorporate a waste water heat recovery system.



Heather House Site- Proposed Community Development



Pavilion Site- Proposed Residential Development

10.0 Amount

All dwellings have been designed to accord with the Technical Housing Standard- Nationally Described Space Standard, the gross internal area (GIA) of each type of dwelling is identified below:

3 Bed 5 Person (Terrace House) 2 Storey	93m ²
3 Bed 5 Person (Detached House) 2.5 Storey	99m ²
4 Bed 7 Person (Detached House) 2.5 Storey	121m ²

The two storey row of terrace homes are representational of the surrounding properties and the three storey homes make economic use of the land, with the second story contained within the roof space.

A total of 22 parking spaces are proposed to serve the new residential development, 8 will be unallocated within the parking court, 2 will be visitor spaces and the remaining 12 will be allocated to specific plots.

With an application site area of approximately 0.46 hectares, the introduction of 11 new dwellings on the site would equate to a density of 33.3 dwellings per hectare.

The new community centre will provide a GIA of 580m² and includes a one court sports/community social use hall, the height of which will be capable of accommodating badminton, a kitchen, storage, bar and social lounge area, as well as further ancillary areas that will provide for field based sports'.

The car park will provide parking for 28 vehicles and include appropriate spaces for 3 disabled drivers which are located in close proximity to the entrance.



Pavilion Site- Proposed Residential Development



Heather House Site- Proposed Community Centre



Site Development Plan

11.0 Layout

Pavilion Site

The proposed layout identifies that the new dwellings will be positioned in close proximity to the back edge of the footpath, the development will therefore replicate the traditional street scene without feeling out of place or overbearing, the orientation of the dwellings provide an active street frontage with entrance doors clearly visible from the road.

The 2 storey properties will accord with the heights of existing properties in the surrounding area. The proposal is set back from Bicknor Road to allow sufficient space for a well-considered landscaping scheme; this will enhance the development and integrate with the neighbouring green space.

Proposed parking for this development has been provided in accordance with the Kent vehicle parking standards, 10 of these residential parking spaces are located in a courtyard type arrangement so as not to clutter the street scene, the remaining spaces are located within the demise of each detached property where they benefit from passive supervision.

The proposed layout of houses will ensure that all dwellings benefit from a private rear garden with independent gated access. Separation distances between the proposed development and neighbouring properties is in accordance with Maidstone's Local Plan and accords with planning discussions during the pre-application phases.

Heather House

In discussions with stakeholders, the community centre layout now includes 4 separate changing rooms, these provide direct access out to the sports pitches. It was therefore appropriate to locate the new building to adjoin the recreation ground, thereby creating the shortest route between the sporting activity and changing facility.

A second advantage in the positioning of the proposed new building will be the potential ability to consider retaining the main hall and ancillary areas of Heather House if required and feasible to do so with only the demolition of the lower section of the building required. The lower section provides space for the boxing club which will need to be relocated, but the remaining stakeholders could still potentially make use of the main hall. This would be subject to health and safety and other operational requirements needed to be put in place to enable the continued use of the existing main hall and new proposed development to occur.

The vehicle parking spaces have been located to the front of the site where they are clearly visible to both, people travelling along Bicknor Rd and from the managers office. The area comprises a simple arrangement that retains the existing access and much of the current hard-standings to provide 28 spaces, 3 of which are for disabled guests.

When the new community facility has been constructed the former footprint to Heather House will form the remainder of the parking area, in this respect the use of any green areas for parking has been minimised.



Pavilion Site- Plot 11 focal point



Pavilion Site- Home zone



Heather House Site- Social inclusion under canopy



Heather House Site- Pathway to entrance

11.1 Built Form

It is the three-dimensional pattern and interrelationship between development blocks, streets, buildings and open spaces that creates an attractive place to live, work and visit. The application site features all the above elements as it borders a substantial area of open space, while fronting onto a main road, in a predominantly residential area.

The proposal features a high density, low rise residential scheme and community centre, both buildings are considered to be compact forms of development that are walk-able. The arrangement of the residential properties and parking courts has provided generous opportunities for landscaping and the high quality 'Home zone' will contribute positively to well-being and place making.

The scheme provides a recognisable tree lined street, with the edges of the spaces clearly defined, making it easy for anyone to find their way around and promote safety and accessibility. The grouping of the homes fronting Bicknor Rd reflects the surrounding housing whilst the properties towards the rear of the site follow a different grouping, the overall composition of the development, which includes unique features and contemporary materials will ensure it remains memorable.

11.2 Public Spaces

The community centre and all associated spaces have been designed to be open to all, the relationship between the building and the recreation ground is stronger as a result of the building being located closer to the open space.

The vehicle parking area has been consolidated into one clearly defined area at the front of the centre, the arrangement is easy to understand and simply laid out. A new pedestrian foot path will lead directly to the main entrance from Bicknor Rd.

Roof projections to the front, side and rear of the building will provide shelter for both visitors and spectators during winter weather and shading from the summer sun. It is anticipated that these sheltered areas will encourage social interaction between spectators and thereby promote health, well-being and social inclusion.



Proposed CGI- Aerial view of site development

12.0 Resources

Both Heather House and the Pavilion building have reached the end of their life span, not only are the buildings dated but they require considerable effort and cost to run and maintain.

Whilst the facilities the buildings provided when new were appropriate for the time, the continual advancement of regulations, requirements, needs and uses over the many years have resulted in facilities that do not meet modern standards or community needs.

12.1 Efficient

Redeveloping the sites to provide residential housing and a replacement community centre is considered an efficient use of both brown-field sites.

Due to the scheme using previously developed land the proposals will support and sustain the natural ecosystems, minimising flood risk and the potential impact of flooding and the high quality landscaping scheme will increase the ability for CO₂ absorption.

12.2 Resilient

The proposals have been well designed and are robust, they take into account local environmental conditions, both prevailing and forecast. The scheme makes the most of passive design strategies to minimise overheating and achieve internal comfort.



13.0 Scale

Properties within the vicinity of the site comprise a mixture of single storey bungalows (Rosemary Gardens), 2 storey houses (Bicknor Rd) and 4 storey flats (Wallis Ave). The surrounding built environment has been used as a benchmark to establish acceptable heights for development on the application site, It was therefore considered appropriate to place 2 storey properties fronting Bicknor Rd to reflecting the existing homes opposite and then increase the height of the proposed properties towards the rear of the site, optimising on views over the recreation ground.

The land is relatively flat which is a positive feature of this site and should result in a level scheme without the need to step the dwellings, the scheme will thereby create a relationship with the land. It is considered that the heights of the surrounding properties and size of the application site can comfortably accommodate the proposed scale of development without it appearing out of place, overtly dominant or departing from the existing urban grain.

The proposed community building has been designed with flat roofs covering the main sports hall and ancillary areas, subsequently the maximum height of the new building will be less than the existing facility.

The community building has been positioned towards the rear of the site, in doing so, the mass of the proposal will appear less from people passing the site along Bicknor Rd.

The proposed level of accommodation identified on the application site will provide efficient use of the land and contributes to providing subsidy to help fund the new community centre.





Heather House Site- Landscaping scheme



Pavilion Site- Landscaping scheme

14.0 Landscaping & Nature

The proposal includes for the parking spaces to be block paved using Marshall's permeable paving, this acts as a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS). It returns rainfall to the water table without the need for membranes, tanks or soak ways. These blocks are non-slip and will introduce varied texture and natural colour which will be softer and far more appealing on the eye. The parking spaces have been arranged to leave opportunities for planting which will help integrate this area into its setting.

The areas around the car park and to the front of all properties will form part of a well-considered site wide landscaping scheme incorporating grassed areas with native bushes / shrubs and trees. The area to the front of the parking court provides an opportunity to introduce a number of trees within a landscaped setting; this space will screen the parked vehicles whilst enhancing the development and improving the surrounding environment.

Private and rear gardens will feature small patio areas with the remaining space being grassed to allow for play/recreation. All shrubs, plants and trees will be species that are native to the local area and chosen for their resilience and low maintenance requirements.

The guidance contained within Secured by Design Homes 2016 will be adopted in terms of defensive planting to the fronts of properties and along fencing to neighbouring properties, any further comments from the Crime Prevention Design Advisor will be incorporated as necessary.



Heather House Site- Timber Cladding



Heather House Site- Projecting Parapet



Heather House Site- Pilkington Profilit profiled glass.



Pavilion Site- Standing Seam Roof



Pavilion Site- Gable Balcony



Pavilion Site- Saw Tooth Roof

15.0 Appearance

Pavilion Site

There are a few vernacular characteristics and details evident in the surrounding buildings which have influenced the proposed design, the most prevalent being the introduction of an alternative cladding material at first floor level.

The design incorporates contemporary brickwork on the ground floor. The height of the ground floor window and door heads has been used as a datum to introduce vertical weatherboarding.

The choice of materials and design of the houses is a contemporary response to the architecture reflected within the surrounding buildings, the intention being that any proposal should enhance the vicinity but also integrate comfortably within its surroundings and not appear out of place.

Heather House Site

As an important community facility we have taken the opportunity to introduce a number of contemporary, high quality materials into the design, in this respect the building will stand out for its attractive appearance and unique blend of materials which have been used across the development including Pilkington Profilit profiled glazing surrounding the top part of the main hall, timber rain screen cladding, contemporary face-brick work and dark grey aluminium glazing to create a varied and interesting appearance.



Access to local facilities and services

16.0 Access & Movement

The site is considered to be well served by the highway network, The main road access is via the A274 situated north of the site which connects north to the A229 into Maidstone and south to the B2163. With secondary roads which encompasses the Parkwood recreational ground with direct access to the site via Bicknor Road.

Public transport is readily available with the nearest bus stop located opposite the site on Bicknor Road (Holy Family School). This bus stop serves the Parkwood estate, with Bicknor Road forming part of the orbital that heads back towards Maidstone town centre. The stop is served by two services with a frequency of every 10 minutes on weekdays.

Pedestrian and bicycle access is provided to the rear gardens of the houses via gates, rear gardens will be securely fenced and all gates will be lockable in accordance with the recommendations of the Secured by Design officer.

It is anticipated that refuse storage for the houses will be located within each rear garden, in the form of standard bins which are brought to the back edge of the footpath on collection day by the resident, in this respect all rear gardens have side/rear access gates to prevent the resident from needing to bring waste through the property.

A swept path diagram has been included on the ground floor drawing for the residential scheme and identifies that a refuse vehicle can access the development from

Bicknor Rd, turn within the 'Home Zone' area and rejoin Bicknor Road.

A new pedestrian access route will be provided in the boundary wall between the residential development and the children's play area, this access will be gated and controlled in accordance with SBD recommendations and provide residents with direct access into the recreation space.

Car parking spaces and cycle parking are proposed to accord with the Kent Vehicle Parking Standards (July 2006).

Although there are no dedicated cycle routes in the vicinity of the site, the speed limits and topography of the area make cycling a viable option. A cycle lane does feature intermittently on the A274 that connects the Parkwood estate to Maidstone town centre.

The layout and access to the dwellings will comply with Building Regulations Part M4 Category (1) visitable dwellings. From 1 October 2015, Secured by Design standards became part of the Buildings Regulations Part Q, Security of Dwellings, to which detailed design will accord.

Pedestrians will understand the difference between public and private spaces, which will be clearly defined through changes in surface materials together with the use of railings and fencing. Residents and visitors will feel safe due to the natural surveillance promoted by the orientation of buildings and location of windows, street lighting in the form of Secured By Design columns and will be used to light the parking court at night.



Pavilion site- Home zone

17.0 Life Span

The principle we follow on all our projects is 'Made to last'.

Well designed places sustain their beauty over the long term, they add to the quality of life of their users and as a result, people are more likely to care for them over their lifespan.

The proposals for both sites are high quality designs featuring robust materials that are durable and will compliment the setting and reinforce the contemporary architectural theme.

The detailed landscaping scheme will clearly define the boundaries between private, shared and public spaces, making it more likely that occupants will use, value and take ownership of them.

Like many places throughout the country this area does have a historical issue with anti-social behaviour, it is anticipated that this could be driven by high concentrations of youths drawn towards the skate park and play equipment. In response to ASB issues we have liaised with the secured by design officer throughout the design process and acted upon his recommendations as the proposals have developed.



18.0 Summary

The development proposals for the site seek to demolish the dated and inefficient community building (Heather House) and re-provide a brand new facility that will cater for the current and future needs of the community. The building will be of high design merit, whilst being accessible, energy efficient, low maintenance and affordable to operate.

The proposal also includes for the demolition of the dated pavilion building, to be replaced with 11 high quality homes, the proceeds from the sale of 6 of these properties will help towards the cost of constructing the community centre. The remaining 5 homes will be retained by the Local Authority and offered for market rent to local families.

The sites are both previously developed land and located within the existing settlement confines of Maidstone, there is a wide variety of local facilities and services within walking distance which supports the sites being considered as sustainable locations and therefore in accordance with both national and local planning policy.

It is considered the principles of this scheme address positively:-

- Building for the future needs of the community.
- Providing much needed housing in Maidstone.
- Creating vibrant, attractive and accessible places for the community and residents.
- Redeveloping end of life buildings to act as a catalyst for regeneration.



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