

1. Background

- 1.1 This report sets out the future options for the locally listed school buildings currently known as Bilston High School that are within the boundary of the proposed South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy (SWABA) site. The buildings in question were added to the Wolverhampton Local List on 26th November 2001 and are highlighted as building E on the boundary map, [Appendix A1](#). The proposal for the Academy falls within phase 1 of the 4 phase Wolverhampton Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, and is due to open in September 2012.
- 1.2 Because of the local listings this options appraisal is required by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and forms part of the SWABA planning application. Whilst the report will focus on the locally listed buildings, the options for these buildings are set within the context of the Academy's educational aspirations, the design solution presented in the planning application for the whole school site, as well as the site's relationship with the wider regeneration of Bilston Urban Village (BUV). The report will also focus on the provision of outdoor sports facilities on the site, and their relationship with other local provision. Regard for the buildings future is also considered in relation to the six aims of Wolverhampton City Councils (WCC) Corporate Property Strategy 2009-12 e.g. "challenging the use of assets...occupancy and utilisation" (Aim C).
- 1.3 To guide this report the LPA provided a statement of requirements for the options appraisal, and these requirements are attached as [Appendix B](#). The statement highlighted the need for the planning application to consider current local and national planning policy, as well as review various surveys to support the options appraisal e.g. archaeological and building condition surveys. Consequently various policies and surveys are referred to as required throughout this report. Further clarification and opinion has been obtained from various technical officers from the Council / LPA / third parties when developing this report.

2 Strategic Context

- 2.1 The site of Bilston High School is being brought forward under the BSF programme to accommodate one of Wolverhampton's two new Academies. Wolverhampton BSF reached Financial Close in April 2010 and a Local Education Partnership (LEP) has been established to deliver the programme, known as Inspiredspaces. This means that the City will have access to £300 million+ to invest in secondary school buildings and facilities. Construction started in summer 2010 for the City's sample schools, and subject to planning will commence in early 2011 for the SWABA site.
- 2.2 The SWABA will play a critical role as part of the wider regeneration proposals in the Bilston area, including a new leisure centre, primary and community care centre and new pedestrian link joining the BUV development with Bilston High Street. In addition 900 new homes and 17,000 sq metres of employment space together with new infrastructure and open space will be delivered by a development partner, Places for People Ltd, for the BUV site.

3 The Site

- 3.1 The school site is located to the south of Bilston Town Centre, Prosser Street, Wolverhampton, just off the Black Country Route and the buildings in question are located to the north west of the school site. [Appendix A2](#) shows the building layout.
- 3.2 The complex of school buildings was constructed in two phases. The original Stonefield Primary School was built in 1905-06 consisting of two very similar single storey linked buildings constructed at right angles, one for girls and one for boys. A further two story building was added sometime between 1924 and 1937 when the site also served as a secondary school. This later building fronts directly onto Prosser Street effectively forming a courtyard area between the older and later buildings. There are also various late 20th century additions on the site, including a sports hall and science block, which are subject to demolition as part of the redevelopment of the site.

4 Site Research

- 4.1 In order to inform the options appraisal a number of surveys and research has been carried out. The statement of requirements specifically mentioned the need to consider the archaeological and building condition surveys, as well as other relevant surveys. Consequently the survey findings have informed the options which are presented in section 6 below. A summary of the main surveys / research is provided below:
- 4.2 **Archaeological survey** - In May 2009 the University of Birmingham completed an archaeological desk-based assessment of the locally listed buildings and its immediate environment. This work was commissioned by WCC in order to collate archaeological and historical information, and “enable informed decisions to be made...as the proposed development proceeds” (WCC Written Scheme of Investigation). As requested a summary of the findings is attached as [Appendix C](#).
- 4.3 Pertinent points to highlight from the archaeological survey include:
- The primary phases of the schools (i.e. the 1905-06 buildings) are an “interesting example of Edwardian school buildings”, and that Stonefield (the original name for the school) represents “something of a hybrid” regarding school design at the time of construction
 - The buildings have been “removed from their historical context to a significant degree by recent infrastructure developments” yet remain a “visible landmark and an important feature of Bilston Town Centre”. The survey also acknowledges “the case for retention applies principally, though not exclusively, to the early 20th century ranges”
 - Any demolition / alteration would warrant “more detailed historic building recording” and a “programme of archaeological mitigation” would be required.

- 4.4 **Building condition survey** – In January 2009 WCC conducted a building condition survey of the Prosser St buildings, which assessed various elements of the building including external areas, mechanical and electrical services, redecoration, etc. [Appendix D](#) provides a summary of the survey, highlighting the main elements of the building, their condition at the time, and estimated costs regarding maintenance and / or renewal.
- 4.5 The latest position regarding the buildings condition has also been obtained from WCC's Surveyor, WCC's Building Services Maintenance Engineer and the Academy Facilities Manager. These discussions and site visit have confirmed that no major works e.g. installation of a new heating system or electrical works, have been carried out since January 2009. 'Patch work' has been carried out to the roof and pipe work, which continues to be maintained by the Facilities Manager as required.
- 4.6 The survey rates each element of the building between 'A' Good (performing as intended) and 'D' Life Expired (exhibits major deterioration, serious risk of imminent breakdown or is a health & safety hazard). Most elements of the building have items which warrant a rating of 'C' Poor or 'D' Life Expired. The major element listed as being life expired is the mechanical services, e.g. the heating system, which has an estimated cost for repair / renewal of over £662k. The Facilities Manager has confirmed that only one of the two boilers is now operational, with the remaining boiler needing to be manually operated on a daily basis. In total, building E has an estimated repair / renewal cost of over £934k. Consequently, any option to adapt the existing buildings would require adequate financial resource to address the issues highlighted in [Appendix D](#).
- 4.7 **Mineshaft investigations** – As noted in the archaeological survey, because of the sites mining history there are numerous mineshafts across the SWABA site, including within the boundary of the existing buildings. A map showing the known mineshafts on the site is attached to [Appendix D1](#).
- 4.8 Technical advice has been previously obtained by WCC regarding the implications of any redevelopment of the existing buildings, as well as the positioning of a new build Academy within the site. Remediation work has already been carried out towards the eastern boundary of the site – mineshafts coloured blue on the map ([Appendix D1](#)) have already been grouted. This area is presumed to be the location of any new build on the site, and was presented as such to the LEP as part of the design brief (Part b2). This positioning was predicated by the geotechnical conditions of the site i.e. the limited ground bearing capacity of the made ground, and the abundance of mineshafts. Other factors regarding the potential positioning of a new build relates to its relationship with the adjacent Bilston Leisure Centre (BLC) and proximity to residential properties in Linton Croft, off Prosser St.
- 4.9 Further advice has now been sought regarding the options for the existing building, and in particular the requirement for appropriate remediation work should major remodelling and / or new additions be added to the existing buildings. Indicative costs and timescales suggest that remediation costs would be approximately £160k (see [Appendix E](#)) and take approximately 5 months to complete. However, this estimate does not include further investigation to locate additional mineshafts in / around the existing buildings – therefore cost & timescales could rise. As such any option to adapt the existing buildings would therefore need to provide adequate financial resource and timescales to address these ground conditions.

4.10 **Other site surveys** – A range of other surveys have been commissioned for the site including acoustic, arboricultural, ecology, transport, etc, and these surveys have informed the planning application now submitted.

4.11 **Transport Assessment** - Of particular relevance to this options appraisal is the Transport Assessment for the site, which was commissioned and a draft version made available August 2010. Two scenarios were investigated regarding site access:

- 1) Access to school car park and pick up / drop off via Black Country Route / Prosser Street priority junction
- 2) Access to school car park and pick up / drop off via Dudley Street, south of the mini roundabout junction with the [Bilston] Leisure Centre access and Nettlefold Way

The draft report concludes that Scenario 1 is the preferred option and the planning application now submitted follows this recommendation, although provides access for the pick up / drop off zone via Dudley Street. This options appraisal also takes account of the draft conclusions – refer to the options appraisal table, section 6 below.

4.12 **Consultation / establishing local interest** – An important element to consider as part of the options appraisal includes understanding the local interest in the buildings, the site and their relationship with the wider environment. To that end discussions have taken place with various WCC officers, including the Local Neighbourhood Partnership (LNP) Manager for Bilston East ward. In addition, the Black Country Living Museum (BCLM) was approached regarding their potential interest in the buildings. On 16/08/2010 the BCLM curator formally responded and confirmed they were not able to take on the building.

4.13 In terms of public consultation, in September 2010 the options appraisal was presented to the public as part of two pre-planning consultation events for the new Bilston Academy building. One event was held at Prosser Street (the buildings concerned) and a second event at the Parkfield school site. The latest plans for the site were presented as well as the range of options for the existing buildings. Feedback from the events has been collated and is presented as part of the Statement of Community Involvement, attached to this planning application.

4.14 Prior to the above events WCC members were also briefed and it is intended that discussions will take place with Wolverhampton Civic and Historical Society regarding the impact of the options on the buildings.

4.15 Finally, a number of the options relate to Local Authority usage and as such a proforma was submitted to the WCC Capital Asset Management Group in late July 2010, offering colleagues across the Council the opportunity to highlight other viable alternatives for building E. No options were forthcoming.

5 Developing the new Academy design brief / Impact on option

5.1 The BSF Client Design Advisor (CDA) and the BSF Technical Advisor have worked with the Academy Trust to establish a Strategic Educational Design Brief (SEDB) and schedule of accommodation for the whole site, including the demands for outside space. The purpose of completing a SEDB is to clearly set out the learning and teaching aspirations, resulting spatial requirements, and the school's organisational model for each BSF site in Wolverhampton, and not restrict those aspirations to the current pedagogy, school organisation or existing site and buildings. For SWABA this work was completed in April 2010.

5.2 Once the SEDB was completed the LEP were tasked with coming up with a suitable design solution to meet the challenges set by the Academy. To do this the LEP engaged Capita Architecture to provide the architectural advice for the site. In doing so Capita have further consulted with the Academy to establish the design solution now presented in this planning application.

5.3 As a consequence of the design consultation process outlined above, Capita's design solution provides a new purpose-built Academy building on the eastern boundary of the site, looking onto Dudley Street. A number of factors have determined the decision to provide a new build, as well as the positioning of the new building on the site. In summary these include:

- An inability of the existing buildings to support the learning and teaching aspirations of the Academy, in terms of providing the spaces outlined in the SEDB e.g. the four skill zones, curriculum zones, pastoral spaces, dining, resource, break-out, in/external requirements, etc
- Remodelling and / or extension of the existing buildings are dictated by the need to adequately address the mineshafts in and around the existing listed buildings. This could actually mean knocking down parts of the existing buildings in order to cap and grout mineshafts, including any unknown mineshafts identified once contractors are on site
- As noted in 4.7 to 4.9 above, the positioning of a new build acknowledges the constraints of the site and restrictions of building directly over mineshafts or within their plane of influence. The positioning also considers the relationship of the new building with the BLC, other BUV developments and Linton Croft residents
- The need to be clear about what the reuse of the Prosser St buildings would be for (Academy or otherwise), and the financial resource required to remodel and maintain the existing buildings, as highlighted in [Appendix D](#)
- The need to present a coherent design solution which encompasses the whole site in order to maximise the space available for the Academy. This includes acknowledging the sites restrictions, e.g. already limited existing sports provision, which Sport England (as a statutory consultee to the planning application) expects to be maintained. Consequently the Prosser St buildings need to be considered as part of the compensation for providing enhanced outdoor sports facilities

5.4 Section 6 below, and in particular the attached options appraisal table, sets out the arguments for the preferred option as well as other options considered for the buildings.

6 Preferred Option – demolition of existing building

6.1 Based on the site research obtained and the development of the SEDB with the Academy a preferred option has been identified. The preferred option includes the demolition of the existing buildings shown as E on [Appendix A1](#). The arguments considered for each option, and the evidence to support the decision making process, are detailed in the attached options appraisal table.

6.2 In summary the following justification is made regarding the preferred option:

- Provides a clear blank canvas enabling Capita Architecture to offer a whole site design solution (as per this planning application) to meet the learning and teaching aspirations outlined in the SEDB and Design Brief: School-specific Building & Ground Requirements
- Demolition provides an opportunity to maximise the space available across the whole site, providing the new Academy and the wider Bilston community with valuable enhanced outside sports facilities which dovetail with the indoor sports provision that the new Bilston Leisure Centre will offer
- Responds to Sport England's concerns as a statutory consultee for the planning application to ensure the existing sports provision for the site is not diminished by the new Academy design. Indeed, the whole site design solution now presented in this planning application provides enhanced outdoor sports facilities, responding to Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, The Protection of School Playing Fields and Land for Academies 2004, and Building Bulletin 98 – Briefing Framework for Secondary School Projects (Department for Education & Skills)
- The enhanced outdoor sports facilities also contribute towards reducing the 18.32 ha deficiency which Bilston is predicted to have by 2021, as per the WCC Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study, October 2008
- Demolition enables site remediation issues to be dealt with quickly and efficiently. Any remodelling of the existing buildings would restrict the ability of the architects to satisfy the Academy design brief, and could be hampered by the remediation work required. Likewise, both the other suggested uses and unknown potential uses from third parties could be restricted by the ground conditions
- The options appraisal table sets out the various other Local Authority and third party uses including co-location of Loxdale Primary School, Midpoint Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), and alternative WCC use. Options which reuse the existing buildings as well as provide a new Academy building negatively impact on the sports provision (noted above), and compound the transportation concerns raised in the Transport Assessment
- No alternative uses for the existing buildings were forthcoming from the Authority.

- 6.3 The local planning policies clearly state that should demolition be permitted “an appropriate level of survey and recording” of archaeological material should take place. Therefore advice has been sought from relevant WCC officers regarding the appropriate survey, recording and salvage opportunities for the site. For reference a full list of local and national planning policies are attached as **Appendix F**, and are responded to in the planning application now submitted.
- 6.4 Appropriate salvage opportunities have been highlighted by the University of Birmingham’s archaeological survey, e.g. various details, embellishments and inscriptions (boys and girls stones), the original foundation stone, etc, and how these could be incorporated into the new Academy building / site design. Further, other opportunities for restoration were discussed at a site visit in September 2010 with the WCC Historic Environment Officer, and these opportunities will continue to be developed during the planning application process.
- 6.5 Please note the Design and Access statement which accompanies the planning application addresses the local and national planning policies, which are highlighted in the LPA’s statement of requirements.

7 Conclusion

This options appraisal has set out the various future options for the existing locally listed buildings on the Prosser St. site, and responds to the statement of requirements provided by the LPA. Relevant evidence has been taken into account relating to the building’s condition, archaeological survey, site conditions and issues relating to specific options.

The preferred option to demolish the existing buildings enables Capita Architecture to present a cohesive design solution which encompasses the whole school site, and provides a new fit-for-purpose Academy which responds to the Strategic Educational Design Brief as well as provide enhanced outside sports facilities, for school and community use. To that end the preferred option to demolish the existing buildings is a critical factor for the development of the new South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy, and its relationship with the wider Bilston Urban Village development.

South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy (SWABA) Planning Application
Options Appraisal Table – complex of existing buildings known as Bilston High School

OPTION NO & CONSIDERATION	FOR	AGAINST	IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, TIME, ETC)	NOTES / REFERENCES
1 Do nothing	Potentially conserves locally listed buildings – subject to provision of adequate resource to maintain and secure the buildings / site in line with the building condition survey [1]	<p>Adequate Local Authority resource would still be required to maintain and secure the existing buildings / site in line with the building condition survey [1]</p> <p>If the building was not used in the future (the Academy does not wish to continue occupation once the new build is complete – as per this planning application), there would still be a financial cost to the Local Authority to adequately maintain and secure the buildings e.g. if a decision was made to ‘mothball’ it</p> <p>Does not satisfy SWABA vision to create a new fit-for-purpose 1,200 pupil Academy. This includes the co-location of two existing schools (both Parkfield) onto one site, Prosser St, Bilston [3]</p> <p>Existing buildings / site do not meet Academy design requirements as per Strategic Educational Design Brief (SEDB), and Design Brief: School-specific Building & Ground Requirements [4]</p>	<p>The building condition survey provides a status report on various elements of the buildings, e.g. mechanical, electrical, roofing etc. The survey states the majority of the elements have items rated ‘poor’ or ‘life expired’, and an estimated repair / renewal cost of over £934k for the listed buildings (see Appendix D). The major cost element is within mechanical services e.g. the heating system, with an estimated repair / renewal cost of over £662k, and categorised as ‘urgent’ i.e. to “prevent immediate closure to the property / address high risk to Health & Safety (H&S) of occupants / remedy serious breach of legislation”</p> <p>‘Mothballing’ the buildings could increase the security risk and may result in further deterioration of the buildings. Also this option may not adhere with the six aims of the WCC Corporate Property Strategy 2009-12 [2] e.g. to “manage property effectively and secure efficiencies by challenging occupation and utilisation” (purpose of Strategy aim ‘C’)</p> <p>Academy vision and design brief not realised and an inability to deliver desired learning and teaching aspirations on current site / using existing buildings. BSF funding not utilised</p>	<p>[1] 06/01/2009 Wolverhampton City Council (WCC) Detailed Surveyed Elements Report E011, extract in Appendix D. WCC Surveyor, WCC Building Services Maintenance Engineer & Academy Facilities Manager confirmed current status – no major work taken place since Jan 2009 survey</p> <p>[2] WCC Corporate Property Strategy has six aims to effectively manage its property portfolio: A Property is managed strategically to support corporate aims and objectives B Property supports service delivery C Property provides Value for Money and secures efficiencies for the future D Property is procured and managed to minimise the impact on the environment E Property supports regeneration of the City F Property supports communities and partners</p> <p>[3] – 01/07/2009 WCC Cabinet approval re: discontinuance of dual site Parkfield High School and creation of a new single site Academy in Bilston</p> <p>[4] – WCC Building Schools for the Future (BSF) documents presented to the Local Education Partnership (LEP) outlining design requirements for the site. Documents form the basis of the LEP design solution for the whole school site, and the planning application now submitted</p>
2 Adaption of existing buildings...reuse options:	Adaption conserves locally listed buildings – subject to provision of adequate resource to maintain and secure the buildings / site in line with the building condition survey [1]. Also, environmental benefits regarding reuse of existing buildings	Environmental benefits of reuse would be offset by the need to rectify the existing building condition [1] and amount of remediation works [5] which may be required by adaption e.g. if remodelling and / or addition of new build onto the existing buildings were required		[5] Indicative site remediation costs & timeframes - refer to Appendix E . N.b – indicative costs only, subject to change once on site

South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy (SWABA) Planning Application
Options Appraisal Table – complex of existing buildings known as Bilston High School

OPTION NO & CONSIDERATION	FOR	AGAINST	IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, TIME, ETC)	NOTES / REFERENCES
<p>Reuse options continued...</p> <p>b) To accommodate the relocated Loxdale Primary School and locate new Academy within existing site boundary *</p> <p>c) To accommodate the relocated Midpoint Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and locate new Academy within existing site boundary *</p> <p>d) Any other use – by the Local Authority and / or third party user. Option could include location of Academy to a different site</p>	<p>Benefits as above. Also provides opportunity for co-location development of 3-19 yr old campus</p> <p>Benefits as above</p> <p>Benefits as above.</p> <p>Potentially relinquishes WCC from responsibility for the existing buildings and related remediation work on the site - dependent on third party proposals (undetermined)</p>	<p>Disadvantages of co-location options for this site as above</p> <p>Uncertain funding position – future phases of Primary Capital Programme (PCP) grant subject to Government spending review – announcement not due until autumn 2010</p> <p>Disadvantages of co-location options for this site as above</p> <p>Space requirements of PRU are substantially below (less than 30%) the space available in the existing locally listed buildings [10]. Consequently this option would only be viable if other appropriate co-location options were considered - otherwise the LA would need to manage the remaining vacant site – circa 70%</p> <p>Disadvantages of co-location options for this site as above</p> <p>WCC interest in the use of the existing buildings was tested via Capital Asset Management Group in July 2010. Property details (building E on Appendix A1) were circulated for WCC colleagues to consider / present alternative uses. No options were forthcoming.</p> <p>Any third party redevelopment of the existing buildings would need to fit in with the new Academy building, as well as the wider regeneration of Bilston Urban Village (BUV). This cannot be guaranteed</p> <p>Further, if the land and buildings were sold there is no guarantee that financial return would be sufficient to offset potential costs of acquiring a suitable alternative site, and whether such a site exists, for the new Academy in Bilston</p>	<p>In addition, there maybe logistical implications of remodelling and remediation works in relation to school organisation</p> <p>Current Phase 1 PCP funding already fully allocated in Wolverhampton – due for completion by Sept 2011. Therefore not possible to reallocate PCP funds.</p> <p>Budget implications for managing the remaining vacant site – see building condition survey above [1]</p> <p>Ability (or not) to co-locate other, appropriate LA / third party services next to a PRU</p> <p>Financial gain or timeframe to secure a suitable sale / rental agreement cannot be guaranteed</p>	<p>[10] - current Midpoint site provides 1,075m² of net floor area verses 3,792m² available in the existing buildings. This represents 28.3% of the space available – net floor areas taken from Evolution, WCC Asset Management database, accessed 29/07/2010</p> <p>Proforma sent to WCC Property Services 28/07/2010 (boundary map amended 03/08/2010) – return date of Friday 13/08/2010</p>

South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy (SWABA) Planning Application
Options Appraisal Table – complex of existing buildings known as Bilston High School

OPTION NO & CONSIDERATION	FOR	AGAINST	IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, TIME, ETC)	NOTES / REFERENCES
3	<p>Demolition of existing buildings, construction of new Academy building on eastern boundary along Dudley Street, and provision of outdoor sports facilities for the new SWABA & community use</p> <p>Meets the learning and teaching aspirations set out by the Academy as per SEDB, and Design Brief: School-specific Building & Ground Requirements [4]</p> <p>Positively challenges the use of the existing buildings as per WCC Corporate Property Strategy [2], and provides a clear blank canvas for the whole site, encouraging a whole site design solution, including relationship with wider BUV development - specifically the adjacent Bilston Leisure Centre</p> <p>Provides enhanced sports / recreational provision – both for school & wider community use. Responds to both Sport England potential objections [6] and contributes towards reducing predicted Bilston deficiency in outdoor sports facilities – as per [7] WCC Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study. Also responds to Section 77 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, The Protection of School Playing Fields and Land for Academies 2004 and Building Bulletin 98 – Briefing Framework for Secondary School Projects (Department for Education & Skills)</p> <p>The draft Transport Assessment [8] concludes that Scenario 1 (as per this planning application) is the preferred option i.e. keeping Prosser St as the car parking access point for the new Academy</p> <p>Cleared site provides opportunity to quickly and efficiently deal with mineshaft remediation works</p>	<p>Loss of locally listed building and loss of archaeological material</p>	<p>Secures enhanced outdoor sports facilities for the Bilston area, in line with WCC Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study, and compliments the indoor sports offer to be provided by the new Leisure Centre</p> <p>No change - access point for the Academy car parking would remain the same</p> <p>Indicative costs estimated at £160K+ to deal with mineshafts (located on map, Appendix D1) and estimated to take approximately 5 months [5]. Does not include further investigation to locate additional mineshafts in / around the existing buildings – therefore cost & timescales could rise</p> <p>University of Birmingham survey (see Appendix C) states that if demolition were required “more detailed historic recording may be required”. Further to this, opportunities to salvage archaeological material and reuse on the site will be investigated, in line with WCC Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies [HE18, HE19 & HE20]. This would involve considering the practical implications for removal & reinstatement of material, as well as maintaining historical references e.g. names, etc</p>	<p>WCC, Capita Architects and BSF site meeting 08/09/2010 to discuss salvage opportunities, and seek guidance from WCC Conservation regarding local planning policy implications for the existing buildings / relationship with wider site</p> <p>The Black Country Living Museum were approached regarding their potential interest in the building – a negative response was received 16/08/2010</p>

Appendix

Appendix A - Site boundary map locating listed buildings and site map showing room layout

Appendix A1 – attached site boundary map locating listed buildings (marked 'E' Main Education Centre)

Appendix A2 – attached site map of listed buildings, showing room layout

Appendix B - Statement of Local Planning Authority (LPA) requirements with particular reference to the former Bilston High School, Prosser Street, Wolverhampton, June 2010

1. Context

1.1 The site of Bilston High School is being brought forward under the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme to accommodate one of Wolverhampton's two new Academies. Wolverhampton City Council (WCC) has recently reached Financial Close and a Local Education Partnership has been established with Inspiredspaces. This means that the City will have access to £370 million to invest in secondary school buildings and facilities, with construction scheduled to start in summer 2010 for the city's sample school schemes, and in early 2011 for the South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy.

1.2 The Academy will play a critical role as part of the wider regeneration proposals in the area, including a new leisure centre, and a Primary and Community Care Centre. A new pedestrian link to the High Street, immediately adjacent to the site, is also being progressed. In addition 900 new homes and 17,000 sq metres of employment space together with new infrastructure and open space will be delivered by a Development Partner, Places for People Ltd for the Bilston Urban Village site. It is anticipated that the lead developer for the Bilston Urban Village site will work in partnership with the Local Education Partnership to ensure a coherent and joined up approach for the Academy development and its external landscaping.

1.3 The complex of historic buildings currently known as Bilston High School was added to the Wolverhampton Local List on 26th November 2001. The Wolverhampton Local List was established in 2000 to identify those parts of the historic environment which are valued by the local community and make a particular contribution towards the local character and distinctiveness of the City. Policies were formulated for the protection of local list sites and are included in Chapter 6 of the *Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan 2001-2011*. Under *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5) such local list sites are recognized as heritage assets. PPS5 - policy HE8 states that the effect of an application on the significance of such a heritage asset or its setting is a material consideration that must be taken into account by the local planning authority in determining the application.

1.4 As the local listing would suggest, there is a strong community interest in the future of the existing school buildings and a credible use for all or part of the buildings would therefore be welcomed. Some continued use of the school would also provide a sense of continuity and place to an area which will be transformed over the next 3-5 years by significant new build.

Appendix

1.5 Notwithstanding the above, the overriding need is to present to the community a coherent plan for the site. If, following a full and rigorous options appraisal (see Appendix 1), the preferred option is to redevelop the whole site for educational use in a way that requires demolition of all or some of the buildings to provide other facilities, then this should be presented in an upfront, honest and fully justified way. The location of the Academy buildings within the school site has not yet been formally agreed, and will be developed through the educational design process of the new school, but it will need to relate well to any new development, particularly the leisure centre, and to this end, is located towards the east of the site. The Academy sponsors have indicated that the existing school building cannot be adapted to meet the requirements of a state of the art BSF Academy, which is suitable for 21st century teaching and learning and will therefore need to be the subject of a full options appraisal.

2. The Site

2.1 The school buildings are located to the south of Bilston Town Centre just off the Black Country Route on Prosser Street at NGR 394629 296038.

2.2 The complex of school buildings was constructed in two phases. The original Stonefield Primary School was built in 1906 consisting of two very similar single storey linked buildings constructed at right angles, one for girls and one for boys. Later on a further two story building was added sometime between 1924 and 1937 when the site also served as a secondary school. This later building fronts directly onto Prosser Street effectively forming a courtyard area between the older and later building. There are also various late 20th century additions on the site.

2.3 The Council has commissioned an archaeological desk top study and building assessment which supports the local lists status of the schools complex and confirms that much of the original built fabric and internal features survive.

3. General Requirements

3.1 The council has published approved national and local validation criteria in the form of a checklist. This information is available via the Planning Portal government web site at www.planningportal.gov.uk. If information that is required by the checklist is not included with an application the local planning authority is entitled to declare the application invalid and not register or process it. Where an application does not contain all of the information required to make a decision the council is able to ask for additional information. In order to facilitate a smooth and efficient application process it is recommended that pre-application discussions take place to ensure that all of the information required is submitted in the first instance. This note is designed to provide preliminary guidance on the initial submission stage with specific reference to key specific site requirements. This is not a definitive list and further pre application discussions with planning officers should also take place.

3.2 The recently published PPS5 comprises policies to secure the conservation of heritage assets and the use of the historic environment in creating sustainable places. Applicants should ensure they are conversant with the requirements of this new policy statement in addition to the council's local policy and validation requirements. The

Appendix

following policies are of particular relevance in this case: HE6 – Information requirements for applications for consent affecting heritage assets; HE7- Policy principles guiding the determination of applications for consent relating to all heritage assets; HE8 – Additional policy principle guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to heritage assets that are not covered by policy HE9; Policy HE12 – Policy principles guiding the recording of information related to heritage assets. Further guidance on the implementing and interpreting the policies in PPS5 is available in the *PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* jointly produced by English Heritage, the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

3.3 Applicants should ensure they have a clear understanding of the local policy requirements as expressed in the adopted Unitary Development Plan in addition to the requirements of the validation checklist. The following planning policies are of particular relevance to this site are as follows:

- Design – D1, D2, D7, D8, D9, D13 & D14;
- Environmental protection – EP4, EP5, EP6, EP7, EP,9 EP11, EP12, EP17;
- Historic Environment – HE1, HE18, HE19, HE20;
- Nature conservation – N1;
- Community services – E4;
- Open spec, sport & recreation – R2, R3, R5, R8, R10;
- Access and mobility – AM1, AM7, AM9, AM10, AM12

3.4 All these policies will need to be addressed in the Design & Access Statement accompanying any planning application.

4. Specific requirements

4.1 The site is of a particularly sensitive nature in view of the locally listed building and provision of sports pitches and these issues will need to be addressed specifically. Whilst the situation needs to be continually reviewed the design solution for the Academy building and its associated outdoor spaces must be contained within the existing property boundary. This has been agreed with the selected Development Partner, Places for People, who are yet to sign the Development Agreement for the delivery of the wider Urban Village and is consistent with the Lease arrangements with the Academy Trust. It will be the Development Partner's responsibility to maximize and show linkages with the school site when design work for the urban village commences and as part of the planning process for the wider scheme.

4.2 A detailed description of the significance of the locally listed building and the contribution of its setting to that significance will be required. This must be sufficient to understand the potential impact of the new development on the significance of the building. This information should be set out as part of the Design and Access Statement as part of the explanation and justification for the design approach.

4.3 The Council will require evidence that all options for the future use of the complex of locally listed school buildings have been explored and their viability has been assessed in the form of an options appraisal for the site. Such an appraisal will be required as

Appendix

evidence to support any planning application which will need to examine the constraints and opportunities relating to the buildings, provide an assessment of a range of possible uses to which buildings could be adapted (see appendix 1 for further information on this requirement) and full justification for any demolitions proposed.

4.4 In designing and detailing the drainage of the proposed development, a system which will enable its eventual linking into the wider Bilston Urban Village Sustainable Drainage system must be fully explored and proposed if found practical.

4.5 For such an important building, particularly careful attention needs its design and external appearance. A modern, 'contemporary' approach is to be preferred over any attempt at mirroring a traditional style, or period, of architecture. The building needs to be designed specifically for this site.

4.6 It is expected that the uses within the Academy will dovetail with those of the nearby Leisure Centre (currently under construction) as to be complementary to each other and that there will be an acceptable level and range of public access and use of any such complimentary facilities. This will need to be secured by a suitable legal agreement.

4.7 A phase 1 Ecological survey will be needed in case of the presence of protected species such as bats and badgers.

4.8 The ground conditions of the site will need to be assessed in view of possible contamination from past uses and past mining.

4.9 Provision for a 'per-cent-for-art' feature under UDP Policy D14, will need to be designed into the scheme from the outset and should be discussed with planning officers.

5. Conclusions

The requirements outlined above provide broad guidance on the submission of the forthcoming planning application. The applicant is strongly recommended to take further pre-application advice from planning officers as proposals are developed to ensure smooth processing of the application once submitted. Further clarification on any of the points above can be provided as required. All enquiries in the first instance should be made to: Jenny Davies, Senior Planner, Development Control Tel: 01902 551123 who will be the case officer for the forthcoming application.

Appendix to the LPA requirements - options appraisal minimum requirements

1. The options appraisal should:

- a) Review and summarise the findings of the archaeological survey and buildings assessment previously commissioned by the Council.
- b) Include a review of the constraints, restrictions and opportunities placed on the use of the site by:
 - Current planning legislation, national policy and guidance, and local planning policy and guidance,

Appendix

- Aspirations of the local community for the future use of the buildings,
- The Building Schools for the Future programme / academy requirements,
- The requirements of future local authority education provision and
- The implications of regeneration initiatives, including the Bilston Urban Village.

c) Include an assessment of the structural condition of the locally listed buildings taking into account ground conditions and any remedial works programmed for the site by the local authority.

d) Assess other issues that will have implications for the future rehabilitation of the buildings including any evidence of infestation, dampness, presence of asbestos and other general dilapidations and possible presence of bats or bat roosts or other protected species. Constraints arising from the above on the potential remodelling of the buildings and development of the site need to be fully explored.

e) Include a market assessment and evidence of discussions with stakeholders aimed at exploring a wide range of options and identifying potential demand for new uses. Three possible options have already been identified by the council as needing to be considered initially a) Adaptation for re-use as the new Bilston Academy (although it is understood that this option is not favoured evidence must be supplied as to why this option has been dismissed especially in view of the proposal to build the new Academy on the site of existing sports pitches); b) Adaptation for re-use to accommodate the relocated Loxdale Primary School; c) Adaptation and re-use to accommodate the Midpoint Pupil Referral Unit. In view of the anticipated constraints on the re-use of the buildings it is recognized that some or all of these initial options may not be suitable candidates to bring forward. The Council therefore require evidence that feasibility of other potential uses have been fully explored some of which may involve transfer of ownership.

2. Having addressed a wide range options for the future rehabilitation of the buildings a short list of preferred options should be considered for further investigation into their feasibility. Sketch drawings of each of the possible options will be required to demonstrate possible outline floor plans of sufficient detail to demonstrate how the proposed new use may be accommodated, including external arrangements, and any significant common interventions. The drawings should be sufficient to undertake further engagement with stakeholders and to allow for indicative costings to be applied to each option in order to assess their financial feasibility.

3. If a new user, or clear viable use type is thereby identified as the best option for the buildings, and planning consent is needed to implement such an option, then a planning application should be submitted which includes this proposed new use, concurrently with any application for the new build school.

Appendix

Appendix C - Summary of University of Birmingham archaeological desk-based assessment, May 2009

Aim of assessment:

“Collate existing archaeological and historic information relating to the site and its immediate environs, to enable informed decisions to be made regarding any further archaeological input which may be required by means of mitigation as the proposed development proceeds.

The assessment will aim to provide a detailed analysis, development and assessment of the importance of the school buildings with a view to informing future decisions regarding proposals for alterations and potential selective demolitions”.

Survey area:

Bilston High School, Prosser Street, Bilston, West Midlands

Summary of findings:

The school buildings (marked ‘E’ Main Education Centre on [Appendix A1](#)) are located to the north-west of the site, and are included in WCC’s non-statutory local list of buildings of special or architectural interest. The buildings are also listed on the Black Country Historic Environment Record (ref: 5328). The WCC local list describes the school as follows:

“Primary School built in 1906. Built around a central hall, highly ornate with large imposing windows. Many original features, including turrets, tall iron railings and terracotta details. The associated building is inter-war date. The complex is a high visible landmark and an important feature of Bilston town centre. Locally listed, approved November 2001”

The survey details:

- The wider historical environment of Bilston, in particular highlighting the importance of the local coal, iron and sand resources, and their contribution towards the industrial revolution
- Any prehistoric or Roman sites – none recorded in the Black Country Sites and Monuments Record
- The Anglo-Saxon period - acknowledging that “little is known of the Saxon period in Bilston”. The surveys discussed various meanings regarding the name Bilston
- The Medieval period – highlighting the areas early connections with the parish of Wolverhampton, settlement layout around the chapel and reference to early coal pits
- The Post-Medieval period – “predominantly agriculture and related trades”, and by the early 17th century, a “well established iron industry”
- The Industrial Revolution – highlighting that “the natural resources of the Black Country were exploited to the full” noting that “mining began in earnest in Bilston at the end of the 18th century”, resulting in rapid population growth between 1801 (6,914 inhabitants) to c. 24,000 around 1860. The area benefited from its proximity to new transport links (Birmingham canal network – 1768) and railway station (opened 1854)

Appendix

The survey describes the current buildings in detail, including specific decorative windows, terra cotta detailing, gable ends, cast-iron wall copings, wood block flooring, embellishments and inscriptions (boys and girls) and the foundation stone.

Survey conclusions:

The survey describes the primary phases of the schools (1905-06 buildings) as an “interesting example of Edwardian school buildings”, and that Stonefield (the original name for the primary school) represents “something of a hybrid” regarding school design at the time of construction

The survey notes the buildings have been “removed from their historical context to a significant degree by recent infrastructure developments” yet remain a “visible landmark and an important feature of Bilston Town Centre”. The survey also acknowledges “the case for retention applies principally, though not exclusively, to the early 20th century ranges”

Finally, the survey suggests any demolition / alteration would warrant “more detailed historic building recording” and a “programme of archaeological mitigation” would be required

Appendix D – Bilston High School building condition survey [January 2009]

(extract from Evolution, WCC Asset Management database, accessed 29/07/2010)

Condition survey ‘overview’ for the whole of Bilston High School (including both sites) states total estimated costs to cover maintenance / repair issues of £2.8m+, including £1.4m+ within estimated cost area 1 i.e. ‘urgent’. Specifically for the locally listed Prosser St buildings (marked ‘E’ Main Education Centre on [Appendix A1](#)), the following summary is provided:

Element	Worst Condition	Estimated Cost 1	Estimated Cost 2	Estimated Cost 3	Estimated Cost 4
Ceilings	C			3000	
Electrical Services	D	8000	80000		
External Walls, Windows and Doors	C	0	0	129660	0
Floors and Stairs	C	0	0	27648	0
Internal Walls and Doors	C	0	0	6960	0
Mechanical Services	D	662500	0	0	0
Redecorations	B	0	0	0	5000
Roofs	D	5580	6000	0	0
Sanitary Services	B	0	0	0	0
Estimated Costs Total		676080	86000	167268	5000
Grand Total for Building 'E'					934348

The major cost element for the building is within mechanical services, specifically relating to the heating system (£500k+) and boiler plant (£105k+). Both items are deemed to be D ‘life expired’ and within estimated cost area 1 ‘urgent’ - see below for definitions:

Appendix

Ratings:

- A = Good performing as intended and operating efficiently
B = Satisfactory performing as intended requiring minor repairs
C = Poor exhibits various defects, each of which might not be significant in itself but together need attention on a planned basis
D = Lift Expired exhibits major deterioration. Serious risk of imminent breakdown or is a health & safety hazard

Estimated Costs:

- 1 = Urgent Prevent immediate closure to the property / address high risk to Health & Safety (H&S) of occupants / remedy serious breach of legislation
2 = Essential Prevent serious deterioration of the fabric or service / address medium risk of H&S of occupants / remedy less serious breach of legislation
3 = Necessary Prevent deterioration of the fabric or service / address low risk of H&S of occupants / remedy minor breach of legislation
4 = Desired Prevent possible deterioration of the fabric or service

Notes of meetings / discussions with WCC / Academy Officers:

WCC Building Surveyor who conducted the January 2009 building condition survey (see 29/07/2010 email):

- Not aware of any major works being carried out (e.g. new heating, electrical) since January 2009 building condition survey
- Visits within last 3 months mainly relate to vandalism

WCC Building Services Maintenance Engineer (tel con 29/07/2010):

- Not aware of any major works being carried out (e.g. new heating, electrical) since January 2009 building condition survey

Academy Facilities Manager, at Prosser St (site visit 03/08/2010):

- Confirmed no major work has been carried out (e.g. new heating, electrical) since January 2009 building condition survey
- Patching to roof and some pipe work completed – but having to maintain as required
- 1 of 2 boilers on the site no longer working. Remaining boiler manually switched on / off daily

Appendix D1 – attached map identifying known mineshafts on the site. N.b refer to **Appendix A1** for actual site boundary

Appendix E – Indicative Costs / Timescales for remediation works (Jacobs Babbie, 11/08/2010 email):

Timescales 12 x weeks = demolition contract
4 x weeks = mobilisation [for site remediation works, during demolition]
8 x weeks remediation works
Total = 20 weeks+

N.b assumes no remedial ground works under existing building – timescales could rise

Appendix

Indicative costs £30 - 40k = Grouting under later extension areas [to existing buildings]
£80k = Treatment of x 4 recorded shafts. Does not include treatment of
mineshaft to northwest of existing building
£40k = Treatment of x 2 unrecorded shafts. Assumes no further
investigations to locate mineshafts
Total = £160k+

Appendix F - Local & national planning policies identified in the LPA statement of requirements for consideration in the options appraisal:

Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan (Revised June 2006) – identified policies:

- HE1 - Preservation of local character and distinctiveness
- HE18 – Preservation and enhancement of local list buildings and sites
- HE19 – Development affecting a local list building or site
- HE20 – Demolition of a local list building or site

Demolition permitted if:

- The proposed demolition is essential to the success of a scheme which would provide other, overriding, planning benefits
- All reasonable alternatives to demolition been investigated and proved not to be feasible

In such cases, the following may be required:

- An appropriate level of survey and recording which may involve archaeological excavation
- Provision of replacement building(s) of comparable quality and design, especially in respect of buildings of landmark value
- Where possible, the salvage of special features or elements for re-use in the replacement development scheme
- The use of road or building names in any new development which reflect the historic origins of the area, maintaining a link with the past

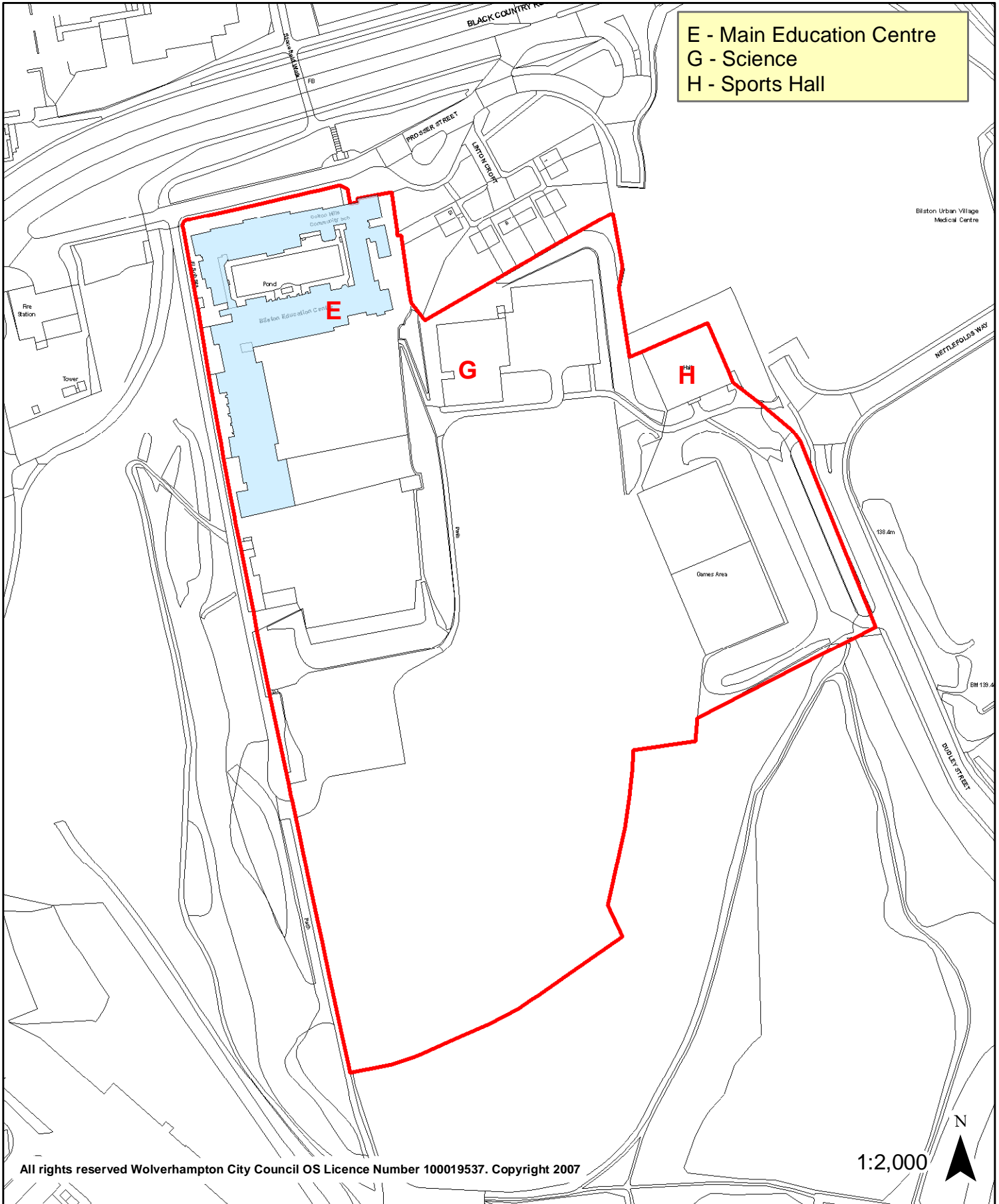
National Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5) – identified policies:

- HE6 – Information requirements for applications for consent affecting heritage assets
- HE 7 – Policy principles guiding the determination of applications for consent relating to all heritage assets
- HE8 – Additional policy principle guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to heritage assets that are not covered by policy HE9
- HE12 – policy principles guiding the recording of information related to heritage assets



Parkfield High School

E - Main Education Centre
G - Science
H - Sports Hall

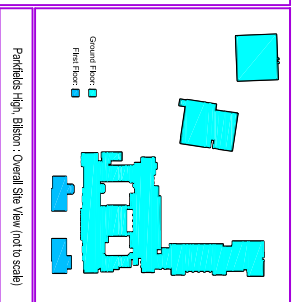
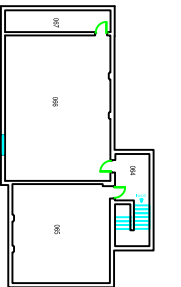
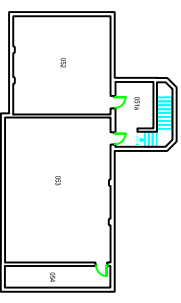
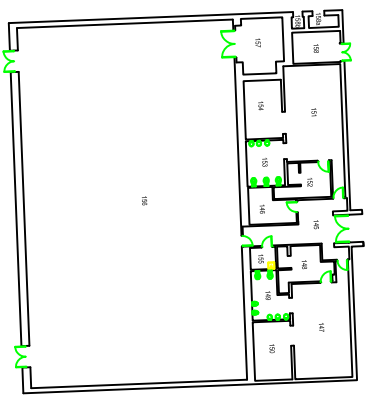


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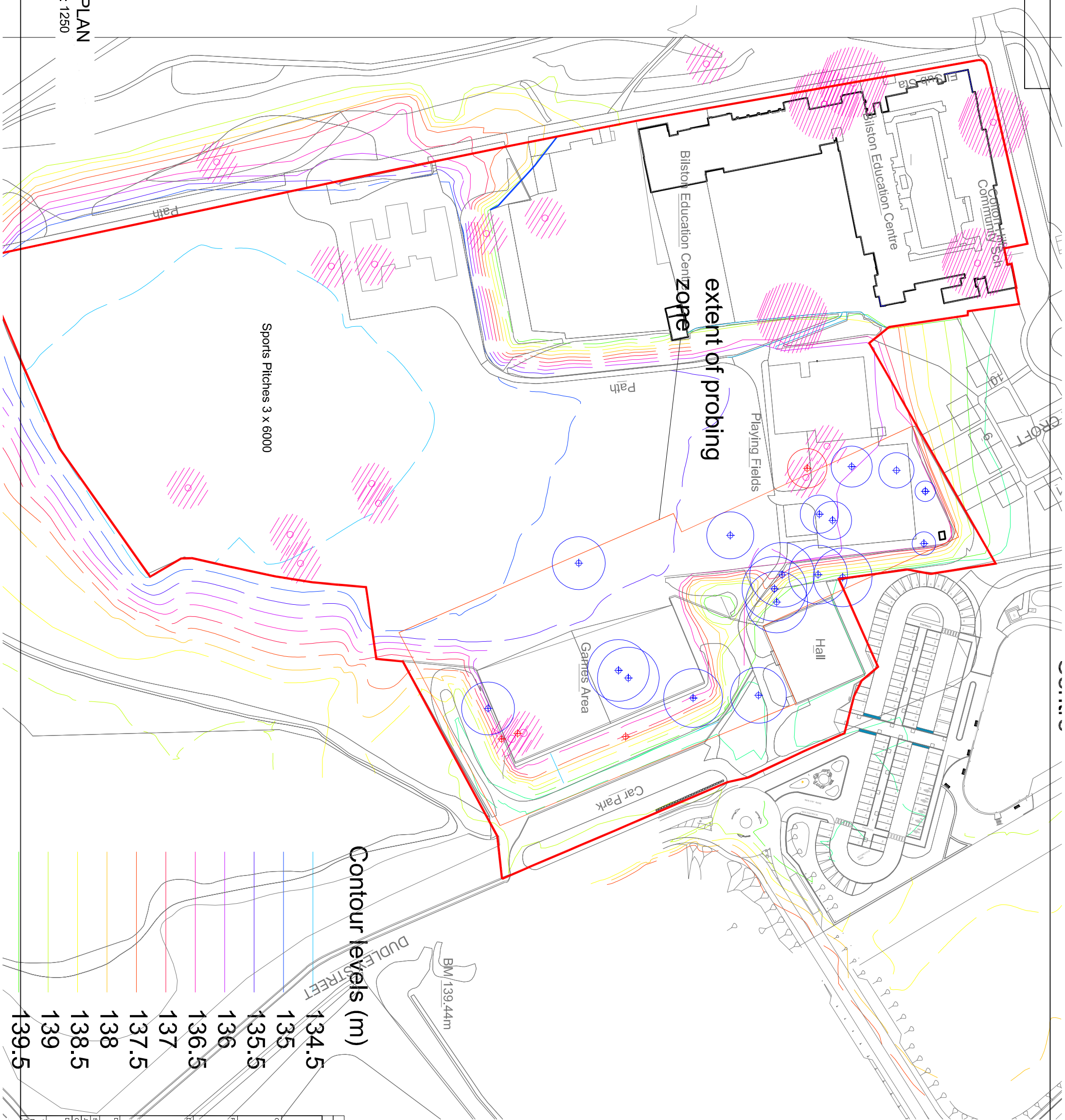
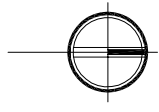
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Parklands High School - Overall Site View (not to scale)

Room No.	Room Name	Area (sqm)
001	Entrance	3.36
002	Staff Room	0.90
003	Staff Toilet	3.50
004	Staff Office	26.47
005	Office	17.29
006	Reception	63.72
007	Reception	63.72
008	Reception	63.72
009	Reception	63.72
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Contour levels (m)

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Rev	Rev. Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked/Approved
<p> Siskin Court, Walspole Lane, Shelton, Birmingham, B29 3JU Tel: +44(0)121 709 1250 Fax: +44(0)121 709 1251 www.jacobs.com </p>				
Client	Wolverhampton City Council			
Project	Bliston Academy Prosser Street Bliston, WV14 0QD			
Proposed site	Exg Shafts and Red Line Boundary			
Drawing status				
Scale	As indicated on drawing @ A3 DO NOT SCALE			
Jacobs No.	B0721200			
Client no.				
Drawing number	B0721200/A/017			
Rev	-			

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 Scale 1 : 1250