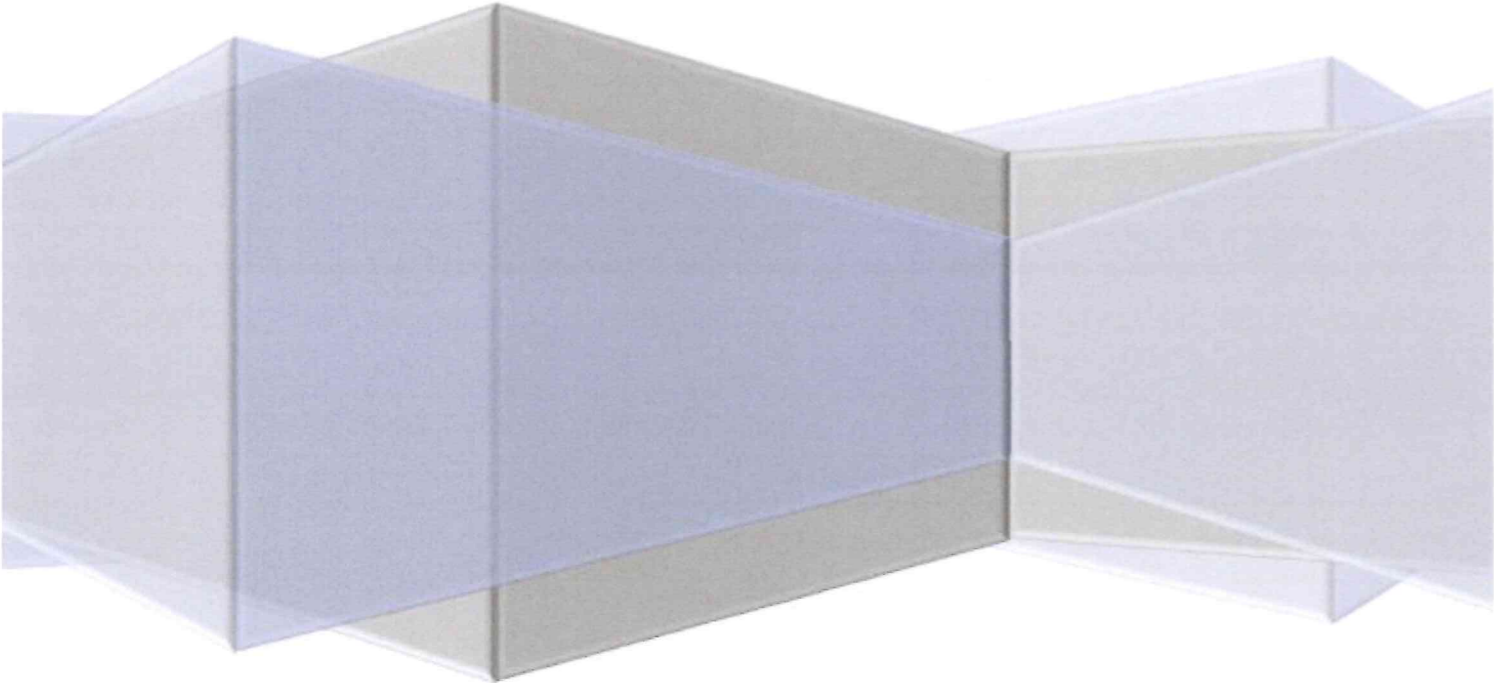


**Silsoe Church of England
VC Lower School
Planning Consultation**

Planning Application - CB/15/00256/Full



Silsoe Primary VC School - Planning Consultation

The village of Silsoe is considered to be one of the most popular residential locations in the county of Bedfordshire. The village has increased in size substantially over the past three years with a planned addition of 533 dwellings of which 70% are now approaching completion.

The land for the new school forms part of a legacy identified by Cranfield University in their development Master Plan. The existing school has an excellent educational record, with a committed compliment of teachers, an active Board of Governors and a vibrant Parent Teacher Association.

The new school is a much needed facility and presents an opportunity to further improve the educational outcomes for the children of the village and it will be something that the Residents can take pride in.

Silsoe Parish Council is totally committed to the provision of the new school and the benefits that it will bring to the village. Parish Councillors have attended all the consultative events and has carefully considered the planning application. The Parish Council details below their observations and comments regarding the proposed design and layout of the new school.

Design & Access Statement

- **Disabled Access**

The Design and Access Statement does not contain an Access Statement detailing the accessible routes and facilities within the building for the Disabled User.

Communities & Local Government - Guidance on information requirements and validation - 148

The design and access statement should also explain the policy adopted in relation to access and how relevant policies in local development documents have been taken into account. The statement should provide information on any consultation undertaken in relation to issues of access and how the outcome of this consultation has informed the development proposals. This should include, for example, a brief explanation of the applicant's policy and approach to access, with particular reference to the inclusion of disabled people, and a description of how the sources of advice on design and accessibility and technical issues will be, or have been followed.

- **Accessible WC & Shower**

The position of the Disabled Shower & WC maybe considered discriminatory on the basis that a disabled User will be required to travel an unreasonable distance to get to the facilities. If a comparison is made between the locations of the sanitary accommodation relative to the class rooms and then the distance to the accessible WC & Shower room it could be considered unreasonable. In addition, this may result in a young disabled student may be made to feel self-conscious about being observed by the rest of the school compliment as he or she travels the length of the building to go to the loo.

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- AD Part M of the building regulations says that the regulations will be satisfied if any wheelchair user does not have to travel more than 40m horizontally to reach an accessible toilet. With young pupils the travel distance may need to be less.
- DoE - Advice on Standards for School Premises - Facilities for disabled pupils - Each toilet for disabled pupils needs to contain one toilet and one washbasin (and possibly a shower or other wash down fitting) and have a door opening directly onto a circulation space that is not a staircase and which can be secured from the inside. Where possible, the number and location of accessible toilets will be sufficient to ensure a reasonable travel distance for users that does not involve changing floor levels.

This shower facility is primarily provided for disabled teaching staff and visitors but as a Unisex facility it can be used by almost anybody. It will be very useful facility should a child have an accident or to encourage members of staff to cycle to school. The limitation of the design is that there is a lack of any locker storage.

- **Main Staircase**

Since the major population within the building are small people it would seem proper to require that there be a handrail for them when using the Main Staircase. A handrail at 600mm above FFL would appear to be necessary.

- **MUGA**

The Design and Access statement Executive Summary states that “There is also a fenced MUGA located between the Community Centre and the school which will be shared between both facilities at various times of the day”. This is incorrect. The MUGA is part of the Silsoe Community Sports Centre and forms part of the facilities owned and operated by the Silsoe Recreational Trust and as such will be a hireable space available to any organisations, clubs or individuals on the basis of declared hiring charges.

Building Design

Having considered the proposed building design and the artist’s impressions provided the Silsoe Parish Council is not convinced that the design adequately reflects the architecture within the village or the new buildings that are in close proximity.

The design of the school is innovative with the tree-like elements that form part of the structural elements which has great merit, but the coloured rectangular block features do not fit in with the neighbouring built environment. No doubt that if the building was located in a larger and more spacious setting viewed at a distance it would be very impressive. In the proposed setting we feel it is wrong.

In the computer generated images of the building do not show the 2 metre high perimeter fence around the school and we feel that this will totally change the appearance of the building. The perimeter fence needs to form part of the overall design to provide a better representation of the actual street scene.

The site of the school is within the Silsoe Conservation Area which was published as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2004. We attach as copy of the Silsoe Village Design Statement for your information and consideration.

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Main Entrance

The Main Entrance approach seems unnecessarily confined. It is suggested that the approaches between the main entrance to the school and the perimeter fencing and entrance gates is increased in size to allow more space for Parents with buggies and siblings to stand in safety.

Transport Issues

- **Travel Plan**

The document states that CBC Highways are engaged in a review of infrastructure improvements to develop sustainable and active travel routes to the new school location. Since the roads within the estate have already been constructed, there is no additional land available for road construction and no capital sums for major road improvements and therefore no prospect of changing the road infrastructure. The only options remaining will be modifications and adaptations to the existing infrastructure.

The School Travel Plan should form part of this planning application as traffic management within Silsoe is a major issue. The Traffic Plan needs to accompany the application so that Residents can realistically review and understand what is proposed. The Travel Plan should not appear as a secondary planning option secondary to the main decision and appearing as an afterthought that may or may not improve the traffic management around the school.

We have an opportunity to make the change and provide a solution to the traffic chaos that ensues outside practically every school in the country. Silsoe is a rural area, and in many families both Parents are employed, and the car is the enabler.

- **School Employee Parking**

The planning application states that the existing staff numbers are 14 full time and 18 part-time staff with an existing parking capacity for 22 vehicles with 2 vehicles parked in the High Street and in recent months up to a maximum of 30 vehicles has been present. The proposal to provide 24 parking spaces in Phase One is too few and unacceptable given the schools location in the estate.

We suggest an increase in the staff car parking capacity and the proposals for Phase 2 be implemented immediately.

- **Pre-School Parking**

The existing Pre-School has an impact upon local parking congestion in the High Street; a recent event at the Pre-School resulted in 28 vehicles parked in the High Street. Without some form of additional parking capacity or set-down area the Pre-School will add to the congestion in Chestnut Avenue. We would point out that Chestnut Avenue is narrower than the High Street North and in its new position it is immediately adjacent the junction with Obelisk Way the junction is likely to be a very congested and therefore a greater safety hazard.

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It is therefore suggested that to overcome this problem the building is re-sited in a westerly direction a sufficient distance to allow the design to include on-road parking or a set-down area to accommodate the needs of Parents delivering children by motor vehicle.

- **Service Vehicle Access**

We note that the plan makes no provision for vehicles loading & off-loading or Set-Down capacity for Coaches or Mini Buses. Given the possibility of children with disabilities being delivered or collected from the school in a Minibus or similar there needs to be some provision for parking the vehicle with adequate space for children to board or disembark from the vehicle in safety.

- **BESD Drop-Off Point**

It would seem sensible and practical that the BESD Drop-Off Point be equivalent to that provided for Off-Street Disabled Parking with the provision of wider safety zones around the vehicle.

- **On-Road Parking**

There is no provision for on street set-down or short term parking to enable Parents to deliver their children at the beginning and end of the day. The School is positioned between two (2) road junctions with nine (9) parking spaces on the opposite side of the road. These spaces are provided for the visitors and service vehicles serving the adjacent housing. Parents parking in these spaces or impeding their use of these spaces are likely to encounter hostility from the Residents.

The existing road layout e.g. Obelisk Way, Chestnut Avenue, Hazel Grove, and Plantation View will become extremely congested at peak times. We are of the opinion that the current design is not satisfactory or fit for purpose and will be the source of continuing vexation with Residents and Parents alike. Unless this is addressed at this time this will be a source of disputes for years to come and will overshadow the educational achievements of the school.

It is therefore suggested that to overcome this problem the building is re-sited in a westerly direction a sufficient distance to allow the design to include on-road parking or a set-down area to accommodate the needs of Parents delivering children by motor vehicle.

- **Road Safety Markings**

The road safety markings will be on the south side of Chestnut Avenue centred either side of the main entrance to the school and will be between 25.5 metres to 43.5 metres in length. This will substantially reduce the available on-road parking on the southern side of Chestnut Avenue.

- **Event Parking**

If the school holds events such as football competitions and other events there needs to be some additional parking capacity to accommodate those attending the event. The school will have access to a junior football pitch and access will be from the school. There will be no parking available at the Silsoe Community Sports Centre.

- **Perimeter Fence**

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It is also noted that the perimeter fence around the building on Chestnut Avenue abuts up to the edge of the pathway. Should motorists attempt to park on the pavement there will be little or no clearance for pedestrians to pass between the car and the fence. Parking on the pavement will present a greater hazard to Pedestrians because of the confined space.

It is therefore suggested that to overcome this problem the building is re-sited in a westerly direction a sufficient distance to allow the design to include on-road parking or a set-down area to accommodate the needs of Parents delivering children by motor vehicle.

- **Emergency Vehicle Access**

There is no access route shown to the rear of the building for ambulance, fire tender or other service vehicles.

Sustainability

While the design principles are clearly stated the actual performance of the building needs to be understood. The school administration should be provided with a “Toolkit” as required in Building Regulations Part L2. This would enable the school to demonstrate both as an educational requirement and part of the Schools Environmental Policy that the building meets or exceeds the design calculations. This should also include for review process and look at possible improvements and alterations in environmental performance.

Environmental Controls

No mention is made of the environmental control package that will be utilised. A well thought out control strategy in association with a good electronic control system will be key to enabling the building to be operated effectively by non-technical staff. The effects of solar gain on the southern and western elevations and the control of the environment within the open atrium area will require specific attention.

Solar Gain

Due to the position of the building the southern and western elevations will be subject to high solar gain. There is no description on how the effects of sun light will be mitigated in the Year 2 Classrooms (2 No), the BESD classroom, the circulation corridor (Phase 1) and the Main Hall.

It may also be appropriate to consider the requirement to provide areas of shade in the play/recreation area.

External Yard & Recycling Bin Area

This is shown on the southern elevation and adjacent the access to the Kitchen. It is suggested that due to the possible solar gain on this elevation the current design needs reviewed. The proposed bin enclosure needs to be modified to reduce or overcome possible unpleasant odours caused by direct sun light on food waste containers and similar that will be stored in this area.

Site Storage

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We note that there is no storage for external equipment. The Site Manager and the school will need to store an accumulation of tools and equipment used in the operation and maintenance of the school that it will not be possible to store within the school building itself. There is limited space for temporary additional storage around the building so it is essential that some storage facilities are provided.

Waste Management

It is assumed that the car park within the school grounds will be a secure area and that waste collection vehicles will not be permitted to enter the compound to access the waste bins. In that event the Site Agent will have to wheel the bins to the pavement edge to await collection. The bin would obstruct the pathway presenting a hazard to pedestrians and cause a nuisance and annoyance to Residents.

It is suggested that an enclosure be constructed adjacent the car park entrance within the perimeter fence for locating the bins while they await collection

Silsoe Parish Council

31st March 2014

Ref: Silsoe VC School

Central Bedfordshire Council,
Priory House,
Monks Walk,
Chicksands,
Shefford
SG17 5TQ

For the Attention of Ms. Edwina Grant, Director of Children's Services

Consultation on the proposed relocation and expansion of Silsoe Lower School

Dear Madam,

With reference to the above, Silsoe Parish Council is committed to ensuring the legacy left to the village by Cranfield University provides an exceptional environment that will enhance the pupil's educational experience and maximise their achievements.

The project timeline is short and it therefore critical that every element of the project is completed correctly, first time and on time. In addition to the design of the building the transfer from the existing school to the new school site is an equally critical part of the project. It is essential that project funding and resources are adequate to ensure the beneficial transfer of the existing school to the new school site. This shall include but not be limited to:-

- Every opportunity to be afforded the Governors and teaching Staff to make a seamless transition from the existing building to the new building.
- That the staff and pupils make the transfer in good time and without any undue stress or discomfort.
- That the changeover maintains the high standard of education achieved.
- To ensure that no child attending the school suffers any change, alteration or reduction in his or her education as a result of the move.

Equipment & Resources

- Any existing equipment to be transferred from the exiting school to the new school is of satisfactory quality, safe for continued use, in good working order and of adequate capacity.
- That there is adequate funding to upgrade or refurbish any existing equipment or to provide new equipment where existing equipment is not suitable for re-use.
- That adequate funding is available to meet the needs for any one-off or temporary resource requirements be they staff or equipment related.

Silsoe Parish Council

Community Engagement

- Community Engagement Plan to ensure that Governors, Staff, Pupils, Parents and Residents are involved in every stage of the building design, construction, fitting out, and occupational services.
- To ensure that the aspirations of all concerned in the project are managed adequately to ensure a successful project completion.

Traffic Plan

The volumes of traffic within the village at peak times are a major problem. Vehicle movements within the village have increased substantially over the past few years and are set to increase still further with the development of the Wrest Park Industrial Area, English Heritage's Wrest Park and the addition of 488 new dwellings under construction at this time.

The site of the new school at the opposite end of the village will change the pupils travel routes within the village. This change requires that all pedestrian and vehicular routes to and from the new school will be thoroughly reviewed, and upgraded where necessary.

Amongst the considerations will be :-

- Identify and upgrade the north/south pedestrian routes within the village to the site of the new school to provide safe, accessible routes and including lighting and signage.
- Provide pedestrian crossing points on all east/west routes.
- Review the need for a 20 mph speed limit with the central zone of the village.
- Reduction of national speed limits at the south end of the village to a point before the junction of Obelisk Way
- Provide adequate vehicular access and parking for Staff, Visitors including accessible parking within the school premises.
- Provision of a set-down point for Private cars, Taxi and Mini bus drop-off/collection of pupils.
- Consider re-siting existing Bus Collection/Drop off/ Assembly points from the crossroads to Mander Farm Road Roundabout.

Silsoe Community Sports Centre

It has been anticipated that the School will make some use of the Community Sports Centre and the sports pitches but this has yet to be defined. Every effort will be made to enable the school to use the facilities it needs. However it should be noted that the Silsoe Community Sports Centre will be operated on a sound economic basis and hiring charges will be at commercial rates.

Storage within the Silsoe Community Sports Centre will be at a minimum and the school should take cognisance of this in assessing their needs.

A limited amount of car parking has been allocated to the Community Sports Centre for Customers using the Centre. The Centre will be open seven days per week from approximately 0600 hrs. to 2200 hrs. each day. It is essential that the design of the new school includes

Silsoe Parish Council

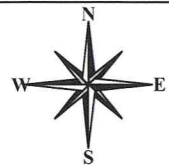
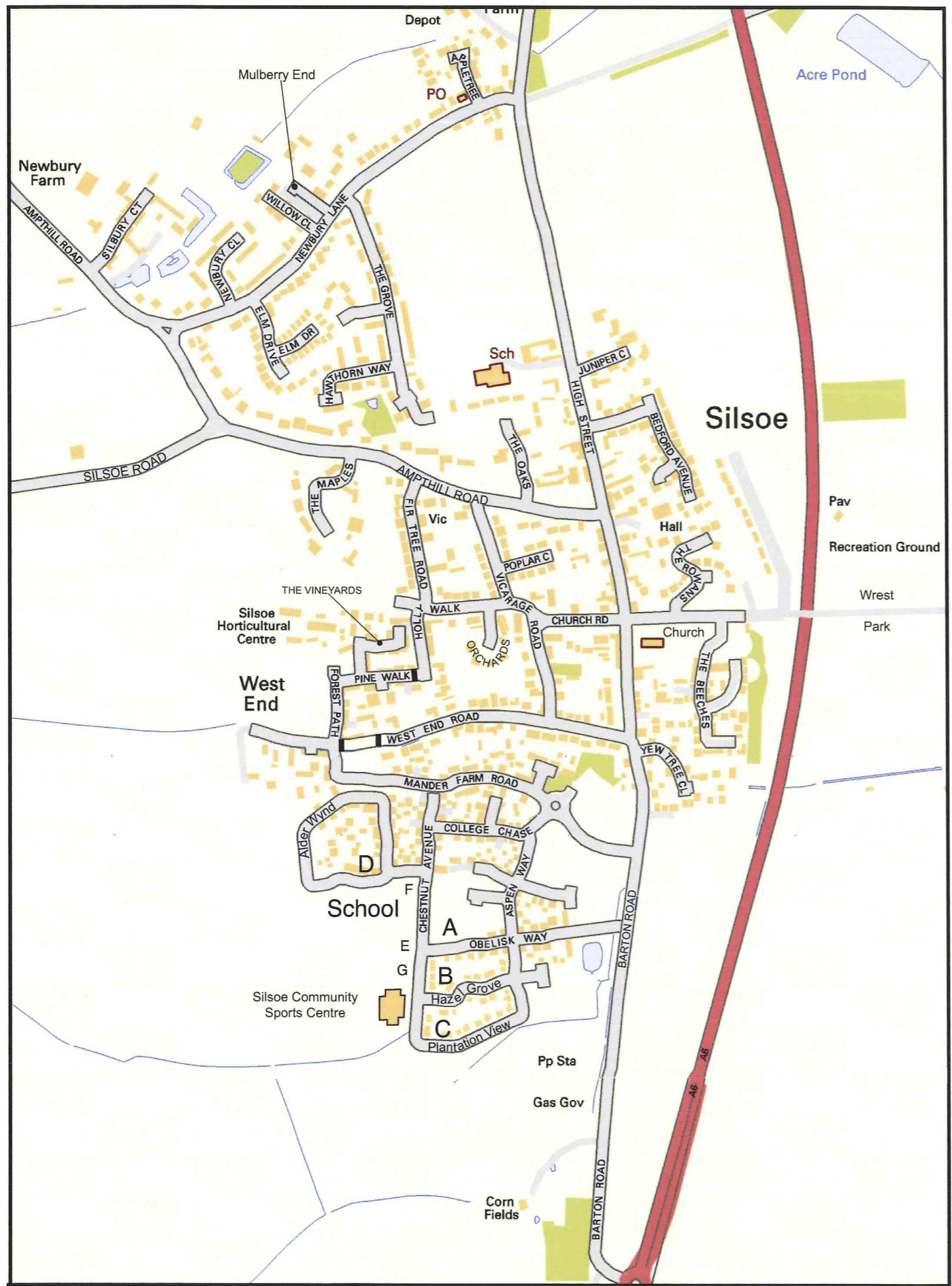
adequate traffic management features and car parking capacity to ensure that the school traffic does not impact unduly on the Community Sports Centres business and that the Customers of the Community Sports Centre are able to park their vehicles in spaces provided.

Silsoe Parish Council is a key stakeholder in the development of both the new school and the Silsoe Community Sports Centre and it is committed to contributing to the development of the two buildings and to ensuring the best outcomes for the Residents of the village.

Yours Faithfully

Cllr. Ian J Kelly
For and Behalf of
Silsoe Parish Council

CC Mr R Parsons, Mrs S. Perdue, Rev. S Holroyd, Mrs S Hughes, Mrs S. Barrow, Mr D. Irons



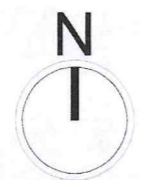
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 Date: 11th January 2015
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REVISED



15/00256



SCALE 1:250

**Silsoe Church of England VC Lower School
PROPOSED SITE PLAN - V.E. Proposal : 1st Phase**

PROJECT No: 2144 SCALE: 1:250@A1
DRAWING No: AK0101_P02 DATE: March 2015

P02 : 17.03.15 : Building moved west by 1.5m.
P01 : 13.03.15 : Preliminary Issue 01, for comments.



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