

## Planning Officer Note Relating to the Penn School Site, Church Road, Penn, HP10 8LZ

### INTRODUCTION

Penn School is currently for sale. The site is located in an area that is covered by a number of planning policies that generally constrain new development. This officer advice note has been produced to give potential purchasers an initial indication of the policy and other constraints. A successful purchaser is advised to seek detailed pre-application advice in relation to specific proposals for the site.

The site falls within two administrative areas. The majority of the site is within Wycombe District Council and a small part of the site including part of the Head Teacher's House is within the administration of Chiltern District Council. Chiltern District Council has not been approached in the preparation of this note.

### THE SITE

Penn School is set within a 7.7 hectare site located on the edge of Penn and Tylers Green. The site is located wholly within the Green Belt and Chilterns AONB. Part of the site which includes all the buildings is located within a Conservation Area. The original building was built in 1847 as a country estate for a prominent Victorian and it was known as Rayners. Since 1921 it has been an educational site initially accommodating a school for the deaf and latterly known as Penn School which was a non-maintained special school until its closure in 2015.

The site comprises a number of buildings namely:

The Gate Lodge	145.5sq.m	
Head teachers House	120 sq.m	Ancillary residential
Main Building including subsequent extensions	4292 sq.m	Educational use including residential accommodation for pupils and staff
Fruit store in Kitchen Garden	40 sq.m	Estate building
Utility buildings consisting of 8 different small buildings in total	368 sq m	Used ancillary to the main educational use
Single storey building used for Design and Technology	93 sq.m	Educational use
Gardener's Lodge	54 sq.m	Educational use
Science and store building	80 sq.m	Educational use and associated storage
The Boat House	10 sq.m	Estate Building

Information obtained from Planning Report prepared by Knight Frank

## THE EXISTING USE

The use pre-dates the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 and it believed that the established use to be a residential school falling with Use Class C2 (Residential Institutions) and all residential elements on the site are ancillary to the main educational use. However in recent years it is clear that the residential element of the school had significantly reduced and it possible that the use may have materially changed to be considered a non-residential institution (Use Class D1).

## KEY PRINCIPLES

The historic site comprising a principle house, cottages, formal gardens, kitchen garden, parkland and wider setting is substantially intact and contributes to the character of the Conservation Area. Therefore it is important to retain the older historic buildings which date from the development of the 1847 estate including garden structures, specimen trees, parkland railings, internal and boundary walls which contribute to the character of the property and its significance is enhanced by the overall integrity and composition of these elements. Physical sub-division of the site could be harmful and detract from the character and this would not be encouraged. An accompanying plan identifies the original 19th century buildings and the more modern 20th century buildings and parkland.

The reuse of existing building is not inappropriate in the Green Belt as long as the buildings are of a permanent and substantial construction. The site is considered to be a previously developed site. However, in terms of new buildings on the site it is considered that due to the location of the site within a Conservation Area and within the Chilterns AONB there is very little scope for infilling and that complete redevelopment of the site would be unacceptable. There may be an opportunity for partial redevelopment of the site involving the removal of newer buildings; however, there should be no major increase in floor space, increase in the height of buildings or increase in the built form. Any proposed new buildings must not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than those they replace and the purpose of including land within it.

In terms of car parking for potential new uses it is important that any proposed car parking relates well to the existing buildings and must not impact upon the landscape setting of the site, the character of the Conservation Area or the openness of the Green Belt. The amount of car parking should be calculated with regard to the County Council's latest car parking standards.

Any development proposals will be required to contribute towards improvements to the green infrastructure network and improvements to bio diversity. A small wooded part of the site is defined a green space. Development proposals should demonstrate how the future management and maintenance of the entire estate will be secured.

## POSSIBLE USES

Possible uses for the site include:

- Uses falling within the same use class (C2) such as residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres.
- There may be some potential for employment uses such as business uses falling within the B1 use class
- Hotel
- Residential conversion

## HIGHWAY ADVICE

It is likely that an alternative use could result in a more intensive use of the existing access, which may have highway implications. The views of the Highways Authority at Buckinghamshire County Council should be sought in relation to any particular development proposal. The access to the site is falls within Chiltern District Council's boundary.

## LOCAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

The relevant policy framework depends on the precise nature of the development proposal but the principal policies are listed below:

Wycombe Core Strategy (2008):

- CS2 Main Principles for the Location of Development
- CS9 Green Belt
- CS11 Land for Business
- CS13 Affordable Housing and Housing Mix
- CS15 Community Facilities and Built Sport Facilities (this would be relevant if it was demonstrated that the use had materially changed from a residential institution to non-residential institution).
- CS16 Transport
- CS17 Environmental Assets
- CS20 Transport and Infrastructure
- CS21 Contribution of Development to Community Infrastructure

Wycombe Delivery and Site Allocation Plan:

- DM1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development)
- DM2 Transport requirements of development sites
- DM11 Green Networks and Infrastructure
- DM12 Green Spaces
- DM14 Biodiversity in development
- DM16 Open space

DM18 Carbon reduction and water efficiency  
DM19 Infrastructure and delivery  
Proposals Map 14

Wycombe District Local Plan (Adopted 2004) – Saved policies:

G3 General design policy  
G7 Development in relation topography  
G8 Detailed design guidance and local amenity  
G10 Landscaping  
G11 Trees and hedgerows  
G15 Noise pollution  
G16 Light pollution  
G26 Designing for safer communities  
H8 Appropriate development densities  
H9 Creating balanced communities  
H10 Protecting existing residential accommodation  
H18 Conversions  
H19 Residents amenity space and gardens  
T2 On-site parking  
T4 Pedestrians  
T5 & T6 Cycling  
GB2 Development in the green belt  
L1 Chilterns area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
L6 Woodlands  
HE6 New development in Conservation Areas  
HE8 Demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas  
Proposals Map

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Planning Obligations SPD  
Housing Intensification SPD

Other Documents:

Statement of Community Involvement  
Policy DM18 Advice Note Reducing the environmental footprint of new development  
in the Wycombe District  
County Parking Standards

The Council has introduced a Community Infrastructure Levy. Details of this are  
available on the Council's web site

**Planning and Sustainability**  
**Wycombe District Council**  
**December 2015**

