

<u>APPLICATION NO:</u>	25/00616/KMBC1	<u>CASE OFFICER:</u>	Lee Osborne
<u>WARD:</u>	St Michael's	<u>PARISH:</u>	
<u>LOCATION:</u>	Altbridge School, Wellcroft Road, Huyton		
<u>PROPOSAL:</u>	EXTENSION OF EXISTING CAR PARK TO CREATE ADDITIONAL SPACES WITHIN EXISTING SCHOOL BOUNDARY, WIDENING OF VEHICULAR GATES TO ALLOW TWO-WAY TRAFFIC.		

Site Description

The application relates to the Altbridge School site on the north-western side of Well Croft Road comprising school buildings, car parking areas and associated school grounds.

Proposal

The application is to extend the existing car parks to create additional parking spaces, and to instal wider vehicular gates to allow two-way traffic.

The front car park would be extended by spaces along the front and reconfigured to give parking for a total of 50 cars, increased from the current 41 spaces. The rear car park would be increased in useable space at the northern end to give additional parking together with double stacked parking at the south end by Wellcroft Road and additional double stacked minibus parking plus reconfiguration. These works would increase the parking to 49 spaces including disabled persons spaces plus 4 minibus parking spaces. A footpath would be installed linking the rear car park with the school building. A 6.0m wide double-leaf automated weldmesh gate is proposed. A number of trees would be removed to facilitate the works but compensatory and mitigating planting would occur.

Consultations

Highway Authority - No objections, request cycle storage condition.
Environmental Sustainability (BNG) - No objections, advise that statutory biodiversity gain plan condition is required.
Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service - No objections, request RAMS and breeding birds condition and that lighting should account for bats.
Cadent Gas Limited - Informative given.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 52 neighbours. It has also been advertised by Site Notice.

There have been 3 letters of objection, and 1 representation. The objections are summarised as follows: -

1. The road already suffers from congestion and on-road parking by staff and parents, and the road is busy all through the day not just school start and finish

times.

2. There is room around the school which could be used, accessed from Longview Lane.
3. Concerns regarding parking and access concerns due to parking outside of resident's home have been raised previously particularly as resident has mobility issues and so needs home access clear.
4. Concerns raised previously regarding children's safety due to amount of traffic through the access gates.
5. The school gets work done every school holiday, so residents are not getting a break at all.

The representation was querying where the works were occurring and the scope of works.

Recent Planning History

The site has a long planning history which does not really have bearing on the current application to extend car park areas. Recent planning history is as follows:

17/00185/FUL - RE-POSITIONING BY WAY OF A 10 METRE SET-BACK AND AUTOMATION OF EXISTING 2.4 METRE HIGH GATES (EXISTING EXIT TO BECOME NEW ENTRANCE TO SCHOOL CAR PARK) TOGETHER WITH INSTALLATION OF 1.8 METRE FENCING AND PEDESTRIAN GATE. WITHIN SCHOOL SITE. Granted: 21.06.2017.

20/00053/KMBC1 - RESITING OF EXISTING STORAGE CONTAINERS. Granted: 26.03.2020.

21/00044/CLD - CERTIFICATE OF LAWFULNESS FOR THE ERECTION OF A SINGLE STOREY MODULAR CLASSROOM. Granted: 15.06.2021.

25/00347/CLD - CERTIFICATE OF PROPOSED LAWFUL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE INSTALLATION OF 3NO MODULAR BUILDINGS. Granted: 11.07.2025.

Relevant Policy

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

The development plan in Knowsley comprises the Saved Policies of the

Replacement Unitary Development Plan, the Core Strategy Local Plan and the Joint Waste Local Plan. The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application.

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY

CS2 - Development Principles
CS7 - Transport Networks
CS8 – Green Infrastructure
CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development
CS21 - Greenspaces and Trees

SAVED POLICIES - KNOWSLEY REPLACEMENT UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ADOPTED JUNE 2006)

H5 – Development within Primarily Residential Areas
DQ4 – Trees and Development
ENV2 - Noise and Vibration
ENV3 – Light Pollution

Article 35 Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating with the applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Assessment

The application relates to extensions and reconfigurations of a school's car parking areas, to carry out compensatory and mitigating planting and to reconfigure access gates to widen the access, together with removal of an internal vehicle access gate. As such the proposal is acceptable in principle.

Design and Visual Amenity considerations

The car park extensions and reconfigurations, together with the proposed planting would be acceptable in the context of the school curtilage and wider area. The vehicle gates would be acceptable visually. Consequently, it is considered that the proposed works not be detrimental to the visual amenity of local residents or the locality. The application complies with Policies CS2 and CS19 of the Core Strategy and Saved Policy H5 of the UDP.

Highways Considerations

Alt Bridge School is located in an area that experiences ongoing congestion and parking pressure on Wellcroft Road, particularly during peak drop-off and pick-up periods. This has resulted in repeated complaints from local residents and concerns relating to highway safety, access to private driveways, and general amenity.

The proposed works aim to alleviate some of these pressures by introducing additional parking within the school grounds. However part of the scheme includes tandem (double stacked) parking. Whilst the LPA and Highways would not normally support tandem parking arrangements, as such layouts can lead to operational

inefficiencies, blocked vehicles, and potential safety concerns if not carefully managed the justification given by the school is noted. The justification for such given by the school includes:

- Persistent on-street parking and congestion outside the school frontage.
- Recorded incidents of conflict and aggression between drivers and residents during peak periods.
- Previous mitigation measures, including off-site overspill parking, which are no longer sufficient due to the growth of the school.
- The need to maximise on-site parking provision to reduce staff parking on surrounding residential roads.

It should also be noted that the school has submitted a Draft Double Parking Policy, which sets out a controlled, managed and risk-assessed approach to tandem parking. The policy confirms that:

- Tandem parking will be limited to identified staff only.
- Vehicles using the tandem arrangement will not require access during the school day.
- Parking will operate via pre-approved “buddy” arrangements.
- Emergency access routes, pedestrian routes and disabled bays will be kept clear at all times.
- The arrangement will be monitored, reviewed regularly, and suspended should any safety concerns arise.

To further support the aim of reducing parking pressure in the surrounding area, the school has indicated that opportunities to encourage more sustainable travel will continue to be explored. In this regard, the provision of secure and covered cycle storage within the site is recommended as a condition, as it offers an alternative travel option for staff and helps reduce reliance on the private car. The submitted gate details show a 6.0m wide double-leaf automated gate opening inwards. In principle, the gate arrangement is acceptable.

The Highways Engineers have no objections to the proposals and request a condition requiring cycle parking provision to be installed in accordance with previously approved details.

Ecology Considerations

The applicant has submitted a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report. The report found that the habitats on site comprise hardstanding, amenity grassland, introduced shrub, bramble scrub scattered trees and semi-natural broadleaved woodland. These habitats are considered to have relatively low ecological value. It was noted that the site contains no designated or priority habitats and that overall, the proposals are unlikely to adversely affect the ecological value of the area. MEAS have no objections to the proposals but do request RAMS for amphibians and terrestrial mammals and also request bird breeding season restrictions (or an ecologist present if works are within the bird breeding season). They also request a condition to provide bird boxes within the site for bio-diversity purposes.

Tree Considerations

The table below outlines the impact on trees within the site:

Issue	Affecting	Mitigation / Compensation / Special Procedures
Trees / hedges to be removed	G1 (in part), G2 (in part), T1 and W1 (in part)	Appropriate compensation can be provided by way of new / replacement planting at the landscape stage of the project. Biodiversity enhancements can also be achieved through the landscape proposals.
Indirect physical impact on retained trees	G1, G2, G3, W1, G4, T2, G5 and T3	Tree protection fencing should be erected to an agreed specification in advance of the commencement of the development. Key areas where works are proposed within or immediately adjacent root protection areas of retained trees should be subject to an Arboricultural Method Statement, agreed in advance as a condition of planning consent.
Removal of existing hard standing	G1, G2, G3 and W1	Existing hard standing should be removed with care and no excavations permitted deeper than existing sub-base without adequate precautionary measures to prevent unnecessary damage to retained trees.
Provision of new hard surfaces	G1, G2, G3, W1, G5, T2 and T3	Suitable construction methodologies are achievable, with the use of geotextiles / porous surfaces where applicable. Careful excavations with an element of root pruning when necessary. Works in this area to be overseen by project arboriculturist.
Construction of new buildings/structures	G1, G2, G3, W1, G4, G5, T2 and T3	Sections of foundations within and immediately adjacent root protection areas to be excavated carefully, with machinery located outside of RPAs and roots pruned cleanly back to the soil surface when necessary. Works in these areas of the site to be subject to a tree Arboricultural Method Statement.
Provision of drainage / services	Unknown.	Where existing services cannot be utilised, NJUG principles must be adopted to and adhered to.
Working Space	All groups.	Working methodology to be agreed in advance.
Access Facilitation Pruning	G1, G2, G3, W1, G4, G5, T2 and T3	All pruning works should be carried out to a minimum of the standards contained within BS3998: 2010 <i>Tree work – Recommendations</i> .
Protection of proposed planting areas	Unknown	These areas should be fenced off at the start of the development for the protection of soil structure.
Protective Fencing	To be erected to an agreed specification in advance of the commencement of the development and retained in-situ throughout the course of the construction phase.	

The submitted Impact Assessment notes that a Method Statement should be agreed with the LPA to ensure that trees to be retained are adequately protected although does note tree protection measures. As such it is recommended that prior to works commencing such a Method Statement should be submitted to and agreed in writing by the LPA by way of a condition attached to the planning permission. There is a comprehensive landscaping scheme proposed which would compensate and mitigate the noted tree loss.

As such the proposal complies with Policies CS2, CS19 and CS21 of the Core Strategy and Saved Policy DQ4 of the UDP.

BNG

The application is subject to BNG requirements and a biodiversity net gain assessment, metric calculation and landscape plan has been submitted. These show that a 10% net gain is achievable if additional habitats within the blue line boundary (school grounds) are used for offsetting. A -45.05 net loss in area units has been achieved within the application site red line boundary with all trading rules met. When factoring in the habitat interventions proposed on the wider site 66.38% net gain would be achieved. A biodiversity gain plan must be submitted to and approved prior to the commencement of development.

Conclusion

Due to the increasing traffic and parking issues in Wellcroft Road the proposal is required to provide some mitigation for both residents and school staff by enabling additional on-site parking for staff and school vehicles. Whilst there would be some tree loss there is a comprehensive landscape plan which would provide satisfactory

compensatory and mitigating planting. The application complies with national and local planning policies and is recommended for approval.

Recommendation

- 1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed in Schedule 1.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

- 3) No part of the development hereby permitted, including any works of demolition, shall be commenced until a Construction Environmental Management Plan that details the means of mitigation of construction effects has been submitted and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include the following:

- a) Methods for the mitigation of noise and vibration from construction works, and also from the operation of any temporary power generation or pumping plant which will operate overnight.
- b) Methods for dust control and suppression.
- c) Control of transfer of mud out of the site - details of wheel washing facilities including location and type.
- d) Methods for the control of pests if apparent on-site.
- e) The areas for the storage of plant and materials.
- f) Location of site compound, including any loading/unloading areas, turning areas for delivery vehicles and construction staff parking arrangements.
- g) Scheme for recycling/disposal of waste resulting from construction works
- h) Adequate provision for addressing any abnormal wear and tear to the highway.
- i) Proposed hours of construction (the following is usually acceptable: 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday, 0800 to 1300 Saturday and not at all on Sundays/Public Holidays).

Reasonable Avoidance Measures to prevent harm to wildlife shall be undertaken in accordance with the following measures:

Amphibians

- Existing vegetation on the site will be gradually cut and removed under ecological supervision to encourage any amphibians present to move away from the affected areas;
- The working area, together with any storage areas, will be kept clear of debris, and any stored materials will be kept off the ground on pallets so as to prevent amphibians from seeking shelter or protection within them; and
- Any open excavations (e.g. foundations / footings / service trenches etc) will be covered with plywood sheeting (or similar) at the end of each working

day. The edges of these sheets will be covered with a thick layer of topsoil or similar) to prevent amphibians from seeking shelter beneath them. Any excavation must be in-filled and made good to ground level with compacted stone or similar at the earliest opportunity, so as to remove any hazard to amphibians.

Terrestrial Mammals

- A pre-commencement check for badgers, hedgehogs and other mammals.
- All trenches and excavations should have a means of escape (e.g. a ramp).
- Any exposed open pipe systems should be capped to prevent mammals gaining access; and
- Appropriate storage of materials to ensure that mammals do not use them.

Breeding Birds

No tree felling, scrub clearance, hedgerow removal, vegetation management, ground clearance and/or building works is to take place during the period 1 March to 31 August inclusive. If it is necessary to undertake works during the bird breeding season then all buildings, trees, scrub, hedgerows and vegetation are to be checked first by an appropriately experienced ecologist to ensure no breeding birds are present. If present, details of how they will be protected are required to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any works commencing.

All site works shall then proceed only in accordance with the approved management plan and the reasonable avoidance measures.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory development of the site in the interests of protecting the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and site ecology/biodiversity and to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework; Policies CS2, CS8 and CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016 and saved Policies H5 and ENV2 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan adopted June 2006.

- 4) In addition to the approved planting scheme as indicated on Proposed Planting Plan Drwg No 24-014-L022 Rev 1 the following shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

- a) A scaled drawing showing existing plants / trees to be retained.
- b) A detailed regime for the establishment and ongoing and longer term maintenance of all soft landscaping is also required to be submitted for approval.

The approved landscaping works shall be implemented and completed prior to the first use of the extended car park hereby permitted or the first available planting season if the works are completed outside the planting season (which is October - March).

Any trees, shrubs or hedgerow planted in accordance with this condition which are removed, uprooted, destroyed, die or become severely damaged or become seriously diseased within 30 years of planting shall be replaced

within the next planting season by trees, shrubs or hedgerow of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

Reason: To ensure that the site is satisfactorily landscaped having regard to its location and the nature of the proposed development, to comply with BNG and to comply with Policies CS2, CS8 and CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016 and Saved Policy H5 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan adopted June 2006.

- 5) The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and take into account the approved planting scheme and the information required pursuant to Condition 4 of this planning permission. The biodiversity gain plan must include :

- (a) information about the steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the onsite habitat and any other habitat.
- (b) the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat.
- (c) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat.
- (d) any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development.
- (e) any biodiversity credits purchased for the development; and
- (f) any such other matters as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify.

The biodiversity gain plan approved shall be implemented prior to the development hereby permitted first coming into use.

Reason: To comply with paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Policies CS2, CS19 and CS21 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016.

- 6) Prior to the installation of any external lighting on the application site, a lighting scheme shall have first been submitted to and been approved by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include, but not be limited to:

- A detailed description and precise details of the type of lighting;
- Positioning details;
- Details of proposed luminance which shall be designed to protect ecology and does not result in excessive light spill onto habitats and have regard to the 'Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' guidance which has been produced by the Institute of Lighting Professionals in conjunction with the Bat Conservation Trust.

The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the agreed details prior to the lighting first being operated and shall be retained as agreed thereafter.

Reason: In order to minimise the effect of lighting on protected species, in the interests of biodiversity in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policies CS2, CS8 and CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016, and Saved Policies DQ2 and ENV3 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan adopted June 2006.

- 7) The proposed development shall not be brought into use until precise scheme details of the proposed cycle storage, as indicated on the drawing Proposed Car Parking Provision - Option 3 - Drawing No. 24-014 L013 Rev 1 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council as Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall provide a minimum of 5 long-stay cycle parking spaces and shall be installed prior to the first use of the extended car park hereby permitted. For the avoidance of doubt, the long-stay cycle parking shall be covered and shall include a means to securely lock cycles. The approved facilities shall thereafter be retained for use at all times.

Reason: To ensure that adequate provision is made for parking cycles securely, to encourage sustainable modes of travel, and to comply with Policies CS2 and CS7 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016.

- 8) Prior to first use of the extended car park areas details of bird boxes to include number, type and location on an appropriately scaled plan as well as timing of installation, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and implemented in accordance with those details. Evidence of implementation (i.e. photographs) shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority to verify implementation of the agreed bird boxes.

Reason: In the interests of bio-diversity and habitat provision and to comply with Policies CS2 and CS8 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016.

- 9) Prior to the commencement of development an Arboricultural Method Statement shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Method statement shall include details laid out in the submitted Arboriculture Impact Assessment by Ascerta as appropriate and as follows:

- All forms of access required to the site.
- Any site cabins and storage areas.
- Proposed parking for site personnel and contractors.
- Any phasing of works.
- Space required for excavations (including foundation excavations).
- Any required special construction techniques (for example provision of porous surfaces).
- The location and construction methodology for installation of services in close proximity to retained trees & hedges.
- Any changes in ground levels and any resulting requirement for retaining structures.
- Proposed root zone enhancement measures.
- Working space for any cranes, plant and scaffolding.
- Management of waste products within the site.
- Protection of the soil structure within the proposed planted areas (where applicable).
- Planting operations within the root protection areas of retained trees.
- Any required / additional precautions outside of construction exclusion zones in relation to the treatment and landscaping of garden or open space areas;

- System of arboricultural site monitoring / schedule of site visits and resulting actions.

The development shall only take place in accordance with the Agreed Method Statement and tree protection measures agreed shall be installed prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted and shall be retained on site until all site construction works including landscaping have been completed.

Reason: In the interest of tree protection and visual amenity and to comply with Policies CS2, CS19 and CS21 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016 and Saved Policy DQ4 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan adopted June 2006.

SCHEDULE 1

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
01/12/2025	24-014-L010.2	-	PROPOSED REAR ENTRANCE ELEVATIONS
05/11/2025	24-014-L022	1	PLANTING PLAN
05/11/2025	24-014-L010	-	EXISTING SITE PLAN
05/11/2025	24-014-L013	1	PROPOSED SITE PLAN
05/11/2025	24-014-L004	2	LOCATION PLAN

Signed Case Officer¹: Lee Osborne

Signed Authorising Officer²: Mark Quinn

Date: 17/02/2026

Informatives

1 Cadent

¹ I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed

² I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed

