



# **CAMBRIDGESHIRE QUALITY PANEL**

## REPORT OF PANEL MEETING

### **Scheme: Great Kneighton Primary School**

**Date:** Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016

**Venue:** Shire Hall Room 128, Cambridgeshire County Council, CB3 0AP

**Time:** 9:45 – 12:30

### **Quality Panel Members**

Robin Nicholson (chair)

Simon Carne

Meredith Bowles

Ashley Bateson

Steve Platt

### **Panel secretariat and support**

Judit Carballo – Cambridgeshire County Council

David Carford – Cambridgeshire County Council

### **Local Authority Attendees**

Elizabeth Verdegem – Cambridgeshire County Council

Rochelle Duncan – Cambridgeshire County Council

Thomas Webster – Cambridge City Council

Jonathan Brookes – Cambridge City Council

### **Applicant and Representatives**

Graham Tweed – Education Capital Strategy Manager, Cambridgeshire County Council

Vikki Spittles – Education Capital Project Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council

Lesley Birch – Executive Principal, Cambridge Primary Education Trust

Stephen Cuttill – Director, Frank Shaw Associates

Norman Patterson – Associate, Frank Shaw Associates

Ashley Garford – Design Manager, Kier Construction



## **1. Scheme description and presentation**

Architect/Designer Frank Shaw Associates  
Applicant Cambridgeshire County Council  
Planning status Pre Submission Stage

## **2. Overview**

This proposal is for a new 3 form entry (FE) primary school for 630 pupils and a separate 52 place nursery within the Clay Farm development.

The school site is approximately 2.3ha and accessed by pedestrians from the south-east corner of the site via public open space. A spine road dissects this area of open space, into 'School Square' to the west and other green space to the east, and continues along the eastern boundary of the school. Vehicular access to the school will be from the south side of the site, via a secondary road that also serves the surrounding houses.

The school sponsor is Cambridge Primary Education Trust. The design has been developed in close consultation with the Trust as well as Cambridgeshire County Council. The design has been tailored to suit their preferred educational vision and pedagogy.

The school site is enclosed on all other sides; by the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway to the north-west (with a planted buffer between the school and track), and otherwise by residential properties of between 2 and 4 stories to the west, south and north. The buildings to the south will work with the school building to define the frontage to the 'School Square'.

It was anticipated that a planning application will be submitted in April 2016.



### **3. Cambridgeshire Quality Panel views**

#### Introduction

The Panel's advice reflects the issues associated with each of the four 'C's' in the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter. The comments below include both those raised in the open session of the meeting and those from the closed session discussions.

#### Community

The Panel recognised that community spaces inside the school have been done very well.

The Panel suggested a cross section view of the Hall and ICT area would be helpful in understanding this area better. Locating the Hall and ICT area nearer the front of the school would give the school more presence, and allow better natural daylighting of the space.

Further consideration of the width of the corridors should be given and they should be thought about as social spaces and not just for circulation. This is key to facilitating a better sense of community within the school.

#### Connectivity

The Panel commented upon the external access to Key stage 1 classrooms via the School Square being narrow and appears to be a bottleneck especially at school pick up time. It was noted the site boundary is such it limits the space available. The Panel were in support of this being reviewed with the developer for the neighbouring residential development and School Square, and to explore if the boundary alignment can be altered to allow for a more generous access.

There were further concerns relating to the entrances to the school site and whether they were sufficient for those with cycles, scooters particularly at home time.

The Panel queried the access to the school kitchen and plant. It was noted the hard surface to the north of the school building would double as delivery and emergency vehicle access, as well as informal play area.

It was noted the drop off area for those travelling to the school by car would be off the spine road. The limited provision highlights the expectation most will travel a short distance to the school by foot or bike. The promotion of sustainable modes of transport and provision of cycle and scooter storage is important.

There was a concern about the design and distance of the key stage 1 and 2 entrance to the north of the site.

#### Character

The Panel encouraged the architects to review the portico, which was formulated as part of the design for the School Square. There are opportunities to enhance the entrance to the school and provide some covered space and to allow more natural daylighting into the building.



The building alignment was discussed and the possibility to align with the northern boundary. This would address the external triangular spaces that are currently less resolved as usable space.

There were further concerns for the north east section of the site. The Panel invited the developer to consider a pitched roof, or relocating of offices to above the Nursery to establish a presence at the corner. The Panel suggested careful detailing will help create a good design. The applicant is therefore encouraged to think about where and how to best focus the available budget. Removing features such as suspended ceilings and reconsidering the portico are key examples of this.

The Panel welcomed the design of the Landscape and the range of uses but further consideration of the threshold spaces to the classrooms is needed.

### Climate

The importance of modelling the performance of the building should not be underestimated and this should be used to inform the design approach and vice versa. The Panel noted that solar gain and overheating needed to be modelled early in the design process. The glazing at the front of the school has opportunities to have shading and could be incorporated into the redesigned approach to the portico.

Full height glazing for the ground floor south facing classrooms was queried by the Panel. Both in terms of sustaining a comfortable temperature summer and winter, and practical uses for the classroom space immediately in front of the glazing. Related to overheating the Panel asked what surface material was to be used immediately outside the classrooms. The Panel had concerns this surface could contribute to overheating.

Entrances to Nursery and Reception classes are straight off the classroom. The Panel were concerned about regulating the temperature inside the classrooms.

The Panel queried the need for a suspended ceiling with void space above. It was noted the void is used currently for cross ventilation to the central corridor and high level ventilators on the roof. It was suggested that the suspended ceiling could be removed.

The Panel queried access to plant room on the first floor and suitability to lifting replacement equipment to the area.

It was noted the design is looking to BREEAM very good. The Panel highlighted BREEAM recognises design that considers longer term environmental changes and adaptability. The Panel would encourage the developer to model for the longer term.

The Panel asked if a green or brown roof and water attenuation measures could be considered. This needs to be thought about as part of the landscape too.

To maximise natural light the Panel suggested a continuous roof light the length of the central corridor be put in place.

Glazed panels to the corridors would improve daylighting into classrooms and noise attenuated vents would improve air flow.



## 4. Conclusion

The Panel welcomed the early viewing of the designs and considered this a very clear scheme. It was felt this is a constrained site and the design has worked well to accommodate the various activities planned for on the school site. There was support for a two storey building.

To help better understand the internal environment it would have been helpful to have more cross sections of the building.

Whilst appreciating the matter of the site boundary is predetermined, the Panel would welcome any effort to seek realignment to allow a more generous entrance off the School Square for key age one and two classrooms.

The Panel supports provision for cycle and scooter shelters to promote sustainable travel to the school and considered important to evaluate if there is enough provision.

The Panel made the following recommendations, further details can be found above:

- Reconsider the location of the Hall and ICT area and its view to the School Square. Moving it forward to give the school more presence onto the School Square.
- Portico design could be reviewed to provide a more effective sheltered threshold.
- The Panel had concerns about the north of the site and the dual use of external spaces. The Panel invited the design team to reevaluate this area of the site.
- The design team are encouraged to keep the exterior of the building simple and to use materials well.
- Consider adding height to the single storey section of the building to the north east of the site.
- There are concerns of overheating for the ground floor classrooms facing south with full height glazing and black surface outside.
- The Panel suggested reviewing the need for suspended ceilings.
- Accessibility to the plant room and suitability to installing replacement equipment was a concern.
- The Panel felt a continuous roof light the length of a widened central corridor would add to the quality of the space, providing much more natural light into the building.
- Need to consider rain harvesting, green roof, brown roof.
- The Panel would encourage the design team to model for the longer term, and adaptation for a warmer climate.

On reflection, during the close discussion, the Panel considered the following:

- More consideration should be given to the landscape by taking into account water attenuation and water retention which is very important in the area.

- Key stage 1 and 2 entry from the north needs more presence. Further thought should be given.



### Post meeting note

Communication has commenced and discussions are ongoing about the southern school access and site boundary.