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**12/00512/FUL**

**DEMOLISH PART OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND RE-BUILD, RE-FURBISH AND CONSTRUCT TWO STOREY AND THREE STOREY FLAT ROOFED EXTENSIONS TO PROVIDE NEW TEACHING BLOCK, ADMINISTRATION AREA AND NEW ENTRANCE, REVISED ACCESS AND CAR PARKING LAYOUT AND LANDSCAPING**

**AT GREENSWARD ACADEMY, GREENSWARD LANE, HOCKLEY.**

**APPLICANT: ACADEMIES ENTERPRISE TRUST**

**ZONING: EXISTING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**PARISH: RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL**

**WARD: SWEYNE PARK**

## **1 PLANNING APPLICATION DETAILS**

- 1.1 The proposal is to demolish the buildings to the central part of the site shown as A block, B block and E block. The main A and B Blocks are part of the older building and comprise the former main entrance, staff and assembly areas and vocational hairdressing, the three storey general teaching block at the front of the site, and the two storey science block.
- 1.2 Block E, also to be demolished, is a detached single storey building with a sloped roofed design used for science and general teaching.
- 1.3 The demolished areas would form a new central quadrangle area to be landscaped over, which the inner walling would overlook.
- 1.4 The proposal would construct a two storey front extension to F block extending the building closer to Greensward Lane by a depth of 10m from the western edge of the existing building to within 3m of the eastern access point. Unlike the existing building this part of the building would also turn slightly to follow the alignment to the street.
- 1.5 The proposal would construct a three storey building to the outer northern side of the building envelope over part of the existing playground area that would connect with the existing detached D block to the west. A second floor pedestrian link with the main building would be provided to the upper floor level at the rear of the group of buildings formed

- 1.6 In addition to the new construction, the remaining building would be refurbished to provide new efficient windows, re-modelling internal spaces, and upgrading the external facade.
- 1.7 The proposal would retain the southern vehicular access for visitor parking and deliveries. The existing drop-off loop would be removed and relocated further into the site to a much larger arrangement adjoining the central quadrangle, but still accessed from the eastern most existing access onto Greensward Lane.
- 1.8 The existing car park to the eastern side of the site would be re-surfaced but also extended along the length of the site boundary with the adjoining footpath and houses fronting Homestead Gardens and Cheltenham Road. Part of this area was previously granted permission for use as an extension to the existing car park under application 11/00296/FUL.
- 1.9 The re-developed areas will be the subject of landscaping.
- 1.10 The proposed additions represent a gross floor space of some 4,376 square metres and would represent an increase of 449 square metres to a total floor space for the school of some 12,585 square metres.
- 1.11 The proposal would allow for a pupil population of 1,650, together with 120 full time and 115 part time staff. The building would also be accessible to the local community for indoor and outdoor sports facilities, performance spaces and meeting rooms, new catering facilities and new educational facilities. The information accompanying the previous application for an extension to the existing car park under application 11/00296/FUL at that time stated the number of pupils on the role to be approximately 1550 and a further 200 staff.
- 1.12 The submitted layout shows the provision of an area described as “vocational construction external” and shown to be located to the far end of the southern car parking area adjoining Nos. 14 and 16 Graham Close. The existing vocational construction area is at present contained within part of the southern side of the existing building, but would be displaced by the re-location of “vocational hair and beauty”. Officers understand that the new location for the construction teaching area would be contained within a new building; no details of this have been submitted as part of the current application. Given the absence of these details and the concerns raised in response to neighbour notification from adjoining residents, the applicant has since deleted that part of the application.

## **2 THE SITE**

- 2.1 This application is the site of the Greensward Academy fronting Greensward Lane located 50m north of the junction with Broadlands Road.
- 2.2 The school buildings on the site form a group of single storey, two storey and three storey school buildings with the playing field areas to the rear extending down to Plumberow Primary and Junior schools. The playing field layout

largely comprises hard play surfaces but is adjoined by pockets of grassed and closely mown areas between these and the site boundaries. The school site totals 4.3ha.

- 2.3 The site has an open frontage directly onto Greensward Lane with the main building set back behind a drop-off loop entrance arrangement with small grassed areas and tree planting. A third access to the south of the frontage allows vehicles to enter the southern side of the building and grounds.
- 2.4 The site is otherwise contained by housing fronting Graham Close and Hamilton Gardens to the south and Homestead Gardens and Cheltenham Road to the north. To the immediate north of the site extends a public footpath with palisade fencing and shrubbery to the school boundary.
- 2.5 The site is allocated for school purposes within a residential area in the Council's saved Local Plan (2006).

### **3 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 Application No. 91/00406/CPO  
Continue use of re-locatable classroom.  
Permission granted 26 July 1991.
- 3.2 Application No. 99/00395/FUL  
Replacement of existing temporary classroom block with permanent building  
Permission granted 2 September 1999.
- 3.3 Application No. 99/00676/FUL  
Variation of condition to allow use of sports hall on Saturday 7am – 7pm and on Sunday 7am – 6pm and use of playground as car park.  
Permission granted 10 February 2000.
- 3.4 Application No. 01/00797/FUL  
Variation of condition(renewal of permission 99/00676/FUL) to allow use of sports hall on Saturdays 8.00am – 7.00pm and on Sundays 9am – 6.00pm and use of playground as car park.  
Permission granted. 18 December 2001.
- 3.5 Application No. 02/00503/FUL  
Stationing of two re-locatable classrooms.  
Permission granted 6 August 2002.
- 3.6 Application No. 03/00176/FUL  
Erection of two storey ICT Building.  
Permission granted 22 April 2003.
- 3.7 Application No. 03/00514/FUL  
Erection of extension comprising three storey lift shaft and enclosed walkway link at first floor(to improve access for disabled)

Permission granted 5 August 2003.

- 3.8 Application No. 03/01001/FUL  
Single storey building comprising Cafeteria, Kitchen , Uniform shop, ancillary accommodation and delivery bay.  
Permission granted 13 January 2004.
- 3.9 Application No. 04/00874/FUL  
Single storey pitched roofed building to provide sixth form centre.  
Permission granted 23 November 2004.
- 3.10 Application No. 05/00144/CPO  
Construction of two multi games areas comprising an all weather 7-a-side football pitch and four netball/tennis courts with perimeter fencing for school and community use  
Objection raised 15 April 2005.
- 3.11 Application No. 06/00891/CPO  
Provision of external platform access lift in glazed shaft to school sports block building.  
No objection raised 16 November 2006.
- 3.12 Application No. 11/00296/ FUL  
Construct additional car parking area.  
Permission granted 7 July 2011

#### **4 CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**

##### **Hockley Parish Council**

- 4.1 No objections on the basis that neighbourhood consultations have taken place.

##### **Essex County Council Highways**

- 4.2 No objections to raise, subject to the following heads of conditions:-
1. Closure of the redundant access incorporating the reinstatement to full height of the highway footway kerbing.
  2. Submission of details for the provision of a vehicular turning facility.
  3. Parking spaces to be provided to minimum dimensions 2.9m x 5m in accordance with existing bay sizes.
  4. A minimum dimension of 6m shall be provided between the rear of the parking bays within the parking court.
  5. Powered two wheeler and cycle parking facilities to be provided prior to the first occupation of the development and retained at all times.

6. Any gates to be provided at the vehicular access shall be inward opening only and shall be set back a minimum of 6m from the nearside edge of the carriageway.
7. Submission of details for the provision of an area within the site for the parking of operatives' vehicles and the reception and storage of building materials clear of the highway for the duration of the construction period
8. Submission of details for a wheel washing facility for the duration of the construction period.

### **Environment Agency**

- 4.3 Have no objection to raise on flood risk grounds (surface water). The application will result in an additional floor space of 449 square metres and gross external area of 5042 square metres. As the proposed development results in development totalling less than one hectare in flood zone one have no comments to make regarding the surface water management of the site.
- 4.4 It is proposed to discharge surface water to existing sewer. Therefore recommend that it is ensured that there is sufficient capacity within the system for proposed water flows.
- 4.5 Advise that Anglian Water Services should be consulted regarding the available capacity in the foul sewer. If there is not sufficient capacity, the Environment Agency should be re-consulted on alternative methods of foul water disposal.
- 4.6 Advise that the water environment at this site is of low environmental sensitivity and the agency will not therefore be providing detailed comments with regard to land contamination of the site.

### **Natural England**

- 4.7 Advise that the proposal does not appear to affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes or have significant impacts on the conservation of soils, nor is the proposal EIA development.
- 4.8 Advise that the proposal is within an area that Natural England considers could benefit from enhanced green infrastructure (GI) provision. Multi-functional green infrastructure can perform a range of functions including improved flood risk management, provision of accessible green space, climate change adaptation and biodiversity enhancement. Natural England would encourage the incorporation of GI into this development.
- 4.9 Advise that the protected species survey has identified that bats and great crested newts may be affected by this application. Advise that with regard to bats, permission could be granted and that the Local Planning Authority should consider requesting enhancements. Advise that with regard to great crested newts, Natural England accepts the report findings and advises the

Local Planning Authority should also consider enhancements such as the creation of new water bodies and suitable terrestrial habitat.

### **Neighbour representations**

4.10 Six letters have been received from the following addresses:-

Graham Close: 14 (two letters)

Greensward Lane: 51, 66,

Hamilton Gardens: 32 (two letters)

4.11 And which in the main make the following comments and objections:-

- Object to the proposed vocational construction area being sited so close to 14 Graham Close. The noise and general disruption this will cause will prevent the quiet enjoyment of our lives.
- Daily noise the vocational construction site will cause, with skip and lorry deliveries. At present there is a small internal construction centre situated further away and at times even this is extremely invasive of our privacy with boisterous teenagers shouting, etc., also throwing used materials into the skip without any consideration for residents living nearby. The proposed relocation closer to residents will only make this worse. Enjoyment of our lovely garden will be spoiled by potential permanent building site.
- Plan will be environmentally detrimental to our lives and would cause a great deal of stress
- Object if the proposed buildings are any nearer to 32 Hamilton Gardens and “vocational construction external “ as already suffer a great deal of noise and foul language from students during breaks as they congregate close to our property as their playground has been reduced over the years.
- Sheer scale of the block to the front of the school would provide a stark contrast to the typically two storey dwellings in the street scene
- Obtrusive development out of proportion and detrimental to the design and appearance of the original property
- The size of the building would be imposing and lead to loss of privacy and loss of views of Ashingdon Hill enjoyed to No. 51 Greensward Lane
- The proposed building would be far too close to the road putting students at risk with reduced pavement and walkway

- Existing noise is bad enough and the expected usage will make our environment almost impossible to live with
- Congestion on Greensward Lane is already near to breaking point during certain times of the day. With the proposed reduction of the turning area the extra traffic would bring gridlock to the area.
- Building line will be about 10m closer to the street and which will over shadow all surrounding houses close by
- The building height of two storeys will drastically reduce light into our bungalow (66 Greensward Lane) and eliminate any sky line we currently have
- Classrooms at first floor would have a total view of our front elevation windows (66 Greensward Lane) and front garden
- Proposed use of ground floor corner room as a drama studio will create a lot of noise and will be likely to be used out of school hours like the current gym, which already creates far too much noise
- The new front entrance is labelled community entrance and therefore clear that the school wishes to offer facilities outside school times, creating more traffic and noise
- Constantly aggrieved by the amount of traffic and coaches that block the road outside the school. The reduction to one entrance will cause even more disruption. Currently endure coaches arriving at 4am and parents not prepared to park in rear car park using the road and pavement clearly a danger to everyone and further problem to the general management of traffic in Hockley by closing (blocking) Greensward Lane to normal traffic.
- Moved to Hockley because it has an enduring village atmosphere. If the proposed building is allowed it will show that Hockley is unhappily following a head long development with no thought or consideration for its residents blindly building yet one more monstrosity.

## **5 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Principle of the Development**

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework provides general support and a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Greensward School is in a location central to the centre of Hockley and in a location that is sustainable, being close to alternative transport modes and the location of services.
- 5.2 Paragraph 72 to the NPPF (2012) states that the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities and that Local Planning

Authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach that should include giving weight to the need to create, expand or alter existing schools. The current application generally accords with that approach.

- 5.3 Paragraph 9.13 to the preamble to Policy CLT 3 to the Council's adopted Core Strategy (2011) states that improvements to and, in some cases, expansion of existing schools will be necessary in addressing accessibility to education in the district.
- 5.4 The site is allocated as a school within the existing residential allocation for Hockley in the Council's saved Local Plan (2006). The overall provision of improvements and extension to the Greensward School as proposed in this application therefore generally accords with the development plan, subject to the consideration of more detailed design and other material considerations.

### **Design and Massing Issues**

- 5.5 The extensions proposed would be of a flat roofed design and form. The new science block to the middle of the site would be to an overall height of 13.2m and 1.9m higher than the existing three storey part of the building at the back of the built envelope on the site. This height increase would be centrally located within the site and 30m distance from the nearest neighbour at No. 7 Homestead Gardens. The end elevation would feature only corridor windows where there would not be the great potential for overlooking as may arise from classrooms. The building would be clad in buff external brick.
- 5.6 The refurbished parts of the building would replace the blue cladding panels with insulated render. Windows would be uPVC and the window curtaining aluminium framed.
- 5.7 The proposed two storey front extension would have a height of 9.3m and would again be of flat roofed form clad in the same buff coloured facing brick. A continuous curtain walling of glass windows would feature to the ground floor leading to the entrance area. The site frontage would be hard paved.
- 5.8 At present the existing building presents a variety of mixed roofing and storeys in a cluttered presentation to the street. The entrance building and design now proposed would make a bold statement. Whilst the design takes a flat roofed form, the overall heights are in scale with the existing building. Importantly, the flat roofed approach limits the height of the buildings in an otherwise domestic context. It would be the wrong approach to seek pitched roofed solutions further increasing the height of buildings as would be presented to the street. The existing school already contrasts with the domestic scale. The current application would not change that relationship.
- 5.9 A consultation with the County Council's urban designer is outstanding at the time of writing. The use of external facing brick and render would give the resultant building a more traditional appearance reflecting local traditional

characteristics, as required by Policy CP 1 to the Council's adopted Core Strategy.

### **Residential Amenity Issues**

- 5.10 The applicant has amended the application to delete the vocational construction area, which has attracted objections from those neighbours near to the existing and relocated facility.
- 5.11 The proposed car park extension would adjoin the existing car parking area and would be separated by the footpath, which runs alongside the school boundary. The relationship of this car parking area to adjoining residents is largely established but would be extended to those residents at the end of Cheltenham Road. Unlike the activity from a public car park, the activity would be concentrated on the movements of staff at the beginning and end of the school day and other activities for the community at weekends. The effects upon amenity would be off set by the likely removal of cars from nearby side streets. No residents have objected to this feature in reply to consultation. The visitor car park would be retained on the southern side of the site as currently exists. The proposed car park extension to the northern side of the site alongside the existing all weather pitches would not be likely to give rise to such loss of amenity that would justify withholding permission for this reason.
- 5.12 The proposed front extension although closer to No. 66 Greensward Lane opposite the site on the even numbered side of the road would, given the presence of the public street between the bungalows opposite and the proposal, still retain a distance of some 27m between the resultant building and the front windows to that neighbouring dwelling. The consequent increase in shading to those properties opposite the site would be reasonable.
- 5.13 The adjoining house at No. 51 Greensward Lane has only a side landing window and no principal living room facing the site. The existing school building is set back over 7.5m behind the prevailing building line formed by No. 51 Greensward Lane and others. The proposal would project between 3 and 4m in front of No. 51 and for the whole of the site frontage but leaving a set back from the back edge of the pavement of between 8 and 12m. Given the retention of the existing side space and visitor access of 13m to the southern side of the building with the boundary to No. 51 and a distance between the resultant building and the landing window of 15m, the resultant front projection would not unreasonably overshadow or over dominate that adjoining property.

### **Ecological Issues**

- 5.14 The applicant's initial phase 1 habitat survey confirmed the site to be of value for foraging by bats. The applicant has consequently included bat and bird boxes to the existing tree planted areas to the west of the site behind the existing buildings, together with a commitment to sow native wildflower seed

and native shrub planting as part of the landscaping scheme to enhance the site in the interests of these species. These measures accord with the general advice from Natural England with a view to enhancing the development for bio-diversity.

### **Parking and Access Issues**

- 5.15 The application particulars describe the academy as providing comprehensive education for 11-19 year olds with a future roll of 1,650 pupils, together with 120 full time and 115 part time staff. The Council's adopted standard requires a maximum provision equivalent to 1 space per 15 pupils with 1 space or 5% to size allowing use by disabled drivers.
- 5.16 The submitted layout provides a total of 157 car parking spaces, which is in excess of the 110 spaces required for the future pupil numbers identified. The five spaces for disabled persons falls just short of the 6 spaces required to meet the Council's standard, but the provision of an additional disabled persons parking space can be achieved by revising the layout as a condition to the grant of permission.
- 5.17 It is of interest that the submitted layout shows the provision of the new car parking spaces to the Council's previous standard width of 2.5m and depth of 5m. Furthermore, the County Highway Authority endorses this approach and seeks to ensure the layout to this specification by a condition to the grant of consent. The Council would normally accept the lower space size only in exceptional circumstances. District officers have raised this matter with County colleagues in order to understand the justification for accepting the lower specification.
- 5.18 The reality is that the site is failing to provide adequate off street parking for the everyday site needs, as evident from the parking problems visible on the site during term time. It is likely that a greater number of staff drive to work despite the proximity of the nearby Hockley main line rail station. Whilst this many spaces are not required, if the development were approved the additional spaces over standard may help to relieve parking pressure within the site and to adjoining side streets.
- 5.19 The application shows the provision of a new drop-off loop deeper into the site and to the foreground of the open quadrangle. The County Highway Authority has no objection to raise against this revised access arrangement, subject to conditions concerning the positioning of gating.

### **Other Matters**

- 5.20 The Environment Agency has raised the question as to the capacity of the existing sewage network to take flows arising from the development. It is necessary therefore to consult with Anglian Water Authority to determine the adequacy of the network to accommodate that further demand arising from

the extension of the school. Any response will be reported through the addendum.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The proposed extensions to the school are of a design and impact both appropriate and necessary to enhance the existing school facilities generally in accordance with national and local policies.

## **7 RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

To **APPROVE** planning permission, subject to the following heads of conditions:-

- (1) SC4B Time limits standard
- (2) Submission of samples of materials
- (3) Submission of revised parking layout to provide 6 No. disabled parking spaces as part of total.
- (4) Provision of bird and bat boxes as specified in the proposed landscaping scheme.
- (5) Implementation of landscaping scheme, including bird and bat boxes.
- (6) Closure of existing access and reinstatement of pavement.
- (7) Provision of vehicular turning facility.
- (8) Powered two wheeler parking facilities to be provided prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted.
- (9) Any gates to be provided at the vehicular access point to be inward opening and set back 6m.
- (10) Provision of area within the site for storage of building materials and operatives' vehicles for the duration of the construction period.
- (11) Provision of wheel cleaning facility for the duration of the construction period.



Shaun Scrutton

Head of Planning and Transportation

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#### REASON FOR DECISION

The proposal is considered not to cause significant demonstrable harm to any development plan interests, other material considerations, to the character and appearance of the area, to the street scene or residential amenity such as to justify refusing the application; nor to surrounding occupiers in neighbouring streets.

#### **Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals**

Rochford District Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy Adopted  
Version December 2011

CP 1, CLT 3.

Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (2006) as saved by Direction of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and dated 5 June 2009 in exercise of the power conferred by paragraph 1(3) of schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

None.

Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice Supplementary Planning Document  
adopted December 2010

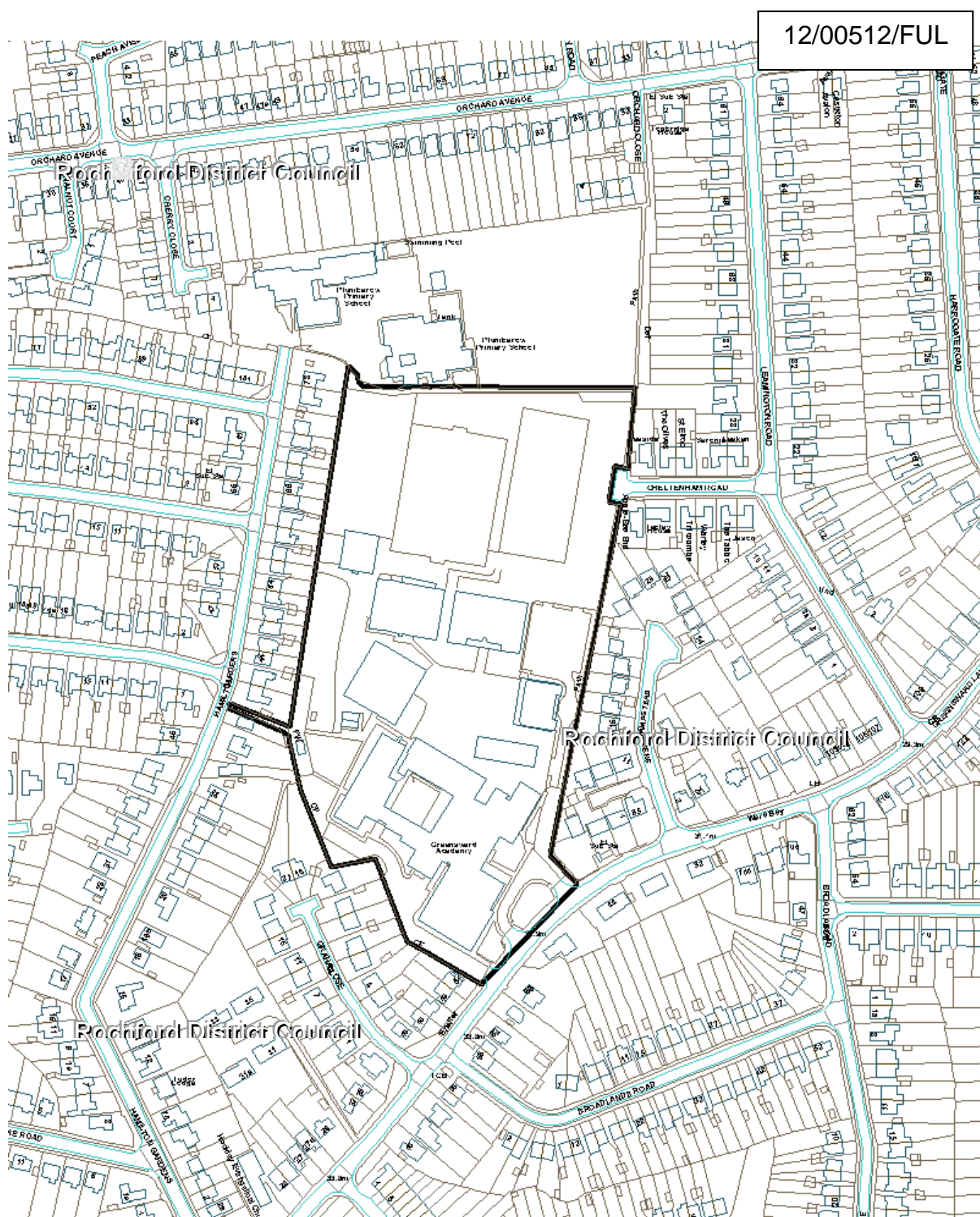
Standard D1

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