

Proposed extension of existing school car park to improve highway safety. Associated landscape and biodiversity improvements.

At Philpots Manor School, Hook Lane, West Hoathly

Justification for the proposed development

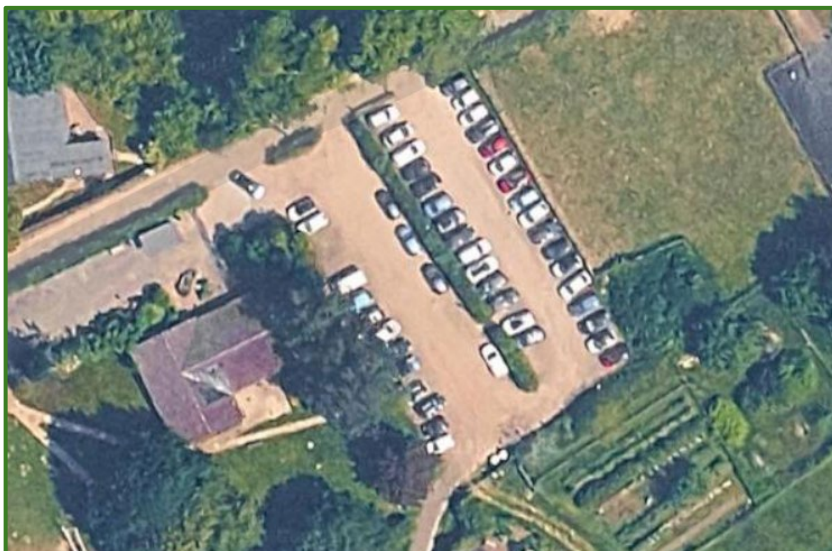
1) Introduction

- 1.1 This statement accompanies planning application no. DM/25/2994 which seeks to extend the existing car parking available at Philpots Manor School, which in turn will improve pedestrian safety during school drop-off and collection times. The existing staff parking would be relocated into the new car park, with the existing car parking being used for car parking and an improved drop-off and collection system for pupils.
- 1.2 The Statement explains how the existing and proposed parking area would be used, followed by the justification for the proposed car park extension.
- 1.3 The information within this document should supersede the respective information within the Planning Statement submitted with the application.

2) Justification for the proposed development

- 2.1 Philpots Manor School is a special educational needs (SEND) school which currently has 62 pupils. It also has 75 members of staff, with 4 vacancies at present. Therefore, the total number of employees at full capacity is 79 members of staff.
- 2.2 There is one existing car park which has a capacity of 65 parking spaces. At present, the existing car park is used almost entirely by staff members. Indeed, the parking to staff ratio is just 1 space per 0.87 members of staff (based on current employment levels) and therefore, there is not even one parking space per employee. As such, the car park is at full capacity during the working day. This is shown on both aerial imagery and by photographs below.

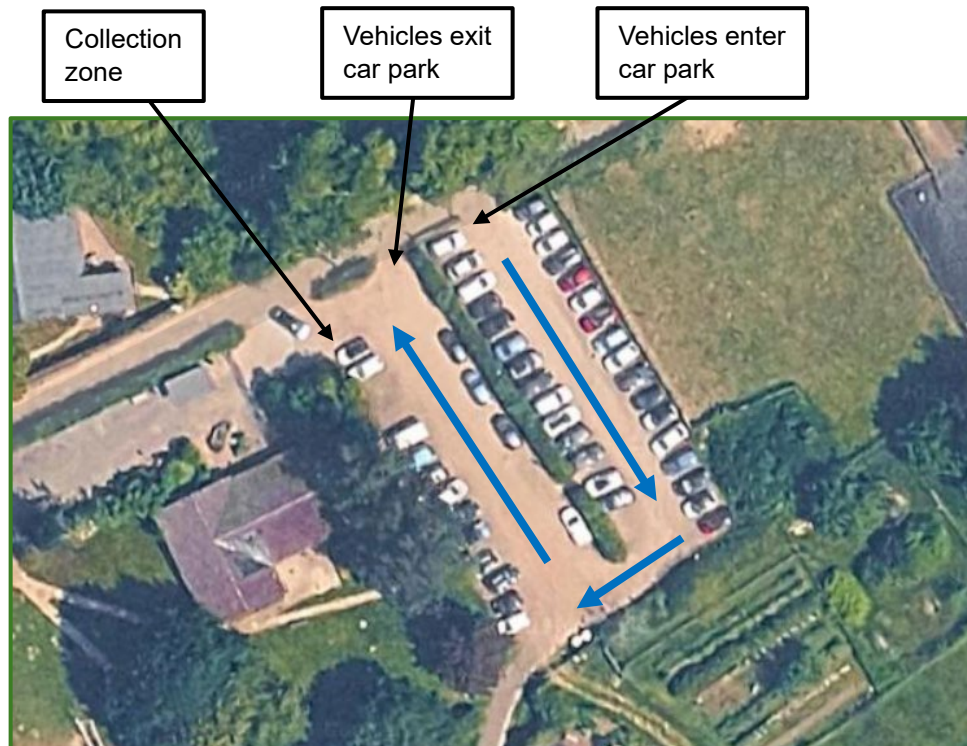
Aerial image showing the existing school car park



Photographs showing staff parking within the school car park



- 2.3 Therefore, there are little or no spaces available to parents at drop-off and collection times. At present, vehicles access the car park from the vehicular access track at the north eastern entrance and enter a queueing system around the car park before collecting their children from the reception entrance on the north western side of the car park. They then exit the car park from the north-western exit and vacate the site via the access track. This is illustrated below



- 2.4 Therefore, as there is no space available to park vehicles, which is sometimes required. There is extensive congestion and queuing within the car park and back along the access track during both drop-off and collection times. This causes hazards, despite being managed by staff members as much as possible. Some photographs demonstrating the level of congestion on a normal school day are provided below.

Cars queueing down the eastern side of the car park



Cars queueing up the western side of the car park towards the collection point



Congestion along the access track



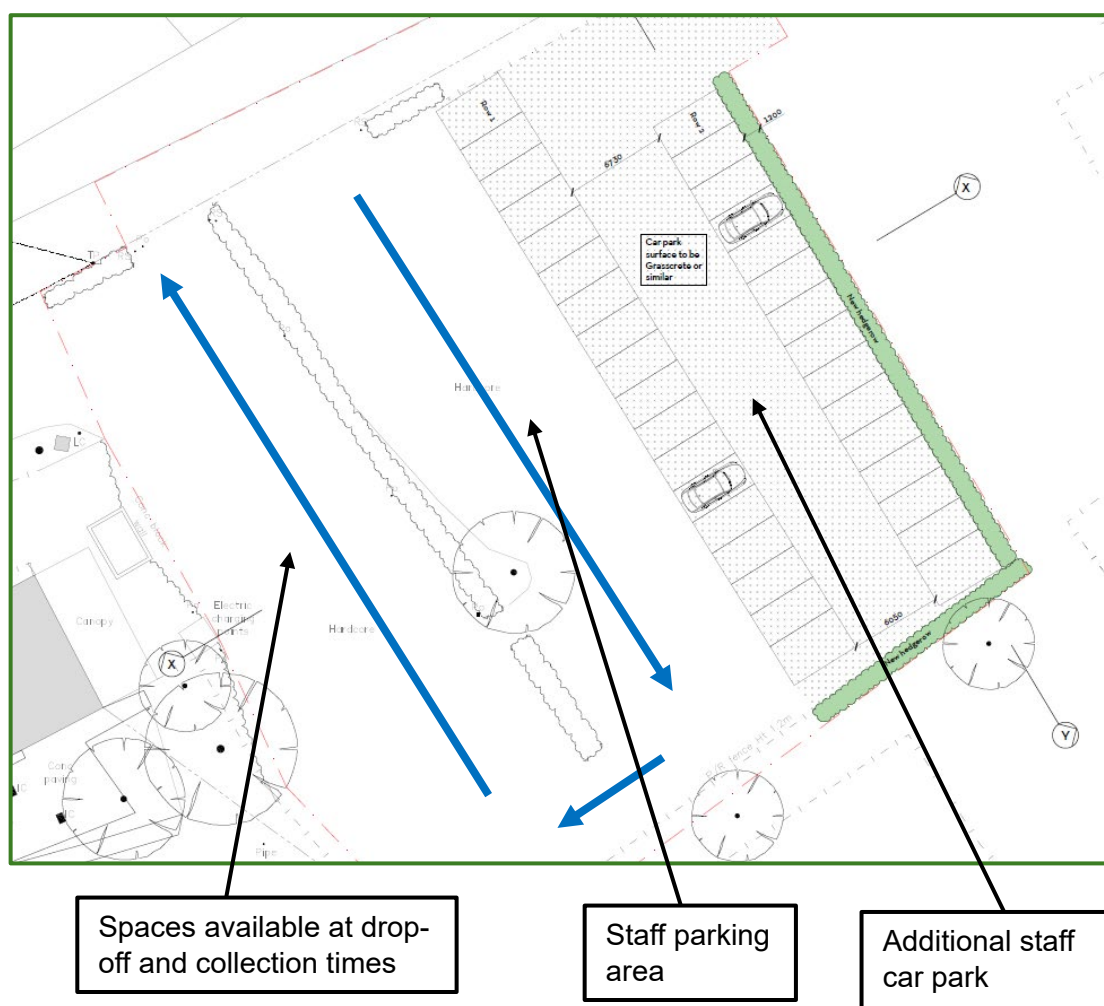
2.5 Therefore, it is abundantly clear that the existing parking provision at Philpots Manor School is substandard and not fit for purpose. This causes congestion and safety hazards to pupils at both drop-off and collection times.

2.6 As such, an extension and improvement to the existing car parking provision and drop-off and collection arrangements is essential.

3) The proposed development

3.1 The existing parking and drop-off / collection arrangements cause daily hazards which is unacceptable, when there is a viable solution to extend the existing car parking to address this issue. It is therefore proposed to extend the existing car park to the north east, located between the existing car parking and the school's horse riding menage where there is minimal landscape impact.

3.2 The extension would create two additional rows of parking for staff members and other employees, with 33 spaces being created. This in turn would enable other employees to park on the eastern side of the existing car park. This would create more space for manoeuvring vehicles through the existing car park at drop-off and collection times. It would also provide some car parking for parents on the western side of the car park. This is illustrated below.



- 3.3 Taking all factors and materials considerations into account, this modest car park extension is fully justified. Indeed, the proposed development is of no economic or financial gain to the school, so it would not be proposed unless it was completely necessary to improve the health and safety of pupils which is naturally of paramount importance.
- 3.4 This location has been carefully selected and clearly makes the most sense, in being located adjacent to existing built form and the existing access road. The surface would be formed of grasscrete to minimise landscape impact. This would be further reduced by the proposed hedgerow planting to the outer boundaries of the new car park.
- 3.5 Overall, the benefits of the proposed development would clearly and demonstrably outweigh and harm and therefore, this planning application should be approved.