

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

At Philpots Manor School, West Hoathly, East Grinstead RH19 4PR

Full Planning Application



Planning Statement

**Town and Country Planning Solutions Ref No: TCPS 1200
November 2025**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies a full planning application submitted to Mid Sussex District Council on behalf of the owners of Philpots Manor School, which is a special educational needs school situated just outside West Hoathly. The application site comprises a paddock adjoining the existing school car park to the north east of the main school buildings. The proposal seeks to extend the existing school car park to create 65 additional car parking spaces. These would be arranged across four rows with integrated hedgerow landscaping. The intention is for the existing car park to be used by staff members only, with the new car park being used by parents as drop-off and pick-up time. There will be no increase in trip generation compared to the existing situation.
- 1.2 This Statement explains the background to the proposed scheme, before assessing the relevant planning policies and other material considerations.

Site location plan



2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL

i) The application site and surrounding land

2.1 The site forms part of a special educational needs school known as Philpots Manor School, which is for pupils with identified social, emotional, behavioural and mental health needs and social communication difficulties. Some children have been diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum. The school currently accommodates 62 day students and there are 65 staff members in total.

2.2 The application site comprises a paddock located to the north east of the main school complex. Adjoining the site to the south west is the existing school car park. This provides informal car parking laid to hardstanding. The size of the car park is not fit for purpose and causes congestion during school drop off and collection times. Photographs 1 – 4 overleaf show the number of parked cars at 14:00 in the afternoon. This shows that virtually the whole car park is taken up by staff car parking.

2.3 To the north east of the site is a sand school menage which serves the school's equestrian offering. Planning permission (no. DM/24/1836) was granted in November 2024 for a new equestrian and land management centre to the south east of the sand school. This has not yet been implemented, but would be unimpacted by the proposed development in any event.

2.4 There is an existing gated access onto the application site from the private access track which serves the school and other properties under third party ownership. The site is broadly square in shape, with a post and rail fence along the western boundary and an established hedgerow along the northern boundary adjacent to the access track. See photographs 5 – 8.

2.5 An aerial view of the site is provided on page 7, followed by the site plan from the approved equestrian building for reference.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL

Photograph 1 – Eastern part of the school car park looking south



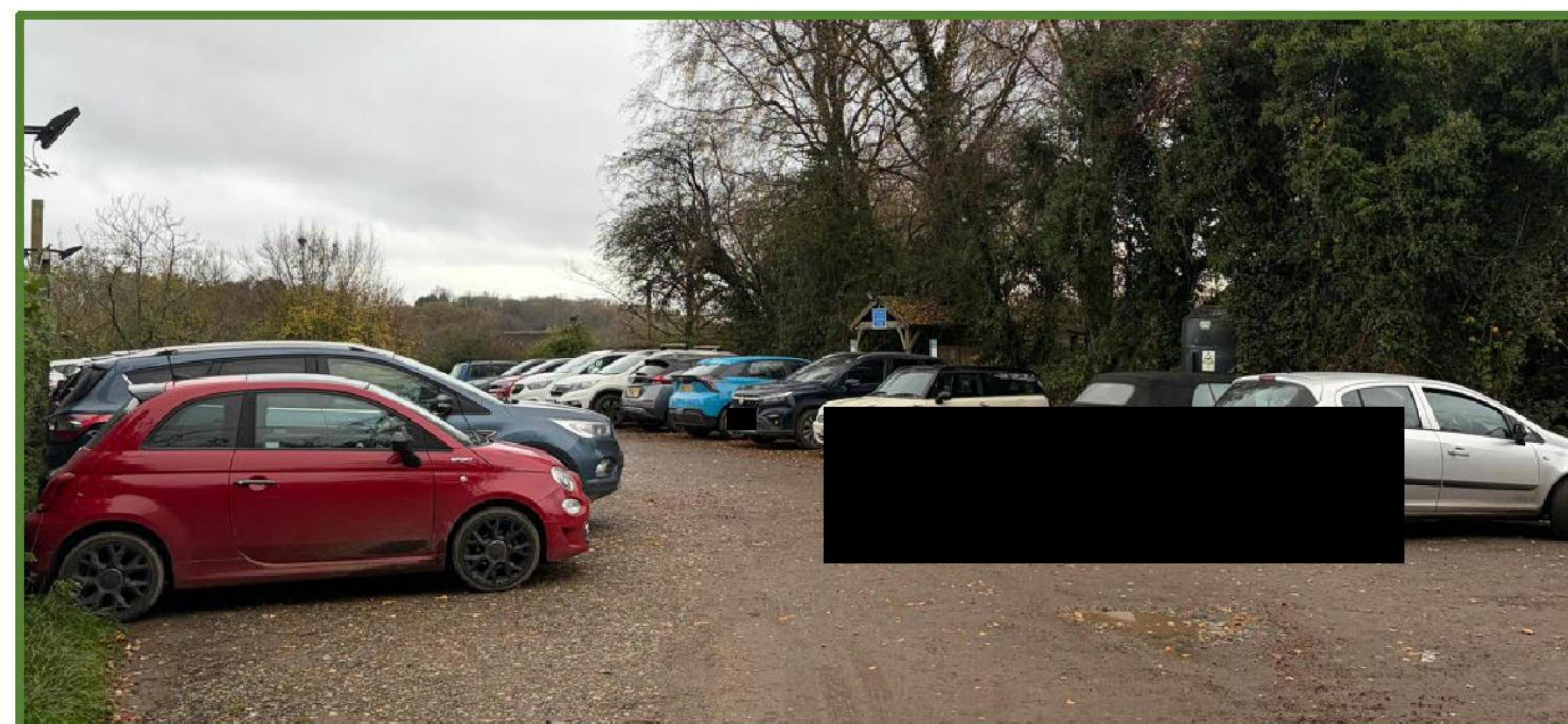
Photograph 2 – Eastern part of the school car park looking north



Photograph 3 – Western part of the car park looking south



Photograph 4 – Western part of the car park looking south west



2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL

Photograph 5 – Application site looking south east from the existing gated access



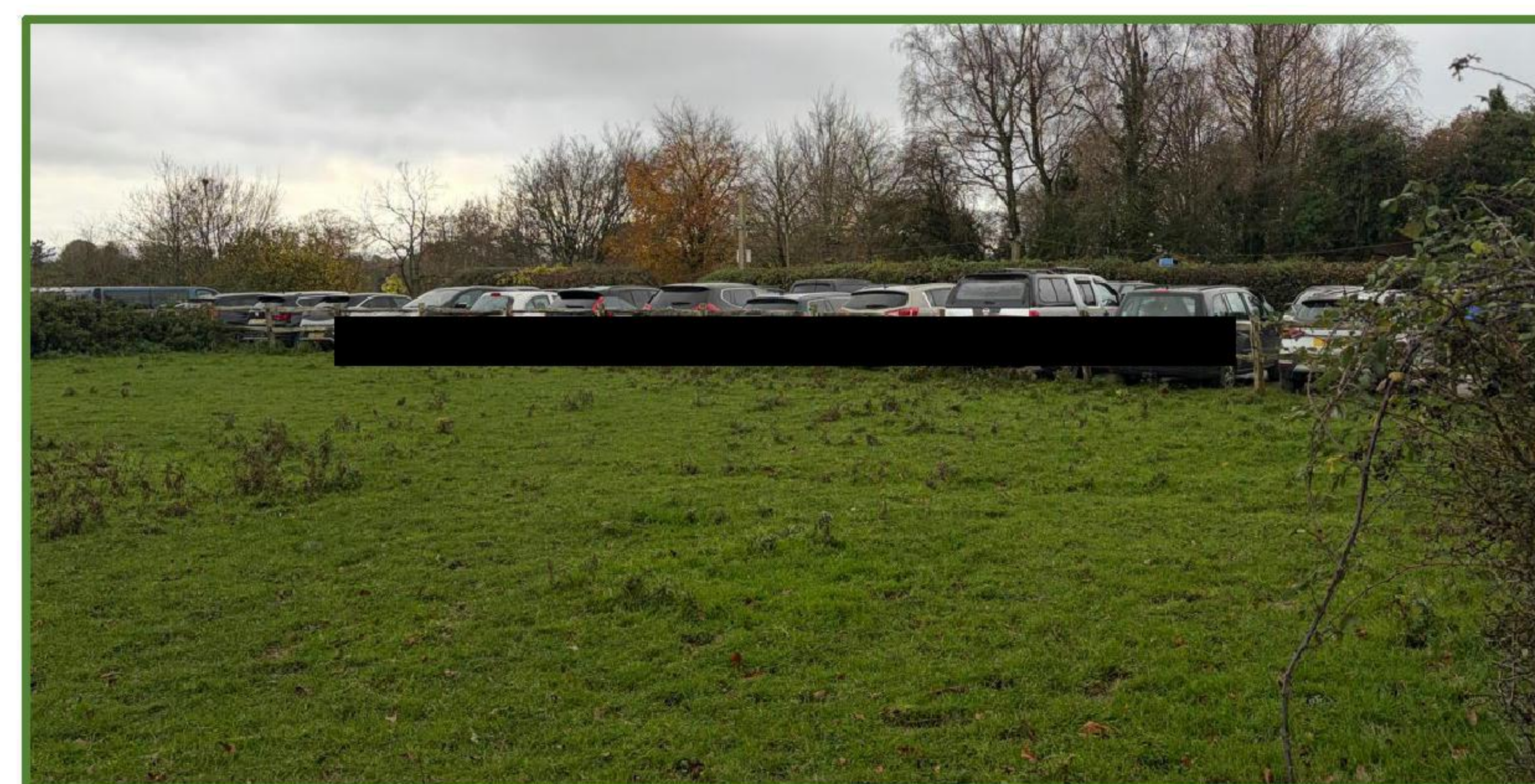
Photograph 6 – Application site looking east from the existing car park



Photograph 7 – Existing gated access looking south into the site



Photograph 8 – Application site looking south west towards the existing car park



2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL

Aerial view of the site and wider school ownership



School reception
building

School car park

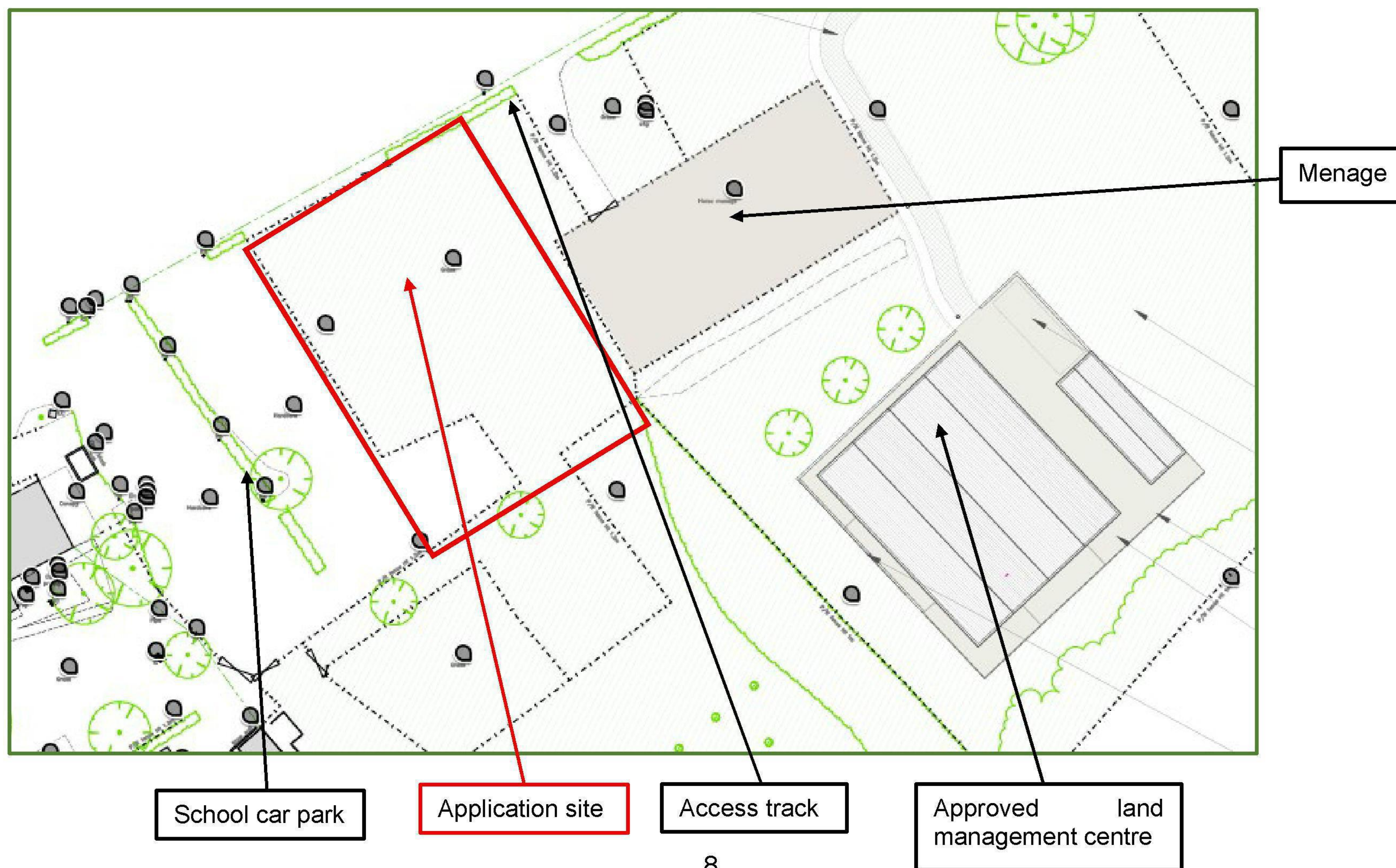
Application site

Access track

Menage and approved
land management centre

2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL

Approved block plan - DM/24/1836



2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL

ii) The proposed car park extension

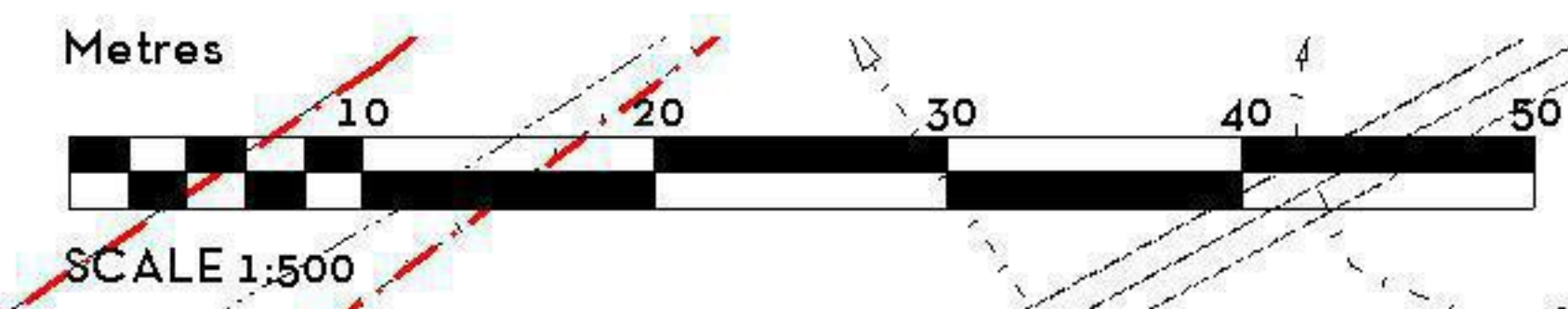
2.6 Due to significant congestion issues during school drop-off and pick-up times, there is a demonstrable need to extend the existing school car park. This would enable the existing car park to be used by staff members and other employees (of which there will always be at least 65), with the new parking areas being used by those dropping off and collecting pupils. The proposal would not result in any increase in trip generation.

2.7 The existing gated access onto the private access track would be reused and widened to 5 metres. A turning area would be provided to enable easy manoeuvring into the two vehicular access rows. There would be four rows of parking (accessed on each side of the access rows), providing 65 new parking spaces. There would be new hedgerow planting along the southern and eastern

boundaries and centrally between the central parking rows.

2.8 The parking surface would be grasscrete or a similar permeable surface which will seamlessly blend into the surrounding landscape. Each parking space would be 2.4m wide and 4.8m deep. The parking spaces on the end of each row would be 3m wide. The vehicular access rows would be at least 6m wide to create comfortable passing places.

2.9 The proposed block plan, site layout plan and section drawings are reproduced on the following three pages.



PROPOSED
CAR
PARK

revisions

ref	date	drawn
A	24/10/25	KMM

**DESIGN INTENT ONLY
NOTES FOR CONSTRUCTION:**

1. Dimensions shall be checked and verified prior to work being commenced on site.

2. This drawing is issued for the sole and exclusive use of the named recipient. Distribution to any third party is on the strict understanding that no liability is accepted by KM Architecture for any discrepancies, errors or omissions that may be present and no guarantee is offered as to the accuracy of the information shown.

PLANNING DRAWING

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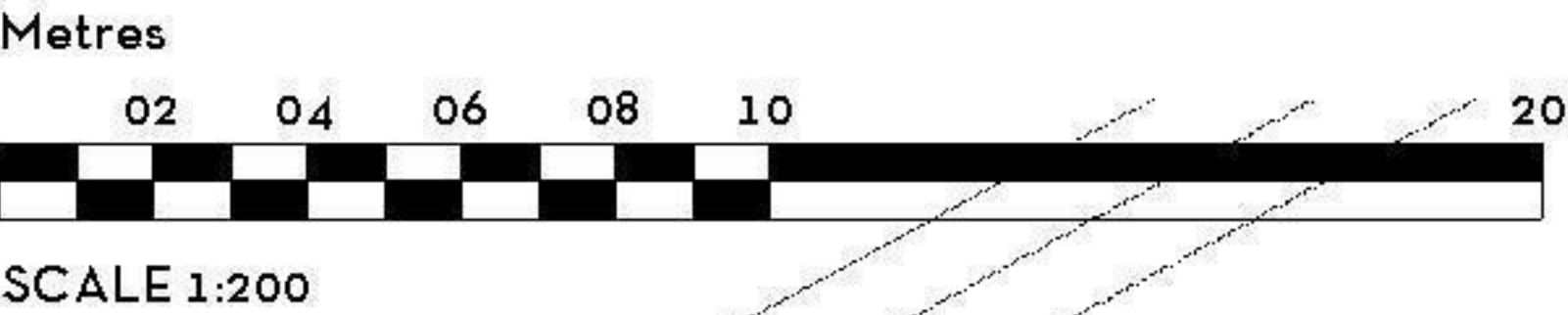
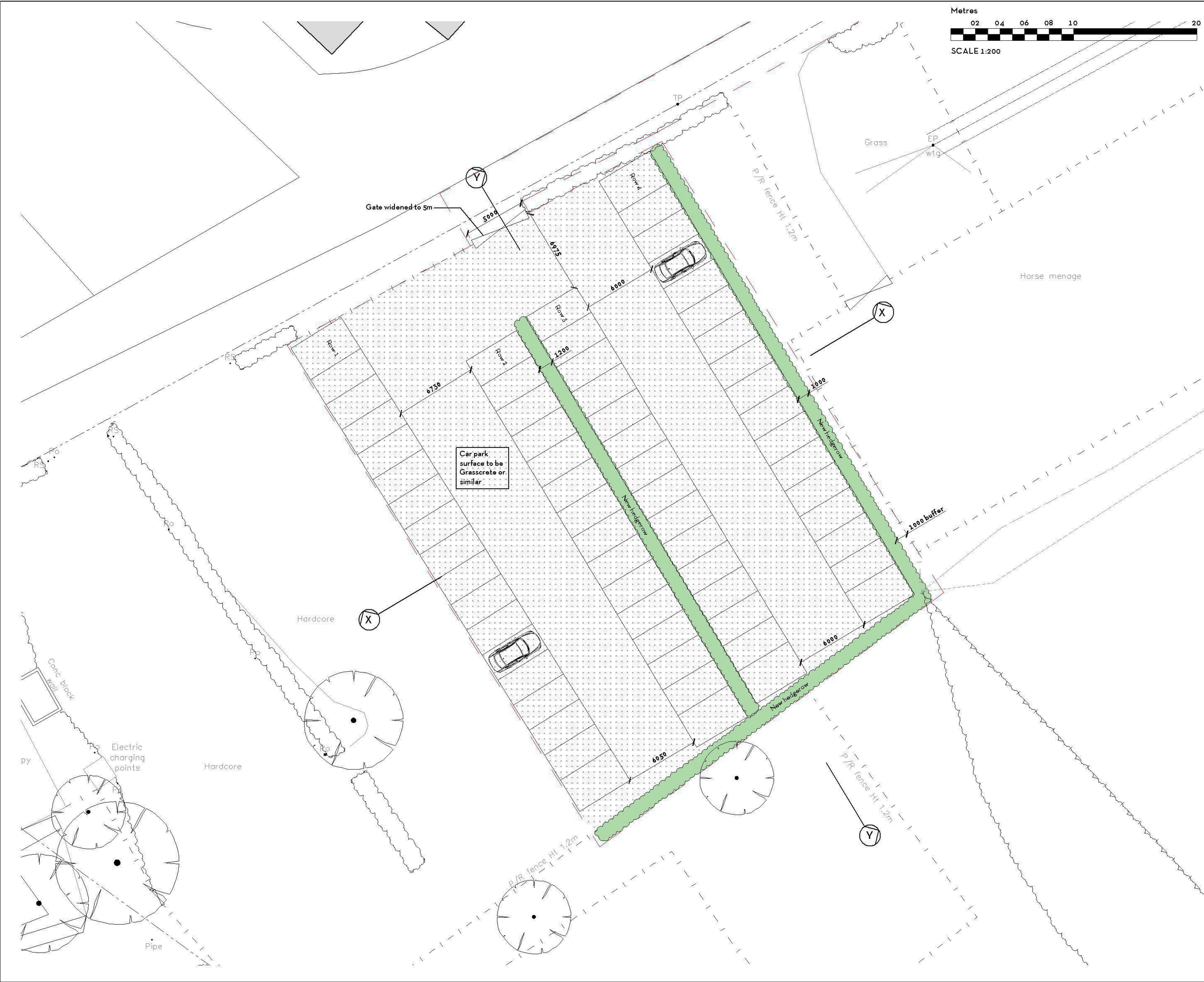
job PROPOSED CAR PARK AT:

PHILPOTS MANOR SCHOOL
WEST HOATHLY
EAST SUSSEX
RH19 4PR

title

BLOCK PLAN AS PROPOSED

scale	1:500 @ A2
date	23/10/25
drawn	KMM
drawing number	2098_00_11
revision	-



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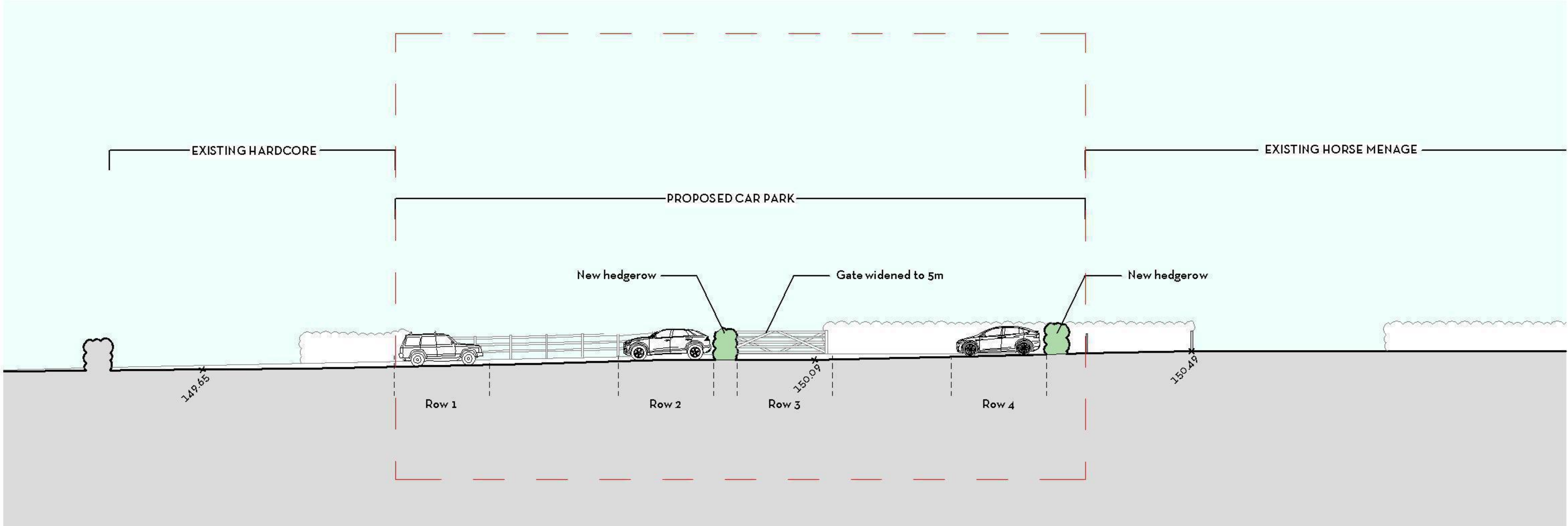
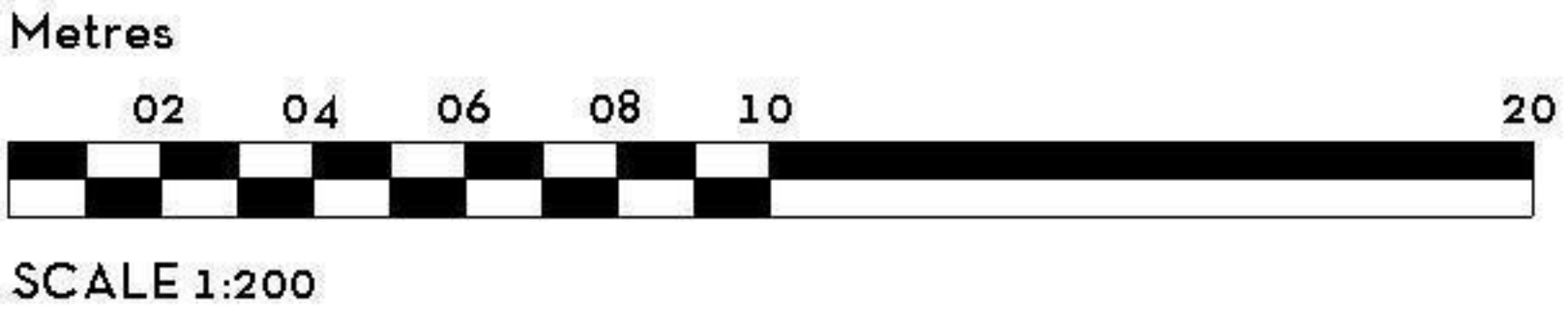
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job PROPOSED CAR PARK AT:

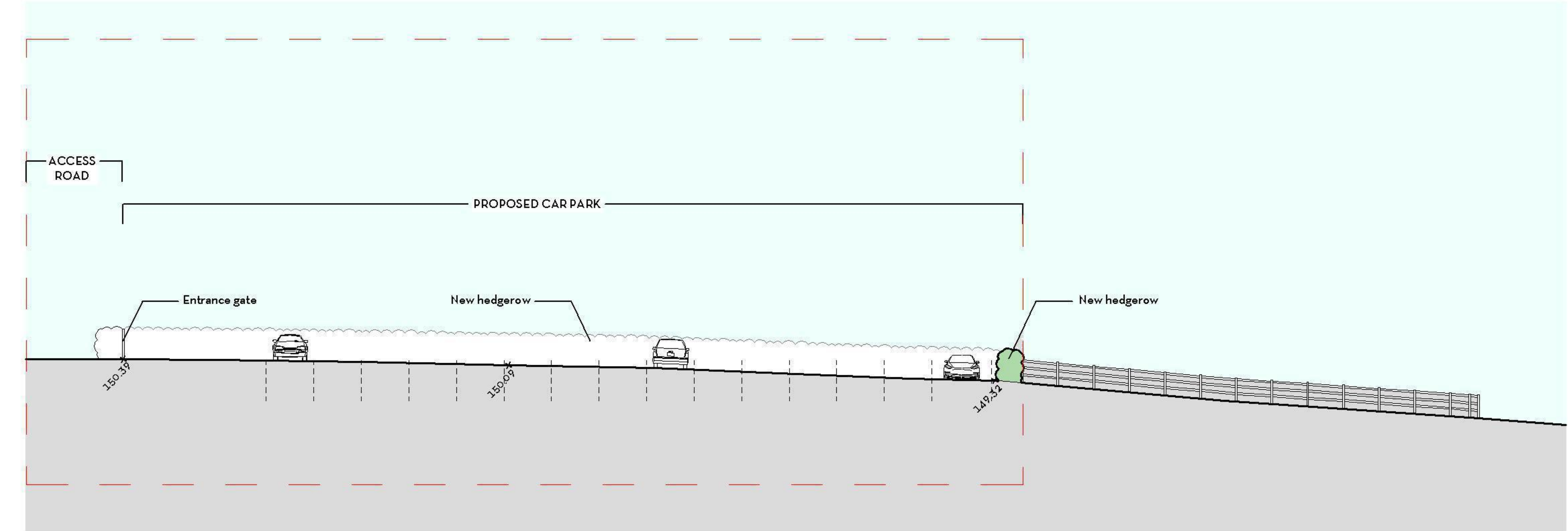
PHILPOTS MANOR SCHOOL
WEST HOATHLY
EAST SUSSEX
RH19 4PR

title
SITE PLAN AS PROPOSED

scale	1:200 @ A2	
date	23/10/25	
drawn	KMM	
drawing number	2098_00_12	revision A



SECTION XX



SECTION YY

revisions

ref	date		drawn
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title
SECTIONS AS PROPOSED

scale	1:200 @ A2	
date	23/10/25	
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drawing number	2098_00_12	revision A

3. PLANNING POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

i) Statutory Provisions and Planning Policies

3.1 Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires planning applications and decisions to have regard to the provisions of the development plan so far as they are material to the proposal. Other relevant material considerations must also be taken into account. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that *“if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”*.

3.2 The relevant part of the Development Plan for the area comprises the policies contained in the Mid Sussex District Plan (adopted March 2018) and the West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan (made in April 2015).

3.3 Relevant District Plan Policies are:

- DP1: Sustainable Economic Development
- DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
- DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- DP21: Transport
- DP26: Character and Design
- DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- DP37: Biodiversity
- DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage

3.4 Relevant Neighbourhood Plan Policies are:

- WHP1: Landscape

3. PLANNING POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.5 Other material policy considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) updated in December 2024.

3.6 Relevant supplementary planning documents are:

- Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD (2020)
- High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024
- West Sussex County Council Guidance on Parking at New Developments (September 2020)

3.7 The Council are in the process of completing the Mid Sussex Local Plan Review which is at an advanced stage, but has not yet been adopted.

ii) **The principle of the proposal**

3.8 There are no national or local planning policies which specifically relate to the proposed development. Ultimately, a planning judgement must be made to determine whether the benefits of the proposal would outweigh the harm as part of the overall planning balance. If so, the application should be approved.

3.9 The existing car parking arrangements present a highway safety issue daily and as such, there is a justified need for extending the existing school car park. The proposal has been sensitively designed to minimise landscape impact any ensure that there is no other harm arising from the proposal (as outlined in the remainder of this section).

3.10 As such, is it considered that the benefits of the proposal would clearly and demonstrably outweigh any harm and as such, the proposal should be supported.

3. PLANNING POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

iii) Impact upon the character and appearance of the area

3.11 The application site lies between the existing school car park and the sand school menage. The large equestrian and land management centre will also be located to the south east of the site once constructed. As such, the site is surrounded by existing and soon-to-be brownfield land, effectively comprising an infill plot. As the proposal would improve highway safety at a school in a rural location, it is considered that this is a suitable use of land.

3.12 The new development would be at ground level only and to minimise landscape harm, the surface would be formed of grasscrete (or equivalent) which would blend into the surrounding landscape. The final surface would be confirmed via a standard pre-commencement planning condition.

3.13 There is an established hedgerow along the northern boundary with only approximately 2 metres being removed to widen the existing site access. In a similar arrangement to the existing car park, a native hedgerow would be planted centrally between the four parking rows from north to south to help retain the rural aesthetic. Two additional hedgerows would also be planted along the southern and eastern boundaries to provide natural screening from beyond the site.

3.14 As such, the proposal would result in low levels of landscape and visual harm. Indeed, the car park would only be fully occupied for short periods during the day (during drop off and collection times) and only during term time. For the remainder of the time, the grasscrete surface would blend into the surrounding landscape.

3. PLANNING POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

iv) Impact upon residential amenities

- 3.15 There are no neighbouring dwellings within the vicinity of the site. There would be no increase in trip generation arising from the proposal so there would be no impact upon residents along the access track.

v) Highways impact

- 3.16 The proposal seeks to alleviate existing highway safety issues at Philpots Manor School. As demonstrated by the photographs of page 5, the existing car park is at full capacity all day during term time. As such, there is little or no car parking available at drop of and collection times which results in congestion and highway safety issues. Therefore, the proposal would result in a highway safety improvement. It should be noted that the proposal is not to facilitate an increase in pupil capacity, so there will be no increase in trip generation arising from the proposal.

- 3.17 Each parking space would be the standard size of 2.4m wide and 4.8m deep. The spaces at the end of each row would be 3m wide.

- 3.18 The access would be 5m wide.

- 3.19 The access routes to the parking spaces would be 6m wide to enable convenient manoeuvring.

vii) Ecology

- 3.20 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken for the site. This confirmed that there would be no harmful impact upon protected ecological species subject to standard mitigation and enhancement measures which can be controlled via standard planning conditions.

viii) Biodiversity net gain

- 3.21 A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Report has been submitted with the application. This confirms that

3. PLANNING POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

subject to the proposed hedgerow planting there would be a net gain of 57.68% for hedgerow units. It is proposed that an additional area of enhanced grassland meadow would be provided and maintained on an area of land to the south east of the application site. This would create a net gain of 13.40% for habitat units.

- 3.22 The area of enriched grassland meadow would be provided on the land surrounding the new land management centre and will provide an additional relevant educational offering for pupils.

ix) Flood risk and drainage

- 3.23 A Surface Water Drainage Strategy has been submitted with the application.
- 3.24 The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk from all types of flooding.

- 3.25 The car park would be formed of a permeable grasscrete (or similar) paving system. Rainfall falling onto the grasscrete surface will infiltrate directly through the permeable structure and underlying granular sub-base into the natural ground beneath. The system will therefore operate as a self-draining surface, without the need for a positive piped outfall. Any excess runoff generated during extreme rainfall will disperse naturally across adjacent grassed areas, consistent with the existing overland flow regime.

- 3.26 Hydraulic modelling undertaken using Causeway Flow has assumed an infiltration rate of 1.0×10^{-5} m/s (0.036 m/hr), representing a conservative value for the local soil conditions. Based on this infiltration rate, a 500 mm deep permeable sub-base is required to accommodate the critical 1 in 100 year storm event with 45% climate change allowance to ensure adequate temporary storage prior to infiltration. The subbase will consist of clean,

3. PLANNING POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

open-graded aggregate (Type 3 or similar) underlain by a permeable geotextile to prevent migration of fines.

- 3.27 Any exceedance flow during exceptional rainfall events will remain contained within the car park footprint and surrounding grassed margins. Given the open nature of the site and the gently sloping topography towards the south-east, any shallow overland flow will dissipate safely without posing flood risk to adjacent buildings or land.
- 3.28 As the car park is classified as a less vulnerable development under the Planning Practice Guidance, temporary surface water ponding during intense rainfall events is considered acceptable and does not represent an unacceptable flood risk.
- 3.29 A detailed surface water drainage strategy can be made the subject of a standard pre-commencement planning condition if considered necessary.

x) Summary and the planning balance

- 3.30 The proposal is to extend the existing parking facilities at Philpots Manor School to improve highway safety in a low-impact manner. The existing car park is at full capacity during the day, presenting significant congestion during drop-off and pick-up times. The proposal would alleviate this issue entirely, resulting in a clear highway safety betterment. The new parking area would be formed of grasscrete (or similar) to minimise landscape impact. New native hedgerow planting would be integrated into the scheme, providing natural screening and biodiversity enhancements.
- 3.31 Overall, the benefits would clearly and demonstrably outweigh and harm and as such, in line with national and local planning policies, this application should be granted.