

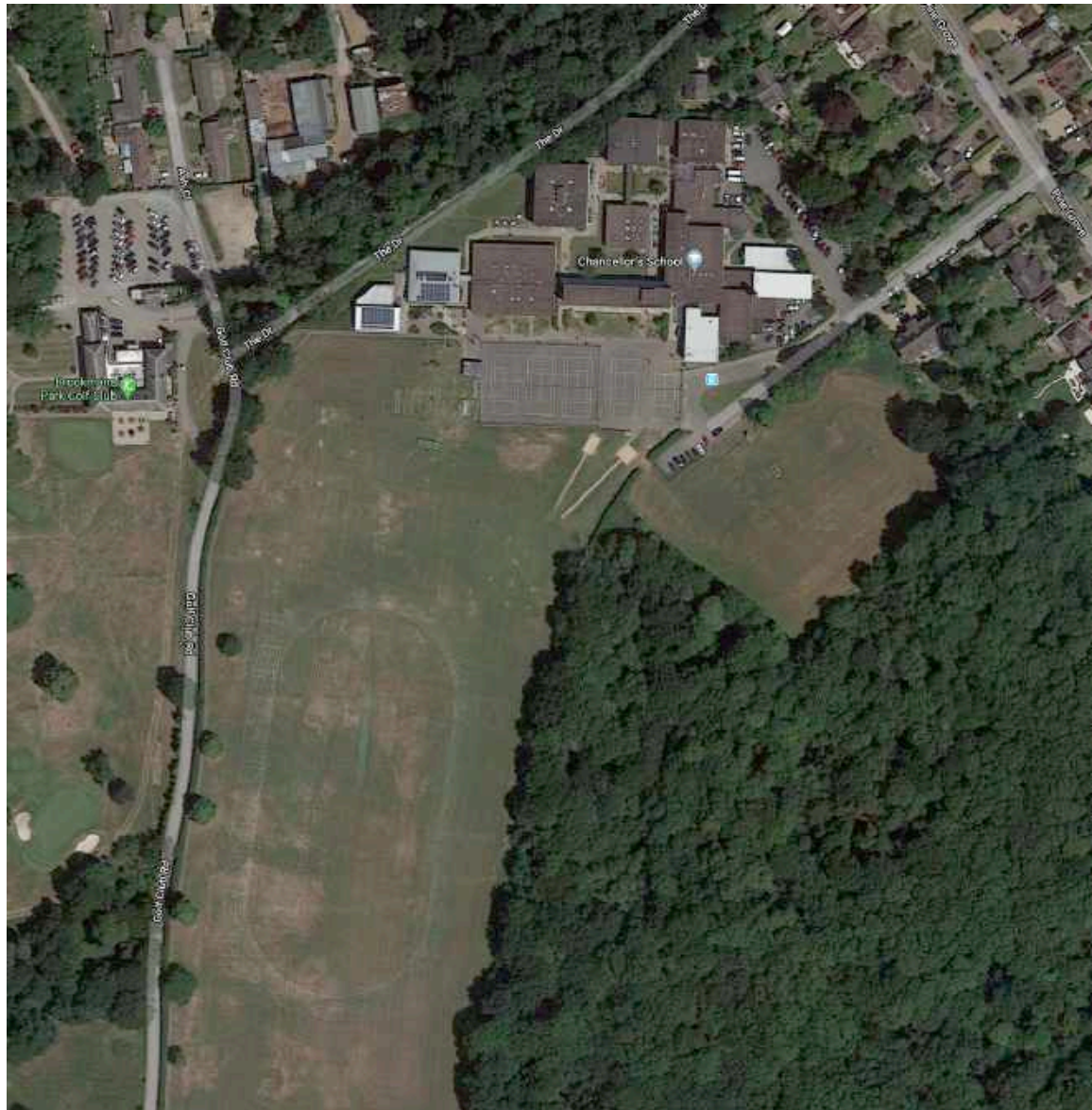
2154 Chancellor's School, Hertfordshire.

Chancellor's School

**New External Dining Canopy**

**Planning Application Submission, September 2020**

**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**



## **Background**

Chancellor's School is a mixed 11-18 secondary school with sixth form located on Brookmans Park in Hertfordshire. The school has an excellent reputation for providing the very best education for all its students. The school has a current mixed intake of approximately 1200 boys and girls aged 11-18 years.

In 2017 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) identified an increased demand for secondary spaces in the area. Given the lack of alternatives for Hatfield, the expansion of Chancellor's was considered essential. Therefore in the Spring Term of 2018 Chancellor's school agreed to admit an additional 30 pupils to each year group from September 2019 onwards.

To plan for the necessary expansion, the scope and organisation of the existing buildings was reviewed and it was determined that significantly greater numbers of pupils attended the school than it was originally designed for. A shortfall of classroom spaces as well as the areas of teaching space was placing a strain on already limited undersized facilities; and with the promise of an additional 210 pupils, the provision of additional accommodation was deemed critical.

Lyster Grillet & Harding Ltd (LGH) were appointed to design and deliver a single new build block to provide 7 classrooms and Sports Hall facilities, as well as a replacement hard-play area of x4 sports pitches, and new parking bays.

Planning approval ref 6/2019/0085/MAJ was granted for these works on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

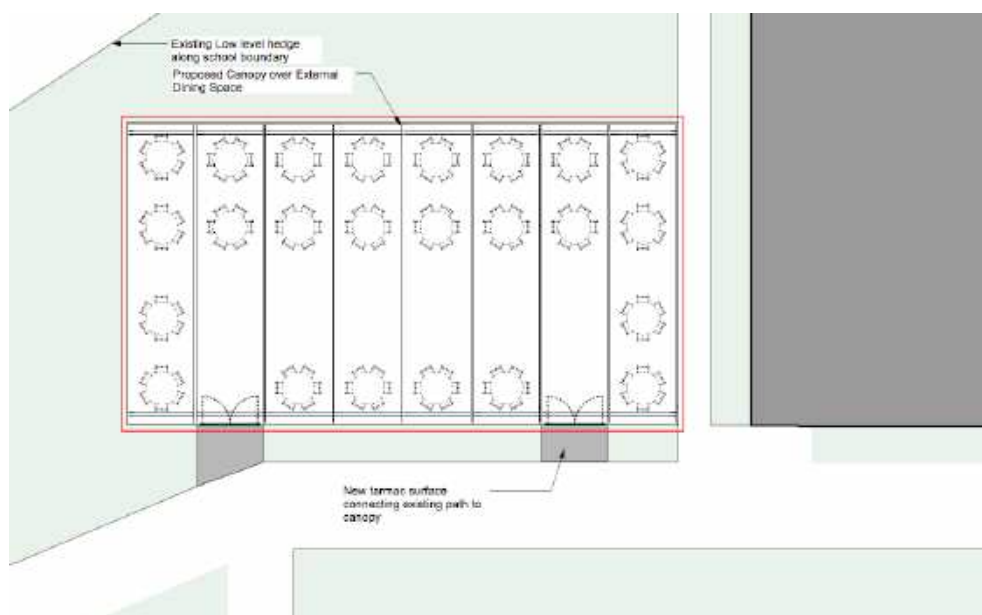
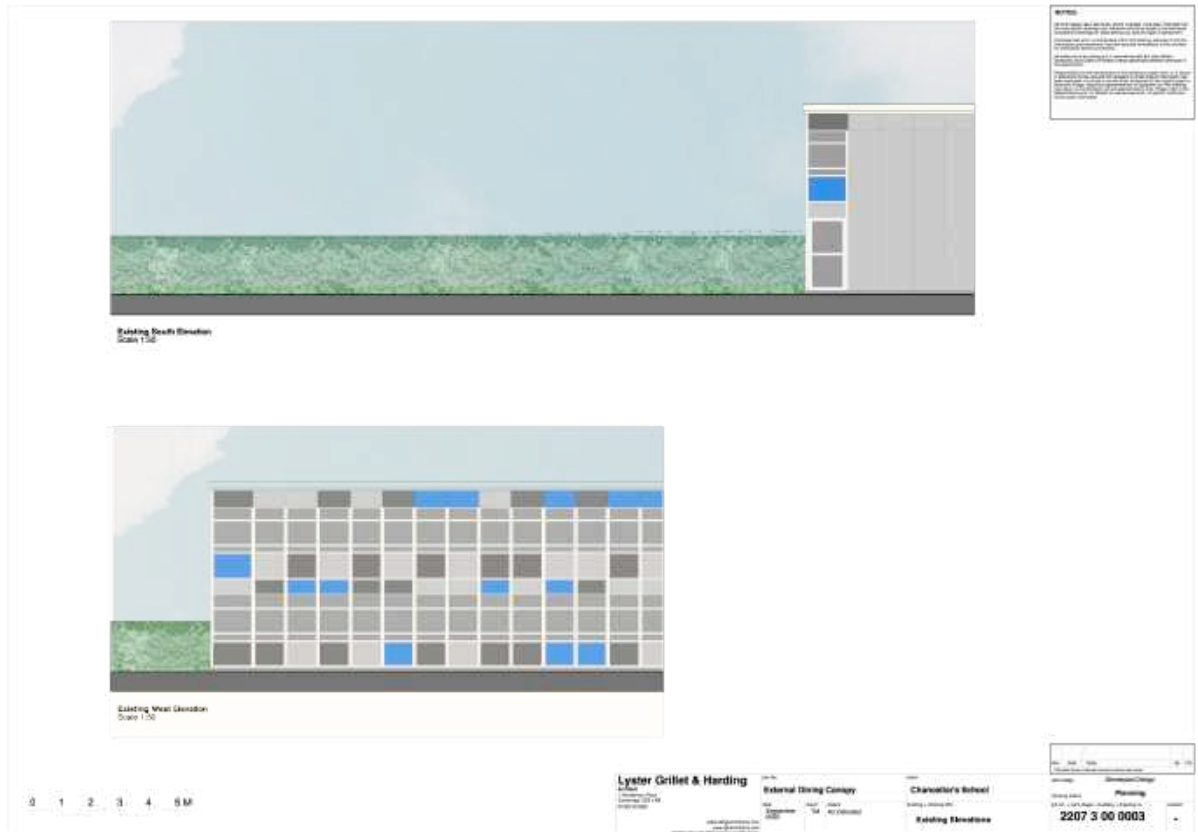
Due to limited funding and priority teaching requirements these original approved plans did not include for core provisions such as additional dining space requirements etc. The additional pupils at the school have placed increased pressure on dining facilities and as such the school have identified the need for additional space to accommodate pupils and in particular those with packed lunches. In a effort to offer varied and differing dining facilities whilst also spreading the concentration of pupils throughout the campus a new canopied social and dining area has been proposed. This in turn allows more pupils eating school meals to make use of the school's catering facilities in the existing dining hall whilst those eating packed lunches have the option of eating in the new canopied facility.

The site is located just south east of Hatfield along Pine Grove off the A1000 Great North Road. The school buildings are positioned behind a row of residential properties adjacent to Pine Grove. The playing fields are located to the rear of the school buildings.

To the rear of the school grounds is Brookmans Park Golf Club separated from the site by Golf Club Road

## Proposals

Further to the school's continuing efforts to provide more suitable accommodation for the additional students, the school are looking to utilise their outdoor space more effectively and create protected cover to a new outdoor dining area.

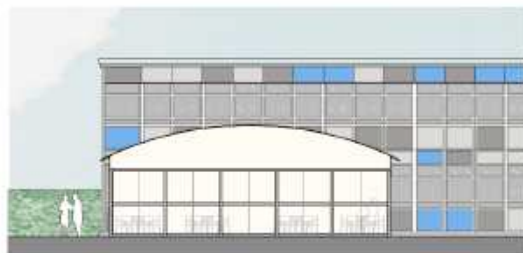


Proposed plan

The proposal is for the construction of an external standalone canopied area to provide social and gathering space in addition to a covered eating area. The canopy will offer protection in terms of wind and rain but will also provide sun shading in the summer months. The canopy will measure approximately 11m x 20m and will offer further protection from the elements by incorporating enclosed, translucent polycarbonate side panels.



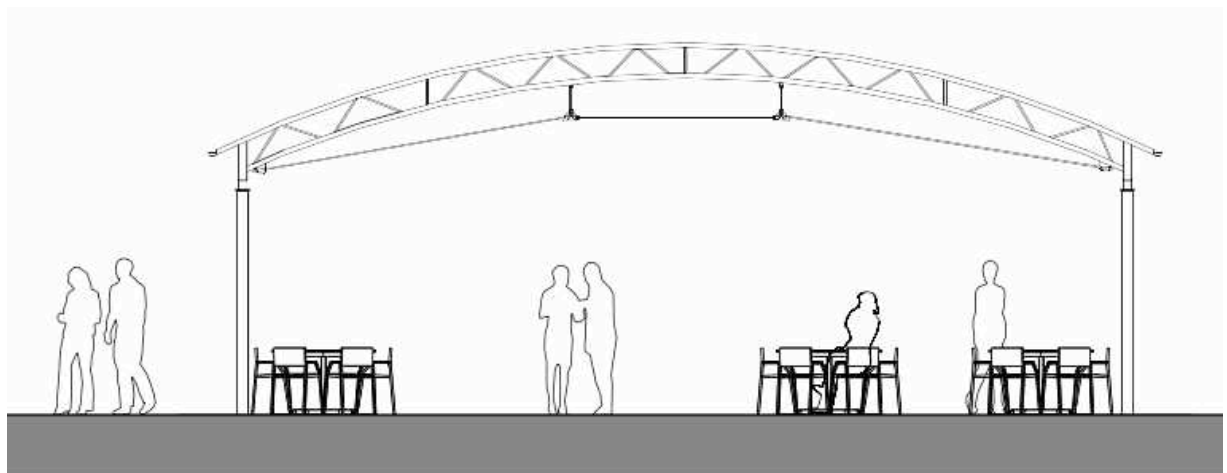
Proposed South Elevation  
Scale 1:50



Proposed West Elevation  
Scale 1:50

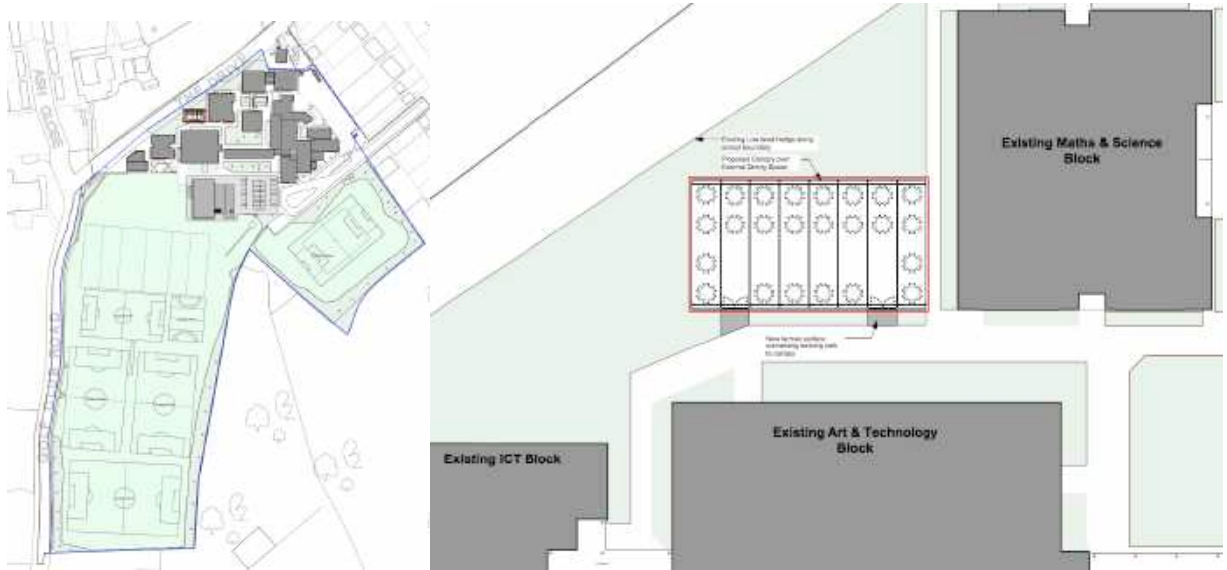
Proposed South and West Elevation

The new canopy will create much needed additional new covered space for students to socialise and eat, within a protected outdoor environment in all weathers. Furthermore, the proposed works will enable more effective use of the existing site whilst dispersing students across the site and avoiding focussed concentration of pupils at lunch and break times around the existing dining hall area.



Proposed Section

## Location and Site



Proposed Location and site plan

The area proposed for the siting of the new canopy is currently an informal area of grass which is little used particularly in the wet and colder months of the year. It is used to landscape the route from the Art and Technology Block to the Maths and Science Block. This is to the North West of the site as shown.

The location has been chosen to integrate the canopy within view of the existing buildings, whilst avoiding loss of any playing field; of which a portion is already being given over to the new Sports and Teaching Facilities. A further advantage to this particular site is that it encourages social gatherings to move away from the central hub of the school, particularly away from the library, where break time noise may prove distracting and ease pressure on the existing dining facilities.

This proposed site also has additional benefits by positioning of the canopy far away from residential neighbouring properties, generally located to the north and east. Positioning away from neighbours will control the level of noise pollution and will generally have the least impact in both construction, and use.





Existing Building Stock at Chancellor's School

### **Appearance and Materiality**

The existing school buildings are mainly flat roofed with only a small number of pitched roof buildings to the west. The main theme of a number of the flat roofed buildings is glazed curtain walling with opaque panels using the schools traditional colours of blue, light and dark grey. There is also buff coloured brickwork with red banding evident on other nearby buildings.

The massing of the canopy has been designed so as to sit comfortably within the context of the existing buildings, remaining sympathetic to existing building configurations and heights.

The use of the canopy has been considered in order to meet the need for what is essentially external dining. The canopy is to be a lightweight steel framed barrel vault structure with a curved roof and a translucent tension fabric covering. The translucent roof material and lightweight structure will provide a light and airy environment. Transparent cladding to the walls will provide simple weather protection whilst offering good views in and from within the new structure. Good levels of supervision will be possible from within the canopied area and also from external areas including adjacent school buildings.

Rainwater runoff from the roof will be collected in aluminium guttering which connects to existing main storm drainage beneath a new area of paving to provide a suitable, durable base for the canopy area.



Manufacturer's precedent

The proposed site is located within the existing school building stock and makes use of an existing, informal, residual area of what is currently underused grassland.

## **Sustainability**

### **Access**

Positioned towards the edge of the school boundary, the new dining area will not adversely affect pedestrian access to any building. The new canopied area will be accessible via an existing circulation route between the Maths and Art Blocks. The proposals represent logical and easily navigable solutions to complement the existing school's campus.

To access the outdoor dining, students can cross the central hub of the school from the canteen in the east, or from the playing fields in the south; all the while utilising the access routes already afforded to the site.

The proposed works themselves, have been designed and detailed in line with the requirements set out in approved documents M; so all works are fully accessible to disabled users and will provide level access and egress to all.

## Planning Policy

In addressing the issue of 'Need' for these extensions and also why this site in the Green Belt has been chosen we have considered the proposals in the context of the following key issues:

### Relevant Planning Policies:

1. The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) applies to all developments.
2. Relevant Saved and Emerging Local Plan Policies are outlined below Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:
  3. SD1 – Sustainable Development GBSP1 – Definition of the Green Belt
  4. GBSP2 – Towns and Specified Settlements
  5. R1 – Maximising the Use of Previously Developed Land
  6. R11 – Biodiversity and Development
  7. R20 – Light Pollution
  8. M14 – Parking Standards for New Development
  9. D1 – Quality of Design
  10. D2 – Character and Context
  11. D8 – Landscaping OS2 – Playing Pitch Provision
  12. CLT8 – New and Extended Education Facilities
  13. RA10 – Landscape Regions and Character Areas

### Other supplementary policies:

Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 (SDG)

Supplementary Planning Guidance – Parking Standards 2004 (SPG) Interim Policy for Car Parking Standards and Garage Sizes 2014 (Interim Parking Policy)

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission August 2016:

SP1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

SP3 – Settlement Strategy and Green Belt Boundaries

SP4 – Transport and Travel

SADM2 – Highway Network and Safety

SP6 – Community Services and Facilities

SADM7 – New Community Services and Facilities, and Losses of Community Services and Facilities

SP9 – Place-making and High Quality Design

SADM11 – Amenity and Layout

SADM12 – Parking, Servicing and Refuse

SADM16 – Ecology and Landscape

SADM18 – Environmental Pollution

SADM34 – Development in the Green Belt

In reviewing the relevant policy documents together with the Pre planning advice received to date, the main points to address when considering this type of development are as follows:

- **Green Belt:** Whether the proposal comprises appropriate development within the Green Belt and if not whether there are any very special circumstances to overcome the harm to the Green Belt.
- **Impact upon the character** and appearance of the area



- **Impact upon the amenities** of nearby occupiers

Addressing these issues in turn;

**Green Belt** - GBC1 Appropriate Development in the Green Belt

Paragraph 89 of the NPPF sets out forms of development that are appropriate within the Green Belt. The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan defines the greenbelt under Policy GBSP1 - Definition of the greenbelt.

The proposals are specifically located within the school building stock and previously approved developments. To this end the impact on the Green Belt is minimal and this is further reinforced given the nature of the configuration and height of the canopy.

We have considered other locations in the school grounds to site the canopy however we do not believe it is achievable elsewhere without reduction in area of playing field or positioning it in a more significant visual site along the boundary and further impacting upon the neighbours.

Policy R1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 refers to:

*- Maximising the Use of Previously Developed Land*

*In order to make the best use of land in the district, the Council will require development to take place on land which has been previously used or developed. Development will only be permitted on 'greenfield' land where it can be demonstrated that no suitable opportunities exist on previously used or developed land.*

The proposed location of the canopy minimises potential impact on neighbours and harm to the Green Belt. The proposed site is set to the rear of the school out of general view from neighbouring properties and positioned nearby existing built structures to retain a sense of development, as far as is possible, close to the curtilage of the existing buildings.

Given the siting of the structure we do not believe the new canopy proposals will constitute a harmful impact on the Green Belt.

Whilst it is believed that the canopy represents minimal impact on the Green Belt it is also felt that very special circumstances exist. The School were asked by Herts County Council to expand to help accommodate a county wide increase in Secondary pupils. This was documented in greater detail in the more recently approved application ref: 6/2019/0085/MAJ in July 2019. This proposed development is as a direct response to the expansion of the pupil numbers in the school and accordingly it is proposed that very special circumstances exist in relation to the application for the new canopied structure.

**Impact upon the character and appearance of the area.**

Consideration has been given to the careful positioning of the proposals within the school grounds regarding impact on both the school and the neighbouring properties and consequently the Green Belt. The existing site is severely restricted in terms of potential locations; particularly within the actual curtilage of the existing building stock. Accordingly a

logical location within the curtilage of the existing buildings has been proposed which has adjacencies with the existing teaching blocks whilst any visual impact from outside of the site is minimised.

The proposed canopy is located away from the local residents and properties and as such has minimal impact on the character and appearance of the area.

### **Impact upon the amenities of nearby occupiers.**

Given the locations of the proposed canopy, it is considered that they will not have any adverse impact upon the amenities of neighbours or local residents. The nearest neighbouring residents are well separated so as to ensure that their living conditions are not adversely affected.

### **Summary**

The introduction of a dining canopy at Chancellor's School will improve the functionality of the existing outdoor space, whilst providing much needed additional, covered dining for the increased numbers of pupils. Rather than propose further developments within the sports playing field areas, the focus of this scheme is to utilise and rejuvenate an area of the school which is currently under used and that the school can offer without impacting other external or curriculum activities.

The positioning is considered appropriate, firstly to neighboring properties, but also to the school in use. No access routes to, or around the school are affected with the introduction of the canopy; and ultimately will offer the school a much needed, useful covered multiuse space.