



16 November 2011

Dear Resident,

I am writing to provide you with preliminary information about our plans for relocation of the Canterbury Steiner School to the former St. Augustine's Hospital site at Chartham and to invite you to our public exhibition.

You will be aware that the hospital site has been derelict for some 20 years and that the buildings suffer greatly from neglect and vandalism. The local authority has identified the site as being suitable for educational use and we believe that, through extensive repair and upgrading of the buildings, our proposals afford an opportunity to breathe new life into the site. If we are not successful, in line with Canterbury Council policy it may be considered for other forms of mixed-use development, with a hotel and conference centre as one such use.

Our plans are focused initially on Oak House (the main building), which would become the centre for the school and also encompass a kindergarten and sixth form college. The wider grounds would include a play area, an area for animal husbandry and sports pitches. We would also develop a programme for proper management of the wider site for the benefit of nature. Community use of the facilities is very much a part of our plans.

While not part of our immediate proposals, we hope that it may be possible in the longer term to restore other derelict buildings to accommodate full arts and life skills programmes and to extend community use and create further local employment.

It is our proposal that the move to the St Augustine's site would be funded by the sale of our present site at Garlinge Green where, if planning is obtained, 12 family homes would be provided, some of them through conversion of the listed Manor House and Oast House. The overall footprint of the small development would be the same as that currently occupied by the school buildings. The development would be limited to the area of the existing school boundaries, retaining and supplementing the perimeter hedges and trees.

Currently, the school has 210 pupils between the ages of three and seventeen and employs more than 30 teachers and other staff. Our intention is to remain at this level until completely re-established on the new site. The relocation would solve our considerable accommodation problems and allow us to go forward in a far more efficient way to meet future educational requirements.

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The breadth of our curriculum is limited by our present facilities, some of which are nearing the point where further maintenance becomes financially unviable. At St. Augustine's, we would have a sustainable future from which to establish a more economic and viable facility in an environment ideally suited for our style of school.

We recognise that traffic movement is an obvious area of potential concern, given that the existing approved access to the site is via Beech Avenue, Updown Way and Candles Way. We have been advised by the highway authority that the roadways have been designed and built with the capacity to cope with the level of traffic likely to use the proposed school site. We are, nonetheless, keen to explore other options, including a possible direct access to Chartham Downs Road. We have discussed this issue with Chartham Parish Council and will now explore it further.

We hope that it will be possible to submit the two inter-dependent planning applications that make up this project to Canterbury City Council before Christmas. As a precursor to that, we are planning an exhibition at Chartham Village Hall between 4pm and 8pm on Monday 5th December and hope you will be able to come and view the proposals and discuss them with members of our design team.

In the meantime, we have created a project page on our website www.canterburysteinerschool.co.uk where you can view a presentation which includes plans and artist impressions. We will welcome your comments via the website or direct to us at the exhibition.

Yours faithfully,



Simon Hewson

Chairman of Trustees

Canterbury Steiner School