

Green light for major education campus at Whitecliffe, Ebbsfleet, Kent, by Lee Evans Partnership



Proposed Alkerden CoE Academy education campus - Secondary School Fastrack view of Sports Centre and Secondary School Entrance

Lee Evans Partnership's (LEP's) design for the Alkerden CoE Academy education campus in Whitecliffe, Ebbsfleet Garden City, Dartford, Kent, has been granted planning consent by Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC).

The campus, to be funded and delivered by landowner and master developer Henley Camland, will offer more than 2,200 places to nursery, primary and secondary school pupils, as well as serve as a key community sports facility. It is projected to complete in the summer of 2023.

The scheme includes provision for a nursery, a new two-form-entry primary school, an eight-form-entry secondary school, a dual-use community sports centre with external sports pitches and associated ancillary facilities for the emerging local community. The sports facilities will support more than 500 users at any particular time and will be designed to a Sports England specification. The combined schools and associated facilities will occupy an 11.1-hectare site, making it one of Kent's largest educational facilities.



Proposed Alkerden CoE Academy education campus – Secondary School Fastrack view of key landmark corner

The officer's recommendation states that: 'The application demonstrates a strong commitment to design quality at every scale... the urban design of the scheme is exemplary, balancing the security and safeguarding needs of a modern school with the ambition to use the buildings to open up visual connections with the community and frame surrounding streets... the architecture is carefully considered, richly referencing local colours, textures and agricultural built forms... (and) an equivalent level of care and consideration has also been shown in the environmental performance, with both schools managing to achieve a BREEAM Excellent target rating...the layout responds to the steep topography of the site and reconciles the huge complexities of the secondary, primary and nursery programmes within a well-structured and legible campus, with distinctive and characterful buildings providing landmarks for the village.'

Lee Evans Partnership's London Partner, Mark Nolan, said: "This is great news - this project is the result of close collaboration between the design team, Henley Camland, the operator - Aletheia Anglican Academies Trust - and Kent County Council, culminating in approval by the planners at EDC. We have imagined the campus as both an educational and civic centre. Careful consideration has been given to access and circulation routes across the site's sloping landscape. These level changes, together with the use of various textures and materials, will help to engender a sense of place. The quality of this new learning environment will greatly benefit pupils and students as well as providing Ebbsfleet with a state-of-the-art sports and community facility.

The design places a strong emphasis on sustainability: the use of cross-laminated timber (CLT) as the key structural material in the primary school limits the amount of embodied energy in the building as well as minimising the use of VOCs (volatile organic compounds) in the construction process. The shape of the primary school's rooftop ventilation cowls reference the oast houses and kilns once typical of the Kent landscape, allowing fresh air to circulate throughout the building. Photo voltaic cells across the roof areas will enable the campus to draw some of its energy requirements from a renewable source. The orientation and elevations of the building will maximise natural daylight, thermal comfort and air quality, while also limiting the school's energy usage and carbon footprint."



Proposed Alkerden CoE Academy education campus – Secondary School: View of west vehicular entrance to the campus

Lee Evans Partnership's London Partner, Mark Nolan, continues: "The design places a strong emphasis on sustainability: the use of cross-laminated timber (CLT) as the key structural material in the primary school limits the amount of embodied energy in the building as well as minimising the use of VOCs (volatile organic compounds) in the construction process. The shape of the primary school's rooftop ventilation cowls reference the oast houses and kilns once typical of the Kent landscape, allowing fresh air to circulate throughout the building. Photo voltaic cells across the roof areas will enable the campus to draw some of its energy requirements from a renewable source. The orientation and elevations of the building will maximise natural daylight, thermal comfort and air quality, while also limiting the school's energy usage and carbon footprint."

Peter Nelson, Director of Henley Camland (landowner, client and overall project director) adds: "We are delighted to bring forward Alkerden CofE Academy, this ultra-modern education hub sitting at the heart of the Whitecliffe Development. Aside from the advanced education provision, the community will be able to access the superb sporting facilities during out-of-school hours. Easily accessible via Fastrack and the network of cycleways and footpaths nearby, it means all users will have access to excellent facilities supporting healthy and active lifestyles, as well as education."



Proposed Alkerden CoE Academy education campus – Secondary School: Fastrack Secondary school entrance."



Proposed Alkerden CoE Academy education campus – Primary School: view along pedestrian spine



Proposed Alkerden CoE Academy education campus – Primary School: Primary School view along pedestrian spine



Proposed Alkerden CoE Academy education campus – site section through pedestrian spine, connecting Fastrack to the Education Hub

Stephen Carey, CEO, Aletheia Anglican Academies Trust comments: “We are delighted to have been selected as the Academy Operator for such an exciting and prestigious project. The new buildings and facilities will allow us to provide a truly first-class educational and social experience for the first generation of young people residing in the Garden City. We understand the existing surrounding suburban area well and will use our knowledge and experience to ensure that we fully utilise this opportunity to promote social cohesion between the new and existing communities. It has been a pleasure working closely with all members of the project team and I believe we have collectively delivered plans for a learning campus that will facilitate an exceptional all-through education from nursery to post 16-provision.”

A planning application for the development was submitted to Ebbsfleet Development Corporation in December 2019 and the project team subsequently worked closely with EDC officers to address technical issues. Following resolution of the Section 106 Agreement, it is hoped that work on the new project will begin in the summer of 2021, with the campus beginning operations in a phased programme from September 2023.

Notes to editors

Project Overview

The development – on the site of the former Eastern Quarry where chalk was once quarried, is currently one of the largest development sites in the UK. Over 6,250 new homes are planned for the site, alongside additional schools, community amenities, commercial and employment ventures, and leisure facilities. Once the education campus is completed, the facilities will be managed by the Aletheia Anglican Academies Trust.

The scale and design of the scheme will reference the site's industrial and agricultural heritage, with the brickwork of the primary school drawing on the original reddish-brown quarry topsoil, and the brickwork of the secondary school reflecting the underlying chalk landscape. This approach allows two distinctive elements to be created within a single, shared identity. A landmark 'corner' has been incorporated into the design to serve as a public-facing 'showcase' for the work of students at the secondary school. The site has been arranged along a central spine which connects the two schools with the external sports facilities, as well as with the wider local community. The primary school classrooms have been arranged to be north-facing, allowing the provision of a greater number of external south-facing play areas. Self-contained 'cloistered' spaces will also be included where students can meet and interact.

The primary school and nursery will accommodate 446 pupils aged 3–11, while the secondary school will provide space for 1,680 students aged 11–18 years and will include a specialist-resourced provision for pupils whose principal challenge to learning in a conventional school environment is a diagnosis of autism.

A dual-use sports centre will be incorporated into the secondary school design to support the requirements of both students and the local community, and will comprise of a four-court sports hall, dance studio, fitness rooms and a café/bar area. Externally, four full-sized grass pitches will be provided, together with an all-weather pitch, running track and field facility. 'Fastrack', a rapid bus transport system, will provide efficient and dedicated bus routes to the campus, linking key local destinations.



Alkerden CoE Academy education campus - north elevation

Other key features include:

- Encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport, whereby children, parents/ carers, teachers and support staff will be encouraged to walk, cycle or use buses as far as possible.
- Incorporating the 'Five Capitals Model for Sustainability' to capture the multi-faceted benefits of Alkerden Education Campus in the context of its social, physical, natural, human and economic 'capital', and to identify the project's sustainability aspirations with the aim of ensuring these are included within the proposed nursery, primary and secondary schools, and community sports campus.
- Exploring the use of several energy-efficient fabric and systems options in the design approach to determine the most effective strategy for minimising the development's energy demands and thereby helping to reduce the scheme's embedded and operational carbon footprint.
- Creating a distinctive identity for the 6th form centre, which will be housed to the south west of the site and will include a roof terrace. The design rationale is to create an aspirational space for younger students.
- Incorporating a series of external terraces for teaching and social interaction.

The campus will be built alongside separate plans to deliver new housing in the villages of Alkerden and Ashmere which collectively, with Castle Hill, form the Whitecliffe Development Site, the largest in Ebbsfleet Garden City. As part of a separate application, it is intended to construct a community hub on a nearby site. This hub will provide a variety of essential community facilities, including a 'Life Long Learning Centre', public library, information centre, adult education services, a Job Centre and a base for local Police youth services.



Alkerden CoE Academy education campus - south and west elevations



Alkerden CoE Academy education campus will occupy the site of the former Eastern Chalk Quarry

Project Team

Client
 Architect
 Academy Operator
 Statutory Authority
 Project Manager
 Principal Designer
 Quantity Surveyor
 Planning Consultant
 Services Engineer
 BREEAM Assessor
 Acoustic Engineer
 Air Quality Consultant
 Daylighting Consultant
 Sustainability Consultant
 ICT Consultant
 Structural Engineer
 FF&E Consultant
 Fire Engineer
 Transport Consultant
 Access Consultant
 Independent Building Control
 Landscape Architect

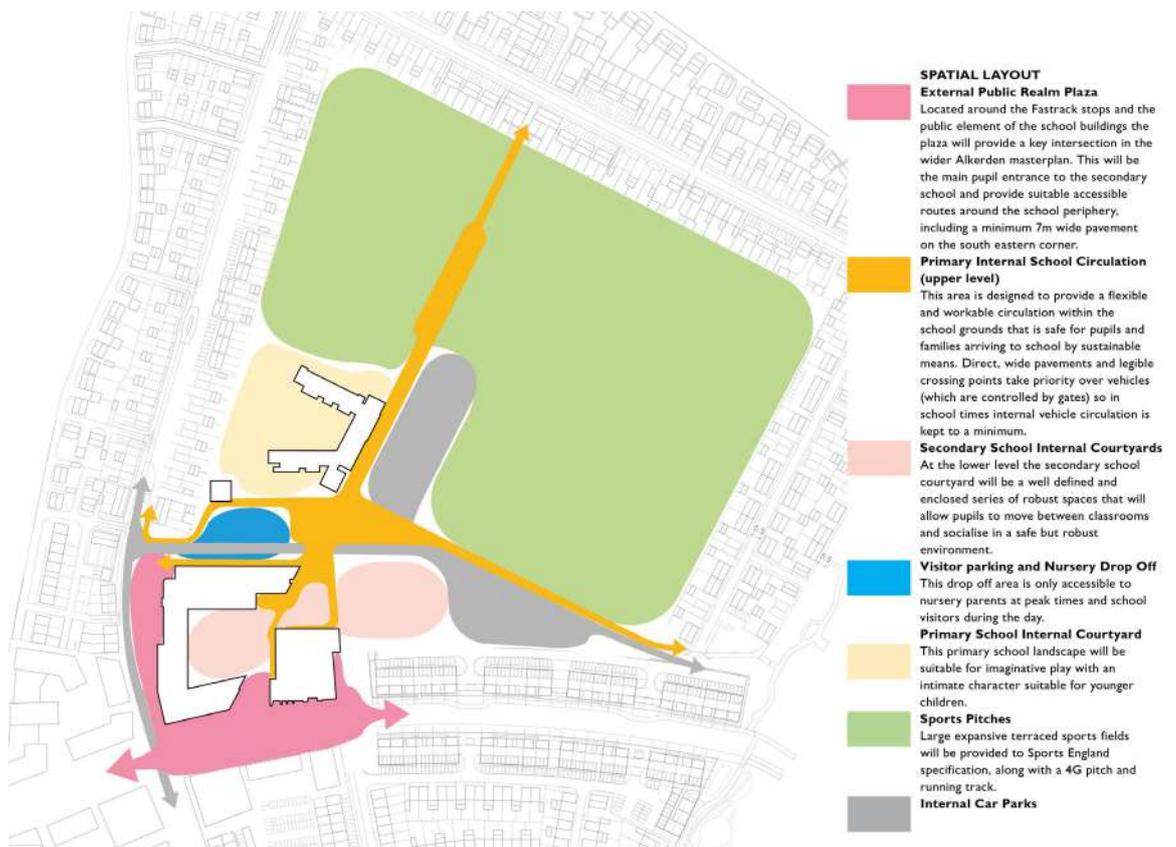
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 Lee Evans Partnership
 The Aletheia Anglican Academies Trust
 Ebbsfleet Development Corporation
 Academy Consulting
 Academy Consulting
 Academy Consulting
 CBRE
 Hoare Lee
 Heyne Tillett Steel
 Red Apple
 BWC Fire Ltd
 Stantec (formerly Peter Brett Associates)
 Jane Simpson Access Ltd
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Alkerden CoE Academy education campus - spatial layout diagrams



Alkerden CoE Academy education campus - site context



Alkerden CoE Academy education campus - aerial view of Primary School



Alkerden CoE Academy education campus - aerial view of Secondary School & Dual Use Sports Centre



Alkerden CoE Academy education campus - Primary school entrance, view from pedestrian spine