Dear Peter,

‘Cabin C’, Castle Academy, St Georges Street, Northampton NN1 2TR

Siting of single-storey temporary modular building (‘Cabin C’) from temporary teaching accommodation (Part revision to 17/00019/CCDFUL).

CC Town Planning have been retained to prepare and submit a planning application for the above development. Please therefore find attached a full planning application for the above works, which has been submitted to the relevant Local Planning Authority (LPA), Northamptonshire County Council, via the Planning Portal (ref. PP-06227452). The application seeks full planning permission for:

‘Approval for the siting of single-storey temporary modular building (‘Cabin C’) to provide an additional 2 no. classrooms and ancillary accommodation, which has extant planning permission (application refs. 17/00019/CCDFUL & N/2017/0413, dated 25th May 2017) as part of the wider Northampton International Academy (NIA) temporary accommodation works, for siting in an alternative location on Castle Academy site’.

The following supporting documents have been submitted with the application:

Supporting Drawings and Documents

- NIA-001 Rev G- Site Location Plan 1:1250@A3;
- AI-2223 012 Rev F - Proposed Site Plan 1:500@A1 & 1:1000@A3;
- NIA-202 Rev T01 – Phase 3 – Cabin C Existing, Demo and Proposed 1:50@A1;
- NIA-301 Rev B – Phase 3 Proposed Elevations – Cabin C & D 1:50@A1;
- Application forms and certificates and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) forms; and,
- Arrangements for the payment of the planning application registration fee in the sum of £770.00 have been made separately.
Planning, Design and Access Statement

Need for Development

The former Royal Mail sorting office is currently undergoing comprehensive conversion and alteration works to change its use to large school to provide teaching accommodation and classrooms for student age groups from reception age to Sixth Form. However, the works will not be completed for the upcoming academic year (commencing September 2017). It has been necessary to provide and site new temporary classrooms, teaching accommodation, support accommodation, catering facilities and associated works within the Northampton International Academy (NIA) and Castle Academy sites whilst the conversion works are completed. Attention is drawn to the fact that the temporary buildings (including ‘Cabin C’) are already subject to an extant planning permission.

Essentially this application seeks planning permission for the siting of ‘Cabin C’ in an amended location to that approved under 17/00019/DDCFUL but still within the Castle Academy site.

The accompanying submission is made following the grant of full planning permission refs. 17/00019/CCDFUL (Northamptonshire County Council reference) and N/2017/0413 (Northampton Borough Council) in respect of the provision of temporary modular classrooms, support accommodation, catering facility and associated external and off site works with regard to both Northampton International Academy and Castle Academy sites.

The accompanying planning application seeks permission for a temporary consent that accords with the wider temporary planning permission for the provision of temporary classrooms and teaching accommodation at the Castle Academy and adjoining Northampton International Academy site.

It is necessary to ‘relocate’ the modest ‘Cabin C’ within the Castle Academy site. This however results in no new planning issues compared to the provision of temporary teaching and support accommodation across the wider site as assessed and approved in the recent planning permission.

The following Summary Statement provides an overview of the development proposals, which relates to the siting of the modular building (‘Cabin C’). The following Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying plans and drawings.

The Site and Surrounding Area

The application site is located within the Semilong area on the northern edge of Northampton Town Centre. The site forms part of the Castle Academy, a 2-form entry primary school located along St George’s Street. The Castle Academy comprises a single-storey main building with ancillary modular buildings and playground, sports pitches and parking area.

The former Royal Mail sorting office which is of substantial scale and massing, lies to the north-east of the site and is visually prominent within the area. The sorting office is currently being converted to a large secondary school which is scheduled to open in September 2018. This application is associated with, and necessitated by, the works currently being undertaken to convert the former sorting office to secondary school (the ‘Northampton International Academy’ (NIA)). Provision of the ‘Cabin C’ is required to accommodate the required level of classrooms and teaching accommodation/facilities whilst the conversion works are undertaken.

The Gibraltar Barracks (an army cadet barracks) and Gibraltar Court (residential flats) are located to the east of the Castle Academy. The Barrack Road Conservation...
Area is located to the north east of the site but lies a reasonable distance from the site itself.

To the south lies an area of light industrial office and warehouse buildings whilst a residential area lies to the west of the site. Overall the Castle Academy site lies in an area with a wide range and mix of uses, with the nearby former sorting office undergoing extensive conversion works to become a large secondary school.

**Planning History**

The site has an extensive planning and development history. The following planning applications are of relevance and set out in chronological order:

**Planning application ref. N/2010/0979**

A planning application seeking full planning permission for the demolition of former Royal Mail Transport Workshop and Change of Use of the former Royal Mail Sorting Office with associated alterations including a new atrium, car park deck and service ramp and yard to provide a foodstore/café was submitted in November 2010. During the LPA’s consideration of the application, concerns were raised in respect of the retail impact of the proposal. It was subsequently withdrawn by the applicant in June 2011.

**Planning application ref. N/2011/0998**

A resubmission application for the demolition of former Royal Mail Transport Workshop and Change of Use of the former Royal Mail sorting office with associated alterations to provide a foodstore (5,218 sq. metres net sales area) /café with associated works was submitted to NBC in October 2011. It was subsequently approved by the Council on 12th November 2012.

**Planning application refs. 14/00039/CCDFUL & N/2014/0757**

A new planning application in respect of the proposed conversion and extension of existing former Royal Mail sorting office building to provide a 420-place primary school, 1500 place secondary school with 300 place Sixth Form, as well as a private nursery, cafe, gym and 7 residential units, together with detailed demolition and external works was submitted to the County Council in June 2014. The application was approved on 29th October 2014.

**Planning application refs. 15/00099/CCDFUL & N/2016/0242**

An application seeking permission for the installation of three single storey temporary modular buildings to provide 12 classrooms and support accommodation for up to 360 pupils, and associated temporary external works was submitted in February 2016 and subsequently approved on 5th May 2016.

**Planning application refs. 17/00019/DDCFUL & N/2017/0413**

A planning application in respect of the Northampton International Academy for the installation of 1 no. 3-storey temporary modular building to provide classrooms and support accommodation for up to 400 secondary school pupils, together with the relocation and refurbishment of 2 no. existing single storey temporary modular buildings to provide music/drama classrooms and changing rooms for secondary school pupils. Associated external works to parking and play areas and off site works to facilitate pupil pick up and drop off at Mill Road, together with (in respect of the Castle Academy site) the installation of 2 no. single storey temporary modular buildings to provide temporary teaching accommodation. Installation of 1 no. temporary modular building to provide catering facility for Northampton International
Academy and Castle Academy, together with associated external works was submitted in March 2017. As a consultee of the planning application, NBC did not object to the scheme. Its Officer Report noted ‘the principle of an educational use on the overall site former Royal Mail site was established by the County Council’s approval in November 2014. Furthermore, approval was granted by the County Council in May 2016 for the installation of three temporary modular buildings. NBC raised no objections to either proposal on the basis of appropriate consideration of highways impacts and impacts on adjacent residential amenity, and the modular buildings being a temporary consent only….The proposal is in accordance with the aims of the NPPF which attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities advising a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement giving great weight to the need to create schools’ and ‘on the basis of the buildings being of a temporary nature to meet an existing educational need, and that the principle of educational development has been established on the majority of the site, the overall principle is considered acceptable’. The Report concludes ‘it is recognised that the temporary modular buildings are required to meet an existing education need prior to completion of building works for the main NIA.’

Following the closure of the Royal Mail sorting office after a fire in 2003 the site has been largely vacant. Planning permission was granted in 2012 to convert the building into a retail foodstore but the consent was not implemented. More recently detailed plans have been submitted to convert the entire building to a large secondary school. It has been demonstrated that there is an identified ongoing need for additional school accommodation and student places within Northampton and the conversion of the former Royal Mail sorting office to large secondary school will assist with meeting this need.

As noted above, over the past three years three substantial planning applications have been submitted in relation to the conversion of the sorting office to educational use, and the installation of temporary modular buildings for teaching accommodation, classrooms, school changing rooms, and other ancillary uses and associated works. Each of the applications has been approved by the relevant Local Planning Authority.

Works in respect of the conversion of the main former sorting office have commenced and are ongoing. However, the works will not be completed by the start of the academic year in September 2017 and the current timetable provides for completion by September 2018.

As a consequence, the current NIA reception year intake (who will move up to NIA Year 1 in September 2017), as well as the new 2017 NIA reception year intake, will be taught within the main Castle Academy building for the next academic year until the main NIA building is ready in September 2018. This will result in Castle Academy Year 5 and 6 pupils being taught within the mobile classrooms set out below, including Cabin C, until the completion of the NIA building.
Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that decisions on planning applications be taken in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is also reinforced within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at Paragraph 2.

In assessing the planning policy context, consideration has been given to the adopted development plan and supplementary planning guidance and also to national planning guidance. All relevant documents are set out below in order of national and local levels.

The National Planning Policy Framework

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF"), at Para 14, lies the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. In order for the delivery of sustainable development to be achieved, the NPPF contains a set of core principles (Para 17), which include (inter alia):

- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial and thriving local places the country needs…; and,
- Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;

There are three dimensions to sustainable development as identified at Paragraph 7 - economic, social and environmental and that the planning system must therefore perform a number of roles:

- An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy;
- A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities;
• **An environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

Paragraph 72 of the NPPF states that the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

• **Give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and**

• **Work with school promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.**

**Section 7** of the NPPF highlights the importance the Government attaches to the design of the built environment. **Paragraph 56** specifically states that ‘Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people’. **Paragraph 57** continues by stating ‘it is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes’.

**Paragraph 186** notes that Local Planning Authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. This is reinforced by **Paragraph 187**, which states that Local Planning Authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

**Local Planning Policy**

**The Development Plan**

The statutory Development Plan for the area currently comprises of the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014), the ‘saved’ policies of the Northampton Local Plan (adopted 1997) and the Northampton Central Area Action Plan (2013).

The following policies are considered to be relevant to the proposed development.

**West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014) (“WNJCS”)**

- Policy SA  Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy S1  The Distribution of Development
- Policy S10  Sustainable Development Principles
- Policy E6  Education Skills and Training

**Saved Policies of the Northampton Local Plan (1997) (“NBLP”)**

- Policy E20  New Development
- Policy E40  Crime and Vandalism

**Northampton Central Area Action Plan (2013) (“CAAP”)**

- Policy 34  Former Royal Mail Post Office
Review of Development Plan Policies

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)

The Joint Core Strategy (“JCS”) sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the area covered by Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire Council’s for the plan period, including strategic policies for steering and shaping development. The relevant policies are as follows:

Policy SA sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development reflecting that in the NPPF.

Moreover, planning applications that accord with the policies in the development plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or,
- Specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

Policy S1 sets out the distribution of development within the plan area and sets out that development will be concentrated primarily in and adjoining the principal urban area of Northampton.

Policy S10 provides the sustainable development principles new development should seek to achieve, including of relevance:

- Achieve the highest standards of sustainable design incorporating safety and security considerations and a strong sense of place;
- Be designed to improve environmental performance, energy efficiency and adapt to changes of use and a changing climate over its lifetime;
- Make use of sustainably sourced materials;
- Minimise resource demand and the generation of waste and maximize opportunities for reuse and recycling;
- Be located where services and facilities can be easily accessed by walking, cycling or public transport;
- Protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment and heritage assets and their settings.

Policy E6 sets out that new educational facilities will be encouraged and should be developed at sites which are accessible by sustainable transport modes.

Saved Policies of the Northampton Local Plan (1997) (“NBLP”)

Policy E20 sets out that planning permission will be granted for new development subject to the design of the development adequately reflecting the character of its surroundings and being designed, located and used in a manner which safeguards privacy, daylight and sunlight.

Policy E40 of the NBLP relates to crime and vandalism and sets out that development will need to pay adequate regard to the need to deter crime and vandalism.
Northampton Central Area Action Plan (2013) ("CAAP")

The CAAP was adopted by Northampton Borough Council in January 2013 and forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the area. Its overall aim is to provide a consistent strategic framework for the improvement and extension of the town centre.

Paragraph 2.27 of the CAAP is of relevance and sets out that existing educational facilities within the area, Spring Lane and Castle Academy, are performing well but are at capacity and will suffer from further pressure for places due to a more recent influx of families into the area.

Design and Access Statement

Use and Amount

The development proposal will provide a modest modular cabin which will provide additional classrooms and teaching accommodation on a temporary basis.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the principle of the proposed use is acceptable. The site forms part of the extensive Castle Academy site (D1 Use Class), and will provide ancillary teaching and classroom accommodation for a temporary period only.

The development will provide temporary additional teaching accommodation and 2 no. classrooms with ancillary toilet facilities which also lies within the D1 use class. The proposed modular building extends to 126 square metres.

Layout and Scale

The layout of the temporary building comprises a rectangular plan, which is typical of such types of temporary classroom accommodation. The total width of the building will be approximately 15.2 metres with a total depth of approximately 8.2 metres. The proposal will have a ridge height of approximately 3.9 metres.

It is shown that the site can readily accommodate the proposed temporary classrooms of the scale proposed with satisfactory amounts of open space and amenity areas to all four sides. The proposed temporary accommodation is set back within the site. The overall design and appearance is similar to the other temporary blocks and buildings found on both the Castle Academy and nearby Northampton International Academy sites.

Appearance

The cabin will incorporate a green finish to the external walls with a grey roof. Other features will include aluminum solid doors, double glazed windows and stair and ramp accesses. The appearance of the building has in many respects been dictated by its function. However, the appearance of the temporary building will seek to match the nearby corresponding temporary building ("Cabin D"), and will fit in with the other school buildings on site.

However, as regards appearance, it is noted that the proposal is for a temporary building which will be removed after an agreed period of time. In the circumstances, it is considered that consideration of the as appearance of the building should be given appropriate weight given that it will have a restricted lifespan.
Landscaping

The cabin will be sited in a spacious area with open space to all sides. The cabin will be set in a typical school area, with open playing fields and playgrounds comprising the setting of the development. Given the modest proposals to site a temporary cabin within a wider school site, it is not considered necessary to incorporate additional or complementary landscaping proposals in this instance.

Access and Highways

Attention is drawn to the fact that the accompanying planning application is seeking permission for the siting of a modest modular classroom on a temporary basis within an existing primary school site. There will be no additional impact on vehicle movements or parking requirements as a result of this proposal than compared with those assessed and accepted under 17/00019/CCDFUL, which permitted Cabin C albeit in a slightly different location within the Castle Academy site.

Conclusions and Summary

The siting of the temporary ‘Cabin C’ is necessary to accommodate displaced pupils from the Castle Academy whilst conversion works are ongoing at the neighbouring Northampton International Academy (NIA). The consequence of the ongoing works is that pupils scheduled to commence study at the NIA in September now require accommodation within the adjacent Castle Academy for a further academic year. Therefore, Year 6 pupils and teaching staff at the Castle Academy require an additional 2 no. classrooms and teaching accommodation on a temporary basis whilst the works to convert the main NIA building are completed.

The scheme will simply provide the siting of a small temporary building within an existing school. The siting of numerous temporary cabins for teaching accommodation and classrooms already has the benefit of a recent planning permission and the potential material planning impacts were assessed at that time.

The accompanying application, which seeks an additional modest building will have a negligible impact on the site and wider area as compared to the other already-approved temporary block and cabins.

In addition, the siting of the additional ‘Cabin C’ raises no new site constraints or material planning considerations which would adversely impact development of the site (such as flood risk, drainage or biodiversity). As noted above, the impacts of the siting of the temporary modular classrooms are no different to those already assessed under the recent (and principal) temporary buildings planning application (LPA refs. 17/00019/CCDFUL & N/2017/0413). As part of the determination of the application, the material planning issues were found to be acceptable, and the planning application was approved. In light of this, siting of the modest ‘Cabin C’ within a revised location within the Castle Academy site should therefore be considered to be acceptable.

Development proposals which create, enhance and improve schools and education facilities and which are in sustainable locations are in accordance with Paragraph 72 of the NPPF and Policy E6 of the WNJCS. It is therefore evident that the proposed development is policy-compliant.

It is considered that the accompanying supporting documents, drawings and plans provide the information necessary to enable the application be validated and determined by the LPA.
If you require any other information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Ian Taylor BA (Hons) MA MRTPi
Principal Planning Consultant