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**MEMORANDUM**

**FROM: JOHN COLLINS, PROPERTY MANAGEMENT (ARCHITECTURE)**

**TO: DAVID AYRES, EDUCATION (SCHOOL ORGANISATION)**

**CC:**

**YOUR REF:**

**MY REF: RJWJDC**

**TELEPHONE: 2741**

**DATE: 18 June 2001**

**HIGH WYCOMBE, POSSIBLE AMALGAMATION OF KINGS WOOD SCHOOLS  
ASSESSMENT REPORT**

Please find attached copy of our assessment report, as requested, for the possible amalgamation of Kings Wood Junior and Infant Schools in High Wycombe. The report includes a site location plan, extracts from the respective condition surveys and copies of photographs taken during the course of my visit to both sites with John Weakley on 5 June 2001. I have also attached, for your information, a copy of a letter from Ringley Chartered Surveyors, dated 14 June 2001, that I have just received regarding the mast at the Infant School.

I trust that the report sets out all that you required but please don't hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

John Collins  
Principal Architect

**HIGH WYCOMBE, KINGS WOOD INFANT & JUNIOR SCHOOLS  
 ASSESSMENT FOR POSSIBLE AMALGAMATION**

John Weakley (Architectural Liaison Manager) and John Collins (Principal Architect) visited both the two school sites during the afternoon of Tuesday 5 June 2001. This report was compiled following those visits. Also enclosed as further information are:

- a location plan
- extracts from both schools' property condition surveys
- photographs of the two schools.

ISSUE	INFANT SCHOOL	JUNIOR SCHOOL
<b>Site Area</b>	1.774ha Predominantly flat site with about a quarter of area covered by copse. Designated by WDC as part of established residential area (including copse and playing field) and abutting local conservation area on eastern boundary. Sheltered site.	1.787ha A sloping site, particularly at the front access and at the margins. Designated by WDC as established residential area (including playing field) and abutting open green space to southern boundary and local landscape area to east (Kings Wood). Exposed site on S and E boundaries.
<b>Playing Fields</b>	Existing field, although flat, does not appear large enough to accommodate area for team games, even with part or all of copse removed (which the planners might object to). Copse provides a very good nature area with wildlife.	Existing field contains reasonably level plateau that currently accommodates an area for team games and appears to be large enough. There is an area on the eastern boundary that appears to have been laid out as a nature area.
<b>Hard Play Areas</b>	Currently has one large playground that could possibly be subdivided into two. There is also a hardstanding strip to SE exterior of classrooms.	Currently has two areas of hardstanding. One square and one of a more freeform shape.
<b>Car parking</b>	Currently appears adequate and easily extendable.	Currently appears to be inadequate and would require remodelling with changes in level to be borne in mind.
<b>Access</b>	Main access from main road, Totteridge Lane, which is sole vehicular access. Main pedestrian access is via footpath onto Totteridge Drive (north boundary).	Main access from estate road, Hollis Road, which is sole vehicular access and main pedestrian access. There is another pedestrian access to the rear of the site.
<b>Other</b>	<i>One to One</i> radio mast in copse area with at least 18 months left on lease. Lottery funded access gates, designed by the pupils.	Existing learner swimming pool and changing area.
<b>Age of Buildings</b>	Original building opened 1951, with later block (now nursery) added 1956. Only minor alterations since.	Original building opened 1966, with later teaching block added 1972.
<b>Character</b>	1950's 'timepiece' still largely intact, characterised by facing brick, painted render walls with steel windows and flat/slightly sloping roofs. Long straight corridor with classrooms one side, toilets/cloaks on the other.	Typical 1960's Bucks school with facing brickwork, timber windows/curtain walling (many now replaced by PVC units) and combination of pitched tiled and flat roofs. There are two double storey blocks.
<b>Floor Area</b>	1,783.39 sq. m (gross)	1,905.33 sq. m (gross)

	See Education report describing existing accommodation. Appears to need less new construction work than the Junior school.	See Education report describing existing accommodation. Appears to be more new construction needed than Infant school. Note that the existing hall can be opened out into a dining area not mentioned before.
<b>Condition</b>	See attached summary extract from the Condition Survey. Note costs of nearly £600,000 identified within next 2 years, largely to external walls, windows and mechanical services.	See attached summary extract from the Condition Survey. Note costs of nearly £113,000 identified within next 3-5 years, largely to roofs, electrical services and redecoration.
<b>Disabled Access</b>	There are no significant problems but there are several steps between the main entrance area and main central corridor. There is also a change in level between the school and nursery buildings.	There are significant problems that will need to be overcome. A lift would need to be inserted to serve the upper levels of the adjacent two storey blocks. There are several changes of level immediately inside of the main entrance and further significant ones across the central courtyard located in the heart of the school.
<b>Extendibility</b>	The existing building appears to be relatively easy to extend. The adjacent areas are flat and accessible from the central corridor. It appears possible to build another block further down the drive for SEN etc if necessary. Nursery blocks currently in its best location adjacent to footpath access for parents.	Despite the level changes it would appear possible that the existing school could be extended on several fronts. Careful consideration required for incorporating a self-contained nursery block.

#### Conclusion:

Firstly this one is a far closer one to call than the amalgamations we have previously been involved in. Architecturally the existing Infant School is a delight to both of us although obviously in need of a degree of rejuvenation, but from purely an architectural design point of view would be our favourite. It also appears to be the easier to extend, possibly needing less new construction work which in turn would go some way to offset the larger identified maintenance requirements and certainly presents fewer problems with regard to disabled access. It is also the more sheltered and secure of the two sites. The Infant School's access onto a main road is not so much of a problem as it may at first seem because a significant number of the parents and pupils use the side pedestrian access onto Totteridge Drive.

However the Infant School's playing fields area seems to be significantly deficient and from brief discussions with Development Control we believe that any proposal to remove even at least part of the copse so as to increase this area would be strongly opposed. An alternative approach in radically altering the existing Infant School buildings could well prove to be economically onerous.

So to that end we, albeit somewhat reluctantly, believe the Junior School site actually offers the better location for a 420 place Combined School. In arriving at this conclusion we accept that there will be significant difficulties to overcome in designing the additional accommodation and making the site more accessible for the disabled but they are possible to overcome. In turn the expansion work should also provide an opportunity to significantly improve the overall visual quality of the school, including the main entrance. For instance it should be possible to insert a new lift between the two existing two storey blocks so as to provide access to both upper floors, and at the same time considerably improve that particularly poor space.

Finally both sites present access problems with regard to any major construction project and this particular aspect will need to be very carefully considered as part of any future feasibility study and associated briefing meetings. It is also strongly recommended that the First School's existing entrance gates be relocated onto the Combined School site within the amalgamation scheme. Unfortunately they might prove unsuitable for positioning immediately onto Hollis Road because of their width but they could be used as a very important visual feature within the site.

John Weakley (Architectural Liaison Manager)  
John Collins (Principal Architect)