Chingford Foundation School redevelopment

Progress Update April 2026 v1

Please note that the project remains a 'work in progress' and a scheme will not be final until such time as a planning application is submitted and permission granted.

Summary:

We are delaying making our planning application until late July 2026. A number of survey and design development matters are being resolved that constrain us to make our application no earlier than this date.

Specifically, there are Ecological surveys that must take place in late spring and summer that are required for the planning application.

We currently anticipate construction work would commence in January 2027.

Update

We thank the residents for their engagement throughout the informal consultation so far, we are actively listening and mitigating concerns wherever possible.

Not all concerns will be resolved prior to the submission of the application, as we will simply not be able to resolve all concerns and still meet the requirements of the school, address the constraints of the site and meet both policy and regulatory requirements.

Many queries will be answered as part of the full planning application submission and request that residents await the formal application submission before speculating or endeavouring to make comments based on imagery.

We would stress that we are unable to respond to residents individually regardless of the number of emails received and that queries should be via your Local Councillors. Updates will be provided via the school's webpage.

The table below summarises key queries received so far and our design team's mitigating actions / explanation.

Query	Update response
Application Timings	The application has been delayed to late June/early July to allow for the essential ecological surveys to be undertaken prior to submission. The scheme however will remain largely unchanged from that presented in November 2025, with regard being given to residents' concerns regarding the position of the sub-station and overlooking matters. A request for further public consultation is being considered, but it should be noted that this is not a legal requirement for any planning application. A full suite of plans and documents will be available once the application is submitted to the Local Planning Authority for consideration. The application bundle will not be finalised until just before the submission and requires sign off by the Department for Education prior to any information is made public.
Engagement and Scheme Evolution	The development of the proposal has followed a traditional process of consideration of the site constraints, policies and regulatory requirements Additionally, this is a small school site with additional challenges such as access and levels that need careful consideration.

	Whilst feedback and comments are welcome, in some cases there is little scope for amendments, but where amendments can be accommodated these are being considered. The nature and scale of these projects do not allow for continual engagement and responses to every email received, hence the approach being taken, and we are endeavouring to provide a single point of update and response via the School's webpage and your local representatives.
Height of the proposed building	It has been expressed that this is a 4-storey building. The scheme proposes a 2-storey building for education purposes. The floor to floor height difference for a new secondary school is larger than for a residential property due to the need to incorporate differing services and structural elements. Since previous buildings were erected regulations and policy requirements have evolved and require different design solutions in response, hence the new building proposed is of a different form to the existing buildings proposed to be removed. The scheme also responds to site levels, which creates a small lower ground floor area, as the ground level falls away towards EFAJ. Internally the floors need to be level to ensure the scheme meets accessibility standards and therefore may be utilised by all pupils. This is the same approach present on the main school building fronting Nevin Drive. The lower ground floor is a small area only and will accommodate plant and access areas, thus optimising the space created and negating the need for additional building massing. To ensure accessibility compliance for both the main school building and any further extension, lowering the level of the roof would require the new building to be located further towards the southwest and nearer to the neighbours boundary. This is not feasible due to other building elements including access road and below ground services in this zone. The building has been designed to reflect the design and massing of the main school building fronting Nevin Drive which it will be read in association with and will be connected to. The height of the building varies due to its response to the site levels. At its highest it is 12.2m, at its lowest it is 8.8m. The stair and lift core extends to 10.9m.
Separate Buildings	There has been a suggestion that separate blocks should be considered to enable the scale of development to be reduced. A single building is proposed to accommodate the schools educational requirements. Setting aside the additional costs that would be incurred if this was taken, breaking up the block would increase the floor area required to achieve the same area of modern teaching accommodation and as such the development

	could not be accommodated alongside all other necessary site wide use provision including sports. Separate buildings is not a viable option.
Levels	There has been a suggestion that ground levels are being increased which increases the height of the building. This is not the case, the building has been designed to respond to the site levels, with external ground levels adjusted to ensure appropriate land gradients around the building are achieved and access to the building maintained in a variety of manners. The redevelopment is being designed in accordance with applicable guidance and regulations. Level access within the building and appropriately designed ramps and steps for the connection to the existing school buildings has been designed.
Tall Buildings	It has been suggested that the proposal is classified as a tall building and that a tall building assessment should be provided. The proposed building does not fall into the definition of a tall building. The London Plan 2021 advises that a tall building is 6 storeys or 18m in height when measured from the ground to the floor level of the uppermost storey. The scheme falls well below this definition.
Sunlight and Daylight	Concerns have been raised in respect of over shadowing and loss of light to rear gardens. The proposed building is sited to the northeast of properties along the same side of Nevin Drive as the school site. As a result, there may be some nominal impact on garden spaces during the early morning period but will not impact midday or evening sun.
Neighbouring Amenity	Concerns have been raised in respect of loss of views, an imposing development and misrepresentation of the scheme on images. There is no right to a view in planning. It is acknowledged that the proposal will result in a change to the views from adjacent properties, however, this is an established school site within a residential area. The context is therefore not solely residential. Having regard to the Waltham Forest design guidance, it is deemed entirely reasonable for separation distances between habitable rooms (i.e. direct relationship from habitable room to habitable room) to be 40m for residential developments of up to 4-storeys. This comparison has been used here as residents consider this to be a 4-storey development. The smallest separation distance for this site is 39m between the proposed building and properties on the southeastern side of Nevin Drive. To those properties on the southwestern side of Nevin Drive the interrelationship is 53 m. Essentially what this shows is that a residential flat block could be in a similar position in respect of properties on the southeastern side of Nevin

	Drive and much closer to properties on the southwestern side thus having a much greater impact but still being policy compliant. For this proposed development, there is no habitable accommodation proposed and is therefore less impactful than other development could be, with separation distances being more than reasonable. We note comments about the visuals and will ensure they accurately reflect the final proposals upon submission. Further concerns have been raised regarding overlooking from corridor and classroom windows. The separation distances from the nearest residential boundary from classrooms is in excess of 31.4m. This is a significant separation distance. Whilst it is easy enough to incorporate privacy glass in corridor spaces, we need to give careful consideration to classrooms where standards around light and air circulation need to be met. Where these standards are not compromised by the inclusion of obscure glazing or other solutions it will be included. Where these standards cannot be met, having regard to the separation distances, these measures will not be included.
Loss of Greenery	There are concerns regarding the loss of existing greenery and screening. It is acknowledged that some trees will need to be removed to facilitate the development, but where retention is possible it has been accommodated. Additional landscape planting is also proposed to ensure visual screening and privacy is retained in the longer term.
School Capacity	It has been confirmed that this proposal does not increase the capacity of the school. There is not proposed to be an increase in the number of pupils or staff. Concerns have been expressed that this does not prevent any changes in the future. We cannot predict what may or may not happen in the future and any planning application can only seek to cater for what is proposed now. Any future changes will be for others to consider and propose at any appropriate time. Further concerns have been raised regarding the long-term increase in daily traffic along Nevin Drive. There are no changes to the access arrangement proposed into the site and given there is no increase in pupils or staff proposed, there is not anticipated to be any significant change in future operations of the site.
Loss of Parking Spaces	Loss of parking on site remains a concern for local residents. The scale of development is what is necessary to ensure the long-term success of this school, it is not simply a case of being able to reduce the scale of the proposal and as a result it is acknowledged that a loss of on-site parking is regrettable.

	There are 12 parking spaces to be lost on site. Parking to the front of the main school building for staff and visitors will remain. Recent highway surveys have been undertaken to ascertain the impact of the loss, as we are required to demonstrate that we are not exacerbating the existing situation. The outcome of these surveys is not yet known. The concerns of residents regarding the existing problems faced has been heard and we are seeking to provide an on-site solution to out of hours parking for events such as parents evenings where parking can be problematic. This is based around the ability to use the MUGA for parking if required. Any application will be supported by a Travel Plan that will also seek to encourage the use of non-car modes of transport and car sharing to endeavour to reduce the reliance on the car by staff and visitors. It should be borne in mind that both the London Plan and the Local Plan encourage a reduction in the provision of parking to encourage the use of non-car modes of transport, however, this does not take away from our obligation to ensure that we are not exacerbating any existing highway safety issues as a result.
Construction Matters	Concerns have been raised regarding the demolition and construction phases of the proposal. A detailed Construction Management Plan will be submitted with the planning application. As with any development construction phases do bring with them additional traffic and some disruption, this cannot be avoided but will be minimised as much as is practicably possible.
Substation Requirements	As set out in earlier updates, we have no control over the potential upgrade of the existing substation. If this were to be possible, it would obviously be preferable for all, but the lack of control over any timings or delivery means that this proposal must seek to resolve the issue on-site. If an upgrade were to come forward prior to any planning application being determined and delivered in line with the site's delivery timescales, then the need for an on-site substation would not be required. UKPN have provided no commitment to the upgrade of the existing substation. We cannot therefore rely on this as an option. We understand Local Councillors are seeking to contact UKPN to ascertain whether anything can be done, beyond what we are able to achieve. In respect of the location on-site. There is a requirement for UKPN to have 24hr access to any substation, with the ability to get vehicles close to the building to provide repairs to and replacement of equipment. They require 1no parking space adjacent to the building. It must therefore be located in close proximity to the road and cannot be located within wider parts of the school site.

	Consideration has been given to locations along Nevin Drive and College Gardens. Having regard to the scale of development required, impact on trees/hedgerows, levels and access/visibility, on-street parking and on-site parking provision, the scope for alternative locations is negligible. Consideration has been given to the historic location approved in 2018. This location will prevent the delivery of adequate hard surface play areas to meet the needs of the school. It should also be noted that at that time the substation was to be a grp encased installation that was far more prominent in the street scene than the building currently being proposed. Other locations adjacent to the proposed MUGAs will result in the loss of additional on-site parking spaces and prevent the potential for the use of the MUGAs as overflow car parking. In response to local residents' concerns, the substation has been positioned to ensure that it has limited visibility from the road and UKPN have agreed to access being via the school site itself and not independently from Nevin Drive. It is not directly adjacent to any residential boundary. The substation enclosure is also proposed to be formed of brick to ensure it is read as part of the school development and not as an obvious substation. Noise insultation is also proposed to ensure compliance with noise emission standards. EMF emissions have been dealt with in a previous update. Residents' concerns are noted, however, advice from UKPN is that the EMF emissions are not a cause for concern. Ongoing objections to the siting of the substation are acknowledged, however we have exhausted all alternative locations and have sought to address some concerns by reducing the visibility within the street scene. We will not be providing any further feedback on the substation proposals at this time.
Use of images, disadvantaging Local Residents	The use of images for public consultation is standard practice. A full suite of plans and documents will be submitted with the formal planning application and residents will be given the opportunity to review and comment on those plans at that time.
Assertions of mis-leading Councillors	Residents have expressed concerns that the Developer team has been mis-leading Councillors in the information provided and that we lack transparency. This is factually incorrect and we have endeavoured to provide answers to questions presented and the images show what is being proposed.