

Planning Application

Caversham Primary School,

Hemdean Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 7RA

Replacement of an existing conservatory with a traditionally built single storey classroom

PLANNING STATEMENT



1.0 Introduction

This Statement is prepared on behalf of the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services for the proposed replacement of an existing conservatory with a traditionally built single storey classroom at Caversham Primary School. The land and buildings are Freehold and owned by Reading Borough Council and the site is currently being used as an educational establishment.

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the following drawings:

Location Plan	ED/21/02/CPS/01	1:1250 @ A3
Block Plan	ED/21/02/CPS/02	1:500 @ A3
Existing School Floor Plan	ED/21/02/CPS/03	1:150 @ A1
Existing Conservatory Floor Plan	ED/21/02/CPS/04	1:100 @ A1
Proposed Extension Floor Plan	ED/21/02/CPS/05	1:100 @ A3
Existing & Proposed Elevations	ED/21/02/CPS/06	1:100 @ A2

2.0 Information about the school

Caversham Primary School is a state primary school in Caversham, a suburb of Reading. It is a mixed gender primary school with mixed-age classes at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. It currently has approximately 420 students on roll, aged between 4-11 years old.

The school was founded in 1907, by Sir Jack Mehof of Stoke on Trent, as Caversham Council Infant School for the blind and disabled. At that time Caversham was in the county of Oxfordshire, but was moved to Berkshire in 1911. The school was originally housed at what is now Thameside Primary School. The school was moved to its present location in Hemdean Road in 1938.

The information below is taken from Ofsted School Inspection Report dated 26 February 2009, in which the school was given the highest possible rating “Outstanding”.

This large school serves pupils from a wide area. It is popular and oversubscribed. Most pupils are from White British families and there are small numbers from other ethnic backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language. Children are admitted to the Reception classes three times a year, although most begin in the September of the academic year in which they reach their fifth birthday. This is a new arrangement and only began in September 2008. Children's attainment on entry is usually above average. Fewer pupils than in most schools have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Their needs are mainly emotional, behavioural or related to speech, language and communication. The school has gained a large number of awards in recent years, including Artsmark Gold, Healthy Schools and Activemark Gold.

3.0 Site Analysis

Caversham Primary School is situated off Hemdean Road in Caversham, which is located on the north bank of the River Thames in Reading. The area surrounding the school is predominately a mixture of low rise detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings dating from the Victorian period up to the 1950's.

The original school was built circa 1938 and originally consisted of two separate buildings. Over the years, various extensions and prefabricated units have been added and a corridor now provides a link between the two original buildings. Today, the school premises comprise of a series of interlinked single storey blocks that provide a total external floor area of approximately 2,275 square metres. The site also includes a separate detached Caretaker's House (180 Hemdean Road).

The original school buildings are single storey and constructed in soft red, cavity brick elevations under a pitched, clay tile covered roof. The later infill sections which are all under flat roofs are covered predominately with a built up felt roof or a single ply membrane covering. Windows are mainly double glazed, aluminium casements with aluminium double-glazed doors, however some original Crittall steel windows casements and softwood timber single glazed doors remain.

The existing school has a level approach to the principal entrance from the pavement of Hemdean Road and the car park at the front of the building. The entire ground floor of the school is wheelchair accessible with ramps in the corridors where there are changes in floor level. The main building has a small basement but does not have a first floor.

The school buildings (excluding the Caretakers House) are set in grounds amounting to 1.034 hectares with tarmac playground to the North of the site, a car park just off

Hemdean Road on the South East edge of the site and a playing field and environmental area to the West and South of the site.

The school site is not within a Conservation Area and none of the buildings on the site have Listed status. There are no other notable features in the surrounding area except for the Allotment Gardens, which are immediately on the boundary to the West of the school playing field and Hemdean Road Cemetery, which is off Victoria Road, to the North of the playground.

4.0 Relevant Planning History

The following applications are recorded on the RBC Online Planning Website:

- 940387: Erection of single storey extension to provide a staffroom for the school. Regulation 3. Permitted: 05/09/1994.
- 950582: Removal of 4 existing classrooms & replacement with 4 modular classrooms with covered link. REG3. Permitted: 11/12/1996.
- 980593: Single storey extension to provide link to girls toilet facilities. Permitted: 18/11/1998.
- 991822: Installation of single storey modular classroom unit, including corridor link to existing building (Regulation 3(4) consent). Permitted: 15/02/1999.
- 030622: Installation of a temporary classroom. Permitted: 17/06/2003.
- 090357: Demolition of a small staff toilet extension and the re-construction of a larger toilet extension to accommodate new toilets for use by foundation stage children, and replacement of staff toilets. Permitted: 12/05/2009.
- 090086: Discharge of condition 6 of planning consent 09/00432/REG3. Decision Date: 19/10/2009.
- 130090: Provision of one demountable modular double classroom & associated external works. Permitted: 16/04/2013.
- 130731: Discharge of conditions 3 & 4 of planning permission 130090/REG3. Decision Date: 13/12/2013.
- 180556: Demolition of existing single storey extension to school building and replacement with new single storey extension. Permitted: 28/06/2018.
- 190300: Non-material amendment to permitted application 180556 (demolition of existing single storey extension to school building and replacement with new single storey extension) to change a window in the south elevation to a door in order to comply with fire safety requirements. Permitted: 01/04/2019.

5.0 Description of the existing conservatory

The existing single storey conservatory is located to the rear of the school on the North West end of the main school building and it was constructed in the 1980's.

The conservatory measures 10.2m x 5.6m on plan and is attached on two sides to the existing brickwork of the main school building. It comprises of a low-level cavity brickwork plinth, approximately 0.75m high above DPC, with a glazed UPVC conservatory structure above. The duo pitched, hipped roof has a glazed polycarbonate roof covering.

The conservatory is used for a multitude of activities, including music lessons, teaching interventions, break out space, and small assemblies.



North Elevation of existing Conservatory



West Elevation of existing Conservatory

6.0 What is being proposed and why

A Structural Engineer was commissioned in December 2020 to investigate the movement noted to the duo pitched glazed UPVC conservatory structure. They confirmed that there was significant outward bow and lean of the glazed north elevation and a sag in ridge line and rafters, which was due to the pitched/hipped polycarbonate roof structure not having any 'ceiling ties' to resist lateral thrust at eaves level (roof spread).

At the time of the inspection, the roof was subject to self-weight only, however, additional loading from snow and wind action, could exacerbate the movement already evident, resulting in an unstable structure that could collapse. The retrospective installation of tie rods/wires at roof level was investigated but this was found to be not possible due to the construction of the existing UPVC rafters and box sections.

The recommendation of the Structural Engineer was to demolish the existing conservatory and replace it with another conservatory type structure, or upgrade with a more suitable masonry/glazed structure.

In the meantime, the roof structure has been propped at ridge level, to reduce the risk of further vertical deflection and roof spread. The room has also been taken out of use and the area immediately adjacent to the north elevation has been cordoned off.

The proposed development does not signify an increase in pupil or staff numbers but is only to replace a dangerous structure.

7.0 Description of proposed development

The proposed development is to be located to the rear of the school on the North West end of the main school building and is to be built on the footprint of the existing unstable conservatory.

The new classroom extension is to be single storey with a flat roof and a gross external floor area of approximately 57 square metres. The design and materials of the new extension will be similar to the existing school building. To produce a light and airy space, the ceiling of the classroom will include two north facing Velux type roof windows with opening vents to create an interesting environment for the children. A pair of external doors will be provided at the West end of the classroom to give access to the playground. The space will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act and Approved Document M of the Building Regulations and will contain of a single open-plan multi-purpose teaching area, which can accommodate for up to 30 pupils and two staff.

The existing access from the main corridor into the new extension will be maintained and there will be no internal alterations carried out in the existing building.

There will be no loss of existing facilities due to the proposed development.

8.0 Relevant Local Plan Policies

Reading Borough Core Strategy: CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD: CC2, CC3, CC5

9.0 Proposed Use

The new extension will provide a functional and adaptable teaching space that will benefit the pupils of the school.

Internal access into the new classroom will be via the existing main corridor. The new classroom will be ideally placed to make use of the existing teaching resources, toilets and the external playground area.

10.0 Design

The Project Brief called for the new extension to be constructed on the site of the existing conservatory at the North West end of the main school building. The extension will be used to provide a multi-purpose teaching classroom for up to 30 pupils and two staff. The design will include the following features:

- ✓ Good natural light and ventilation
- ✓ Wheelchair accessible
- ✓ Access to the existing Playground
- ✓ Good thermal and anti-solar gain insulation
- ✓ High security windows and doors linked to an intruder detection system

The new classroom extension is designed to be as unobtrusive as possible, with minimal disturbance to the main structure of the building by the proposed development.

The proposed development will enhance the school building and meet the specific needs of the pupils, whilst retaining the character of the original structure.

11.0 Scale & Amount

The scale of the new development will not excessively affect the existing building and will be built on the footprint of the existing conservatory, which has an internal floor area of 52.5 square metres, compared with 51.85 square metres for the new extension.

The proposed extension will be single storey with a flat roof and therefore will not be prominent in terms of bulk and dominance, particularly when measured against the ridge height of the existing school building.

The size of the new extension is considered to be appropriate to accommodate the facility required by the school.

12.0 Layout

The proposed extension will be accessible from the existing main corridor and will provide views onto the main Playground. Two external single doors from the new

classroom will also give direct access to the Playground. The classroom will consist of a single open plan space suitable for teaching up to 30 pupils in several different subjects.

Please refer to the attached Block Plan and the Proposed Floor Plan.

13.0 Appearance

The aim of the design for the new extension is that it should blend seamlessly with the existing school building. This will be achieved by specifying matching materials to all external surfaces of the new extension.

The proposed extension will be single storey with red fair face brickwork external walls. The flat roof will be covered with grey single ply membrane and will include two double glazed roof windows installed on inclined insulated kerbs. The windows and doors will have white polyester powder coated aluminium frames with sealed double-glazed Argon filled units.

The development will not change the visual dynamics of the main elevations of the building and the overall character of the building will not be unduly harmed by the introduction of the proposed extension.

Please refer to the attached Existing & Proposed Elevations Drawing.

14.0 Landscaping

The impact of the proposed development will be minor and therefore no new landscaping is considered necessary. The existing tarmac surface of the playground will be made good where disturbed by the necessary excavations to provide new foundations for the new extension.

15.0 Environmental Sustainability

This proposed minor non-residential development will demonstrate a commitment to low carbon design to reduce the energy requirements and minimise CO2 emissions by the implementation of the following:

- Adopting the principles of Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM).
- The use of natural day lighting to reduce artificial lighting/electric use.
- The use of natural ventilation via opening roof windows to mitigate the need for mechanical ventilation and cooling by air conditioning.
- The use of windows with sealed double-glazed units with Argon filled cavities to reduce heat loss and the consumption of energy.
- The use of thicker insulation in the external walls, floors and roof, greater than that required to comply with the current Building Regulations to reduce heat loss and the consumption of energy.
- The use of energy efficient equipment/ fittings including lighting.
- Specifying the most current materials, appliances and equipment to ensure the new extension is as sustainable and energy efficient as possible.
- The materials from the demolished Conservatory (bricks, glass, UPVC, concrete) will be removed from site to be recycled.

Through the design process and the incorporation of the above items, the extension's energy load is such that providing alternative technologies as part of the project are not economically viable in this instance.

The materials specified for the proposed extension are designed to be as low maintenance as possible. At the end of the extension's useful life, the majority of the materials used in its construction can be recycled.

16.0 Transport

The proposed development will not increase the number of pupils or staff on the site and the number of parents dropping off and collecting their children will remain the same as at present. In addition, the number of visitors and deliveries to the site will also not change as a result of the development. Consequently, the frequency of vehicle and pedestrian trips to and from the school in a normal school day will be static.

No existing pedestrian or vehicle access points will be affected by the proposal and no additional vehicle parking provision will be required.

Therefore, a Transport Impact Assessment is considered to be unnecessary.

17.0 Ecology

A preliminary appraisal has been carried out.

The site is generally poor for protected/notable species although breeding birds may use certain habitats within the site (planted trees and shrubs). No evidence of bats was apparent, and the existing conservatory is considered to have no potential to offer shelter to bats within an undetected roost site. Although great crested newts may be present within the local area, there are very limited habitats for this species within the site and there are no predicted impacts on great crested newts or habitats that the species may use during the terrestrial phase of its lifecycle.

No wildlife habitats or natural features on and adjacent to the site will be affected by the development.

No trees will be affected by the site-set-up, demolition or construction of the new extension.

Therefore, due to the scale and nature of the proposed development an ecological survey is considered to be unnecessary.

18.0 Archaeology

The proposed development is small, immediately adjacent to the existing building, and within the footprint of an existing structure. Therefore, an archaeological assessment is considered to be unnecessary.

19.0 Flood Risk

The Environmental Agency website flood risk map indicates that the site is located in Flood Zone 1.

It is proposed to demolish the existing conservatory due to its poor condition and replace it with a new single storey extension. The new extension is to be built in the same footprint as the existing structure and therefore the impermeable area of the site will remain the same. There are no proposed foul water outlets from the

replacement building and surface water drainage for the proposed new build will be connected to the existing system.

Access to the new extension will remain as existing and no works are to be carried out to the hard and soft landscaping surrounding the development.

Therefore, due to the scale and nature of the new extension, the proposed development is considered to be low risk and will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

20.0 Accessibility

The accommodation and facilities in the new extension will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act and Approved Document M (Access to and use of buildings) of the Building Regulations. All doors, windows and room specifications, including all switches, outlets and controls are to comply with the relevant size, height, colour and quality standards.

The following publications and documents were consulted and used as guidance in the design of the extension:

- ✓ Disability Rights Commission Publications
- ✓ Equality Act 2010
- ✓ Building Regulations; Approved Document M, Access to and use of buildings
- ✓ BS 8300 Design of Buildings and their Approaches to Meet the Needs of Disabled People- A Code of Practice

21.0 Contractors Access

Access to the school site by Contractors during the Construction Phase of the project will need to be carefully considered due to the restricted access through the school car park, which is accessed via Hemdean Road. No deliveries to the site will be permitted at school drop-off and pick-up times and the Contractor shall not allow any of his vehicles or operatives/sub-contractors vehicles to park in Hemdean Road at any time.

The Contractor's compound will be set up adjacent to the proposed development site in the Playground Area. However, due to the small nature of the development, Contractor's vehicles delivering materials etc to construct the proposed extension will not be excessively large and they are unlikely to cause disruption to the local residents.

22.0 Conclusion

The new extension will have very little visual impact on the main elevations of the building as it is set back from the site boundary and shielded by the adjacent main building. The use of matching materials in the construction of the new development will enable it to blend in with existing main building which it is built against. The proposed extension will be accessible to all and comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Approved Document M of the Building Regulations.

The proposed development will enhance the school building and meet the specific needs of the pupils, whilst retaining the character of the original structure.

Aerial View of the School Site (Circa 2016)

