

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Highdown School, Surley Row, Emmer Green,
Reading, RG4 8LR

August 2019

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Site Location and Context	4
3.	Planning Policy	5
4.	Proposed Development – Design & Access	6
5.	Conclusion	8

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Client
Building Schools for Nothing Limited

Our reference
BSFS3000

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document has been prepared on behalf of Highdown School in support of a full planning application for permission to temporarily retain three temporary classroom buildings. The full wording of the proposal is outlined below:

'Retention of three temporary classroom buildings until 27 September 2023'

- 1.2 This Planning, Design and Access Statement should be read alongside the supporting planning application submission documents.

- 1.3 The documents submitted with this application comprise:

- Application Forms
- Cover Letter
- Planning, Design and Access Statement prepared by Turley
- Site Location Plan (ref. E02253_100)
- Site Plan (ref. E02253_200)
- Science Laboratory Plan and Elevations (ref. E02253_03)
- Single Storey Double Classroom Plan and Elevations (ref. E02253_01)
- Two Storey Temporary Building Plan and Elevations (ref. E02253_02)

2. Site Location and Context

- 2.1 The application is for three temporary buildings which are situated on the Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre site. The school is located in the north of Caversham.
- 2.2 The main school buildings comprise an original large Victorian residence with more modern purpose built school buildings added as the demand for secondary school places has grown.
- 2.3 The whole school site is 12.4 hectares in extent and is situated in a predominantly residential area with mature trees and planting lining the boundaries. Developments within the site are therefore well screened from the surrounding residential areas.
- 2.4 The site currently benefits from existing vehicular accesses from Surley Row at the eastern boundary of the site and pedestrian accesses from the west.
- 2.5 Highdown School and Sixth Form has experienced a significant rise in pupil numbers over the past 10 years, which has resulted in pressure on school places and the physical infrastructure and has required the need for temporary accommodation at the site.

Planning History

- 2.6 The temporary modular buildings were added to the school in 2008 and 2010. Planning Permission to retain the buildings until 27 September 2015 was granted in 2012 (ref. 121807).
- 2.7 In 2015 a further application was approved to retain the three temporary modular buildings until 27 September 2019 (ref. 151542) after which time there is a requirement to restore the site back to its original state.
- 2.8 Due to pressures on school places in Reading, these buildings are still required therefore planning permission is sought to retain them for a further period of 4 years, until 2023. There is no current alternative for permanent buildings to be provided.

3. Planning Policy

- 3.1 This chapter summarises the national and local planning policy relevant to the planning application proposal.
- 3.2 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, applications are to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.3 Paragraph 11c of the NPPF 11 states that development proposals should be approved without delay if they with the up-to-date development plan.
- 3.4 Paragraph 94 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting the requirement to ensure there are enough school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities. To do this LPAs should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications.

The Development Plan

Core Strategy (Adopted January 2008 & altered January 2015)

- 3.5 The adopted local plan sets out the overall planning strategy and important principles for development in Reading.
- 3.6 By way of summary the relevant policies from the Core Strategy are considered to be:
- Policy CS5: Inclusive Access
 - Policy CS6: Settlement Boundary
 - Policy CS31: Additional and Existing Community Facilities
 - Policy CS32: Impacts on Community Facilities
- 3.7 Policy CS31: Additional and Existing Community Facilities is of relevance as it states that proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site.

Emerging Local Plan

- 3.8 The emerging Submission Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on Thursday 29 March 2018. Consultation on Main Modifications ended on 24 July 2019.
- 3.9 The key relevant policy from the Emerging Local Plan (November 2017) is considered to be **Policy OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities**. This Policy states that proposals for on-site intensification of important facilities, such as schools, will be supported, subject to other policies in the plan.

4. Proposed Development – Design & Access

- 4.1 This full application proposes to temporarily retain three classroom buildings. The full wording of the proposal is outlined below. Further details can be found within the submitted drawings.

‘Retention of three temporary classroom buildings until 27 September 2023’

Scale, Appearance and Materials

- 4.2 The three temporary buildings comprise:
1. A single storey building of modular Building size 15.15 M long x 8.5 M wide, and height 3.5 M high. This unit provides two general teaching spaces. Externally there is grey paint finish to the walls and white Upvc windows. See plan ref. E02253_01;
 2. A two storey building 15.553 M long 9.76 M wide and 6.84 M high providing four general teaching spaces. Externally there is grey paint finish to the walls and white Upvc windows. See plan ref. E02253_02; and
 3. A single storey building 18.77 M long x 21.155 M wide and height 3.5 M this building provides two science laboratories, preparation room and toilets. Externally there is grey paint finish to the walls and white Upvc windows. See plan ref. E02253_03.
- 4.3 The units are constructed on a timber frame with timber felt covered flat roofs and steel RSJ at the underside of floor joists.
- 4.4 The buildings have UPVC double-glazed windows with trickle vents and top openers to assist airflow.
- 4.5 Decoration includes vinyl faced plasterboard to all internal walls, ash-faced internal doors with half-an-hour fire rating, stained timber skirting and timber mounted coat-hooks; included with installation is air conditioning to provide warm and cool air options, or electric convector heating.
- 4.6 The buildings are fit for purpose and comply with the Building Regulations. They are fitted out to a high standard as required by the school for teaching sixth form pupils.
- 4.7 The modular buildings are already located on the site with the benefit of a valid planning permission (ref. 151542), therefore this planning application does not create any additional accommodation.

Access and Movement

- 4.8 The site currently benefits from existing vehicular accesses from Surley Row at the eastern boundary of the site and pedestrian accesses to the west.
- 4.9 As the temporary buildings are already on site, there is no need to alter the existing highways access nor the internal circulation routes.

- 4.10 In terms of access into the temporary modular buildings there are ramps and stepped accesses to the main entrances.
- 4.11 The temporary buildings will be in use between the hours of 7:30 and 17:30 on weekdays only.

Drainage

- 4.12 Foul drainage will be provided using the existing infrastructure on the site.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 4.13 There are no known ecological constraints in the area which would be adversely affected through retaining the three temporary building on the site.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The application to retain the three temporary classrooms at Highdown School will allow the school to continue to support the Sixth Form Centre through providing appropriate facilities for the increasing number of students at the school.
- 5.2 The application also complies with paragraph 94 of the NPPF as the temporary classrooms are in place to contribute to the provision of sufficient school places for the local community. Therefore the council should give weight to the expansion of school facilities.
- 5.3 We consider the proposal to be acceptable in planning terms as it does not propose any changes to the existing planning approval (ref. 151542). The application does not prejudice the aims of the Development Plan, there are no identified technical reasons or material considerations to why the proposal cannot be approved. On this basis, planning permission should be granted.

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