



Property Services

Planning Statement

June 2018

Property name	The Heights Primary School
Property address	82 Gosbrook Rd Caversham Reading RG48BH
Proposed Works	Temporary fencing off area of recreation ground for educational use during school hours.

Contents

1.0	Existing Buildings and Site
1.1	Site and Site Access
1.2	Community Use
1.3	Site Boundary
1.4	Landscape Features
1.5	Existing Building Design
2.0	Design Proposals
2.1	Space Needs Analysis
2.2	Proposed Site Strategy
2.3	Materials
2.4	Proposed Landscaping and External Works
3.0	Consultations
3.1	Planning Policy Guidance and Other Relevant Guidance
3.2	Pre-application advice
3.3	Consultation
4.0	Construction Strategy
4.1	Project Phasing
5.0	Biodiversity and Environmental Protection
6.0	Services
8.0	Access Statement
9.0	Acoustic Statement
10.0	External Lighting
	Appendices

1.0 Existing Buildings and Site

1.1 Site and Site Access

The application site comprises 0.193 hectares of land and has been in use as a public recreation area since 1900. The site is located off the north side of the Gosbrook Road and bounded to the west by Westfield Road, to the east by the Heights Primary School temporary site and by residential housing to the north. A macadam footpath bisects the recreation ground diagonally meeting a second footpath running north south adjacent to the boundary of the Heights Primary School temporary site. These paths connect with a main pedestrian route through Christchurch Meadows and over the new pedestrian bridge to the mainline railway station and town centre. Neither footpaths are designated public rights of way.

1.2 Community Use

The recreation ground is used by the general public for dog walking as well as general recreation space with a small children's play area.

1.3 Site Boundary

The boundary is not fenced along its southern or western boundaries (both these boundaries have low level metal rail with concrete posts). The northern boundary has a semi mature hedge. The eastern boundary is divided from the St Annes CE Primary by a brick wall and to the temporary Heights Primary school site by a leylandii hedge brick wall and fencing..

1.4 Landscape Features

The site is gently sloping and has a good number of trees both along the southern and western boundaries as well as a number of areas of planted bulbs. Ornamental shrubs underlay the tree canopy at the southern end of the development site. A number of park benches are situated along the footpath that diagonally bisect the site and these are in varying state of repair.

1.5 Existing Buildings

There are no existing buildings on the site.

2.0 Design Proposals

Please refer to the design proposals described in the planning drawings contained within **Appendix A**.

2.1 Space Needs Analysis / Education Case

The Free Schools initiative, introduced by the government, is a state funded programme that enables the provision of schools in response to demand from local people in order to improve education for their community. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is supporting this initiative by working with local authorities and communities to establish both site and building solutions. The EFSA is part funding the proposals that form this application.

The Heights Primary School was formed as a free school in 2012 in response to a public consultation exercise held by Reading Borough Council ; ‘Lets Talk Education’ seeking solutions to an identified oversubscription of Primary School places in North Reading.

While the school waits for ESFA to secure a permanent site, Reading Borough Council in conjunction with the school's Academy Trust and the ESFA agreed to establish an alternative temporary site for the school in order to allow it to commence operation. A parcel of land adjacent off the Gosbrook Road in Caversham was identified and developed in 2014 as a temporary school site using modular classroom accommodation.

The Heights Primary School is now established as a 2 Form Entry (FE) primary school for children aged from 4 – 11 years on its temporary site off Gosbrook Road, Caversham.

The on-going analysis of pupil forecasting data has identified the need to accommodate the continued growth of the school in line with an already established demand of 50 places per year for the next 2 years.

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that the 50 pupil places per annum provided by the Heights Primary School can continue to be accommodated within Reading Schools. The Council does not have the capacity to provide these pupil places in other local schools. Similarly the ESFA have been unable to secure an alternative private site to house the additional places for the two year period.

Reading Borough Council, the Heights Primary School Academy Trust and the EFSA have therefore confirmed a brief requirement for an additional 100 pupil places to be provided at the temporary site in Caversham over the next 2 years. This will allow the school to continue to grow from the bottom up (Reception year to year 6.) to eventually reach its full capacity as a 350 place 2 Form Entry Primary School.

Planning permission has been granted for an extension of the approval period covering the existing 6 classroom modular block and for an additional 6 classroom block provide sufficient accommodation for 75 pupils in Key-Stage 2 (years 4 & 5), freeing up space in the existing block for the new Reception year intake. The new accommodation will also provide a studio room, group rooms, break out spaces and office accommodation. Please refer to Planning application reference number -180552/REG3 for details.

In order to meet basic educational needs of the pupils attending the Heights Primary School, sufficient external space needs to be provided for both informal play (lunchtimes and break times) and also sport activities. Due to the restricted nature of the site and the need to limit impact on the existing St Anne's Primary School, the Westfield Park recreation ground directly adjacent to the temporary school was identified as being the optimum location for providing this extra space.

2.2 Proposed Site Strategy

External Space

The Heights Primary School currently has an arrangement with the neighbouring St Annes Primary to use part of their playing field for informal play at lunch times and break times. Increased pupil numbers at the Heights School would put undue pressure on this resource so a proposal to establish this additional outside play space elsewhere was required. This application seeks to temporarily fence off a part of the adjacent Westfield Park recreation ground for use by the Heights Pupils during school hours only. The area marked on the proposed plans (see **Appendix A**) denotes a line of 1.2m high steel railings which will segregate the new play area from the general public's use of the park during school hours. When the temporary school moves to another site, these railings are to be removed and the grass area fully reinstated to its current condition.

It should be noted that The Heights will continue to make use of St Anne's school playing field but that this use will now be restricted to foundation stage and key stage 1 pupils only.

The Heights School will also continue to make use of the Christchurch Meadows playing fields for sport and outdoor education.

Objections have previously been raised in response to the previous application asking why the school could not make more use of the Christchurch Playing Fields instead of fencing off part of the Westfield Road Recreation Ground. The principle reason relates to management and safeguarding ; to take pupils safely across a busy road takes time and must be done very carefully. This is more manageable during a games lesson with limited pupils but impractical for a shorter playtime or lunchtime when there would be more children.

2.3 Materials

The fencing is to be a powder coated green bow top railing with vertical bars spaced at 100mm centres. An alternative timber fence was also considered but the green metal bow top was felt to be more sustainable as it has the benefit of being reuse elsewhere when the recreation ground is reinstated. The green railings are also less visibly intrusive than timber.

A short run of higher fencing is proposed along the western boundary adjacent to the shrubs for reasons of safeguarding pupils due to restricted visibility. This will be a slightly higher fence of 1.6m and will be a green powder coated metal weldmesh fence to match the lower railings.

2.4 Proposed Landscaping and External Works

- Hard landscaping is limited to a tarmac path to link the existing footpath with a new gated entrance to the temporary school site shown on drawing E03620 -A-PL-1052 Proposed Site Plan

Site levels and general accessibility details -

The site slopes slightly but can provide level access to both pedestrians and for maintenance vehicles for mowing.

Gates and Access

Three gates are to be provided along the new boundary; 2 pedestrian gates providing a clear open width of 0.8m and a larger double gate (3.1m wide) for grounds maintenance. All gates are to be powder coated galvanised steel to match the fencing.

3 Planning Policy and Consultations

3.1 Planning Policy Guidance and Other Relevant Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Reading Borough Council's Core Strategy (January 2008, updated January 2015)

Policy CS1	Sustainable Construction and Design
Policy CS4	Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
Policy CS5	Inclusive Access
Policy CS6	Settlement Boundary
Policy CS7	Design and the Public Realm
Policy CS9	Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities
Policy CS35	Flooding
Policy CS36	Biodiversity and Geology
Policy CS38	Trees Hedges and Woodland

Reading Borough Councils Sites and Detailed Policies Document (Oct 2012, updated Jan 2015)

Policy SD1	Sustainable Construction and Design
Policy DM1	Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
Policy DM3	Inclusive Access
Policy DM4	Settlement Boundary
Policy DM12	Design and the Public Realm
Policy DM18	Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities
Policy SPD	Sustainable Design and Construction (2011)
Policy CS35	Tree Strategy for Reading (2010)

3.2 Pre-Application Advice

Meetings have been held with Reading Borough Council's Planning Officer, Parks Department and Ecologist. Key recommendations regarding siting of fenced area and regarding the nature of the boundary treatment have been taken into account within the planning documents presented.

Archaeology

The Borough's archaeologist has reviewed the application and confirmed that there is a cropmark recorded in the park such that the ground works (digging of shallow post foundations) will need to be archaeologically monitored. Arrangements will be made for a watching brief as works progress.

Ecology

The Boroughs Ecology team have been briefed with respect to the forthcoming application.

Parks Department

A number of meetings have been held with RBC Parks department including a site visit to advise on the annexation of the recreation ground which forms part of this application. Advice also references requirements for reinstatement following school's move to a permanent site.

3.3 Consultation

Design Development Consultations February - May 2018

Regular meetings have been held between Reading Borough Council's School Services Manager, The Heights Primary School senior management team, representatives from Heights Primary Academy Trust and Governing Body, Education Skills Funding Agency

4 Construction Strategy

4.1 Project Phasing

The project is to be delivered in one phase by Reading Borough Council's Parks department.

5.0 Biodiversity and Environmental Protection

Ecology and Arboriculture

There are no proposals to remove any existing trees or shrubs as part of this development.

The proposed fence line in the bottom southern corner of the site near Gosbrook Road is to be in-board of the existing tree line and shrubs. Some tree canopies and root zones have the potential to be bisected by the fence line. For this reason, the exact location of fence posts and method statement for fixing of posts is to be subject to agreement by the Borough ecologist to ensure that existing trees are adequately protected. The fencing works are to be undertaken by the Borough's Parks department.

6.0 Statutory Services

A new electrical main has recently been laid in grass in the park close to the bottom corner of the proposed enclosure. Care will be taken to identify the route of this new service and to ensure that it is adequately protected during the works. There is also an unregistered easement for 18 inch gas main running along the length of the diagonal path.

7.0 Access Statement

Access to the new enclosure is to be level and fully accessible to any wheelchair users. The pedestrian access gates are to comply with Part M of the building regulations.

8.0 Acoustic Statement

Additional validation surveys undertaken in February 2018 show that the survey data collected in 2014 for the original planning application is still considered representative of the existing noise environment. The report concludes that 'noise should not be a material concern with respect to the determination of planning permission for this (application.)'

For the detailed report, please refer to **Appendix C**

9.0 External Lighting

There is no external lighting or emergency lighting to be included as part of this proposal.

Appendix A - Proposals

Drawings:

- E03620 -A-PL-1050-Site Location Plan
- E03620 -A-PL-1051 -Existing Site Plan
- E03620 -A-PL-1052 Proposed Site Plan

Appendix B – Air Quality Report

Appendix C – Acoustic Report

Appendix D – Flood Risk Assessment and Report