

Moorlands Primary School

Expansion to 3FE

Design and Access Statement

January 2018

School Details:

Location: Moorlands Primary School, Church End Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4UN

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1.0 Design & Access Statement

Moorlands Primary School is proposed to expand from a two Form of Entry Primary School to a full three Form of Entry Primary School. The following pages explain the basis upon which the scheme has developed and demonstrates the steps taken in appraising the context.

This document contains the Design and Access Statement and supporting information to accompany the Planning Application Form and drawings.

1.1 Project Context

The national picture was reported by the National Audit Office (NAO) in March 2013, with the indication that England requires 250,000 more school places in the next year to meet the demand fuelled by the extraordinary growth in birth rates. The NAO noted that this growth is not equal across the country with particular pressure in urban areas in London and other strong economies. Reading is in the band of highest need as assessed by the NAO.

The Primary Schools selected for potential expansion were identified following a comprehensive assessment of need across Reading and included two rounds of 'Let's talk Education' public consultations (Autumn 2012 and March/April 2013). The headline summary of that process is that residents seek "predictable access to good schools that serve their local communities".

Local people will have an opportunity to comment on the principle of expansion via the statutory consultation under the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools (England)) Regulations 2007.

Moorlands Primary School has been identified for expansion from a two form of entry (420 pupils) to a three form of entry (630 pupils). The school has already taken on additional 'bulge' classes in 2012 and 2013.

1.2 Existing Site and Buildings

Moorlands Primary School is located within a suburban setting in the Tilehurst ward of Reading. The School's catchment serves the immediate local area and beyond. The School was built in the 1960's to serve the new housing estates being constructed in the 1950's and 60's, and is predominantly single storey with two, two-storey teaching wings. The main building is very similar in appearance to other schools of the period constructed in buff-coloured stock bricks, extensive areas of curtain walling and central pitched roof halls with flat roofed teaching and ancillary accommodation.

A single classroom modular building houses the music room, a double modular classroom unit, installed in 2013 accommodates Year R children and a double modular classroom unit, installed in 2015, accommodates Year 6 children.

The school site is fairly extensive and bounded to the North-East by housing and to the East and South by Church End Lane with detached and semi-detached housing set back from the road. Meadway Park wraps around the site from the South to the North, with tennis courts and a skate park, located to the South, playing fields to the South-West and a wooded area (Blundell's Copse) extending from the West to the North. A public parking area, for access to the Park is located to the South, off Church End Lane. The school has separate Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 playgrounds and a dedicated Early Years play area.

There are separate vehicular and pedestrian accesses into the school via Church End Lane and two other pedestrian access for use during drop-off and pick-up times. A staff car park has approximately 15 formal parking bays, however many staff park on an adjacent grassed area and although 8 spaces have been created using a 'grass-mat' system this is not usable all-year.

A scheme, which increased car parking numbers to 30, was approved in 2008 (ref. 08_00418 Ful) but not implemented. A further scheme, which proposed to increase car parking numbers to 37, was developed in 2011, but was not taken any further.

The school does not have any community use but has a breakfast club in term-time.

Areas:

School site area	- c. 20,615m ²
School site development area	- c. 9,370m ²
Off-site development area	- c. 575m ²

1.3 Scope of Project

The core brief for the expansion agreed with the Client Department:

- Accommodation: 10 no. new classrooms
Additional group working spaces
Extended staff accommodation and refurbishment of existing areas
Additional ancillary accommodation to suit the increased pupil and staff numbers
- Modular units: Demolish 1no. temporary single classroom unit
Retain and refurbish 1no. double modular unit for relocated Nursery provision
Retain 1no. double modular unit for SEN provision
- External works: Extension to Key Stage 2 playground
Enhance Early Years external spaces
Enhance spaces around new Key Stage 1 and 2 blocks
Reconfiguration and extension of existing car park and entrance forecourt
Provision of additional car parking spaces off-site

Through design development in consultation with the School and Client Department further key objectives have been identified:

- Group classes in year sets to maintain strong working relationships between the classes.
- Spread group working provision across the school for efficient and effective teaching.
- Locate the staffroom and staff facilities together at the front of the site.
- Create an entrance lobby and enlarge the reception desk for improved safeguarding and to cater for the increased pupils/ parents.
- Minimise works to the existing buildings to minimise disruption to the school during construction.

1.4 Proposal and Justification**1.4.1 Pupil and Staff numbers**

The school expansion to three Form of Entry will increase pupils from currently 461 to a capacity of 630. Pupil numbers will increase by 30 each year from 2019, until full capacity in 2025. The school currently has two bulge classes which will have gone through the school by 2020.

The school currently has 59.4 FTE staff which is anticipated to increase to 73.2 FTE staff, an increase of 13.8 FTE.

1.4.2 Site Strategy

The proposals consist of a number of development zones to facilitate the expansion for teaching and staff accommodation.

Two stand-alone buildings are proposed for the main teaching accommodation (for Key Stage 1 and 2) to minimise disruption to the school and the associated risk (including prohibitive costs) of connecting onto or extending upwards on the existing 1960's buildings, including foundation requirements, structural implications, services infrastructure and asbestos.

The stand-alone proposals allow teaching to continue in existing classrooms throughout the construction period without the need for temporary classroom accommodation.

The locations of the new teaching accommodation maintain the existing continuity of year groups moving through the school and are situated near to existing classrooms and playground spaces. The proposals aim to minimise, as far as possible, development on the school playing fields.

The front of the site is proposed to be developed with extended staff accommodation, an entrance forecourt and parking. It is not considered suitable for teaching accommodation to be located here as it would limit provision for the front entrance/ staff accommodation, displace more car parking off-site, provide limited external space for the classrooms and split teaching accommodation from the rest of the school.

It is proposed to retain the existing two double classroom modular units. The unit at the front is proposed for Nursery use, with its own dedicated access, through an existing gate. This will help facilitate various drop-off/ pick-up patterns, and improve safeguarding, as the location of the existing nursery is deeper within the school site. The unit at the rear is proposed to be retained for specialist resource/ SEN provision, due to higher numbers of SEN children attending the school.

1.4.3 Proposed Buildings

It is proposed to utilise off-site construction methods for the two stand-alone teaching blocks. The proposed Key Stage 2 block is two-storey with the intention to reuse, refurbish and re-clad two existing double-stack modular buildings located at Alfred Sutton and Ridgeway Primary Schools. The proposed single-storey Key Stage 1 block is a new off-site construction building.

Due to the existing buildings configuration and key objective to group the classes in year sets, the Key Stage 2 block will accommodate 6no. classrooms, 2no. group spaces and ancillary accommodation and the Key Stage 1 block will accommodate 3no. classrooms and ancillary accommodation.

The scale of the proposed teaching blocks are in keeping with the scale of the adjacent existing buildings. The Key Stage 2 block forms a private courtyard space around mature trees and a gardening/ wildlife area and the Key Stage 1 block creates a semi-courtyard space around the shared Key Stage 1 playground.

A single classroom extension, to the front, will allow the three Year R classes to be grouped together and linked internally, with a shared outdoor area, forming part of an overall Early Years external environment.

It is proposed to locate all staff facilities in one area and improve staff accommodation including areas of refurbishment.

A new main entrance is proposed to create an entrance lobby, increase the school reception to cater for the increased pupils/ parents, and create a clearly identifiable entrance in an enlarged entrance forecourt.

The total new build gross floor area will be approximately 1,204m².

One temporary single classroom unit will be demolished as part of the proposals. The double modular classrooms installed in 2013 and 2015 are proposed to remain on site.

1.4.4 Form and appearance

The two-storey Key Stage 2 teaching block is located adjacent the existing two-storey part of the school, with a similar scale. The roof has a shallow double pitch.

The block is proposed to be a light render finish, with an element of vertical timber cladding, which ties in with the form and appearance of recent school expansion projects. The external window and door openings remain as existing, with the addition of sun-shading, where necessary. A series of larger windows/ screens are proposed to the 2no. main entrance areas to define these spaces, with canopies over. A large canopy to the rear courtyard area is proposed, with vertical timber cladding under. Large windows are proposed to the 2no. stairwells to bring light and views into these spaces. The classrooms face onto the playground and playing fields.

The single-storey Key Stage 1 teaching block is located adjacent the existing single-storey part of the school with a similar scale. The roof has a shallow double pitch. The block is proposed to be a light render finish, with an element of vertical timber cladding under the canopy and around the entrance areas, again to tie in with the form and appearance of recent school expansion projects and the two storey teaching block. A new canopy links this block to the main school.

The single classroom and admin extensions are proposed to be flat roofed to match the existing building. Materials and detailing of the single classroom extension are proposed to be similar to existing. The admin extension is proposed to be a light render finish to tie in with the materials of the teaching blocks and recent school expansions. This will also help to signal the visibility of the improved main entrance area.

1.5 External Works/ Landscape Proposals

Opportunities will be taken to make improvements to the landscape around the school, to create play spaces, facilitate movement around the school site, improve security, replace diseased and dying trees, and to provide additional parking facilities for cycles, scooters, powered two wheelers and cars.

The visitors' entrance and school reception will be enhanced with attractive paving and fresh planting, including a small tree to compensate for the loss of tree T51. The design of the building will create views through the building to new planting and wildflower meadow within the school's nature garden. The parking facilities on site are currently insufficient, with overflow staff parking on a grassed area in front of the school which cannot be used in wet weather. This situation will be alleviated through the installation of a porous geocell surface filled with gravel, marked out for up to 14 cars. A route through the car park to the rear of the school will be provided for emergency vehicles, utilising the existing grounds maintenance route around the East side of the site. This grassed surface will be strengthened with a ground reinforcement grid, retaining its existing appearance. The existing asphalt car park will be remarked to accommodate 3 accessible and 4 standard parking bays, and the recreation ground car park to the South on Church End Lane will be extended to provide 24 additional spaces, with the existing features relocated as described on drawing L-7011B.

The relocation of the nursery and the removal of a small temporary classroom will enable the Early Years outdoor area to be updated. Small changes to the layout of fencing, gates and paths will improve the security of the area and at the same time allow for the tarmac surface over the roots of the Norway maples T38 and T39 to be replaced by a porous surface of artificial grass.

The arboricultural survey has identified four trees of poor quality which will be removed; it is proposed to fell a further 7 trees for the reasons identified on drawing L-7012A, and to replace them with a selection of semi-mature ornamental and native species to provide shade, wildlife value, blossom and autumn colour.

Improved cycle storage facilities will be installed just inside the double entrance gates by the recreation ground, and at the opposite end of the playground a new path will create a link between the new classroom blocks. Areas which suffer from high levels of wear and tear around the edges of paths will be covered with artificial grass and a performance space with associated seating will form a focal point between the buildings on the West side of the school.

Further landscape improvements across the site are shown on the annotated drawings L-7010 and L-7011A and B.

1.6 Relevant Planning Policies and Consultations

1.6.1 Relevant Planning Policies (Reading Borough Core Strategy)

- CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design)
- CS4 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development)
- CS5 (Inclusive Access)
- CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)
- CS22 (Transport Assessments)
- CS24 (Car/ Cycle Parking)
- CS28 (Loss of Open Space)
- CS31 (Additional and Existing Community Facilities)
- CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources)
- CS36 (Biodiversity and Geology)
- CS38 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)

1.6.2 Pre-application advice

The Planning Department were consulted at an early stage regarding the principal of the overall site development. A meeting was held on site with RBC planners on 12th January. A pre planning application enquiry response has been received on 23.01.18. reference 171917. Consultee responses have been provided and comments taken on board within this statement and supporting documentation.

1.6.3 Building Users and Public Consultation

Moorlands Primary School, school governing body representatives and the client department have been consulted throughout the development of the scheme through regular client meetings.

A public exhibition for the expansion of the school was held on 20th September 2017. Parents, school staff, local residents, neighbouring organisations and ward councillors were invited. The event was well attended and feedback for the principle of expansion was generally positive. There were a good number of responses, primarily concerned with parking/ transport issues along Church End Lane and Calder Close and the impact of the increase in pupils this would have. Another concern from residents in Calder Close was the two storey teaching block.

A public planning exhibition was held on 13th December 2017. Parents, school staff, local residents, neighbouring organisations and ward councillors were invited. The event was also well attended and again feedback was generally positive. The key concerns remained parking/ transport issues along Church End Lane and Calder Close and for residents in Calder Close the location of the two storey teaching block.

Following the feedback from the exhibition the two storey block has been moved c. 8.5m further away from the boundary with the neighbouring properties.

1.6.4 Sport England

The playing field is used by the school only, with no community use. The school maintains limited pitch markings on the playing field, including a football pitch in the winter months and a running track and a rounders pitch in the summer months.

The proposed development has minimal impact on the existing school playing fields, c.658m² of open space has been used to extend the Key Stage 2 playground, which is located on ground that slopes towards the North-Western boundary with some play equipment, and is therefore not suitable for pitches. The Key Stage 2 playground will have markings for three netball courts.

The location of the Key Stage 2 block requires the relocation of the existing play equipment which will be moved to the North-West, within the same zone, on the edge of the playing fields. The Key Stage 1 block is located on the periphery of the playing fields in an area where there is some play equipment. C. 1000m² of open space has been lost, however these spaces are on the periphery of the playing fields and in a location which suffers from high wear and tear, as noted in section 1.5, and are not suitable for pitches.

C. 575m² of open space is proposed to be used for the staff car park on the adjacent Recreation Ground. The car park is located at the end of an existing public car park and where an existing footpath is located. This area of the Recreation Ground is not considered suitable for playing fields/ pitches.

Sport England has been consulted in the pre-application stage and have advised the following; “....the scheme does look like it should meet the E3 planning policy exception as long as the new building’s windows which face on the playing fields, should be at least 6.5 toughened glass for the outer pane and 6.4mm laminated glass for the inner pane, or installation of external protective grills to the windows facing the playing fields.”

The specification of the windows along the playing fields will comply with Sport England’s requirements.

To support the application drawings indicating the existing and proposed playing field layout are provided which includes the ability to mark out 2no. U7/8 pitches or 1no. U9/10 pitch including run-off areas.

Sport England make reference to a community use agreement, however as the school site is adjacent The Meadway Recreation Ground a community use agreement for the school site is not considered necessary.

1.6.5 Transport and Highways

The proposed development will increase the number of pupils and staff. A Transport Consultant has been appointed to assist with the planning application. A Transport Statement accompanies this application. A Travel Plan will be issued following submission of the application, as agreed with RBC Highways.

It is proposed to provide a total of 46no. car parking spaces, 22no. on the school site (including 3no. accessible spaces) and 24no. off-site, based on the parking numbers at another 3FE Primary School in Reading. The school currently has c. 16 car parking spaces, only 5 of which are marked out, including 1no. accessible space. An area of grass to the front is used as overflow parking but for only limited months. A number of staff park on Church End Lane, due to the lack of existing car parking on site.

The proposed additional number of staff is 14FTE, equating to an additional 14 car parking spaces in accordance with RBC Parking Standards. However due to the under provision of existing car parking spaces this is proposed to be increased to alleviate the parking congestion on site and on Church End Lane, which has been discussed with RBC Highways.

The proposed staff car park on the adjacent Recreation Ground is proposed to be accessed through the public car park. An access controlled barrier is proposed with fob/ card reader access to enter and an induction loop release on exit, using a power supply from the existing school site. The car park will be used by school staff during the week only and at limited other times. RBC Parks department will also have access for maintenance to the Recreation Ground. It is not proposed to open the car park out of school hours for public use, which could cause management difficulties for the school.

2no. powered two-wheel parking spaces are proposed at the front of the site.

An additional 15no. cycle hoops are proposed (creating 30 additional spaces), located at two pedestrian entrances, which is an improvement over the minimum requirement within RBC Parking Standards. In addition separate scooter parking provision is proposed near to the Key Stage 2 block. The existing cycle shelter at the front of the school can be designated for staff use.

Reading Borough Council Highways department has been consulted in the pre-application stage and from an early stage, regarding the proposals. An initial meeting was held with no significant Highways concerns raised regarding the proposals, or the principle of expanding car parking off the adjacent public car park for additional staff spaces. It is noted that parking was suggested here as part of the proposed housing development off Conwy Close, but was rejected, and that The Avenue Centre were also possibly looking for more car parking space in this area, however these have different requirements to that of the school.

A Transport Statement and full Travel Plan accompany the Planning Application. The Transport Statement has been developed with dialogue with RBC Highways. In summary it is considered that there are no significant highways and transportation matters that should prevent this planning application from being approved.

The strategy for deliveries, waste collection, maintenance and emergency vehicles is proposed to continue as existing.

1.6.6 Trees

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Protection Plan and preliminary AMS have been compiled by SJ Stephens Associates and accompany this application.

There are a variety of trees at different stages of maturity on the site. The road frontage is attractively planted and there are small clusters of trees within the site mainly in close proximity to the existing buildings.

The proposals will be developed to avoid or minimise impact to the trees following advice from the Arboricultural Consultant on tree protection measures.

There are a small number of trees to be removed to facilitate the development and which are considered low value or diseased/ damaged. Refer to section 5 for further details and supporting information.

1.6.7 Environmental Protection

1.6.7.1 Acoustics

An Environmental Noise Assessment has been compiled by Sound Advice and accompanies this application. In summary, the proposed development can achieve the requirements of Building Bulletin 93.

The new teaching blocks are proposed to have air source heat pumps, but have not yet been specified therefore an assessment of potential noise cannot be made at this time. During the next design stages the air source heat pumps will be carefully chosen and assessed against the existing background sound level.

1.6.7.2 Contaminated land

Terra Firma (South) was commissioned by HCC Engineering Consultancy to carry out a ground investigation of the proposed area of development.

The Ground Investigation Report accompanying this application details the investigation and findings, and confirms the following:

Six samples of soil collected from the site were tested for a site specific suite of contaminants. The soil chemical testing has revealed that the determinants tested were all below relevant guidelines for a Public Open Space (POS) – Residential scenario.

1.6.7.3 External lighting

External lighting will comprise typically LED source, wall mounted and under canopy luminaires to illuminate all final exits from the buildings. For the staff car park (on and off-site) planted column mounted LED luminaires will be utilised. Lighting columns will not exceed 5m in height or as recommended by the Planning Authority.

All external lighting will be controlled via a combined photo electric cell and time switch control with limited manual override facility. The time switch / lighting programmer will feature a battery reserve and day omit facility. It is planned to use multiple lighting programmers / circuits which will allow selective control of different external zones as the client may require e.g. car park lighting and building mounted lighting.

All external lighting will be designed to be in-line with the following:

- i) The Works shall comply generally with provisions of relevant Statutory Regulations, B.S. Specifications, Euro-norms and IEC Regulations.
- ii) CIBSE, Code for External Lighting, Guides and Technical Memoranda.
- iii) 17th Edition of IEE Wiring Regulations and any subsequent amendments.
- iv) Installation of luminaires shall be carried out in accordance with clause B2.2 of the HCC Standard Electrical Specification.

All external lighting will be designed to comply with the energy efficiency and the reduction of night time pollution requirements/criteria of the Institute of Lighting Engineers guidance on the reduction of night-time pollution.

An isolux plot showing light levels including overspill will be provided. All external lighting will be configured not to operate beyond 2300 hours and will be typically set to turn off at 1900 hours or no later than 2100 hours as agreed with the client.

1.6.7.4 Construction Strategy

To keep the school fully operational during the construction period and to minimise disruption, an initial phasing strategy has been developed with the school.

It is proposed to use two contractors, one for the Phase 1 works and another for Phases 2 and 3. Once a contractor has been appointed for the relevant phases a Contractor's Management Plan will be developed with dialogue with RBC Highways.

In summary, the development is proposed in three phases.

Phase 1:

- Site establishment (proposed adjacent public car park)
- Extend Key Stage 2 playground
- Construct two-storey and single-storey teaching blocks
- Carry out associated external works

Phase 2:

- Site establishment (proposed adjacent public car park)
- Construct single classroom extension
- Carry out associated external works

Phase 3:

- Install temporary admin.
- Construct off-site car-park
- Construct admin extension and refurbishment
- Construct site staff car park
- Carry out associated external works

Works on site are planned to commence in July 2018.

The contractors will liaise with the school and neighbours on a regular basis to agree any temporary arrangements, safety measures and access strategies, to ensure disruption is kept minimal.

1.6.8 Energy Efficiency

The project will be designed and built to comply with the performance requirements of the current Building Regulations. Following the approach taken and agreed with the planning department on recent education expansion projects a Sustainability Statement is included to support the Planning Application.

2.0 Supporting Information

2.1 Access & Inclusion

Hampshire County Council Access Officer has been consulted regarding the proposals. The Design and Access Strategy details measures to comply with the requirements of DDA and Approved Document M of the Building Regulations and is included to support the Planning Application.

2.2 Flood Risk

The Environment Agency website flood risk map indicates that the site is in Flood Zone 1, with a low probability of flooding. The size of the proposed development area on the school site is less than 1 hectare.

2.3 Drainage Strategy

HCC Engineering Consultancy has been appointed Drainage Consultant to assist with the drainage strategy, as detailed on the Drainage Statement and strategy drawings, which accompany this application.

2.4 Archaeology

Berkshire Archaeology have been consulted as part of the pre-application stage and have advised the following;

The school is located in an area where little previous archaeological work has been carried out and as a result the archaeological potential of this immediate area is unknown. There have been a cluster of investigations to the south, within the historic core of the village of Tilehurst.

The site is located just outside the historic core of Tilehurst, but the potential for medieval archaeology should not be ruled out. There are hints of earlier prehistoric and Roman activity within the area, the Historic Environment Records include a Bronze Age feature recorded during works at Iris Court to the south-west and a small number of Roman finds from within St Michael's Churchyard.

Although the existing school development is likely to have caused disturbance to archaeological remains that may have been present, the proposals include areas away from the existing school buildings where the potential for survival of archaeological deposits is greater. We would therefore recommend field investigations to be completed and, depending on the amount of below ground disturbance required, this may consist of either trial trenching and/or archaeological monitoring during ground works.

Considering the scale of the proposals this work could be completed under a condition attached to any permission granted, but we would be happy to discuss the requirements prior to submission of an application. As the purpose of trial trenching is to identify the archaeological potential, it is possible further stages of field work would be needed and therefore adequate time should be allowed for this to be completed if necessary.

Following the submission of further information to Berkshire Archaeology regarding the proposed foundation strategy they have advised the following;

Given the scale of the proposals and the foundation design, the archaeological requirements could be dealt with by archaeological monitoring (watching brief) during the groundworks for the new teaching blocks, and any stripping of areas to extend the car parks and playgrounds. There won't therefore be the need for any trial trenching before construction work begins as the monitoring takes place alongside the construction works.

2.5 Ecology

An updated and extended Phase 1 habitat survey has been carried out by John Wenman Ecological Consultancy in October 2016 (following on from a Phase 1 habitat survey undertaken in May 2015). The Ecology report summarises that the habitats within the site are of no special ecological value. The woodland beyond the Northern boundary holds the highest ecological importance.

Evidence of bats was not found, with the existing school buildings lacking features suitable for roosting bats.

Although noted in section 9.1.1, further survey work would be required if trees were to be removed, this is in particular relation to the trees in the woodland, along the Northern boundary, which are being retained. The

Ecologist has reviewed the proposed tree removal against the Phase 1 survey findings and the trees to be removed lacked any features that would make them suitable for bats, therefore no further survey is necessary.

2.6 Utilities

Enquiries to the utility companies have been issued.

Capacity checks have been carried out for incoming services serving the school. Existing gas, water and electric supplies are deemed adequate to serve the new development. Electrical and gas supplies have recently been upgraded.

The existing gas and electric supplies to the existing plant room will need to be diverted around the new front extension.

The design and implementation of the engineering services for the proposed works will focus on delivering low energy, low maintenance, high reliability and user friendly installations appropriate for the building users.