

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

LEIGHTON PARK SCHOOL

PEDESTRIAN AND CAR PARKING IMPROVEMENTS

Introduction

Leighton Park School would like to improve pedestrian safety within the internal road network, improve aesthetic quality of the school grounds and to reduce congestion at peak times. The school already controls vehicle access with automatic barriers and other measures.

The proposals, detailed in this document and supporting plans, re-inforce these measures by further excluding vehicles from more central areas of the site with a new car park at the main gates and therefore minimising vehicle movements near pedestrian areas.

At present, car parking is distributed throughout the site and can often be located in 'dead' areas that have become parking spaces. These parking spaces are spread throughout the school campus and involve driving deep into the campus. A Travel Statement (TS) has been prepared by Vectos and issued as part of the planning application. The TS has utilised local policy documents (Reading Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (2011)) to determine an appropriate number of car parking spaces for existing staff numbers and for a school of this size. Using the local policy calculation system (Chapter 4.4.-4.5) there is a shortfall of 66 car park spaces.

The NVB Design and Access Statement will also demonstrate that the proposed works (on completion) will not only improve the safety and movement of pupils, parents and visitors around the school campus but also reduce the visual appearance of the school grounds and reduce congestion at peak times.

The proposed location of the new car parking area is adjacent to Grove House, to the north west of the school campus. Grove House is a boarding house with staff accommodation set within a mature woodland belt and adjacent to Pepper Lane.

To support this application, a number of supporting studies have been prepared, including:

- Transport Statement prepared by Vectos;
- A set of drawings prepared by NVB Landscape;
- Arboricultural Assessment prepared by Future Tree Management;
- Heritage Statement prepared by Armour Heritage; and
- Ecological Appraisal prepared by Soltys Brewer Ecology.

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Use

In planning terms, the use of the development site will not be changed. The current use of the development site comprises a gravel access track that diverts off from the main school drive and terminates in a car park for residents and visitors to Grove House.

Photo 01 – Existing access track and grounds to the front of Grove House



Staff and visitors have to park their cars in a number of small parking areas throughout the school site, many of these are adjacent to school buildings and classrooms. There is a real concern for the safety of children, staff and visitors whilst vehicles are manoeuvring and reversing.

Photo 02 – Existing car parking provision within school grounds



Leighton Park School have developed a proactive car safety policy to address the issue of on-site vehicle traffic. A safety measure that has already been put in place is to ensure that the main barrier gates into the school are closed between 8 and 6pm.

The proposed car park is a key constituent in ensuring that the school's policy will give active segregation of vehicle and pedestrian and improve safety throughout the school.

Amount & Scale

The size and number of car parking spaces of the proposed car park has been calculated in accordance with Reading Borough Council's parking standards as documented within the Transport Statement (Section 4).

A total of 66 car parking spaces has been proposed to address the shortfall for onsite parking numbers. An existing area, adjacent to Grove House, has been identified as the best location for the proposed car park as it's close to the existing main vehicle access where similar activities and expectations take place on a daily basis.

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Layout

The design has been developed with the following key guiding factors:

- Parking Need
- Safety of pedestrians
- Heritage Setting
- Arboricultural Assets
- Sustainable Drainage

The daily parking requirement includes; school drop off and pick up, staff parking and visitors coming to school events. A hard wearing and easily maintained surface will be essential for a sustainable school car park.

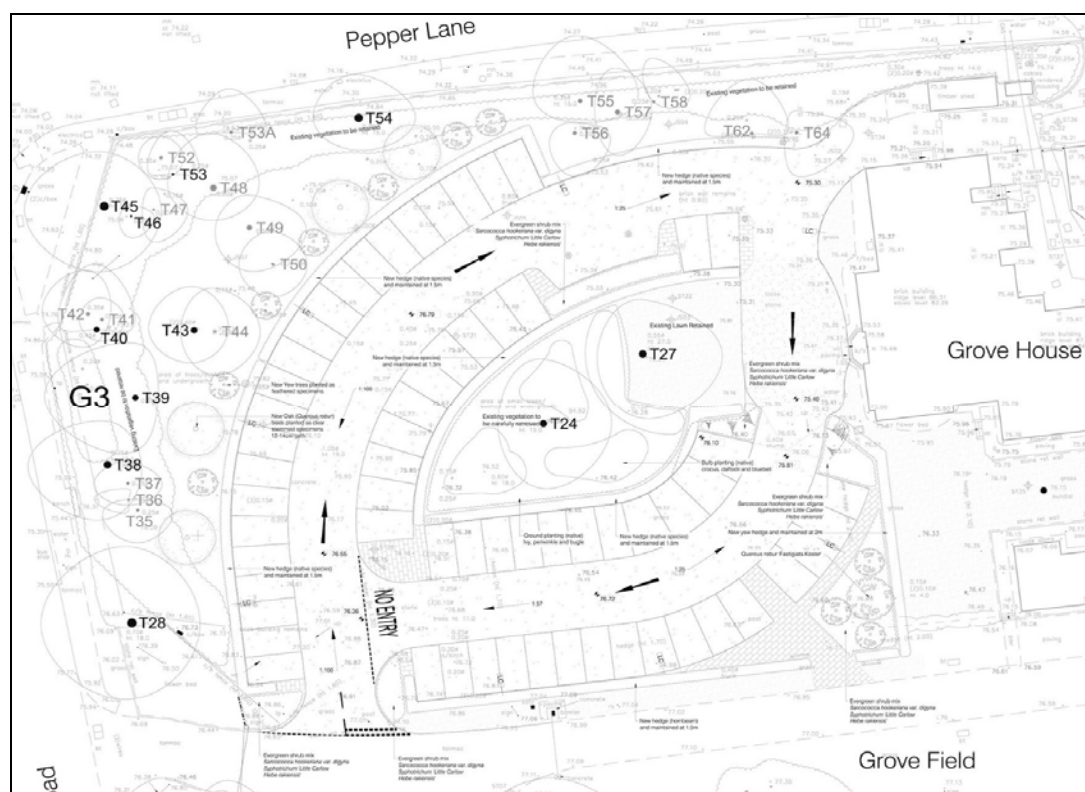
The number of proposed car parking spaces has been arranged to fit into the existing drive and car park to Grove House. The layout of parking spaces will make the best use of the limited space and with as little impact as possible to the adjacent trees and landscape - see Vectos drawing 162670-PHL-05_Car park OP5.

The layout has been developed with a 'one way' circulation route which in part uses the footprint of the existing gravel drive that sweeps around to Grove House and back onto the main school drive.

The proposed layout has been developed to efficiently use the existing area and to integrate the car park into the surrounding woodland belt. The car park layout has developed to maximise the number of trees that can be retained, protected and maintained.

All these design constraints positively combine to ensure that the car park is practical in scale, can achieve the maximum car parking spaces with the least amount of change to the existing woodland. Also, to mitigate the loss of the boundary hedge, a new hedge will be planted to screen vehicles within the car park from the sensitive views within the school grounds and the wider public realm.

Plan 1 – Proposed Car Park Layout (1622-2100-D-Proposed Site Plan)



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Trees

The existing trees form a mixed woodland plantation belt on the northern and eastern school perimeter. These trees are designated with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO no. 27/07 – T91, G14 and W9).

Photo 03 – Existing trees



The car park proposal will require that a number of trees and hedges within this corner of the school to be removed; see Tree Constraints Plan (drawing number - LP220220171.01).

Much of the existing trees and woodland understorey will be retained, protected and maintained. The removal of the trees and hedge is critical to the layout and to achieve the required car parking spaces to ensure a safe and car free school.

Within the submitted Planning Application, a detailed Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been prepared with information on the quality and condition of the existing trees. This includes a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Constraints Plan (drawing number - LP220220171.01).

Planting

As part of the works to construct the car park, there is substantial planting proposed to mitigate the loss of trees and hedges and ensure good visual screening from the road.

There will be 26 standard trees planted as part of the car park development including 18 infill yew trees to further enhance the screening to Pepper Road by the existing yew trees that form part of the adjacent woodland belt.

Views of the car park will be screened from the school and views from across the open lawns will only see a carefully maintained hedge (approx. 1.5m high).

Also, a screening hedge will be planted to provide a private garden for the residents of Grove House.

Car park surface

To be consistent with the network of internal school roads and to ensure a hard, durable and maintainable car parking space; the area will have an asphalt surface finish.

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Heritage

The proposed car park is located within the North West corner of Leighton Park School campus. The Old School House is a Grade II building and situated 191 metres away to the south east. There are no designations for the adjacent Grove House.

The likely impact of the car park proposal on the Old School House (Grade II listed building) has been considered within the Heritage Statement.

The site is not in direct sight of the Old School House as all views are blocked by the existing Music building and new extension. The Heritage Statement states that the mature trees and hedges around Grove House help screen views from the Old School House and the adjacent parkland.

Therefore, the impact of the proposed development will have no significant impact on the listed building or its landscape setting.

Photo 04: View from the Main School, the new extension will block all views



Lighting

The car park proposal will include 13 lighting columns that are Four metres high. The position, height and type of luminaire have been chosen to maintain visitor safety and also to reduce light spill into adjacent areas for ecological reasons to minimise light spill into bat foraging areas.

Refer to Lighting scheme produced by *Whitecroft Ltd*

Photo 05: Light column and luminaire - Siroccos and Cygnus Luminaires

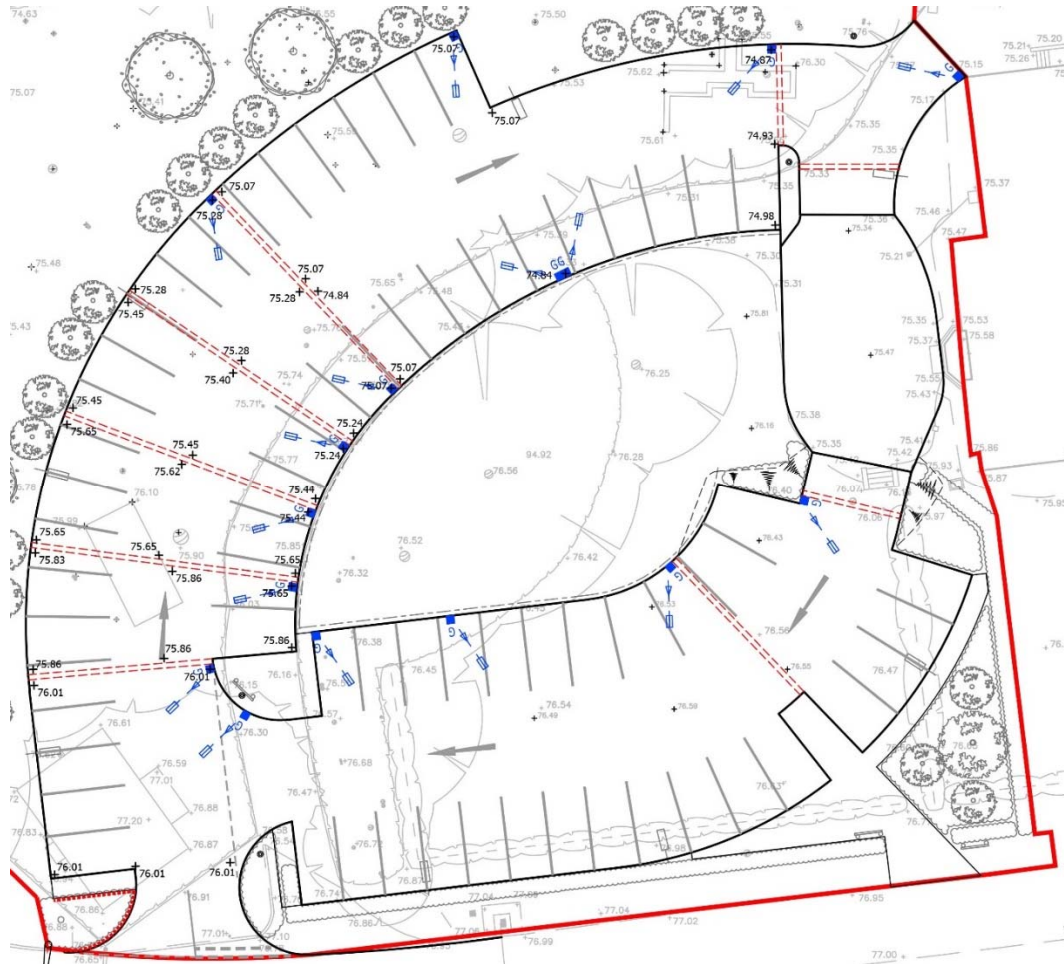


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Drainage

The drainage has been designed to be fully attenuated within the majority of the subbase to the proposed car park. This will also perform some bioremediation for the rainwater from the car park - see Vectos drawing 162670-D-01_Drainage

Plan 02 – Attenuation system section



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