



DESIGN, ACCESS and PLANNING STATEMENT

FOR

Specialist Classroom Block

AT

Hope Primary School; Lordens Road, Huyton; Knowsley, Merseyside L14 8UD

REVISION 2

Date Amended: 03.02.25



Introduction:

This planning application is for a proposed standalone building to incorporate specialist teaching spaces and spaces for Students with Special Educational Needs. The space will also include Calm Rooms, a Sensory room and WCs.

The building will be located within the school grounds just North West of the main school block. It will be built upon a piece of disused land which is currently .

The main school building is currently running at full capacity, therefore space needs to be created within close proximity to the main school building to allow for specialist teaching, provisions, and space for those with Special educational needs, so to aid them to continue to stay in mainstream education and integrate with the rest of the school.

School Statement:

"At Hope Primary School, we are proud to provide a safe, stimulating and inclusive learning environment where every member of our community is valued and respected.

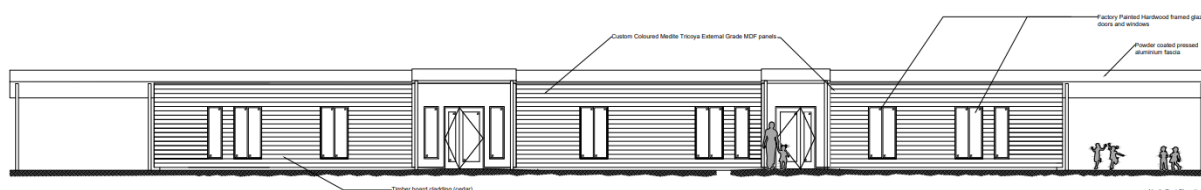
Our broad, balanced, creative curriculum and enrichment activities provide opportunities for everyone to achieve and succeed.

We are a joint faith school where learning is fun and children are nurtured and inspired to Believe, Respect and Achieve through a range of creative and spiritual experiences. Children are encouraged to take risks to become confident, independent learners.

Together we take pride in making a positive contribution to our school and the wider community.

We aim to provide every child with access to a broad and balanced education. This includes the National Curriculum in line with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice."

- <https://www.hopeprimary.com/>



Design:

The design will incorporate 3 specialist teaching spaces, alongside a sensory space, calm room and WCs suitable for those who will be using the space.

The project will be built off site as a modern modular build, and delivered to site as to create the minimal amount of disruption to the school environment while construction is underway.

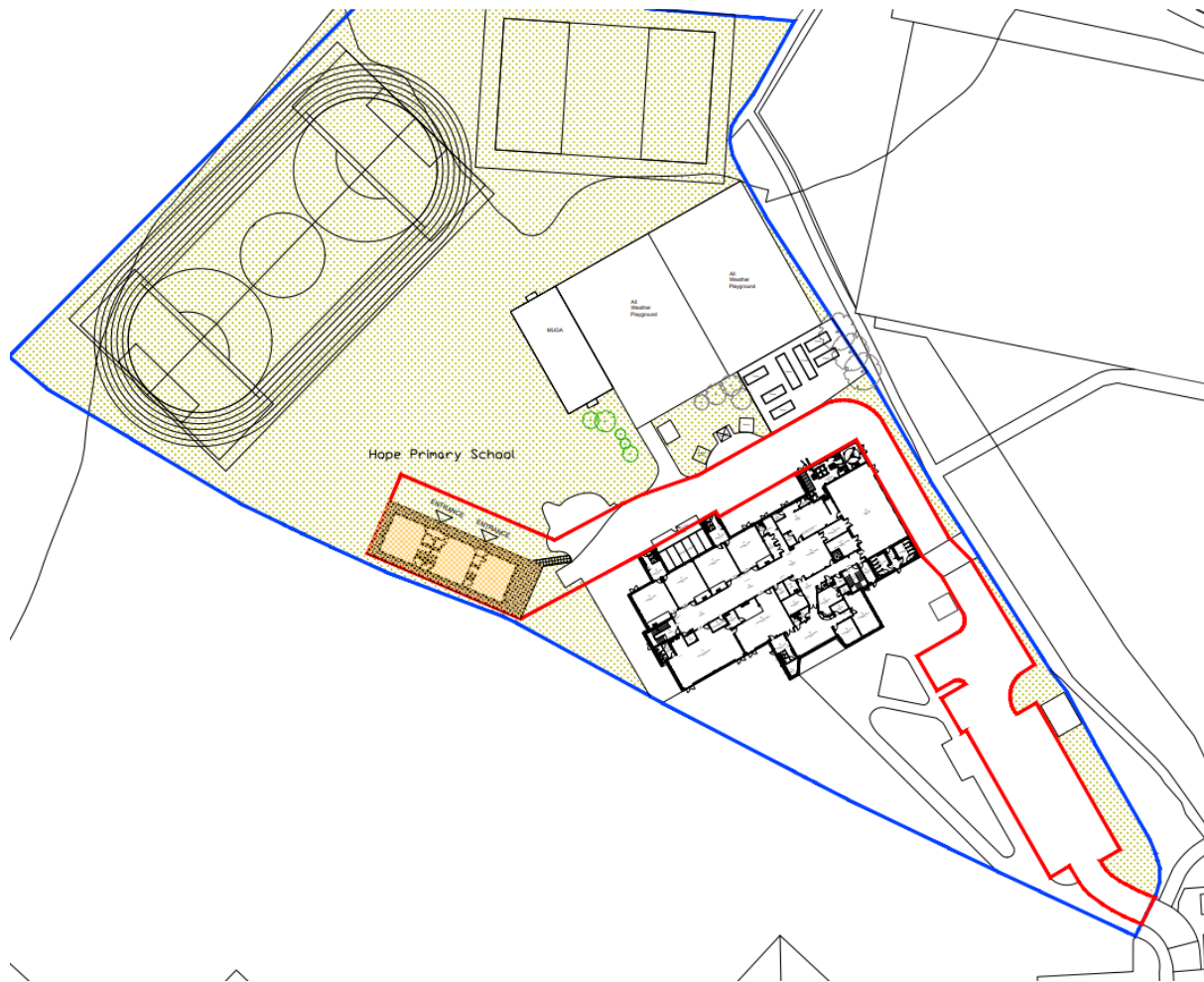
The roof of the building will over sail an area (approx. 5 m to the North west) creating a covered and shaded space for outdoor learning and play.

The building will be clad in a mixture of natural cedar timber boards and bright coloured panels to tie in with the current aesthetic of the existing school as well as creating a new visually vibrant space within the school environment.



Example of Cladding and window design courtesy of Moduplan.com

Site



(Proposed Site Plan indicating location of the proposed classrooms shown in yellow)

This area has been identified by the school as an ideal location as it is within close proximity to the main school building as to not give the feeling of isolation from the rest of the school, but also has the level of separation which may allow students who may have sensory issues using that space to feel safe and calmer being slightly removed from the hustle and bustle of the main building.

The location is in a currently disused modified grassed area of the school, approx. 30m from the marked out sports pitches, (utilised primarily in the summer months) and outside of the Schools 'Way-leave' zone (see *drainage plan - 7273-HPR-CUN-XX-XX-DR-A-1201*).

Planning Statement

The application site to which the development is to take place is allocated as Urban Greenspace and Education Land under the 2016 the Knowsley Local Plan.

The proposal will result in the loss of part of this grassland.

Knowsley Local Plan - Policy CS21 states that:

“1) In supporting the wider Green Infrastructure functions of urban greenspace in accordance with Policy CS8, the Council will provide and maintain quantitative, qualitative and accessibility standards for different types of public open space. “

The space designated for the proposal is currently unused grass land, which is considered ancillary to the sports pitches also on the site, the development of these classrooms which face directly onto the grass, will allow more of this green space to be utilised further than it currently is within lesson time by the students due to their close proximity to the green space.

It also states:

“2) New development which would result in the loss of urban greenspace, will not be permitted unless at least one of the following criteria are met:

a) A surplus of provision for all types of greenspace would be maintained relative to local standards;

b) The land is considered unsuitable in terms of size, location or character to prevent or address individual deficiencies of different types of greenspace relative to local standards;

c) Appropriate mitigation is provided through replacement facilities of at least an equal quantity, quality and accessibility;

d) The development is required to improve greenspace provision or for ancillary facilities to support sport or recreation; or

e) Where the proposal relates to the loss of indoor or outdoor sports provision, and there is no evidence of future or continuing need for sports use, or alternatively only land incapable of forming a playing pitch or sporting facility is affected and its release accords with either clause 2)a) or 2)b).”

We consider this proposal to fall under multiple of these criteria. The main use of the land is school playing fields, with regards to 2b, due to the shape of the school site, and the location of the existing marked sports pitches, the area of the has been deemed unusable by the school and hasn't been utilised. The integration of these new green facing class rooms will allow the space to be used more, but also importantly during lesson time as well as recreational or dedicated sports time.

With regards to 2d) the development will provide ancillary facilities to support sport recreation with the WC provision which will be provided in the new building, this will aid the sports pitches being used and accessed easier outside of school hours. In terms of safe guarding, it will save children having to use the WC facilities within the main school building when the sports pitches are being used after school hours.

Policy CS21 also refers to:

“3) Irrespective of whether criteria in 2) are met, unless the benefits of a proposal clearly outweigh the loss of urban greenspace, development will be resisted where it would significantly harm any existing or potential special qualities of 126 The Knowsley Green Space Strategy 2010–2014 (Knowsley Council, 2010) Page 158 Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy January 2016 greenspace in the area in terms of:

a) Visual amenity;

b) Residential amenity;

c) Biodiversity and environmental benefits;

d) Historical, cultural or community value;

e) Recreational benefits; or

f) Physical and/or visual linkages between adjoining urban greenspaces.”

We do not consider that any of these apply to the proposed development, instead we consider the development to enhance visual amenity and have recreational benefits too as well as educational benefits. There will also be Biodiversity and environmental benefits.

Part of the proposal involves removing the modified grass land in exchange for Neutral Grassland which will provide a far greater Biodiversity to the site than is currently the case.



Revision 2 – diagram updated – 03-02-25

The Proposal is orientated towards the grass playing fields, facing this more natural external space will bring a stronger feeling of calm to the students using the space.

The Knowsley local plan also refers to the Enhancement of Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace and tree protection in Policy CS21:

“10)The Council will encourage proposals for new development to incorporate:

a) Retention of existing trees, woodland, vegetation and other habitat features which offer a positive contribution to the local environment in terms of visual amenity, recreation value or biodiversity/wildlife interest;

b) Appropriate planting of trees, other soft landscaping and installation of habitat features for the benefit of biodiversity; and

c) Adequate replacement provision where tree loss is unavoidable, comprising two additional trees for every tree lost and taking account of species and size.”

Although there is the removal of 7 small trees within this development, they are unsightly and offer little positive contribution to the local environment.(see 7273-HPR-CUN-XX-XX-DR-A-1202 - Biodiversity Net Gain Plan) The proposal allows for the planting of a further 14 trees as well as those retained on the site, and the planting of Neutral grasses which will include wildflowers, these will be beneficial to the biodiversity of the site providing a greater variety of species than are already situated within the area of development.

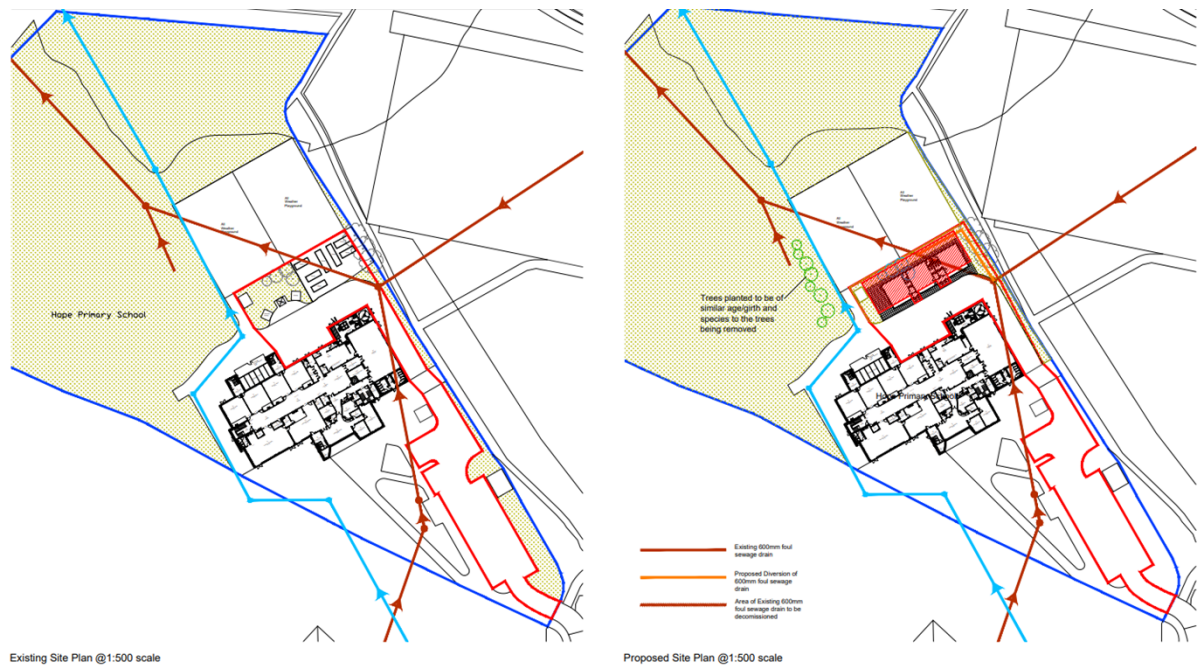
Revision 2 – Update – 03-02-25

Previous Related Applications

24/00006/FUL | ERECTION OF SINGLE STOREY MODULAR BUILDING TO REAR OF EXISTING SCHOOL, INCORPORATING 3NO. CLASSROOMS, W.C FACILITIES, CALM ROOM AND SENSORY ROOM FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIALIST EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Date: 14.03.24

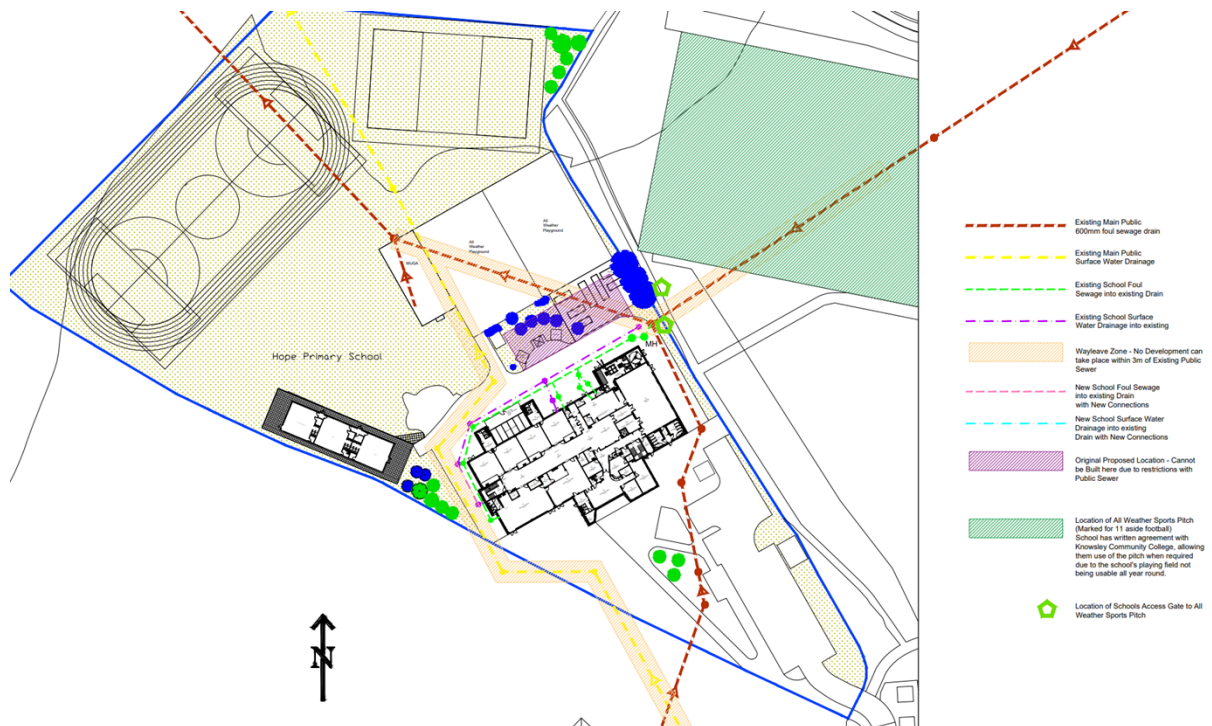
Decision: Granted



We sought and were granted approval previously for this proposal, with the proposed classrooms situated within a different location on this site.

Although approved, due to the location of existing public sewers and the implications of the 'build-over' agreement required by United Utilities, with the school's necessary stance on risk adversity, it was not possible to build the proposed classrooms in this original location.

Due to this we explored further options for the location of the proposed classrooms, and found the proposed location to be the only one that was feasible in relation to both site restrictions, due to locations of existing public drains, encroachment of sports pitches, achieving required Bio net diversity targets, as well as the required proximity to the existing school, both being close enough so that the travel distance is not too great from the main school for those with mobility requirements, but also far enough away from the main school to give the required elements of space and privacy from the general busyness of a main school building as required by the very specific needs of the students that will be using the space. The diagram below illustrates this.



Revision 2 – Update – 03-02-25

Sports England Response

Following our initial submission for this application we have had a formal response from Sports England stating that they object to the proposal:

“because the erection of the school building on playing field land is not considered to accord with any of the Policy Exceptions to Sport England’s Playing Fields Policy or with Paragraph 104 of the NPPF.”

They have offered possible resolutions to this however, all of which have been taken on board.

1. **Sports England:** Regards to Biodiversity Net Gain – wildflower and tree planting – Sports England have suggested that these areas be moved to other parts of the site which cannot accommodate sports pitches.

Response: As can now be seen on Site and BNG Plans, we have co-operated with this suggestion and located the proposed areas of proposed Neutral Grassland to the areas suggested and have updated the BNG Matrix accordingly. This has meant that we have removed the proposed area of Wild Flower planting to the North West of the Proposed Classrooms, to allow for the greater area of sports pitch.

2. **Sports England:** To demonstrate that there will be no unacceptable impact on the quality of the playing field as a result of the installation of a drainage system, the applicant is advised to provide an Agronomy Report completed by a suitably qualified natural turf consultant which details the existing condition of the playing field.

Response: We have removed all proposed drainage through the field from the application and will explore a more suitable alternative as to avoid the damage or disruption to the playing surface.

3. **Sports England:** To minimise the impact on the playing field, the applicant is advised to move the building further towards the southeast corner and to remove the proposed areas of hardstanding either side of the proposed building. This would allow the red line to be reduced.

Response: although in principle we agree that this would be a good idea, it is not possible due to the location of the existing public sewer and the 3m Wayleave Zone from this, if the building and hardstanding was moved it would encroach on this zone, therefore this is not possible. The relocation of the wildflower planting has however reduced the length of the site area by 28 metres.

4. **Sports England:** It has not been demonstrated that there is an excess of playing pitches in the catchment in terms of both school and community playing pitch provision to justify the loss of the playing field brought about by the classroom building as proposed.

Response: although there may not be an excess of playing pitches in the area, the school has a written agreement with Knowsley Community College, which allows them use of their all-weather playing surface (which can be seen in the image below). There has been a gate installed between the school and the pitch which allows the students access to the pitch without having to go through a public road. Part of the reasoning for this is that the school's playing field is not fit for purpose a sizable proportion of the year round due to waterlogging during the school year. Although Sports England have shown a google Earth image from 2012 showing the layout of a football pitch, this was from over a decade ago and the school field is now marked out as shown below in the summer months when it is usable.



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Statement from the School with Regards to the Necessity for Development

The School have provided a statement as to why this development is necessary to facilitate the ongoing needs and requirements of a number of their students.

'Like lots of schools locally and nationally, our school SEND needs are growing each year with children. These also include children with increasingly complex needs. It is difficult to meet these needs within the current school footprint due to the lack of flexibility in the building's design. The additional works planned for Hope Primary will allow the school to meet the needs of our current children in a more flexible way. The modular building will provide additional SEND and sensory provision. The building will allow smaller group work and one to one provision. They also include canopies to allow for more bespoke outdoor learning. It has taken a significant amount of time and funding to reach this point in the process.'

School will not be increasing its numbers on roll as we are currently at our maximum.

Hope Primary are fortunate to have a close relationship with Knowsley College, who are located next to school. We have weekly PE sessions in their sports hall. These are to allow their students to gain valuable experience. We also have a similar agreement for their Early Years students. Students from

college also come to school as part of placements. This arrangement also allows us to have key access to the college gates to use a variety of facilities including the full size astroturf pitch. We regularly use the pitch during the school day and for afterschool activities.’ – John Casson - Headteacher

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Highways

This development is to facilitate the needs of existing students who already attend the school, this will not lead to the increase in student intake or extra staffing. (Capacity will remain the same) therefore no extra parking facilities etc will be required.

Access

The new classrooms will be accessed through the existing school gates, there is already access to the rear main building from this area. It is also situated just off thoroughfare from the main building to the playground, so existing routes will not be affected.

There is hard standing all the way from the entrance gate of the school up to the doors of the proposed classrooms. Vehicular access is also possible up to a distance of 20m from the doors.

Conclusion

The proposed new classroom block at Hope Primary will enhance students' learning experience and aid their journey in mainstream education. They will accommodate more specialist teaching methods within the school and will in turn allow the school to be more inclusive, providing pupils with spaces for ranges of education where necessary for their needs, as well as allowing the students to further engage with wildlife and environment as part of their education.