

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

to accompany planning application relating to
PROPOSED 2No. SINGLE STOREY
MODULAR CLASSROOM BUILDINGS

at

DENE MAGNA SCHOOL
ABENHALL ROAD
MITCHELDEAN
GLOUCESTERSHIRE
GL17 0DU

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Dene Magna School is an academy converter school located in Mitcheldean, Gloucestershire. It is a mixed school for students aged 11-18 and has been rated as Outstanding by Ofsted for eighteen years.
- 1.2 The school's continued success has contributed to a gradual yearly increase in student numbers and the school has been operating near its physical / spatial capacity for some time. The recent restrictions on mixing and movement due to the Coronavirus pandemic has meant having to introduce new methods of operating which generally requires more space. This has meant having to use staffrooms and staff training rooms as makeshift classrooms and as a consequence, the school library has been used as a temporary staffroom, training room and as a general multi-purpose space. This has hampered the school's ability to function normally and has highlighted the pressing need for additional classroom spaces.
- 1.3 Whilst the governors and school leaders have a long-term strategic vision for the school, they acknowledge that in the short-term there is an immediate need to provide more teaching space and that the most efficient way of achieving this, within the required timeframe, is to place modular classroom buildings on the site.
- 1.4 This planning application is therefore for the placement of 2No. single storey modular buildings on the site, providing four additional classrooms.

2.0 The Site

- 2.1 The school is located on Abenhall Road, which is a classified unnumbered highway off the A4136 (Gloucester Road) that meanders in a southerly direction towards Littledean. The site topography generally falls from west to east down towards Abenhall Road.
- 2.2 The school grounds comprise of 8.2ha, of which approximately 0.7ha is built upon and the remaining majority is set aside for playing fields, recreation areas, car parking and circulation routes. The school buildings are gathered towards the northern end of the site, with the playing fields extending to the south.
- 2.3 The school's main entrance, which will remain unaltered as a result of the proposed development, is towards the northeast of the site. The school grounds are generally bound by hedgerows and towards the northern end, where the buildings are situated, there is a good amount of tree planting along the boundary. Neither trees nor hedgerows will be affected by the proposed development as they are at a considerable distance from the application site.
- 2.4 The school buildings are a mixture of single storey and two storey structures with a mixture of both flat and pitched roofs. Typical of many a school campus, the original buildings have been extended and added-to over a period of decades by different hands. This means that there is no single architectural vocabulary or style which continues throughout the campus. There are also two small modular buildings currently within the site, to the south of the main carpark.

3.0 The Proposal

- 3.1 The school's intention is to provide four additional general teaching classrooms. This will consist of two separate modules each with two classrooms. The buildings will be constructed off site, delivered and lifted into position onto pre-formed foundations. This will minimise disruption to the school particularly in comparison to a traditional build.
- 3.2 The option of a two storey structure was considered, and even though this would reduce the extent of the foundations, and reduce cost, two smaller single storey buildings are preferred in order to reduce the visual impact on the school frontage.
- 3.3 The buildings will be located to the south of the main school entrance forming an L-shape in plan to address the existing paths and building entrances. The buildings will partly sit on an existing grassed area and partly on existing tarmac hardstanding. Some additional hardstanding is proposed to the entrances and fire escape doors of the buildings.
- 3.4 The use of the buildings will be for general teaching. This will allow the staffroom and the teacher training building to be returned to their former use and allow the school to provide more appropriate spaces for the activities being carried out.

4.0 Sizes and Areas

- 4.1 The whole school site measures 8.2ha but the extent of the site relating to the erection of the proposed modular buildings is 1320m².
- 4.2 Each building will have a Gross Internal Area of 139m² and the total additional floor area will therefore be 278m². There are no demolitions proposed as part of the application.
- 4.3 Taking into consideration the setting and size of the existing buildings, the proposed addition is modest in scale and will have a minimal impact on the site as a whole.

5.0 Materials and Appearance

- 5.1 The external walls of the proposed buildings will be clad in colour coated steel panels. The design is that of a typical flat roofed, double classroom 'modular' structure. One of the standard colour options will be chosen and the applicant requests that this be conditioned whilst the options are considered by all stakeholders.

6.0 Site Layout & Landscaping

- 6.1 The overall site layout will remain unaltered and vehicular access onto the site will be as existing.

- 6.2 There is currently a tarmac access, used for emergency vehicles to the rear of the site and this will be maintained and kept clear.
- 6.3 For pedestrian access into the proposed buildings and to accommodate the emergency exit doors, some new paths / hard standings are proposed. These are minimal and are shown on the plans submitted with the application.
- 6.4 The table tennis tables and basketball hoops nearest to the proposed buildings will be relocated elsewhere on the playground. Their new positions have not been shown / agreed.
- 6.5 There will be no foul water produced within these buildings and no foul water connections are proposed. Rainwater currently drains into the ground (grassed area) or discharges to surface water drains (tarmac areas). It is proposed that rainwater collected from the roof of the new buildings will be collected and discharged to a new soakaway located 5m from the buildings.
- 6.6 Flood Zone maps from the Environment Agency show the school to be in Flood Zone 1, which represents a low risk from fluvial flooding. The school grounds are approximately 800m outside the area of extreme flood. This means that the flood risk here is calculated by the Environment Agency as being less than a 1:1000 chance of occurring each year. As the proposed buildings are not within the floodplain, there will be no net loss of flood plain storage. There are therefore no unresolved flood risk issues relating to this proposed development.

7.0 Access

- 7.1 Both vehicle and pedestrian access into the site will remain unchanged and the positions of the new buildings will not affect any existing pedestrian or vehicular routes within the site
- 7.2 The main entrances of the proposed buildings are located nearest the existing tarmac paths and pedestrian routes. There will be a level access along a hard surface, suitable for both the ambulant and wheelchair users, and access into the building will be via level thresholds. There will be internal level access to all areas within the new buildings.
- 7.3 Internally, paint colours and ironmongery will be chosen taking account of partially sighted users and those with impaired mobility. Colour contrast will be used for adjacent materials and ironmongery will be easy to use and generally amenable to the sense of touch.

8.0 Summary

- 8.1 There is a lack of basic teaching space to accommodate the current student numbers at the school and this planning application is for the erection of 2No. single storey modular buildings on the site, providing four additional classrooms.
- 8.2 The buildings will be located to the south of the main school entrance and the total additional floor area being proposed is 278m².

- 8.3 There are no unresolved issues concerning drainage or flooding.
- 8.4 Access and accessibility have been considered and built-in to the proposal.
- 8.5 A travel statement has been appended to this document. Since the proposed development is to accommodate existing numbers, there is no proposed increase in traffic movement in or around the site.
- 8.6 Gaining planning permission for these modular buildings will allow the school to function adequately in the short term, by providing suitable teaching space for its students and returning staffrooms, training rooms and library space to their originally intended use.

Appendix A
TRAVEL STATEMENT

to accompany planning application relating to
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- 9.0 Existing Conditions:
- 9.1 Dene Magna School is accessed from a classified unnumbered highway known as Abenhall Road, which forms a major/minor priority junction with the A4136 Gloucester Road a short distance to the east of the mini-roundabout junction of the A4136 with the B4224.
- 9.2 The school has two vehicular accesses off Abenhall Road, one is for general use and the other is for exit only for maintenance vehicles and school busses.
- 9.3 Pavement and pedestrian access is provided alongside the vehicular access point and there is a further pedestrian/cycle access available from a minor lane named Silver Street to the west of the site. A footway runs along Abenhall Road between the school and the A4136 junction. This has street lighting and is separated from the carriageway by a grass embankment.
- 9.4 The section of Abenhall Road between the school entrances and the A4136 is subject to a 30mph speed limit and there is a school warning sign on the approach from the south.
- 9.5 A total of approximately 170 car parking spaces are available within the school grounds - mainly to the north of the main buildings and along the eastern boundary down towards the lower tennis courts / MUGA.
- 9.6 Included below is the most recent data obtained from questionnaires completed by pupils and parents: -
56-60% (369-392 pupils) use the school bus;
22% (144-149 pupils) walk;
13-16% (83-108 pupils) travel by car;
2-3% (15-18 pupils) car-share;
1% (7-9 pupils) use a public bus service;
1% (5 pupils) use a taxi;
0% (3 pupils) use a moped or motorcycle;
0% (1 pupil) uses a bicycle.
The percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number and there is a variation between modes of arrival and departure in some cases.
- 9.7 The majority of pupils travel by bus and the school has a total of 11 buses dropping off and collecting pupils on a daily basis. These services are operated by a number of different operators and provide journeys to and from Blakeney, Cinderford, Drybrook, Littledean, Longhope, Minsterworth, Ruardean, Ruardean Woodside, and Westbury-on-Severn.
- 9.8 There is adequate footway provision along Abenhall Road to the north of the school, and the carriageway width of Abenhall Road is suitable for use by cyclists, and so journeys on foot or bicycle are entirely feasible. Similarly, walking to or from bus stops along the A4136 is a viable option.

10.0 The Proposed Development:

- 10.1. Two modular buildings are proposed, providing 4 additional classrooms. Each building will have a Gross Internal Area of 139m² and the total additional floor area will therefore be 278m². The intention of the proposed development is not to allow for further increases in pupil numbers, but to provide adequate space for the school's current population.
- 10.2. Given that there will not be an increase in the number of students or staff, and that the current activities on site will remain as existing, the school does not envisage that there will be any increase in the amount of traffic visiting the school. No additional car parking is proposed as part of this application and there are no alterations being proposed to the school entrances, or to the on-site car and cycle parking facilities.
- 10.3. The proposed development will have little or no material consequence in terms of either highway safety or accessibility considerations.