

Design and Access Statement

for

Replacement of External Modular Teaching
Accommodation

at

Olsen School, Liverpool Road, Great Crosby, L23 5TD

Project Reference – 480/DAS/1

Date – March 2024

Revisions –

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The existing privately-operated day school is for pupils who hold statements of education (under the Education Act 2000) or Educational Health Care Plans (under the SEN Code of Practice January 2015).

The school is approved by the Department for Education and Skills as an independent special school for children with Special Educational Needs and is rated by Ofsted as 'Good' (March 2020).

The school is focussed on sustaining excellence in learning opportunities within the framework of a caring and therapeutic environment.

The intention of this project is to internally remove the existing external modular classroom building and replace it with a new, larger modular classroom building of a similar design.

There will be no change in the type of young people the school will be accommodating with the school continuing to provide placements for young people presenting with social, emotional and mental health issues and / or ASC (autism spectrum condition).

The school has a capacity of 55 young people with 35 members of teaching and support staff; this will remain unchanged.

In the main, the majority of young people are transported to and from the school by taxi and will continue to do so.

2.0 Guidance / Consultation

- 2.1 An application will be made for approval under Building Regulations prior to the works commencing.

3.0 Specific “Design Issues”

3.1 Use

The site will continue to be used as a privately-operated day school for pupils with who all hold statements of education (under the Education Act 2000) or Educational Health Care Plans (under the SEN Code of Practice January 2015). The additional accommodation provided by replacing the existing external modular teaching building will provide improved teaching and support accommodation.

3.2 Amount

The additional teaching and support accommodation (53.8m²) to be provided in the replacement modular building is required to support the school's expanding curriculum and changing needs of the pupil cohort.

3.3 Scale

The scale of the modular building is informed by the standard modules available from the supplier in much the same way that the building it replaces is. The height of the new modular building will be similar to that of the existing with the width and depth being governed by standard modular construction and the space available.

3.4 Appearance

The building will be finished with smooth grey external wall panels and have a single ply membrane finished flat roof with polycarbonate roof lights to provide natural daylight.

3.5 Landscaping

The existing raised planting beds adjacent to the site boundary will be removed and replaced with paving. No further external landscaping is proposed.

4.0 Specific “Access Issues”

4.1 Principal access into the site and building will continue to be provided through the main entrance off Liverpool Road with ancillary access available from both the car park area to the side of the building and the amenity area to the rear of the building.

4.2 The replacement modular accommodation is laid out over a single level.

4.3 This approach best will best serve the nature of the school pupils, all of whom will have been diagnosed with Autism or Social, Emotional and Mental Health conditions which result in their exclusion from the main stream education system. The management of the school will be specifically structured for the very specific needs of pupils diagnosed with ASC / SEMH and is not aimed at those children with other special or specific needs such as physical disability. Indeed, the very nature of the behaviour demonstrated by many pupils would differ significantly if combined with some form of physical disability or impairment and such children would be accommodated in a facility more suitable to address their specific needs and vulnerability.

4.4 Accordingly, it is considered adequate for the school to address issues arising from temporary impairment through accident or injury only and to this end, the facilities already provided within the existing layout are considered both adequate and reasonable. In adopting this approach, the new school layout will be designed to embrace those aspects of AD part M which are necessary to facilitate very limited disabled visitor access to the building i.e. retention of a disabled wc facility. Access for pupils diagnosed with any temporary disability or impairment will be accommodated by a management-based approach based on the provision of increased staff assistance when and for as long as required.

4.5 The pupils in all areas of the school are fully supervised at all times.

4.6 The vulnerable nature of the pupils is of paramount importance to the school and the number and nature of visitors is very carefully monitored with all visits supervised to maintain pupil safety. Although very occasional in frequency, the visits and meetings that do take place will only be held in specific rooms in a controlled environment and are supervised by suitably qualified members of teaching and support staff at all times. Fully accessible offices will be provided within the building for this purpose and at no time would a visitor meet with a pupil outside of this controlled environment. As a consequence of this, absolute provision has not been made in a way that accommodates fully inclusive access to all visitors and the design arrangement, therefore, is limited to compliance with the requirements of AD Part B and only particular criteria within AD Part M.

4.8 The specific needs of the school’s pupils will dictate that all staff must be able bodied in order that they can adequately manage the pupils’ behaviour, especially, if threatened with verbal or physical abuse.

5.0 Site Wide

5.1 The Approach

The main approach for staff and visitors will be via the existing main entrance door to the front of the school. Secondary level access is provided via the external entrance doors to the existing teaching accommodation at the rear of the school building and these routes also provides independent and direct level access into the ground floor teaching and ancillary staff spaces.

5.2 Car Parking

Car parking will remain unchanged.

5.3 Entrance / Entrance Doors

Level access is provided in to the main school buildings.

5.4 Means of Escape / Exit Doors

Final exit doors will be fitted with emergency escape hardware to maintain exit at all times with electronic access control to prevent unauthorised re-entry into the building outside of specific times.

5.5 Circulation

All rooms are directly accessed; there are no internal circulation spaces.

5.6 Disabled Facilities

Existing disabled wc facilities will be retained.

5.7 General Items

For the partially sighted contrasting colours would ordinarily be recommended for the following:

- walls/floors;
- doors/linings/walls;
- door furniture;
- light switches and sockets/walls; and
- sanitaryware.

The nature of the pupils is such that visual impairment is not an issue that requires special attention in the form of contrasting colours and in this instance, it will not be considered necessary to make special provision. The nature of ASC / SEMH is such that pupils are generally able-bodied and have no diagnosis of visual impairment, enabling their very specific condition to display as previously described. In the case of pupils on the Autistic Spectrum special consideration on the use of adjacent colours needs to be made in order to maintain their concentration and positive behaviours and this will be the driving factor when considering the above.

New electrical sockets will be at heights indicated in AD Part M (lower limit 400mm, upper limit 1200mm).

New doors will be 876mm clear (926mm doors) and 776mm clear (826mm doors) with a 300mm leading edge. Where proposed, doors not meeting these criteria are limited to stores, cleaner's rooms and doors not for disabled use where space is restricted.

Escape from all exit doors to be onto a level landing hard surface.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 It is considered that the additional modular accommodation proposed will have no impact on the existing use in the wider area surrounding the site whilst providing the additional space required by the school. Taking this and all of the above factors into consideration, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted in respect of the works proposed.