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VARNA STREET

Manchester BSF
Varna Street Primary School

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

in support of
Outline Planning Submission
Revision A (12th February 2009)



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INTRODUCTION

Varna Street Primary School, originally built in 1896, was identified in the Manchester City Council Primary School Capital Review in 2006 for replacement. An option appraisal identified the most cost effective and efficient solution to be a new building constructed on an available site approximately a quarter of a mile away.

The new school will be a 1 form entry primary school for children aged 3 -11 years including a 30 place nursery. It is to be designed to allow for possible expansion in the future to 1.5 form entry.

The new site of approximately 1.2 Hectares is currently vacant land owned by the City Council in the Openshaw area of Manchester. It is bounded by Ashton Old Road to the north with mixed residential and light industrial premises to the south, east and west. The site which is grassed with existing tree cover, is gently sloping in both directions.

It is the intention once Outline Planning Permission is received, to apply for a road closure to the part section of Chisholm Street and also the formal and informal footpath and tracks crossing the site. Contact is being made with the interested footpath associations to inform them of the proposals.

A THE SITE

A1 Site Analysis

A 1.1 Historical context of School and its current site
Opened in 1896 under the authority of the Manchester School Board. It was a building of refuge during World War 2. Operated as a primary & secondary school until the mid 1960's, in this time school populated with pupils occupying the many rows of surrounding terraced houses. Local employment for parents was usually obtained from the Iron Foundry businesses & Hugon's suet factory.

From mid 1960's has functioned as a primary school. Varna Street offers a rich educational experience to pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The school provides a quality educational facility to pupils living in an urban context. Some of our pupils come from a economically disadvantaged circumstances. 50+% of pupils qualify for free school meal

The school currently Offers:-

- An inclusive pattern of educational provision through increasing the presence, participation and achievement of children with special and addition needs.
- A commitment to equality and harmony within the school community
- Additional support for children with English as an additional language.
- A strong commitment to the multi agency approach to Every Child Matters.
- High Standards of Teaching
- Well qualified teaching assistants and support staff, all staff are highly valued and supported in their roles.
- Sports activities during and after school in partnership with the East Manchester School Sports Partnership Service.
- Active participation in promoting life skills validated by Healthy Schools Awards.
- Provider of Extended Schools facilities including , before school care "breakfast club", out of hours learning and community curriculum access in the form of adult education learning opportunities on the school site.
- A variety of after school activities involving the arts, music, drama, gardening and sports.
- Recent national accreditations of the quality of learning provided by the school include a Leading Aspect Award in Ethnic Minority Achievement and the National Basic Skills Quality Mark Award.

A 1.2 Site Regeneration

New East Manchester Regeneration Framework

The Openshaw neighbourhood area is located in the Bradford ward and lies 4 miles east of Manchester city centre on the major eastern arterial route, Ashton Old Road, which eventually crosses the city boundary into Tameside.

The Toxteth Street and Openshaw District Centre are the current focus for regeneration activity within the neighbourhood of the proposed school site.

Neighbourhood planning commenced in the Toxteth Street area in 2001 which resulted in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan in 2005. This was done in consultation with local residents and key stakeholders. The proposed scheme is holistic in it's approach and will provide a range of new family housing in a mixed tenure setting, (432 homes), high quality public realm and a new street hierarchy. This will be supported by the introduction of new neighbourhood management strategies focusing on action both during and after the transition. A CPO enquiry has been conducted, to facilitate site assembly, the outcome of which will be known in early 2009. Retained residential and commercial properties in the neighbourhood will benefit from a programme of face-lifting and environmental improvement works.

The scheme has been complimented by the refurbishment of the former St Peter's Sports Hall into to a community managed sports facility – Sporting Edge.

In addition Openshaw District Centre will benefit from substantial investment which will transform this part of the neighbourhood into a location that is economically viable and will provide a range of community services and facilities within a quality, accessible and attractive location. The retail offer will be extended anchored by a new supermarket.

To the south of the proposed new school site, 103 3 and 4 bedroom family houses have recently been developed, out of a proposed 157.

The Openshaw neighbourhood suffers from a range of long term inter-related problems that affect both residents and businesses. These problems are illustrated by the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) which measures deprivation within a specified area and indicates how deprived an area is relative to all parts of England.

The current measures include

- Income
- Employment
- Health and disability
- Education, skills and training
- Barriers to housing and services
- Crime
- The living environment

Bradford ward is listed as the number 1 ward in relation to the rest of Manchester and is in the top 2% of wards nationally.

A 1.3 Site Context

The school site is located on the junction of Ashton Old Road and Chisholme Street on the main east / west arterial route. To the rear of the site there is family housing and mixed use along Ashton Old Road, comprised of commercial and retail outlets.
The site is bounded to west by the Stockport Canal "Greenway", which affords an important pedestrian and cycle route north from the Gorton reservoirs to the Medlock Valley and west into the city centre.
Improvements along this corridor will help improve access, legibility and a greater sense of security for users.
Ashton old Road has a number of community facilities located along and adjacent to it, including Openshaw Medical Centre, Openshaw Community resource Centre, The Eden Project, Sporting Edge, St Clements School and St Clements Children's Centre.

A 1.4 Environment and Walk-over Survey

The site currently consists of 2 separate parcels of land, both owned by the City Council but separated by Chisholm Street. The gross area of the site including the area gained by the part closure of Chisholm Street is 1.21 Hectares. It has no boundary fencing or walls, other than those to adjacent properties, with open access available. In addition to the adopted road and footpath, it is crossed by a formal adopted footpath and a number of informal but established minor tracks.

It is grassed with a number of mature and semi mature trees, further details of which will be contained within the tree survey submitted with the application.

The smaller parcel of land bounded by Chisholm Street and Leamington Street is virtually flat on its north west to south east axis with an approximate 1 meter fall across the north east to south west axis. The larger parcel of land has a general fall along its longer east to west axis of approximate 3.7 meters with a lesser fall of approximately 1.5 meters across the north to south shorter axis from back of Ashton Old Road pavement to the housing on the south side. Within these overall general gradients are areas of localised mounding.

There are a number of services present within the overall site boundary. The main one is a major United Utilities sewer of approximate 600mm diameter. To the north west corner of the site it is above ground but on entering the site is routed below ground. It follows a line approximately parallel to the back of pavement along Ashton Old Road, crosses Chisholm Street and then changes direction to head south east to leave the site and cross Leamington Street. This is a major service which will be retained in its current location. Consequently there is an overall 12 meter easement line centred on the sewer on which building work is not permitted.

In addition to the sewer there are a number of electrical and data services mainly on the line of the adopted footpath for which an application will be made to divert.

Outside the site boundary on Ashton Old Road are an existing bus stop and pedestrian crossing point which will remain unaltered in their current locations.

B DESIGN

B 1 Design Principles

B 1.1 Key Objectives

The benefits delivered by the Primary Capital Programme (PCP) will contribute significantly towards transforming teaching and learning, the raising of pupil attainment and broader achievements and ensure that all Manchester's primary schools play a lead role at the heart of their communities.

The environment in which pupils learn will reflect developing teaching methodologies and management and leadership changes and will enhance the educational and community requirements of school spaces including the "Every Child Matters" agenda.

Manchester's capital programme must, therefore, have high aspirations for well-designed, sustainable school buildings. The aim must be to achieve this not just for large-scale new build and refurbishment projects, but also for small school-led building works. This vision will mean that our primary schools will need quality school environments, which facilitate personalised learning and enable them to offer a wide range of services to their local communities, and contribute to Every Child Matters.

The vision for primary education is firmly set within the context of the Council's regeneration plans. The aim is to make Manchester a City of local, regional, national and international excellence, where people wish to live and learn, where companies wish to invest and where there is equal access to the wealth, employment and other opportunities brought about by regeneration.

High quality, successful schools are seen as a key driver of regeneration. The housing market in particular benefits as good schools will attract people to the new houses nearby. Conversely, poor schools can be a significant deterrent for potential buyers/tenants.

The vision for primary education is transformational. It seeks to enhance the life chances of every child who attends a Manchester primary school, by ensuring that all five outcomes enshrined in "Every Child Matters" are delivered. It draws on and complements the vision statements for early years provision, secondary education and 14-19 provision, providing a smooth and consistent progression path for all children and young people.

Delivering this vision has involved a wide-ranging, strategic review of our primary provision across all sectors and stakeholders in Manchester. The scoping programme targeted a significant emphasis on need of the state of the building stock and the challenge of demographic change and has looked at the options of rebuilding, refurbishing and upgrading at least 30 per cent of the primary schools in the City.

The School will achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'.

B 1.2 Brief

The project will provide for a new highly innovative 180 place exemplar primary school and 60 place Foundation Stage Unit for Varna Street Primary School on the Chisholm Street site. The new school will meet the requirements for a 1FE establishment with the ability / flexibility to develop further to a 1.5 FE capacity dependant on increased pupil demand due to the new housing developments and the regeneration of the surrounding local area.

B 1.3 Impact

The overall massing, scale and proportion of the new building should have a definitive presence within the community. The new school should be seen in its own landscape and setting. The building and facilities need to be a significant community asset that will act as a point of physical reference. The building's two storey height should give a presence from Ashton Old Road whilst giving full and careful consideration to the contiguous sites. The building's single storey height will create a welcoming and sensitive entrance and shall be considerate of the neighbouring residential properties to the south of the site.

B 1.4 Access and Travel Patterns

As this is a new location for the school there are no established travel patterns.

Ashton Old Road is a busy arterial trunk road with heavy traffic throughout the day. It is a bus route. To the south and west of the site, Chisholme, Leaminton and Lee Street carry both local traffic and others joining and leaving Ashton Old Road.

B 2 Design Options

- Classrooms to the south, away from Ashton Old Road – noise / pollution / natural light
- Building located to east of site as levels are more suitable
- Building to the west of Chisholm Street to reduce services to be diverted
- Building sheltering possible location of external play areas – promoting feeling of safety

C DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

C 1 Functionality

C 1.1 Access

This will be considered in 2 parts, the site and the building.

Site

In consultation with the corporate client body plus consultations with officers from Safe Routes to School, Highways and Planning, it has been decided that there will be no access to the site for either vehicles or pedestrians from Ashton Old Road.

Vehicular access to both the car park and for servicing to the kitchen and refuse collection will be from Leamington Street. Parking within the site boundary will be for staff and visitors only at a ratio agreed with the Planning Authority under the Framework one and Two Agreements of 2 staff spaces / 30 pupils and 1 visitor space / 100 pupils, both including provision for disabled. This would equate to an initial provision for 21 spaces in total. Site area is available to expand parking provision if the school is expanded to 1.5 form entry, which would result in a further 10 spaces.

Level access within the necessary distance proximity guidelines will be available from the accessible parking bays to the 2 principle entrances for the main school and foundation unit to comply with both Part M and DfA2

There will be no provision within the site boundary for car "dropping off " by parents.

Pedestrian access for visitors and after 9.00am for late comers and parents will be from an entrance off the corner of Leamington Street and Chisholm Street. This will also provide compliant DfA2 access to the 2 principle entrances.

Pupil pedestrian access and exit to and from the school before 9.00am and after 3.0pm will be from the footpath on the southern boundary of the site . It is envisaged that work will be undertaken to improve both the width and surface quality of this footpath. There will be a level difference of up to 1.5 meters between the main plateau of play areas and the adjacent footpath and ramping will be necessary to ensure DfA2 compliant access is available.

Building

A detailed plan of the building does not form part of this Outline Planning Application. However bubble diagrams are included "for illustrative purposes only", in order to demonstrate how the plan form is likely to develop. It is envisaged that the building itself will be fully compliant with DfA2 unless any sections are derogated against with the full agreement of the Access Officers.

C 1.2 Space and Use

This will be completed as required for the application to discharge reserved matters.

C 2.0 Impact

C 2.1 Landscape

This will be completed as required for the application to discharge reserved matters.

C 2.2 Form and Materials

This will be completed as required for the application to discharge reserved matters.

C 3.0 Build Quality

C 3.1 Engineering Services Statement

This will be completed as required for the application to discharge reserved matters.

C 3.2 Structural Statement

A detailed site investigation has been undertaken by Strata Surveys, the results of which are given in their interpretative report No 14469. This revealed made ground reflecting the previous development of the site overlying natural sands and lays of variable strength / density. The ground investigation recommends ground improvement works using either stone column vibro compaction techniques or driven piling. Ground gas monitoring is also currently being undertaken with initial results indicating slightly elevated levels of carbon dioxide. Final reading will confirm the Characteristic situation of the site and protection measures required.

Localised pockets of hydrocarbon based contamination were located within the made ground, but these were low level and the report concludes that wide spread remediation is not necessary. Any contamination found on site will be reviewed by a geo environmental specialise and treated as required. All remedial works will be agreed with the Local Authority.

The two storey building is to be designed utilising a steel frame supporting concrete floors and a lightweight roof to provide maximum flexibility for the future thereby providing a sustainable development. The design will be detailed to achieve the requirements of a Class 2B building with relation to disproportionate collapse.

Separate foul and surface water drainage systems will be provided on site. These will combine before connecting to the existing adopted combined sewer crossing the site. The new site layout will take account of the location of this sewer and its associated easements. Attenuation will be provided on the surface water system as required by United Utilities.