DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Extension to St Agnes C.E. Primary School

Hamilton Road/Slade Grove

Longsight

Manchester

Introduction

The proposed scheme consists of an extension to the existing St Agnes C.E. Primary School, to increase capacity from 1.5FE to 2FE following Manchester City Council's examination of demand for school places in the area.

Completed in 2009 the existing school is still relatively new and well-regarded by the pupils and staff of St Agnes, the Director of the diocese of Manchester Board of Education has described it as *'one of the most imaginative buildings I have seen.'* It is for this reason we are aiming to deliver the extension to a similar standard both in terms of design and construction principles.



St Agnes C.E. Primary School built

The Design & Access statement (D&A) prepared in Oct 2007 ref: 06/319/RA recognises the local vernacular, identified the physical context and how this has influenced the derived character of the school. It also identified how the school addressed the social and economic context including local resident's aspirations for the site. This document has been a constant source of guidance when looking at development options as the issues are still relevant to the proposed extension. Through discussion with the Local Authority and due to the relatively small scale size of the extension proposed we have not readdressed all issue outlined in the previous D&A, however we believe it is important this should be read in parallel with the statement to understand; the site analysis, the existing school (referred to as the 'new build' school) original design ethos and solutions.

Design Process

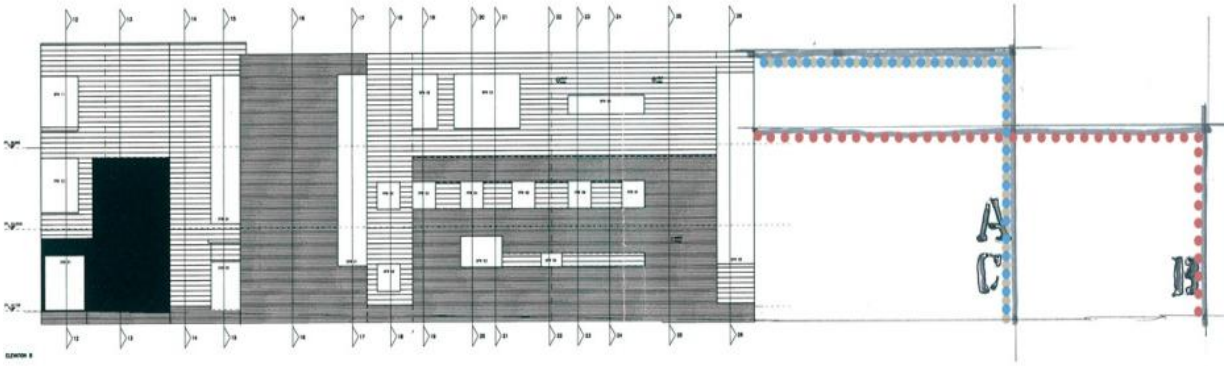
A fundamental consideration throughout the site analysis has been the desire and need to retain as much of the existing playground space, a key driver within the proposed development options which has ultimately informed the buildings scale and form.

The nature of the restricted site and the impracticality of adding additional floor space above the existing school from a cost, structural aspect and due to disruption to the schools operation have determined the only feasible development option being an extension on the end of the west elevation. Deriving at the schools required accommodation through review of the BB99 guidance document and liaising with the school and the Local Authority we developed three potential options for consideration:



Existing site Aerial plan illustrating proposed building footprint for options A,B & C.

Option A – would spread the accommodation over three stories marrying in with the existing hierarchy of the school. The ground floor would accommodate boys & girls toilets, accessed from the playground. The first and second floors incorporate the classroom spaces, to be raised above the ground floor level on 'stilts' leaving an area underneath suitable for external play significantly reducing the loss of external play space.



Existing elevation to Slade Grove illustrating proposed massing of options A,B & C.

Option B – would spread the accommodation over two stories, keeping the classrooms on one floor, however initial concerns with this option are: it impacts heavily on the existing playground, comes close to the neighboring property and is within the sight line of the properties across Slade grove.

Option C –Through discussions with the school the design team were tasked, whilst working within the limits of the budget, to look at enclosing the external space proposed in option A, bringing it into the building envelope to provide space protected from the elements with potential for multipurpose use. Creating a more efficient internal layout and retaining the feature corner window to the existing stair on the end of the west elevation. The accommodation is spread over three stories marrying in with the existing hierarchy of the school, classrooms are on the first and second floor allowing the 'open plan space' to link with the playground. The overall footprint has been reduced and therefore further minimizes the impact on the existing playground.

Pre-application Discussion

Having prepared three preferred options whilst the scheme was still in a feasibility stage it was prudent to hold pre application discussions with the local authority. Initial concerns regarding the potential planning issues surrounding ***option B*** *highlighted above, loss of external play space, proximity to neighbours were met by the planning officer and* ***option C*** *was quickly determined as the preferred design solution. Discussions surrounding materiality suggested that matching the material pallet used on the existing s school would be a sensible approach going forward.*

Use

In order to accommodate the increased capacity the extension will incorporate two additional classrooms at first and second floor with associated resource and amenity space. The room configuration will follow the existing layout pattern providing teaching space for two teachers and a half class group with resource area allocated on the first floor offering potential for personalised learning through 'quality first teaching'. Year one and six are the two year groups using these classrooms, these are the youngest of key stage one and the oldest pupils of key stage two and this combination is seen by the school to promote; spiritual, moral, social & cultural education of the children. This also continues to enhance the family ethos by the oldest pupils 'looking after' the younger.

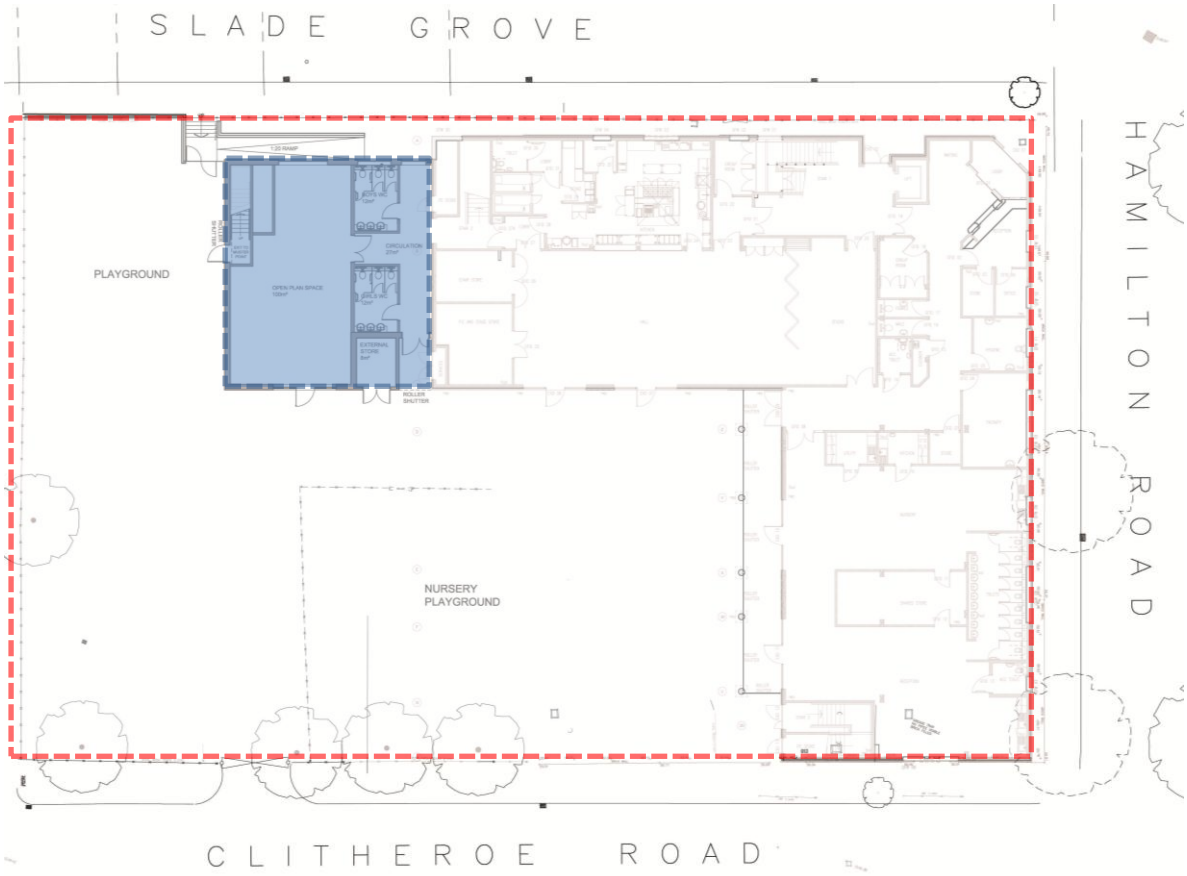
The new internal space on the ground floor will be timetabled for all 20 sessions throughout the week in addition to the 20 session provided by the existing hall and studio space, this will providing satisfactory space to fulfil demands of the curriculum. New toilets located on the ground floor can be accessed from outside without walking through existing teaching spaces, a key requirement of the school.

Integrated I.T. throughout the extension also compliments the existing sound field, IWB, lap tops, PC's etc.



Perspective view form Slade Grove

Amount



Proposed ground floor site plan

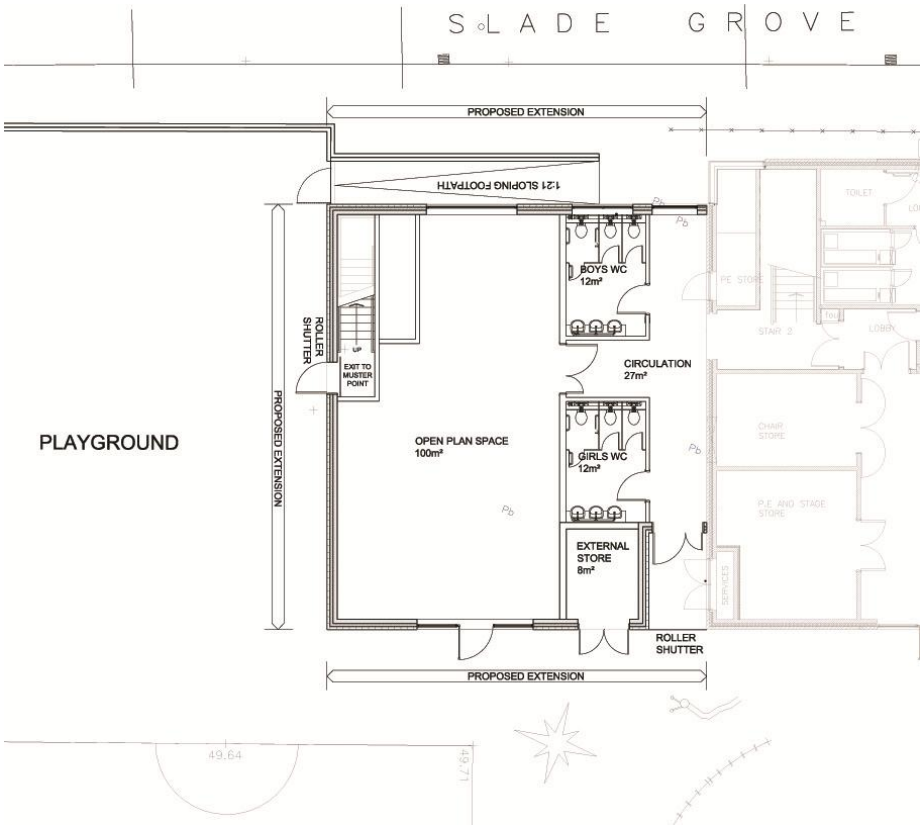
The current school occupies one of the tightest Primary school sites in Manchester being only 2,725sq. meters in area, any development will impact heavily on the playing area for pupils and proposed designs need to be mindful of this. In all a gross area of 591sq. meters is included in the proposal and is spread across three floors, the ground floor footprint being 190 sq. meters. The extension sits neatly to the west elevation facing Slade Grove, the depth has been reduced on plan which enables the proposed access off Slade Grove have no impact on the loss of playground area.

Layout

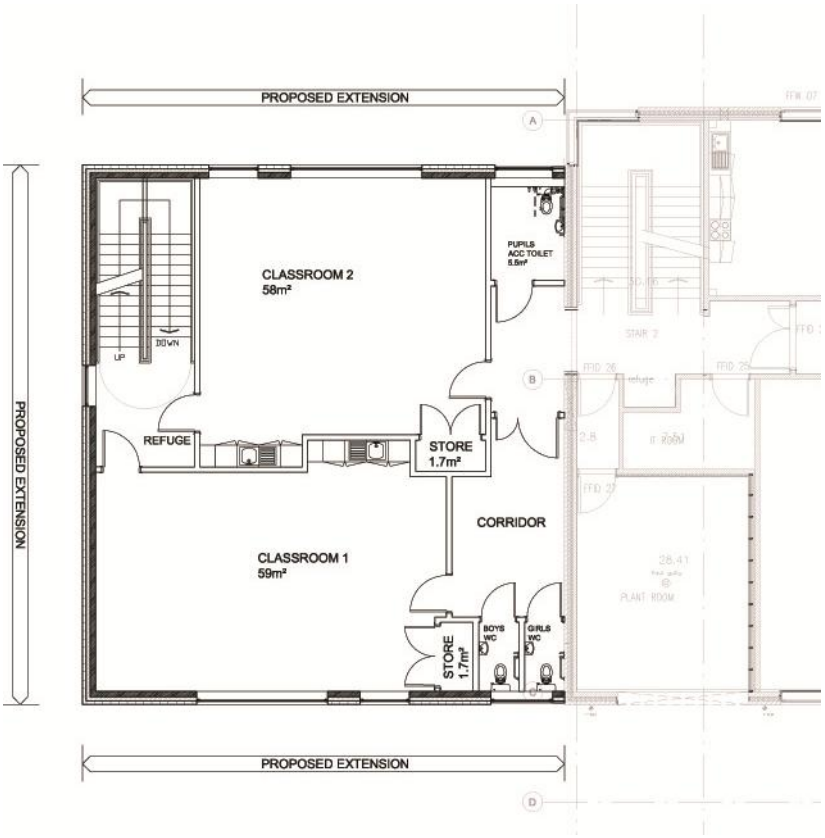
The building will provide 4 new classrooms accommodated over the first and second floor. Associated resource space will be located off the classrooms on the second floor with new toiles accessed at the first floor, a major requirement by the school. The ground floor will incorporate a large open plan multi-purpose space along with ancillary toilets and an external store to house playground equipment. A new staircase will provide additional means of escape and secondary access to the classrooms at first and second floor as recommended by building control.

Internally the layout of the building responds to the functional brief for the school, key areas being the classrooms which require good environmental design to create the best conditions for learning. The classroom layouts are consistent across the first and second floors and are accessed via a central corridor link to the existing school plan. Adjacent to the new classrooms on the first floor is a cluster of toilets which addresses the schools need for additional provision whilst the second floor valuable support and resource space is proposed in close proximity to the new classroom and easily accessed if required by the existing teaching space accommodated on this floor.

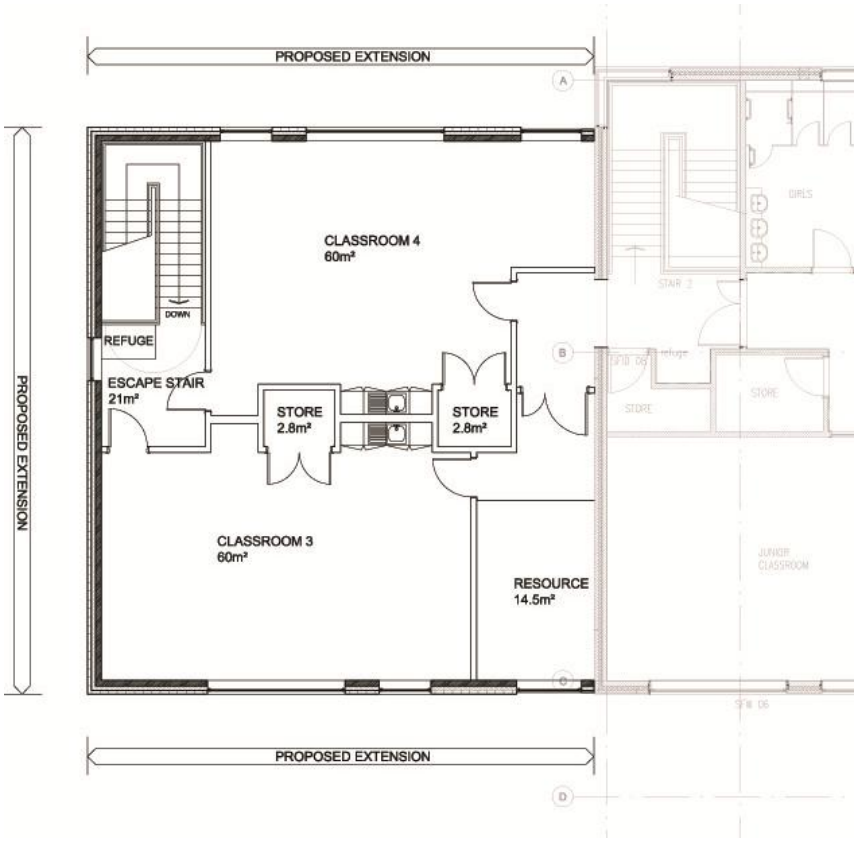
The majority of the area on the ground floor accommodates a large open plan multi-purpose room which has direct access to the external playground. The remainder of the ground floor spaces consists of additional toilet provisions accessed from a central spine corridor enabling direct access from the existing school and the playground, whilst a new external store allows a safe space for play equipment.



Proposed ground floor layout



Proposed first floor layout



Proposed second floor layout

Scale

The extension will tie in with the floor levels of the existing school, 3568.5m floor to floor with the parapet culminating 11,210m above ground floor level (as existing). The parapet height to the area of cement cladding board will be lowered slightly to express the link between the new and old.



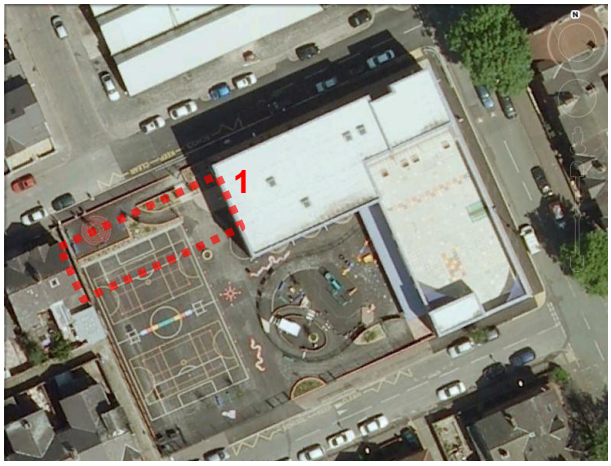
Proposed Slade Grove elevation

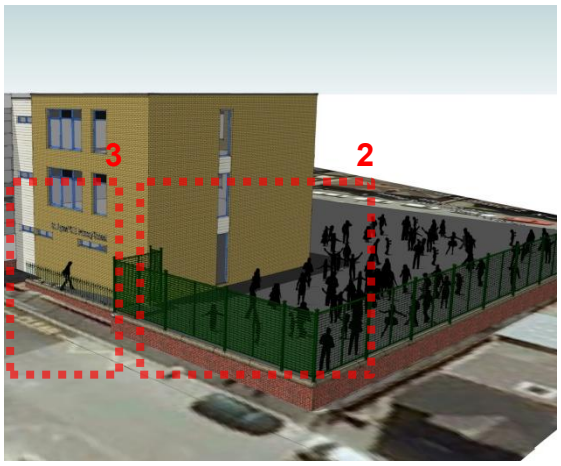


Aerial perspective view

Landscaping

The need to retain as much external play space has been a key driver behind the landscape strategy and options were developed with this principle in mind. The existing access to the playground is via a sloping winding path (1) this utilizes a large proportion of the site. The proposal removes the access ramp and planting beds and extends the playground towards the Slade Grove boundary. The ground level in this area will be raised and supported by a small retaining wall (2) two small trees in this area are to be relocated in planters to the other side of the playground.





A new DDA accessible route to the school will allow controlled access via a 'sloping access path' off Slade Road (3). A low level wall with metal railings will guard pedestrians against the change in level and in keeping with the principles of secure by design any guarding will be open to prevent potential blind spots and hiding places.

We propose a simple pallet of quality robust materials that are aesthetically pleasing whilst offering longevity and minimize the need for onerous maintenance. The extended area of playground will receive a tarmac finish tying in with the existing playing surface and the new sloping access will pick up a similar concrete flag to the existing footpath.

Site security

The secure perimeter of the site will be extended to enclose the extended playground, the existing principle of a 2.4m high level 'anti climbing' metal fencing will sit on a low level red brick wall that will match the red brick used on the existing school. A lockable gate positioned at the top of the 'sloping footpath' will provide a secure access to the school during opening hours.

Appearance

As dicussed in the pre application discussions and identified in the origional D&A statement, materials will tie in with the existing school and the surrounding buildings to help the extension feel part of the whole. The decision to use a traditional 'buff' brick as used to the main entrance of the existing school for the majority of the new external fabric rather than the red brick predominantly used on the existing building identifies the extension as a new element to the school. A lesson learnt from the original build has seen the use of render replaced with an engineered cement fibre cladding board, this offers a more robust product which inherent properties are less likely to fade in colour and harbour mould growth whilst forming a distinctive link between the new and the old.



Interface between 'new & old'

The articulation of the elevations mimic the existing building with the relationship of the windows to internal spaces already established. Corridor spaces will have high level windows at their ends to create well-lit areas that will play an important part for social interaction, whilst still offering sufficient wall space for exhibition use. A key feature of the proposed scheme was to retain the curtain wall glazing to the existing west elevation staircase (see image), with this in mind we have introduced a similar element to the west elevation staircase in the new extension. The blue powder coated window and door frames used within the existing school building will be reflected in the proposed to bring continuity between the two elements.

Internally the environment of the extension will follow the principles set by the existing school. The 'Eurban' timber construction panels used during the construction of the existing scheme will again be applied to the new addition offering a high quality internal timber skin, treated to comply with current building regulations, this provides a lovely soft timber grain background offering a pleasant learning environment.

Access

The new access gates will be opened by the caretaker in the morning to allow all pupils to line up in the playground area with their parents where they will be met by their class teacher, all the staircases are then used for pupils to enter and exit the school building, the gates are then locked at 9:15. At 3:00 the playground gates are unlocked to allow parents to access the playground and collect their children at 3:15.

Visitors to the school any other time will enter through the main doors on Hamilton Road, where they are signed in and out at the main reception. Deliveries will continue to be uninterrupted through the playground gate as currently used for early morning kitchen deliveries and the main entrance for any others.

Currently there is no out of hours community use of the school premises, however should this be required approval from the governing body would need to be sort.

Inclusive access

The project brief promotes fully accessible school facilities and an inclusive school environment for all, the extension will be developed in line with Manchester City Council's Design for Access 2 document as per the existing school.



Access from Slade Grove

Vehicular and transport links

The existing school is bounded by roads on three sides: Slade Grove to the north, Hamilton Road to the east (the main route) and Clitheroe Road to the south. Buses run regularly along Dickinson & Stockport Road, bus stops are located conveniently near to the school with direct routes into Manchester.



Access Statement Supplement - DFA2

Entrances

All new entrances will have a minimum clear opening of 1000mm and where double doors are provided at least one will achieve this clear opening dimension. All entrances are level and will have flush thresholds.

Circulation

Generally all internal circulation spaces have been design to provide a 2000mm clear corridor width. Where there are protrusions by such items as columns or services , the circulation width will not be less than 1800mm.

All internal doors will provide a min. clear opening of 850mm. Doors to accessible toilets will have a clear opening of 900mm and will be clear of all ironmongery. At the leading edge of all doors to accessible areas a clear wall space of at least 450mm will be provided.

At key intersection points and accessible WC's a 2000mm turning space have been provided.

Vision panels across doors and ironmongery will be positioned will be in accordance with Approved Document M of the building regulations.

Vertical Circulation

Through discussions with the school and Manchester City Council the new staircase will deviate from DFA2 guidance;

There should be a level unobstructed landing, 1800mm x 1800mm minimum, at the top and bottom of each flight, clear of any door swing.

The proposed staircase will have a minimum clear width of 1000mm between handrails however the half landing will have an unobstructed landing of 2500x1000mm, accepted by Manchester City Council and comply with building regulations.
There will be refuge areas (900x1400mm) sufficient for two wheelchairs on each floor landing .

Toilets

The first floor will accommodate a fully accessible WC and will have a 2000x2000mm inside clear of any obstructions such as drainage and be suitably equipped in accordance with Part M of the building Regulations. Each main toilet on the ground floor will have a clear 2000mm square area upon entrance to the room and an enlarged ambulant cubicle 1200mm wide, this will include support rails and outward opening door.

Toilet fittings will be fitted against contrasting backgrounds to provide a contrast in order to aid the visually impaired.

Secure By Design

The proposed extension is to be designed in accordance with recommendations made by the Architectural Liaison Officer for the existing school. This includes:

- Outside play space must be defined at the perimeter with high security welded wire mesh fencing such as Betafence Securifor 2D system or metal railings at least 2100mm high and preferably 2400mm high. Gates within this perimeter fencing must be lockable.

- All glazing at ground level must include at least one sheet of laminated glass min 9.5mm thick. Manchester City Architects have a standard glazing specification which we have agreed meets SBD standards. This includes a 6mm toughened outer pane and 9.5mm laminated inner pane to all ground floor glazing.

- Windows at ground floor level must be made by a competent manufacturer with ISO 9001 and any ironmongery should be from a Secured by Design supplier. All opening lights must have restrictors.

- Entrance doors to the outside play area must be fitted with hook bolts at 1/3rd points along the door edge. Glazing to these doors must include laminated glass min. 9.5mm thick. Behind the doors to the entrance lobby from the street, within the lobby, there must be a security shutter, which can be lowered when the school is not in use.

- Any glazed opening within the lobby from the street must include laminated glass9.5mm thick.

- The inner doors to the lobby from the street must be electrically operated so visitors have no direct access into the school unless permitted.

- All glazed doors at ground level must be made by a competent manufacturer with ISO 9001 and any other ironmongery should be from a Secured by Design supplier. Each door leaf must have at least two point locking or multi-point locking. Glazing must include laminated glass min 9.5mm thick.

- Solid external doors should if possible be to BS PAS 24. They must have a t least two-point locking and fire exit doors should have no external ironmongery unless required by the fore brigade as a fire-fighting stair

In addition roller shutters are to be position behind the external doors that give access to the new staircase and corridor.