

Design & Access Statement Prospect House Playground Works Prosperre Learning Trust

December 2024

Prospect House
Bank House Road
Higher Blackley
Manchester
M9 8LT



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1.0 Introduction

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Drees & Sommer UK Ltd on behalf of Prosper Learning Trust to support the planning application lodged for the 'External Playground Works Scheme' at Prospect House, M9 8LT.

Prospect House is a free special primary school offering places for children with very significant learning needs and other associated additional needs, aged 3-11 years old. The school is a brand new, purpose built site, which offers specialist facilities including a state of art hydro pool, including changing room to pool hoisting. The school has ASC friendly classrooms and corridors, food technology rooms, library, immersive learning rooms, sensory regulation rooms, and other spaces.

The purpose of this Design & Access Statement is to consider the accessibility of the proposals, regarding wheelchair users, ambulant disabled people and people with poor dexterity, poor comprehension or sensory impairments.

The criteria used for this assessment is listed below:

- Approved Document Part M of the Building Regulations
- Approved Document Part B of the Building Regulations
- BS8300 – 2:2018 (Design of Buildings and their Approaches to meet the needs of Disabled People)
- Consideration of disability discrimination issues under The Equality Act 2010 (EA)
- The School's duties under the Disability Equality Duty

Instructions

Client

Prosper Learning Trust
Firbank Road
Newall Green
Wythenshawe
Manchester
M23 2YS

Lead Consultant/Designer

Drees & Sommer UK Ltd
Jackson House
Sibson Road
Sale
M33 7RR

Property Discussed in this Report

Prospect House
Bank House Road
Higher Blackley
Manchester
M9 8LT

2.0 The Development

The works consist of external playground remodelling to the rear of Prospect House School.

2.1 Disability Definition

In access terms, the term disability has two distinct definitions:

- People who have an impairment that limits their ability to walk
- People who have impaired sight, dexterity, comprehension or hearing

Provision for those with walking difficulties is not limited to people confined to wheelchairs, but includes all types of impairments such as arthritis, rheumatism or partial paralysis as a result of strokes or accidents, people who may not be able to bend limbs or have back problems.

When viewed in this way it becomes clear that this definition can include a substantial proportion of the population who may not consider themselves disabled.

2.2 Consideration of The Equality Act 2010

In essence, the general principles of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, have been carried through to The Equality Act 2010.

With respect to disabled access, the intent of the EA is to offer disabled people an accessible environment which does not discriminate against them because of their disability. The term 'disability' should therefore be seen in the broadest of terms.

The EA is a social document against all forms of discrimination, which is designed to be evolutionary and promote equality through all walks of life. Compliance with the statutory regulations and recommendations is not proof that EA issues have been addressed. However, they do go a long way to achieving it.

2.3 The Statement

This Design and Access Statement is presented as a synopsis of the principles and guidance used during design development. It demonstrates the School's work towards achieving the aspirations of the EA and shows compliance with the statutory regulations, in particular Approved Document Part M and Approved Document Part B.

3.0 Outline Scope of Works and Overview of the Site

The arrangements for access described in this statement reflect the current design intention.

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3.1 Outline Scope of Works

The proposed playground equipment has been designed by Creative Play for Prospect House and takes into account that the school is a Specialist Support School.

The following equipment has been proposed and shown on the drawing attached to this application:

1. 3m x 3m Sensory Cambridge
2. Batpipes Music Panel
3. Xylophone Music Panel
4. Basic bench
5. Wheelchair Accessible Sensory Play Tower
6. Vertical Rollers
7. Sensory Seating Area – Zigzag
8. 14mm Blue 1m Wide Pathway
9. 36mm Green Artificial Grass Safety Surfacing

4.0 Design – The Process

The development of the detailed design brief took place by Creative Play, alongside Prospect House and Prosper Learning Trust. The scheme has arisen for the need to improve the current play equipment and proposes to make it more inclusive given it is an SEN School.

The proposed scheme retains existing access strategies.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015) Section 6.9 states that:

“All Schools have duties under the equality Act 2010 towards individual disabled children and young people. They must (by law) make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services for disabled children, to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage. These duties are anticipatory – they require thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage”.

It is therefore recognised that specialist customised equipment may be needed to ensure that pupils with low incidence, high needs have access to appropriate specialist aids and equipment.

For SEN schools, installing more accessible play equipment such as the proposed, is a great way of promoting inclusivity and allows all children to share the joy of play regardless of their ability. Creating inclusive outdoor play spaces is essential for the well-being and development of SEN children. Outdoor activities allow children to move and discover their bodies naturally to promote physical and cognitive growth. The play equipment is designed to help activate their senses and allow them to explore their sensory devices.

Benefits of inclusive play:

- Every child is equal in inclusive play. This removes stigmas and separation between disabled and non-disabled from an early age, helping mindsets change and society progress in a positive way
- Children become more independent, confident and develop different ways to communicate
- Outdoor play alleviates stress, improves mood and boosts wellbeing
- For sensory impaired children, play can strengthen their other senses and ways to interact with the world. These spaces can help neurodivergent children find comfort and sensory play can help children develop fine motor skills as they learn how their bodies work
- Play helps children learn about risk in a safe supportive environment as well as adjust to change and build resilience
- It helps to develop social and empathy skills, make friends and form connections

4.1 Value

Best value in construction costs must be attained. Layouts should be as simple and as straightforward as possible which in turn promotes simple methods of construction, yet still fulfilling its function. Lifetime costs of all materials have been considered.

4.2 Appearance

The material choices for the play equipment will aim to match the existing equipment and surrounding as closely as possible in terms of colour, form and general appearance.

4.3 Building Approach, Access Points and Entrances

The works should not affect the operation of the school as they are to the rear of the school which is segregated from the main building where students and teachers are located.

4.4 Means of Escape

If escape from the site is needed, depending on the time of stage of the programme, workers will simply be able to escape via any external egress route, as there will be no fencing installed for the majority of the project. During the construction phase of the programme, escape can be via any of the external gates, or via the main car park. It is important to note, however, that there is no foreseeable reason for any escape needed, as the works are external.

5.0 Conclusion

This Design & Access Statement has demonstrated the way in which the design of the present scheme meets various requirements with regard to both access and egress issues.

The Design philosophy has embraced the ethos of inclusive design in proportion to the scope of works and has utilised Approved Document Part M and best practice BS:8300.

6.0 Conditions of Use of this Report

This report is to be regarded as confidential to and for the sole use of the recipient. Consequently, no responsibility is accepted to any third party in respect of its contents in whole or in part.