St Paul's RCHS, Wythenshawe
Replace Modular Classroom

Design & Access statement

BC.2025.00004.008

SPHS-AHR-00-RP-A-08700

July 2026

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Introduction

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The proposal comprises the replacement of the existing modular classroom with a new permanent modular classroom building located on the footprint of the existing structure. Retaining the existing location enables the proposal to utilise the existing drainage and utility infrastructure, minimising disruption to the operation of the school and reducing the extent of external works.

The proposed building provides modern, fit-for-purpose teaching accommodation comprising two classrooms, an intervention room, an office, storage facilities and accessible WC provision. The layout has been designed to create a functional, inclusive and efficient learning environment that meets current educational and accessibility standards.

AHR's design has sought to integrate the replacement building with the existing school campus while maintaining established access routes and minimising the impact on the surrounding external spaces. The proposal has also been developed to provide a durable, sustainable and energy-efficient building that supports the long-term needs of the school.

This Design and Access Statement explains the design principles that have informed the proposal and demonstrates how the replacement building responds to the characteristics of the site, the operational requirements of the school, and the relevant planning and accessibility considerations.

The scope of works includes:

- Assessment of the existing site and its constraints.
- Design of a replacement modular classroom on the existing footprint.
- Development of an efficient and accessible building layout.
- Integration of the proposed building with the existing school campus.
- Consideration of planning, accessibility and Building Regulations requirements.
- Coordination with the design team to deliver a functional, sustainable and compliant design.

CLIENT
Corpus Christi Catholic Multi Academy Trust

SITE ADDRESS
St Paul RCHS Firbank Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester, M23 2YS

PROJECT TEAM
Lead Consultant: AHR Building Consultancy

BUILDING TYPOLOGY
Sector: Higher Education
Age: Post 2000

Site Analysis

2.0 SITE ANALYSIS

Site Analysis

St Paul's Catholic High School is located on Firbank Road in Wythenshawe, Manchester, M23 2YS. The school is situated within a suburban area, surrounded by a mixture of residential developments and green spaces. The site includes both St Paul's Catholic High School and Piper Hill Specialist School, creating a shared educational environment. This location is well-connected, with access to major road networks such as the M56 and local bus routes providing convenient transport links.

The school comprises a mix of traditional and modern buildings, with facilities that cater to both academic and extracurricular activities. The main entrance opens into a welcoming reception area, leading to a central hub that connects the various blocks of the school. The existing dining area serves both St Paul's Catholic High School and Piper Hill Specialist School. Surrounding the main buildings are extensive outdoor spaces, including sports fields and recreational areas, which are key assets for the school's curriculum and community use.

The proposed replacement building has been positioned on the footprint of the existing modular classroom to minimise the impact on the established school layout. This approach makes use of the existing drainage and utility infrastructure, maintains existing access routes, and minimises disruption to the day-to-day operation of the school during construction.

The site benefits from being relatively level, which provides flexibility in terms of building placement and logistics during construction. However, the proximity to neighbouring residential properties and the need to maintain uninterrupted access for staff, students, and visitors will be critical considerations during the design phase.



Figure 1-Aerial Image, site boundary in Blue – Separation line between schools in Red

Overall, the site offers a strong foundation for the proposed expansion, with the potential to deliver facilities that complement the school's existing infrastructure and enhance its capacity to meet future demands.



Figure 2 - Aerial Image, surrounding land use and access routes

Site Photos

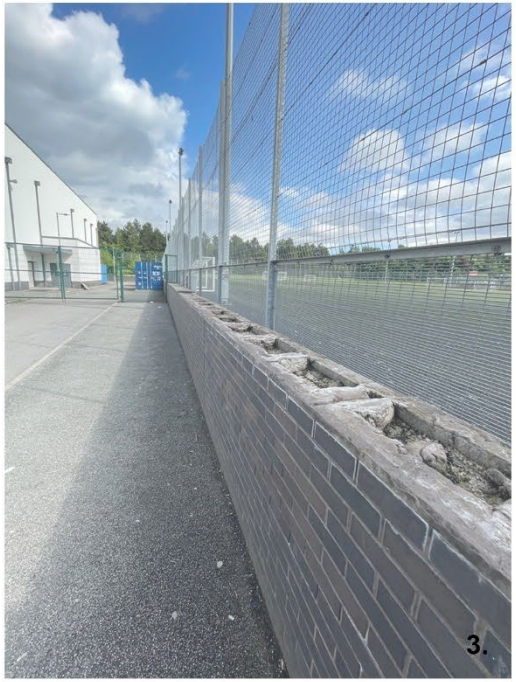


Figure 3 – Key map

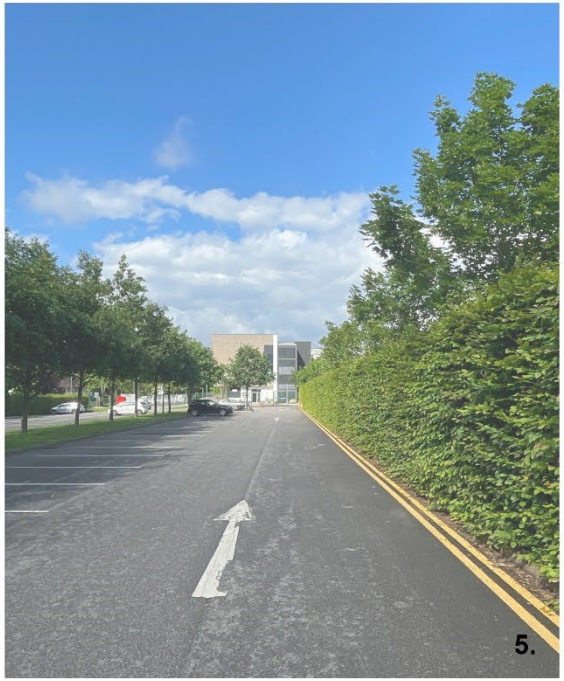


1.

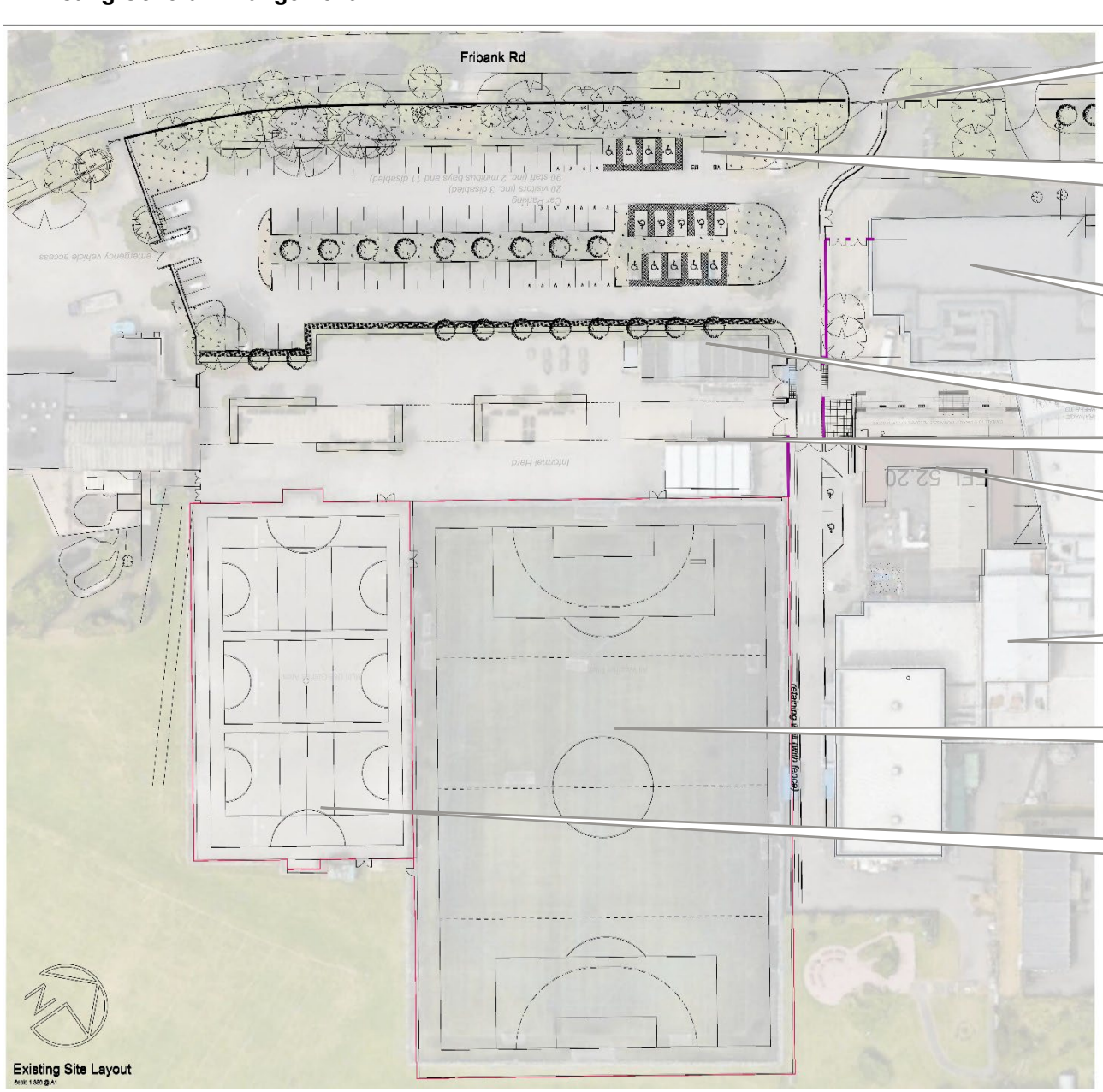

2.


3.


4.


5.

Existing General Arrangement



Existing Site entrance

Existing Car Park
90 staff (inc.2 minibus bays and 11 disabled

St Paul High School

2 X Modular class

Dinning for both schools

Piper Hill Specialist School

All weather pitch

Multi use games area

Figure 4 - Existing General Arrangement

Brief & Design Considerations

3.0 BRIEF & DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

BRIEF

The proposed development comprises the replacement of the existing modular classroom with a new permanent modular classroom building. The new building has been designed to provide modern, flexible teaching accommodation whilst improving accessibility and supporting the day-to-day operation of the school. The layout has been carefully arranged to maximise the use of the available site and provide an efficient learning environment.

Brief Summary

- Replacement of the existing modular classroom.
- Utilisation of the existing drainage and utility infrastructure.
- Provision of two classrooms.
- Office accommodation.
- Intervention/meeting room
- Accessible WC and pupil WC facilities.
- Dedicated classroom storage rooms.
- Cleaner's room.
- Main entrance and circulation space.
- Modern, energy-efficient teaching accommodation.

Design Considerations

- Replace the existing modular classroom with a modern, permanent building.
- Retain the existing building location to utilise the existing drainage and utility infrastructure.
- Minimise disruption to the operation of the school during construction.
- Provide a functional and efficient layout that supports teaching and learning.
- Maximise natural daylight to teaching spaces.
- Deliver a durable, low-maintenance and energy-efficient modular building.
- Ensure the new building integrates with the existing school campus in terms of scale, appearance and function.

Site Impact and Accessibility

- The replacement building occupies the footprint of the existing modular classroom, utilising the existing drainage and utility infrastructure.
- Step-free access is provided, ensuring the building is fully accessible for all users.

Accommodation

- Two classrooms (approximately 58.5 m² each).
- One intervention/meeting room.
- One office.
- Two classroom stores.
- Accessible WC.
- Students WC facilities.
- Cleaner's room.
- Central entrance and circulation space.

Building Facilities

- Accessible sanitary accommodation.
- Dedicated storage areas to support teaching activities.
- Mechanical and electrical services.
- Heating, lighting and ventilation designed to provide a comfortable learning environment.
- Fire detection, alarm and emergency escape provisions in accordance with current Building Regulations.

LEGAL & REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

CDM Regulations
The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM Regulations 2015) are aimed at improving health and safety in the construction industry. Under the CDM Regulations, the client is obliged to appoint a principal designer in order that compliance with the regulations is achieved.

Planning
Planning consent will need to be obtained.
These regulatory controls operate alongside standard planning regulations, serving as a distinct measure to prevent unrestricted demolition, modification, or expansion of a structure without explicit approval from the local planning authority or the Secretary of State. Decisions on planning consent applications typically require a minimum of eight to twelve weeks from registration and validation of the application. Delays may extend beyond this timeframe, especially when specialised consultations are needed.

Building Regulations
The Building Regulations, established under the authority of the Building Act 1984, are applicable in England and Wales. The current version, known as 'the Building Regulations 2010' (with amendments), is a crucial framework that most building projects must adhere to. These regulations are designed to safeguard the health and safety of individuals within and around various types of structures, encompassing residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. Additionally, they address energy conservation and establish guidelines for building accessibility and use. Approval from building control, either through the local authority or an Approved Inspector, may be necessary for the proposed works, contingent upon the final scope of the project.

Equality Act
The Equality Act 2010 (formally the disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005) establishes a protective framework for individuals with disabilities concerning the provision of goods, facilities, services, and employment. The Act prohibits discrimination and the unfair treatment of disabled persons. While the Act does not specify building code requirements related to properties, it underscores the importance of managing buildings and processes to prevent discrimination, even in the absence of specific guidelines. Evaluating existing buildings against the Act may be challenging, emphasising the need for a comprehensive approach that extends beyond physical structures. Design considerations should prioritise minimising discrimination through reasonable measures wherever possible.

Energy Performance Certification
Statutory instrument 2007 no. 991, 'The Energy Performance of Buildings' (Certificates and Inspections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007, as amended, transposes the requirements of Articles 7.2 and 7.3 of the Energy Performance of Building Directive 2002/91/EC. A copy of the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) should be obtained, and the accompanying recommendation report assessed, and recommendations incorporated into any proposed works. EPCs are generally valid for 10 years but require updating if there is a major change to the building footprint, fabric or layout. It is not anticipated that renewal will be required due to the minimal building footprint change.

Deleterious Materials
It is a duty of the building owner under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 to ensure a 'pre-demolition/refurbishment survey' is undertaken to determine the presence of any asbestos. According to information that has been gathered, this building was constructed post 2010, at which point asbestos was banned thus mitigating the need for an R&D survey.

Workplace Regulations
The workplace regulations generally require that every employer ensures that every workplace which is under their control or where any of their employee's work complies with the requirements of these regulations. The regulations cover items such as maintenance, temperature, ventilation, lighting and general condition of the internal areas. the basic premise is to ensure that the workplace is safe and healthy for employees to use. The regulations should be consulted when considering any proposed alterations and our designs will aim to satisfy these requirements.

As Built Information

This feasibility assessment has been undertaken based on as-built information. Existing building layouts were provided in PDF format and converted into a digital, editable format; as a result, these drawings are not fully dimensionally accurate. The car park and external areas, however, have been fully surveyed by the AHR Geomatics team, ensuring that the proposals for these elements are based on accurate and reliable data. To mitigate any further design risks, detailed surveys are recommended for the next stages of project development.

CONSTRAINTS

An assessment of the existing building and site has been undertaken to identify any possible constraints that may exist that could have a bearing on the design and construction of the school extension. Some of the key issues for consideration that may present some challenges are as follows:

- Current modular classes occupants and displacement of teaching during the works;
- Regular/pre-arranged events in the surrounding areas disrupted.
- Presence of modular classes in the area of works.
- Access for construction operatives and materials during the works.
- Access for goods/deliveries and refuge collection during the works.
- Continuity/disruption of onsite activities during the works.
- Maintaining the use of external areas during the works.
- Limiting disruption to the adjacent site from construction activities.
- Current car park will be blocked during works

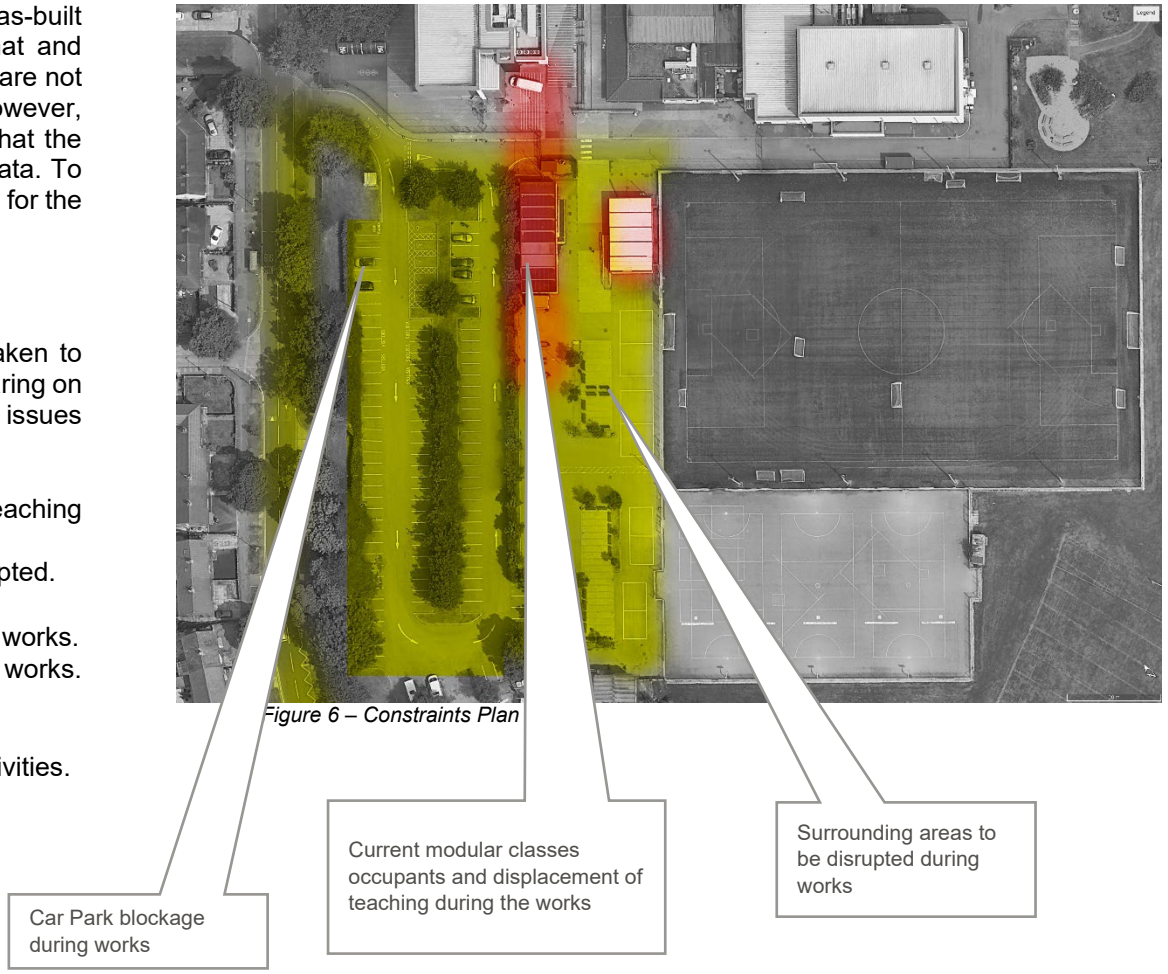


Figure 6 – Constraints Plan

Carbon Impact

4.0 CARBON IMPACT

The proposed development replaces the existing modular classroom with a modern, energy-efficient building designed in accordance with current Building Regulations. The replacement building will improve the environmental performance of the existing accommodation through enhanced insulation, efficient building fabric and modern building services.

Operational carbon emissions will be reduced through the incorporation of energy-efficient design measures, including high-performance insulation, LED lighting and automatic lighting controls where appropriate. The opportunity to incorporate low-carbon technologies will be considered as part of the detailed design, where practical and feasible.

The following matters will be considered…

LOW ENERGY USE

- Low energy lighting will be installed to reduce power consumption.
- The design maximises natural daylight to minimise reliance on artificial lighting.
- Occupancy sensors will be incorporated where appropriate to reduce unnecessary energy use.
- High-performance insulation and an energy-efficient building fabric will improve the thermal performance of the building and reduce heating demand.
- Energy-efficient mechanical and electrical systems will be specified in accordance with current Building Regulations.

EMBODIED CARBON

- Minimize embodied carbon by carefully selecting materials and systems.
- Utilise the existing building footprint and existing drainage and utility infrastructure to reduce site works and material use.
- Prioritise responsibly sourced materials and, where practicable, locally sourced products.
- Minimise unnecessary alterations by reusing existing layouts whenever feasible
- Specify materials that can be recycled or reused at the end of the building's life.

BUILDING REGULATIONS, SUSTAINABILITY AND BRUKL

Compliance with the Building Regulations, including the requirements of Approved Document Part L, will be required. Early engagement with Building Control will help ensure the proposed design satisfies the relevant statutory requirements.

Clarify any Local Council stipulations related to sustainability, energy efficiency and carbon emissions, as these may impact the proposed works. Additionally, a BRUKL (Building Regulation UK Part L) report will be required to demonstrate compliance with energy performance requirements.

Scheme Options

5.0 SCHEME OPTIONS

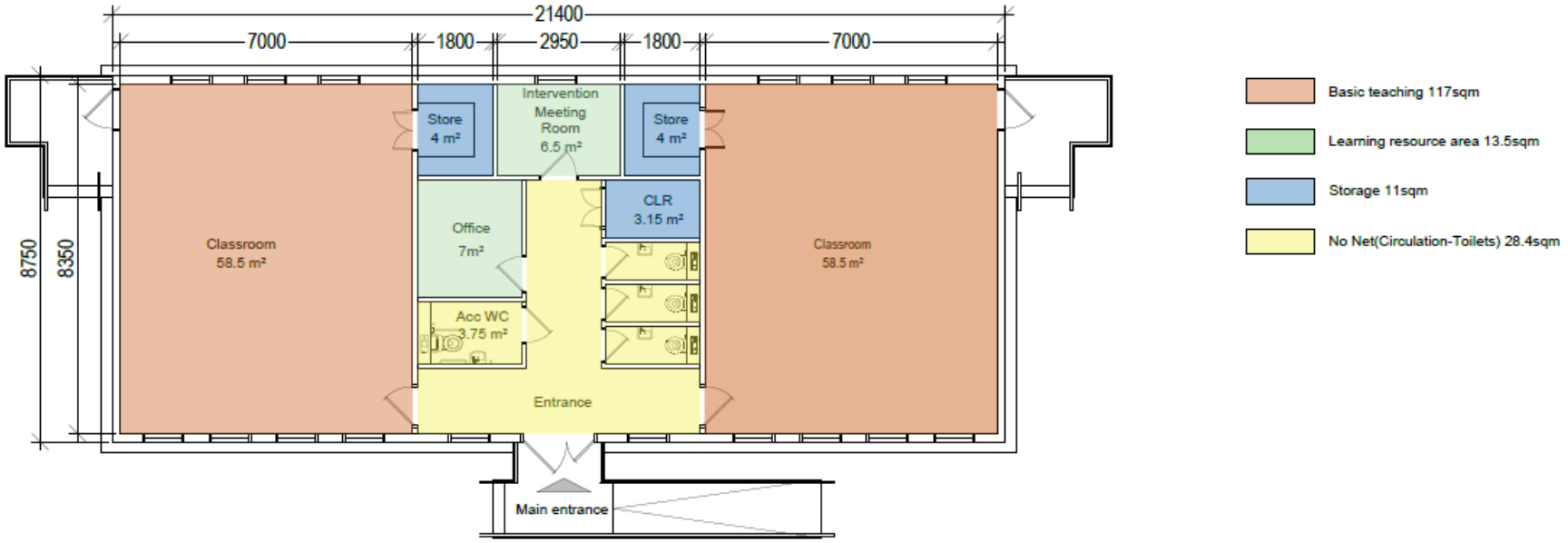
OPTION 1
Schedule of Accommodation

Main features of the proposal are…

- Replacement of the existing modular classroom with a new permanent modular classroom building.
- 2 No. Classrooms – 117.0 m² total (58.5 m² each).
- 1 No. Intervention / Meeting Room – 6.50 m².
- 1 No. Office – 7.00 m².
- 2 No. Storage Rooms – 8 m² total (4.0 m² each).
- 1 No. Cleaner's Room (CLR) – 3.15 m².
- Accessible WC and pupil WC facilities.
- Entrance, circulation and sanitary accommodation – 28.4 m².
- Step-free access provided via the main entrance.

Matters for consideration

Balanced Internal Layout – This option provides a balanced arrangement of sanitary facilities and storage space, maximising functionality while maintaining efficient circulation throughout the building.



OPTION 2
Schedule of Accommodation

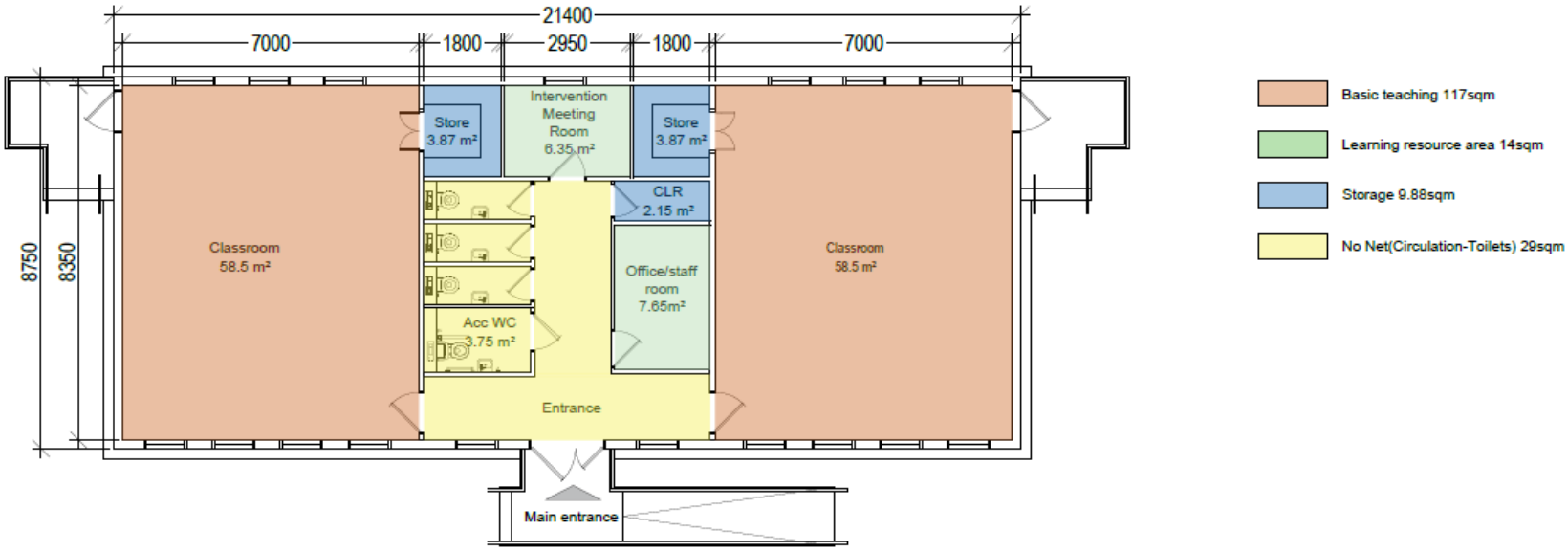
Main features of the proposal are:

- Replacement of the existing modular classroom with a new permanent modular classroom building.
- 2 No. Classrooms – 117.0 m² total (58.5 m² each).
- 1 No. Intervention / Meeting Room – 6.35 m².
- 1 No. Office / Staff Room – 7.65 m².
- 2 No. Storage Rooms – 9.88 m² total (3.87 m² each).
- 1 No. Cleaner's Room (CLR) – 2.15 m².
- Accessible WC and pupil WC facilities.
- Entrance, circulation and sanitary accommodation – 29.0 m².
- Step-free access provided via the main entrance.

Matters for consideration:

Sanitary Layout – All WC facilities are grouped on the left hand side of the building adjacent to the accessible WC, creating a single sanitary zone that simplifies servicing and plumbing.

Consolidating the WC facilities results in a reduction in the overall storage area compared with Option 1.



OPTION 3

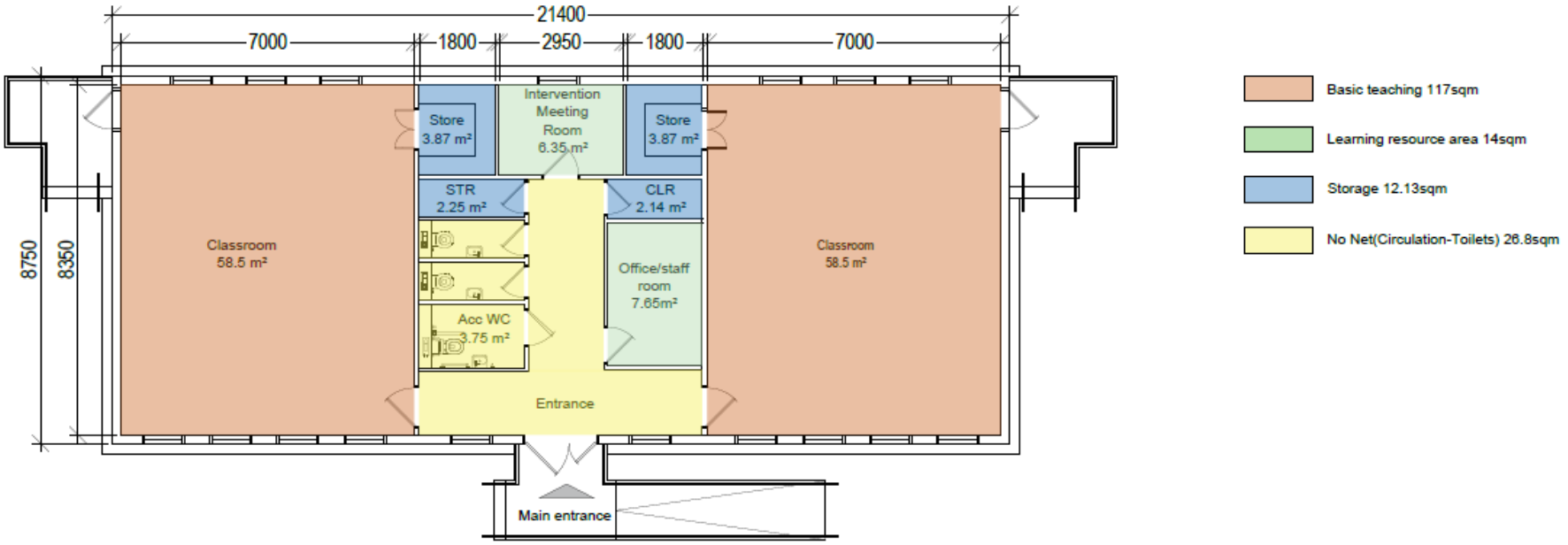
Schedule of Accommodation

Main features of the proposal are…

- Replacement of the existing modular classroom with a new permanent modular classroom building.
- 2 No. Classrooms – 117.0 m² total (58.5 m² each).
- 1 No. Intervention / Meeting Room – 6.35 m².
- 1 No. Office / Staff Room – 7.65 m².
- 3 No. Storage Rooms – 12.13 m² total.
- 1 No. Accessible WC and 2 No. Pupil WC facilities.
- Entrance, circulation and sanitary accommodation – 26.8 m².
- Step-free access provided via the main entrance.

Matters for consideration

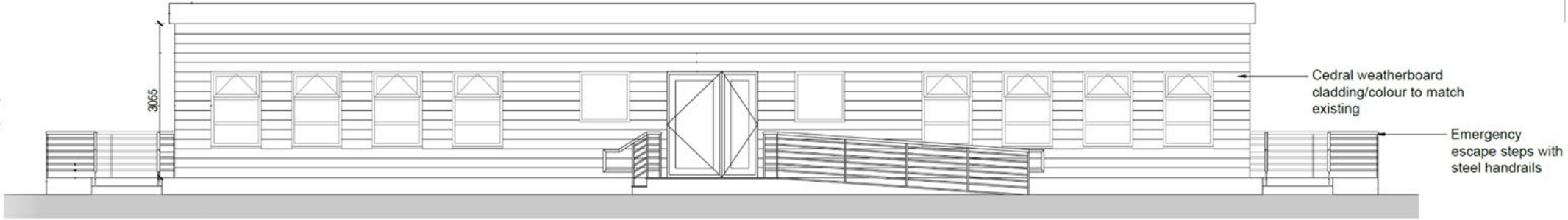
Storage and WC Provision – This option increases the overall storage provision by introducing an additional storage room, with one fewer WC compared to the other options.



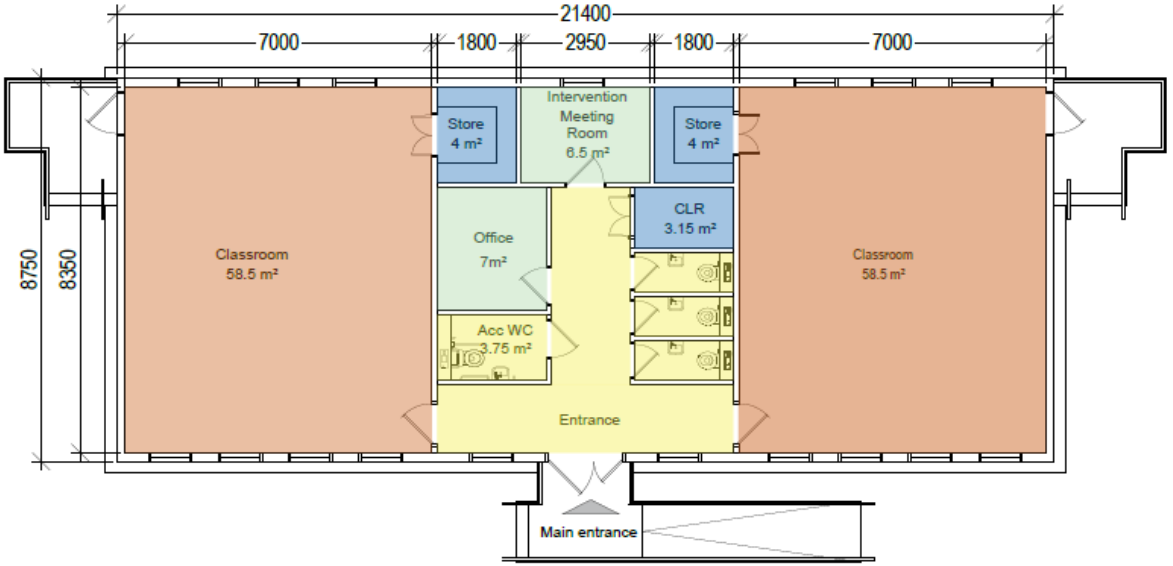
Preferred Option

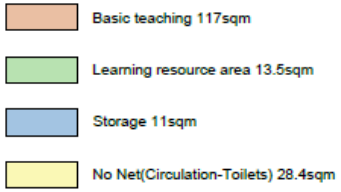
OPTION 1 – PREFERRED OPTION

Option 1 is the preferred option as it provides the most efficient and balanced internal layout. The arrangement achieves an appropriate balance between teaching accommodation, storage provision and sanitary facilities while maintaining clear and functional circulation throughout the building.
The proposed layout also makes effective use of the available floor area, providing adequate storage to support teaching activities without compromising the number of WC facilities. Located on the footprint of the existing modular classroom, the proposal utilises the existing drainage and utility infrastructure, minimising disruption to the school site and reducing the extent of external works.



Proposed Elevation A
Scale 1:100





Appendices

We approach every project with the same commitment to quality, excellence and integrity in all we do.