

GREENACRE SEN

Design and Access Statement

October 2009



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Statement

This Design and Access Statement is in support of a Reserved Matters Approval for the construction of a new school building on the site of Greenacre School, Keresforth Hill Road, Barnsley. The proposal also involves the demolition of part of the existing building fabric.

This development will greatly improve both the facilities available to the school and the quality of the landscape and buildings on the site.

This Design and Access Statement includes proposals that comply with the current Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Local Planning Policies. These are listed below:

Local Plans and Policies

- Barnsley Unitary Development Plan, Adopted December 2000
- Barnsley Local Development Framework, Barnsley Education Sites Development Document, Adopted January 2009

Transport Policies

- Home to School Transport Policy 2009-2010

In order to comply with national guidelines and to meet the requirements set out by the DCSF the proposals have been developed with reference to the national Building Regulations and the following Building Bulletins:

- BB102 - Designing for Disabled Children and Children with Special Educational Needs
- BB98 - Briefing Framework for Secondary School Projects
- BB85 - School Grounds, a Guide to Good Practice
- BB95 - Schools for the future, Designs for Learning Communities

1.2 Scope of Proposals

Greenacre School is located on the outskirts of Barnsley to the West of the town centre on the brow of Keresforth Hill. The site has a total area of 45,640m² and is bordered to the South by Keresforth Hill Road, to the East by a large dual carriageway to the West by a small group of houses and to the North by Kingstone School. Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is from Keresforth Hill Road.



Fig. 1 – Aerial photo of the site as existing

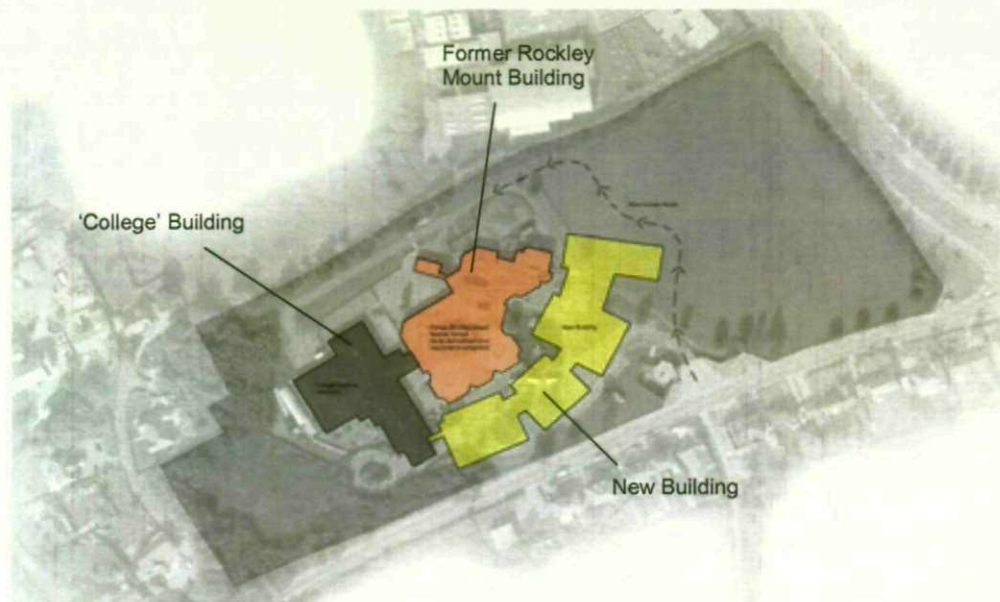


Fig. 2 – Diagram of Proposed Development

The existing school currently occupies two buildings on the site. The first is the former Rockley Mount Special School (area 2900m²) and the second is the Arts block or "College" (area 1850m²). The proposal involves the demolition of the former Rockley Mount building and the construction of new accommodation to the South. The total proposed area of new building is 3640 m².



Fig. 3 The former Rockley Mount School



Fig. 4 The "College" Building or Arts Block

Once completed the new school will provide places for 202 pupils aged 2 to 19 and with a range of disabilities including PMLD (Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties) and SLD (Serious Learning Difficulties). The specialist nature of the school means that it is significant within the Barnsley area with students attending from across the whole Borough, and some from neighbouring Boroughs.

2.0 Contextual Appraisal

2.1 Assessment:

Greenacre School is located in a semi-rural area about 1 kilometre to the West of Barnsley town centre. The area is semi-rural in character with some residential properties located close to the site to the West and the South. As a result of its location on the outskirts of Barnsley the site is very green and as well as offering an external sports pitch, also has a number of wooded areas.

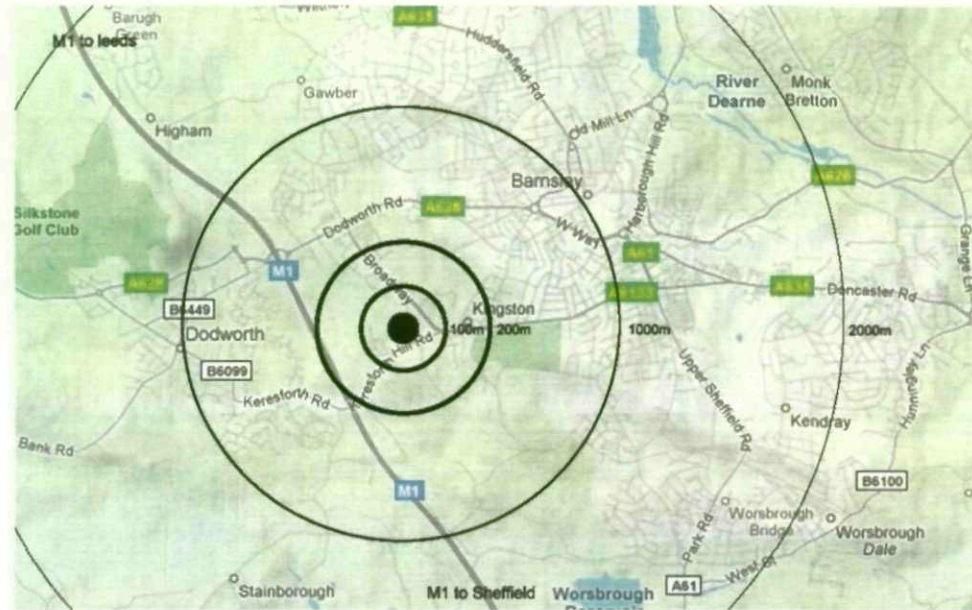


Fig. 5 Site location map

The site is located 140-155m above sea level and has a varied topography. From the site entrance, on Keresforth Hill Road, it rises up towards the existing buildings. The site slopes steeply down to the west of the 'College' building and along the boundary to the south, but is relatively flat in the areas immediately surrounding the existing buildings. Buried services have, as far as possible, been identified.

Existing noise pollution from the M1, which is within a couple of hundred metres of the Western site boundary, can affect all areas of the site. This has been considered in the development of the design.



Fig. 6 Site Plan



Fig. 7 Site aerial photo from South West

A full tree survey has been carried out on the site. No trees on site are protected by tree preservation orders; there are however two protected horse chestnut trees on adjacent land to the South west which overhang the site boundary. The new building will require the felling of around 20 trees on and near the footprint of the new school building.

2.2 Design Policy Assessment:

PPS1: Creating Sustainable Communities

PPS1 sets out the Government's commitment to sustainable development, highlighting the importance of urban regeneration, prioritising the re-use of previously developed land, securing mixed-use development and concentrating new development in town centres and locations similarly well-served by public transport. It also promotes the efficient use of land through higher density mixed use development.

PPS1 states that to ensure sustainable development, high priority should be given to development proposals in locations that are easily accessible by foot, by bicycle or by public transport, rather than by car. This includes access to jobs, health, education, shopping, leisure and community facilities.

Within PPS1, Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to:

- Give priority to re-using previously developed land;
- Create sustainable patterns of development;
- Create usable, durable and adaptable places;
- Make more efficient use of land, and
- Promote good design in development.

PPS1: Climate Change Supplement

This statement supplements PPS1 by setting out how planning should contribute to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change and take into account any *unavoidable consequences of planning*.

Consideration of the environmental performance of a proposed development, particularly taking into account the climate that the development is expected to experience of its projected lifetime, is encouraged.

The design of new development should therefore:

- Take account of landform, layout, buildings orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption
- Deliver a high quality local environment
- Provide public and private open space as appropriate
- Give priority to the use of sustainable drainage systems
- Provide for sustainable waste management; and
- Create and secure opportunities for sustainable transport

The effects of the proposal on existing and proposed development in close proximity should also be taken into consideration.

By Design (DETR/CABE)

It is now a requirement of PPS1 that regard should be given to good practice guidance set out in 'By Design'.

'By Design' highlights the fact that good design is important everywhere and the creation of successful places depends on the skills of designers and commitment from those who employ them, as well as input from the planning system. The key aspect it focuses upon includes the design of buildings and spaces, landscapes, roads and movement systems. It also ties in with both PPS3 and the Urban Task Force report by seeking to enhance the quality of urban development through a move from reliance on prescriptive development standards towards a more design led approach with a positive emphasis on place making.

'By Design' states that successful streets, spaces, villages, towns and cities tend to have characteristics in common. These factors have been analysed to produce principles or objectives of good urban design. They help to remind us what should be sought to create a successful place. 'By Design' lists the objectives of urban design as follows:

- Character – a place with its own identity. Planning should promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture.
- Continuity and enclosure – a place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished. Planning should promote continuity of street frontages and enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas.
- Quality of the public realm – a place with attractive and successful outdoor areas. Planning should promote public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people.

- Ease of movement – a place that is easy to get to and move through. Planning should promote accessibility and local permeability by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport.
- Legibility – a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand. Planning should promote legibility through development that provides recognises routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around.
- Adaptability – a place that can change easily. Planning should promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.
- Diversity – a place with variety and choice. Planning should promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.

CABE Schools Design Panel

CABE also produce specific guidance on the design of Schools brought forward under the BSF programme. In this regard schemes are assessed against 10 criteria as they relate to design and form:

- Identity and context: making a school the students and community can be proud of;
- Site plan: making the best use of the site;
- School grounds: making assets of the outdoor spaces;
- Organisation: creating a clear diagram for the buildings;
- Buildings: making form, massing and appearance work together;
- Interiors: creating excellent spaces for learning and teaching;
- Resources: deploying convincing environmental strategies;
- Feeling safe: creating a secure and welcoming place;
- Long life, loose fit: creating a school that can adapt and evolve in the future; and
- Successful whole: making a design that works in the round.

CABE assess proposals and each scheme is given an overall rating of 'excellent', 'good', 'not yet good enough', 'mediocre' or 'poor'. CABE consider that only schemes with an overall design quality rating of 'excellent' or 'good' are regarded as acceptable.

PPG 13

PPG 13 sets out the government's objectives that integrate planning and transport at the national, regional and local level. The guidance seeks to;

- Promote more sustainable transport choices;
- Promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, reducing the need to travel especially by car.

A key objective of PPG 13 is to ensure that jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. Local Planning Authorities should give particular emphasis to accessibility, in identifying preferred areas and sites where such land uses should be located, to ensure that they are located where they will offer realistic, safe and easy access by a range of transport modes, not exclusively by the car.

The Development Plan

Regional Spatial Strategy

The issued RSS offers little in terms of design guidance which is relevant to this proposal. Policy ENV5 seeks to encourage green technologies and requires 10% of energy to be sourced from decentralised or renewable / low carbon sources. This policy also encourages the orientation and layout of development to maximise passive solar heating.

Barnsley UDP (2000)

In accordance with Policy GS8, the construction of new buildings in the green belt will not be permitted unless these are for:

- Agriculture or forestry;
- Essential facilities for sport and recreation, for cemeteries, or for other uses which preserve the openness of the green belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- The replacement of existing dwellings.

Other development in the green belt is not acceptable except in 'very special circumstances'. Policy GS9 requires that any development within the green belt should be an appropriate design and siting so that it does not incur significant harm to the visual amenity of it.

In terms of landscape design, Policies GS22, GS23 seek the retention of existing trees and the creation of new woodland, hedgerows and habitats as part of development proposals.

Policy BE6 requires that the council achieve good design standards for all types of development. Proposals will be assessed according to:

- The quality of layout and suitability of scale of the development;
- The use, quality, design and landscape treatment of open land within the site and the area around buildings;

- The standard of detailed design and facing materials of proposed buildings;
- The suitability of the whole development for its proposed context and its relationship with adjoining land uses.

Supplementary Planning Guidance 25 Landscape Design

This supplementary planning guidance note provides further details on landscape design. This document sets out that good landscape design should:

- Soften the impact of new buildings on the surroundings;
- Integrate new development into its surroundings; and
- Provide an environment which is pleasant to live and work in.

2.3 Involvement

Throughout the design process consultation has taken place between the designers, school and stakeholder groups including community users. This has taken place through a series of 'Engagement' meetings where the school meet with the designers to discuss and develop the design. This dialogue with the school has helped us, as designers, to understand the unique and specific requirements of the school. As a result we have been able to use the knowledge we have gained to develop a bespoke design solution tailored to the learning needs of the school. The design captures the vision and ethos of the school in a way that will reinforce the culture of learning and aspirations for the future.



Fig. 8 Engagement with the school

In order to ensure that the development of the design has been in line with the requirements of the BMBC Planning Department, a series of meetings have taken place with Planning Officers as the design was progressed. The design has also been audited by a Building Control Adviser.

A process of independent design review has taken place at various stages of the project and the feedback received from these reviews has been incorporated into the final design.

2.4 Evaluation

The design concept at Greenacre has been driven by two key principles. These are the specific and strong learning methodology practiced by this school and the complexity of the site on which it is located. The combination of these factors has acted to create a bespoke solution influenced by their amalgamation. The varied topography and the reluctance of the school to decant during construction have strongly influenced the site strategy and design development.

The proposal aims to maximise the site's opportunities by responding to the views and orientation whilst minimising disruption to the existing school during the construction phase.

Opportunities

- Respond to the specific needs of the school and PMLD and SLD pupils.
- Provide the facilities required for the extended curriculum that Greenacre deliver to the borough.
- Respond to the site including natural features and views.
- Design an environmentally aware school for the future.
- Provide the school with an identity and 'something to be proud of'.

Constraints

- Limited site due to the occupied existing building.
- Varied topography
- Residential area to the South
- Retention of Post 16 College Building

2.5 Design Evolution

The design has evolved through constant dialogue with the school in the form of meetings, workshops and presentation days. These meetings were attended by governors, teachers, pupils and council representatives.

In response to the school's vision and the constraints of the site three possible strategies for the construction of the new building were developed. Each of these took a different approach to the site and the way in which the new building would integrate with the retained 'College'.

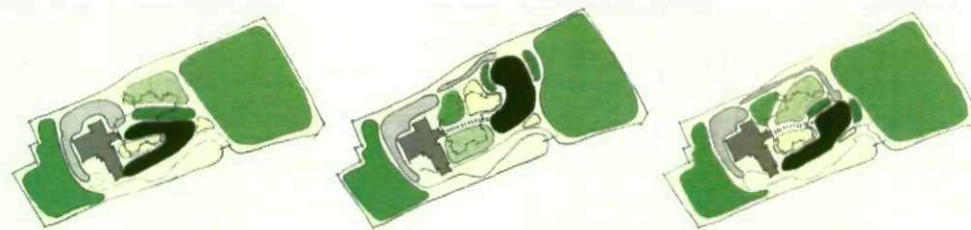


Fig. 9 Site strategy development

In the first strategy, (left), the new building links to both of the existing entrances to the retained College, this approach would require the phasing of both construction and demolition in order to allow part of the new build to be constructed on the footprint of the existing school.

The second strategy, (centre), involves the construction of the new building on the sports pitch on the Eastern part of the site. A covered link could then be provided to connect the new building with the retained College.

In the third strategy, (right), the new building is constructed along the front of the site linking to the South entrance to the College building. This third option was chosen by the school because it causes the least amount of disruption to staff and students during construction and creates a large, well protected inner courtyard.

The selection of a site strategy allowed the design to be progressed in more detail and in consultation with the school.



Fig. 10 Selected plans from the design development

As the design developed the strong desire of the school for a solution based around a curved plan became apparent. In order to achieve this aim the concept of a curved sensory element that ties a series of small pavilions together in the form of a sensory wall was introduced. This curved circulation route ties the pavilions together with a sensory wall that acts as a navigational tool throughout the building. This wall will use textures, signage and displays to give each part of the school its own character and identity. The learning pavilions are 'book ended' by a larger two storey block and the retained 'College', these act to anchor the learning pavilions to the site.

The building form was developed to wrap around the front edge of the site partially enclosing an activity court to the North. This court provides a secure outdoor learning space where students can engage with the external environment through performance, hard and soft play, external dining and cycle skills. The activity court is enclosed along its Northern edge by a Multi Use Games Area, (MUGA), and a Synthetic Turf Pitch, (STP). The impact of these areas is softened with carefully placed landscaping.

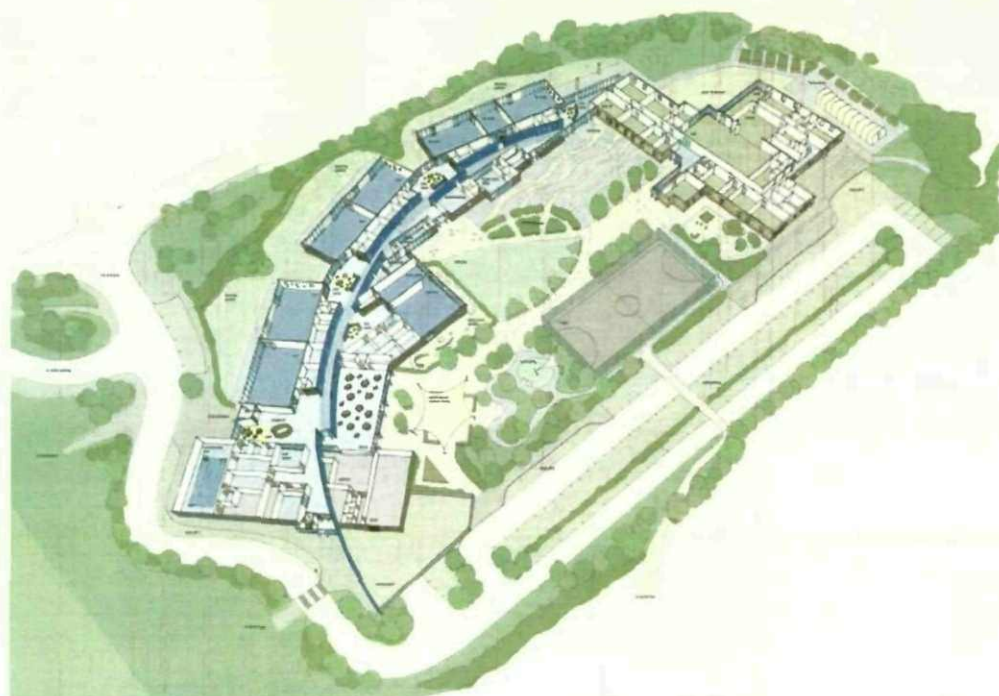


Fig. 11 Cut away aerial view

3.0 Design Resolution

3.1 Use

The scheme will provide the school with a much improved learning environment both internally and externally. This improved environment will provide the school with every opportunity to realise its ambitions for inclusivity, normalcy and achievement.



Fig. 12 Proposed site master plan

3.2 Amount

The proposed scheme will dramatically improve the facilities in which the school operates. This will be achieved by increasing the amount of new building on site from 4750m² to 5500m² of which 3640m² consists of new development.

The intention is to use the whole site as an educational resource. In order for this to be achieved a balance has been struck between hard and soft areas, whilst maintaining a philosophy of inclusivity for all school users of varying disabilities.

The following table sets out the provision of external areas on the site.

Area	BB98 / BB102 Minimum area recommendations	Proposed Provision
Area for Sport (Playing Fields and Ball Courts)	15,000 sqm.	9,700 sqm
Soft Informal and Social	1,305 sqm.	1,400 sqm
Hard Informal and Social	703 sqm.	1,150 sqm.
Habitat	402 sqm.	c.600 sqm.
Access	-	c.11,000 sqm.
Buildings	-	c.5,500 sqm.
Other	-	15,750 sqm.
Total Site Area	-	45,640 sqm.

Fig. 13 External site areas

3.3 Layout

The scheme makes use of the existing vehicular and pedestrian site entrances on Keresforth Hill Road. On entering the site the sequence of arrival is different for each user group. These differences are reflected in the layout of the access routes and parking provision for the school.

Visitors to the school will use the main school entrance which is a prominent and welcoming feature sandwiched between the easternmost learning pavilion and the two storey block. The entrance to the building is orientated towards the site entrance so that it is obvious to those unfamiliar with the school. Visitor car parking is located to the east of the site entrance. Visitors arriving at the school will be visible to members of staff at the reception desk and, once approved, will be allowed into the secure main entrance area.

Pupils and staff can gain access to the secure part of the site by three entrances. The school specifically prides itself on its ability to get all students between the 30 minibuses, on which they arrive and depart, and the learning spaces within 10 minutes at the start and end of the school day. In order to replicate this in the new building each of the three entrances to the secure part of the site is adjacent to a large minibus drop off point. From here the students are personally greeted by a member of staff and escorted into the school.

Kitchen and FM staff arriving at the site have their own entrance to the school building through the service yard located to the North of the two storey block. This private entrance provides access to the kitchen and associated service spaces.

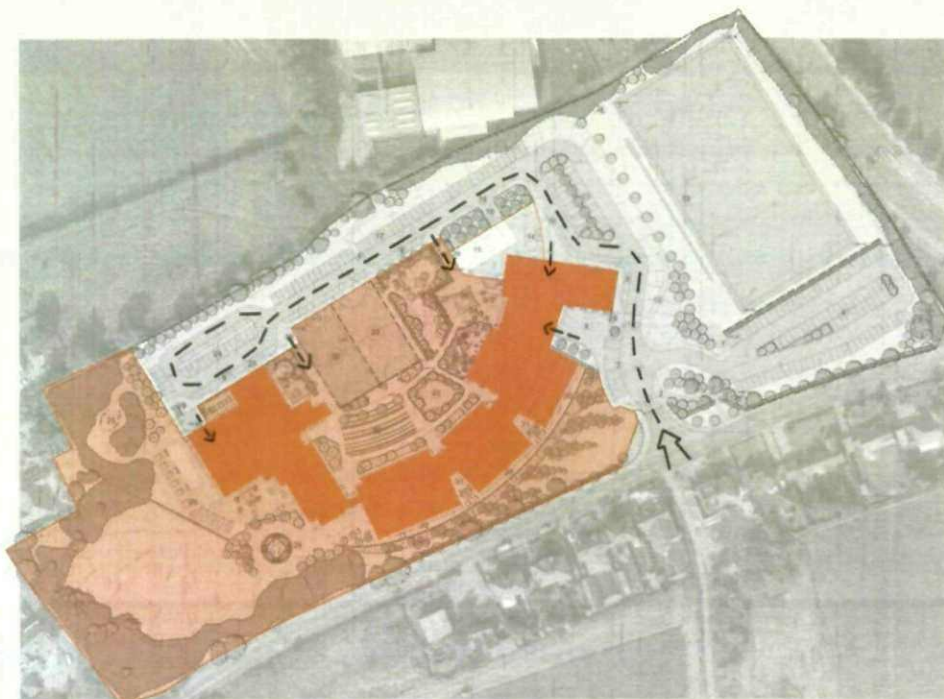


Fig. 13 Access routes and entrances to the secure part of the site

Once in the secure part of the site the external environment is split between outdoor learning spaces, play areas and sports provision. This is achieved using a mix of hard and soft landscaping.

3.4 Scale

The new building has been designed to respond to the topography of the site. It is largely single storey and wraps around the South edge of the existing buildings. The single storey pavilions are book ended by the retained College and a two storey block. The two storey element of the scheme marks the main entrance to the school. It is set back from the site entrance in order to minimise its impact on the housing located on the South side of Keresforth Hill Road.



Fig. 14 Site Section

3.5 Landscape Design

A key priority of the design of the external spaces is to extend the teaching spaces out into the landscape. The proposed landscaping provides a variety of hard and soft landscaped areas for both learning and play; the areas of each comply with the relevant requirements set out in BB102 and BB85.

The proposed layout of the new school building acts to enclose a well defined central courtyard space. This large communal courtyard provides a variety of protected external spaces which provide shelter, security and enclosure. The courtyard area includes a series of dedicated, distinct and defined destination spaces at the heart of the school. These are set within a network of routes which in themselves provide students with learning opportunities.

Wherever possible the links between the new building and external spaces are designed to be as direct as possible. The main external social areas are located within the central courtyard with teaching and learning spaces located to the South between the learning pavilions.

The area to the West of the College building has been set aside as a horticulture area. Here, natural processes can be explored through the cultivation of plants and organic food crops. To the North West of this area is a small habitat garden which will include an informal meandering path leading to an external teaching space.

The main parking area and sports pitch are located to the East of the new building outside of the secure part of the site.

The provision of sports and recreation facilitates the opportunity for students and community users to participate in both formal and informal play and sports activities. The incorporation of both hard and soft surfaces enhances the variety of

sports that can be played and the provision of a MUGA allows for sport to take place throughout the year.

3.6 Appearance

We have looked at the visual impact the new school building will have on the landscape and, following discussions with the local Planning Authority, our approach is to integrate the building into the landscape along the Southern edge of the site. This will be achieved by continuing the roof line of the banking down to the road in a pitched roof to the South edge of the learning pavilions. The level of planting and trees in front of the building will mean that it will have only a small visual impact on the residents of the houses on the other side of Keresforth Hill Road.



Fig. 15 Existing view from Keresforth Hill Road



Fig. 16 Proposed view from Keresforth Hill Road

The two storey element of the scheme is set further back on the site and will be most prominent from the site entrance. The massing of this block will be on a

smaller scale than that of the Kingstone Sports Hall to the North which it will partially shield from view from the road.

The two storey block marks the main entrance to the new school building and helps to give the entrance a greater sense of drama and importance.



Fig. 17 Proposed view from Keresforth Hill Road

The new building will use a simple palette of materials, rendered flank walls act to sandwich timber and glazed panels. The use of colour is limited to the glazed elements to create a simple and elegant appearance.

3.7 Sustainability

The design team is committed to designing schools based on sustainable environmental principles from the basic concept through to detail design. The design will utilise green materials from sustainable local sources where ever possible. Biomass will be used to generate heat and power throughout the life cycle of the building. The building is orientated to reduce solar gains in summer and will be well insulated for the conservation of heat in winter. Our initial BREEAM assessment shows that it is likely that we will achieve a "Very Good" rating as a minimum.

4.0 Accessibility

The main point of access to the site is from Keresforth Hill Road to the South. The new building presents its main entrance in this direction. Access to the site and buildings is designed to be inclusive and convenient for all.

Provision has been allocated for 196 car parking spaces, including 8 disabled bays and 10 visitor bays. Space for 10 motorcycles and a storage area for 20-30 bicycles for the use of staff and visitors will also be provided. These areas are easily accessible and designed on the principles of secure by design. All parking spaces will be marked in accordance with BS8300 Fig.3. Disabled car parking spaces are designed to be easily identifiable from the initial point of access to the site and close to the main entrance. Dropped kerbs and tactile blister paving will be provided where access routes meet other zones i.e. vehicle routes.

In line with good practice both in terms of DDA compliance and Health and Safety the initial access to the site is designed so that vehicular and foot traffic are physically separated in order to afford a safe transfer from vehicles to the main school entrance.

Most pupils arrive on site by minibus. Large minibus drop off points have therefore been provided at three points around the secure part of the school site. Each of these drop-off points has an associated entrance to the school where students are personally greeted by a member of staff and escorted into the buildings.

Users of the school can make use of public transport. There is a bus stop with routes to and from Barnsley town centre and surrounding areas located opposite the school entrance.

The school lies approximately halfway between Barnsley Interchange and Dodsworth Stations which are both within 2 miles of the school. Both stations are served by buses that stop near the site. Barnsley Railway Station provides links to London, York and Lincoln. Northern Rail manages the station and the following routes operate through it:

- Huddersfield – Lincoln
- Leeds – Sheffield
- London – York

The new building will be constructed in compliance with Building Regulations Approved Document M and BS8300 so that the school complies with the requirements of DDA95+2000 and SENDA 2001.

The main entrance to the school building is clearly identifiable on entering the site. The entrance is emphasised by it's location between the two storey element of the scheme and the first of the learning pavilions. The use of clear signage and clearly demarked external paving features will provide further emphasis to the location of the entrance.

Due to the nature of the school, with a high proportion of students severely disabled and in wheelchairs, it is proposed that the new building will take the same finished floor level as the existing College building in order to provide level access throughout.

5.0 Implementation

Subject to the discharge of relevant conditions that are attached to the Outline Planning Permission the development will be phased to minimise the need for decant into temporary accommodation. For this to happen the existing buildings need to be kept fully operational until the new building has been completed. Once complete the school will decant into the new building allowing the former Rockley Mount building to be demolished prior to the completion of the landscape proposals.

The following diagrams set out the phasing that will take place on site:

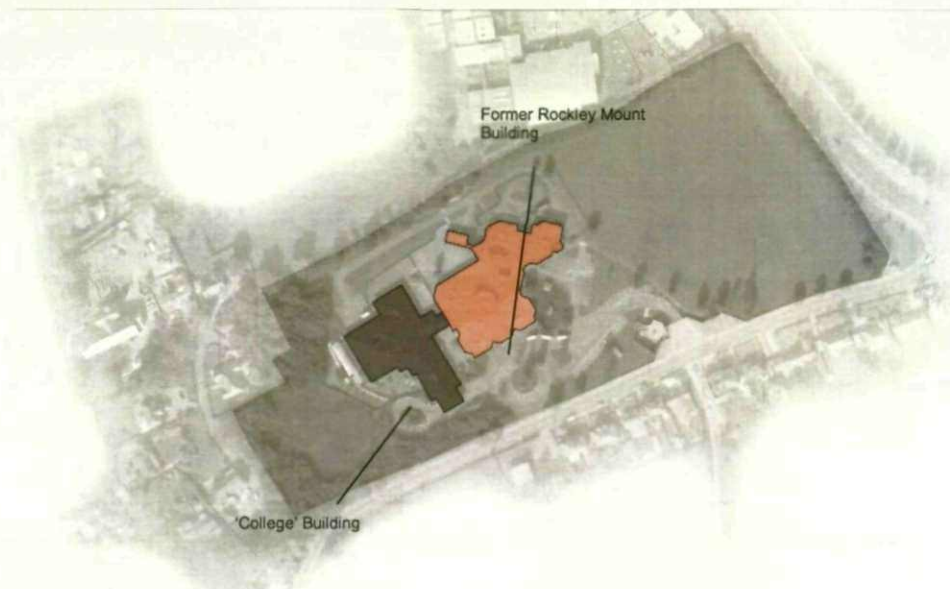


Fig. 18 Site as existing



Fig. 19 Enabling works (week 1-10)

New building works
Temporary school access to rear of College
Possible temporary parking North of sports pitch
Site storage and parking to South of pitch

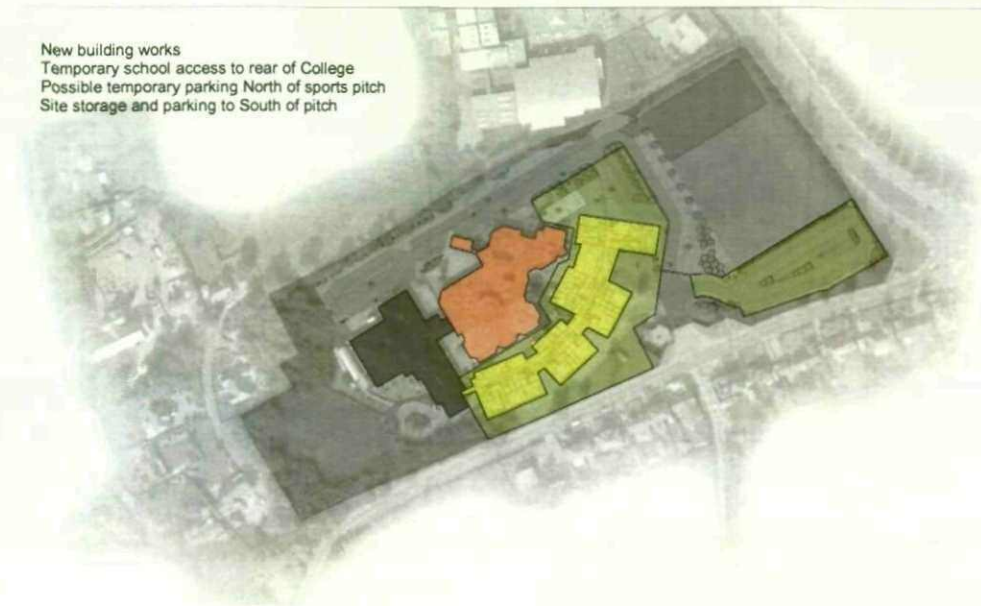


Fig. 20 Main build (week 10-63)



Fig. 22 External works (week 63+)

New school occupied
Demolition of Rockley Mount Building
Refurbishment of sports pitch



Fig. 21 Demolition (week 63+)



Fig. 23 Completion (week 89)