

Darlington Borough Council

Eastbourne Church of England Academy

Design & Access Statement

Statement

June 2007



Prepared for:

Revision Schedule

Design & Access Statement

May 2007

Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
01	May 2007		Claire Dobinson Grad Town Planner	Robin Newlove Assoc Town Planner	RAN
02	June 2007		Claire Dobinson Grad Town Planner	Robin Newlove Assoc Town Planner	RAN

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Scott Wilson being obtained. Scott Wilson accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequence of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person using or relying on the document for such other purpose agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm his agreement to indemnify Scott Wilson for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Scott Wilson accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person by whom it was commissioned.

Scott Wilson
Victoria House
159 Albert Road
Middlesbrough
TS1 2PX

Tel. 01642 218476
Fax. 01624 223582
claire.dobinson@scottwilson.com

www.scottwilson.com



Table of Contents

- 1 Eastbourne Church of England Academy Design and Access Statement 1
 - 1.1 Introduction 1
 - 1.2 The Design Process 2
 - 1.3 The Design 7
 - 1.4 Access 9
 - 1.5 Summary 10

1 Eastbourne Church of England Academy Design and Access Statement

1.1 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) accompanies an outline planning application for a new Academy at Hundens Lane, Eastbourne, Darlington. The DAS has been written to meet the requirements of Article 4C of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended).

The format of this Statement is guided by the advice given in Circular 01/2006 and 'Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them' (CABE, 2006). In keeping with best practice the statement aims to be concise, whilst focusing on the key elements necessary to understand what is being proposed, how it fits into the site context, how it relates to extant planning policy for the area, what it will look like and how it will be accessed. In such way, the Statement is intended to be a useful tool to assist consultees and decision-makers in formulating a recommendation.

1.2 The Design Process

1.2.1 Physical Context

Following a site selection process, the preferred site is Hundens Park in the Eastbourne area of Darlington (shown on the aerial photograph below). It comprises some 6.34 hectares of recreational land although only a small proportion of that area (less than 0.5 hectares) will comprise built development.

The site is fairly level with the exception of the northern boundary which falls away to young woodland below.

The residential properties along Arnold Road make up the western boundary to the site and the southern boundary is marked by outdoor sporting facilities belonging to the current school and the Eastbourne Sports Complex. The eastern boundary cuts down the middle of Hundens Park with the section to the west containing 4 pitches being retained as open green space. A full physical assessment of the site is provided within the landscape assessment which accompanies the planning application.

Aerial Photograph of Site and Surrounding Area



1.2.2 Social Context

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has approved an Expression of Interest from Darlington Council for an academy for Eastbourne School to be built in the town. It will bring top class facilities to this area of the town and will help raise standards of achievement.

The current Eastbourne Comprehensive School is located very close to the proposed site so people in the wider area will experience little change in terms of land use. Nearby residents may experience some limited disruption especially during construction but a full traffic and pedestrian assessment should alleviate this. The new Academy is not expected to affect visitor numbers to the Sport's Centre which will remain open as usual.

1.2.3 Economic Context

The Regional Economic Strategy for the North East (2006) states that the north east has below average academic performance with only 48.7% of North East students achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs against a national average of 52%. This is echoed in the Draft Tees Valley Economic Strategy where one of the five priorities is to raise education and skill levels which are fundamental to both an inclusive society and the development of a knowledge-based economy.

The Academy seeks to provide a superior standard of education for the young people of Darlington, improving educational attainment and general behaviour. The new school building is an important mechanism for this change, inspiring pupils and creating an entirely different learning environment to that of the current Eastbourne Comprehensive.

1.2.4 Planning Policy Context

The local planning policy context for the site is set out in the Darlington Local Plan, which was adopted in May 1997 with alterations in September 2001. The plan forms part of the statutory development plan read together with RPG1 (Regional Planning Guidance for the North East) and the Tees Valley Structure Plan 2004.

Hundens Park is a large Outdoor Sports site designated as open space within the Darlington Local Plan. This means it is protected by various open space policies including Policy E3 – 'Protection of Open Land', R4 – 'Open Space Provision' and R9 'Protection of Playing Pitches'.

The policy case for the new Academy is outlined fully in the Planning Statement accompanying the planning application.

1.2.5 Involvement

Prior to the site selection process there was extensive consultation with pupils of the current Eastbourne school, their parents, teachers, school governors and nearby residents. There was widespread support for the Academy which has led to more detailed site assessments and designs.

Two public consultation meetings were held during the early design stage to seek opinion on aspects such as access, boundary treatment and building height. These meetings were

held at Eastbourne Sports Centre on the 26th March at 4pm and 6pm and were attended by four and eight people respectively. Approximately 1100 letters of invitation were sent to publics and nearby residents.

The meetings highlighted several areas of concern:

- There is no physical boundary with the care home which could cause problems.
- Will the school be capable of being extended in response to changing population and demand?
- Playing fields will be available for community sports use, but not for residents to use informally. Residents will lose their recreation space.
- Corridor for public access follows rough, sloping ground.
- Could the buildings be located towards the east end of the site away from Arnold Road, with a longer access road from Hundens Lane?
- Parked vehicles on Hundens Lane would prevent buses turning into the entrance; congestion is already bad on Hundens Lane due to College parking, and this would add to it; the access drawing is not correct.
- Abusive behaviour and damage to property in Fairway and Bourne Avenue – there should be no access to the new school via these routes.
- Concern that the proposals are designed to increase use of the sports centre.
- Timing of refuse collection in The Fairway results in bin bags being out on the footway when pupils leave school and bags being kicked and burst open.
- What are the plans for Eastbourne School after the academy transfers to Hundens Park?

The meetings were followed by a two week consultation period where any interested party could view the plans and submit comments. Four responses were received. These echoed the concerns of those at the meetings but also added further, and sometimes conflicting, comments.

- Other areas were not considered or investigated for the Academy
- Sports pitches will only be available to the community at a cost and by booking with the Sports Centre; residents will lose their recreation space.
- Creating 'narrow' access corridors around the school will promote litter and vandalism
- A two storey building will impact too heavily on surrounding properties
- A two storey building is the most acceptable.
- Would appreciate fewer football pitches
- Would like to see family council housing on the site of the old school which would not be privately sold.
- The Academy should have been located at the top of Yarm Road.

- This is the most viable option for the Academy

1.2.6 Evaluation

Hundens Park is a large accessible site ideal for locating a new Academy. A Site Constraints Plan (fig X) was prepared following initial site evaluation. This addresses many of the issues raised during consultation. Although there are no major problems with the site there are important issues to be considered with the site some key considerations were identified.

- Access for vehicles and pedestrians
- Boundary with Arnold Road and proximity to residents
- Loss of open space.

1.3 The Design

1.3.1 Use

The site is currently designated open space within the Darlington Local Plan. Although developing this site will result in the loss of this open space, at least three of the six playing pitches will be retained as well as other areas of open space and landscaping. The sports facilities will remain available for public use and an access strip around the northern boundary will be removed from the development site to retain access to the remaining Hundens Park.

The application site is in very close proximity to the current Eastbourne School and adjacent to the Sports Centre so the proposed use is considered not to conflict with the surrounding area.

1.3.2 Amount

The Academy buildings and outdoor recreation space will need to meet standards set by the Department for Education and Skills for a school of this size. The Hundens Park site is currently larger than required which would leave room for future expansion, extra landscaping or community facilities.

The actual built aspect of the development will comprise less than 10% of the application site area with the remaining land being used for sports pitches, car parking, access roads and other landscaping.

1.3.3 Layout

Although a conceptual layout plan has been provided (plan MA06395 - 1004) the detailed positioning of the Academy buildings and sports facilities are subject to change.

The site lies in a large open area within Darlington. To the north and west site lies further open space bounded by houses and other buildings along the east and southern boundaries. Locating the main Academy development close to the south east corner of the site will minimise impact on this open break in townscape.

The vehicle access is also located in the south west corner of the site through the existing entrance to Hundens Park. Locating the school buildings as close as possible to the vehicle entrance, will not only avoid a water main but reduce the length and cost of new road surface.

Moreover as it is intended that the Academy and sports centre will share facilities so it would benefit both developments if they were located close together.

Properties along Arnold Road back onto the Academy site. A resident attending one of the consultation events suggested that it would be preferable to locate the car parking near this boundary rather than school buildings.

It may also be possible to locate all 'loud' school rooms such as dining areas and sports halls away from this boundary.

1.3.4 Scale

The buildings closest to the site are of a domestic scale being small two-storey terraced and semi detached dwellings. However, these buildings abut only one boundary of the site.

To respect the scale of the surroundings a limit of two storeys would be put on the Academy buildings which would be the most economical solution and free-up as much land as possible for sports pitches and landscaping. The site is large enough to allow the building to be lowered to one storey along the boundary adjacent to the residential properties as this would help alleviate concerns of nearby residents.

1.3.5 Landscaping

There are many mature trees on the site and these should be retained where possible. Extra landscaping will be provided to screen the houses along Arnold Road from the Academy development. Consultation with residents suggests that fencing and landscaping would be appropriate boundary treatment along the eastern edge. This would help screen the school from residents.

1.3.6 Appearance

A modern and vibrant appearance would help in bringing a new image and ethos to Eastbourne School and greatly assist the transition to Academy status. However as the site is bounded to the west by residential buildings it is important that the western elevation of the Academy has regard for its visibility from nearby residents. Further design work and consultation will follow this statement to create suitable design solution.

1.4 Access

Capita Symonds has carried out a transport assessment to assess the effects of the new Eastbourne Academy on the existing highway network. The report includes a design for new access into the site (see plan MA06395 1004) with appropriate assessments of the effect this will have on surrounding roads. In addition to assessing the effects of the proposal Capita Symonds also examined parking requirements for the new site and produced an outline travel plan for the Academy.

The report concluded that there would be no problems with accessing the new Academy from Hundens Lane, parking within it or capacity on the surrounding highway network although there could be conflict with shared pedestrian and vehicle access.

Currently many pupils at Eastbourne School either walk or cycle to school. As the new site is so close to the current school it is anticipated that these numbers will not change. Therefore it is important that there are accessible entrances to the school be provided so pedestrians and cyclists are not discouraged.

Residents at the community consultation event were keen to retain public access around the park so a strip along the northern edge has been retained. Providing a similar access belt along the eastern boundary could cause problems for residents living along Arnold Road.

The Academy will meet all accessibility standards set by the Disability Discrimination Act.

1.5 Summary

The proposed development is intended to provide modern and improved learning, recreational and local community facilities to the Eastbourne area of Darlington.

The design concepts have taken account of site constraints, proximity to residents and loss of greenspace. Accordingly the design a successful solution to complement the existing facilities.

Vehicle access to the proposed development will be via the existing entrance which will be altered to limit impact to nearby residents and to improve safety. Pedestrians will benefit from additional entrance points around the school site to disperse pupil numbers and help alleviate some concerns from consultees.

These proposals accord with the provisions of the development plan and extant planning policy.

Accordingly, this submission considers that the proposed development can be satisfactorily accommodated in design and access terms.