

TEMPORARY CLASSROOM FACILITIES

QUEENSWOOD SCHOOL

Design and Access Statement

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Introduction

This Design and Access Statement accompanies an application for a temporary three classroom modular building at Queenswood School. This accommodation would replace five modular classrooms used as teaching space for the school's Design and Technology, Physical Education, Art and Speech and Drama department. The existing units, which sit between the Sports Hall and Leach Centre, are 30 - 40 years old and beyond economic repair.

These temporary units are necessary as part of a wider masterplanning exercise for the school, with a new multi-purpose Hall, for which full planning permission has been granted, to be built on the site currently occupied by the modular classrooms. In the medium term, teaching space will be relocated to the Old Swimming Pool Hall, however, at present this space is needed for assemblies, exams, performances etc. Thus, new temporary classroom accommodation will be necessary for a period of 5 years.

Context

The main campus at Queenswood School is identified as a 'Major Development Site in Green Belt' (MDS) under the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan. The school buildings are an eclectic mixture of ages and styles. Some, such as the new and old Pool Halls, are clearly non-domestic whilst others have residential quality, most are relatively large scale. The site can be considered flat albeit it is at the top of a plateau. There appears to have been little change to the topography from previous developments.

Recent and historical School Developments at Queenswood School have been piecemeal. Massing within the school area is predominantly large buildings of domestic appearance intermixed with buildings that have been built with a specific purpose in mind, such as the teaching block, theatre, and pool hall. In the vicinity of the school there are various detached houses of a domestic scale.

No listed buildings are in the immediate vicinity of the development site, and those buildings currently on site and nearby are an eclectic mix of architectural styles. The whole site is enhanced by large areas of mature woodland giving a feel of a school set within woodland. In visual terms, the site is well screened from close and distant views, by a combination of mature planting and trees.



LEGEND



Footprint of proposed Sports Hall



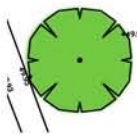
Existing building to be demolished



Application boundary



Line of rhododendron



Larger vegetation

fig. 1 - Location Plan NTS





-  Red line indicates application boundary
-  Blue line indicates Major Developed Site in Green Belt

fig. 2 - Plan showing Major Developed Site in Green Belt NTS

Site Selection

It is proposed that the temporary classrooms will sit adjacent to the existing Art Block, behind a row of trees (birch and scots pine) and a line of rhododendrons. It is felt that this site provides the best location for those departments wishing to use the classroom facilities. The Design and Technology, Physical Education, Art and Speech and Drama departments are all located within close range of the proposed site, making it a practical area to locate the facilities.

The location also allows the facilities to make use of existing paths and networks already established close by and used by staff and pupils.

The choice of location is such that the building sits outside the MDS boundary, but within the local Green Belt. A number of options within the developed area were considered but excluded, as they could not accommodate a building of its size.



fig. 3 - photograph of site from North East



fig. 4 - photograph of site from North



fig. 5 - photograph of site from South West



fig. 6 - example of external cladding

Materials

The location of the classrooms is such that its elevation will be obscured when viewed from the visitors car park by large trees, as such the impact of the building on its surroundings will be minimal. Principally, the building will be clad in plastic coated steel with a light grey finish, with plastic coated steel trims in dark grey and U-PVC windows and doors.

Scale

The modest scale of the single storey structure is such that it will not overpower the surrounding architecture. The neighbouring two storey Art block and Swimming Pool are both considerably larger and it is suggested that their impact will be in no way diminished by the proposed temporary structure.

Sustainability

The nature of modular building means that less energy is used in the construction process as the units are largely pre-fabricated. This also means that fewer vehicle movements are required in transporting the building to site.

Access Statement

It is anticipated that the proposed temporary accommodation will not affect existing use of the site. The site can be considered level and as such access to the proposed building will be on the level. The temporary nature of the buildings dictate that they will be raised slightly off the ground, however, an access ramp complying with the Building Regulations will allow full ramp access for wheelchair and ambulant users. Selection of the site has ensured that parking is available close to the facilities in question, ensuring it is easily accessible to wheelchair users. The location is such that a clear, safe route is ensured for construction machinery.

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