Northamptonshire, like all other areas of the country is having to deal with the largest numbers of Primary age pupils entering the education system since the 1970’s. There is a national growth in the birth rate that has now impacted on schools. As recently as last week a national newspaper ran a ‘two page spread’ on the crisis, as it referred to it (see link below). In other areas of the country 4 and 5 year olds are having to be bussed to schools with capacity. In the main, for obvious reasons, we have avoided this. In Northamptonshire the problem is compounded by being a growth county and through in-migration. We, like other areas are having to look at contingencies that may include using buildings other than schools. However, we are not there yet and are managing the situation. This has involved extensions to schools and the deployment of mobiles. The Northampton town centre area is that with the greatest pressure.

We are building new schools to accommodate new developments. These are funded through Section 106 funding and NCC funding. Where it is possible, and we have time, we are building extensions to schools. Some of the growth has been predicted, however some, for example that from in-migration is less predictable and there is a need to respond quickly. We are currently working with the largest number of ‘in year’ admissions that we have ever had. From 50 a month, several years ago, we now have more than 200 per week at some times.

In relation to Northampton, the town has seen a rise in demand for reception and Year 1-2 places over the past 3 years. See table below.
We are currently looking at **permanent** solutions to include extensions to the following local schools:

- Earl Spencer
- Castle
- Kings Heath
- Weston Favell
- Sunnyside
- Standens Barn
- Hunsbury Primary -reverting to 2 FE
- Briar Hill
- The Abbey
- Ecton Brook
- Upton
- Cogenhoe
- Hopping Hill remaining as 2FE
- Possibly Kingsthorpe

Other temporary solutions have been found at Queen Eleanor by extending for 2 years into existing accommodation. Likewise Abington Vale has two classes in temporary mobiles, and we are proposing Spring Lane has three classes housed in temporary mobile classrooms.

We are looking at the use of alternative buildings as either standalone schools or annexes to existing schools.

There are no long term plans to increase Spring Lane to a 2FE school as the site does not lend itself to having a further 7 classrooms and all the additional buildings that go with a 2FE school; such as additional small hall, toilets, group space etc.

The choice of location at Spring Lane has been somewhat predetermined by the school’s use and topography of various areas within the school site. The grass area chosen is flat and unencumbered and is close to the existing mobile on site. This grass area is what could be termed “dead space” and school neither use it for social or formal recreation. The proposed positioning of the mobile will eliminate any encroachment on to the formal team games playing field area and also ensure that none of the existing trees or shrubs will be affected.

It is expected that extensions at other schools will take the strain of the bulge in the medium term. Longer term the bulge is expected to fall back to smaller number. There are no plans to extend Spring Lane. When these bulge year groups work through the school, the mobiles can be removed from the site. Therefore, I apply for planning consent for 5 years.

Ian Shanks
NCC Property Asset Management
March 2012
Ref SS/01

Two links to recent newspaper articles about the problem


http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/9138541/Warning-over-acute-shortage-of-primary-school-places.html
Design:

Use
The building will be used for general teaching in conjunction with the existing accommodation within the school.

Size
The proposed development consists of a single storey single classroom mobile building of approx 72m². The height is approx 3.3m.

Layout
The layout of the site is as existing, and therefore has been somewhat predetermined.

Landscape
The mobile will be sited on a grass area adjacent to the school playing field and playground. The landscape of the site will remain the same other than the footprint of the mobile.

Appearance
The proposed building is of standard single storey mobile classroom construction. The elevations are perpendicular surmounted by a low pitch roof. The roof is finished in grey felt with a small overhang, discharging rainwater into a black PVC gutter and down pipes. The height of the roof is approximately 3.3m from ground level. The walls are refinished in a stippled weatherproof coating, all painted in dark Green (12 B 25) colour. All windows have white uPVC frames and are double glazed in clear float glass. A wooden slatted skirt is fitted between ground and floor level, the slats being horizontal.

Access:
The building design takes account of:-

**Approach**
Within the limits of the site the mobile has been positioned to create ease of access for all users.

**Parking**
Not applicable.

**Entrances**
Access to the site is as existing with no need for any alterations. Access to the mobile will be via steps and ramp to the main entrance.

**Horizontal and Vertical Circulation**
The horizontal circulation within the mobile has been carefully planned to accommodate all users. Vertical circulation is not applicable for this single storey building.

**Access to all Services**
Internally the mobile has been carefully laid-out to maximise use. All facilities are logistically placed in relation to each other.

**Emergency Egress**
The design of the mobile will ensure and assist evacuation should an emergency need occur. All travel routes have been carefully planned and emergency exit facilities provided. Evacuation planning will be recorded and regularly tested by the occupiers.

**Waste Management**
There will be minimal waste generated during the installation of the mobile. Each contractor will be responsible for removing their own waste to a licensed tip.

Ian Shanks  
Northamptonshire County Council  
Property Asset Management  
March 2012

Ref DA/01