Construction of a new two storey, eight classroom teaching block and new hard play area at Spring Lane Primary School, to enable the school intake to increase from 210 to 420 places.
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1.0 Introduction

Architecture Initiative, on behalf of Northampton Schools Limited Partnership, has been commissioned to develop a proposal for the expansion of Spring Lane Primary School in Northampton.

Full planning approval is sought for the construction of a new two storey, eight classroom teaching block and new hard play area at Spring Lane Primary School, to enable the school intake to increase from 210 to 420 places (1 to 2 form entry). The increase in pupil numbers is forecast to occur steadily over a seven year period to match demand.

It should be noted that the current school intake capacity is 210 pupils. This is based on 30 pupils per year, over 7 year groups. The current number of pupils on roll at the school differs from this school capacity figure.

Summary of Proposal

The application site area is 1350sqm. The proposal involves a two storey stand alone block located to the east of the existing school, with a gross internal floor area of 727sqm. The existing school building has a gross internal floor area of 1495sqm.

This Design & Access Statement details the proposal as well as how the final design solution was reached.

The document has been arranged into six sections; starting with an explanation of the requirement for additional primary places at Spring Lane Primary, details of how the brief was developed and a final design solution was reached. The specifics of the proposal are described in the Design section. The final part of this document addresses access.
2.0 Requirement for Primary Places

Decision to Expand: Overview

It should be noted that this application specifically concerns the built accommodation and associated works required to house the additional intake of pupils at the school.

The decision to enlarge the school is covered via a formal process undertaken by Northamptonshire County Council, which includes a period of consultation with a final Cabinet Member decision in early 2013.

The proposed expansion is related to the general rise in the population of primary aged pupils living in the area, which is the result of the higher birth rate and inward migration being experienced by the County as a whole and Northampton in particular.

Recent census data demonstrates a 19% increase in the County’s under-fives population. Northamptonshire County Council has a statutory obligation to provide sufficient school places for all pupils living in the area. Current projections forecast that additional capacity is required in the local area and therefore extra places are proposed at Spring Lane Primary School.

Alternative solutions to the need for additional places considered by Northamptonshire County Council included:

(i) Providing ‘Portakabin’ style accommodation to house the additional intake. - It was concluded that this would not provide a long-term conducive learning environment for children and would separate them from their peers.

(ii) Transporting children to alternative schools outside the town. - It was concluded that there would be a negative impact on the welfare and education of children for them to be spending considerable parts of their day on buses and this does not support the healthy schools agenda.

(iii) Reconfigure the starting ages for children to attend school. – It was concluded that this would not adequate to meet the levels of school place demand and does not ensure that every child in the county has the same opportunities as their peers.

(iv) Increase class sizes. – Legislation precludes this option.

Therefore NCC made the decision that the best solution is to construct additional long-term teaching accommodation on the school site to accommodate the enlarged pupil intake.
The most recent (November 2012) projections for the number of primary school places required across the county in September 2015 is 62,400. This is a 10.4% increase on the current primary roll of 56,500. The shortage of places is particularly acute in the town centre of Northampton, where the rising birth rate has also been complemented by high levels of inward migration and some new housing completions.

Spring Lane Primary (NN1 2JW) has a published admission number of 30; a one form entry primary school with a total of 210 pupils. Since September 2010, the school has admitted 60 pupils into Reception on the basis of temporary mobile classrooms providing the additional capacity. The school continues to remain oversubscribed and is unable to offer a place to all children who meet ‘the closest school’ criterion. Analysis of the Reception intake in September 2012 indicates the following numbers in order of admissions priority:

- Named child: 4
- Sibling link: 29
- Closest to: 13
- Others: 14
- Total: 60

There are a further 23 applications which did not gain a place at a higher preference; 15 of these were NN1 postcodes.

Northamptonshire County Council is currently carrying out the statutory process related to a proposal to permanently expand the school to two forms of entry, 420 pupils. Additional accommodation is required to achieve this and it is proposed to build a two storey block on the school site to provide 8 new classrooms. The three existing mobile classrooms would then be removed from site.

The school is well respected by its local community and is seen as a focus for young families with the Nursery and Children’s Centre located on-site as well as after-school/wrap-around provision. The school has recently become an Academy and the Academy Trust is supportive of the proposals.

If the school reverts to its single form of entry, there would be a number of negative implications:

- Not all sibling links would be guaranteed a place, so families would have the difficulty of travelling to two schools.
- Only a proportion of the children for whom Spring Lane is the closest school would be able to attend.
- The other four primary schools in the NN1 area (Barry, Vernon Terrace, Castle and Stimpson Avenue) are also full and oversubscribed, and are already being extended if the site is suitable. Children would therefore have to be allocated a school place further afield.
- At least 40% of the Reception children have addresses that are either a flat number or shared house. A shortage of school places can sometimes mean children living in the same road don’t always get into the same school; in the case of Spring Lane, children living in the same block of flats may be allocated different schools.

The school site area is 1.2 hectares in a very urban area. The proposed extension is 2-storey with the aim of minimising the impact on playground and external areas. The school has the benefit of a grassed playing-field and has recently completed projects such as a ‘Qube’ building on formerly unused space to enhance its facilities. The school makes use of the local church hall when it wishes to do whole school assemblies or school productions. It is anticipated that temporary arrangements can be made with local businesses regarding extra staff car-parking off site during construction.
Consultation

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Architecture Initiative, who have been appointed by Northampton Schools Limited Partnership to develop a proposal for Spring Lane Primary School on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council.

Northamptonshire Schools Limited Partnership (NSLP) is a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) set up to run the Northampton Schools PFI Scheme. The scheme, which was set up in 2005 following the Review of Education in Northampton includes the operation and maintenance of five secondary schools and thirty-six primary schools in Northampton over a 32 year period.

Spring Lane Primary is one of the primary schools covered under the PFI scheme.

Consultation has occurred with Northamptonshire County Council, local authority, PFI SPV (NSLP), the School and governors as well as NCC planning department and other relevant consultees to the planning process.

Refer to the Consultation section of the Planning Statement for a summary of the consultation that has taken place.
Spring Lane Primary School is currently a 1FE mixed primary school for children of 5-11yrs with a current intake of 237 pupils. It is located to the west of Northampton town centre in the Central West Ward, the site is located in a mainly residential area, with a cluster of light industrial buildings also in the vicinity, to the north of the school site. The surrounding residential buildings vary considerably in scale. To the east of the school are two twelve storey residential towers, and to the south 2 and 4 storey blocks.

The site is bounded by Scarlewwell Street to the south, Crispin Street to the east and Spring Lane to the north. The busy north/south A5095 (St. Andrew’s Road) runs a short distance away from the schools western boundary.

The site does not lie within any areas of particular note, as shown in the map identifying zones of land use surrounding the school site. However the borough’s opportunity site D23 occupies land on the other side of the A5095 road. For full details of zones of land use surrounding the school site and other relevant planning policies please refer to the accompanying Planning Statement.

The existing school is mainly visible from the adjacent public roads and properties. Care has been taken to ensure that the new development is sympathetic to view from these nearby residences.
The School Site

The school site is rectangular with an irregular portion cut out from the school land from its northern edge, occupied by a large red brick industrial building. The school building is located in the centre of the site, with hard play areas around it and a grass pitch at the west of the site, past the industrial building. Another section of land is cut out of the rectangular school site which is a building occupied by Spring Lane Out of School Club, which has strong ties to Spring Lane Primary School.

The main pedestrian and vehicular site access point is adjacent, off Spring Lane. There is an on-site car park for staff and disabled visitors in front of the school building, within the fenced ‘air-lock’. The refuse and recycling bins are also located in this area. The 1.1ha school site is fenced and it contains a number of trees (none of which have TPOs).

There has been a school on this site for over 130 years, however the original building has since been demolished. The existing school building has been extended a number of times in a variety of styles and materials at various differing levels across the sloping site. As can be seen from the photographs on the following pages there are a range of architectural styles, building heights and forms.

The materials of the existing building and school site are a mixture of dark brown, red and stock brick, areas of marine blue render and similarly coloured spandrel panels within the glazing as well as external doors. (The marine blue colour is somewhat a theme across the schools buildings.) There are portions of corrugated black metal cladding to the two-storey block, and (one assumes the oldest) part of the school building, dating from the 1970s, with walls of dark grey tiles with concrete fascias above. Most of the school is single storey with flat roofs, with one two-storey element.
3.2 Site Photographs

On Site

Key plan showing views
3.2 Site Photographs

Off Site
4.0 Developing the Brief

The overall brief for the project, set by Northamptonshire County Council, was to develop a proposal for housing the additional intake required at Spring Lane Primary School to suit the specific constraints of the site and educational requirements of the school. To maintain external play space and deliver an extemporary, cost-effective and sustainable construction solution, whilst minimising the impact on the running of the school during construction.

The specific brief for the expansion which forms this proposal, was then developed through site analysis and consultation and dialogue with NCC, NSLP, Spring Lane Primary School and other consultants listed in the Planning Statement.

Northamptonshire County Council gave specific request that the accommodation provided should adhere to the Department for Education’s Building Bulletins. The bulletins set out the types of spaces that school of a particular size should have and the areas of those spaces.

Northamptonshire County Council is also acutely aware of the potential traffic and car parking impacts that increasing school places can incur and in developing the brief Northamptonshire County Council has engaged with the highways authority and the school to insure where possible impacts are limited by additional facilities provided on the school site.

Setting the Brief

In order to keep the impact on the day-to-day running of the school during construction as small as possible it was decided form the outset that all additional accommodation required would be provided in a new stand-alone building over two storeys, to minimise its footprint and impact on the school site. Any works to the existing school building are also minimised. This is also the best way to ensure that the expansion of the school can occur in the most cost effective manner (the budget for expansion is finite).

With this starting point, analysis of the existing spaces within the school was undertaken in order to identify the additional accommodation required to enlarge the school from 1 to 2 forms of entry. This was completed in conjunction with the school in order to ensure that the best educational solution was reached.
4.1 Existing School Analysis

The main circulation route runs in a ‘T’ shape to the west of the hall that forms the centre of the school. The classrooms are currently orientated around both the hall and this ‘T’ shaped circulation route with two east west facing blocks and two north south facing blocks with views out over the soft play areas and pitches.

A main consideration in a 2FE school is that the two classrooms in each year group are kept as a pair, so with this in mind 14 pairs of classrooms are required in the enlarged 2FE school (as well as other support and shared accommodation).

Northamptonshire County Council use area and space standards as set out in the 2003 document *Building Bulletin 99: Briefing Framework for Primary School Projects* as a guide for primary school provisions in the County.

It was against these space standards that analysis of the existing building was undertaken in order to determine the additional spaces required.

The conclusion of this analysis was that eight additional classrooms and associated accommodation (such as WC’s and stores) would be required for the school to enlarge to a 2FE intake of 420 pupils.
4.2 Expansion Options

The new building could potentially be located in a number of locations. However creating a successful circulation link back to the new building will provide the best possible solution of the proposed location as the link needs to run off the existing central circulation routes.

The next step was to analyse the most desired locations on the site for locating the new stand-alone block. This would ideally be as near to the existing school building as possible, whilst minimising the impact on sports and play space. Through discussion with NCC and the school two possible locations were indicated for the new classroom development.

The following principles and practices were employed in the analysis of location options for the additional accommodation:

(i) The location that would have the least impact on the private amenity of surrounding neighbours.
(ii) The location best suited due to site constraints e.g. protection of green spaces for sports, construction access, protection of the environment, etc.
(iii) The location best suited to support the circulation of pupils within their year groups and key stages.

The diagram below illustrates the potential locations that were identified for siting the building. One of these options (shown in blue) were deemed less appropriate;

**Option B** is located too close to the existing two storey building and would have a detrimental affect on the natural daylighting to both buildings. **Option C** is situated within an uncomfortable proximity to the site boundary and is on an area of soft landscaping with large level changes that would be costly to level. There is also an impact on private amenity on two elevations.

**Option A** is the most favourable site for the new classroom block as it sits comfortably within the existing site and is most considerate to the current building arrangement. Any new two storey building in this location would sit comfortably adjacent to the two storey existing school building. **Option A** is located on a hard area but does not adversely affect the total area of sports pitches provided. The proposed building would have limited impact on the day to day operations of the existing school. It is suitably located for construction traffic to access the site and the impact to private amenity is limited to one elevation.
4.3 Brief Requirements

In order for Spring Lane Primary School to become a 2FE school, eight new classrooms and associated support spaces are required within the new teaching block. The diagrams below display the rooms necessary for this expansion, and how they have been arranged to generate the new building. An efficient footprint and use of space is achieved by stacking classrooms and support spaces over two floors.

**Ingredients**
- Classrooms
- Support Spaces (W.C’s, Stores etc)
- Group Area

**Combination**
This diagram shows the arrangement of the spaces required by the school over one floor of the new build block. The classrooms are in pairs with communal and support spaces between.

**Proposed Plan**
This drawing represents how the diagram has been translated into a material form. The plan form is compact so as to minimise its footprint which reduces its impact on the school site. The group space is open to circulation to enable maximum use of space in the building.
5.0 Design

The basis of the concept revolves around the rationalisation of spaces, as previously discussed in section 4.3.

From this point the building layout was developed through an iterative process of consultation, design and redesign. The opportunity for the school to gain brand new teaching spaces gave the opportunity for the proposal to be designed to meet the aspirations of a modern teaching environment: to maximise natural lighting and natural ventilation; to reduce solar gains and energy use; and to create inspirational teaching and learning environments.
5.1 Layout

The new teaching block is arranged as four pairs of classrooms over two floors with shared support spaces in the core of the building and vertical circulation on either side. The design consolidates the relationship of the classrooms with the shared amenities core into a rational layout that is efficient both in terms of general use and construction. The classrooms have windows on two external walls to maximise natural daylight. Internally each space meets the requirements of a modern teaching environment as set out in the DfE “Building Bulletin” guidance.

The ground floor classrooms all have external doors to allow direct access outdoors. The service core consists of boys and girls WCs, a disabled WC (also for use of staff), a curriculum and cleaner’s store, a small plant room and IT hub room. A portion of the circulation space doubles up to provide a group area/break out space. Two stairs serve the building (as is required): One internal and one external. A passenger lift is also provided for vertical circulation.

New Building Accommodation Schedule

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<th>Number</th>
<th>Area (m²)</th>
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<td>WCs</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Cleaner’s Store</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Store</td>
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<td>Group Room</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Voids (lift/stair)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5.1 Layout

External Works

Externally the proposal includes the removal of redundant classroom cabins, a new hard surfaced all weather court and new cycle rack storage.
5.2 Form & Scale

Form of the Proposal

The form of the proposed new teaching block is designed to respond to and was directly inspired by the existing school building.

The scale and rhythm of the existing elevations have been emulated in the proposed teaching block. However, contemporary details have been added so that the teaching block is read as a modern addition to the school site.

The overall result is one that sits lightly within the landscape while providing a valuable and sensitive addition to the existing built fabric.
5.2 Form & Scale

Scale within the Existing Context

The proposal is designed to sit comfortably in relation to its surroundings and the existing school. The school buildings are of a similar architectural language; monolithic rectilinear forms of 1-2 storeys in height and of a buff/brown colour brick, dark brown cladding and coloured spandrel panels and all with flat roofs.

The proposed two storey teaching block fits in well with the height of the existing school. It is situated ideally away from the school site boundary and within appropriate proximity to the existing school building to allow easy access to the new classrooms whilst not detrimenting daylight or views from the classrooms in the main building.

The overall affect of the new build block on the existing context is minimal. The proposal sits lightly within its surroundings and compliments the landscape through carefully considered detailing and contemporary design.
5.3 Materiality

The materiality of the new teaching block has been carefully considered to respond to the existing school building, creating a link between the buildings on site and helping to consolidate the existing materials and therefore defining the image of the school within its context.

The existing school building is a mixture of dark brown, red and stock brick and areas of marine blue render and similarly coloured spandrel panels. Most of the school is single storey with flat roofs, with one two-storey element. The proposed new building relates to and directly responds to this design and as such the materiality of the new building matches the existing buildings on the site, being of the same red brick. In this way the character of the new building will fit within its context.

Facing brickwork was chosen as it was felt it would best fit in with the context as well as being durable and secure.

The flat roof of the proposal will be finished in a single ply membrane or asphalt. With a thin profiled, powder coated aluminium coping.

The double glazed windows and external doors are aluminium framed, powdered coated grey to provide an attractive and durable finish.

Example of proposed facing brickwork (colour to match existing building)
5.4 Detail Design

The suspended ceiling is set back from the internal wall to let more daylight penetrate deeper into the classrooms.

The one brick return helps to control daylighting inside the classrooms whilst also reducing cleaning and maintenance.

Floor to ceiling windows allow for full height views out onto the surrounding landscape and natural light to reach deeper into the classroom. South-facing windows utilise solar control glazing. Mid-level slide open windows provide easy access for natural ventilation. The windows open within the recessed opening.

Windows at eye level allow for surveillance of the external play areas.

Windows are raised from ground level and together with the one brick return help to reduce cleaning and maintenance.

The internal skirting visually aligns with the external window finish and also reduces maintenance.

Two storey height to match existing school building.

Mid-level slide open windows provide easy access for natural ventilation. The windows open within the recessed opening.
5.5 Daylight & Ventilation

Natural Daylighting

The principles of natural lighting and ventilation are realised throughout the design of the classroom spaces.

The classrooms have full height windows with the suspended ceilings set back to allow natural light to penetrate into the rear of the spaces during the winter.

In summer months, solar control is used to prevent over heating within the classrooms. The proposal utilises solar control glass, which is both cost effective and easier to maintain than alternate forms of solar shading such as canopies or bries soleil. All window have internal blinds for user control of light levels.

Natural Ventilation

The classrooms are naturally cross ventilated via mid-level opening windows situated on each of the adjacent external walls.

The support spaces are also all naturally ventilated (with the obvious exception to the required extract to all WC’s).
The external spaces at Spring Lane Primary are a great asset to the school and local area; the grass pitches to the west of the site and hard play areas around the school building.

It is paramount that the construction of the new teaching accommodation not impact negativity on the play and sports provisions of the school. This has been addressed in the design layout of the new block to by minimising its footprint by building over tow storeys.

On the tight urban site, the loss of hard play area was unavoidable. This has been addressed by providing a new large hard court to the west of the new block. This ensures that play space requirements are met.

Sport England have a statutory obligation to protect sports pitches, therefore building on a pitch will be opposed by Sport England unless the net overall sports pitch usable area on-site be maintained and improved. The proposal does not affect the grass pitch area.
6.0 Access

Entering the Site
All access arrangements are as existing condition.

Pedestrian / bicycle access
The site can be accessed by pedestrians from the main access located to the north off Spring Lane.

Pick up/Drop off
As is the current arrangement, during the peak times when parents gather to drop off or pick up their children at the beginning or end of each academic day, the entrance gates will be open and monitored by members of staff. Pupils and parents will be able to congregate on the hard play area.

Teaching hours
During teaching hours, all access gates to the secure part of the site are secured. Visitors can still access the car park area. Any visitors must enter the site via the secure entrance/reception area, with access into the school through an electromagnetically locked door.

Non-teaching hours
Subject to out of hours uses or holiday use the main entrance gates will be locked closed. All visitors will have to wait off-site for the facilities manager to allow them access.

Parking
For this section the Northamptonshire County Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance (March 2003) was consulted with regards to parking standards.

Cycling provision
NCC Planning guidance asks for 5 cycle parking spaces to be provided for every class at a primary school. Therefore in the case of Spring Lane Primary School this adds up to 70 cycle parking spaces, 5 for each of the 14 classes. NCC planners advised that additional spaces can be added incrementally, as required by the school. At its current 1 form entry size (210 pupils) very few pupils currently cycle to school. It is hoped that as they expand to 2 form entry, pupils will be encouraged to cycle to school. Therefore it is proposed that 10 additional cycle spaces be provided, 14 in total, to meet future requirements.

Car parking
No additional spaces are proposed in the staff car park. It is hoped that staff will be encouraged to car share, use public transport, cycle or walk to work.

Disabled Spaces / Mobility Standard Spaces
There are disabled/mobility standards parking spaces provided on site to meet the standards set out in NCC’s Parking: Supplementary Planning Guidance (March 2003). There are currently three disabled spaces to the entrance of the school.
Delivery access / parking
All delivery vehicles to the school or school kitchen enter the school site off Spring Lane. There is a ‘hammer head’ end to the car park for vehicles to turn around in order to exit in forward gear.

Maintenance

Refuse collection
The bin store is located adjacent to the Main site entrance (including for recycling bins). Refuse collection will occur via the Spring Lane site entrance. There is no change in location of refuse collection: The refuse vehicle reverses onto the school site and leave the site in forward gear.

Service/maintenance access
The site is to be accessed via the Spring Lane entrance, managed by the facilities manager.

Emergency Access
To occur via the Spring Lane site entrance, with vehicular access gates in to the secure part of the school site.

Inclusive Access
The new building has been designed to provide an inclusive environment, in accordance with current legislation that provides for the need of all users.

Guidance referred to:
- The Building Regulations of England & Wales (most specifically Part M)
- Building Bulletin 91: Access for Disabled People to School Buildings (published by DCFS)
- Building Bulletin 94: Inclusive School Design (published by DCFS)

The building is designed to be fully accessible to all members of society, the design of the building is inclusive for children who may be dependent upon wheelchairs or have varying degrees of visual or aural impairment. All visitors access the building via the same entrance; no segregation occurs. The new building is fully accessible a disabled WC provided.

Please refer to the Transport Statement, School Travel Plan and access drawing for further details.