Lings Primary School

Design + Access Statement

March 2013

Construction of a two storey, eight classroom teaching block with studio, enlarged car park and new covered play area at Lings Primary School, to enable the school intake to increase from 1 to 2 forms of entry.
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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 Lings Primary School in Northampton.

Full planning approval is sought for the construction of a two single storey, eight classroom teaching block, enlarged car park and new covered play area at Lings Primary School, to enable the school intake to increase from 1 form entry to two 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 2556 sqm. The proposal involves a two storey stand alone block located to the north of the existing school building, with a gross internal floor area of 909sqm. There is also a reconfigured car park and new covered play area proposed. The existing school building has a gross internal floor area of 1340sqm.

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 Lings Primary, details of how the brief was developed and an 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 followed by a final Cabinet Member decision.

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 Lings Primary School. Refer to statement on the following page for further details.

Alternative solutions 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.
Decision to Expand: Analysis by Northamptonshire County Council

Lings Primary School became an Academy on 1st November 2012 as part of a group of schools forming the Northampton Primary Academy Trust. Northamptonshire County Council retains the statutory duty for the provision of school places, and the proposal to expand Lings Primary is therefore a joint proposal between Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), the Education Funding Agency and the Academy Trust. NCC organised the initial statutory consultation process after the Cabinet Member Decision to proceed on 14 November 2012, but is not required to publish a Public Notice for Academy proposals. Northamptonshire County Council did not receive any feedback during the four week consultation period.

An increase in permanent capacity is required to ensure Northampton County Council can meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places in future years. The rise in the birth rate, both nationally and in Northamptonshire, has been well documented. The high levels of in-migration are an additional factor for pupil projections in Northamptonshire. Recent analysis of the “In Year” applications indicates a seven-fold increase between 2007/8 and 2011/12. The Admissions Team is now processing over 580 “In Year” applications per month. 60% of these involve a change of address (moving into or within the county) nearly a third of which are in Northampton town. This has led to an unprecedented rise in the number of applications for school places received by Northampton County Council, with demand outstripping supply. Temporary enlargements have ensured that all children who applied for a Reception place in September 2012 received one.

The proposal for additional capacity at Lings has come forward after taking account of the following:

- The school is currently one form of entry (total of 210 pupils) and enlargement would allow it to become more sustainable financially and educationally.
- The school site is of a sufficient size to meet Department for Education guidelines for two form entry primary schools.
- There is a Government focus on choice and diversity for parents by increasing the supply of school places.
- Arrangements to enlarge other schools in the Eastern District of Northampton have already been implemented (Ecton Brook, St Andrews, Standens Barn), but more places are still required.
- The partnership arrangements in the Academy Trust mean that there is a wide network of leadership and curriculum support for the school.
- The OfSTED judgement of Lings Primary in March 2012 was that it is Good.
- The school has a current pupil roll of 207 with a capacity of 210 in total; the three surplus places are in Year 6. A third of places in Reception are filled with sibling links. There are currently 10 pupils on the waiting list for Reception places.

The proposed extension to the school is being planned via a contract variation to the Northampton PFI group schools contract, and the design and procurement is being managed by the PFI provider. It is proposed that the additional accommodation is built in a stand-alone block of 8 classrooms to minimise disruption to the school during construction. This will provide the 14 classrooms required for a two form entry primary school and some additional multi-purpose teaching space to support curriculum delivery. Parents and local residents had the opportunity to view the plans at a pre-planning consultation event on 17 January 2013.

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1 “In Year” applications include all pupils that move from one school to another within the county, or request a school place after moving into the county for the first time, outside of the normal time of school allocations.
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 Lings 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.

Lings 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.
3.0 Context

Lings Primary School is currently a 1FE mixed primary school for children of 5-11yrs with a current intake of 210 pupils. It is located in the north east of Northampton in the Lumbertubs Ward. The site is located in a mainly residential area.

Vehicular access to the site is via the entrance from Hayeswood Road to the north of the site. To the south there is a pedestrian entrance accessed via a footpath running along the south east boundary of the site. To the southern boundary there is also a wooded area. To the east and west of the site there are rear gardens of neighbouring houses that face onto the school.

The site does not lie within any areas of particular note. For full details of the relevant planning policy please refer to the accompanying Planning Statement.

The existing school is mainly visible from Hayeswood Road to the North of the site and from the rear gardens of neighbouring houses.

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.
3.1 The School Site

The school building is located at the centre of the 1.57ha site with hard play areas located to the east and west of the building and with soft play space occupying the southern and northern ends of the school grounds.

From the main entrance at the front of the school, access through the ‘air-lock’ is either into the building or via access gates in the fence to enter the site around each side of the building. The site is fenced and it contains a number of trees, none of which have TPO’s.

The school building is all single storey apart from the school hall which is the equivalent of two storeys high. The school is constructed from red/brown brick with blue and white infill panels.
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 Lings 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, Lings 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 minimal as possible it was decided from the outset that all additional accommodation required be provided in a new stand-alone building and any works to the existing school building are 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). Furthermore, as the school is run through PFI a stand alone building reduces the risk of lenders not approving the scheme.

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.
### Existing School Analysis

The classrooms are currently arranged around a central hall, with each classroom having a view of a different aspect of the site.

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 7 pairs of classrooms are required in the enlarged 2FE school (as well as other support and shared accommodation).

As previously noted 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 8 additional classrooms, a new small hall 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 sited 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 four possible locations were indicated for the new classroom development.

The following principles and practises 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.
(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. Three of these options (shown in blue) were deemed less appropriate;

Option B is situated on an area of hard play space. This location was discounted because the building would take up valuable hard play space. In this location the building would directly face neighbouring properties and effect their amenity and also block daylight into the existing school building.

Option C was discounted for the same reasons as option B.

Option D - whilst this option has less effect on the amenity of neighbours due to the view of it from neighbouring gardens being shielded by trees, there is a large grass mound in this location and building in this part of the site while the school is operational would cause a large amount of disruption.

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. Option A sits close to the existing car park and does not effect the school’s existing play space. The option also has less of an impact on neighbours amenity as it is positioned away from the rear gardens of neighbouring properties and the view of the building from Hayeswood road is partially obscured by trees. As this location is at the front of the site it can be constructed with little impact on the running of the school.
4.3 Brief Requirements

In order for Lings Primary School to become a 2FE school, eight new classrooms and associated support spaces as well as a new small hall 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.

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 on the south elevation and the amenities are on the north elevation. Small hall is attached at end of teaching block.

Proposed Plan

This drawing represents how the diagram has been translated into a material form. The plan form is linear as this form best fits on the proposed location on the 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.
### Layout

The new teaching block is arranged over two stories, providing 8 new classrooms, one new small hall and amenities. The layout is based on a linear configuration with all classrooms along the south elevation of the building to gain maximum day light and amenities block along the north elevation. Access to the first floor is provided by two staircases (1 internal and 1 external) and a lift. 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. On the first floor their is an access bridge to the grassy playspace to the north of the building. 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.

![Ground floor plan of proposed new teaching block](image1)

![First floor plan of proposed new teaching block](image2)

### New Building Accommodation Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rooms</th>
<th>Area per room (m²)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Area (m²)</th>
</tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Support Spaces</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disabled WCs</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff WCs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaner’s Store</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total GIA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>737</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1 Layout

External Works

The proposal includes a number of external works. A new extended staff car park will be constructed to cope with additional teachers to be employed at the school. A new ‘air lock’ fence will be built around the new teaching block, a new retaining wall will be built and the existing kitchen ‘pod’ and bin store will be relocated. To the reception classrooms in the existing building a new covered play space will be constructed.

The proposal will necessitate the construction of a large retaining structure and associated earth movement. Where possible spoil will be re-distributed on the application site. All other earth will be taken off site. This will be determined once a building contractor is involved in the project.
5.2 **Form & Scale**

**Form of the Proposal**

The linear form of the building was generated as a consequence of the levels of the site and the building's position in relation to the existing trees. To the north of the building, the ground rises by almost three metres and so the linear form maximises the southernly aspect of the building giving classrooms maximum daylight. The close proximity of the existing trees also dictated the form of the building. The building rises over two stories in order to fit the required 8 classroom on a tight site.

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, partially hidden by the level change, 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.

Whilst the proposal is two stories high it cuts into the existing landscape and viewed from Hayeswood road the scale of the building will appear to be reduced as much of the ground storey will be obscured behind a retaining wall and the existing grass mound. The hall of the existing school building is two stories high and the scale and height of the proposal relates to this. The new small hall provided in the proposed building is only single in height with an extended teaching space provided on its roof for curriculum use.

View 1: Much of the bulk of the building from the north east of the site is obscured by the landscaping / mound.

View 2: View of proposed and existing school building from main entrance gate.
5.2 Form & Scale

Scale within the Existing Context

The drawings below show views of how the existing reception years canopy will be extended and a view from the neighbour’s garden illustrating how the front elevation of the proposed building will look.

View 1: Proposed canopy to reception classrooms in existing building.

View 2: View of proposed building from neighbouring properties to the west.
The materiality of the new teaching block has been carefully considered to respond to the existing school building, creating a link between the two buildings and helping to consolidate the existing materials and therefore defining the image of the school within its context.

The existing school building is brickwork. The existing roof is mainly flat.

The proposed new building relates to and directly responds to this design and as such is to be constructed from a red brick to match the existing school building.

Facing brickwork was chosen as it was felt these would best fit in with the context as well as being durable and secure. The brick colour will be chosen to compliment the existing school brickwork while becoming a feature elevation and complementary to the surrounding landscape. The blue spandrel panels of the existing building are replicated in the new building, furthering the visual link between the new and existing buildings.
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.

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

Two storey height to match existing school building.

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.

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

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

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.
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 windows have internal blinds for user control of light levels.

Natural Ventilation

The classrooms are naturally ventilated via mid-level opening windows situated on each of the south external walls. The teaching spaces are shallow enough to enable single sided ventilation. The support spaces are also naturally ventilated (with the exception of the WC’s which have mechanical extract).
5.6 Play Space

The external spaces at Lings Primary are a great asset to the school and although a small site, the school has a wide variety of play spaces. The grass area at the south of the site is used as a playing field and there are two areas of hard standing that have all weather courts on them to the east and west of the existing school. It is proposed that the existing reception covered play space is extended.

It is paramount that the construction of the new teaching accommodation not impact negatively on the play and sports provisions of the school. This has been addressed in the design layout of the new block to minimise its footprint.

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 new building is positioned on the existing car park and as such does not affect the existing sports pitch and play space provision of the school.

The new car park is built on an area of grass that is not large enough to be used as a playing field or sports pitch so the car park will also not affect sports pitch provision of the school.
6.0 Access

Proposed site access is detailed below. Please refer to the Transport Statement, School Travel Plan and access drawing for further details.

Entering the Site

Access to the site remains the same as existing.

Pedestrian / bicycle access
The site can be accessed by pedestrians from the main vehicular access off Hayeswood Road, located to the north of the site or existing pedestrian access routes on the east, west and southern boundaries of the site. The school travel plan indicates a clear intention, working with parents, to introduce active measures to reduce the reliance on vehicle use.

Pick up/Drop off
Pick-up and drop off arrangements will remain as existing.

Teaching hours
During teaching hours, all access gates to the secure part of the site are locked. Visitors can still access the car park, however 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 usually be securely 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. Northamptonshire County Council, via public consultation, has become fully aware of the concerns from local residents regarding parking. Northamptonshire County Council has taken measures to reduce the impact of parking related problems associated with the school, as outlined in the planning statement.

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 Lings 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 and when they are 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. It is proposed that 10 spaces be added to meet current requirements.

Car parking
Three additional spaces are proposed in the staff car park increasing provision to 25 spaces, to allow for the increase in staff came from the client brief from NCC. 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 currently three disabled/mobility standards parking spaces provided on site, meeting the standards set out in NCC’s Parking: Supplementary Planning Guidance (March 2003).

Delivery access / parking
All delivery vehicles to the school or school kitchen enter the school site off Hayeswood Road and enter the school through a dedicated delivery gate.

Maintenance
Refuse collection
The bin store contains separate refuse and recycling bins. Refuse collection will occur via the Hayeswood Road site entrance. Currently the refuse vehicle enters the school site then reverses down the staff car park to the bin store and then exits the site in forward gear. The bin store has been relocated adjacent to the site entrance for easier collection.

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

Emergency Access
To occur via the Hayeswood Road site entrance, with vehicular access gates provided into the secure part of the school site, beyond the car park.

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 lift and WC’s are provided.
Lings Primary School

Proposed Access Plan