TRINITY FIELDS SCHOOL & RESOURCE CENTRE, YSTRAD MYNACH

PROPOSED EXPANSION

Cymunedau Dysgu Cynaliadwy
Sustainable Communities for Learning

Design & Access Statement

January 2023

Contents

Appendices

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the proposed strategy for the expansion of Trinity Fields School & Resource Centre, Caerphilly Road, Ystrad Mynach.

This scheme forms part of the wider Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Programme, where Caerphilly County Borough Council has committed to an ambitious school investment programme.

The Sustainable Communities for Learning programme is a major long-term Capital investment programme jointly funded by the Welsh Government and the Local Authority.

The aims of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme are to provide:

- Raised standards and improve the quality of learning environment to create a fit-for-purpose 21st Century school
- Learning environments for children and young people in Wales that will enable the implementation of strategies for school improvement and better educational outcomes.
- Reduce inequalities in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged areas, groups and individuals
- A sustainable education system through better use of resources to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the education estate which will enhance local public service provision
- A 21st Century Schools Standard for all schools in Wales which reduces recurrent cost, energy consumption and carbon emissions.

The first phase of the programme, Band A, ran from 2014 to March 2019. This was around a £56.5 million investment for educational and community use which included:

- Islwyn High School
- Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Rhymni Y Gwyndy Campus
- Idris Davies School 3-18
- Trinity Fields Schools improvements

The second phase of the funding - Band B started in April 2019 and runs until 2026. Band B of the programme focuses on reducing the number of poor condition schools and toensure that we have the right size schools in the right location, providing enough places to deliver Welsh and English medium education. A key investment criteria is to promote the effective and efficient use of our school facilities for wider community use. Phase 1 of Band B includes this investment together with the relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon to a new building on the former Cwmcarn High School site.

The proposals were prioritised based on a number of factors, including building condition, projected pupil numbers, local and national drivers. However, delivery of the curriculum remains at the core and it has been identified that the current school could not meet the requirements of the curriculum and the needs of Special Education Needs (SEN) pupils due to lack of classrooms, specialist intervention areas and outdoor play space.

The proposal for consideration seeks to erect a two storey extension, single storey link to form a new main entrance to the school and outdoor play spaces with an anticipated completion date of September 2024. The extension to the south of Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre is to provide additional classrooms to accommodate up to an additional 80 pupils with specialist intervention areas, a new soft play room, outdoor play spaces together with a relocated Memorial Garden and School Allotment area. This extension is to ensure that the school can cater for the growing demand for places and the changing and more complex needs of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) pupils across the county borough, both now and in the future. This will ensure compliance with the new Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act.

Use of the existing hydrotherapy pool, Cafe, and the new additional facilities will be available for the community to utilise at suitable times and in keeping with the school timetable.

2.0 Policy

2.1 The Caerphilly County Borough Council Local Development Plan up to 2021
identifies a number of policies that support the proposed development. In addition, the LDP refers to Technical Advice Notes that have been referenced for this report.

2.2 Strategy Policies

The proposed site is within the existing school boundary.

The site is located within the Northern Connection Corridor (NCC**). Policy SP2: Development Strategy – Development in the Northern Connection Corridor** requires development proposals to promote sustainable development. Specifically proposals in this area should: focus significant development on both brownfield and greenfield sites that have regard for the social and economic functions of the area; reduce car borne trips by promoting more sustainable modes of travel; make the most efficient use of existing infrastructure; and protect the natural heritage from inappropriate forms of development.

Trinity Fields is the Authority's only special school and improved medical intervention is leading to an increase in survival rates and improved life expectancy of pupils with the greatest need.The application is for an extension to the existing school to provide additional facilities to cater for the growing demand for places, and accommodate up to 80 additional pupils. The proposal is likely to generate additional vehicles visiting site, as the school catchment is the whole of the county borough. However, in terms of sustainable transport, if the proposed development were not to take place the additional pupils that the development would cater for would be required to go to schools outside of the authority at a higher cost and resulting in significantly longer journeys . As such, the proposal accords with Welsh Government's sustainable transport aim of reducing the length of car borne journeys. It should also be noted that there are a very small number of pupils attending Trinity Fields School who travel from outside the county borough, but this does not outweigh the benefit of the proposed development in sustainable transport terms.
Furthermore, whilst the majority of pupils would travel by car or bus to the school, for staff, the site is in a sustainable location close to bus stops and within easy reach of Ystrad Mynach Station. The proposal also accords with the aim of increasing the use of more sustainable transport modes.

SP4: Settlement Strategy defines the settlement hierarchy for towns and villages across the county borough and identifies those areas where development would be supported and enhanced based on the specified role and function of a particular area. The Strategy seeks to concentrate new development to respond appropriately to the economic, social and environmental needs of individual settlements and thus settlement boundaries are identified accordingly to indicate the potential areas where development is likely to be permitted. Ystrad Mynach is designated as a Principal service, employment, retail and population centre.

The proposal to intensify the use at this location would accord with this policy.

SP5: Settlement Boundaries promotes resource efficient settlements, indicating where growth will be permitted through the delineation of settlement boundaries. Settlement boundaries define the area within which development would, in principle, be allowed, taking account of all relevant planning policy and material planning considerations.

The site is within the settlement boundary and therefore the principle of development is deemed to be acceptable, subject to all other material considerations being met.

SP6: Place Making requires development proposals to contribute to the creation of sustainable places by having full regard to the context of the local, natural, historic and built environment and its special features. The visual appearance of the proposed development, its scale and its relationship to its surroundings and context are material planning considerations.

SP10: Conservation of Natural Heritage recognises the natural heritage as a positive asset that enriches people's quality of life. In this context Policy SP10 indicates that the Council will protect, conserve, enhance and manage this asset in the consideration of all development proposals. The application site is within close proximity of a SINC, NH3.83 Coedcae Mawr, Ystrad Mynach.

A preliminary ecological assessment and bat activity surveyshave been carried out for the site. The proposed development has been designed to minimise the impact on the adjacent SINC and to enhance the biodiversity and habitat potential on the site by providing species rich planting, wildlife areas and bat and bird boxes.

SP18: Protection of Strategic Leisure Network states that the Council will protect important networks of public open space, natural green space and recreational facilities from inappropriate development to avoid their loss to more profitable developments such as housing.

The proposal is for the expansion of an educational facility for children with learning difficulties that can cater for the changing and more complex needs of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) pupils across the county borough, both now and in the future and ensure compliance with the new Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act. The development is proposed within the existing boundary of the school.

2.3 Countrywide Policies:

Policy CW1 Sustainable Transport Accessibility and Social Inclusion requires development proposals that are likely to generate a significant number of trips to be designed to ensure that car borne trips are kept to a minimum. It is therefore important to ensure that provision is made within the development to actively encourage walking and cycling, and that appropriate infrastructure is included in the layout to facilitate short trips on foot.

In this instance the proposed extension is likely to generate additional trips for pupils and, as detailed in 2.2 above the proposed extension would allow for an anticipated 80 more pupils and without the extra provision, these pupils may need to travel outside of the county borough. There are good existing pedestrian routes to the school, and a cycle storage area is provided as part of the proposals so the proposed development is deemed to satisfy the requirements for sustainable transport.

Policy CW2 Amenity indicates that development proposals must ensure that the proposal would not result in over-development of the site and/or its surroundings. Furthermore, the policy indicates that the proposed use would need to be compatible with the surrounding land uses and not constrain the development of neighbouring sites for their allocated use.

The provision of the school extension would be compatible with adjoining uses. The proposed development indicates a two storey building connected to the existing school via a single storey link, with outdoor areas for play, gardens and the school allotment, it is not considered that the indicative layout results in overdevelopment of the site or its surroundings.

Policy CW3 Design Considerations – **Highways** states that development proposals must meet a number of highways requirements including car parking and access. The submitted details indicate reconfiguration of the existing parking and drop of areasin compliance with LDP5 Parking Standards.

Criterion B of **Policy CW4 Natural Heritage Protection** states that development located within, or in close proximity to a site designated as a SINC should only be permitted where proposals conserve and enhance the importance of the designation or where the need for development outweighs the ecological importance of the site and harm is minimized. In that respect the site is already designated asa school site.

The proposal includes appropriate landscaping proposals and boundary treatments, therefore the development is not considered to have any adverse impacts that cannot be adequately mitigated for.

2.4 Other Matters

TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk

A school is considered highly vulnerable development within TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk. The application site falls within Zone A. Natural Resources Wales advice is that there is little or no risk of fluvial flooding. The existing entrance to the school off Caerphilly Road is within flood zone C1.

Natural Resources Wales have been consulted as part of this consultation and a Flood Consequences Assessment is being prepared in support of the proposal.

2.5 Ystrad Mynach Masterplan

The Ystrad Mynach Masterplan proposes an exemplary sport, leisure and education cluster around the Centre for Sporting Excellence, including the principle of allowing for the expansion of Trinity Fields School.

The Ystrad Mynach Masterplan states that the whole site should be subject of a masterplan that would consider the best uses for all the land.

Analysis

The policies and Technical Advice Notes listed above support the proposed development on the existing school site.

3.0 Consultation

A formal public consultation on the Educational proposals, following the Welsh Government guidelines as set out in the School Organisation Code 2018, commenced on 14th September 2020 and ran until 26th October 2020. A link to the School Organisation Code 2018 can be found here: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/school-organisation-code-second-edition.pdf

3.1 The following groups were consulted as part of this process:

- Parents, Guardians and carers of all pupils of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Headteacher, staff and governors of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Pupils/Pupil Councils of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Directors of Education of all bordering Local Authorities – Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Newport, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen
- Catholic Diocesan Board of Education
- Church in Wales Diocesan Board
- Local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
- Governing Bodies of other schools which the proposer considers are likely to be affected by the proposal
- Local CCBC Members
- All Assembly Members and Members of Parliament representing the area served by the schools directly affected by the proposal
- Welsh Ministers
- ESTYN
- Teaching Associations
- Support Staff Associations
- South East Wales Consortium (EAS)
- South East Wales Transport Alliance (SEWTA)
- Gwent and South Wales Police and Crime Commissioners
- Local Town and Community Councils
- Menter Iaith
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
- Parent Network
- Welsh Education Forum

3.2 In extending the existing school a number of advantages were anticipated:

- Provides a facility to accommodate an additional capacity of 80 pupils
- Retaining pupils within the authority and keeping family units together
- Provision of an energy efficient facility
- Modern state of the art classrooms
- New flexible hall and double height soft play facilities to increase provision on site
- New additional outdoor activity facilities
- Modern flagship facility for Special Needs Pupils in Caerphilly
- Space maximisation through reconfiguration of existing building
- A stimulating environment to deliver high quality learner outcomes Community Use

3.3 Consultation Responses

The consultation process represented an opportunity for people to learn about the proposal, ask questions and make comments.

The **Consultation Document** outlined the Council's proposal to expand the existing Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre, via a new building extension and outdoor play space, with the original proposed location and layout to expand the school onto the adjacent Trinity 1 pitch.

All responses received from the consultation period have been summarised in a **Consultation Report**.

However, subsequently, linked to Welsh Water resolving the sewage issues at Sue Noake Leisure Centre as part of the mitigation measures for utilising the Trinity 1 pitch location, a compromise solution that enabled the additional places to be provided in the most time efficient manner was sought with Officers revisiting the original expansion proposal, with a view to developing some innovative alternatives that did not involve the loss of the sports pitch.

The alternative configuration now proposed in this document is a two storey extension that makes use of part of the existing car park and outdoor space within the curtilage of the school, being able to provide the additional pupil places without losing the sports pitch. This revised proposal has received unanimous support from the School, its Governing Body, Education Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. Welsh Government have also verified that no further consultation for this proposal would be required as prescribed under the School Organisation Code 2018.

3.4 Recommendations

It is the recommendation of this report that the proposal is progressed as outlined:

Expand the existing Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre, via a new building extension and outdoor play space with an anticipated completion date of September 2024

3.5 Planning Pre-application Consultation

As a result of the recommendation above, the project information has been brought up to Planning Stage and is presented here as part of the Pre-Planning Consultation process. The requirement to undertake pre-consultation applies to all planning applications for 'major' development (full or outline as defined in article 2 of the Town and County Planning Development Management Procedure (Wales) Order 2012). This consultation process represents an opportunity for people to learn about the proposal and make comments that will be recorded and summarised in a consultation report.

4.0 EXISTING SITE CONTEXT

4.1 The school site is located to the South of Ystrad Mynach town centre, on Caerphilly Road and just off the roundabout at its junction with the A472. The proposed extension to the South of the existing school building will be within the existing school site.

4.2 To the North of the existing school site lies Holy Trinity Church, it's grounds and Church Hall. Residential housing is located to the West of the site with Penallta RFC and Caerphilly County Borough Council's Ty Graddfa office immediately to the East. Sports playing pitches known as Trinity Pitch 1 and Trinity Pitch 2 lie to the South and South West of the site running into an area of parkland.

4.3 To the wider area Ystrad Mynach Collage campus lies to the South along with the Centre for Sporting Excellence and Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr hospital. Residential housing lies to the West and North. The River Rhymney lies approximately 130m to the East at its closest point.

4.3 The existing school site and proposed site are in the ownership of Caerphilly County Borough Council. The overall site area is 0.53 hectares. *(refer to drawing 4813/P001 for the site boundary).*

4.4 Site conditions are known to be favourable – a Site Investigation Report has been included as part of the Planning Application. The site of the development isgenerally level.

4.5 The site is characterised by green open space bordered by mature trees to the South, with residential housing to the West. To the North the site boundary to Holy Trinity Church and its grounds is lined with trees. To the East of the site lies Caerphilly CBC Ty Graddfa Office and Penallta Rugby Club

Fig 1 Google Earth Image NTS

4.6 Site Analysis

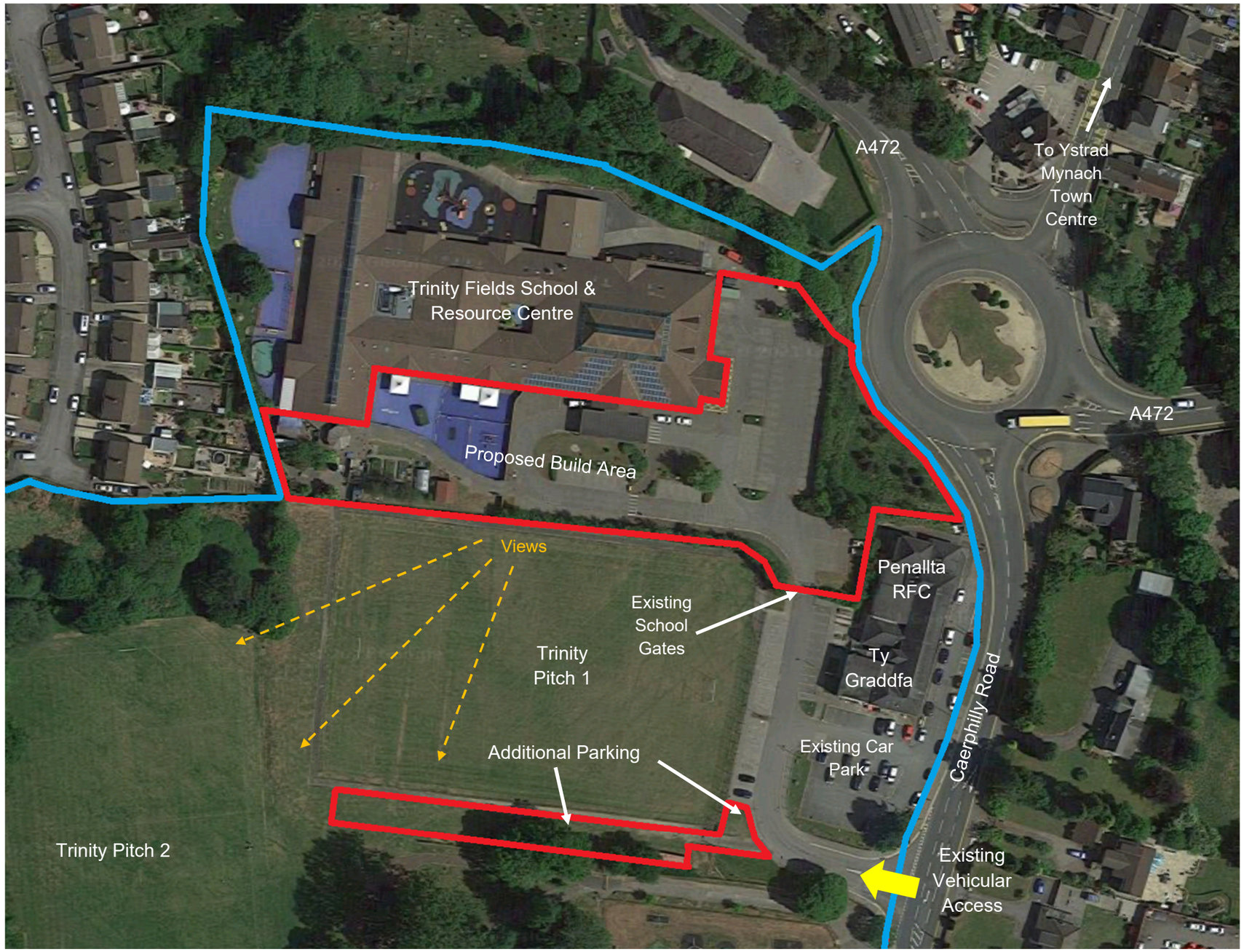


Fig 2 Satellite view of the site and surrounding land courtesy of Google Maps. Application area shown outlined in red, site ownership outlined in blue

4.7 **Site Opportunities and Constraints**

Figure 2 The above diagram illustrates the context of the Trinity Fields site and the immediate surrounding areas.

Opportunities

- The site is immediately adjacent to the existing school and allows the building to be extended at the same floor level for full accessibility
- The site is generally level
- Extending the school will provide appropriate separation between primary and secondary phases whilst maintaining continuity of health and education provision from a single location
- The site is the appropriate size and has open space to develop with few restrictions (minimal underground services, no buildings to demolish)
- The existing vehicular access will be redirected to a new one way drop off route
- Good links to the main A472
- Excellent views over the adjacent playing fields and park land
- Orientation will make use of North light to the circulation areas
- Improved cycle route to the site and cycle storage encourages sustainable transport
- Local playing fields nearby may be utilised by the school

Constraints

- Development on and adjoining a live school site
- Shared drop-off route for mini-buses, parents and taxis will require careful management and possibly staggered timings
- Proximity of the adjacent SINC NH3.83 Coedcae Mawr, will require minimal external lighting to the Western boundary to avoid light spillage into the trees and bat foraging areas

4.8 Existing Site Photos:

Existing Vehicular & Pedestrian Entrance

Existing Entrance & Covered Drop-off

South Western corner of existing building

Vehicular access from Caerphilly Road

View from Western boundary of Pitch 1

Southern boundary with Trinity Pitch 1

View towards School entrance

Parking area to existing Southern school boundary

Existing Southern school playground

Fig 3 Proposed Site Layout NTS

5.0 CHARACTER

5.1 Site Layout *(Refer to drawing 5239 P002)*

5.2 The development area is around 0.76 hectares and the building will be located to the South of the existing building. The main teaching block will run parallel with the existing school with a link to the East forming the new main. A new covered drop-off area will be created. The drop off route will be one-way for safety Six accessible parking bays will be located near the main entrance to the school and six vehicle charging bays will be located in the school car park.

5.3 Delivery vehicles will also utilise the one way system and deliveries will therefore be scheduled to avoid busy drop off and pick up times.

5.4 Outdoor play areas will be provided around the new building. Individual outdoor teaching spaces will be created directly off each classroom with access to a wider shared play space. A new Sensory Memorial Garden will be created, accessed from the main entrance area alongside a new School Allotment.

Further individual outdoor teaching spaces will be provided to the South of the new building, again with access to a wider shared play space.. A new forest school will be located at the Western corner of the site. Sustainable drainage features including a wildlife pond will provide a teaching resource for the school along with ecological benefits. This is shown in more detail on the Indicative Landscape proposal drawing included in Appendix A

5.5 Cyclists will utilise the new path to the school and a cycle shelter will provide 10 cycle parking spaces, located just to the North of the new main entrance..

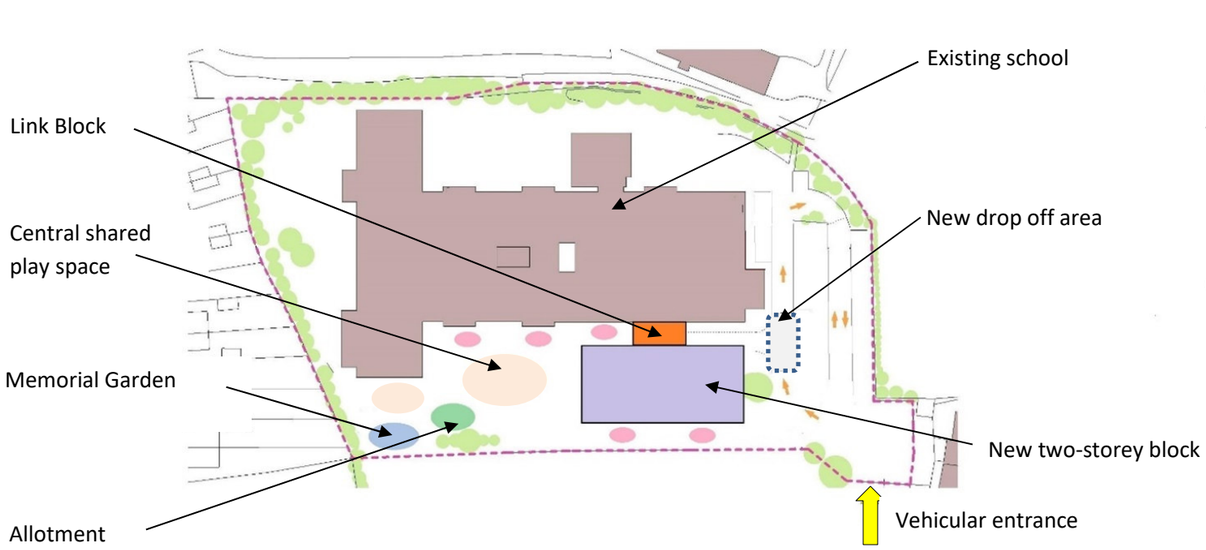
5.7 Layout & Scale

This section should be read in conjunction with the drawings and documents submitted as part of the application.

During the design process, a range of considerations were made before arriving at the submitted scheme. *Figure 4* below shows how the design proposals developed in consultation with the School, the local authority's Education and Social Services departments, the local health board and in response to the Ecological Impact Assessment.

Main considerations:

- To enable the school to remain operational during the construction process
- To provide a new covered drop-off space to serve both the existing and new part of the school
- To create a new one way drop-off route
- To locate a new Memorial Garden so it may be accessed without entering the wider school building
- To locate the new Primary accommodation away from the main entrance and community facilities
- To provide new play spaces directly accessible from the Classrooms
- To locate the building along the site contour lines , parallel with the existing building



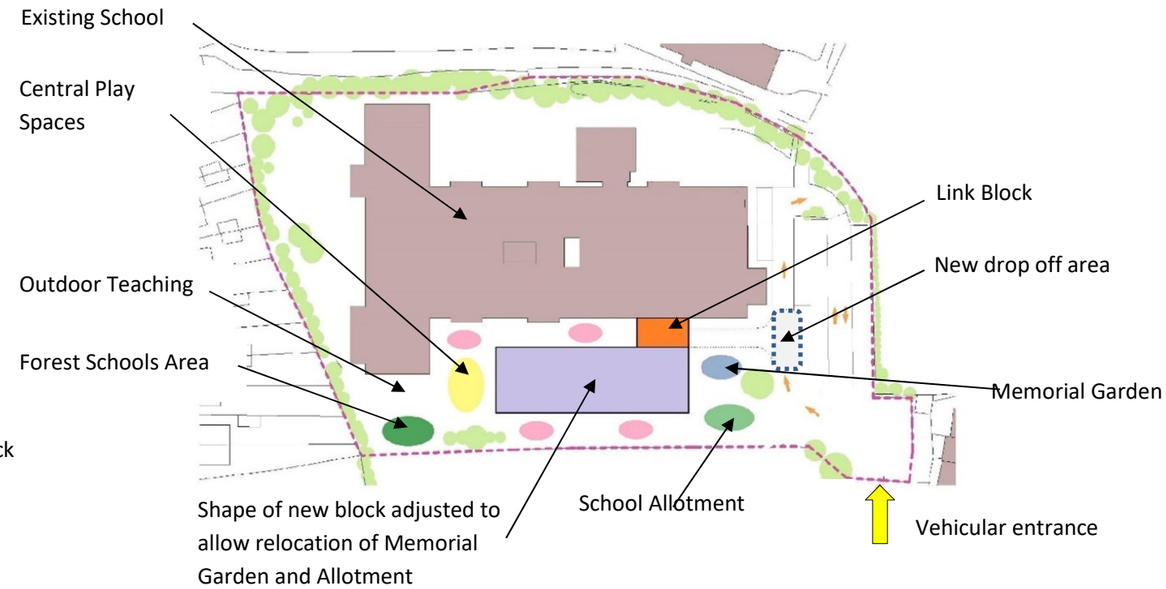


Fig 4 Design Development NTS

The primary elements of these design proposals are as follows:

1. Design, layout and materials for the new school.
2. Design and layout of external works and landscaping.

Fig 5 Proposed Ground Floor Plan in Context

5.8 The design philosophy for the new extension is to provide the building with an identity as a sustainable community for learning whilst also complementing the existing building. The decisions regarding the site layout are set out previously. The decision to place the extension parallel to the existing school building with link blocks towards the East are as follows:

- To create a new central, shared covered drop-off area for primary and secondary phases
- To avoid mini-bus traffic entering the main car parking areas
- To place the building along the site contour lines parallel with the existing building.
- To locate green spaces along the Southern boundary in the form of the school allotment and new forest schools area, to tie in with the adjacent playing fields, park land and SINC

5.9 The School will follow a similar format that we have used for our previous new sustainable communities for learning, with the majority of the teaching accommodation on the ground floor.The first floor will house staff accommodation along with a new 6th form area to give the feeling of 'moving up' through the school. It will be a two storey development with two main building elements:

- A two storey teaching block running East to West, with the accommodation arranged around a central corridor, including a new double height soft play room.
- A single storey link block to join the existing building to the East, with a central shared covered drop off area.

5.10 The main entrance gives access to a generous secure reception area and café seating. Screen doors at the North and South of the foyer provide a further line of security between school and community domains.

5.11 The plan form allows for the doors to the main classroom wings to be secured, allowing community access to the Soft Play and Cafe for use of the building outside school hours.

5.12 The North/South orientation and design of the building allows the use of lantern north lights over the central corridor. The central corridor provides natural lighting through the corridors which also allows light into the back of the classrooms through glazed screens.

5.13 The classrooms are arranged off the central corridor in pairs with access to shared cloakrooms and toilet facilities between. All of the classrooms have individual withdrawal rooms accessed directly from each class space. *See Figure 5 above.* Each classroom also has direct access to an external partly covered teaching area and the wider shared hard/soft play areas. Each classroom will be designed to be naturally ventilated and will maximise the use of natural daylight.

5.14 The Café and Soft-play room have been designed to operate independently of the wider school outside school hours to provide facilities for the local community, along with use of the existing Hydrotherapy Pool.

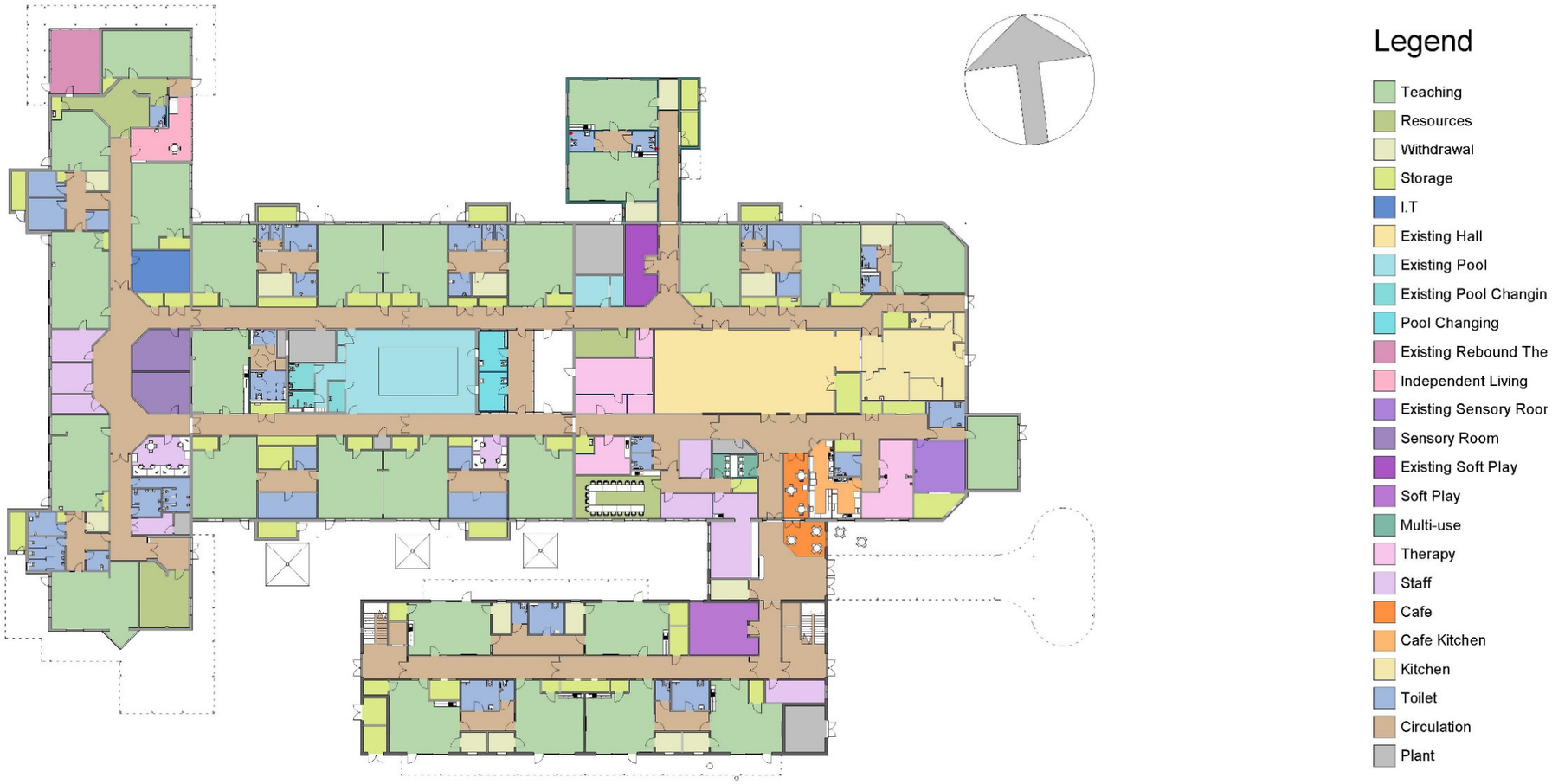


Fig 6 Proposed Ground Floor Layout NTS

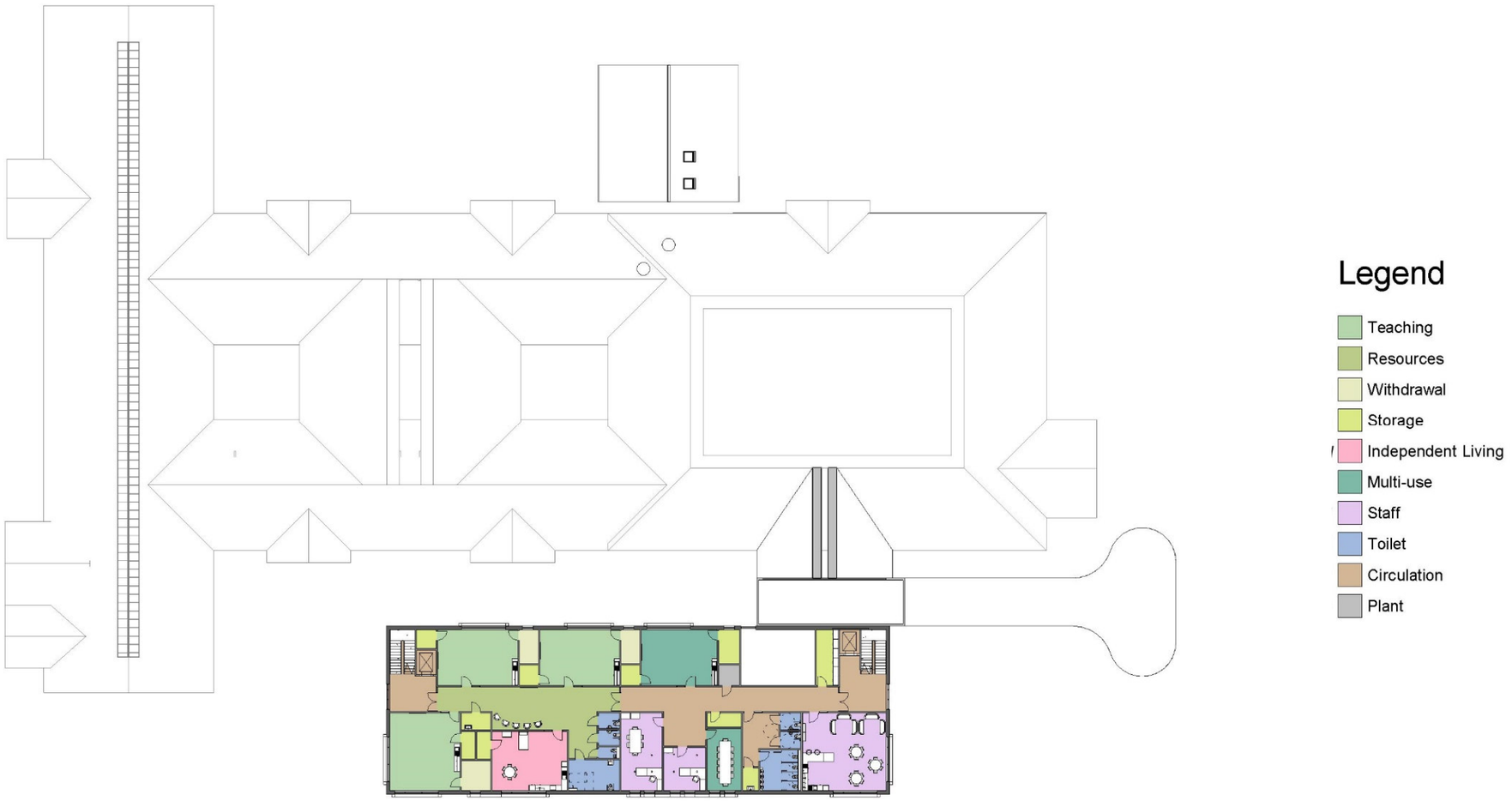
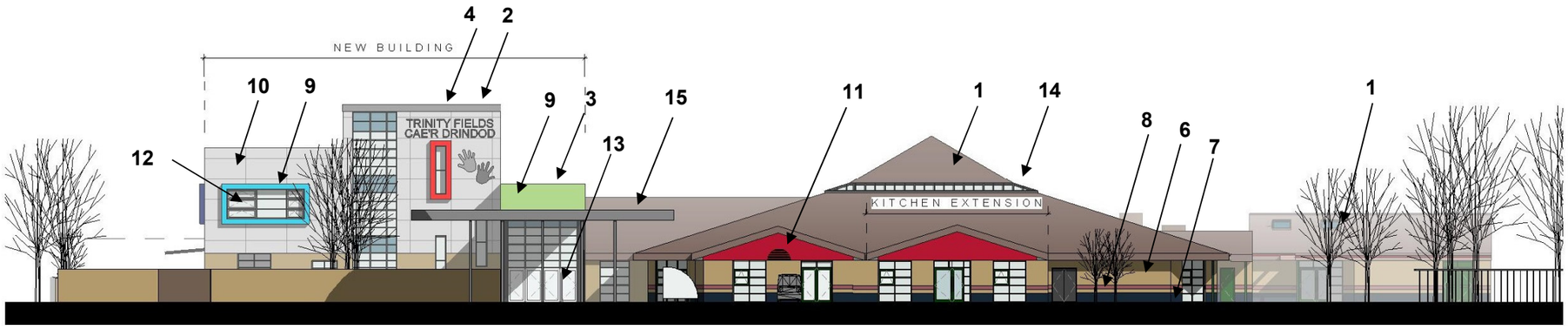


Fig 7 Proposed First Floor Layout NTS

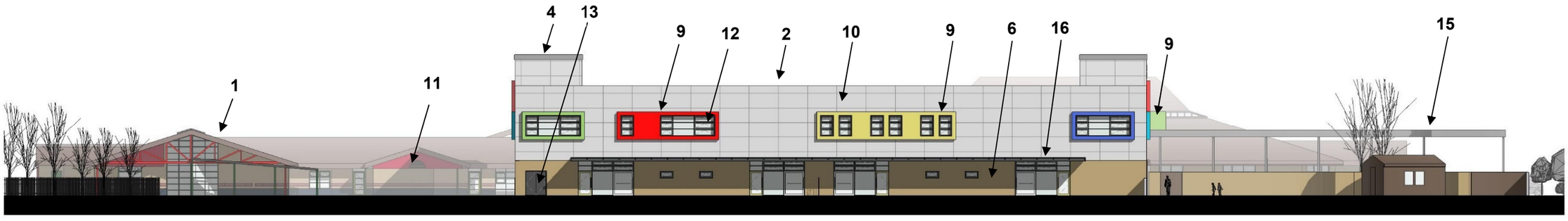
5.16 Proposed Elevations



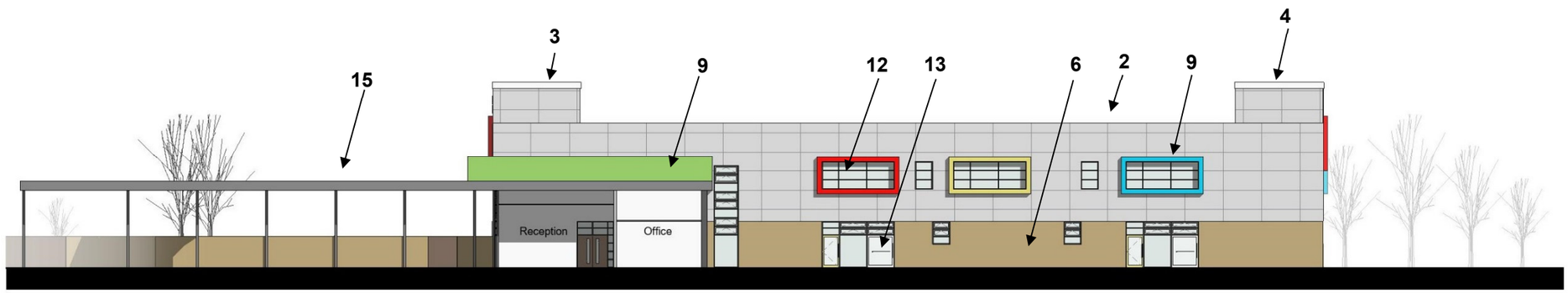
Proposed East Elevation

Legend:

1	Concrete roof tiles
2	Green roof covering
3	Flat roof covering
4	Metal fascia/soffit
5	Aluminium rainwater goods
6	Facing brickwork, colour: Buff
7	Facing brickwork, colour: Blue
8	Facing brickwork, colour: Red
9	Rockpanel wall cladding, mix of colours as indicated
10	Rockpanel wall cladding, colour: Grey
11	Existing Trespa cladding, colour: Red
12	Aluminium windows, colour: Grey
13	Aluminium doors
14	Clerestory windows
15	New Entrance Canopy
16	Canopy Roof



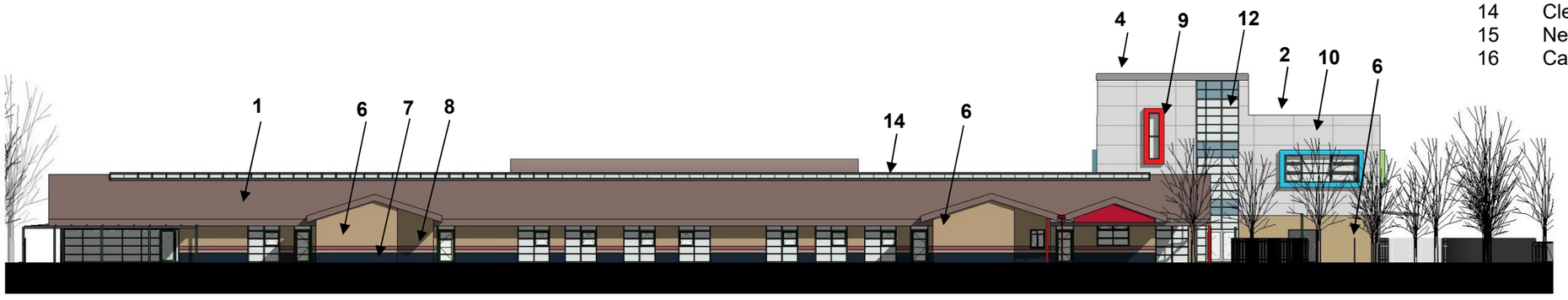
Proposed South Elevation



Proposed North Sectional Elevation

Legend:

1	Concrete roof tiles
2	Green roof covering
3	Flat roof covering
4	Metal fascia/soffit
5	Aluminium rainwater goods
6	Facing brickwork, colour: Buff
7	Facing brickwork, colour: Blue
8	Facing brickwork, colour: Red
9	Rockpanel wall cladding, mix of colours as indicated
10	Rockpanel wall cladding, colour: Grey
11	Existing Trespa cladding, colour: Red
12	Aluminium windows, colour: Grey
13	Aluminium doors
14	Clerestory windows
15	New Entrance Canopy
16	Canopy Roof



Proposed West Elevation

5.15 Appearance

Aesthetically, the building utilises a combination of traditional and modern materials to create an inviting and attractive facility for both pupils and the wider community.

As the new building adjoins the existing school building, materials have been chosen to reference and complement the existing materials whilst also giving the new building a fresh modern appearance. Buff coloured facing brickwork will tie in with that of the existing building, complemented by a mix of cladding panels in light grey with bright coloured ‘pop-outs’ which will give a modern appearance.. The new main roof area will receive a Green roof covering with a small area of flat roof to the Eastern link block. The new covered entrance canopy will provide a visual ‘full stop’ between the existing building and new extension. Where possible, sustainable and natural materials will be utilised. This will complement the natural environment and beauty of the area whilst still giving the new buildings a contemporary feel and help to define the development as a 21st century learning facility.

The design of the new extension will provide an attractive and fit-for-purpose building that will use sustainable sources of materials and preserve the best traditions of architecture and local building, which are efficient in energy and resources.

The elevations have been designed to give the different building elements recognizable identities which complement each other. The hall and general classrooms are easily identified by the change in materials and colours. The design comprises a mix of buff facing brickwork to the main teaching block to reference the existing building, with cladding panels above and the use of coloured doors to highlight the classroom entrances.

Windows and curtain walling are colour coated aluminium punctuating the brickwork and cladding. Doors are aluminium powder coated with ancillary doors coloured to match windows and entrance and classroom doors highlighted in contrasting colours. Large glazed aluminium curtain walling panels break up the mass of the building and flood the classrooms with light. Lanterns above the central street provide both high levels of natural light and ventilation to the corridor.

External canopies will provide covered outdoor teaching spaces, with roof glazing to enhance the natural light to these areas. The main entrance is defined with a large canopy

Green Roof

Buff Facing Brickwork to reference existing building

Existing School Building

New Main Entrance Canopy

Rockpanel Cladding in Grey with bright coloured ‘pop-outs’ to give a fresh modern feel

Covered Outdoor Teaching Space

Shared central play area

Forest School Area with New Tree Planting

View from Forest School Area

School name and logo

Existing trees retained and enhanced with additional shrubs and decorative planting

New covered entrance canopy

Brick walls to Memorial Garden

Sensory planting

Enclosed spaces for contemplation

Memorial Garden View

6.0 **Ecology, Landscaping & Arboricultural Survey**

6.1 An Ecology and Biodiversity survey has been carried out by Ecological Services Ltd and an Ecological Impact Assessment has also been produced. A copy of the report is included as part of the PAC information. All information here is taken directly from the Preliminary Ecological Assessment 2021-04-PEA V1.0

6.2 **Summary**

Purpose	Ecological Services Ltd was commissioned by Caerphilly County Borough Council to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Assessment at Trinity Fields School & Resource Area and the adjacent sports playing pitch, Trinity Pitch 1. The proposed site is centred at ST1447793991 and planning permission is being sought to create an extension to the south of the existing school. The site was originally surveyed in October 2020 with bat activity surveys competed in 2021. As development plans have progressed an additional parcel of land is now included within the site boundary. A walkover survey of the additional parcel of land was completed in February 2023
Methodology	Survey work was undertaken following JNCC Phase 1 Survey Guidelines and CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2013).
Key Issues	The existing school is known to have been used as a roosting site for bats. ECUS Ltd were commissioned by Caerphilly CBC in 2016 to complete bat surveys of Trinity Fields School to support a proposed extension to the building. A small number of Soprano Pipistrelle bats were found to be using the South Western area of the building as a day roost. The proposed development site lies directly adjacent to Coed Mawr Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The SINC lies directly adjacent to the sports field to the South of the school and extends away to the West and South. Appropriate mitigation measures will need to be included to ensure the SINC is not negatively affected.
Recommendation	Bat activity surveys were complete by Ecological Services Ltd in 2021. The bat activity surveys confirmed the presence of a Common Pipistrelle bat roost in the south western extension of the building. Mature trees must be retained where possible and any loss of mature trees will require replacement planting. It is recommended a minimum of 4 saplings is planted for every mature tree lost. Removal of existing trees must be carried out outside the bird nesting season from March to August. If an active nest is found prior to works commencing a buffer zone of 5m must be observed until the chicks have fledged. The design for external lighting must be carefully considered to avoid light spillage into adjacent semi-natural habitats. External lighting should be motion activated and set to the lowest time to remain lit as possible to avoid lights being left on overnight. No additional external lighting will be provided on the western elevation of the new extension. This will help to reduce light spill onto the known bat roost location. A number and variety of integrated bird boxes and bat boxes should be provided in the new building. A Barn Owl box located in one of the existing trees within the park would be welcomed. Soft landscaping should include native tree species and hedgerow creation. Creation of wildflower areas subject to low frequency mowing would improve diversity within the site. Fencing around the site should be hedgehog friendly in design. It should provide either a continuous gap between the bottom of the fence and the ground of approximately 5cm or gaps cut at a set distance along the fencing. SUDS features should be carefully designed and engineered to provide biodiversity enhancement. Native plant species are recommended for inclusion in features. Also, bio-retention ponds and swales should be engineered to hold water for most of the year.

6.3 **Protected Habitats and Species**

Recommendations regarding protected species are shown in the Table below:

Species	
Great Crested Newts	There are no waterbodies present within the site boundary and none visible within 500m of the site when viewing aerial photography. The vast majority of land within the site is considered unsuitable for use by such species. The well mown grassland, buildings, tarmac footpaths and car parking areas provide limited cover from predation or foraging habitat. Given the lack of records and suitable water bodies in close proximity to site it is thought highly unlikely that GCN are present. No further recommendations are made for this species.
Dormice	The habitats within the proposed development site are considered to have very negligible potential for use by dormice. Whilst there is woodland adjacent to the development site, it will not be impacted on as part of the development proposals. It is considered highly unlikely that dormouse are present within the site boundary. No further surveys are recommended for this species.
Bats	The building within the site are assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats. In line with the BCT Survey Guidelines (2016) buildings assessed as having low potential for use by bats require activity surveys. A suite of activity surveys are recommended which focus on the areas of the building which will be directly impacted on by the proposed extension.
Otter	No evidence of mammal use within the site boundary was noted and the habitats on site are not considered to be suitable for use by otter for shelter or resting. No watercourses run through the development site or within close proximity to it. No further surveys are recommended for otter
Badger	The closest recent record for the presence of badger is for a road traffic collision approximately 380m from the proposed development site. No evidence of the presence of badger, such as sett, latrine or digging, was noted during the site survey. The site is well used throughout the day by school pupils and the playing field is used by local residents. Given the open nature of the site and frequent human presence, it is considered unsuitable for use by badger apart from occasional commuting purposes and no further recommendations are made.
Birds	No bird nests were noted during the site visit. However, the buildings and mature scattered trees all have the potential for nesting use during the summer months. Whilst no specific bird surveys are recommended, mitigation for the loss of nesting habitat must be provided
Amphibians & Reptiles	Reptile surveys are not recommended in this instance due to the frequent use of the school grounds and public access to the remains areas within the proposed site boundary. Any artificial refugia would be disturbed frequently putting any animals sheltering under it at risk and possibly negatively skewing any survey results. Instead it is recommended that a small number of common reptile species are assumed to be present within the site boundary. Any future development proposals will require a reptile mitigation strategy

6.4 **Overall Conclusions**

No direct impacts to the current identified bat roost location on the southern elevation of the school will be experienced. However indirect impacts via lighting could be experienced. Recommendations are made to help reduce and avoid any negative impacts that the development proposals may have.

No further Reptile surveys are recommended however a reptile mitigation strategy will be developed and put in place prior to any works commencing on site.

6.5 **Landscaping**

The outline design for hard and soft landscaping is included on drawing 4813 P002 which is included as part of the PAC information in Appendix A.

Detailed soft landscape proposals have been prepared by the Council's Landscape Architect. Please refer to drawing 5239/P-A/LMP/3001 Proposed Site Layout.

Within the proposals, hard and soft landscaping areas are clearly marked. The existing trees to the perimeter of the site will be retained and existing trees within the school site which will need to be removed will be replaced with trees of equal or greater ecological value.

The landscape proposals will provide an attractive setting for the proposed school expansion. Native and semi-native perimeter planting is planned in the form of hedgerows and tree planting to enhance visual amenity and improve biodiversity with a minimum of 50% of species being of native origin. Evergreen and native hedgerows will include Carpinus betulus (Hornbeam), Ilex aquifolium (Holly) and Crataegus monogyna (Hawthorn).

Existing trees and hedgerows requiring removal to facilitate the extension of the school and its grounds are to be undertaken in Autumn / Winter outside of the bird nesting season which runs between 1st March to 31st August inclusive.

Mitigation Tree Planting is to include a minimum 30 plus No. Semi Mature Trees at 18 to 20cm girth and minimum 450cm height. Species rich grass mixes are proposed in relation to the SAB water garden with native hedgerow and shrub planting along with native bog garden and pond, planted with marginal and aquatic native mixes.

7.0 **Community Safety**

7.1 The safety of pupils, staff, visitors to the site and the surrounding community is a fundamental consideration for the LEA in the design, layout, and operation of education facilities.

Early consultation has been undertaken with the Gwent Police Designing Out Crimes Officer (DOCO) and initial recommendations received will be implemented in the design. It is also intended that the building will be designed in accordance with the principals of Secured by Design (SBD) in Schools guidance. This aims to reduce crime in the built environment and improve safety standards.

The DOCO has provided recommendations in respect of some of the areas below. These will be refined and added to as the design detail is developed.

- Site enclosure height
- Out of hours vehicular control
- Defensive planting and Landscaping considerations
- Safe route, drop off and collection points
- Signage
- Community access
- Motorcycling & bicycle parking
- Troublesome meeting places

Within the design the following considerations have been made:

7.2 The extension will runparallel with the existing building, within the existing site boundary. Inside this boundary will be lower height railings of between 0.9m and 1.5m around the play areas. A new brick wall will separate the new Memorial Garden and School Allotment from the car park

7.3 Defensive planting is included within the landscaping layout.

7.4 A new one-way drop-off route is proposed.

7.5 Deliveries will be routed via the existing access route to the Kitchen and Bin Store to the North East of the site.

7.6 Motor cycle parking will be accommodated within the existing park area opposite the main entrance to the building for passive supervision.

7.7 Additional signage noting site rules and speed limits (5mph) will be used throughout the site.

7.8 Signage: the building and outside facilities will be clearly signposted.

7.9 Community Access: the new Soft Play room and the Café will be accessible from the main Foyer without opening the main building. The main entrance lobby is secure from the rest of the building with access control on the inner doors.

7.10 Troublesome meeting spaces have been designed out where possible.

In addition to this the following will be included:

7.12 Windows and doors will be to Secured by Design standards.

7.13 A centrally monitored CCTV and intruder alarm system will be installed.

7.14 A category L2 fire alarm system will be installed. The system will include a main fire alarm panel, smoke detectors, sounders and beacons in all rooms and integral emergency lighting as part of the overall lighting design.

7.15 The external lighting strategy will be designed in compliance with Table 1 (and its accompanying notes) of the ILE Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light, 2005.

8.0 Environmental Sustainability

8.1 Sustainability

Caerphilly CBC has a commitment to sustainability and the environment. The following measures are proposed to be incorporated into the design of the scheme:

- The scheme shall achieve a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating for energy efficiency with an overall BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'.
- The scheme shall achieve an EPC rating of A.
- Site surface water drainage will be limited to site run-off rates agreed with CCBC Drainage Section.
- PV panel array applied to roof -South facing.
- Natural ventilation.
- A or A+ rated materials in accordance with BRE Green Guide to Specification.

8.2 Waste

Caerphilly CBC will provide collection for waste and recycling collection from the site. A store area with separate recycled and non-recycling waste stores will be provided in a separate enclosure located away from the side of the kitchen, sized appropriately to serve the school.

8.3 Noise

As part of the BREEAM process, an acoustic survey is being prepared to ascertain the site acoustic levels. A further report shall be prepared for the proposals in line with BB93 Acoustics for School requirements.

8.4 Light

With regards to light pollution, proposals will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for consideration. The external lighting strategy will be designed in compliance with Table 1 (and its accompanying notes) of the ILE Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light, 2005.

8.5 Air Quality

Other than for general heating and ventilation requirements, no fumes will be generated by any processes within the building.

8.6 SuDs Development and Drainage Strategy

In compliance with the Statutory National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for Wales, the design for project will include a sustainable drainage system and a full application will be submitted to the SuDS Approving Body (SAB) for approval.

8.7 Foul Water Discharge

The existing buildings connect into the onsite private sewer which in turn connects into a public sewer via a pumping station at the North Eastern corner of the site. Whilst there is an increase in facilities, we do not anticipate any issues associated with a connection into the existing system.

8.8 Ground Conditions

A ground investigation report has been commissioned and produced by WYG Environment Planning Transport Limited and has been submitted in support of this application.

A summary of the report is as follows:

Geotechnical

Based on ground conditions it is considered that shallow spread foundations, strip or pads, placed within the shallow coarse-grained deposits Glaciofluvial Deposits, at a minimum depth of 0.85m bgl, would be a suitable foundation option. Shallow footings may be design to an allowable net bearing pressure of 200kPa, giving a factor of safety greater than 3 against ultimate bearing capacity failure, and should result in settlement less that 25mm for a strip footing of no greater than 0.7m wide or a pad of no more than 2m2. Floor slabs may be ground bearing to combined dead and live loads of 20kNm2, providing that topsoil should be stripped and localised made ground excavated and replaced with compacted granular fill.

Soakaway testing within the shallow coarse-grained Glaciofluvial deposits indicated low to medium permeability with good drainage conditions. Therefore, soakaways would be a viable option. However, further testing will need to be undertaken once the position and invert level of the proposed soakaway is known. The Design Sulphate Class for the site can be taken as DS-1, and the Aggressive Chemical Environment for Concrete (ACEC) site classification be taken as AC-1.

Ground Contamination

A thin thickness (<0.60m) of Made Ground was identified in some exploratory locations on site. The laboratory testing found tested contaminant concentrations did not exceed the screening criteria for a Public Open Space (POS) end use. Asbestos containing materials have not been identified within the shallow soils on the site. However, the potential presence of asbestos containing materials within the Made Ground cannot be discounted. In the event that previously unidentified asbestos contamination is encountered during the development phase, works should stop to allow additional investigation and risk assessment to be undertaken and additional risk management procedures put in place, if required.

With respect to the risk to the wider environment, the results of the soils derived leachate testing indicated an exceedance of zinc and fluoranthene against their respective EQS values. In addition, the groundwater results show exceedances of a number of PAH compounds against their relevant EQS values. However, given the marginal nature of the exceedances noted and the conservative methodology of the leachate testing, the concentrations noted are considered to pose a low risk to the local environmental receptors. The site is categorised as Characteristic Situation 1 (low risk) under the Wilson and Card classification presented in CIRIA 665, and Green within the NHBC Traffic Light System following the completion of Ground gas monitoring undertaken during variable pressure conditions. As such, gas protection measures are not required within new developments.

Recommendations

Within the context of ground contamination, no further risk management procedures are recommended with respect to the proposed development of the site. However, it is recommended that a proactive approach is adopted during the future development of the site to identify and assess any previously unidentified contamination which may be encountered during development works.

8.9 Construction Waste

As part of the project requirements the Contractor will be required to construct the building to ensure that a minimum of 15% of total material used in construction, by value, derives from reused and recycled content. The Contractor will use the WRAP Net Waste Tool (www.wrap.org.uk/nwtool) to quantify this, in accordance with Welsh Assembly Government funding requirements, and submit a final report verifying the final achieved recycled percentage.

9.0 **Movement to, from and within the development**

9.1 A Traffic Statement (TS) has been commissioned and produced by RPS Consulting Services Ltd and is included as part of the PAC information. The statement is summarised below:

Summary

9.1.1 This Transport Statement has been prepared by RPS to support an application for the proposed expansion of Trinity Fields, a School located in Ystrad Mynach.

9.1.2 Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre opened in 1998 and provides education and specialist facilities for students aged 3 to 19 with a wide range of learning difficulties. The school currently has 177 students and 153 staff. The expansion will lead to the ability to accommodate a total of approximately 257 students and 200 staff.

9.1.3 Although most students travel to the school via taxi or minibus, the site can be easily accessed on foot, by cycle or using public transport.

9.1.4 There is predicted to be an increase in 19 vehicles dropping off and picking up students. This will lead to a slight increase in the drop off and pick up period, which currently can take between 35-50 minutes, but such an increase will be safely managed by CCBC and the School.

Conclusion

9.1.5 It is concluded that the proposed redevelopment will have no detrimental impact on the local highway network.

9.1.6 Accessibility to the School by all modes is good, with sufficient staff car parking, drop-off / pick-up collection areas, and facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.

9.1.7 The School will prepare a Travel Plan prior to occupation which will promote Active Travel which seeks to increase the number of people travelling on foot and by cycle, as well as public transport.

9.1.8 Overall, it is concluded that the proposals accord with transport planning policy, are safe, and provide for sustainable travel whilst not impacting on the local road network. As such there are no transport related reasons why the proposed School expansion should not be permitted.

9.2 The safe and efficient movement of vehicles within the site has been a considered factor during the design process in defining the site layout and parking areas.

9.3 Pedestrian routes into the site have been carefully considered to ensure safe routes are created to the building.

9.4 Vehicular movements to and from site will be via the existing highway network A472 and Caerphilly Road.

9.5 The drop-off and pick-up route will be clearly marked with a one-way system and covered drop-off area at the main entrance to the building.

9.6 Delivery vehicles will be routed via the existing access to the Kitchen and Bin Store to the North East of the building.

9.7 Appropriate signage will be provided to these areas. Advice has been sought from the Authority's Highways Department and any further recommendations have been accommodated.

10.0 Accessibility

10.1 A fundamental requirement of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme is that facilities are made fully accessible for all users. External areas are required to confirm to accessibility standards in terms of ramps, paths, and levels. Internal areas similarly must meet building control regulations in this respect. The proposed development will ensure equality of access regardless of physical or mental impairment.

10.2 Consultation will be undertaken with the Authority's Access Group. As part of the Authority's Access protocol, meetings with the Access Group will continue throughout the duration of the project to ensure matters are appropriately addressed.

Appendix A

Drawings:

Drawings submitted are:

5239 P001 Site Location/Existing Site Layout
5239 P002 Proposed Site Layout
5239 P003 Existing Floor Layout
5239 P004 Proposed Floor Layout
5239 P005 Existing Elevations
5239 P006 Proposed Elevations
5239 P007 Proposed Typical Sections
5239 P008 Proposed Roof Plan
5239 P009 Proposed Visualisations
5239 P010 Proposed Visualisations

5239/P-A/LMP/3001 Landscape Architect's Proposed Site Layout.