

Rainshore House SEN School, Rochdale

Over Town Lane, Norden, Rochdale OL12 7TQ



Planning Application Design Statement

Rev 00
May 2024



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1.0 Introduction

This document has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the change of use of *Rainshore House, Over Town Lane, Norden, Rochdale, OL12 7TQ*.

The proposals seek to provide a specialist SEN educational facility at the site for children aged 3-18. Accordingly this will require minor internal remodelling to the main house and annex, demolition of the garage building and the construction of single-storey accommodation, as well as the introduction of a mixed-use games area (MUGA) and further fencing within the grounds.

The site is currently a residential dwelling house (Use Class C3). The proposed use is to be F1(a) throughout.

The following pages provide a summary of the site's local context, as well as a description of the proposed alterations that are necessary to accommodate a facility such as this.

The document has been compiled by architecture practice **e-gg** in collaboration with The Aurora Group, Archway Building Consultancy, and Velocity.



1.1 The Aurora Group

“Our mission is to provide innovative, high quality education, care and support, enabling all children and young people to thrive and fulfil their aspirations”

The Aurora Group was established in October 2015.

Aurora are an innovative provider of education, care and support for children, young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities.

They have a growing number of schools, colleges and homes across the UK providing a wide range of services and facilities.

Their shared commitment across the group is to maximise opportunities for each individual to fulfil their potential, by making the most of their talents and creating outcomes that suit their unique set of skills and abilities.

Aurora work in partnership with each child, young person and adult to deliver personalised education, care and support which meets each individual's needs and aspirations



Caring: We show kindness and concern for others and consider the implications of our actions.



Ambitious: We challenge ourselves to be the best, thinking big and taking personal responsibility for achieving our goals.



Collaborative: We achieve successful outcomes by involving the right team of people to get the job done.



Trusted: We act consistently, fairly and openly in a way that others can rely on.



Innovative: We constantly seek new and creative ideas and solutions to make our workplace the best it can be – for now and the future.

Aurora Group Values



Breathing Life Into Buildings

The Aurora Group, in collaboration with Archway Building Consultancy and **e-gg**, have undertaken a number of similar projects over the last few years, creating special needs schools in otherwise under-appreciated buildings across the country.

Each property is unique and varies in character and context. By applying a consistent and careful approach to each site, the Group have ensured that their SEN schools can be successfully and sensitively introduced without compromising the assets in which they are based.

Alongside the societal benefits of specialist schools such as these, the employment that each brings to the area helps to quickly bed them into the communities that they serve.

The BBC recently ran a special news item extolling the benefits of a recently completed site in Huntingdonshire: Aurora Fairways School.

Opposite is a selection of recently completed school conversions.

Aurora Poppyfield School

Conversion and refurbishment of a former Royal British Legion town hall in Effingham, Surrey.

Aurora Fairways School

Reimagining of a former golf clubhouse in St Ives, Huntingdonshire.

Aurora Summerfield School

Refurbishment of a purpose-built early years centre into a through school for pupils aged 3-18.

Aurora Cedars School

Conversion of a Locally Listed 19th Century townhouse and surrounding landscape in Wolverhampton.



Aurora Fairways School



Aurora Poppyfield School



Aurora Fairways School



Aurora Cedars School



Aurora Summerfield School



Aurora Cedars School



2.0 Site Analysis

2.1 Site Description

The proposed change of use and associated works are to the buildings and landscape at *Rainshore House, Over Town Lane, Norden, Rochdale, OL12 7TQ*.

The property is comprised of a 3 storey house, with a large detached annex, triple garage and various smaller outbuildings set around a landscape garden, in the village of Norden.

Currently a dwelling house, built in 1929 and recently restored, the red brick house is an example of the Arts&Crafts style. The existing landscape is predominantly grass lawn with planted borders and mature trees along the boundaries.

Trees within the site range in size and stature and an arboriculturalist has been commissioned to establish their value and any impact the proposed works may have upon them.

Rochdale and Castleton train stations are just over 3 miles away.

Bus routes B3 and R2 stop at the end of Over Town Lane 250m from the site, connecting to Rochdale Town Centre, Rochdale train station and the wider area.

The Local Need

There is a demonstrable need for specialist learning environments for young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs within Rochdale and the wider catchment area.

Local Amenity

The site is located 150m south of Greenbooth Reservoir and Naden Country Park which offer recreational rights of way.

Further to the north lie Fordoe and Naden Woods, and to the south-east Holt Woods, all of which are Designated Land of Ecological Importance.

Listed Buildings

There are no listed buildings in close proximity to the site.

2.2 Local Context



Aerial View of Local Area (Google Maps)

2.3 Site Plan



2.4 Site Photos



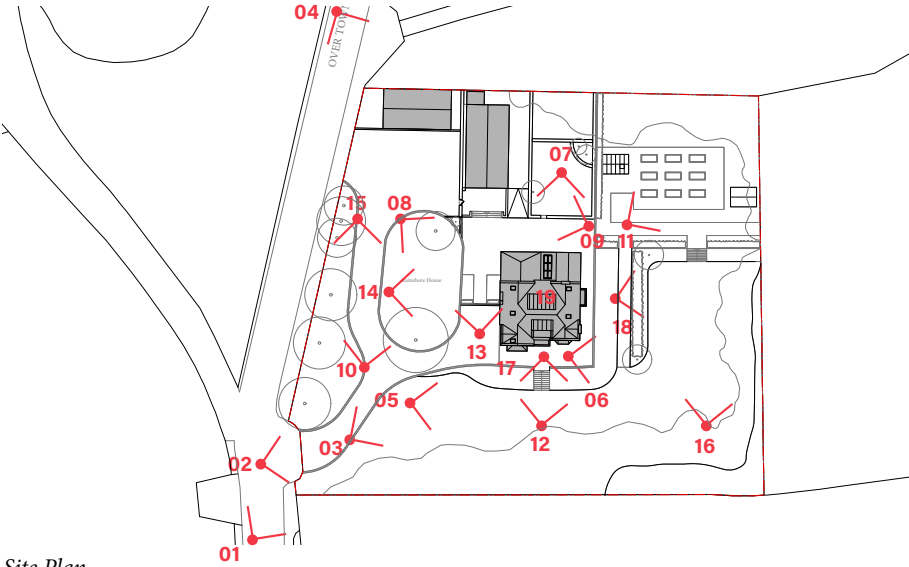
(Google Street View)



(Google Street View)



(Google Street View)



Site Plan







Aerial view (Google maps)



Drone View from north-west corner of site looking south



Drone View from north-east corner of site looking south-west



Drone View from south-east corner of site looking north-west

3.0 Design Proposals

3.1 Design Concept

Design Intent - An Essential SEN Facility

The purpose of this application is to provide a safe space for special needs education to address local need. All works proposed to the existing building and landscape are necessary to facilitate this provision.

Young people with learning difficulties need a quiet and calm environment in order to thrive. The Aurora Group take great pride in delivering education in such places - settings that serve to encourage and stimulate away from the more traditional mainstream provision found elsewhere.

Evidence from the Sensory Trust suggests that regular interaction with the natural environment will offer significant benefits to pupils and staff alike. To this end, the existing landscape will become outdoor learning spaces of differing types.

Aurora’s Approach to Education: One Size Does Not Fit All

All students have a personalised curriculum following the National Curriculum at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, and Aurora are currently developing their post 16 provision. Aurora offers a ‘stage’ rather than ‘age’ provision where students learn alongside others with similar attainment levels in core subjects.

Focus is placed on social-emotional aspects of learning and student progress is carefully monitored to enable us to adjust programmes as needed to maximise their chances of success. There are a range of learning opportunities available and students benefit from an enhanced curriculum which includes life skills as well as accessing subjects such as Horticulture, Food Technology and languages. Core subjects include English, Maths, Science, PSHE and Computing and students can also study Geography, History, Music and Art.

With Aurora’s registered Exam Centres, students can study for a range of academic and vocational qualifications.

Students are encouraged to participate with group work and also to spend time in other parts of the school. Some older students support others in their lessons and each week everyone meets for Pupil Parliament, where achievements are celebrated and any issues shared and discussed.

The scheme has been developed to optimise the potential learning environments within and without the existing building, in line with BB104 best practice guidance.

Main Building and Outbuilding

Internally within the main house, the ambition is to create a learning environment that feels comfortable and homely and in no way institutional. Interventions will be minimised, utilising as much of the existing resource as practicable to create a safe learning environment.

The existing Outbuilding is to be converted to a dining space and associated kitchen, with the terrace used to outdoor dining.

New Net Zero Classroom Block

In order to best address the Local Authority need, a new classroom block is required.

The proposed classroom block has been relocated away from the northern site boundary and positioned in relation to the main house and outbuilding to create a coherent arrival and entrance space at the centre of the site. Located on existing hardstanding / lawn and away from the line of trees along the northern boundary the block will have minimal impact on the ecology.

As set out later in this section, the new timber classroom block has been designed to limit carbon in construction and in use.

The existing single-storey garage is to be demolished, to mitigate the construction of the new classroom outbuilding.

Landscape

Amendments are proposed to the landscape to support the change of use and ensure safe access for pupils, staff and emergency services.

Additional carparking necessary to support the change of use is located on existing grassed areas and will use a cellular paving type that will allow grass to continue to grow through, with no excavation in the vicinity of trees. All carparking will be well screened from Over Town Lane and the surrounding area to minimise impact on the Green Belt.

An outdoor Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) is introduced in the south-east corner of the site on an area of low-value grassland. Existing planting around the MUGA is retained and intensified to ensure it is well screened from the road and surrounding area so as not to impact the Green Belt. It is envisaged it will be surfaced with a porous finish. The MUGA has been reduced in size in response to Pre-Application comments.

The proposals retain all trees along the boundary. 3no of scattered trees within the site are proposed for removal, all of which will be replace with new trees, in line with ecologist and arboricultural recommendations.

The existing allotment will be retained as a valuable learning space.

Metal fencing will provide a visually permeable secure enclosure for pupil safeguarding, which will be screened with planting.

Transport

The existing vehicle access and egress points are to be retained and adjusted to allow for required visibility splays, service and emergency vehicle access. A new dedicated pedestrian access point and route is created from the site entrance to the building main entrance.

Minibus parking, with EV charging, is located in place of the existing garage. The existing driveway is reconfigured to provide a designated taxi / drop-off area and accessible and visitor spaces adjacent to the main entrance. Limited staff parking is located along the southern edge of the site. Staff will be encouraged to arrive by public transport or cycles.

Refer to the Transport information that accompanies this submission.

Low-Impact Lighting

External lighting will be provided to ensure safe use of the site, with all lights on daylight-sensors and timers limited to the opening hours of the School. Specific luminaires are still to be selected, however these will be downlighters to limit upwards light spill.

Site Strategy

Existing single storey garage demolished, new minibus parking with 2no EV charging points

New secure bin store

Existing vehicular exit retained and widened

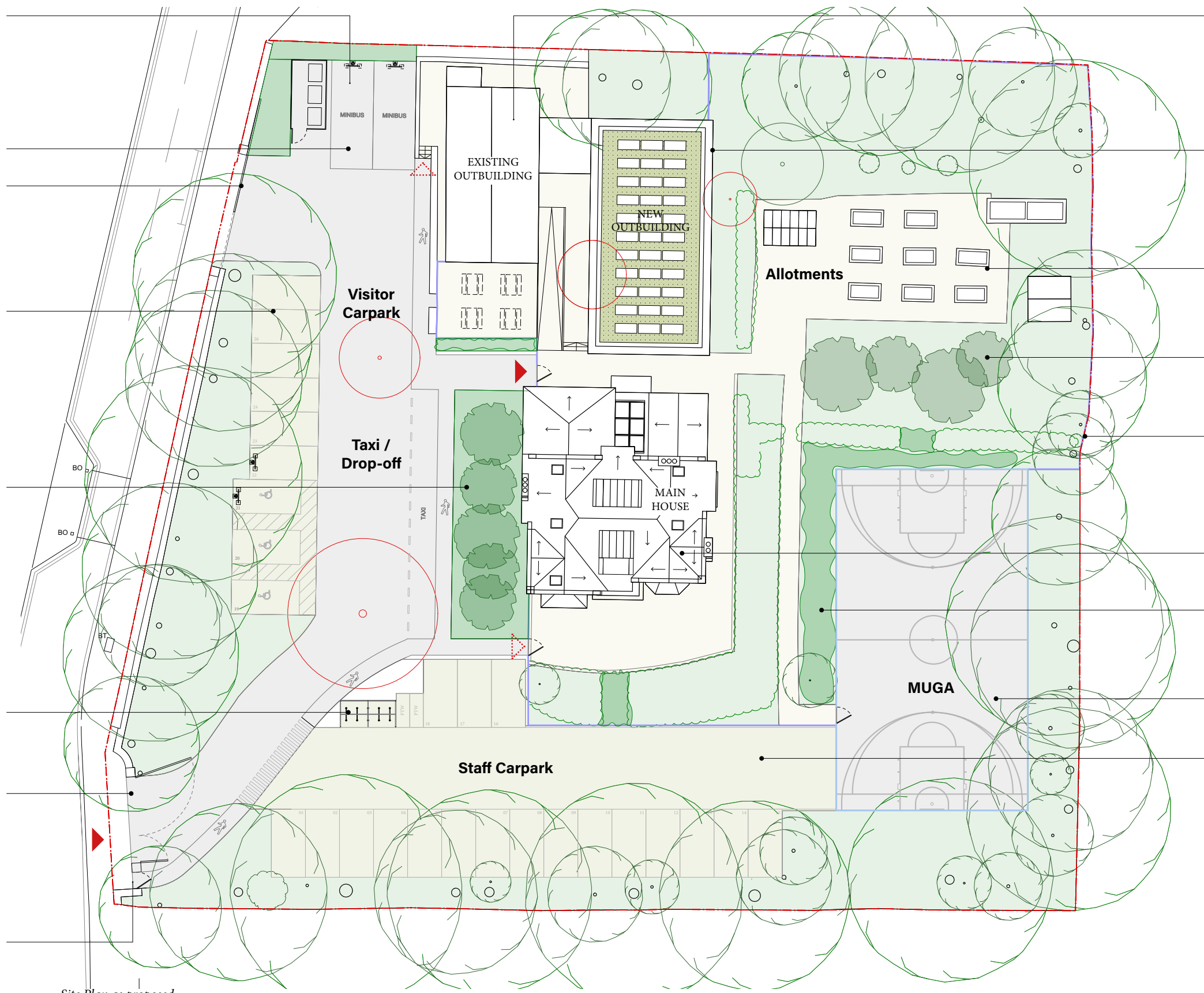
Accessible and visitor parking within existing soft landscape area using proprietary heavy-duty grid cellular paving system

2no. trees removed, landscape and driveway reconfigured to create soft landscaped area with replacement trees and planting in front of house and dedicated taxi/drop-off area

Secure, covered cycle shelter for 10no. cycles

Existing driveway and vehicle access retained and amended. New automatic gates

New pedestrian entrance and access route added



Existing brick outbuilding to be retained, to accommodate new kitchen and dining room area

New single-storey outbuilding constructed, sited to avoid impact on trees. 1no. fruit tree and small hedge to be removed.

Existing allotment to be retained as learning space

Replacement tree planting and additional soft landscaping

New secure fencing to perimeter of the site

Minor internal modifications to existing main house

New hedging to provide further screening to MUGA

Proprietary MUGA

New staff carpark, including 2no. PTW spaces, accommodated on existing soft landscape using heavy-duty grid cellular paving system

3.2 Use

The site is currently used as a residential dwellinghouse Use Class C3.

The proposals concern the conversion of the care home into a day education facility for children with special educational needs (SEN, with a Use Class designation of F1(a) at the site.

Likely hours of operation are as follows:

Aurora SEN hours of operation:

Weekdays	7.30am-7.30pm
Weekends	N/A

3.3 Amount

The site area is approx. 0.42ha and existing buildings combined footprint is 362m², which equates to 9% of the site area.

The total built footprint as proposed (including retained existing) is to be capped at 10%.

Garages (-64m²) are to be demolished. The proposed new classroom block has a GEA of 158m².

The total footprint is thus 456m² (11%).

It is anticipated that this facility will provide full time day education for 55 pupils and employment for up to 25-30 people.

3.4 Layout

As shown, the site layout has been designed to minimize significant alterations to the setting, while providing the necessary servicing, security and safe outdoor space required for the school.

The new outbuilding has been designed to sit away from the main building, with a modular arrangement suited to offsite Modern Methods of Construction (MMC). The outbuilding will be constructed to minimize disruption to the existing tree roots

An all-weather MUGA play area is proposed, set behind dense foliage in the lower part of the site so as to be concealed from passers by.

Internally, the layouts have been designed to provide 8 classrooms with a 3:1 pupil to staff ratio and dedicated therapy rooms. The spaces vary in size and will provide specialist curriculum areas for Science, cookery and ICT.

To ensure fire safety, lobbies have been introduced to circulation spaces off the main stair within the main house.

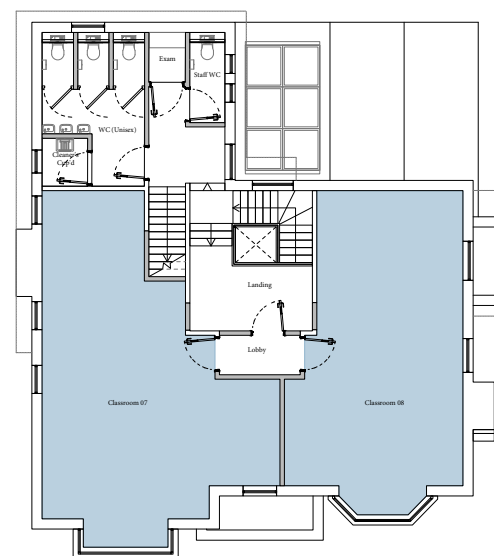


Ground Floor Plan as proposed

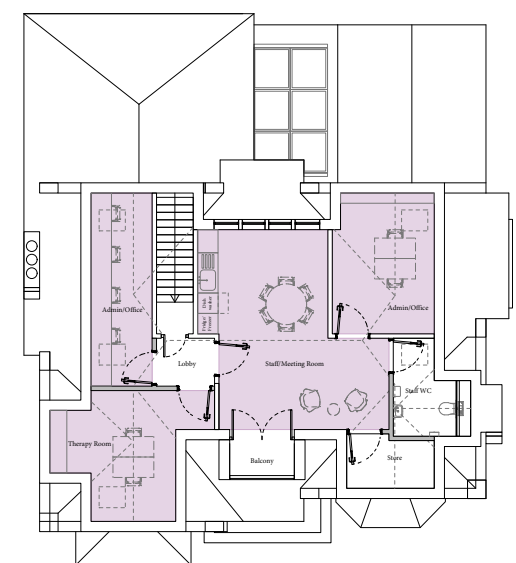
Classrooms Support spaces Service areas

May 2024

1F Plan as proposed



2F Plan as proposed



3.5 Scale

The proposed development provides for well-proportioned classrooms within the existing main building and dining facilities in the existing annex.

A new single-storey outbuilding with a green roof is proposed, which will sit below the eaves line of the existing outbuilding and relate to the decorative banding of the main house.

The single-storey triple garage is to be demolished to mitigate the impact of the new building on the green belt.



3.6 Appearance

The façades of the existing buildings are composed of red brick with stone detailing and white framed openings and slate tiled roof. These are to be retained as part of the proposed development.

Set away from the trees, the new outbuilding will be clad in vertical timber weatherboarding, cedar or similar, under a green roof. Double glazed openings will be framed in dark grey / black to match the existing outbuilding.

New secure fencing will be installed as shown in the drawings, set away from existing trees along the boundary. This will primarily be a dark-green secured mesh type. Fences will be concealed externally behind existing and new planting where possible.



Indicative palette of materials for outbuilding construction

3.7 Low-carbon design philosophy

We are facing a climate emergency and must urgently reduce CO2 emissions. The UK is legally committed to achieving net zero (carbon) by 2050.

To achieve this the World and UK Green Building Council have stated that all buildings must be net zero by 2050, including existing buildings.

The Aurora Group take great pride in celebrating reuse, breathing new life into dilapidated buildings with special needs education provision, an approach which accords with the national focus on retrofit.

To support the UK's net zero commitments building reuse must consider embodied carbon, operational energy and circular design.

Operational energy

The proposals will improve the operational energy efficiency of the building, which currently has an EPC D rating.

Energy demand will be reduced by adopting a fabric first approach, upgrades to the existing building fabric will include roof and cavity insulation. Elsewhere existing fabric, including double glazing, is to be retained and made-good where necessary.

All Aurora schools are transitioning away from fossil fuels to low-carbon solutions wherever infrastructure allows. The viability of replacing the existing gas boiler with electric is being explored.

On-site renewable energy generation is proposed in the form of photovoltaic panels (PVs) on the roof of the new classroom building and the existing outbuilding. Remaining energy will be provided on a green-tariff providing 100% renewable energy.

Natural ventilation is prioritised as far as possible with mechanical ventilation (MVHR) installed where required.

Low-energy fixtures and fittings are proposed throughout. Lighting will be time-controlled and on sensors, to limit unnecessary use. Taps and other water appliances are to be a concussive type that will automatically turn off after a few seconds of use.

Smart meters will be provided to each building.

Operational performance will be monitored in-use.

Embodied carbon

Opting for building reuse and refurbishment is inherently a lower-carbon approach than new build. Similar projects completed by the Aurora Group in recent years have demonstrated this, achieving embodied carbon rates of <400 kgCO2e/m2, below the LETI 600 kgCO2e/m2 embodied carbon target for schools.

Rainshore House will continue this low carbon approach by retaining as much of the existing fabric as possible and adopting an efficient design approach combined with the use of low-carbon and natural materials.

Designing Out Waste / Circular Economy

As part of reducing embodied carbon and reducing the resource demand the proposals follow circular economy principles.

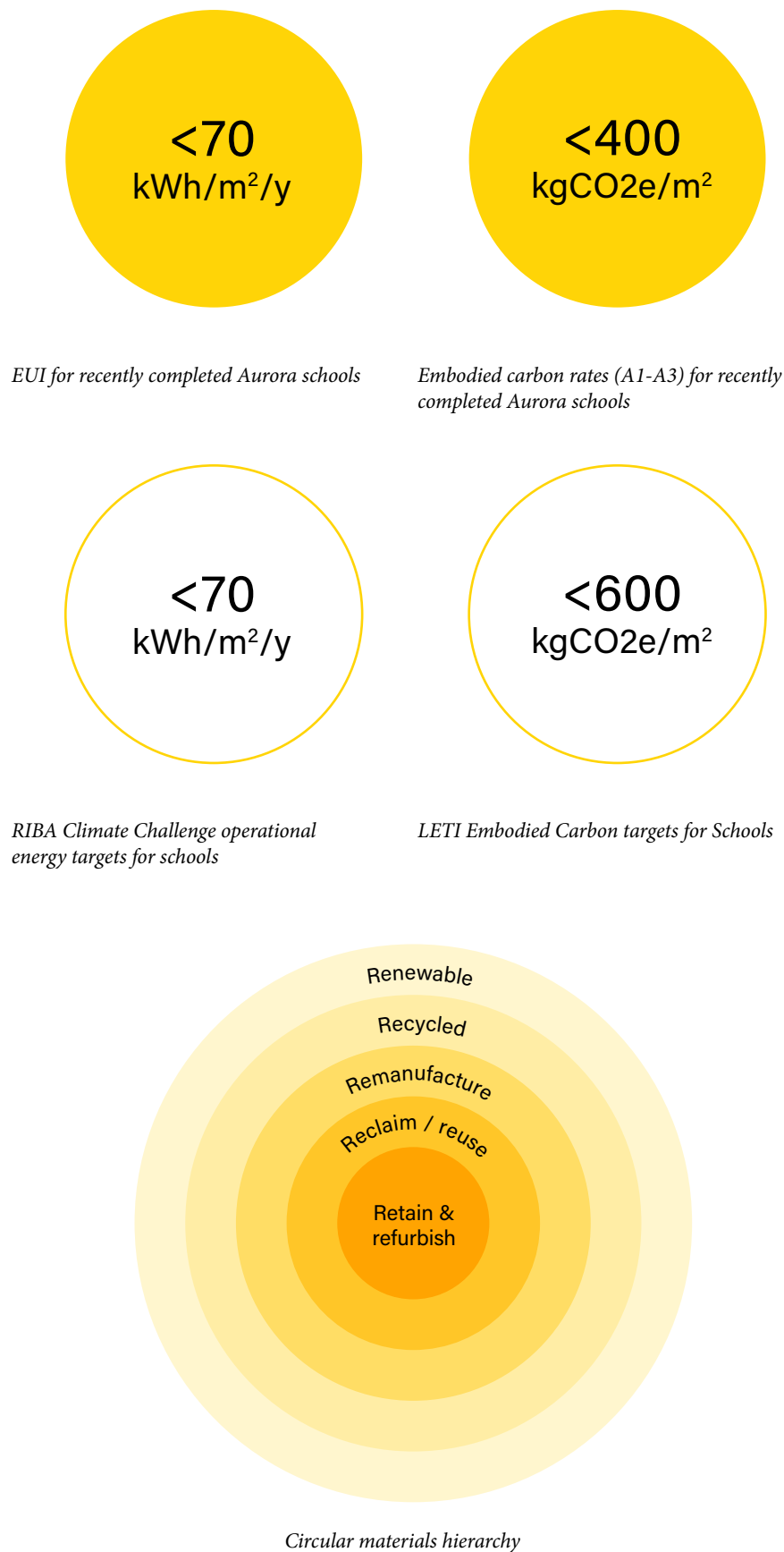
A pre-refurbishment survey has identified opportunities for materials reuse and reclamation, including retention of the existing ceilings, timber wall linings and main stair. Existing partitions and service runs will be reused as far as possible. The opportunity to reuse some of the kitchen equipment is being explored.

New materials will follow the materials hierarchy, prioritising reused, recycled and renewable materials from sustainable, ethical and local suppliers. All timber will be FSC certified.

Where possible, excavated land will be re-distributed across the site to achieve the necessary pathway levels as shown. Any unavoidable waste removal that would otherwise pose a safety threat to the students, will be disposed of safely.

Construction waste will be minimised, by providing appropriate waste streams for segregation on site and utilising product take-back schemes. Regular waste reporting will enable review and opportunity to identify areas for improvement.

In use, waste streams are to be separated as recycling, compostable and residual waste for separate collection. The Aurora Group are committed to reducing waste within their buildings and regularly monitor usage to assess opportunities for improvement



3.8 Landscape

Trees

The site is characterised by lines of trees along the boundaries, which enclose the site and provide a visual screen from the surrounding Green Belt. The proposals retain all trees along the boundary.

There are several scattered trees within the site. Two trees are proposed for removal to facilitate the reconfiguration of the existing driveway and landscape. It is proposed to replace the existing Beech and Cherry Tree as part of a new soft landscaping area in front of the west elevation of the main house.

Erection of the new classroom building necessitates the removal of one small fruit tree and a small hedge. Replacement planting is proposed as part of increased soft landscaping between the allotment and MUGA.

The arboriculturalist and ecologist will advise of the most appropriate species for all additional and replacement trees and planting.

There should be no harm caused to any trees planned for retention by these proposals. Protective fencing furnished with tree protection notices and the creation of Construction Exclusion Zones will ensure no damage is caused to the landscape as a consequence of the works.

Ecology

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken by Arbtech to assess the current biodiversity value of the site and the potential impact of the proposals.

The majority of the existing landscape is comprised of grassland, with low ecological value. Other soft landscaping includes ornamental non-native hedgerows and introduced shrubs.

The PEA identifies Rhododendrons in several locations across the site. These are an invasive species and will be removed prior to commencement of work in line with the Ecologist’s recommendations.

Biodiversity and ecological enhancements

A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment is being undertaken for the site. It is envisaged the BNG will be achieved through the provision of native hedgerows, wildflower meadows, deadwood habitats and bird and bat boxes.

Resilient planting for biodiversity

New landscape planting is proposed along the western edge of the Main Building, around the MUGA and along the southern edge of the allotment. All planting will be drought resistant, low maintenance and support biodiversity.

Green Roof

A sedum green roof is proposed to the new outbuilding, with a range of low-maintenance succulents planted that provide visual variety, pleasant aromas and will not be compromised by leaves that fall from the trees overhead.

Hard landscape

In order to provide safe access for pupils, staff and emergency services amendments are proposed to the driveway. The existing trees and area of soft landscaping along the boundary with Over Town Lane are retained and the vehicle access route within the site is brought inboard away from this boundary and rationalised. An existing area of soft landscaping is relocated to improve the setting of the main house and create a natural buffer.

Additional carparking necessary to support the change of use is located on existing grassed areas and will use a cellular paving type that will allow grass to continue to grow through, with no excavation in the vicinity of trees. All carparking will be well screened from Over Town Lane and the surrounding area to minimise impact on the Green Belt.

An outdoor Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) is introduced in the south-east corner of the site on an area of low-value grassland. Existing planting around the MUGA is retained and intensified to ensure it is well screened from the road and surrounding area so as not to impact the Green Belt. It is envisaged it will be surfaced with a porous finish. The MUGA has been reduced in size in response to Pre-Application comments.

Allotment

The existing allotment garden will be retained as a valuable learning space.



Site baseline habitats



Indicative range of informal insect habitats proposed



Secure mesh and MUGA fencing (RAL 6005 Moss Green finish) as proposed

Boundary Treatment

As the drawings show, some alterations are proposed to the existing boundary fencing.

The existing timber fence along the boundary with Over Town Lane, will be repaired / replaced as required with closed board timber fencing.

New vehicular and pedestrian entrance gates are proposed to the existing site entrances, in order to create a secured perimeter.

Additional planting is to be introduced to screen vehicles. This will also help intensify and enrich the existing habitats.

Metal fencing to the student areas will provide a visually permeable secure enclosure for pupil safeguarding. Fencing will be located inboard of the site boundary as far as possible and screened with planting

The new MUGA will be enclosed within 3m high sports fencing, in a dark green finish. Additional external lighting will be required to ensure the safe operation of the space, however the hours of use will be limited to the opening times previously described.



3.9 Environment

Flood risk and drainage

The site is in Flood Zone 1 with a low risk of flooding and less than 1ha in size, so no full flood risk assessment is included with this submission.

All new drainage design will be in accordance with the CIRIA SUDS manual (C753) and be designed to accommodate a 1 in 100 year storm event including a 40% allowance for climate change.

Pollution

The development will not lead to an unacceptable increase in air, water, noise, light or other pollution.

Air pollution associated with vehicle movements will be reduced by promoting electric vehicles, including the school minibuses and pupil taxis. Staff will be encouraged to walk or cycle. Refer to the Transport section in this report for further information.

The SUDs will be designed to treat and mitigate water pollution.

This outlying site benefits from seclusion and extensive planting to screen and mitigate any noise generated during school hours.

Lighting

External lighting will be provided to ensure safe use of the site, with all lights on daylight-sensors and timers limited to the opening hours of the School. Specific luminaires will be downlighters to limit upwards light spill and maintain dark skies for wildlife.

Geodiversity

The proposals will not impact the geodiversity of the site, which is identified as a Safeguarding Area for Sandstone in the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan.



Flood Map for Planning



Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan (Adopted April 2013) Map Extract

4.0 Access Statement

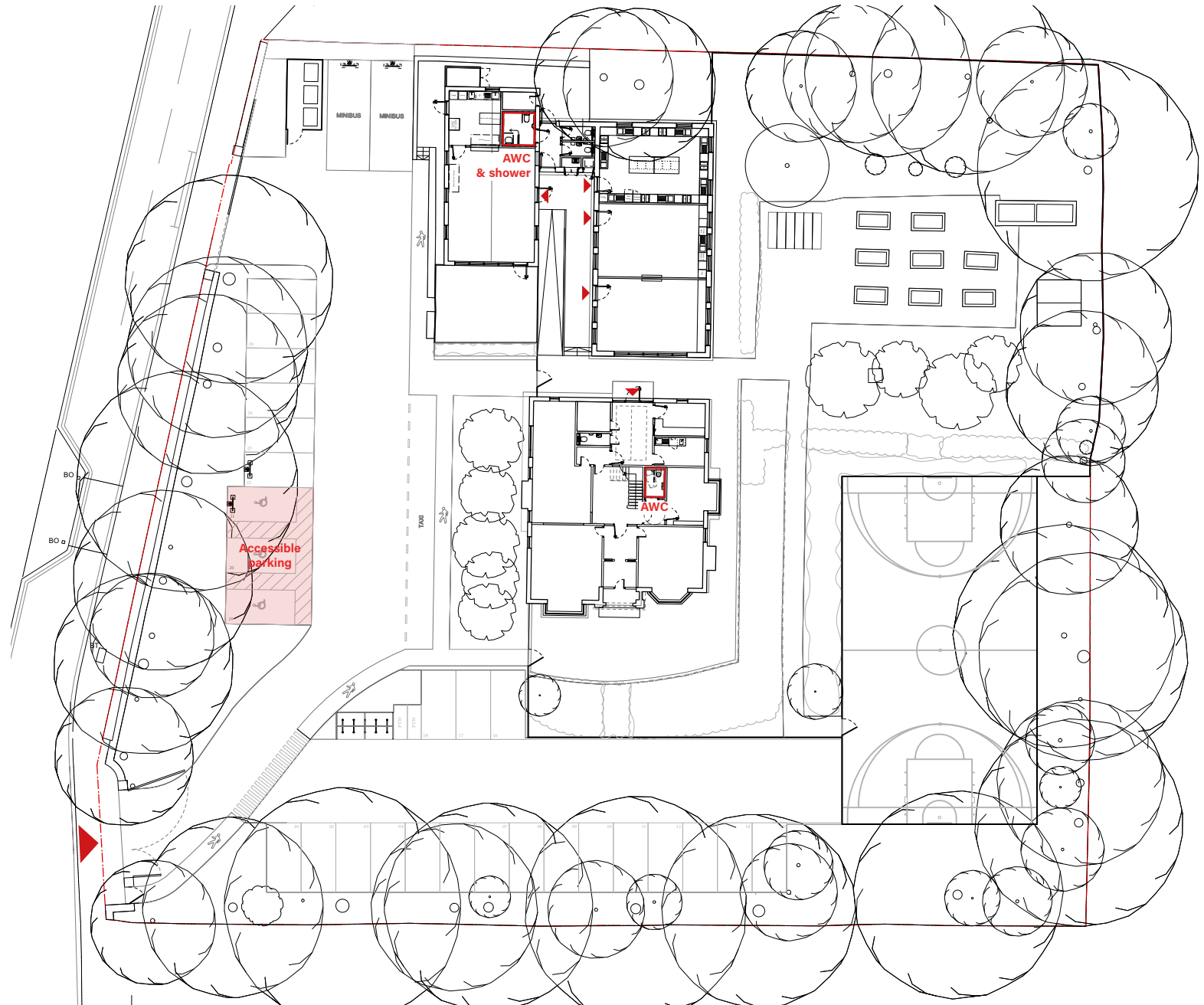
4.1 Inclusive Design Strategy

The following guidance is being consulted in developing proposals: Approved Document M of the Building Regulations and BS8300, plus other sources to meet the duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Step-free access will be provided at ground floor level of the main building and throughout both the existing and new outbuildings. The new dining room within the existing brick outbuilding building will be fully wheelchair-accessible, with an accessible WC and shower available. An AWC is also provided on the ground floor of the main building. No facilities will be provided at first or second floor levels that cannot be provided on the ground floor.

Three permanent wheelchair-accessible parking spaces are proposed to the front of the building.

Externally an accessible route is provided from the Main Building to the Outbuildings. Ramped access is also provided to the gardens and MUGA.



GF Plan as proposed

Thank you.



e-gg: Architecture With Soul

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