

Design and Access Statement

Proposed Development: Application for a Temporary Change of Use to Class F.1 for an Independent Special School, Implementation of a Multi-Use Games Area and Associated Works

Location: Link House, Finlan Road, Stakehill Industrial Estate M24 2RW

Applicant: Meadows Care Ltd

Date: 10.03.25

Planning Portal Reference: PP-13816957

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement supports the planning application for the change of use of an existing office building located at Link House, Stakehill Ind Est, Middleton, M24 2RW into a Secondary school and post 16 provision. The proposed development aims to provide a high-quality educational facility while respecting the character of the building and its surrounding environment. This document outlines the design principles, planning considerations, and access strategies associated with the proposed change of use.

2. Site Description

The site comprises an existing 2 floor office building situated within Stakehill Industrial Estate. The property is a modern, purpose-built office with open-plan floors and a large meeting/breakout area. The building has easy access to local transportation links, including bus stops, and is well connected to surrounding areas. The existing site also benefits from parking for 35, surrounded by a border of trees.

3. Proposed Development

The proposal seeks to convert the existing office space into a school, with no external alterations required. There are internal alterations proposed, which do not form part of this planning application, to meet the requirements of educational use.

- The proposal includes a MUGA and outdoor yard which will provide a safe and stimulating environment for outdoor learning and recreation.
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4. Design Principles

The design approach focuses on the internal focuses on maintaining the integrity of the existing building while transforming it to accommodate the needs of a school. Key design principles include:

- **Respecting the Character of the Building:** The design aims to respect the original architectural features of the building. There will be no structural changes of the existing building, only the addition of internal partition walls. Any alterations will be in keeping with the existing structure and the surrounding area's aesthetic.
- **Sustainability:** Existing sustainable design practices will be integrated into the conversion, including exploring the use of energy-efficient lighting, heating systems, and water-saving technologies. Where possible, the use of renewable energy sources will be explored and implemented to reduce the environmental impact of the development.
- **Safety and Security:** The building will respect its current state, with additional designs to ensure the safety and security of students, staff, and visitors. include secure access points, CCTV surveillance, appropriate lighting, and fire safety systems (such as alarms, sprinklers, and emergency exits). The school will adhere to all relevant health and safety regulations.
- **Acoustic and Environmental Considerations:** The internal spaces will be designed to reduce noise and ensure a comfortable learning environment. Noise attenuation will be considered, particularly in areas such as classrooms and break rooms, where quieter spaces are essential for effective learning.

5. Access and Transportation

Access to the school will be provided by the existing entrances to the building. The proposed development will ensure that both students and staff can safely and easily access the site. Specific access considerations include:

- **Pedestrian Access:** The building is located within walking distance of local transport links, including bus routes. Pedestrian routes to the school will be clear, well-lit, and safe for students and staff. Drop-off zones will be designated on-site to ensure smooth and safe student arrivals and departures.
- **Vehicle Access and Parking:** The site will provide adequate on-site parking for staff and visitors. In compliance with local planning policy, a designated drop-off area will be included to ensure minimal disruption to local traffic.

- **Public Transport:** The site benefits from excellent public transport connectivity, with bus stops within walking distance. This will encourage sustainable transport options for both students and staff.
 - **Accessibility for Disabled Users:** The existing building meets current Building regulations, including ramps, wider doorways, and lift access to ensure that the building is fully accessible for students, staff, and visitors with disabilities.
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7. Consultation and Community Engagement

Prior to submitting the planning application, consultations were held with neighbouring residents to gather feedback and address concerns.

8. Conclusion

The conversion of Link House into a school represents an opportunity to repurpose an underutilised building while providing much-needed educational facilities for the local community. The proposed development will create a safe, accessible, and environmentally responsible space for students to learn and grow. The inclusion of the MUGA and outdoor yard has been carefully considered to ensure it is in keeping with the surrounding character of the area whilst promoting a positive educational environment.

We respectfully request that Rochdale Borough Council grant approval for the proposed development, as it will contribute to the social and educational needs of the community while respecting the surrounding environment.

Signed:

Paula Forth,
Headteacher
Meadows School
13.03.25