



# Wokingham SEND Resource

## Bulmershe School Cognitive & Learning SEND Unit

### Design & Access Statement

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**Bulmershe DAS**

| Rev | Date     | Suitability | Status       | Initials |
|-----|----------|-------------|--------------|----------|
| PL1 | 11/02/26 | S3          | For Planning | RT       |
|     |          |             |              |          |
|     |          |             |              |          |

This document has been prepared to be printed and read at A3.

**The Site:**

The Bulmershe School Woodlands Avenue, Woodley  
Reading RG5 3EU

**The Client and Applicant:**

Wokingham Borough Council  
This statement has been prepared on behalf of the client by:  
**Rivington Street Studio** - Architects

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

This Stage 3 Design and Access Statement sets out the proposals for the new SEND Communication & Learning (C&L) Resource Base at The Bulmershe School, Woodley. The scheme will provide a self-contained specialist environment supporting pupils requiring structured, small-group and individual learning. The building is located adjacent to the Table Tennis Building within the school campus, on a currently grassed area of the site.

## 1.2 Brief

Bulmershe Secondary C&L Unit- 25 students

The brief developed with the school and Wokingham Borough Council focuses on delivering a flexible, calm and supportive environment for a secondary Cognition & Learning (C&L) cohort. The key accommodation requirements include:

- One larger classroom for whole-group teaching.
- Several smaller classrooms and resource rooms.
- Small-group / sensory / intervention spaces.
- Kitchen / Life Skills space.
- Office/meeting room for SEND staff.
- Student WCs, accessible WC, staff WC, storage and plant.

This aligns with the wider WBC SEND Resource Base programme, which seeks to provide integrated, flexible learning and life-skills development spaces across multiple school sites.

The design is required to:

- Ensure safe, legible and independent access for pupils, including separation from mainstream circulation routes where beneficial.
- Maintain controlled access to outdoor learning space, with clear boundary definition and opportunities for outdoor learning.
- Achieve a design that is cost-effective, robust, low-maintenance and compliant with current Building Regulations, BB103/BB104 guidance, and WBC standards.

The overarching ambition is to create an environment that promotes pupil confidence, reduces anxiety, supports sensory regulation, and integrates seamlessly with the existing school layout.

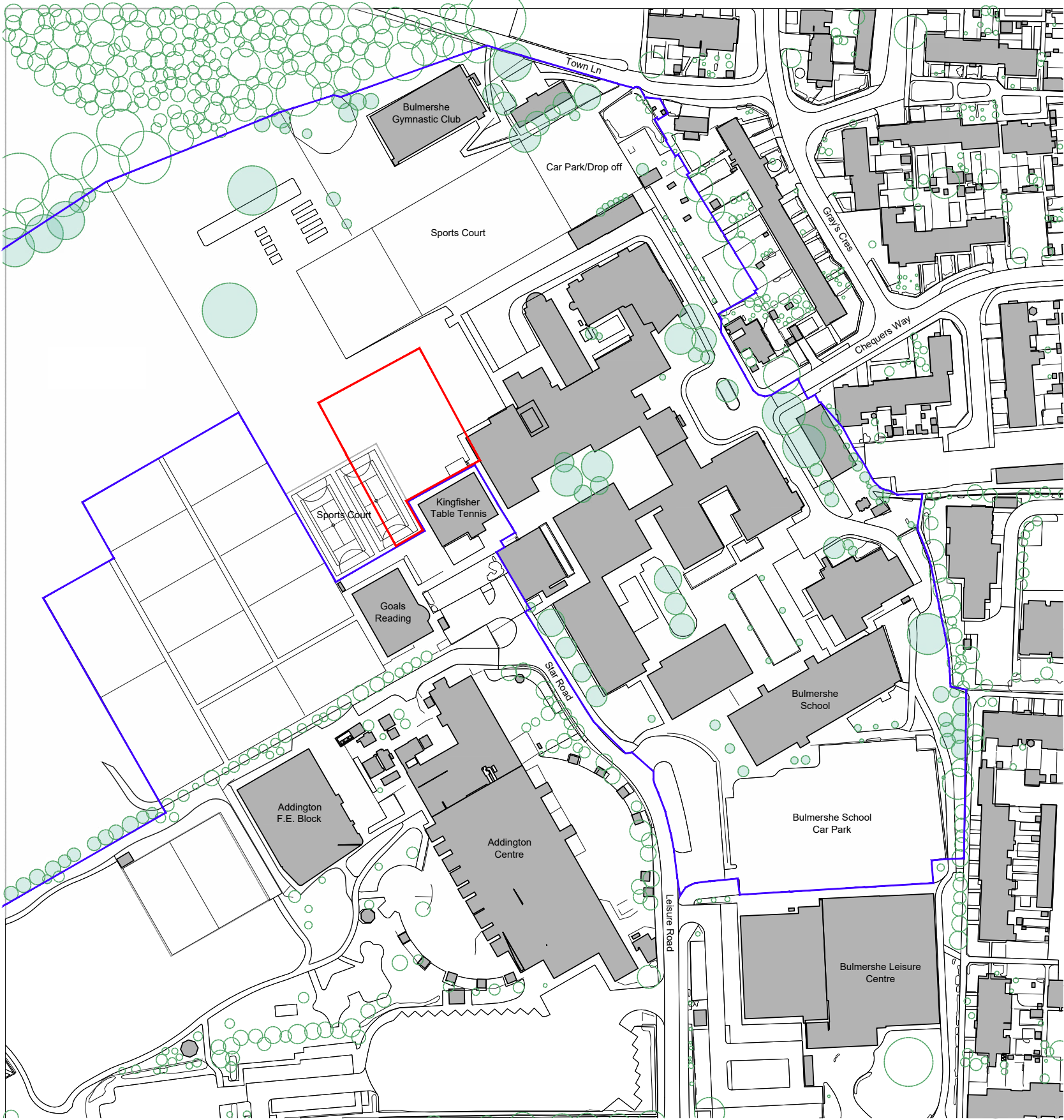
The students attending the unit will be part of the wider Bulmershe school and it is anticipated that pupils will spend approximately 60% of their time within the resource base and 40% within the main school.

# 2. Existing

## 2.1 Existing Site and Context

Bulmershe School is a campus-style secondary school located at the edge of a wider area of open green space, part of which comprises the school's extensive playing fields. The main school buildings are clustered toward the centre of the campus, with sports and community facilities arranged around the perimeter.

The school sits within a broader education and leisure context, adjoining other established uses including Addington Primary School, Goals Reading and the Bulmershe Leisure Centre. This setting reflects the dual role of the campus as both an educational environment and a shared community resource.



Site Location Plan

# 2. Existing

## 2.2 Proposed site and access

The proposed site is located adjacent to the existing Table Tennis building and sports courts. This area of the site is currently underused but benefits from strong physical and visual connections to the wider school campus, making it well suited for the integration of a new SEND Resource Base.

Pedestrian routes connect into the wider school circulation network.



View from existing tarmac area looking towards site (grassed area)



View from proposed site looking north east towards existing car park.



View from Goal's Reading drop off area with Bulmershe Sports Court and Table Tennis Club building (SEND unit site is behind).



Circulation route to rear of gym



Site bounded by school gym to left and Table Tennis Club in front

# 2. Existing

## 2.3 Existing School Buildings

The Bulmershe School campus comprises a mix of historic brick buildings, later modular additions and sports facilities. Recent development includes the Table Tennis Building and the main entrance improvements delivered as part of the 2013 programme



Main Entrance Building (2013)



North west face of gym



Table Tennis Club building and single tree on site



Gymnastic Club behind sports court to north of site



Goals Reading car park and access road

# 2. Existing

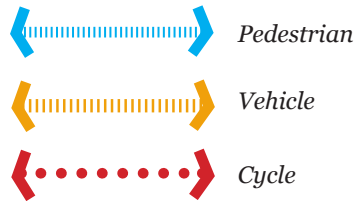
## 2.4 Site Opportunities and Constraints

### Opportunities

- Site provides good integration with the existing school, with clear physical and visual connections.
- Site is well away from boundaries and residential properties, limiting amenity impact.
- Makes good use of underused area of green space
- Biodiversity gain opportunities for grass area

### Constraints

- The development involves the use of greenfield / playing field land and will be considered in parallel with the Section 77 application being progressed separately by the client.
- The sloping nature of the site necessitates careful design to achieve inclusive and compliant access
- Construction within a live school environment will require careful management.
- The proximity of classrooms to sports courts may require consideration of noise separation and mitigation measures.
- Coordination of existing underground services will be required as part of the detailed design process



- 1. Bulmershe car park
- 2. Bulmershe MainEntrance
- 3. Bulmershe Leisure Centre
- 4. Addington Primary School
- 5. Goals Reading
- 6. Bulmershe Sports Courts
- 7. Table Tennis Club
- 8. Playing Fields



# 3. Proposed

## 3.1 Location Options Appraisal

This site plan illustrates the three locations considered for the new Resource Provision Unit. **Option 3** is the preferred location because it provides the strongest connection to existing school circulation routes, meets access requirements for pupils, staff and servicing,

All options are positioned away from residential boundaries. Option 3 occupies an under-used corner of the playing field, allowing the unit to operate semi-independently while remaining well linked to the main school.

**Option 1** – On Existing Sports Court

- Pros: Avoids building on green space
- Cons: Displaces existing sport court which has recently been resurfaced. Replacement would need to be on green space

**Option 2** – On grassed area option A

- Pros: Makes use of underused grass area
- Cons: Too remote from access points and away from existing buildings making it appear separate from existing school

**Option 3** – On grassed area option B

- Pros: Close to access points and existing school buildings making new building here connected to existing school
- Cons: Although not well used, does build on grass area. Site levels will require some retaining walls

The school does not have existing internal accommodation suitable for conversion to provide the required SEND facilities. All options would result in some loss of external space; however, Option 3 is considered to have the least impact on day-to-day outdoor activity while offering the most appropriate balance between accessibility, integration and operational efficiency.



# 3. Proposed

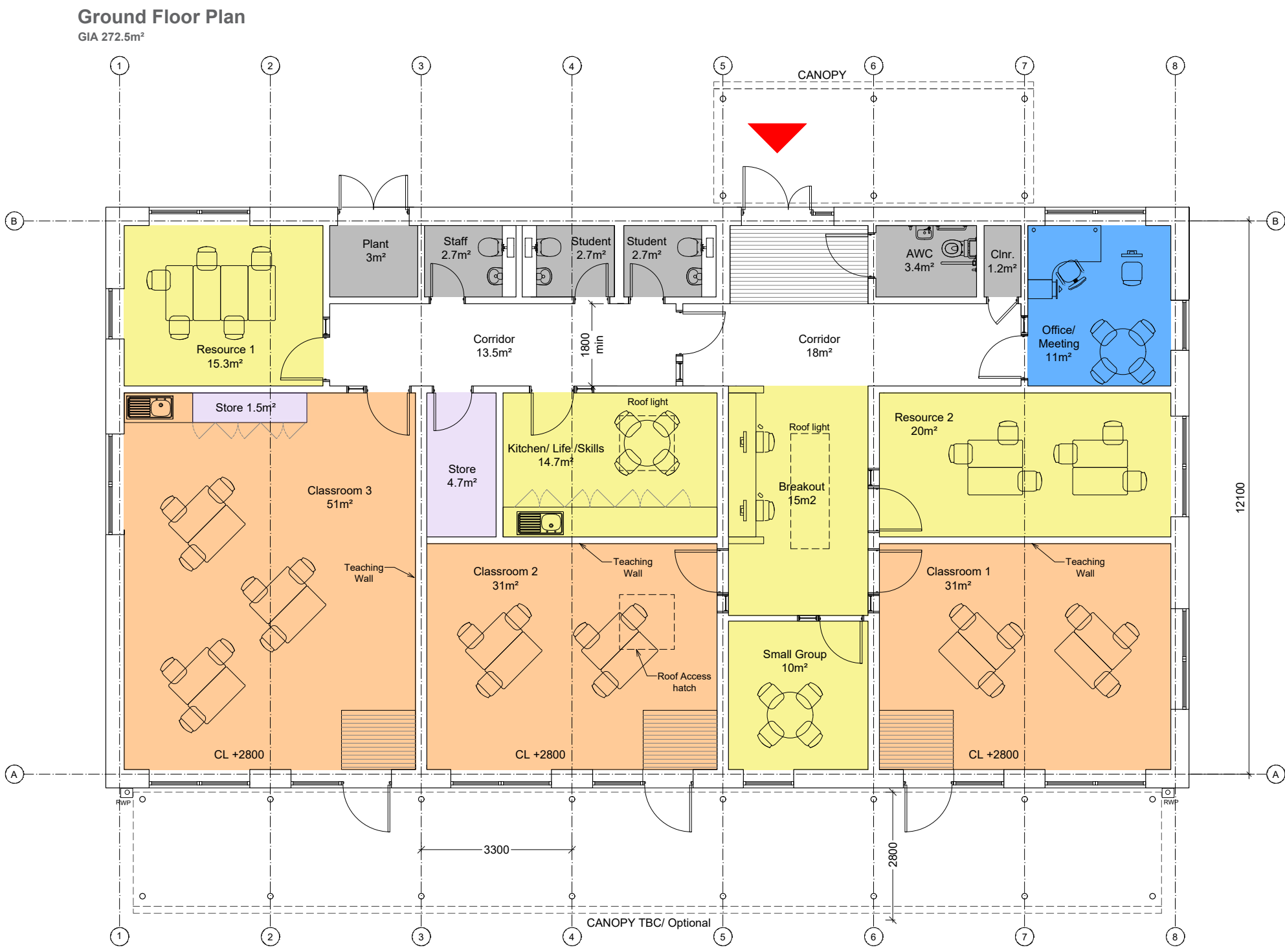
## 3.2 Proposed Layout

The plan on this page is the proposed SEND Communication & Learning Resource Base. The arrangement has been developed within a typical modular grid and informed by engagement with the school to respond to the educational needs of a secondary Cognition & Learning cohort.

The layout provides one larger classroom supported by smaller teaching and resource spaces, enabling flexible whole-group and small-group learning. The arrangement includes a breakout space between the two 31 m<sup>2</sup> classrooms, relocation of the Kitchen / Life Skills space to improve daylight to Resource Room 1, and an entrance orientated toward the Gym building. Overall, the layout supports clear zoning, effective supervision and a calm learning environment.



Example of modular unit being installed by crane



# 3. Proposed

## 3.4 Area Schedule and BB104 Comparison

The area schedule on this page sets out the proposed accommodation at Stage 3, including teaching, support and staff spaces. BB104 recommended areas and indicative occupancies are included to demonstrate how the proposal has been developed with reference to guidance for a secondary Cognition & Learning unit.

Overall, the accommodation provides a balanced and appropriate mix of teaching, small-group and support spaces suitable for a 25-pupil Cognition and Learning SEND cohort, and generally aligns with the principles set out in BB104.

| Space                               | Number | Area (m²) | Typical Occupancy  | Total area (m²)    | BB104 guidance (m²) | Compliance / commentary                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Classroom 1 & 2                     | 2      | 31        | 4–6 pupils         | 62                 | 30–35               | Compliant – supports smaller learning groups (min 4m length 600mm deep in class storage required (min 2m2) |
| Standard Classroom 3 (large)        | 1      | 51        | 8–10 pupils        | 51                 | 50–55               | Compliant – one larger classroom provided for whole-group teaching                                         |
| Classroom 3 store                   | 1      | 1.5       | n/a                | 1.5                | As required         | Additional 1.5m3 in class storage required (min 3m2 total)                                                 |
| Store shared                        | 1      | 4.7       | n/a                | 4.7                | As required         | Acceptable                                                                                                 |
| Resource / Group Room               | 1      | 20        | 4–6 pupils         | 20                 | 10–20               | Compliant                                                                                                  |
| Resource / Sensory Room             | 1      | 15.3      | 2–4 pupils         | 15.3               | 8–12                | Slightly above BB104 but appropriate for secondary C&L use                                                 |
| Small Group Room                    | 1      | 10        | 2–4 pupils         | 10                 | 8–10                | Compliant                                                                                                  |
| Breakout Space                      | 1      | 15        | Transient          | 15                 | 12–20               | Also serves as circulation                                                                                 |
| Kitchen / Life Skills               | 1      | 14.7      | 4–6 pupils         | 14.7               | 12–15               | Compliant                                                                                                  |
| Office / Meeting Room               | 1      | 11        | 2–4 staff / pupils | 11                 | 10–12               | Compliant                                                                                                  |
| Total Net Internal Area (NIA) 205.2 |        |           |                    |                    |                     |                                                                                                            |
| Accessible WC                       | 1      | 3.4       | Single user        | 3.4                | 3–4                 | Compliant                                                                                                  |
| Student WC                          | 2      | 2.7       | Single user        | 5.4                | 3–4                 | Compliant                                                                                                  |
| Staff WC                            | 1      | 2.7       | Single user        | 2.7                | 3–4                 | Compliant                                                                                                  |
| Plant Room                          | 1      | 3         | n/a                | 3                  | As required         |                                                                                                            |
| Circulation (corridors)             | 2      | 31.5      | n/a                | 31.5               | 15–25% GIA          | Within expected BB104 range                                                                                |
| Partitions                          |        |           |                    | 21.3               |                     | (8% within standard range for modular building)                                                            |
|                                     |        |           |                    | Total Non Net 67.3 |                     |                                                                                                            |
|                                     |        |           |                    | GIA 272.5          |                     |                                                                                                            |

# 3. Proposed

## 3.5 Site Plan Proposed

The building is orientated so that its main entrance faces back toward the existing school, reinforcing a clear relationship with and sense of connection to the wider campus. The administration office is positioned at the corner of the building to provide views in two directions along the principal pedestrian approach routes, supporting supervision and passive oversight.

SEND pupil drop-off and pick-up is proposed from the existing car park to the north-east of the site, subject to detailed operational arrangements.



# 3. Proposed

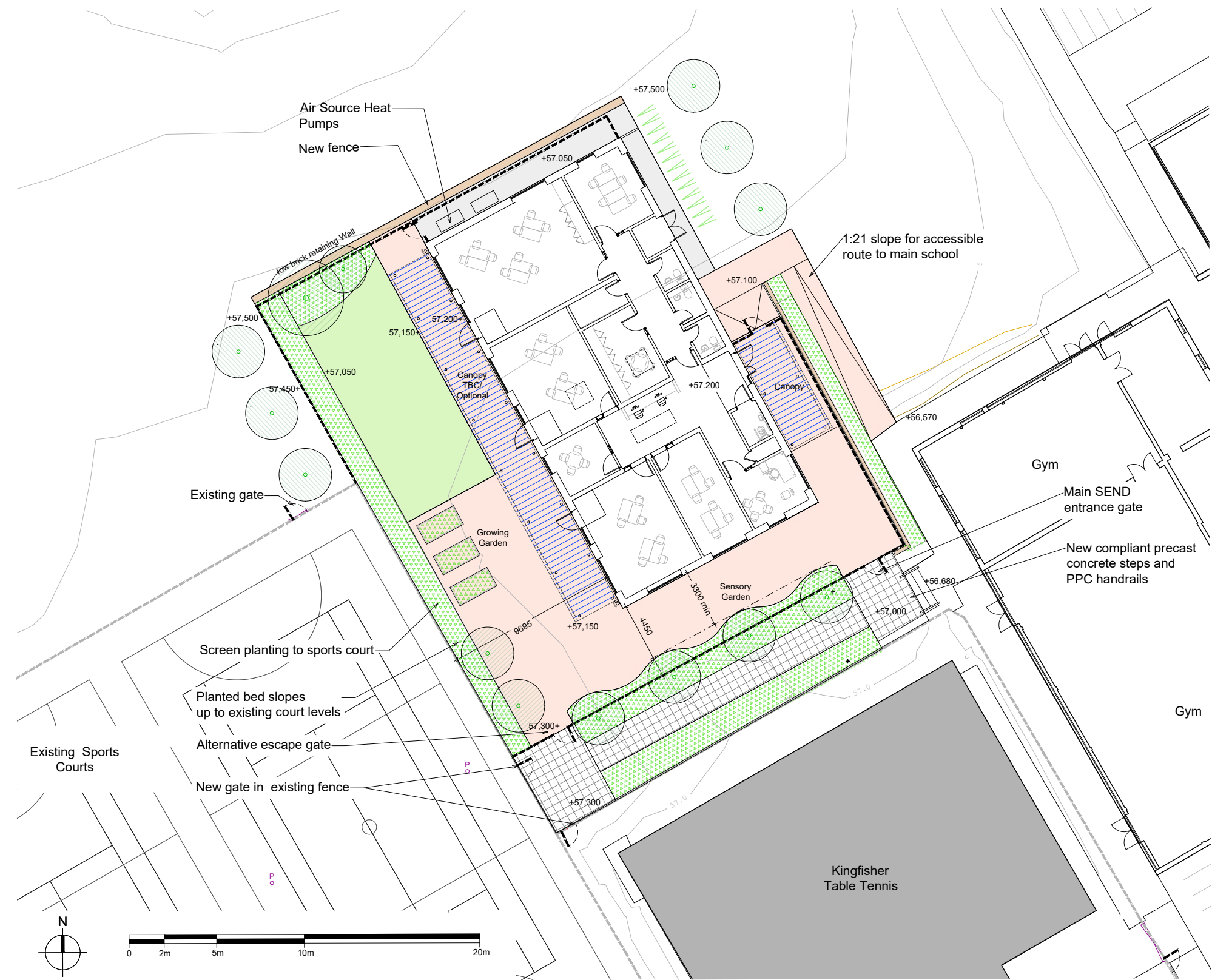
## 3.6 External Works Proposed

Teaching spaces within the SEND unit are orientated broadly to the south-west to benefit from natural daylight. A linear canopy is proposed along this elevation to assist with the management of solar gain and to provide weather protection.

The external area associated with the SEND unit is enclosed with a visually permeable mesh fence, allowing outward views and maintaining a visual relationship with the surrounding green space. New planting and trees are proposed to enhance the external environment and provide access to nature and calming, sensory stimulation for pupils attending the unit.

Given the sloping nature of the site, localised retaining elements are anticipated to create a level platform for the modular building. To the northern, rear elevation, air source heat pumps are proposed to be set at a lower level relative to the adjacent playing fields, providing a degree of visual screening and containment.

Access to the existing sports court is proposed to be improved through the provision of a new gate within the court fencing and a dedicated pedestrian route to the rear of the Table Tennis Club.



# 3. Proposed

## 3.7 Architectural Approach

The proposed SEND Resource Base is conceived as a simple, legible single-storey building of a modest scale appropriate to its location within the school campus. The form is intentionally restrained to support clarity of movement, ease of supervision and the creation of a calm learning environment for Cognition & Learning pupils.

The external envelope is proposed to comprise a horizontal boarded fibre cement rainscreen system. This provides a robust and low-maintenance façade with a high level of inherent fire resistance, which is an important consideration for a SEND facility within a school setting.

The use of horizontal boarding is intended to visually reference the adjacent timber-boarded Table Tennis Building, allowing the new SEND unit to sit comfortably within its context. Fibre cement offers the appearance and scale of timber boarding while avoiding the durability, maintenance and fire performance limitations associated with natural timber.

Openings are arranged to provide good levels of daylight to teaching spaces, with canopies and façade articulation proposed to help manage solar gain and provide weather protection at entrances.



View from west



View from east

# 3. Proposed

## 3.8 External Materials & Colour



CLASSROOM ELEVATION WITH CANOPY



CLASSROOM ELEVATION



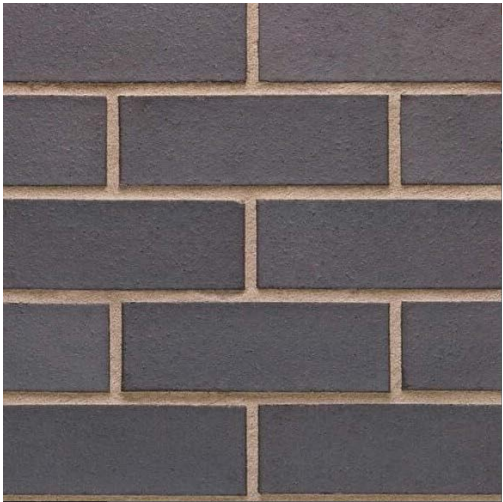
CLADDING  
Metal Green



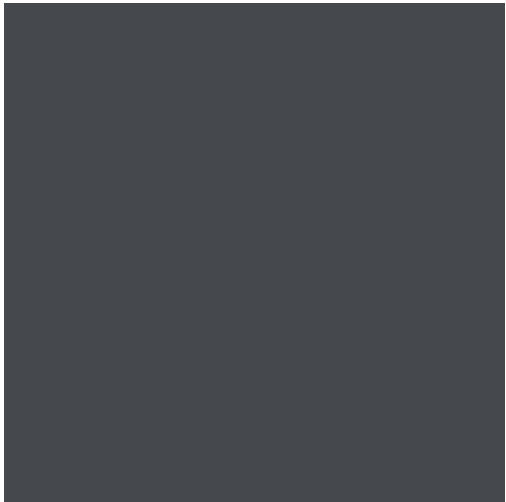
WINDOWS/DOORS/COPING/RWP  
RAL 7045



GRILLS  
RAL 7026



BASE/ RETAINING WALLS  
Blue Engineering brick



CANOPY  
RAL 7024

# 4. Access and H&S

## 4.1 Accessibility

The proposal will be designed to comply with the Equality Act 2010, guided by Approved Document Part M and BS 8300:2009 – Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people. Level and step-free access is provided from the drop-off area to the building entrance, with compliant internal circulation and sanitary provision.

## 4.2 Fire Safety

Fire appliance access is understood to be available via Chequers Way to the east of the site. The specific arrangements will be developed further at the next stage in consultation with the school.

The proposed building is a standalone, single-storey structure and is sufficiently separated from existing school blocks so as not to adversely affect current escape strategies.

Sprinklers are not currently considered necessary, subject to confirmation that neither the school nor their insurers require them. There is no property protection requirement identified at this stage and insurance cover does not mandate their inclusion.

## 4.3 Principal Designer (CDM)

The project will be delivered in accordance with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. Construction works will be carefully planned and coordinated to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and neighbouring residents throughout the build period.

Key health and safety considerations identified at RIBA Stage 3 include underground services, construction activity adjacent to an operational school, and future access for maintenance. These matters will be addressed through further surveys, detailed design development and the preparation of a Construction Phase Plan.

Pre-Construction Information is being developed as further site and survey information becomes available.

## 4.4 Principal Designer (Building Regulations)

Introduced through the Building Safety Act 2022, the Principal Designer (Building Regulations) is responsible for ensuring that building designs comply with the Building Regulations. This role is required for any project involving design work subject to Building Regulations approval.

The client (Wokingham Borough Council) has;

- Made suitable arrangements for managing the project's health and safety from the start.
- Has appointed the key duty holders.
- Has ensured that there is enough time and money allocated for the work to be done safely
- Has provided/ or will provide, essential background information about the site (surveys and existing hazards)

At RIBA Work Stage 3, the Principal Designer (Building Regulations) has determined the following;

- The design is compliant with all relevant parts of the Building Regulations in principle, however it is not yet sufficiently detailed to assess compliance in full.
- That the project designers have managed and coordinated the work satisfactorily.
- That the project designers are technically competent to undertake this project.
- That the project designers have kept a record of design decisions and any relevant regulatory documentation.

The Principal Designer (Building Regulations) has had sufficient influence over the project design at this stage.

# 5. Environmental Impact

## 5.1 Sustainability

The sustainability strategy focuses on practical, low-maintenance solutions compatible with modular construction and long-term operation within a school environment. Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs), combined with high-efficiency air-conditioning units, are proposed to provide heating and cooling, avoiding the use of underfloor heating and reducing overall plant space requirements. Enhanced fabric performance, hybrid ventilation approaches, solar control measures and low-energy lighting strategies have informed the design and will be developed further through the detailed technical design stages.

Refer to the submitted Sustainability Report.

## 5.2 Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

An Ecological Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment have been undertaken to inform the proposed development.

The emerging proposals include enhanced planting within the application site boundary, including additional tree planting, in order to achieve the required minimum 10% biodiversity net gain in accordance with current legislation.

The proposed landscape strategy and planting types are illustrated on the submitted Soft Landscape Plan.

Refer to the submitted Ecological Assessment, Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Soft Landscape Plan.

## 5.3 Arboricultural

The proposed building location is set away from existing mature trees. One small memorial tree within the site footprint will require relocation or replacement. This will be mitigated through appropriate replacement planting and the introduction of additional trees as part of the wider landscape strategy.

Refer to submitted Ecology and BNG Reports.

## 5.4 Transport

The SEND Resource Base will result in a modest increase in pupil numbers associated with specialist provision. The development has been designed to integrate with existing school access arrangements and to minimise impacts on the local highway network.

Refer to the submitted Transport Assessment.

## 5.5 Flood Risk

The Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning confirms that the site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding from fluvial or tidal sources. Surface water drainage will be managed through appropriate on-site measures in line with current standards.

Refer to the submitted Drainage Strategy.

## 5.6 Ground Conditions

Ground conditions and potential land contamination have been assessed through a desk study and preliminary risk assessment.

Refer to the submitted Desk Study and Preliminary Risk Assessment Report.

## 5.7 Noise and Acoustics

Noise considerations, including the assessment of proposed plant and background noise conditions, have been reviewed as part of the design process.

Refer to the submitted Noise Impact Assessment prepared by Anderson Acoustics.

## 5.8 Construction Management

Construction management will be critical to ensuring health and safety and minimising disruption to the operation of the school and its surroundings. Key considerations include site set-up, materials storage, construction traffic routing, and maintaining safe segregation between pupils, staff and construction activities. These principles will be developed further through engagement with modular contractors and formalised within a Construction Management Plan.

# 6. Planning Context and Next Steps

## 6.1 Design development

The design proposals have been developed to planning stage to establish the siting, scale, layout and access arrangements for the SEND Resource Base. Further detailed design development will be undertaken following the appointment of the modular contractor, who will be responsible for progressing the technical design in coordination with statutory and specialist requirements.

This Design and Access Statement therefore focuses on the planning principles of the scheme rather than detailed technical coordination.

## 6.2 Planning Considerations

Planning policy compliance, transport impacts, residential amenity considerations, ecology, trees, drainage and other material planning matters are addressed in detail within the submitted Planning Statement and supporting technical reports.

## 6.3 Relevant Planning History

The Bulmershe School has been subject to a series of significant planning approvals in 2013 as part of a wider programme of campus redevelopment. In March 2013, full planning permission was granted for a new main Entrance Building incorporating administrative accommodation, teaching spaces, a Sixth Form Centre and a new school hall (application ref. F/2013/0430). This development established a new principal arrival sequence, rationalised pedestrian and vehicular movements and improved the public-facing facilities of the school.

As part of the same redevelopment programme, planning permission was granted in May 2013 for the relocation of the Kingfisher Table Tennis Club to a new purpose-built building located on the eastern edge of the campus. The relocation enabled the removal of older temporary and ancillary buildings from the core school area and supported the consolidation of sports and community uses toward the site perimeter, with dedicated access arrangements separated from the main school circulation.

The proposed SEND Communication & Learning Resource Base is located adjacent to the approved Table Tennis Building and reflects the same planning principles established through the earlier redevelopment. These include locating specialist accommodation toward the edge of the campus, maintaining appropriate separation from core school buildings, and supporting clear safeguarding and operational arrangements. The proposal therefore sits comfortably within the established planning context and long-term development strategy for The Bulmershe School.

28 Navigation Road  
London  
E3 3TG

Telephone: 020 7739 8945

[www.rivingtonstreetstudio.co.uk](http://www.rivingtonstreetstudio.co.uk)

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