LVS Hassocks, London Road, Sayers Common, Hassocks, BN6 9NT

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

To accompany the planning application for:
‘Hybrid application which encompasses the development of the north western part of the Land at LVS Hassocks so as to accommodate a new SEN School with associated access from London Road, car parking, landscaping and drainage works’.

Submitted on behalf of the Licensed Trade Charity (LTC). January 2026

ABOUT ECA

ECA PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE LIMITED

ECA Architecture & Planning,

w: eca-p.com; t: 01202 675152; e: info@eca-p.com

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Print format: A3 double sided facing pages (plans not to scale)

1. CONTENTS

1. Introduction and description of development

1.1 The **Licensed Trade Charity (LTC)** have been educating the children of families from the licensing trade for over 220 years and have 3 schools in the south of England. The LVS Hassocks school is a specialist school for young people with a diagnosis of autism and offers academic and vocational pathways that support students to reach their potential in an inspiring, aspirational and collaborative environment.

1.2 LVS Hassocks School was opened on the site of the former Priory of Our Lady of Good Counsel, in 2009 and operates out of a series of education buildings dating from the Nineteenth Century. It is surrounded by open fields, three of which are open ground and not used by the school and accessed off a driveway from London Road.

1.3 LVS Hassocks is registered with the Department for Education for 100 school places for pupils aged between 11-18. The replacement school is required to accommodate the continued pressure for Special Educational Needs (SEN) included for those with Autism, ADHD, and sensory issues. Each class has 8 pupils with a teacher and support assistants plus therapists.

1.4 The school previously accommodated boarding pupils, but due to changes in regulations and the care system, this has now ceased, resulted in large areas of land and buildings no longer needed. This, together with the outdated building typology means that the school is now extremely inefficient and expensive to run.

1.5 LTC now wish to deliver their long-term aspiration for LVS Hassocks, to be accommodated in a low carbon school, fit for purpose, meeting the needs of its pupils and staff, whilst being efficient to manage and run cost effectively.

1.6 A hybrid planning application has been submitted that seeks consent for separate and severable elements comprising:

'Demolition of all existing buildings bar the chapel, to retained for use within Use Class F and:

a) Full planning permission for the development of the north western part of the Land at LVS Hassocks so as to accommodate a new SEN School with associated access from London Road, car parking, landscaping and drainage works; and
b) Outline planning permission (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale Reserved) for the development of the rest of the land at LVS Hassocks so as to accommodate up to 210 dwellinghouses (including affordable housing) with associated access, car parking, landscaping, play areas, informal outdoor space and drainage works.'

The Design and Access Statement relates to the full element.

1.7 The proposal includes the following features:

- Erection of a 1 and 2 storey detached SEN School in the north west corner of the existing site capable of accommodating up to 100 pupils in a series of classrooms, dining space and studios of various sizes
- The installation of a Multi-use games area to the rear of the school, with fencing and astroturf
- Internal driveway and waiting area (looping driveway) and car park for up to 69 car parking space, plus spaces for deliveries, and drop-off/ pick-up
- Erection of a single storey cafe building
- Associated landscaping to achieve BNG
- Installation of an improved access road to be shared with the associated housing development

1.8 This proposal is part of a residential-led development for the wider site, which is required as enabling development to fund the building of the new school.

1.9 The school requires there to be minimal disruption and a complete continuation of education on the site before, during and after building work. Therefore the new buildings need to be on a separate, but adjoining site, whilst also being away from the housing site which will be built out during and after the school has relocated.

1.10 As a result of the ongoing disrepair to the existing school, it is essential that the project adheres to a strict timetable and it is anticipated that building work will commence on site in early 2027 with pupils moving into the new school in September 2028.

Figure 1 - LVS Hassocks school entrance

Figure 2 - LVS Hassocks school grounds

Figure 3 - LVS Hassocks satellite view

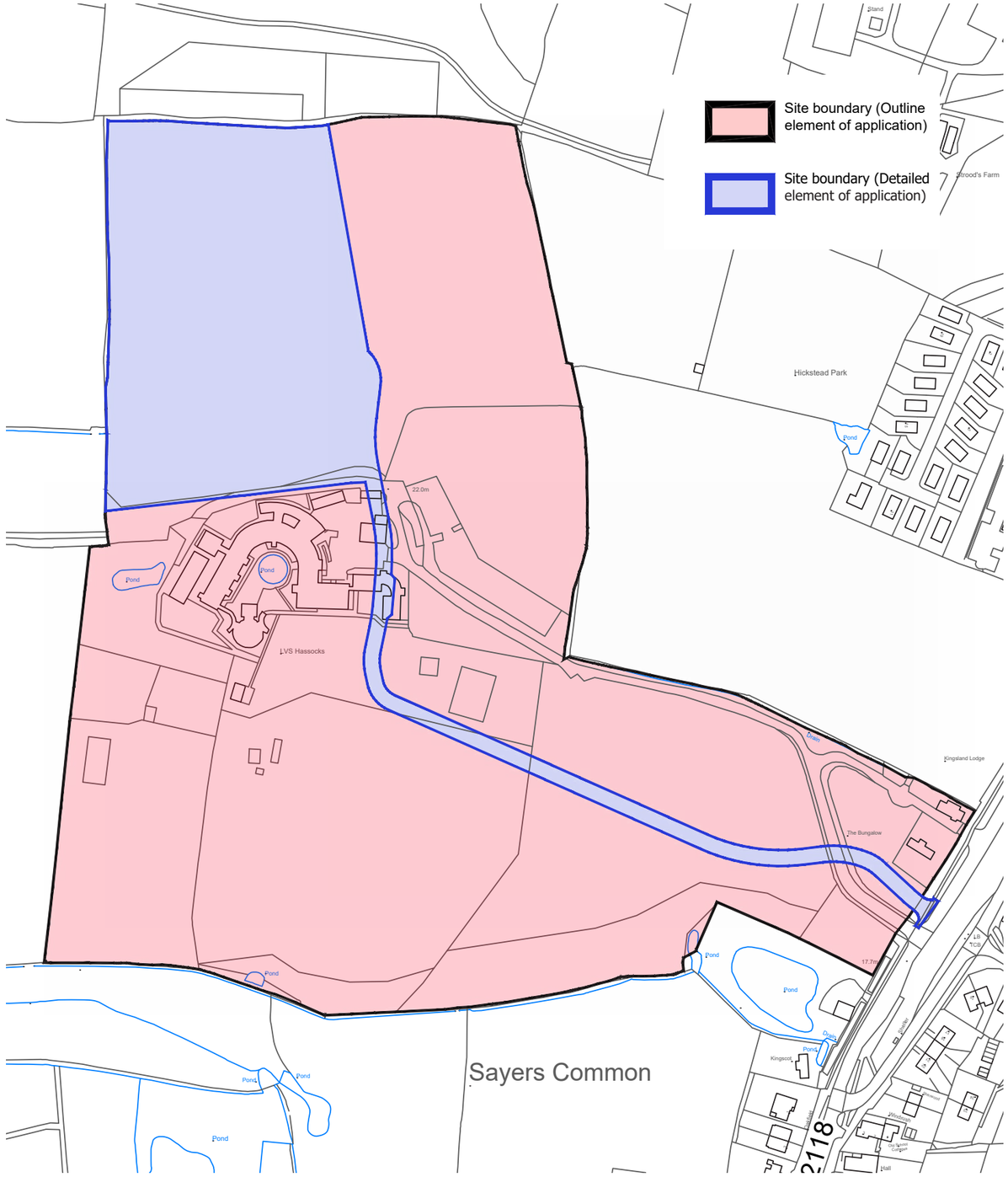


Figure 4 - Hybrid Application Areas Plan (OSP Architects) N.T.S.

Figure 5 - Site location plan of the wider site

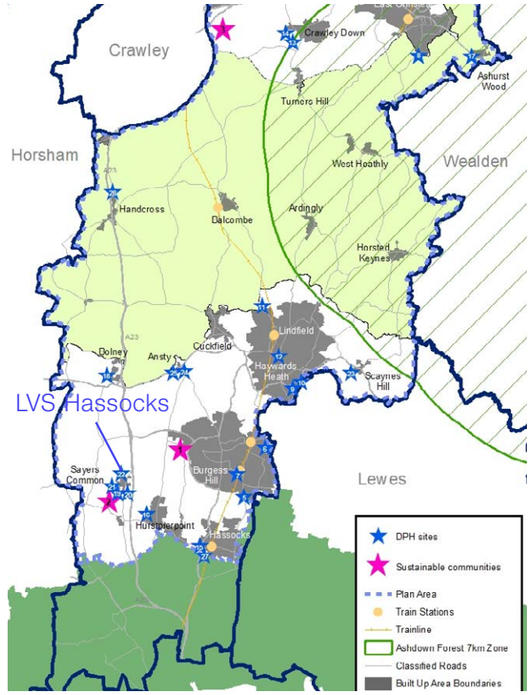


Figure 6- Image taken from Consultation Draft of the Mid Sussex Local Plan, 2024

Figure 7 - Drainage survey showing areas prone to localised flooding

2. The site context and setting

2.1 The wider site comprises 14.41 Hectares of brownfield land with ancillary fields, pitches and driveways associated with the existing school use.

2.2 The existing school buildings are clustered in the centre of the site and form a series of 1 and 2 storey buildings. These include a two storey Georgian stucco-fronted, Kingsland house, a two storey monastic arch (former Convent bedrooms) and cloisters and a domed chapel built in 1976-1980 to designs by the Michael Blee Whitaker Partnership. LTC took over the site from the priory in 2007 when it was extended and converted to a boarding and day school for children with special educational needs.

2.3 In 2023, LVS commissioned a study of the 'Existing building area and uses' which founds that:

- 46% of the total floor space in the existing school building is unusable
- Nearly 30% of the space within the building is corridor space
- The classroom spaces, which utilise the original nuns sleeping quarters, are too small and their irregular shape creates impractical spaces for classroom based exercises and furniture
- The deep floor plan of most rooms, requires artificial light to be used all the time
- The extensive thermal envelope, extensive glazed elevations and extensive use of asbestos in the buildings construction, makes many parts of the school uncomfortable to occupy and impractical to extend and convert.

2.4 Due to the requirement to maximise the potential for enabling housing development and provide uninterrupted education provision, the replacement school will be located on a sloping undeveloped field to the north of the existing buildings, currently used as grazing land, ancillary to the education use comprising 2.63 Hectares. This field is bounded on all sides by mature hedgerows and trees and a Public Right of Way runs along its southern boundary.

2.5 The site contains a heavy landscaping buffer (trees and hedgerows) on the sites boundaries, which are not protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The site is outside a flood zones, however parts of the site are prone to surface water flooding. The site contains no listed buildings, although the Chapel of the former Priory of Our Lady has been identified by the council as a Non Designated Heritage Asset.

2.6 The proposed school will be located at the western end of a proposed new road, approximately 400 from the west side of London Road on the northern edge of the village of Sayers Common. This is a relatively sustainable location, with the new school being within a 20 minutes walk to some shops and services including a Church, Parish Hall, Community Shop, public house and various employment premises.

2.7 Vehicular access to the school is excellent, as the London Road (B2118) junction is approximately 500m from the junction with the A23. There are also regular bus services from Sayers Common to Burgess Hill train station, itself being a reasonably large urban centre, about 3km to the east. Hassocks Railway Station is located 6.3km south east of the development. Hurstpierpoint is accessible via an eight-minute bus journey or 13 minute cycle.

2.8 The school is located within a semi-rural area, characterised by open countryside to the west and the built up area of Sayers Common to the east and south. The character of built form in Sayers Common and surrounding villages is taken from the Sussex and South Downs National Park typology with extensive use of natural, local materials, timber framing, clay tile roofs dating from 13th Century to the early Georgian period. However the character of the area is changing and large areas to the east and south are proposed as urban extensions with over 2000 new homes planned for this area in the next ten years.

Figure 8: Existing school entrance on London Rd

Figure 9: Existing driveway

Figure 10: Existing field where the new school will be located

2.9 The High Weald National Landscape (previously Area of Outstanding natural Beauty (AONB)) is situated approximately 3.3km to the north of the site at its closest point, and the South Downs National Park (SDNP) is approximately 2.5km to the south-east of the site at its closest point

2.10 A Screening opinion was sought from Mid Sussex Council on the following development: 'Hybrid planning application for residential development of up to 210 dwellings with associated access, car parking, landscaping, play areas, informal outdoor space and drainage works (outline) and a new SEN school with associated access, car parking, landscaping and drainage works (full)'.

2.11 On 17th November 2025, Mid Sussex District Council confirmed, by notice, that in accordance with the criteria in Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations, the proposed development, while constituting a Schedule 2 development, would not be likely to have a significant effect on the environment by virtue of the factors such as its characteristics, location and characteristics of potential impacts. It is therefore not EIA development requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment.

2.12 In summary, the character of the site, in which the proposed school is to be located is as follows:

- **Semi rural character, with calm and pleasant views of the open countryside, ideal for a SEN school**
- **Secluded site, surrounded by mature hedgerows and trees**
- **Sloped topographical nature rising to the north, creating the potential to minimise impact of the new built form on the surrounding countryside to the north and west**
- **Green field with excellent potential to increase biodiversity, whilst providing opportunities for outside play and education (forest school) meeting the specialist education needs of pupils**
- **The former chapel, to be retained in the wider site masterplan provides a strong sense of place and reference point for the site and designs for the new school**
- **Semi-rural area with excellent access to a large population where the staff and pupils come from.**

Figure 11: Existing chapel

3. Relevant planning and design policies

NPPF (2024)

3.1 The proposal for a replacement SEN school to meet the needs of the sub-region is in accordance with **strategic policies** as included in the NPPF (2024), which seeks to plan positively for education, giving significant *weight to the need to 'create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications'.*

3.2 The NPPF (131-141) confirms that **design quality** should be considered throughout the evolution of proposals and decisions should ensure that developments function well, are visually attractive, are sympathetic to local character, establish or maintain a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

Mid Sussex Local Plan

3.3 In accordance with the NPPF, LVS have sought to take a **plan-led approach** to the redevelopment of the site and have made representations through the emerging local plan process. However the emerging local plan has been delayed and the operational needs of the school require this planning application to progress independently of the Local Plan.

3.4 Not withstanding this, the site is allocated for 200 homes and a replacement school in the emerging local plan policy DPSC7 and this should carry weight in the determination of this detailed application. The current school is in need of improvement to better provide for the children attending, therefore action is now needed to plan for a replacement school to open no later than September 2028. The proposal will lead to an improvement to the quality and sustainability of eduction within the local and sub-regional area.

National Design Guide (2019)

3.5 The national design guide (see figure below) confirms that well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create its physical character, helping to nurture and sustain a sense of community, positively addressing environmental issues affecting the climate. The ten characteristics are context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public space, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan (see figure opposite).

3.6 This Design and Access statement demonstrates that a robust design process of briefing and review has been adhered to and the building and site design, respond to the character of the site, enhancing the sites sense of place, whilst providing a sustainable building which will reduce the carbon footprint of LVS Hassocks in the long-term.

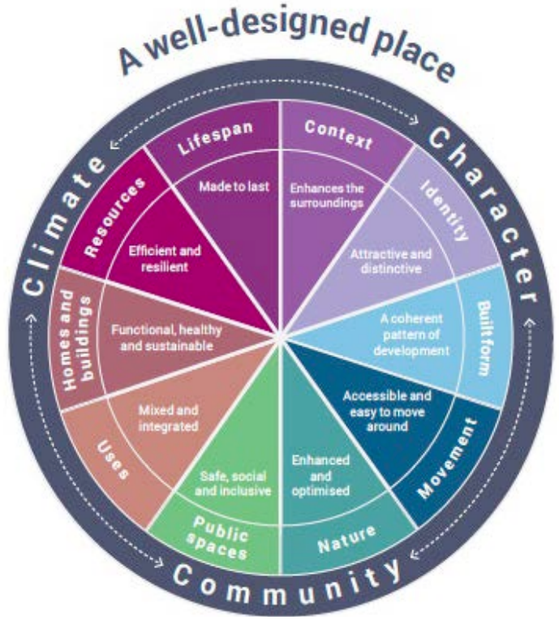


Figure 12 - Ten characteristics of well-designed places National Design Guide

DPSC7: Land at LVS Hassocks, London Road, Sayers Common

The boundary shown on the site map below represents the extent of the site inclusive of all built development and any mitigation requirements (e.g. landscape buffers or open space) listed within the policy requirements.

DPSC7: Land at LVS Hassocks, London Road, Sayers Common					
SHELAA Ref:	1003	**Settlement:**	Sayers Common	**Gross Site Area (ha):**	10.2
Number of Dwellings:			200		
Infrastructure	On-site: • Informal outdoor space • Relocation of the SEND school Financial contributions towards the provision of: • Sustainable Transport • Improvements at Hassocks Station • Education • Library • Community buildings • Local Community Infrastructure • Emergency services • Health • Play area • Other outdoor provision • Outdoor sports Provision of: • Sustainable transport measures • Highway works • Reprovision of SEND school • Sewerage network upgrades				

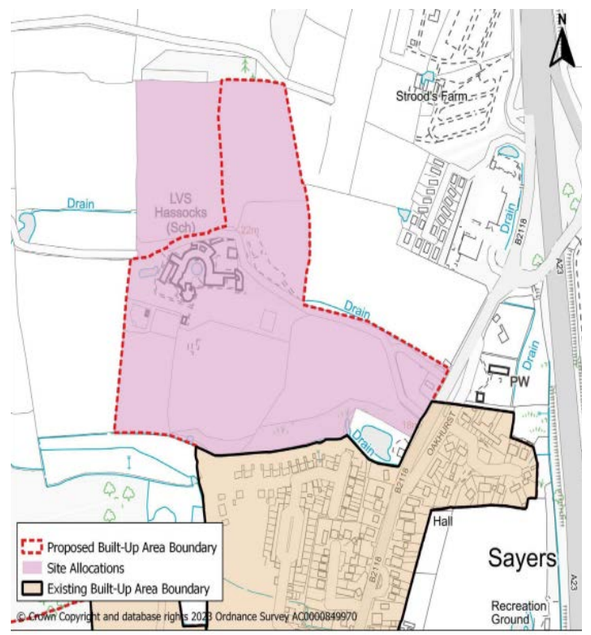


Figure 13 - Extract from Mid Sussex Draft Plan Planning Policy DPSC7

4. Design Principles and concepts

4.1 A school which promotes health, well-being and access to nature: The design maximises access and views of the natural environments for students, with external doors from all the ground floor rooms to the extensive gardens, forest school , circular walking route and MUGA. There are also views from within the atrium to the countryside and roof-lights are used to maximise light through the centre of the building.

4.2 A school which responds to the local context and has its own identity: Oast house roofs are part of the rural landscape character and by creating a contemporary sculptural interpretation of the existing chapel, a local landmark, the building will relate well to the rural landscape here. This form also has the benefit of creating a strong sense of place and familiar design feature which the pupils can orientate themselves towards.

4.3 A school which creates inspiring views and is connected to the landscape: This is done by maximising windows from all spaces, whilst ensuring that temperature controls and light are appropriate for the teaching environment and energy efficiency is maximised. There is also a need to maximise wall space for classroom storage, teaching and display purposes.

4.4 A school which is comfortable to use and affordable to run: The orientation of the building and design treatments have been carefully considered to limit overheating. With the entrance orientated to face the south-east, the classrooms face north and west so as to minimise solar gain. The amount of south facing elements are minimised, and the smallest section of the building faces south which is used as the dining hall, a space occupied for the least amount of time. The first floor PE and drama space has a large roof-light and vaulted ceiling that can be blacked out for performances.

4.5 Directional windows are proposed on the first floor for solar shading and this also creates opportunities for planting and balconies. Quiet spaces have also been designed in, where students can sit and look out to the country side.

4.6 A legible school for way-finding: A rationalised route has been provided through the school for students with multiple learning abilities for easy way-finding. Unusually, classrooms and staff office spaces are positioned on both the ground and first floor levels interspersed to maximise safeguarding and minimise congestion in corridors at peak times. A circular walking loop has been created for pupils through the school and around the north/west sides (see drawing 323_005)

4.7 Well ventilated and well lit classrooms and spaces to promote well-being: The roof lights from the sculptural roof form, will maximise light, providing inspiring spaces and passive ventilation. Window sizes are maximised on the ground floor classrooms.

4.8 The most sustainable school possible: A bio-solar roof has been proposed on the single storey element to reduce rain water run off, improve biodiversity and soften the building within the landscape. Solar panels provide renewable sources of energy. Roof-lights and windows are maximised to minimise the use of artificial light, orientation and materials are also well considered for insulation and carbon footprint reasons.

Figure 14 -Visualisation of proposed school and landscaping

5. Design development and engagement including the Design Review Panel

5.1 There have been four main stages in the design process, as follows:

- **Site master planning from 2023:** Through representations to the emerging local plan and collaboration with house builders for enabling housing development to create a viable development and cohesive site plan.

- **Brief and concept designs from 2024:** This stage was subject to extensive options and engagement with the client and senior school leadership team.

- **Pre-application enquiry and site planning from January 2025:** These designs were subject to engagement with Mid Sussex District Council Planning Officers; West Sussex County Highway authority; Mid Sussex Design Review Panel and the wider client team, including Wates Developments.

- **Late 2025 - Planning application:** These RIBA stage 3 designs have been subject to value engineering, detailed engagement with the school community, including pupils and amended to respond to comments received from the Design Review Panel.

5.2 The section below sets out how the planning application scheme has responded to all the comments received form the **Design Review Panel (DRP)** and pupil, parent and teacher engagement in November/December 2025.

5.3 The most fundamental change since the DRP has been the amendment to the site plan and relocation of the proposed school to the north-western area of the site. This was needed to maximise the area for enabling development and affordable homes on site.

Design response to the DRP: Notes of Mid Sussex Design Review Panel, 10 September 2025

5.4 Summary: The notes confirm that the panel '***'commended a most interesting presentation for an exciting but challenging project, for which a humble, low-level building in this secluded location is apt for its use'.*** The overall assessment was '***Support with amendments to the design'.***

5.5 The designs have been developed in response to these comments.

5.6 DRP Comment: ***'They were not convinced that it was landscape-led, as the building feels separate to the landscape rather than integrated with it'*****:** The designs have been improved to include:

- A building located in the centre of a field with all classrooms orientated towards views of the open countryside with easy direct access from all ground floor rooms

- Views of the countryside from the atrium, dining hall, entrance and classrooms

- A hierarchy of outside spaces including everyday adjoining outdoor learning areas, forest school, paths, structured walking lap, horticultural beds and a MUGA (See landscape section)

5.7 DRP Comment: ***'there is scope to subtly break up the expanse of car parking so that it does not dominate the area. This could be achieved by more naturalistic surfacing, tree planting and buffer screening.*** The designs have been improved to:

- Site plan adjusted with the parking now tucked behind the entrance so hard-standing does not dominate the setting of the entrance

- The immediate view on approach to the school is the school building and entrance and not the car park

- Car park broken up with trees, landscaping and use of grasscrete

Figure 15: Pre-application proposal, which showed the car park dominating the approach to the school

Figure 16: Planning application proposal, showing car park and access road to the south of the driveway away from the school entrance and secluded behind existing dense hedgerow. Grasscrete used.

- Access road for waiting cars, spirals round the edge of the car park away from views and within the school site boundary instead of spilling out to the wider site and London Rd (as existing)

5.8 DRP comment: ***'The Panel urged the architects to go further in creating something truly special in terms of landscaping and how it can benefit neurodiversity needs. This could be achieved by blending landscape textures and planting into the building and out again (such as the reception area) and focusing on the spaces immediately adjacent to the ground floor rooms to provide a generous perimeter between the building and the drop-off car parking spaces.*** The designs have evolved to:

- Using the landscaping required to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain as a means to create accessible, varied landscaped spaces suitable for learning in, whilst also being intimate, familiar and tactile

- Maximising the potential that can be planted and maintained by the schools grounds people who have specialist knowledge and work with the pupils on a daily basis already on horticulture and gardening activities (the staff have been engaged in the design process)

- A courtyard character to the drop-off area separated from the main car park as a result of location and landscaping, taking into account accessibility needs for a clear route with no opportunities for hiding or compromised safety.

- A walking loop has been created through the school and around the north/west side (requested by pupils)

- **This is visually demonstrated in the Landscape section of the report.**

5.9 DRP comment: ***A plan should also show immediate connecting garden areas outside the classrooms, which are an important part of designing for neurodiversity, and could include a covered area to help with overheating and facilitate all-weather play. Creating a high-quality environment with textures, smells and views will have a considerably positive impact on the pupils and staff'.*** The designs have evolved thus:

- Integrating the ability of pupils to interact with nature to complement the educational experience with the provision of outdoor classrooms, next to all ground floor classrooms, creating break-out and calming zones to replace breakout rooms currently in each classroom

- **This is visually demonstrated in the Landscape section of the report.**

5.10 DRP comment: ***'While the L-shaped building offers simplicity, the internal layout could be better reconfigured, in terms of accessing facilities, such as break-out areas, calm areas and larger and better-connected staff rooms facing onto gardens. Corridors could terminate with windows or views outside and an additional staircase is likely to be required. It was acknowledged that a specialist acoustic consultant would assist in further detailed layout and design'.*** The designs have evolved thus:

- L-shaped building enables the school to fully integrate with the site, whilst being the most energy efficient and comfortable

- Break-out areas inter-dispersed in corridors and external gardens to form calm/ break-out areas

- Therapy rooms (etc.) inter-dispersed throughout the building

- Staff room relocated to the corner of the ground floor where it is quiet and benefits from garden access improving conditions for staff

- Corridors do terminate with views on the first floor and ground floor east elevation

- Two staircases are provided, in accordance with building regulations

Figure 17: Pre-application proposal, showing proposed ground floor plan, where the pupil entrance was adjacent to toilets and did not lead straight to the atrium. Reception not as transparent. Few views to open countryside afforded. Limited access from classrooms to gardens.

Figure 18: Planning application proposal, showing proposed ground floor plan with large welcoming reception, staff room on ground floor with entrance to garden, large atrium, break-out areas and access to gardens from all ground floor classrooms. Intimate entrance for pupils retained but away from toilets.

5.11 DRP comment: '***The Panel queried the somewhat anonymous location of the reception and suggested that it be repositioned more prominently, to form a natural termination of the smooth approach to the building via the drop-off zone and landscape buffer zone. This would also avoid a chaotic pinch point for a variety of users and interactions. Understanding the car movements to access the school (which could involve circulating round the café rather than manoeuvring in front of the building) would assist in such decisions'.*** The designs have evolved thus:

- A series of spaces unfold as you enter from London Road, through the new housing development, past the familiar former chapel and terminating in the front of the school and reception which is legible and identifiable in a courtyard setting.

- The frontage of the school opens out onto the rest of the site, providing a book-end and vista from within the site, albeit a quite secluded one.

- Our engagement with staff and pupils confirmed that a large expansive reception and atrium were inappropriate for the special needs of pupils and a balance needed to be struck between creating light and views with intimate, calming spaces. The reception must be an intimate welcoming space instead of an statement. This is what people like about the exiting school entrance. There is also a security and safeguarding issue. The reception is now separated from the atrium and small in scale

DRP Comment: ***Full support was given to the café (which is intended to be open to the public but, on very restricted opening times with its main being used for private school use), but consideration could be given to placing it closer to the reception area or to overlook the swale rather than the staff car park. At present, the link between the café, staff car park and drop-off zone is not clear. In addition, the Panel suggested that a building providing a break-out space for staff could be incorporated into the scheme.*** The designs have evolved to:

- Create a defined site for the cafe, whose intention is to be readily visible and accessible for local external residents on restricted opening times, beyond the school perimeter which gives pupils more of a real life experience.

- It is not practical to install the cafe by the swale. Landscaping will however be introduced adjacent to the cafe to create a pleasant environment and overlook the adjacent street network. It will be in site line of the reception area. A separate staff room is provided on the ground floor with garden access.

- Its possible that cafe may double up as a music practice/ teaching room

5.12 The Panel felt that the roof form could be more boldly expressed. The original intention appeared to be for it to be visible in longer views on the approach, but as designed, this is unlikely to have the impact it should. The opportunity could be taken to introduce some character by increasing its height or reducing the eaves depth and horizontality of form. Use of clay tiles, rather than shingles, was suggested, which would reduce maintenance and inspection costs. The designs have evolved to:

- Make the roof form taller, wider and more sculptural, with a conical shape reminiscent of the existing chapel and local oast houses providing a strong sense of place and local landmark

- Roof conical and buildings overall orientation has been located within the site masterplan to be visible through dapled views from the trees and on a processional route to the school from the new road network

Figure 19: Pre-application proposal, showing more secluded entrance with lack of way-finding

Figure 20: 2 images showing planning application proposal, showing clear student and visitor entrance using colour and way-finding

5.13 DRP Comments: ***'The Panel noted that the air source heat pumps would be sited to the south-east of the building and north of the car park, where there are no windows opening out to the ground floor, but queried whether they would be better in one location, depending on noise considerations'.*** The designs have evolved to:

- Locate the air source heat pumps in a location on the south-east of the building, which is outside the secure perimeter and pupils secure garden areas, practical for maintenance and also security of pupils.

- Located adjacent to the staff room which is least sensitive to noise, although modern plant, regularly maintained are usually well within noise limits which would harm a teaching environment.

Design response to pupil/parent/teacher engagement

5.14 The school design has emerged from regular engagement and briefing with the school Senior Leadership Team. Further engagement took place with pupils, parents and teachers on 1st December, which included short workshop sessions with each class, an exhibition, drawings, interactive plans and discussions. The table below is a summary of comments received and how the designs have addressed the comments.

Comments received	How we responded
Music and art rooms should be separate as the music generates a lot of noise	Yes, we have moved this within the updated proposals
Music practice rooms needed (Drum kit)	To be defined at detailed stage in discussion with client.
Need for a sensory room as well as a swing room	Yes, we have included this next to the swing room in place of the LEAD LSA and Therapy Room. Therapy room moved down next to nurse.
Open atrium which is noisy and busy not suitable for those with Special Needs (Autism)	Atrium will be acoustically designed so that noise levels are minimised. The atrium is needed as part of the whole building's passive ventilation strategy. It is also integral to the building design proposals and planning negotiations at pre-app stage.
Open balcony in atrium may not be appropriate for pupil behaviour (appropriate to an office!)	Need to think on this more at the detailed design stage.
Exit from the dining hall to outside space needed to connect to wider footpath	Yes, we have incorporated this within an amended floor plan.
Footpath circuit needed around the school	Yes, this is included within the proposed landscape plan.
Breakout rooms needed within each classrooms	Space does not possible within the proposals. There are 1-2-1 rooms and calm seating areas outside the classroom on the ground floor. The outdoor classrooms next to each classroom will be excellent break out space, increasing pupils access to nature and landscape, containing ornamental planting around patios nice to sit within.
Views of the countryside welcome but are not visible from music room	More views out to the countryside have been provided as above. Music has been swapped for Art
Reception needs to be next to Admin with its own toilet	Admin office has been relocated close to a toilet and reception, SLT in adjacent area to assist with management.
Specification for layout of the food tech room	To be defined at detailed stage in discussion with client.
Secure large cupboard/ workspace needed for exam papers (JCQ compliant)	Included within relocated admin office. Specification at detailed design stage.

Figure 21: Pre-application proposal, showing less sculptural roof (above)

Figure 22: Planning application proposal, with more sculptural roof

6. Proposed Design

Use

6.1 The proposed new school forms a vital part of the wider site for a mixed use development which includes new homes, recreation open space and the community use of the existing chapel. Unfortunately due to the type of education provision here, we cannot fully integrate the school into the street-scape of the wider development, but parts will be visible and the new cafe will provide a vital link between the school community and new residents. The uses will complement each other to provide a viable, sustainable community and unique sense of place.

Layout

6.2 It has been necessary to locate the school in the northern corner of the wider site, (which is on higher ground) to maximise the area for enabling development and create a viable scheme. Therefore the scale and height of the building is minimised to protect views from the surrounding countryside, National Landscape (AONB) and National Park. The school is away from the main road and built up area, so as to maximise the potential to create a calm, secluded and safe environment needed for this particular SEN school.

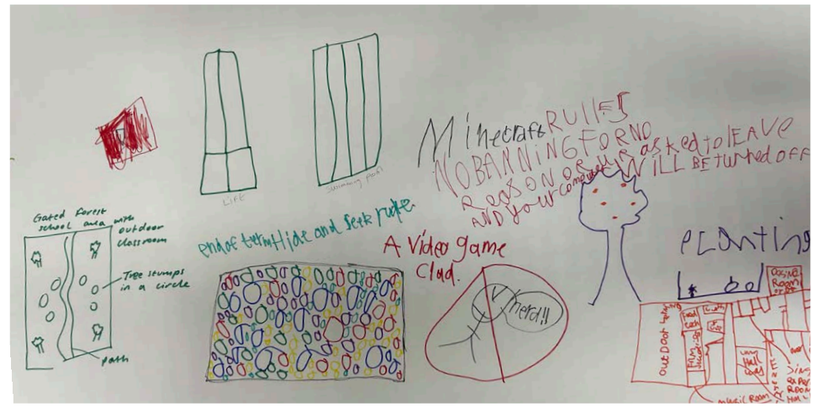
6.3 The school has been sited in the centre of this north-western field so as to retain the established hedgerow and public footpath. The proposal will therefore result in the loss of only one tree, currently in the centre of the field. This is more than compensated for by the preservation of all the other trees and most of the hedgerows and will facilitate biodiversity net gains for the benefit of the environment and pupils.

6.4 The site plan layout is split into publicly accessible space and private space for student outdoor play. A robust fence separates the split which is softened and screened by hedgerows. Creating a courtyard outside the front entrance allows for deliveries and drop-off and pick-up for pupils and some disabled parking.

6.5 The car park has been pushed to the far south of the school site, inside and close to the existing hedgerow and treeline. Located away from the entrance this, together with the integral landscaping, maximises the landscape setting of the school and minimises the impact of the hard surfacing associated with the access road and car park on the setting of the school.

6.6 The approach to the building has been designed to celebrate the soft and open nature of the countryside beyond. Wildflower meadows and sporadic fruiting trees are positioned either side of the more formal drive entrance.

6.7 As explained above, the proposed internal layout has been subject to detailed engagement and it is considered that this layout prioritises the sensory needs of the pupils, whilst also taking into account the need to create a building efficient to heat and run within a wider landscape setting.



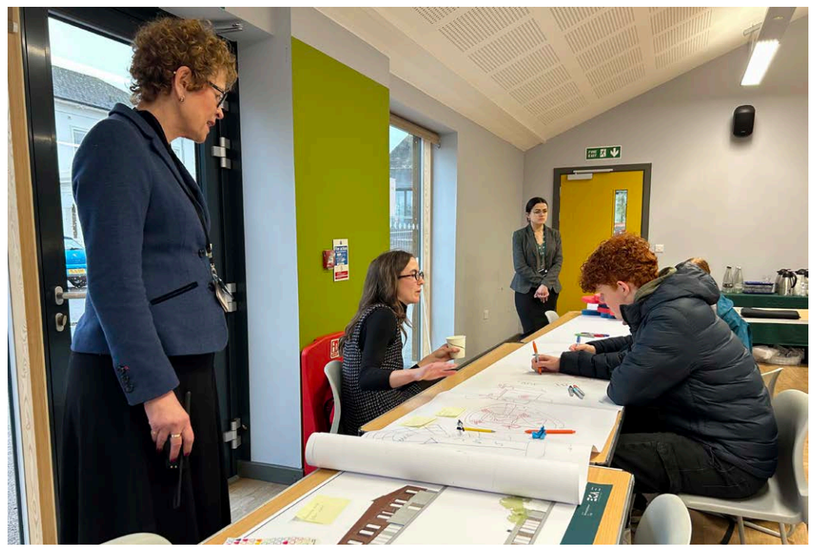


Figure 23: Various photos from the Engagement day with staff, pupils and parents at LVS Hassocks

Figure 24: Visualisation of proposed school

6.8 The entire site is in flood zone 1 but there is some surface water flooding issues and the proposals design-in large areas of soft landscaping in the south-west for an attenuation holding area/pond. Newly proposed planting and trees will help to reduce flooding risk and minimise run off, actually reducing the risk of flooding into neighbouring sites.

6.9 A green roof is proposed on the lower section of the new school building which will help to minimise rainwater run off into the field.

Scale and massing

6.10 The school currently occupies a 14.41 hectare site. The proposed school will occupy a self-contained site comprising 2.63 hectares.

6.11 The proposed school is approximately two thirds of the size of the existing school, as follows:

- Existing school GIA: 3210.64m2
- Proposed GIA for new school is: 1954.22m2
- Existing Cafe GIA: 35.64m2
- Proposed Cafe GIA: 52.26m2

6.12 Initially we developed three options:

- **Option A, U-shaped plan with separate hall:** This had the benefit of being the most organic shape within the landscape setting and created an efficient floor plan. But the massing of this was the largest and it did not sit well in the wider landscape.

- **Option B, an L-shaped plan with separate hall (preferred option):** also has the benefit of a central courtyard space, but is the most efficient and creates more space around building, maximising interaction with the landscape. This creates a light and open learning environment, is the most thermally efficient and appropriate in terms of massing, scale, simple building form and would best create a well lit, spacious environment for learning with easy access to nature and views.

- **Option C, a courtyard proposal**: enclosed by three buildings, linked by outside walkways, with the main building lit through the roof. This provides private courtyards for play, but it occupies a large floor plate and a big envelope to heat and cool. It was therefore discounted.

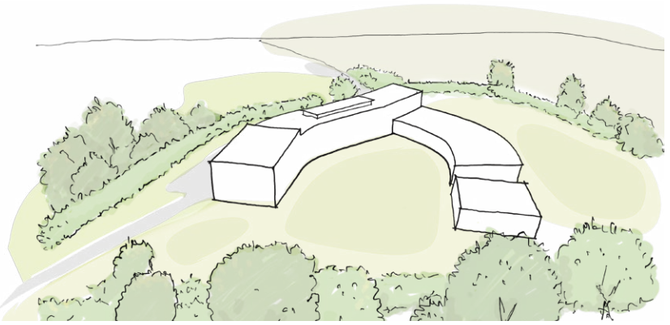
6.13 The footprint occupied by the proposed school is considerably less than the existing school in order to minimise the impact on the landscape and respond to the sites rural character. Having a single storey green roofed element creates variety and responds to the sloping topographical nature of the site.

6.14 Within this wider landscaped setting it is totally in scale, appearing subservient, whilst at the same time being of a scale appropriate to a small school.

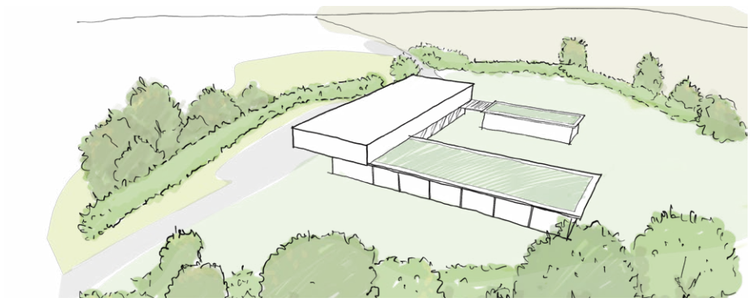
Appearance

6.15 The appearance of the building is highly influenced by its landscape setting and the need to maximise light and space inside the buildings whilst creating views out of the space. This contrasts, in part to the need to create human scale welcoming spaces for those with special sensory needs. The building has a expressive and sculptural quality but is also very calm and simple facade with areas of glazing and tactile materials.

OPTION A



OPTION B



OPTION C

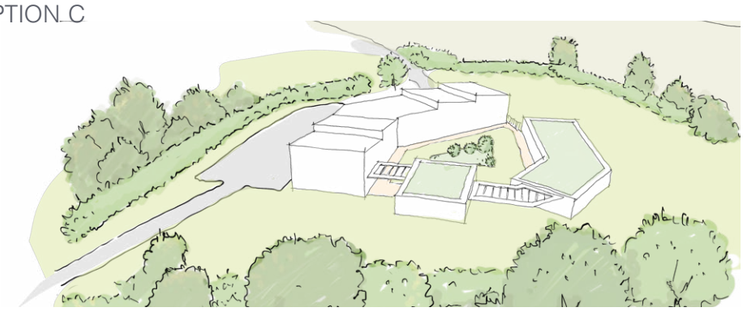
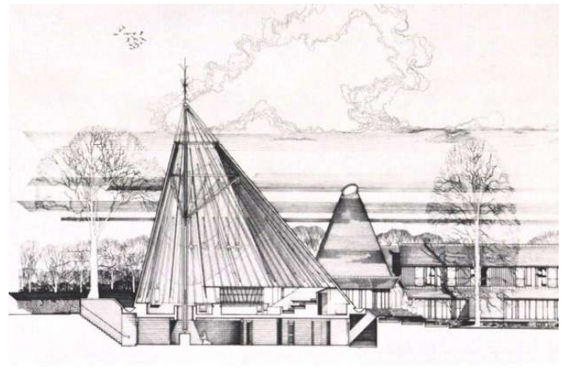


Figure 25: Comparative massing options



ig. 2

Figures left 26: Existing chapel building at LVS Hassocks by Michael Blee

Figure 27: Caring Wood House by James Macdonald Wright and Niall Maxwell

6.16 The roof form creates a strong design feature whilst also providing an opportunity for natural ventilation. As set out above, oast house roofs are part of this rural landscape character and by creating a contemporary sculptural interpretation of the existing chapel, a local landmark, the building will relate well to the rural landscape here. This form also has the benefit of creating a strong sense of place and familiar design feature. It is a truly unique design solution.

6.17 Building typologies which have inspired the design can be seen in the appendices.

6.18 The two roof forms are designed to be both expressive but also not to dominate the design. They are articulated to tilt slightly to the north. Functionally this restricts south facing light entering the rooms, thus causing overheating. Visually it re-enforces the link with the Oast house and with the chapel designs that are both types of offset conoid shapes.

6.19 The southern roof form is a steeper pitch than the northern one. This is to make more of an impact when first seeing the school and for those walking to it from the car park. They are also reminiscent of observatory type of structures that appear to connect with or visually link to the sky and at night, the stars above. There are ideas here about education and learning that the school would expresses through these forms.

6.20 The first floor and roof forms are designed to read as a one - floating above the ground floor . The cantilever of the walls at first floor re-enforces this. The open glazed dining room on the south end of the building further enhances this .

Materials

6.21 The materials are designed to articulate the forms of the building. At pre-app we had considered a cedar shingle to the first floor . Whilst this is a warm and natural material , concerns were raised around the weathering and compliance of it. The proposed material is an arrowhead tile. There is a strong tradition in Sussex and Surrey of tile hung walls.

6.22 The arrowhead tile is a particularly unique version of this that originated in Victorian times. It creates a hexagonal appearance. These 30° angles chine well with the angles of the roof above, tying both elements together. The product chosen as it also has quite a wide colour gamut with both orange/brown and blue/purple hues. This all adds to a biophilic quality of the building

6.23 In order to make the building appear to hover above the ground the first floor is strongly contrasted with the ground floor. The ground floor is finished in a concrete with tile-holes. The smooth, light, raw surfaces appears as if the building is striped away here, revealing an inner surface. Light brick was also considered for this element.

6.24 The roof is a finished in a standing seem in a brown (pre-oxidised) orange/copper colour. This colour is designed to pick up on the hues of the first floor. This will integrate the roof into the first floor form , thus reading as one from a distance. This will in turn pick up on the colours and finishes of the adjacent chapel building.

6.25 There are a number of panels to one side of the first floor windows finished in the brown standing seem metal. These will be functionally useful as some of the NVHRS (natural ventilation and heat recovery units) will enter/ exit at these points. Visually they are designed to further connect with the roof, so as to tie into the sculptural angled elements above.

Figure 28: Materials palette - bronze standing seem metal, arrowhead tiles , concrete panels and light blue powder coated metal

6.26 The glazing and signage is to be finished in a light blue/grey metal. These will pick up on the blues of the tiles and provide important way finding and colour markers for the pupils. There will be signage next to each classroom - giving names of the rooms to aid with orientation.

Figure 29: Visualisation showing facade materials Face materials

Energy and renewables

6.27 The applicant is using Passivhaus principles for the mechanical and electric design so as to minimise the schools carbon footprint and running costs. To achieve this, the designs incorporate fabric first principles, renewable technologies, building orientation and the use of louvres/ shades.

6.28 A generous sized plant room is provided on the ground floor with adjacent store for air source heat pumps. Located on the side elevation, least visible from students and the entrance, the integrated detailed design and landscape will ensure that it does not harm the appearance of the building.

6.29 Whilst the design of the proposed roof-lights provide directional light into the atrium spaces as well as visual interest, they have also been designed to help ventilate the space to increase natural cooling of the building, this is explained in the adjacent sketch, showing how hot air will be drawn out through the roof-lights within the atrium spaces, in turn, drawing new cool outside air into the building naturally circulating for good air quality. This is accompanied by a MVHR system (and a NVHR system) to adequately regulate the internal temperature and circulate clean air.

Renewable Energy and Ventilation Strategy – LVS Hassocks

6.30 The following renewable and energy-efficient technologies will be implemented to significantly reduce the overall energy demand of the school:

- Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP)
- Natural Ventilation with Heat Recovery (NVHR)
- Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR)
- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Panels
- Heating Strategy

6.31 The calculated heat demand for the school, based on an external design temperature of -2.9°C, is 212.54 kW. This requirement will be met by two Kronotherm (or equal and approved) ASHP units, located externally adjacent to the plant room.

6.32 Heat distribution throughout the building will be provided via Underfloor Heating (UFH) in all occupied spaces, ensuring efficient and consistent thermal comfort.

Ventilation Strategy

6.33 The ventilation approach for the site incorporates a combination of natural and mechanical systems to optimise indoor air quality and energy performance:

- Circulation Spaces: Naturally ventilated through mechanically controlled roof vents linked to CO_2 sensors, enabling purge ventilation. Fresh air will enter via ground-level louvres.
- Classrooms under Flat Roof Areas: Ventilation provided by Windhive (or equal and approved) units to deliver effective natural ventilation.
- Other Classrooms and Office Spaces: Served by NVHR units, ensuring adequate fresh air supply while recovering heat to improve energy efficiency.
- Moisture-Prone Areas and Parent-Facing Spaces: Equipped with MVHR systems to manage humidity and maintain a comfortable environment.

Renewable Energy Generation

6.34 The scheme allows for the installation of 58 Solar PV panels (430 W each) on the flat roof area, providing a total generation capacity of 24.94 kWp. This renewable energy source will contribute to reducing the building's overall electricity demand and offset operational energy costs.

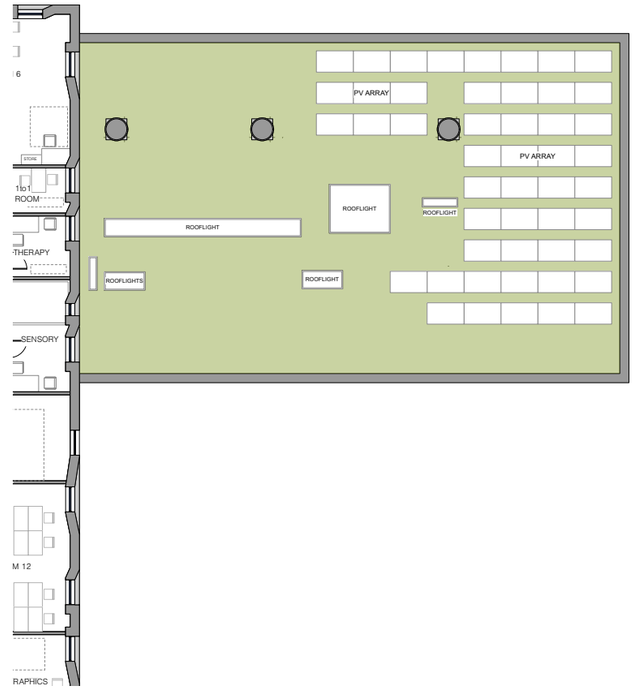
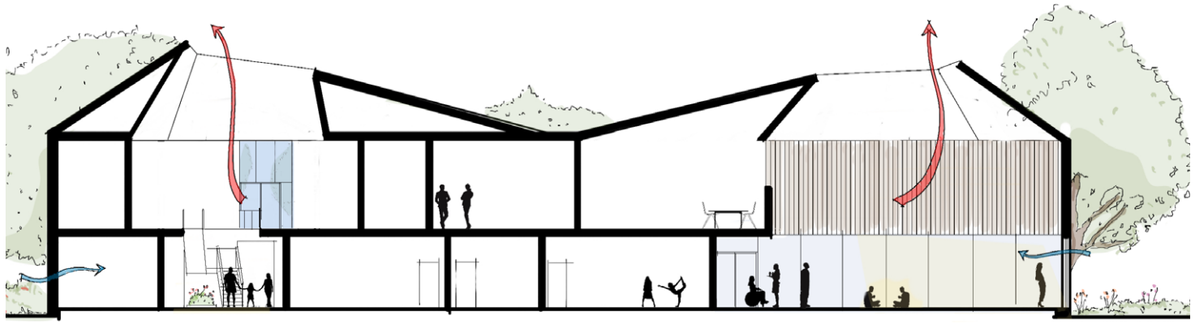


Figure 31 - Proposed bio-solar roof

Figure 32 - Bio-solar roof example



Figures 30: Sketch to show how the rooflights will assist with air circulation

7. Proposed Landscaping

Introduction

7.1 This landscape strategy was produced as part of the application for the development of the north western part of the land at LVS Hassocks, to accommodate a new LVS Hassocks (SEN) School with associated access from London Road, car parking, landscaping and drainage works'.

The school landscape proposals include:

- A new school building

- A new access road with waiting and drop off area, a loop road and car park for up to 69 car parking spaces and a cycle shelter for 10 bikes

- Drainage elements to accommodate the new built form, including attenuation basin, swales and rain gardens

- A Multi-use games area and informal playing field

- Formal and informal play facilities and features to cater to a variety of learning requirements and ages

- A horticultural area for education and food production

- Outdoor classrooms / break-rooms

- A Forest school

- Outdoor gym equipment

- A wide range of planting to ensure a variety of habitats, ecological corridors, screening and filtered views, a natural green setting for the school and an enhanced play and learning experience for all pupils.

Figures 33: Site Location Plan - Wates

Site Context

7.2 The site is not located within any landscape or landscape-related designations. The South Downs National Park is located approximately 2.5km south of the site.

7.3 The High Weald National Landscape is located approximately 3.3km to the north of the site. It has been determined, through a Landscape and Visual Appraisal accompanying the wider hybrid submission for the school and residential use that the site does not form part of the setting of either of these National Landscapes.

7.4 Public bridleway 9Hu runs east to west, south of the school site, and public footpath 10Hu is located immediately north of the site.

Landscape Character

7.5 In the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid-Sussex (November 2005) the site is classified as part of character area 4, “Hickstead Low Weald”. The wider site and its context strongly align with the characteristics of area LCA 4; an undulating, agricultural landscape with scattered woodlands, shaws and hedgerows.

7.6 The site is located on the northern settlement edge of Sayers Common with London Road to the east and existing built form to the south and east.

7.7 The landform within the site is gently sloping; the highest elevation is in the north-western corner and then gradually falls away to the south. The site is predominantly bound by well-established hedgerows and trees, which provide a sense of enclosure across the wider site. There are limited views out from the school site towards the wider countryside or settlement edge of Sayers Common.

7.8 Therefore, the site is generally still and quiet due to the buffering of the well-established vegetation. The site presents an enclosed, generally still, landscape appropriate to accommodate the proposed change of use.

Figures 34: Hybrid planning application boundaries school site in purple - SLR

Landscape Concept and Zoning

7.9 The overarching design principles of the landscape proposal reflect a diverse and multi-use, flexible approach and they have been developed taking into account design and best practice guidance, consultations with key stakeholders and Design Review Panel feedback.

7.10 The design aims to cater to all user needs, from a wide range of pupil educational and neurodiverse requirements, to staff spaces and visitor facilities.

The main design principles are:

- flexible and versatile spaces that can accommodate change of uses and requirements

- variation in scale, micro-climate and experiences for users

- grouping of activities to ensure the outdoor spaces communicate with the interior of the building; louder activities are grouped together and more quiet spaces are provided.

- circular landscapes with accessible journey paths

- a diverse plant palette, providing a variety of textures, fragrances, sounds throughout the seasons.

- buffers which enhance existing vegetation and provide screening and wildlife habitats.

- appropriate, comfortable and legible transitions between outdoor and indoor uses

- hard material palette enhances the learning and play experience and is sensitive to the character of the site

- play is diverse and inclusive

1 Undulating landscape with wildflower meadow and tree planting to arrival area

2 Attenuation basin - seeded to allow for seasonal habitat variations

3 Staff car park area - with trees and native shrub planting

4 Drop off area and access point

5 New hedgerow planting to boundary

6 Play Areas
- 6a Main Play Area
- 6b Sensory Play Area

7 Sports and Gym Areas
- 7a MUGA
- 7b Grassed Playing Field
- 7c Outdoor Gym Equipment

8 Horticultural/ growing area

9 Circular footpath

10 Forest school

11 Existing boundary vegetation to be retained and enhanced with new native planting.

12 Defensible planting/ classroom pocket gardens

Figures 35: Proposed landscape plan zoning - SLR

Landscape Illustrative Masterplan

7.11 The overall proposals provide:

- spaces at a variety of scales, from larger areas for group activities to smaller quiet pockets and break out areas. Spaces are meant to be versatile and accommodate a comprehensive range of activities.

- circular landscapes with accessible journey paths that flow throughout the areas.

- a wide range of green spaces that provide a variety of textures, fragrances, sounds and material palette throughout the seasons. Native and drought resilient plants offer a sustainable and wildlife friendly mix.

- a robust planted school site perimeter providing a setting for natural play, screening and wildlife habitats.

- defensible planting around the school building to create a transition space from classroom to outdoors facilities and small quiet spaces for breaks

- diverse material palette that responds to the natural setting whilst providing visual interest and tactile finishes to hard surfaces, furniture and play

- play areas catering to a variety of ages and abilities, with accessible equipment, natural and sensory play, formal play and outdoor gym equipment

Figures 36: Proposed landscape plan - SLR

LEGEND

- School Site boundary
- Existing Vegetation to be retained

PROPOSED SOFT LANDSCAPE

- Tree Planting
- Small Multi-stem/ Feature Shrub planting
- Orchard Tree
- Native Scrub Mix
- Hedge Planting
- Native Shrub Mix
- Ornamental Shrub and Sensory Play Mix
- Wildflower meadow/ Flowering Lawn
- Wet Wildflower meadow to SuDS Features
- Amenity grass to play and kick about area

PROPOSED HARD LANDSCAPE

- Asphalt to road
- Asphalt to footpath
- Reinforced grass to car park
- Permeable Concrete Block Paving to entrance area
- Permeable Concrete Block Paving to terraces/ break-rooms
- Permeable Concrete Block Paving to Horticultural Area
- Aggregate surfacing in earthy tones to footpath
- Mown footpaths
- Safety surfacing to play area
- Safety surfacing to MUGA area
- Raised beds to Horticultural Area
- Timber decking to Play Area