

**Planning Statement/Design and Access Statement for the proposed
project to install a new guardrail system to the perimeter of all flat roofs**

At

The Windmills Junior School, Dale Avenue, Keymer, Hassocks, BN6 8LS

April 2026



1. Summary

Windmills School is a junior school for year 3 to year 6 located within Hassocks, West Sussex.

The school is accessed from a private driveway off of Dale Avenue. Sections of the school can be seen from Dale Avenue; however, the majority of the school is out of view from the main road. The school is surrounded by residential properties

The school shares a boundary with Downlands Community School and Hassocks Sport Centre. These sites are accessed via their own private access gate further to the north of Dale Avenue.

The school comprises a single main building which is built up of the original main school, and various extensions, the most recent being to the North West and southeast of the building constructed in 2015.

On 17th November 2023, a member of the School's premises staff was attempting to replace one of the blinds by gaining access to one of the flat roofs and fell from the ladder. This led to the incident being investigated by the Health and Safety Executive on 16th January 2024, their Conclusion Letter has been included within the supporting information of this application

Within the letter it notes that West Sussex County Council have been issued with an Improvement Notice requiring the council to review how work at height is planned, managed, and monitored.

Since the issuing of this and following the incident at the school, West Sussex County Council have implemented a working at height policy prohibiting any working at height on flat roofs where either a temporary or permanent guardrail or mansafe system in place.

As the flat roofs at Windmills Junior School require ongoing maintenance it is proposed to install a guardrail system to the perimeter of all flat roofs of the site. Further to this, separate guardrails will be installed to the perimeter of all skylights to further reduce risk of falling through these apertures. CAT ladders will be installed to provide access from ground level to the roofs and also to provide access from the lower roofs to the upper roofs.

Whilst the above work is completed to the guardrail, a new lightning protection system will be installed to the school.

2. Supporting information

This statement is to be read in conjunction with supporting drawing documents as listed below;

- Location Plan
- Block Plan
- Elevation mark-up
- MedGuard's manufacturing details

3. Contact Details

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Contact: Henry Cook (Premises Manager – Windmills Junior School)

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Statement compiled by Atkins Réalis (on behalf of West Sussex County Council)

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4. Site Location and Surroundings

The Windmills Junior School is located to the South East of Windmills School and is approximately 0.6 miles from Hassocks Train station and Village.

The school is accessed from a private driveway towards the centre of Dale Avenue. Although sections of the school's front elevation can be seen from Dale Avenue; the majority of the school is out of view from the main road.

The school is surrounded by a high volume of residential buildings to the north of the site, a number of the south elevations of the houses on Dale Avenue face onto the school premises and share the north and North east boundary with the school. The east and south boundary of the school is shared with Downlands Community School and Hassocks Sport Centre. These sites are accessed via their own private access gate further to the north of Dale Avenue.



Fig 1- Application Site

5. Application Design

The proposal is to install a guardrail to the perimeter of all flat roofs of the Windmills Junior School site, this includes all roofs associated with the building. It is also proposed to install the guardrail to the perimeter of all skylights on the site to further reduce risk of falling. The main purpose of this is to provide a safe means of access for those looking to carry out maintenance works to the roof and lightning protection system in the future.

In addition, the guardrails it is proposed to install 3no. CAT ladders in order to access the roofs from both ground level and to provide a means of access up onto the higher roofs of the site, these locations are indicated on the proposed plan provided by the proposed contractor within the supporting information of this application. These ladders comprise fall protection to the upper section of the ladder.

The guardrail will be installed at approximately 1100mm to 1150mm above the finished roof level. Due to the nature of the fixings, where the self-closing gate of the CAT ladder meets the guardrail, the CAT ladder will sit approximately 100mm to 200mm above the guardrail. Therefore, whilst the majority of the installation will not be past 1150mm, at the points of meeting the CAT ladder, this will be between 1300mm to 1350mm above the finished roof level.

The proposed guardrail has been tested in accordance with BS13700:2021 and the proposal will be subject to the review of a suitably qualified structural engineer. The structural engineer will review all proposals and will sign off the works to assure compliance with the relevant building regulations and British standards noted within the data sheets of the Medguard system.

As noted within the supporting images, the guardrail and CAT ladders have a galvanised steel finish.

Whilst it is understood that certain areas to the lower roofs could comprise the Guardrail without the need for a planning application and would meet the guidelines of permitted development; to provide a comprehensive overview of the proposal, all areas proposed to comprise the guardrails have been included within this application.

It is noted that to the more recently constructed extension to the site, there is a works restraint harness that was included within the design at the time of construction. Note this is not a fall arrest harness.

It has been discussed and observed as to whether a similar system could be expanded to serve the entirety of the site. Installing the anchor points within the roof systems retrospectively has the potential to significantly impact the integrity of the roof system. On the basis the anchor points would need to penetrate into the decks of the roof, this would also incur a significant amount of remedial

works to make good the roof and avoid further defects such as water ingress through these points.

By having a guardrail in place to the entirety of the roof, this provides an opportunity for operatives maintaining the roof to access all areas of the roof as opposed to just the perimeter.

It is also deemed that there is less risk to those accessing the roof with the guardrail in place as opposed to a fall arrest harness that requires a higher level of competence and training to utilise.

The guardrail has been designed in accordance with Part K of the building regulations; testing figures of the proposed guardrail system have also been provided within the supporting information of this application.

Consideration has been given for DP26: Character and Design of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031. The main consideration in relation to this is how the increased height of the building could affect the surrounding community viewing the school from both Dale Avenue and the residential properties, of which a number of south facing gardens back onto the school and have a view of the school's roof.

Whilst the overall height of the building will be increased, the guardrail would not be a solid addition/extension to the building and so would not be overbearing to the residents of these houses or indeed the public that can view the school from Dale Avenue

With exception to the houses that can view the school from the rear, there is also very limited view of the school from public highways.

It has also been considered that the neighbouring school, namely Downlands Community College, comprises a three-storey building, significantly higher than this proposal and of solid construction.

The building has had a number of extensions constructed to it, most recently in 2015. With the building being of modern construction, it is deemed that the installation of the guardrail would not affect the architectural integrity of the building.

1. Breakdown of works

1.1 Access

The contractor will be required to initially install a full scaffolding to the perimeter of the entire building including an access staircase. This has been requested by AtkinsRéalis' Health and Safety consultant to ensure the safe installation of the guardrail system.

1.2 Guardrail

The guardrail comprises both horizontal and vertical steel bars and jointing. The manufacturers details have been included within the supporting information of this application.

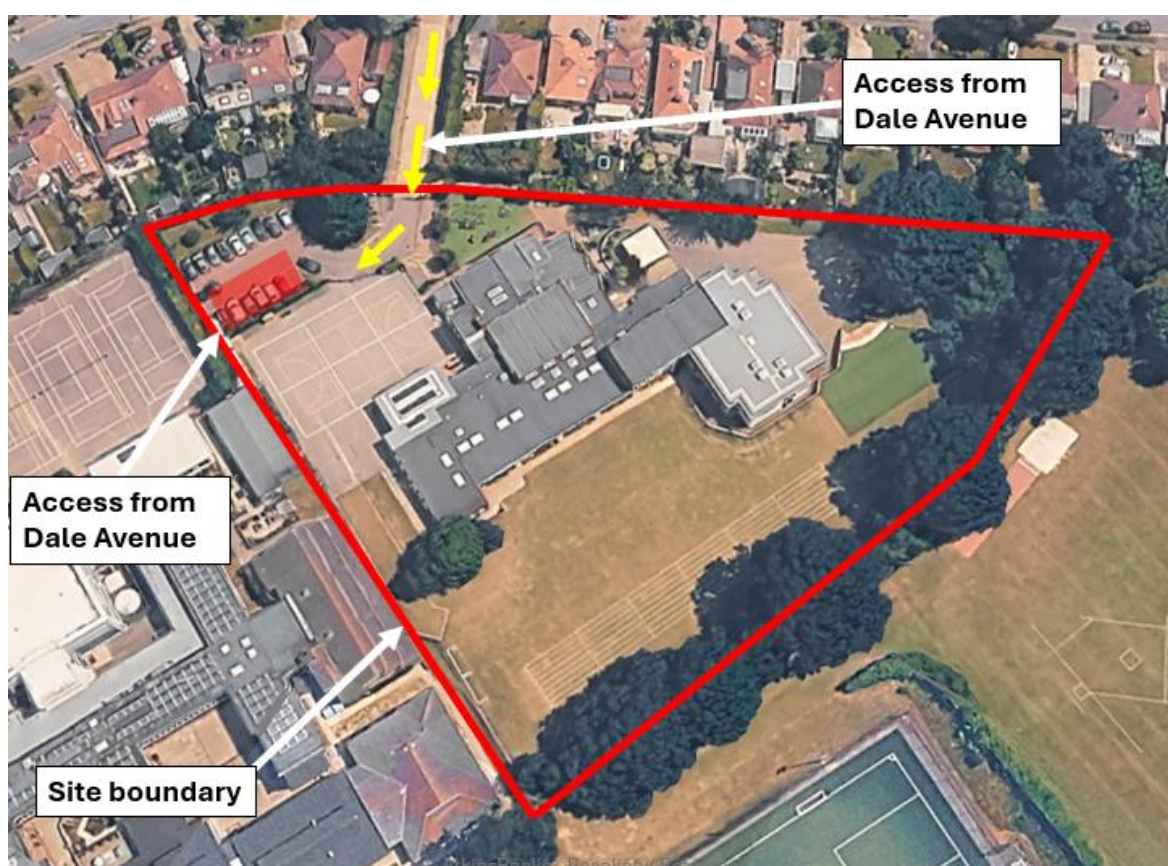
The guardrail will be installed at approximately 1100mm to 1150mm above the finished roof level.

At locations where the guardrail meets the CAT ladder, this second of the rail will sit approximately 100mm to 200mm above this.

2. Project Timelines

The proposed project is due to commence in the second week of the school's summer holiday period to avoid the need to manage the requirements of the school occupying at full capacity. The works will run from 27th July to 21st August 2026, this time allows for 1 week to erect the scaffolding, 1 week to install the guardrail and the final week to strike the scaffolding.

For the purpose of the application, the contractor's compound is initially proposed to be located within the school's main car park as shown below:



2.1 Proposed works areas and compound location

The works will have a dedicated H&S consultant appointed as the Principal Designer and adhere to all Construction Design Management Regulations (2015) requirements. The contractor will act as the Principal Contractor and complete works in line with CDM (2015) to include the completion of the Construction Phase Plan which will be reviewed by the H&S consultant. The CPP will be a 'live' document and updated in the event changes to programme in particular resulting in term time working is required.

The specific locations of the guardrail due to be installed is noted in drawing 'Roof Plan Fall Protection Layout' provided by the proposed contractor to complete the works, Safe And Secure Fall Protection Limited.

2.2 Noise Impact

Any works requiring machinery and deemed to be noisy works will only be carried out during the hours permitted by Mid-Sussex District Council, i.e. Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm and Saturday 8am to 1pm.

As a result of the works there will be no additional noise impact for residents. As the works will be completed in the school's summer holidays, this will not impact the schools operation or the neighbouring School, Downlands Community School.

3. Final planning statement

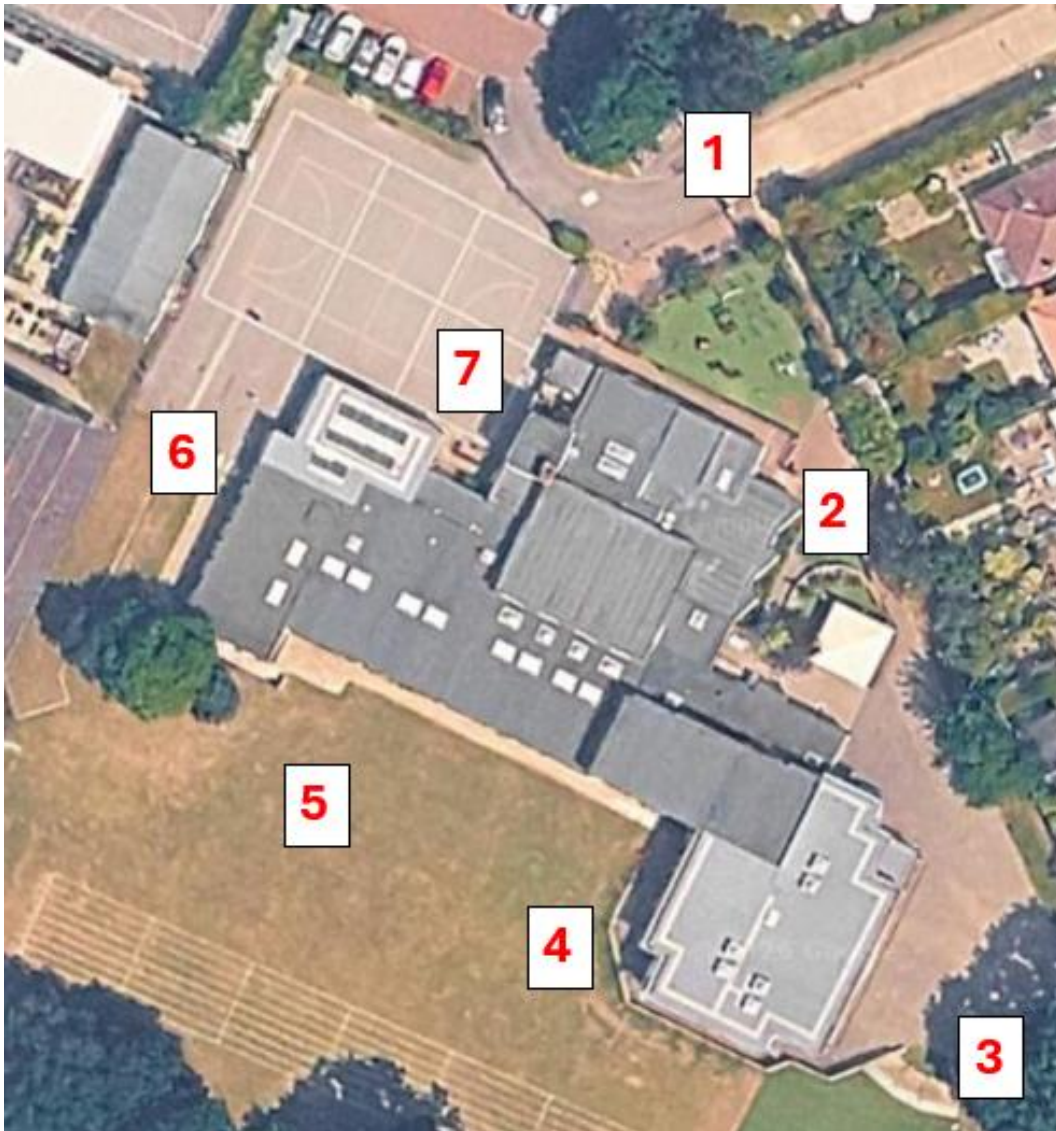
Proposed works within this planning and design and access statement have in the opinion of the applicant, been approached with a sensitivity. Consideration has been given to the impact the installation of the guardrail would have in relation to the surrounding residential properties, and this has been weighted against the benefit of providing safe access to those requiring the maintain the roof areas of the school.

The HSE report highlights lack of edge protection to the majority of the roof areas with exception to the extension building to the Southwest corner of the site which comprises a mansafe system. Due to the maintenance work required to flat roofs and the need to access them, the most efficient solution has been to propose the installation of a guardrail system to the entirety of the site.

Further to this and in response to this incident at Windmills Primary School, West Sussex County Council have since revised their working at height policy noting all working at height is prohibited where a guardrail or similarly approved mansafe system is not installed. Therefore, currently if maintenance works was required, a full scaffolding including a handrail would need to be installed to facilitate this. As the school is managed by WSCC the funding for projects like this would likely come through publicly funded budgets, it has been considered that the installation of the guardrail would significantly reduce access costs for future projects.

Consideration has been given to the impact the guardrail would have on the building itself and the surrounding environment. Whilst it is acknowledged the guardrail will increase the finishes roof level, the impact the guardrail would have to views, light or similar is very low, due to the guardrail essentially being an arrangement of steel bars and joints.

4. Supporting Images



4.1: Fig 2 - Site Orientation

Images 1 to 7 below provide a ground floor view from the locations noted in the above site annotation.



4.2: Image 1 – view of front school from Dale Avenue.



4.3: Image 1 – view of front elevation from main entrance gate of North Elevation.



4.4: Image 2 – Ground view from North East of building



4.5: Image 3 – Ground view from South East of building



4.6: Image 4 – Ground view from South of building



4.7: Image 5 - Ground view from South of building



4.8: Image 6 - Ground view from West of building



4.9: Image 7 - Ground view from North West of Building

5. Areal Images



5.1: Fig 3 - Site Orientation

Images 1 to 6 below provide a arial view from the locations noted in the above site annotation.



5.2: Image 1 – Arial view of front elevation



5.3: Image 2 - Arial view of East elevation



5.4: Image 3 - Arial view of extension roof to South East corner of site



5.5: Image 4 - Arial view to south of site



5.6: Image 5: Aerial view to centre of site



5.7: Image 6: Aerial view to West of site

6. Proposed Guardrail Images



6.1: Image 1: Example image of proposed guardrail



6.2: Image 2: Example image of CAT Ladder junction with guardrail