

Design & Access Statement

Physical Context

The proposed extended area of parking and vehicular circulation is a rectangular site on flat ground which is currently grassed and forms one end of an informal sports pitch. It lies immediately north of the multi-purpose hall and the existing minibus drop-off road which surrounds it. The new layout will dispense with the existing L shaped access road with its dead-end and turning head, and will form a one way loop with separate dedicated in and out access routes. Two parking spaces at the front of the school have been sacrificed to facilitate the egress route, and the new system will provide simpler, safer and more efficient circulation at the start and end of the school day. At its western edge, the road adjoins a paved area outside the dining hall at the rear of the School's main building, and this will be enlarged and squared off as part of the scheme. A privet hedge currently separates the circulation route from the pitch, and this feature is reproduced in the proposed scheme. At the eastern boundary, trees and hedges line the fences of residential properties in Moor Park Road and Mezen Close. The north and east kerbs of the hardstanding will be furnished with solar powered lighting bollards. 26 new parking spaces are provided as well as a dedicated groundsman's access. A new surface water attenuation system will be installed beneath the parking bays, and ducting for electric vehicle charging points will be incorporated.

Social Context

The scheme provides the school's users with a series of benefits including:

- Increased number of parking spaces
- Dedicated parking areas for part time staff, full time staff and visitors
- Simpler and safer circulation for the school minibus
- Dedicated bicycle storage
- Enlarged area of paving outside dining hall
- Enhanced surface water drainage attenuation and oil separation
- Infrastructure for electric vehicle charging points
- Dedicated groundsman's access.
- Location for refuse skip
- Improved lighting to vehicle and pedestrian areas

Economic Context

The long term future of St Martin's School depends upon meeting the expectations of pupils, parents and staff and being able to offer workable, practical facilities to the highest possible standards. As detailed in the Access section of this report, the majority of teaching staff necessarily come to work by car, and the introduction of daytime parking restrictions in the roads outside the school represents a serious disincentive to current and future employees. To counter this, the school has determined to provide an increased level of on- site parking. The proposals have been determined to provide an appropriate number of additional spaces whilst enhancing the safe and efficient management of vehicular traffic within the school grounds. As with any school, pick up and drop off arrangements are one of the most critical elements in the working day.

Use

The proposed scheme represents a much needed upgrade to parking and vehicle management on the school site. It allows for separation of parking zones such that the new parking at the rear of the site is designated for full time staff only, and the existing parking to the front of the site is to be used by part time and peripatetic staff as well as visitors. The creation of a one way circulation route allows for simplification of vehicle movements and removes the need for turning the minibus. The road around the auditorium building will be closed to traffic through the school day between 9am and 4pm with appropriate signage at the entrance and exit, and the minibus will be parked strategically as a further, physical barrier. Dedicated bicycle racks will be installed at the eastern edge of the site, representing an upgrade of the current informal approach.

Amount

Under the proposed scheme, the overall increase in area of hard landscaping is 618 sq. m, of which 467 sq.m is roadway and parking bays, the remainder being the additional paved pedestrian area. The scheme encroaches on the playing field by 13.5 metres, but this remains perfectly viable for recreational football and cricket use.

Two parking spaces are removed from the front of the site adjacent the main entrance, and an additional 26 standard parking bays are provided at the rear of the site, bringing the total number of available spaces to 54. This number of spaces best reflects the actual needs of the school balanced against impact on the playing field and will substantially reduce pressure for on-street parking by both full and part time staff. The accessible parking zone adjacent the entrance lobby is unchanged. Bicycle storage has been informal/ ad hoc to date, and the proposals provide for 22 dedicated rack spaces.

Layout

The proposed scheme comprises the creation of a new circulation route around the main hall building by moving and enlarging the section of road to the north of the building such that parking bays are located on either side of it. Two existing parking bays are removed at the south east of the site adjacent the main entrance to facilitate egress. The curved area of hard paving that currently exists outside the dining hall is extended to line through with the back edge of the parking bays, and the boundary demarcated with a new kerb and solar powered lighting bollards.

Scale

The scale of the proposal is minimal in the context of the school campus, being largely a change in surface finishes immediately adjacent to the main hall.

Appearance and Landscape

The site is visible from many of the existing school buildings which border the playing fields, and from the rear of the residential properties to the north east. The proposed scheme will be manifested principally as an enlarged surface area of tarmac to the north of the main hall, marked out with parking spaces. The area will be edged with a new kerb and bollards incorporating lighting, and enclosed to the north and west by a new run of privet hedge. The existing attenuation tank will be retained in place, and a further system installed beneath the new bays, incorporating an oil separator. The expanded attenuation system will also feature a pump station, allowing for rainwater harvesting for irrigation. New signage will be placed at the entrance and exit to the one-way system to either side of the building.

Access

The School is located in a residential road approximately 1km away from Northwood Underground Station, and is not served by a bus route. Most pupils and staff therefore arrive by private road transport. Vehicular access to the school is via the driveway off Moor Park Road at the western end of the existing car park. Egress is via the automatic gate at the eastern end. Pedestrian access is via the dedicated entrance in the middle. The road at the front of school is furnished with a speed hump, 'Keep Clear' zone and a continuous line of bollards to protect pedestrians and prevent parking on the kerb.

Part time staff and visitors to the school are provided with parking spaces in front of the reception areas, and a large bay with wheelchair provision is placed centrally. Full time staff will park in the new parking bays to the north of the hall. The School minibus will park on the access road in between the designated movement periods (from 9am to 4pm). Level access is provided to all buildings from the paved areas, and wall mounted lighting is provided. The increased road width at the back of the hall will allow full access to emergency vehicles.

Construction Access

Construction access will be provided from Moor Park Road via the normal vehicular access and egress, with all construction traffic guided through the site by a banksman. The existing access road is adequately sized to allow all necessary plant onto the site, and the site itself will be secured by suitable hoardings and gated access.

Wheel wash down facilities will be provided and the public road will be swept regularly/ as required.