

Kevin McDaniel
Head of Schools and Education Services
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Town Hall
St Ives Road
Maidenhead
SL6 1RF

10th March 2017

Dear Kevin,

Thank you for your letter dated the 8th March 2017. Dominique Du Pré, our Chair of Governors, and I met to discuss the content last night and we have been asked to respond on behalf of the Governing Body.

We have attached the original expansion brief that was designed and shared with you last summer and will clarify the misconceptions outlined in your letter. In summary, there are two phases to this expansion: Phase 1 was to convert the internal spaces of our library and storage room into a temporary teaching area, whilst we build a permanent classroom. This allowed us to take an additional 30 children in September 2016. It is envisaged that the new classroom for this cohort will be finished in the summer term and will allow the pupils to move from the remodelled internal space into a permanent classroom. Whilst this phase is in progress, our entire library and school resources are being stored in a temporary lock up in our school car park.

Phase 2 is the design and development of the new classrooms and a school hall, which will allow us to have the required second large space in which to hold whole school assemblies. The agreed funding for this, as you know, is £1.6m and will not cover what we believe to be the expected costs. Anne Pfeiffer has recommended that the planning and tender processes for this phase be run concurrently but has instructed that the tender be subject to approval, *"In the worst case scenario, it could stop prior to construction beginning."* (23rd February 2017).

The Governors are grateful for your support, however are not in a position to take an additional 30 children this September whilst Phase 2 is at risk. If we take the additional 30 this year and the project does not proceed, we could be left with a legacy where pupils are being taught in an internal space without toilets, cloakroom or natural light. In addition to this, there will be no resource room, library or staff room, and there will be insufficient space for the school to comfortably hold assemblies in the hall. We can of course live with these inconveniences for a year whilst the Phase 2 development is in progress but cannot risk this being the new school norm. Alternatively, if the tenders come in over the QS estimates we are not in a financial position to cover additional costs and are not prepared to make sacrifices to our already lean design, for example, proceed with no hall.

Having spoken to Cllr McWilliams yesterday, we were reassured that RBWM are still committed to this expansion and that the matter was to be discussed at Cabinet on the 30th March 2017. We would ask that the Cabinet fully support this expansion and the associated costs of the agreed design and build. Furthermore, we have submitted the QS estimates but are not in a financial position to fund any of this project, with the exception of the £50,000 commitment we made in July 2016. This is not an easy



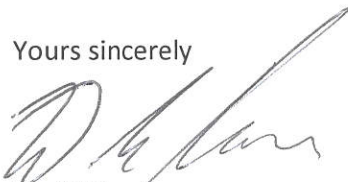
building project due to the location and the decreasing time scale. It is therefore expected that the tenders, when complete, will have significant variation. We would be agreeable, of course, to allow yourselves full authority of this project but reiterate that we cannot fund any over spend, estimation variance or indeed temporary accommodation if this build is not completed by September 2018. We are therefore seeking full financial commitment to this agreed design and build at the Cabinet meeting on the 30th March 2017.

Assuming this is agreed then please consider this letter as authorisation to offer places to an additional 30 pupil for September 2017. It is our belief that the national offer day is Tuesday 18th April 2017 so this should allow ample time for your officers to plan for this.

As agreed from the outset, we have applied to the DFE to be redesignated as a 2 form entry school with a permanent PAN of 60. Matthew Bamgbele (matthew.bamgbele@education.gov.uk) is processing this request. We have also invested much time in applying to the EFA to fund this entire project in full and are cautiously awaiting the outcome of this bid.

As already stated, the Governors of Lowbrook Academy are 100% committed to this expansion and continue to work tirelessly to ensure this becomes a reality for our community. We are seeking the same commitment from yourselves to ensure that we are corporately safeguarding our current pupils and the school's future interests. Timescales for this project are now very tight. We are working towards a full planning application to be in place next week and for the tender documents to be ready for distribution within a fortnight. As always, we are available at short notice to discuss any aspects of this project and will make ourselves available on the 30th March if this will be of help.

Yours sincerely



David Rooney
Executive Principal



Dominique Du Pré
Chair of Governors

Cc

Cllr N Airey

Cllr Dudley

Cllr Brimacombe

Cllr McWilliams

Cllr Bullock

Cllr Saunders

Alison Alexander, Managing Director & Strategic Director of Adult, Children and Health Services

Rob Stubbs, Head of Finance, RBWM

Lowbrook Academy Expansion

INITIAL BRIEFING FOR THOMSON RODDICK AND LAURIE (TRL)-ARCHITECTS

The Governors took the decision to expand the school and re-designate its planned admission number to 60 with immediate effect on the 6th of June this year.

The first intake of 60 pupils will be in September 2016 and this is the first priority and phase for this briefing. This phase will include the remodeling of the internal space known as the **Library and ICT Suite**, and the design and build of a new classroom adjacent to the current Year 4 classroom and school carpark to the south-west side of the school buildings. This project is referred to as **Phase 1**. It is crucial that the internal remodeling is complete for September 2016 and that we aim to have the classroom adjacent to the current Year 4 classroom built and ready for use by January 2017 or at the very latest February half term.

Phase 1 (Split into two projects: Internal Space and Classroom build)

Internal Space

The remodeling of the internal Space is a project which you have already been commissioned to begun work on. I can confirm that drawing A102 fully meets our brief and we are instructing you, on receipt of the Engineer's Reports and the Mechanical Engineer's drawings to tender this job on behalf of the Governing Body with immediate effect. I will work with you separately from this brief to define the details of our room data sheet, fixtures and fittings. It is crucial for this project that this remodeled space is ready for use in September and we are able to educate our children without disruption when school returns.

Classroom build

The timescale for the classroom build during this phase is also very tight and therefore will need prioritizing. As discussed, we request the classroom is designed in the same specification style as the current Year 4 classroom (CL6 on attached map). This room was designed by TLR so defining the specifications can easily be incorporated into this brief. We would request that there is a cloakroom and toilets placed between the two classrooms and that a small corridor is created to enter the room via CL6 current rear access to the car-park. We would request that we use the same specifications as we did for the Pavilion Project that you completed for us in the summer of 2015. The toilets will be used by our KS2 children.

It is anticipated that the classroom will extend onto the current walkway and that the car-park along the north wall and extend to the end of the building and would request that, during the design stage, it incorporates double doors to the rear of the classroom extending onto a small covered outdoor space and fire exit. A new entrance for the kitchen will need to be created through the current Caretaker's room and some remodeling of the kitchen will be necessary to accommodate the new entrance. In

addition, we will need to move our rubbish bins and PTA shed to a new location adjacent to the disabled car-park space.

We would ideally aim to have this teaching space ready for use in January 2017 but for the purpose of this brief being as realistic as possible commissioning use by February half term 2017 is a must.

Estimated Floor Space

Classroom 63m²

Washroom 11m²

Lobby 6m

Covered area 27m²

We will be working within BB98 and 103

DDA access requirements are to be adhered to

Phase 2

Phase 2 incorporates two projects: **Project 1** is the development of a four-classroom block with utilities and **Project 2** is the development of the second large space that will extend from the main 1978 building.

PROJECT 1-THE DEVELOPMENT OF 4 CLASSROOMS INCLUDING UTILITIES (UPPER SCHOOL KS2 BLOCK)

The new classroom block is to be located on the newly acquired land at the rear of the Lowbrook Suite. To maximize space and to save costs we are requesting that:

- the building is located as far back to the new boundary as possible;
- it is on the northerly aspect of this land and;
- is two storeys in height.

We are also requesting that the design incorporates a covered area for the classrooms on the first level and that the classrooms on the second level also have an outdoor area with cover. The scope of this build is estimated to be 400m².

The proposal is to use the Lowbrook Suite as a guide for the aesthetic of this building to create identity through cladding the building in timber. The teaching style of the school incorporates breakout areas in each classroom and we would request that this is considered in this proposal along with large doors opening out into these outdoor spaces. Again, please use the stylizing of the Lowbrook Suite as a guide in this design. This aspect of the design will also need to incorporate landscaping to bring this new building into the school. This will incorporate fencing along the Cox Green building and the removal of the fencing area and kitchen garden behind the current Lowbrook Suite.

Estimated Floor Space

4 Classrooms at 63m²

Lobby and stairs at 33m² x 2

Washrooms and disabled staff toilets 20m² x2

Plant room 6 m²

We will be working within BB98 and 103

DDA access requirements are to be adhered to

The covered area and outdoor space for the second story approximately 60 m²

PROJECT 2-THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SECOND LARGE SPACE

The proposal is to create a large space for multi-use by the children. The space will be used for an additional lunch hall, daily and after school activities, PE, Drama and Assemblies.

The proposal incorporates this space onto the back end of the 1978 building integrating some of Zone 3 and extending onto the existing Early Years playground and a small section of the school field. The estimated area of this building would be approximately 165 m².

As with all of the buildings in this initial briefing, we would request that glass and wood cladding *are* used on the exterior. We would also request that the south-east facing wall has large glass doors and that shelters for classrooms CL1 and CL5 are extended from this new build to create the new outdoor areas for these classrooms. This new building must incorporate height that will allow for gymnastics, dance, fitness classes, internal ball games such as badminton, volleyball and indoor tennis. The fixtures and fittings must be designed to meet the purpose as identified above. Toilet facilities and storage are also crucial to ensure the space is practical and useable at all times.

Project 1 in Phase 2 must be completed by September 2018. Project 2 of Phase 2 could be completed within 12 months of this deadline however we are mindful that this is a working school with young children so we would like the build timescale to be as short as possible, purely on Health & Safety and functional grounds.

Estimated Floor area

Hall 175m² (Hall Height to be determined by the structural integrity of the build. (Approximately 8m)

If the budget allows toilets will be included 10m²

Storage 10m²

Canopy to each side of the Hall 20 m²

We will be working within BB98 and 103

DDA access requirements are to be adhered to

Budget

You will be aware from the Local Authority press releases that the budget for this build is £1.6 million. It is imperative that during the design process we work within this budget, inclusive of fees.

Key factors to consider during the design process:

- The School and the Local Authority are committed to this expansion and must deliver as close to the timescales as possible;
- The Timescales are short and may increase overall costs;
- The School and the Local Authority must seek best value and work within this budget;
- The school is open to traditional, modular, SIPs build or a *design and build* (D&B) option if it achieves this brief and is best value;
- The access arrangements are poor for Phase 2: Project 1 is landlocked with poor access and Project 2 is at the heart of school activity-this will be a costly and potentially disruptive obstacle;
- This is a working school and within an Ofsted cycle. Health & Safety is always priority number one and must be considered at all stages of this project;
- There is an asbestos ceiling in the room identified as RES. This will add to the cost of the Phase 2 Project 2 build;
- DDA is important to this school- it is recognized that we could design the two story building with the potential to add a lift if required at a later date; to save costs we will design and build the building without one as we currently have no children requiring this reasonable adjustment;

Kevin McDaniel
Head of Schools and Education Services
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23rd May 2016

Dear Kevin,

Further to our meeting on 16th May 2016, the Governors have, at short notice, considered your approach asking us to accommodate 30 additional children for the 2016-17 academic year. In addition to this approach, you requested me to investigate how Lowbrook Academy could realise its vision of becoming a two-form entry school. Whilst we have positioned many feasible options to the Local Authority in the past dating back to 2009-10, we have been subject to decision-making that has significantly narrowed our current options.

Consequently, we have concluded that the options available to us are extremely limited and the challenge for Lowbrook Academy is considerable, however not insurmountable. We have therefore outlined here-below what we believe to be the best possible option; this has been broken down into two phases, however we must insist they are linked together as one strategy for this to be an effective solution for our current and future students.

We are also seeking full written assurance from the council, if we are to progress this solution at such short notice. I'm sure you are aware that once we offer the additional 30 places, we are making a commitment to the community that we are expanding to a two-form entry school.

Phase 1

Phase 1 is to build one new classroom adjacent to our school kitchen and perpendicular to our current Year 4 classroom. This is one of the few spaces left where we can extend on and is the most cost-effective option over the medium-term. A temporary, portable classroom solution will be cheaper in the short-term but not cost-effective in this overall scheme and therefore is not considered in this proposal. We have obtained a brief and preliminary cost analysis for this proposed build and have been advised that this would cost in the region of £275,000 including fees (Budget estimate included).

The Governors are seeking 100% funding, design control and management of this build. We are confident, based on our own track record of delivery, that we can deliver this option by the 1st January 2017 (subject to planning permission). This would mean that for the autumn term, we will need to either hire a classroom from Cox Green School (subject to availability) or re-develop our existing ICT Suite so that a class of 30 children can be taught in this area for one term. This would be our preferred option as our pupils would remain on-site, benefitting from the learning environment they are familiar with. A budget estimate for this indicates that the cost would be £49,967.50 (Budget estimate included).

We are requesting financial support for either of these two options, which we are currently investigating. In addition, Lowbrook Academy will be required to employ a teacher after the



resignation date during a time of a national teacher shortage. We are requesting that you assist us recruit and should the school be left with no alternative but to use an agency, then these additional fees are to be paid for by the LA.

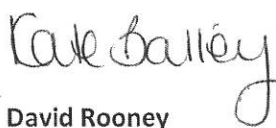
Phase 2

The Academy Trustees will accept an additional intake of 30, if Phase 1 is implemented and only on the condition that the Local Authority commit to the school becoming two-form entry with a planned admission number of 60. To achieve this within the timescales available, and without finance for a complete re-build, we believe this will only be feasible if:

- The block of land behind the Lowbrook Suite, currently managed by Cox Green School, is **returned** back to Lowbrook Academy. The Trustees are requesting that the Local Authority secure this land at their cost.
- A block consisting of four classrooms is to be built on the above-mentioned secured land. To maximise space and to leave a play area for the pupils, we would propose that this block be two storeys high.
- The Trustees are requesting 100% finance for this block based on an approximate build area of 400sq.m. with an estimated build cost of £2,700.00 per sq.m. Moreover, the Academy is calling for full control of the design process and furthermore, would make the offer to fully manage all aspects of this build.
- In addition to this block, the Academy will require a second large communal space to cater for the additional pupils on roll. We are working on replicating our existing hall space of 167sq.m and as above the estimated build cost would be £2,700 per sq.m. The Trustees are currently undertaking a feasibility exercise to examine where this would be best placed.
- The Trustees are seeking full financial support for all associated mechanical and engineering modifications to our site and the surrounding area. This may include: securing effective power supply to our new buildings; ensuring all drainage and sewage facilities meet the demands of the expansion and modifications to our site, e.g. entrances and access ways; and security during and after the build process.
- Please note that all costs outlined in both phases relate to the build only and excludes furnishings, ICT and other requirements needed to make the space a suitable learning environment. Toilets and storage areas must also be included in this new build.

The Governors, as you know, are fully committed to our ambition of becoming a two-form entry school and are all too aware that this is what the local community requires. We look forward to progressing with this proposal at speed, in the knowledge that we all have much work to do over the coming weeks to ensure a timely delivery of this project.

Yours sincerely,


PP David Rooney
Executive Principal

CC

Councillor Bicknell

Councillor Dudley

Alison Alexander

Rt Hon Theresa May MP