

Tilbury Pioneer Expansion Options – Briefing Note

07/09/2022

In late February 2021, Thurrock Council commissioned Alderton Associates to undertake a feasibility study for the potential 1 form-entry expansion of Tilbury Pioneer Academy. The brief was to provide a report into options for an expansion that would seek to provide additional teaching space for 210 pupils only.

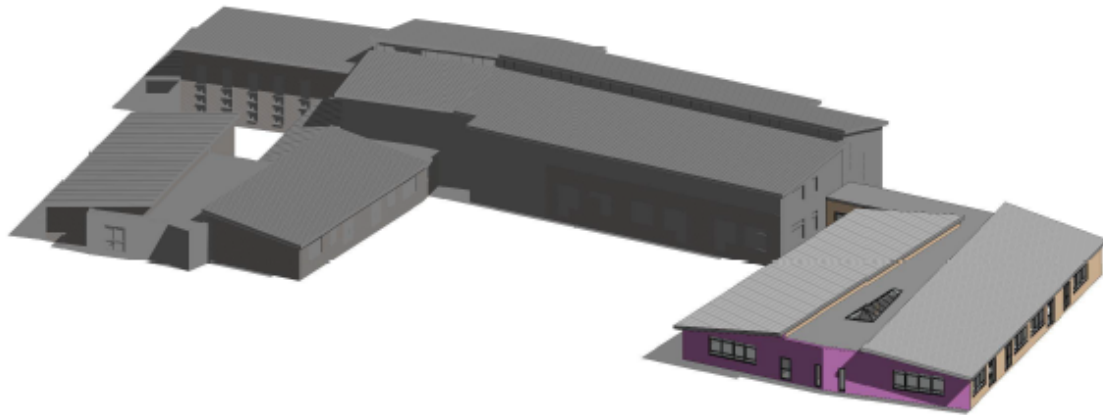
Appended to this note is a copy of the completed feasibility report, along with feasibility sketch drawings for the 3 options provided.

Option 1 is for the construction of a new teaching block to the rear of the site (north of the existing two-storey block). This option proposes to construct a single-storey teaching block comprising 8nr. New classrooms with shared breakout space, unisex pupil WCs, Accessible WC, office and a corridor link to the existing two-storey teaching block. All classrooms would be provided with access to external play areas and sports fields with lobbied entrances including coat and bag storage.

All circulation and teaching areas will be carpeted and have an area of vinyl around a sink and base units (and in WCs). The classrooms and circulation spaces would have suspended ceilings with provision for LED lighting, small power and IT equipment, all internal walls would meet the required Fire and Acoustic standards for schools and would be fully decorated on completion. External windows and doors would be aluminium framed, double-glazed units with solar controlled glazing.

The block easily links to existing walkways within the school and provides a holistic approach to the development of the school. These proposals would require planning approval but due to the position within the site, overall building height and the impact on neighbouring residential areas, the planning risk is considered to be low, and would be unlikely to receive any adverse comments.

At the time of the report, the option was costed at £1,827,500.00 although with the steep increases in costs experienced over the last 20 months, when applying a CPI linked increase, this is now more likely to be in the region of £2,120,730.00 and within the next 12 months projected to increase to approx. £2,438,839.00.



PROPOSED ISO VIEW

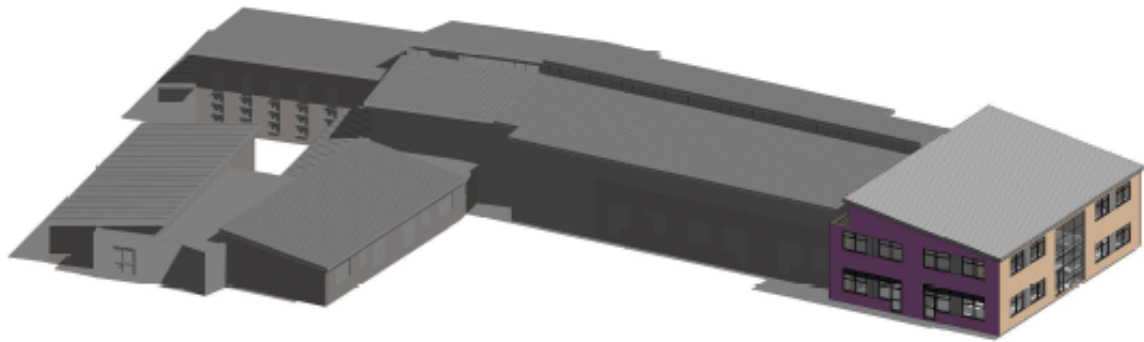
Option 2 also looks to utilise the available space at the rear of the site, with a view to constructing a new two-storey teaching block comprising 8nr. Classrooms for use by the upper years (Years 4,5 and 6) plus WCs, stairs, lift and circulation spaces.

The proposed location provides a link to the existing school at both ground and first floor levels to aid general circulation to and from the new classrooms. The 4nr. classrooms situated on the ground floor will be provided with direct external access to the playground and playing fields.

With construction costs based on a steel frame and masonry construction with suspended concrete plank (block and beam) floor construction on each floor, the building has been designed sympathetically to be in-keeping with the adjacent buildings. The proposal would be to have the same level of finish and provision in terms of power, lighting and IT facilities and all would be designed in accordance with the space standards set out in Building Bulletin 103 and current Building Regulations.

This option would also require planning permission, although it is a two-storey construction it is very much in keeping with the existing buildings in terms of scale and design and is therefore felt to carry a relatively low planning risk. As with previous development on the site, mitigation to flood risk will form a key part of the planning application.

At the time of the report, the option was costed at £1,496,400.00 although with the steep increases in costs experienced over the last 20 months, when applying a CPI linked increase, this is now more likely to be in the region of £1,736,504 and within the next 12 months projected to increase to approx. £1,997,078.00



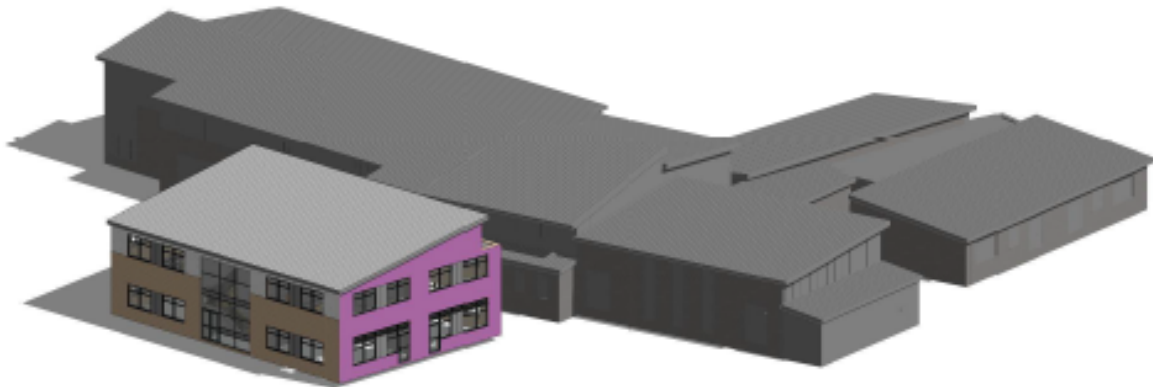
Option 3 proposes a similar two-storey teaching block to Option 2, although an alternative location has been proposed. The intention is to situate the block towards the front of the school site, where one of the bunds are currently located. Although this would require additional groundworks and a slight increase in overall project cost, the location offers a number of benefits due to its close proximity to the main hub of the school comprising the entrance/reception, kitchen, hall and other key ancillary services. This would improve the general circulation of pupils around the school and

reduce the interaction between pupils in Year 4, 5 and 6 and the Early Years pupils currently situated in the recently opened two-storey block.

The new teaching block will comprise 8nr. classrooms for use by the upper years (Years 4,5 and 6) plus WCs, stairs, lift and circulation spaces.

A similar method of construction is proposed (steel frame and masonry construction with suspended block and beam floor construction on each floor) to ensure good value for money and a robust construction meeting all requirements for Fire, Acoustic and Thermal performance in accordance with the relevant Building Bulletins and current Building Regulations.

At the time of the report, the option was costed at £1,583,400.00 although with the steep increases in costs experienced over the last 20 months, when applying a CPI linked increase, this is now more likely to be in the region of £1,837,463.00 and within the next 12 months projected to increase to approx. £2,115,920.00



Option 4 (Refurbishment of the old Tilbury Manor Building)

Following high level discussions between the CEO of GLC Academy Trust and the LA's ESS Strategic Lead regarding a further possible option to appraise, Thurrock Council commissioned Huggins Bromage Ferguson Architects to work up a costed proposal for the complete refurbishment of the remaining northern and western wings of the former Tilbury Manor building. This building as existing comprises of the following spaces.

- 2 x classrooms of 56 Sqm.
- 5 x classrooms of 47 Sqm.
- 1 x Hall of 166 Sqm.
- 1 x Separate entrance lobby with reception office and back office.
- 1 x Female WC
- 1 x Male WC
- 1 x Accessible WC
- 1 x Caretakers Office
- 2 x Cleaners Cupboards
- 1 x Kitchen (Staff)
- 5 x Storerooms (Separated from Classrooms)
- 1 x 1st floor Staff Room
- 1 x 1st Floor Meeting Room

Estimated costs are as follows: £1,550,000 at present although as with the other options above, when applying an inflationary value this rises to £1,900,000

This option does carry a greater planning risk however, details are as follows:
When the GLC applied for planning consent in 2018 for the new teaching block, the title of the application was:

20/01339/FUL | Two storey primary teaching block along with associated landscaping, hardstanding, new main entrance, site facilities and phased demolition of the existing junior block and associated earthworks and reinstatement (resubmission of 18/01104/FUL)

The application was approved in January 2021 and the decision notice states that in regard to the phased demolition of the former junior block:

The eastern and northern portions of the existing Junior Block on the site shall be demolished and the resulting material removed from the site. The West wing is permitted to remain in occupation until 30th September 2024 after which it shall be demolished and resulting materials removed from site. Reason: The development has only been approved on the basis that the building hereby approved is a replacement building in the Green Belt in accordance with policy PMD6 of the adopted Thurrock LDF Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development [2015].

HBF have enquired with planners whether this obligation could be varied or removed by way of a Section 73 application but received a negative response due to a precedent set from a former application.

Ultimately, the only clean way around this planning obligation would be for the School's Architect to re-apply for planning consent for the new school without seeking demolition of the old block, and there is no guarantee that this would be approved due to the green Belt issue.

Author

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