

APPENDIX 2

School Design Guidelines September 2018

Responses to consultation and changes to document as a result.

Respondent	Comment	Change made	
Primary Headteacher	Thank you for this commendable piece of work and please take my support to these plans and count me in for providing any quotes/positive praise for plans and designs regarding School Design Guidelines going forward.	Noted	
Primary Headteacher	<p>I have read the proposed document. It is great that you are putting something in place and it looks very strong.</p> <p>My only feedback is that I find the approach to mixed use sites inconsistent through the document. Initially it seems that such schemes would only be possible if other solutions were not possible. Later, you speak of the benefits of mixed use and the potential mitigation for them if uses of a mixed site are compatible.</p> <p>I also think the section on having a garden or growing things sounds a bit like tokenism and surely some sort of overarching planting and tree scheme is more important than a place for children to grow the occasional sunflower at its more basic level.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Mixed use section completely revised</p> <p>noted</p>	3
Architect	<p>We think the document provides some thoughtful text when considering school design.</p> <p>We have also made a few comments which may be helpful below:</p> <p>Photographs The images chosen to illustrate the text should be given further thought. Given that schools are essentially for children, there are no children in any images which is a shame and a real missed opportunity. Particularly the classroom image (which currently shows chairs on top of tables) and the outdoor space image (which doesn't have any play equipment or interest – although is on a rooftop) are real opportunities</p>	Photographs and labelling updated.	

	<p>to show what wonderful buildings you have commissioned recently. The document would benefit from selecting one or two key vibrant building images with children, and making them extend across a full page so they can be seen properly.</p> <p>Southwark's Vision In our experience of working with you, what sets Southwark's vision apart from other boroughs is about design ambition and thinking strategically/long term. We are unsure that this is really communicated in the document.</p> <p>Standards We note there is no reference to Secured by Design and early consultation with ALO (or is that in a different brief?). Similarly acoustics guidance documents could be referenced, if over and above the ESFA standard output specification? You do mention daylighting however.</p>	<p>Photographs added.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Text added</p>	2
Architect	<p>Compliance with Area Standards I have real concerns about the extent to which outdoor play in schools is being cut back. I agree with the sentiments regarding outdoor play in the guide, but wanted to highlight that the guidance document (BB103) relating to outdoor play is woolly and open to at best misinterpretation and at worst, abuse. The BB103 document provides much less clarity on outdoor play than the previous BB99 and much more room for interpretation, which is resulting in schemes which are inadequate. BB99 had a defined minimum for 'confined sites' which was lost in BB103 and which now suggests a priority order for outdoor play types on restricted sites but no bottom line. A clear and firm line from the Borough on what it considers to be the minimum outdoor play (for confined sites) would be hugely beneficial and hopefully avoid the squeeze by developers. For context – we were asked by a joint venture group (not in LB Southwark) to prepare plans for a 3FE school with 650sqm playground. Schools this squeezed will fail.</p> <p>Loss of Playspace (expansion and refurbishment) Section 77 of the Schools Standards Act will provide some governance of this issue. Notwithstanding this, expansion on existing school sites should always seek to mitigate loss of outdoor play. It is possible to expand a school without losing playspace – at Charles Dickens and Grange we increased outdoor play on both sites.</p>	<p>Reference added to page BB99 being the requirement, rather than BB103.</p> <p>Text included “<i>Expansion on existing sites should seek to mitigate loss of outdoor play space and to increase it wherever possible, for example through a use of roof decks or by rationalising existing</i></p>	<p>1 & 6</p> <p>6</p>

	<p>Expansion projects should seek to rationalise existing outdoor areas.</p> <p>Efficiency (expansion and refurbishment) It should be recognised that older school buildings will not naturally fit current area guidelines and may have inherent inefficiencies, notwithstanding this, the briefing process should involve a thorough inventory of existing spaces and a review of whether these are being used efficiently or still relevant to the current curriculum approach. It may be possible to address some organisational issues through simple re-allocation of spaces without the need to undertake building work.</p> <p>Entrance and Legibility Some emphasis of the challenge of lunchtime change-over in early years would be beneficial. The entrance strategy needs to consider how this will be addressed without impacting pupil safeguarding – i.e. avoiding the need for parent to cross KS1&2 playgrounds to pick up nursery children.</p> <p>Mixed Use and High Density Sites Although I recognise the need for these and believe that good design can overcome many of the challenges, there is little built evidence of successful applications of the typology to-date. I wonder if the language in this sentence “<i>School buildings on high density sites can be just as successful as schools on more generous sites</i>” could be tempered slightly? This may fit better with the earlier statement that the council’s preference is for stand-alone schools. Additionally, the design should ensure a clear sense of identity for the school – perhaps covered by the comment about the school not being overwhelmed, but worth stressing this point.</p>	<p><i>outdoor areas. “</i></p> <p>Whole section of this text included in guidelines document.</p> <p>Whole section of this text included in guidelines document.</p> <p>Mixed use section updated to reflect importance of school identity and quality of environment.</p> <p>Updated to read “<i>School buildings on high density sites should be designed carefully so as to take account of challenges and demonstrate where compensatory design solutions are being proposed; e.g. a larger multi use hall where there is reduced external area, elevated play decks and podium development</i>”</p>	<p>5</p> <p>3</p>
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	<p>Materials</p> <p>I'd recommend some guidance on materials and durability. The Employers Requirements for Package B were written with industry-leading warranty periods for most components for example, but the design guide could include something more tectonic:</p> <p>Schools should be designed for robustness and be capable of being easily maintained. External materials which weather well and are inherently robust will reduce maintenance costs in the long term and provide a lasting legacy. Internal materials should also be considered for their inherent strengths, rather than relying on applied protective finishes, which can provide an institutional feel. This can help both to add character to internal spaces and reduce material waste in construction.</p> <p>Phasing</p> <p>There could be more commentary on phasing of projects for existing school sites. In these instances a clear phasing strategy is essential. The cost of temporary accommodation to support phased construction plans should be weighed against alternate approaches. In some instances, smaller packages of work may be feasible over school holidays. This approach was used successfully at Charles Dickens school to create two new classrooms within the existing building during summer 2015, which avoided additional temporary classrooms (and loss of play space) during the main building works. This also provided an opportunity to prototype joinery items that were later used across the main project.</p> <p>I hope the above is useful. School design is a brave new world at the moment and robust policies by local authorities are invaluable in securing the quality of education that all children deserve.</p> <p>Best of luck with the rest of the process.</p>	<p>This text is now included on page 7</p> <p>This text is now included on page 5</p>	<p>7</p> <p>5</p>
Architect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Generic guidance. I feel that there is a risk that this document falls between two stools. In generic terms I don't think that it covers enough ground and that other publications i.e. Building Bulletins, CABA guides etc. do a better job of this without many of the gaps that exist in this document. It is also not clear if this document takes precedence over other documents. If so, then these issues should be spelt out. Either way, there needs to be a thorough crosscheck between this guidance and these other documents to iron out any ambiguities or contradictions. 2. Specific guidance. I don't think the document is clear enough on issues that are specific to Southwark rather than generic. This is particularly important 		

	<p>where Southwark best practice is different to DfES standards. In recent projects there have been issues related to internal space standards e.g. Kitchens where the Southwark standards are different. Also, our experience would indicate that BB104 is very constrained indeed and projects find it hard to meet this guidance and maintain the quality of outcomes Southwark would desire.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. This document uses such terms as ‘inspiring’ spaces. Unless Southwark are more specific about how this can be achieved within the BB104 space standards and parallel budgets, it is not fair to raise expectation to this level. 4. In recent schools we used the DfES Output Specification to determine detailed design standards which needed to be complied with or derogations accepted by Southwark. In my view this, or similar, is a critical document and should be referenced as being mandatory unless Southwark now have a better approach. 5. Illustrations. The photos need to have consistent descriptions and in my view should relate to the text if at all possible in order to illustrate the points that are being made. 6. I may be wrong but I think that some of the titles are for the wrong school i.e. the classroom shot is not Albion. 7. The classroom is such an important element in a schools’ design that I think there must be better photos than the one that is chosen. 8. I understand that photos of Belham School are now available and these could be included to illustrate the issues related to working with Boards Schools which may be listed. Ref 5 below. 9. Context and Vision. ‘Adaptable design’ is referred to in this section. In recent projects Southwark have accepted that certain forms of construction e.g. CLT (cross laminated timber) find it difficult to meet this criteria which normally requires a framed solution. 10. Compliance with area standards. Please refer to my comments in section 2 above. 11. Respecting the context. London Board Schools are part of the Southwark portfolio and have their own particular issues, not least that some are listed buildings. It think that this should be referenced and guidance given in this section. 12. Siting and Pollution concerns. The issues about school and their proximity to main roads is important. However, the note needs to distinguish between school buildings and external areas. Buildings can often form a boundary to roads which protect the external areas from noise etc. My first reading of the note suggested to me that school buildings should be set in the middle of a 	<p>Labelling updated to highlight points being made.</p> <p>Labels updated.</p> <p>Updated.</p> <p>Included on page 3.</p> <p>Noted as too specific for guidelines</p> <p>Included on page 3</p> <p>Included on page 3</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3</p>
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	<p>site away from roads. I don't think that this was the intention of the wording.</p> <p>13. Elevated play decks are referenced several times in the document. It should be made clear that budgets will need to take these abnormal costs into consideration at the outset.</p> <p>14. Entrance and Legibility. The requirements for drop-off to a Special School could have a mention here as they are unique.</p> <p>15. Mixed use and high density sites. Reference is made to maximising light and air to provide a high quality environment. The whole issue of daylight, solar gain, heat loss and ventilation standards is complicated and needs to be spelt out specifically e.g. in an Output Specification. Statements such as the one above are not of any use to a designer without clearer guidance on which standards are to be met.</p> <p>16. I am not sure what the bullet point 'Utilities should be separated' means.</p> <p>17. Environmental Conditions Internally. Please refer to previous comments about design standards set out in an Output Specification.</p> <p>18. Reference is made to Southwark best practice solutions for classroom environments. Shouldn't these be stated? If not, where can they be found? The recent approach has followed DfES standards which require 'assisted natural ventilation'. Is this still Southwark's approach. How are these schools performing in the hot weather? Are there high maintenance issues and costs being incurred? If an alternative approach is to be taken, what are the design criteria and where are these set out?</p> <p>19. Reference is made to each teaching space having 'an openable window'. This is too vague and must tie into the overall ventilation strategy.</p> <p>20. The paragraph on acoustic design does not make sense to me. The implication is that natural cross ventilation should be adopted (ref. previous comments above) even though this has little to do with acoustics. It is also not 'easy' to achieve cross ventilation as stated!</p> <p>21. Internal Teaching and Learning Environment. I am not sure that this is the best heading for this section as non-teaching areas are also covered.</p> <p>22. The bullet point 'Well designed toilets...' should be reworded to omit these words and specific preferred solutions referred to.</p> <p>23. Outdoor Space. Please refer to previous comments about the additional</p>	<p>Added</p> <p>Mixed use section revised</p> <p>Removed</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted. Too specific for overall guidelines</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Wording removed and sentence updated to <i>"Acoustic design for schools is a demanding Building Regulations requirement and should be adopted. Derogations against acoustic requirements will not be accepted as these restrict access to education for all learners, not only for those with hearing loss."</i></p> <p>Updated to <i>"Internal Spaces"</i></p> <p>Wording removed and section updated</p> <p>Noted</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p>
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	costs that need to be accommodated to cover rooftop play areas.	Noted	
	24. Daylight and views. Please refer to previous comments about the daylight etc. The statements '....a feeling of occasional height and volume ... a stimulating variety of experience'. I totally support this principle. However, the cost constraints on schools are such that I don't think that this can be a specific requirement in a design guide unless Southwark accept that this approach will almost certainly need a higher level of budget than the DfES would accept.		
	25. Sustainability. The stated aim is for BREEAM 'excellent'. All too often we see this in specifications knowing full well that budgets will not stretch to this. This should either be a mandatory requirement with budgets to suit or it should be dropped as an aim which will never be achieved and will consume a great deal of abortive time and energy.		
	26. Procurement. I think that the cost constraints should be spelt out clearly here or in a separate section. Southwark should have sufficient information from recent projects to set out costs per square metre, costs for externals etc. This is vital to set the design team's aspirations at the right level from the outset. Guidance should also be given about the need for detailed feasibility work and realistic costings of design solutions at the early stages in any project.	Noted	6
	I hope that these comments can be seen as constructive and are of some help.		