

PLANNING STATEMENT

for St Cecilia's RC High School, Chapel Hill, Longridge PR3 2XA **Proposal: Provision of Additional On-site Parking**

1. Introduction

St Cecilia's RC High School is a voluntary aided secondary school established in the early 1960s. Administered by Salford Diocese and the Lancashire County Council Education Authority within the Ribble Valley Borough Council, serving the local community.

Currently, the school faces a shortfall in on-site car parking spaces. This planning proposal seeks approval for the creation of 16 additional car parking spaces to address the needs of the school and its staff. The expansion of parking capacity is essential to accommodate the increasing number of staff and pupils, in line with the school's growth and ongoing developments.

2. The Existing Site, Building, and Setting

The school is situated off Chapel Hill in Longridge, surrounded by both established and new residential properties. The main school building is a mix of single, two, and three-storey sections, while a detached single-storey teaching block to the west has recently been extended to provide an additional 4 classrooms.

The school is set back from the main road, with staff and visitor car parks (A and B) located at the front of the site. Hard surface playgrounds lie to the west of the school, while a large playing field is located at the rear. New residential developments are underway opposite the school on Chapel Hill, and well-established properties are positioned on either side.

- **Car Park A** consists of 5 marked parking bays and 1 disabled bay.
- **Car Park B** includes 20 marked parking bays.

While there is additional informal parking for up to 10 cars, this is outside the designated bays, creating congestion and restricting access for deliveries and vehicle movement on-site. Many staff and visitors also park along Chapel Hill, further exacerbating the issue.

3. Recent Development and Impact on Site

In accordance with planning approval notice **3/2022/1182** (dated 22nd December 2022), the school completed a single-storey extension to the detached teaching block, adding 4 classrooms to the school's facilities.

As part of this development, the small car park and adjacent grassed area were temporarily taken out of use to serve as the contractor's compound. During construction, the ground was excavated and replaced with a compacted stone pad foundation to accommodate the crane used for installing concrete roof planks.

The main contractor is responsible for reinstating the 5 parking spaces and grassed areas that were temporarily removed. The school now seeks to take advantage of this restoration work to enlarge the existing car park.

4. Proposed Development: Car Park Expansion

The school proposes the following improvements to the parking facilities:

- **Enlargement of Car Park B:** The existing car park B will be expanded to create 15 additional designated parking bays, resulting in a total of **20 parking bays**.
- **New Disabled Parking Bays:** The planting bed adjacent to the existing disabled parking bay will be removed to make space for two side-by-side disabled parking bays.
- **Cycle Storage:** The former cycle storage enclosure, removed during the construction works, will be replaced with 3 new cycle shelters, providing space for 18 bicycles. These will be located along the entrance walkway leading up to the school's main entrance.

5. Ecological and Biodiversity Considerations

To comply with the Extended Preliminary Ecological Assessment and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation, the following ecological enhancements will be implemented:

- **Wildflower Meadow:** Approximately 411m² of wildflower meadow will be created around the new car parking area to promote biodiversity.
- **Shrub Relocation:** 5.4m² of shrubs will be carefully lifted using a small bucket machine from the area of the new disabled parking bay and relocated to bare soil areas within adjacent weeded beds.
- **Tree Planting:** Three new trees will be planted along the boundary with the playing field to replace those lost due to the car park development.

6. School Capacity and Staffing Levels

Currently, the school has 530 pupils on roll. With the recent extension, the school's capacity will increase to 600 pupils over the next four years.

- **Current Staffing Levels:**
 - FTE Teaching Staff: 30.4
 - FTE Support Staff: 12.7
 - Total FTE: 43.1

The recently completed 4 classroom extension will gradually increase staff numbers, with an additional 4 staff members over the next four years, bringing the total staff count to 47.1 FTE by 2028.

7. Conclusion

This planning proposal for the addition of 16 new car parking spaces is a vital step in addressing the current shortfall in parking facilities at St Cecilia's RC High School. The expanded car park will improve access, reduce congestion, and better serve the growing school population. The proposal also includes environmental enhancements, ensuring the development aligns with sustainability and biodiversity goals. By increasing the parking capacity and improving site accessibility, the school will be better equipped to manage its expanding pupil and staff numbers in the coming years.