

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
THAMES YOUNG MARINERS,
SURREY OUTDOOR LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT CENTRE**

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PART 1 - INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

ISSUE 02

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Introduction



1.1 Site Address

Site Address

Thames Young Mariners Outdoor Education Centre
 Riverside Drive
 Ham
 Richmond
 Surrey
 TW10 7RX

1.2 Project Overview

Planning Proposal Description

Demolition of existing buildings and construction of replacement buildings with associated residential accommodation, changing block, replacement staff accommodation and outdoor activity equipment including high ropes, climbing wall, coasteering course, supporting pontoons with associated hard and soft landscaping and parking.



1.3 Statement of Need

Vail Williams were commissioned to undertake a Green Belt Statement. Their findings are provided in the report titled Operational Need and Metropolitan Open Land Statement. Within Section 12.2 of this report a statement of need is established. This section is provided below for reference:

This report has clearly set out the background of the site and SOLD who currently operate the site including their current challenges around with the site's operation which is becoming no longer fit for purpose. Consideration has been given to whether the existing buildings can be refurbished but concluded that the most suitable option is for full redevelopment of the site. No alternative sites have been identified which would be suitable to accommodate the development outside of MOL or Green Belt land and therefore the current TYM is the only site for the proposed development. There has been extensive scrutiny of the design to justify the size and scale of the development to demonstrate that all development being proposed is necessary and does not lead to unnecessary development on MOL.



1.4 LBR & London Boroughs Strategic Requirement Statement

The London Plan Policy GG3 - Creating a Healthy City

To improve Londoners' health and reduce health inequalities, those involved in planning and development must:

- Ensure that the wider determinants of health are addressed in an integrated and co-ordinated way, taking a systematic approach to improving the mental and physical health of all Londoners and reducing health inequalities
- Promote more active and healthy lives for all Londoners and enable them to make healthy choices
- Use the Healthy Streets Approach to prioritise health in all planning decisions
- Assess the potential impacts of development proposals and Development Plans on the mental and physical health and wellbeing of communities, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts, maximise potential positive impacts, and help reduce health inequalities, for example through the use of Health Impact Assessments
- Plan for appropriate health and care infrastructure to address the needs of London's changing and growing population
- Seek to improve London's air quality, reduce public exposure to poor air quality and minimise inequalities in levels of exposure to air pollution
- Plan for improved access to and quality of green spaces, the provision of new green infrastructure, and spaces for play, recreation and sports
- Ensure that new buildings are well-insulated and sufficiently ventilated to avoid the health problems associated with damp, heat and cold
- Seek to create a healthy food environment, increasing the availability of healthy food and restricting unhealthy options.



1.5 Greenbelt Statement

Vail Williams were commissioned to undertake a Green Belt Statement. Their findings are provided in the report titled Operational Need and Metropolitan Open Land Statement. A summary of these findings are provided below for reference:

There has been extensive scrutiny of the design to justify the size and scale of the development to demonstrate that all development being proposed is necessary and does not lead to unnecessary development on MOL.

The harm to MOL as a result of the impact on openness is clearly outweighed by the other considerations relating to the social, economic and environmental benefits the scheme will generate as summarised in section 12.3. Therefore, when considered as a whole, the proposals comply with paragraph 148 of the NPPF and Policy LP13 of the Richmond Local Plan as Very Special Circumstances can be demonstrated to justify new development in MOL.



The Project

2

2.1 Key Objectives

1. New build facility to provide guest residential accommodation, changing & personal care, dining hall & full catering service kitchen, administrative space, learning spaces, staff residential accommodation, storage, outdoor pursuits activities and associated glamping provision.
2. Local community and local schools to benefit from the proposed new & improved facilities & provision of the TYM site
3. Provide an improved and varied, all seasons activity offer
4. Continue to provide and improve upon the accessible & inclusive offer at TYM.
5. Develop a design & construction methodology that safely and effectively allows the site to remain operational whilst mitigating the impact on the site & local context,
6. Identify and set out a plan to deliver the project against SCC's sustainability objectives
7. Deliver a successful scheme to budget
8. Achieve a centre opening for Autumn 2023
9. Provide a scheme which enables TYM to deliver all-year round residential courses
10. Deliver an offer which will enable increased footfall and thus increase revenue return to SCC.



2.2 Project Vision

The Site & The Community

TYM is a unique site, which has the potential to provide a much broader, quality experience to their user groups. The site offers access to natural environments, such as water and woodlands, to local communities which makes a significant positive impact to peoples lives.

Development at TYM will enable SOLD to realise the potential of the site through a significant increase in service capacity, supporting Surrey County Council's strategic priorities for children, young people, and families by providing bespoke programmes of personal development, appropriate education, skills training and family support.

It will further enhance SOLD's ability to work in partnership with services across the SCC Children, Families and Lifelong Learning Directorate, other Local Authority Children and Family Services, charitable trusts and organisations.

This partnership work will allow SOLD to particularly support vulnerable children and young people including looked after children, young people within the criminal justice system, children who are not in full time or mainstream education to support vulnerable children and young people including children with a social worker, young people in contact with the criminal justice system and children not able to access full-time education. Whilst focusing on children and young people, the new facilities will also be available for all ages and abilities including families and adults.

Community Vision for Surrey 2030

The investment at TYM will contribute towards the Council's "Community vision for Surrey 2030" for People and Place, particularly in these areas through increased capacity and opportunity:

- Children and young people are safe and feel safe and confident.
- Everyone benefits from education, skills and employment opportunities that help them succeed in life.
- Everyone lives healthy, active and fulfilling lives, and makes good choices about their wellbeing.
- Residents live in clean, safe and green communities, where people and organisations embrace their environmental responsibilities.

PSHE & Citizenship

Outdoor education is a form of education that engages children and young people and helps to ensure that no young person falls through the gaps. It focuses on developing essential skills - those highly transferable skills that everyone needs to support their use of specialist knowledge and technical skills in preparation for the world of lifelong learning and employment

A residential learning experience provides unique opportunities and benefits that cannot be achieved in any other educational context or setting. A Recent report 'Why Brilliant Residential?' (Learning Away Organisation), reported the significant positive impact of residential visits confirmed that residential experiences can lead to improvements such as improved achievement, attainment, progress, as well as improved behaviour, attendance, enhanced resilience, confidence, and wellbeing.

Vision Summary

The following bullet points summarise SOLD's vision for the proposed development at TYM:

1. Make a significant contribution in supporting vulnerable young people and adults from Surrey, South London and surrounding areas
2. Increase the capacity, quality and range of outdoor learning opportunities for young people and families.
3. Provide additional accommodation, facilities and learning environments to benefit users of the site and increase long term financial sustainability.
4. Design modern, fit for purpose facilities that will be accessible and inclusive to a wide range of users with additional or specific needs.
5. Develop a site which reflects high standards of environmental sustainability, which will be linked and embedded in the learning outcomes of all user groups.
6. Create a facility which increases and improves the health, personal and social skills and emotional well-being of its users.



2.3 Core Values



Increase the capacity and breadth of outdoor learning experiences on offer so that more users can benefit from achieving crucial personal, social, emotional and physical outcomes, which will benefit their life chances and opportunities.



Offer higher quality outdoor learning experiences in a better environment with attractive accommodation and fit for purpose facilities. This will encourage creative and diverse uses of the site and significantly enhance the learning outcomes which can be achieved.



Endeavour to address the National Carbon Neutral Agenda and provide imaginative learning opportunities for children and young people to foster a respect, awareness and understanding of the natural environment.

Preserve and improve the unique natural setting of TYM and enhance the plant and wildlife habitats on the site.



Regenerate a unique Thames-side asset to provide exemplar all year around facilities for outdoor learning activity which will benefit the local community for years to come.



Allow opportunities for SOLD to adapt & grow into the facility through flexible design and informal interventions supporting the changing demands on the services they are required to deliver.

2.4 Surrey Outdoor Learning Development

Surrey Outdoor Development Ethos

Surrey Outdoor Learning & Development is committed to achieving positive personal development through outdoor experiences that challenge the mind and body. Through these outdoor experiences, we guide participants to discover more about themselves by learning and developing personal, social, emotional, physical and key skills

We treat each person we work with as an individual with his or her own unique core strengths and limitations. Together, we work to achieve the best each person is capable of, whether this be newfound self-esteem, the ability to communicate effectively with friends or strangers, or the completion of a strenuous uphill hike.

Self-evaluation and the recognition of achievement are the two fundamental principles behind our work. Participants must assess their own capabilities in order to perform. Ultimately, learning and development will then occur when an individual chooses to fulfil these capabilities through action and is able to recognise their actions as a new and remarkable personal achievement.

Learning Outcomes

Defining the aim and meeting the specific needs of our user groups' visit is very important to us

As their leader we work with you to specify their learning outcomes you wish them to achieve during their visit.

These could include:

- Involvement
- Setting goals
- Broaden horizons
- Development
- Self-awareness
- Confidence
- Coordination
- Fitness
- Communication
- Leadership



2.5 User Groups

The site is used by many local schools and community groups for day visits and for schools and community groups from further afield for residential stays.

During 2019/20, the footfall at TYM was 23,041. With the proposed development, TYM is forecast to more than double the number of outdoor learning sessions each year and add a minimum of 150 nights of residential stays for children and families.

SCC's approved financial modelling projections forecast that TYM is expected to increase footfall by approximately 54%, double the number of activity sessions held annually.

TYM, currently & will continue to, provide outdoor learning programmes through both day and residential visits to a wide range of user groups including;

- Primary & Secondary Schools,
- Colleges and Universities
- SEN Schools,
- Youth groups e.g. cubs, guides etc,
- Families,
- Children booked on by parents,
- Adults on training courses,
- Adults with additional needs,
- Parents and toddlers,
- Open water swimmers,
- Vulnerable and looked after children,
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award participants and
- Children who are receiving alternative education provision.



2.6 Site Activities

Thames Young Mariners offers water-based activities in a controlled environment, providing a unique space for learning and self-discovery in the natural environment. The centre is recognised as a teaching centre by the Royal Yachting Association and the British Canoeing.

All activities are delivered by qualified and experienced outdoor education workers in a structured form as little as a day course to a full week.

Activities available at TYM include:

- Adventure/night walks,
- Archery,
- Bell boating,
- Canoeing,
- Challenge course,
- Climbing wall
- Kayaking,
- Orienteering,
- Raft building,
- Sailing,
- Team tasks and woodland skills,
- Camping,
- Open water swimming

The proposed development would expand the activity offer to include:

- High Ropes Facility
- Coastering (Over Water Challenge Course)

NB. Activities can be adapted for groups with accessibility requirements



High Ropes



Challenge Course



Climbing Wall



Family Days Out



Kayaking



Zipline



Sailing



Rafting



Archery



Camping



Campfires



Team Tasks & Woodland Skills

2.7 Feasibility Study

Surrey County Council commissioned Hamson Barron Smith in 2020 to undertake a feasibility study to review the viability for regenerating the site of Thames Young Mariners (TYM).

Through engagement with the team at Surrey Outdoor Learning and Development (SOLD) they established aspirations to expand the seasonal activities to a year round offer.

The existing infrastructure at the site was outdated (original construction from the 1950s) and suffering from lack of investment. A high level appraisal of the condition of the buildings was carried out and summarised below:

- Club House – poor
- Boat Store – poor
- Cedar Bungalow – poor
- Bungalow 2 – poor
- Classroom (pre-fab) – poor
- Warden’s Accommodation – average
- Staff Dormitory – average
- Changing Blocks - average

Inspections carried out during the feasibility study highlighted that the standard of existing catering and changing facilities were in poor condition. The catering provision was noted as being too small to cater for the range of user groups. Improving the changing rooms to be gender inclusive would align TYM with modern facilities at schools and other activity providers.

Ancillary spaces, such as the hall, are too small and would benefit from additional multi-use rooms for briefings to support administration and training requirements. This would enable expansion into conference style event hosting.

A series of opportunities were presented within the feasibility study, ranging from refurbishing and extending the existing buildings to total replacement with new buildings.

The conclusion of the feasibility was recommendation for replacement with new buildings. Due to the age and condition of existing buildings the ability to bring up to energy efficiency standards were not considered possible. There would have been significant extension to the existing buildings to meet the accommodation need, which would

be compromised by retention of parts of the existing complex, leading to an increased density of built form within the open setting.

A new build solution would allow the organisation and placement of buildings to respond to the lake and views, with a sense of arrival created that is missing at the existing site. New buildings are shown spaced apart to open views through the site. Modern construction methods would allow for off-site manufacture, greater levels of efficiency to minimise energy consumption and integrate renewable technology. Inclusivity and accessibility would be easier to provide through a consistent approach, to meet the varied needs of visiting school children and community groups.



HBS Selected New Build Feasibility Study Option 3

2.8 Project Brief

Thames Young Mariners have been long established as an outdoor learning centre off Riverside Drive in Richmond.

The existing buildings that support the various outdoor activities operated by Surrey Outdoor Learning and Development (SOLD) are now life-expired and in need of replacement. Unfortunately, the type of construction applied in the 1950s was devoid of insulation and used shallow storey heights that make modernisation with sustainable building services not possible. Surrey County Council have therefore allocated funding to allow for the modernisation of the facility to secure ongoing operation.

A business plan has been established by SOLD to support the funding bid. To allow the current activities to be supplemented, a range of new climbing activities will be created with high-wire and coasteering courses. A replacement climbing wall will expand the current provision.

Existing and new activities will be supported by a continuation of camping on site and a new provision of dormitory style residential blocks, like those at other sites around Surrey operated by SOLD. This enables overnight accommodation for year round use that extends the period activities can be offered to school groups.

The administrative functions, dining hall, changing facilities, and staff residential accommodation will be replaced by a new main building on the footprint of the existing complex.

A new camping changing block will improve facilities for the campsite and reduce the distance school children need to travel for toilets and showers.

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