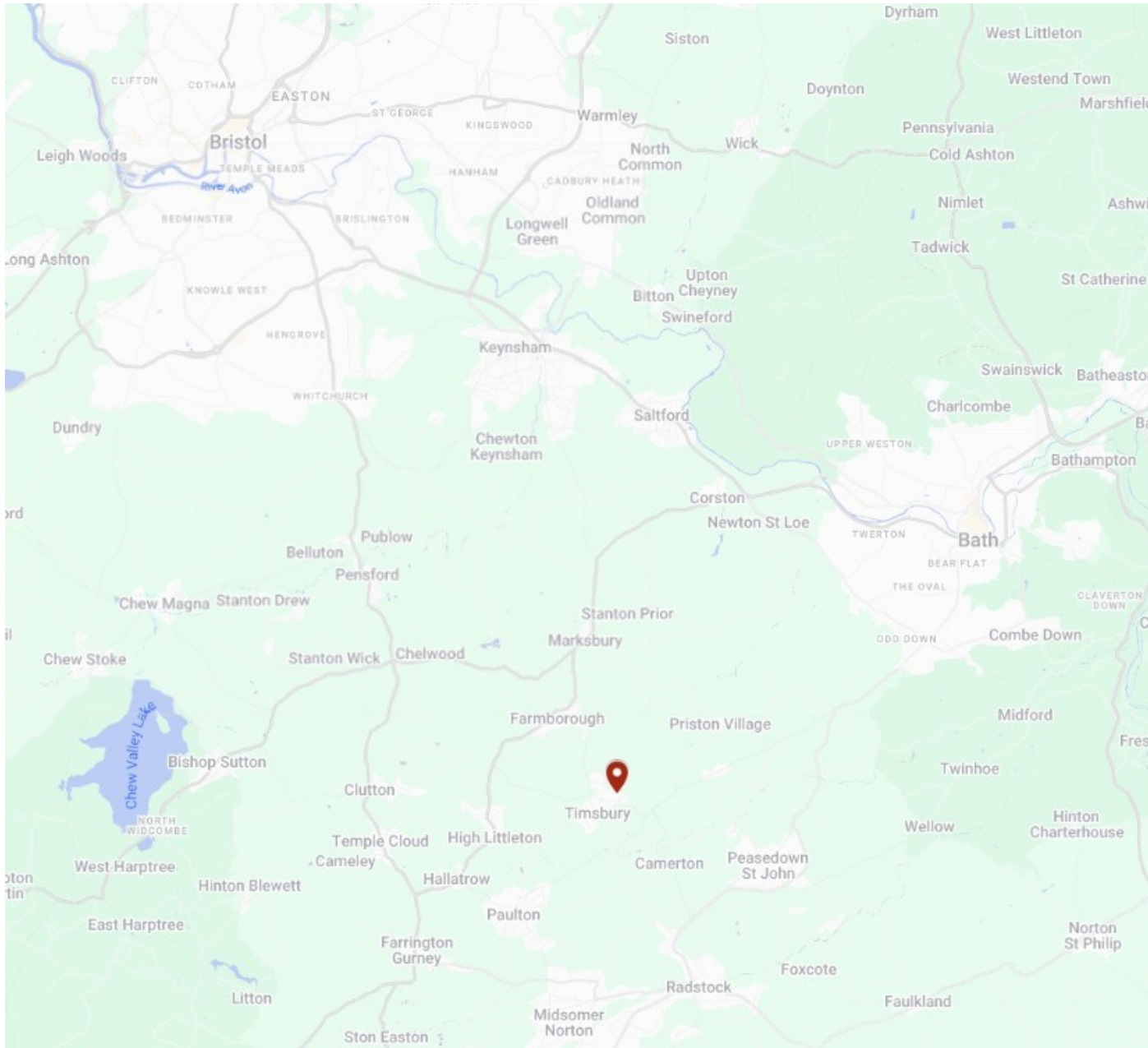




FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE EXPANSION AT ST MARY'S CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL TIMSBURY

PROJECT: 4597

REVISION: _

DATE APRIL 2026

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REVISIONS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project introduction

This Feasibility Report has been prepared by BBA Architects (BBA) to review the previous feasibility study undertaken in 2019, which explored the expansion of St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Timsbury.

The purpose of this update to provide updated evidence to inform the Local Plan and future decision making, for the feasibility of accommodating a 0.5 form entry (0.5FE) expansion on the existing school site.

To inform this report existing accommodation schedules, drawings and Net Capacity Assessments have been reviewed. Due to the time constraints this study has been undertaken using desk-based evidence alone, with no site visits undertaken, albeit BBA team's knowledge of the school site has been used.

High-level reviews of BB103 against the existing school site areas and gross internal floor areas (GIAs) has been undertaken to illustrate any significant departures from BB103 standards.

1.2 Updates from the 2019 feasibility study

In 2019 the study included the potential use of land to the east of the site, however, this is no longer available as a live planning application ([26/002010/FUL](#)) for 54 dwellings is under consideration.

The red line boundary included the playing field, and whilst this review will focus on the existing school site for any potential development, the sports pitches have been included within the site area calculations, indicated by the red line boundary (figure 02)



FIG 02: Aerial Map of the site's locations. Copyright Google maps 2026

2.0 EXISTING SITE

2.1 Site location: St. Mary's C of E Primary School is located within Timsbury, a village in Somerset in the Bath and North East Somerset Council administrative area. It is located approximately 8 miles south-west of Bath. The School itself is located on Lansdown View, which is a no through road accessing residential properties and the School.

2.2 Existing School External Design: The School has a large amount of green space to the entrance of the building which is used as a gardening area and early years play area. There is a small staff and visitor car parking area which can accommodate approximately 13 no. cars. Externally there is a tarmac hard standing play area, a soft play area and a forest area. The large shared playing field to the north of the School is accessed via a track.

2.4: Planning constraints: St. Mary's C of E Primary School is not a listed building nor is it in the curtilage of any listed buildings. The Parish's House (Grade II*) is in the locality however it is of a sufficient distance away from the site that it is not considered that there would be a detrimental affect on the listed buildings, should the School expand. It is not in a Conservation area or the Green Belt. A Tree Protection Order exists for a Cedar Tree on North Road (TPO no: 544/8) however it is not close enough to the site that any potential works would have any affect on this Tree.

2.5 Site constraints: The existing total site area is 31,131m² however, this figure includes the shared playing field. The School site area alone is 9,964m².

2.6 Site hazards:

- Limited access arrangements
- Asbestos



FIG 03: Aerial Map of the site's locations. Copyright Google maps 2026

3.0 EXISTING SCHOOL

3.1 Existing School Design: The original building was built in 1934 as Timsbury County Secondary School. In 1970 following a major national review of secondary education, Grammar Schools were phased out. As a result, the building became available as a 'new' Primary School in 1973. The School is a rendered brick, two-storey building. It contains 7no. Classrooms, a Music Room, a Thrive Room, Hall and associated facilities. Part of the School building is leased out for the use of the nursery, which has 1no. classroom.

3.2 Existing Floor Areas: The existing school's Gross Internal Floor Area GIA is 1807m² with a total net area of 1147m² (with teaching area of 879.9m²) and non-net area of 659.9m², this includes the nursery accommodation.

For the purposes of this assessment the nursery internal accommodation is to be excluded, therefore the **Primary School's GIA is 1603m²** with a total net area of 1070m² (with teaching area of 815m²) and non-net area of 533m².

3.3 Comparison with BB103 for a 210 place (1FE) primary school: As this feasibility report is to consider the existing school site's ability to accommodate additional pupils, a high-level review of their existing accommodation is necessary to consider if there is an existing deficit in comparison with their existing provision as a 210 place (1FE primary school). The overall GIA of a BB103 1FE primary school is 1211m², St Mary's is well in excess of this. This can be attributed to inefficient layouts e.g. single sided corridors and large classrooms.

Whilst the overall GIAs is in excess, under closer inspection deficits do exist within individual rooms and certain spaces. For example there are no SEN facilities and shortfalls in staff facilities, toilets, and storage.

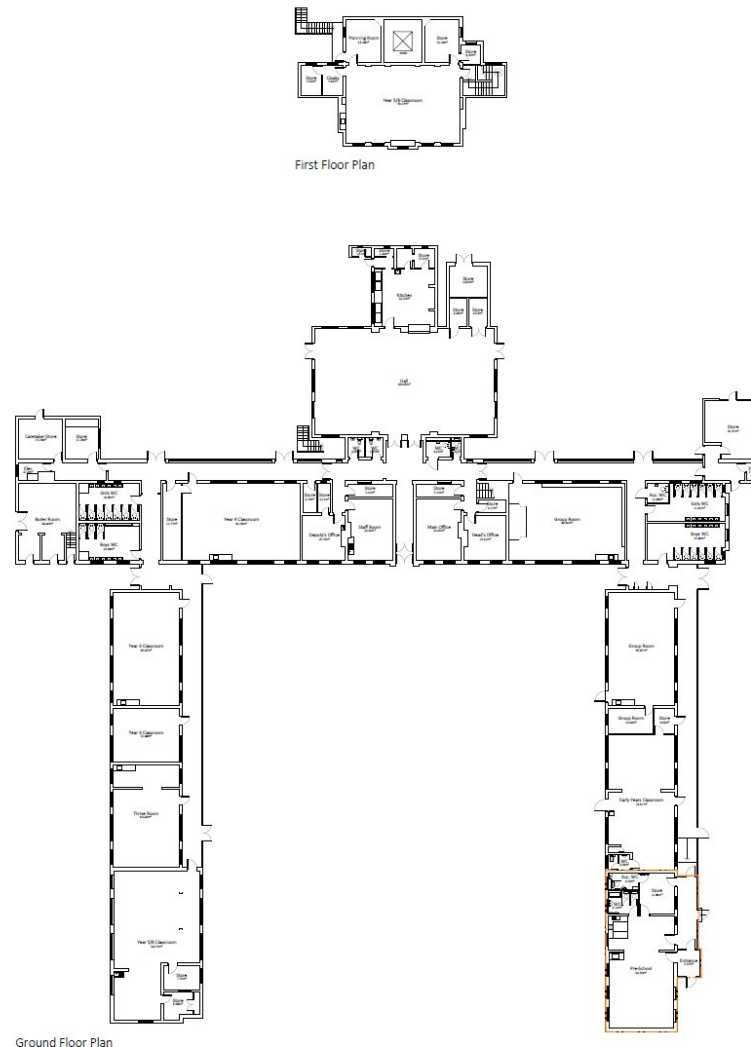


FIG 04: Existing School Floor Plan.

4.0 BB103 REQUIREMENTS FOR 315 PLACE PRIMARY

4.1 BB103 for a 210 place (1FE) primary school + 30 place nursery: To understand the existing site, a review of the existing site areas has been undertaken and these compared with the minimum required site areas for a 210 place (1FE) primary school + 30 place nursery school. The minimum total site area for a 1FE has been calculated as per annex B: Site area table on page 44 of BB103: Base area for any primary school + area per pupil place for 5 to 11 primary + nursery. Total minimum site area = $2000\text{m}^2 + 33.3P + 6N$ (where P = no. of primary pupils and N = no. of nursery pupils).

The minimum total area for a 1FE +30 place nursery is therefore:

$$2000 + 33.3(210) + 6(30) = 9,173\text{m}^2$$

4.2 BB103 for a 315 place (1.5FE) primary school: To understand the existing site, a review of the existing site areas has been undertaken and these compared with the minimum required site areas for a 315 place (1.5FE) primary school + 30 place nursery school. The minimum total site area for a 1.5FE has been calculated as per annex B: Site area table on page 44 of BB103: Base area for any primary school + area per pupil place for 5 to 11 primary + nursery. Total minimum site area = $2000\text{m}^2 + 33.3P + 6N$ (where P = no. of primary pupils and N = no. of nursery pupils).

The minimum total area for a 1.5FE + 30 place nursery is therefore:

$$2000 + 33.3(315) + 6(30) = 12,669.5\text{m}^2$$

4.3 Existing site areas compared to BB103: The existing site is $31,131\text{m}^2$. This exceeds the minimum size for a 1FE+30place nursery school and a 1.5FE+30place nursery school.

TABLE A: Existing school sites scoring matrix

Additional accommodation	No.	Area [m ²]	Total
Reception classroom	1	62	62
Infant classroom	1	62	62
Junior classroom	2	55	110
Small group room	2	9	18
SEN rooms	2	12	24
Studio	1	45	45
Classroom storage	1	6	6
Cloakroom storage	1	20	20
PE/hall storage	1	16	16
Kitchen	1	6	6
Toilets	1	21	21
Total			390m²
Undersized accommodation			
School hall			-10
Staff spaces			-16
Total			26m²

4.4 BB103 Schedule of Accommodation (SOA) for a 315 place primary school

A schedule of accommodation (SOA) has been produced to compare the existing accommodation and BB103 requirements for a 1.5FE primary school. This can be used to assess the additional accommodation requirements to provide a 0.5FE expansion.

The overall GIAs indicate that there is shortfall of a mere 39m^2 , however, this figure is grossly misleading. As discussed in (3.3) the existing building layout is inefficient and thus is oversized in unusable areas e.g. corridors.

The SOA can however, provide an initial brief of the additional accommodation the would be required, this has been collated in table A. This suggests that circa 416m^2 of new building accommodation would be necessary, excluding circulation.

5.0 POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

In July 2020, B&NES declared an Ecological Emergency. To protect, restore and enhance the natural environment, wildlife and nature. In January 2023 Policy NE3a (Biodiversity Net Gain) was adopted as part of the Local Plan Partial Update.

An application at St Mary's CofE Primary School will be considered a major application. Major applications are expected to deliver:

- Minimum of 10% biodiversity gains, with habitat management and monitoring secured for at least 30 years.
- The gains must be calculated using the statutory (official) biodiversity metric.

At concept stage designs should look to avoid and minimise harm to biodiversity. At St Mary's this would include either building on the footprint of existing built structures, on hard-standing or mown grass areas, schemes should not look to encroach on the habitat area or adjacent to the mature trees.

On-site BNG provision could be delivered using green roofs or walls, additional landscaping and additional tree planting is unlikely to be achievable due to the constrained site. Off-site BNG is therefore likely to be required subject to detailed design.

5.2 Sustainable Construction Checklist

In 2023 a supplementary planning document (SPD) known as the Sustainable Construction Checklist became a policy requirement, it was subsequently updated in 2025. This SPD sets the energy efficiency and sustainable construction standards required for certain types of development.

The requirement includes medium development to existing buildings e.g. large extensions of 500m² (the likely size of development for St Mary's expansion). If the development falls within this category, policy CP1 and table 4 is required— with a 10% improvement in regulated CO₂.

Whilst imperative for sustainability and achieving a net-zero goal, these standards will impact the 2019 feasibility; increasing design and construction budgets, due to the additional report and build costs.

5.3 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) accommodation

Since the 2019 feasibility study the requests for SEND provision has increased; illustrated within B&NES's School Organisational Plan 2023-2029, which states that requested increased from 247 in 2019 to 460 in 2022. Additional SEND provision is planned in the district, however, currently the closest SEND provision to St Mary's CofE Primary School are:

- Fosse Way School
- Midsomer Norton Primary School Resource Base
- St Nicholas Church School Resource Base
- Three Way School
- St Martin's Garden Primary SEN Unit

For this feasibility it has been assumed that no SEN provision is required.

5.4 Early years provision

The Childcare Sufficiency Duty Report from Autumn 2025, highlights that Timsbury has a shortfall of early years provision. Also of note is that due to Timsbury's location, early years provision in neighbouring areas would only be accessible via car. Within the planning application (26/00210/FUL) for the adjacent land, the educational team have highlighted this development alone would generate sufficient children to fill another nursery (39.408 children calculated). If St Mary's CofE Primary School was to be used for this expansion, this would significantly limit the opportunity for Primary School expansion.

5.5 Highways and transport requirements

Timsbury is within a rural location where accessibility is highly reliant on car usage. There is public transport available via bus (2V) which links it to Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Paulton, Tunley and Odd Down Park & Ride (from where bus connections to Bath can be made) This is service, however, is exceptionally limited every 2 hours and 20 minutes, and only 5/8 services per day (direction dependant), Monday to Friday and Saturday (no Sunday or bank holidays).

The lack of sustainable transport options could hamper development, as planning policies seek to expand areas where sustainable forms of travel are possible. However, the school's central location within its village, would enable pupils to walk, scoot or cycle to school as homes are within 1 mile.

6.0 FEASIBILITY DESIGNS

6.1 Feasibility designs in 2019 study

The feasibility undertaken in 2019 create three high-level concept designs to expand the school provision. These designs included two options to refurbish and extend the existing school, and one option to create anew build school on adjacent land. As discussed in (1.2) the new build option is no longer feasible, therefore the extend and refurbish options are to be reviewed only.

6.2 Feasibility designs—Option 01

This design proposed:

1. School refurbishment.
2. Kitchen and hall extensions (within rear playground).
3. Single storey classroom extension (within front courtyard).
4. External works to increase hard-standing.

This option is still considered a viable proposal. No change in BB103 standards have occurred which would render this option redundant. The shortfall of SEND provision within B&NES is acknowledged and requirement for early years provision has been adopted into policy, this may increase a new brief beyond the previous expansion requirements. As a result, further accommodation maybe necessary for these provisions and this would exacerbate the deficits in the external environment.

BNG and the Sustainable Construction Checklist will add additional requirements within a detailed design, and will increase programme and design and construction budgets.



FIG 05: 2019 Feasibility—Option 01



FIG 06: 2019 Feasibility—Option 02

6.3 Feasibility designs—Option 02

This design proposed:

1. School refurbishment.
2. Kitchen and hall extensions (within rear playground).
3. Single storey classroom extension (within rear wing).
4. External works to increase hard-standing.

As with option 01, this is still considered a viable proposal. No change in BB103 standards have occurred which would render this option redundant.

The expansion into the rear playground has the potential to cause a greater impact on the existing biodiversity, habitat and treescape. This additional requirement for BNG, would thus increase planning risk and design/construction budgets. The Sustainable Construction Checklist will add additional requirements within a detailed design, and will increase programme and design and construction budgets.

6.4 Exploration of alternative designs

Consideration should be given to the benefits of a masterplanning exercise for a long-term expansion programme. This could include demolition of existing single elements and providing two-storey accommodation.

Stand-alone teaching blocks have been undertaken in multiple B&NES primary schools to expand their accommodation and capacities, often with a junior block. It is not considered that there is sufficient space within St Mary's CofE school site for a stand-alone block. Conversely, whilst this could be physically undertaken within the front courtyard, it is not considered that this arrangement would be beneficial to the school due to the access arrangements, safeguarding and security, and unlikely be considered an acceptable form by the LPA.

7.0 SUMMARY

7.1 Summary

It is considered that options 01 and 02 of the original 2019 feasibility study are still feasible, subject to site specific brief and detailed design. This is also with the caveat that there will be an acceptance that some existing deficits and derogations are likely to occur from BB103.

Policy changes including BNG, sustainability targets, and sustainable locations, will increase planning risk, albeit it is considered that these are achievable and can be included within detailed design. The policy changes will also increase design and construction budgets.

The increase in requirements for both SEND and early years may also affect the development. If early years accommodation needs to be expanded alongside the primary school expansion, this would inevitably limit the outside space and result in further deficits from BB103. Long-term masterplanning designs should be undertaken (rather than piecemeal expansion) and serious consideration of rebuilding existing areas. For example removing single storey sections and replacing with efficient two-storey accommodation to maximise the site and increase usable outside space.

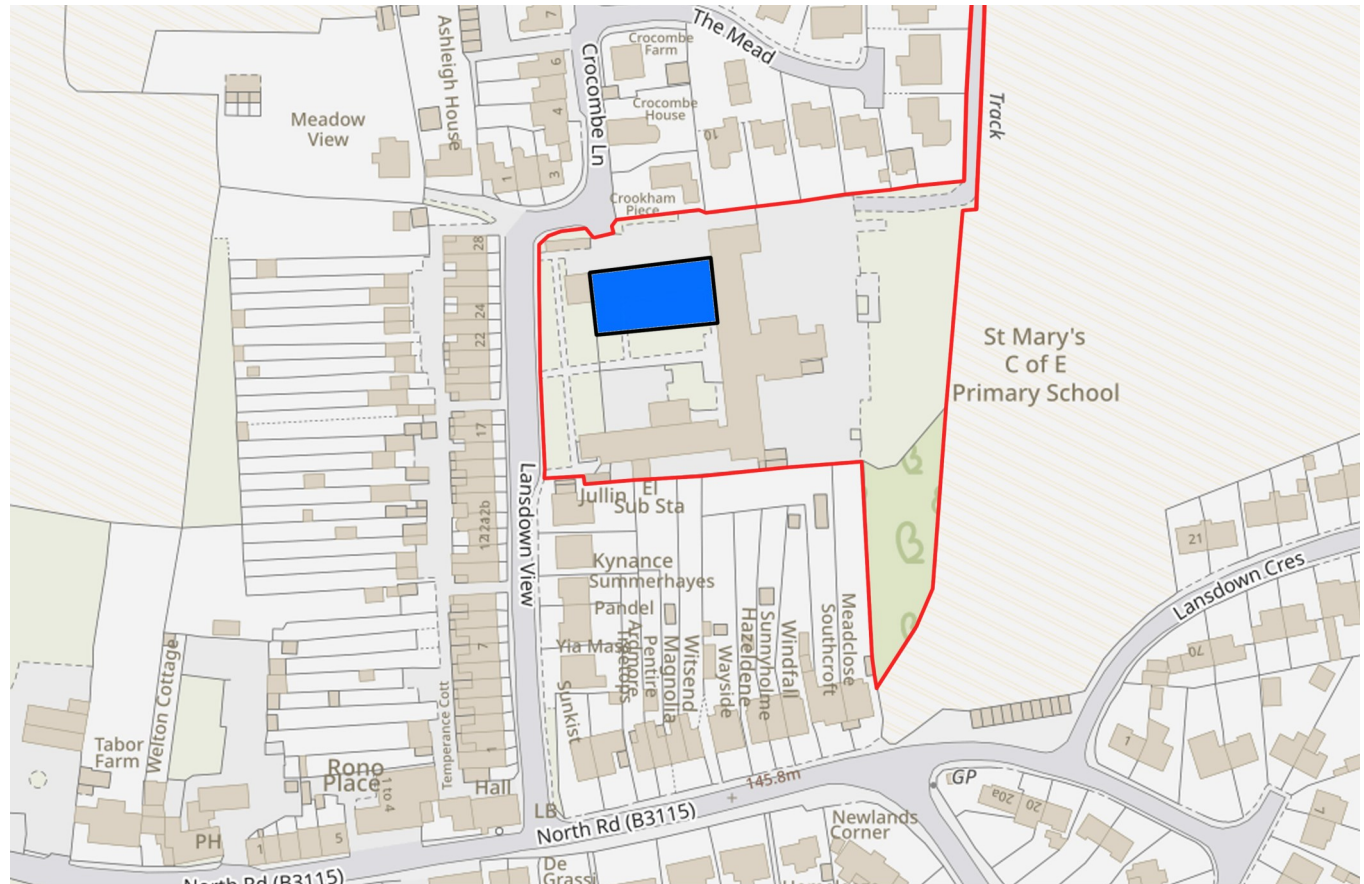


FIG 07: Potential location for two-storey accommodation

8.0 CONTACTS

BBA ARCHITECTS

Contact: Nick Vater

Telephone: 01225 460427

Email: mail@bba-architects.co.uk

Website: www.bba-architects.co.uk

