

# Agenda Item 29.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
191640	16/08/2019	Wokingham Town	Norreys

<b>Applicant</b>	Wokingham Borough Council
<b>Site Address</b>	Foundry College, Budes Green, Wokingham, RG40 1PX
<b>Proposal</b>	Full planning application for the change of use of office accommodation (Use Class B1 (a)) to school (Use Class D1) to form an enlarged school, along with change of use of amenity land to school playing field, erection of single storey extensions, relocation of existing temporary classrooms and associated hard and soft landscape works.
<b>Type</b>	Full Planning
<b>PS Category</b>	18
<b>Officer</b>	Senjuti Manna
<b>Reason for determination by committee</b>	Applicant is Wokingham Borough Council

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 14 August 2019
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Assistant Director – Place

<b>SUMMARY</b>
<p>The proposal is for expansion of the existing Foundry College to provide the required area needed to support the existing cohort of 47 students. The existing building currently accommodates three uses – The Foundry College; The WBC’s Neighbourhood and Children’s Services offices; and Brambles Children’s Centre. The proposal includes relocation of the WBC offices to include additional area within Foundry College, change of use of external amenity space into the school’s playing field by relocating the boundary fencing, erection of two single storey extensions, relocation of an existing modular teaching unit and internal alterations to provide adequate facilities for the school. The proposal also includes erection of fence between Brambles Children’s Centre and Foundry College to physically separate these two institutions.</p> <p>The proposed extensions will be acceptable since these would be of limited footprint and height and would be subservient to the host building. Proposed subdivision of the existing building between Brambles Children’s Centre and Foundry College would include erection of a bow-top fence with natural screening that would provide a secure environment for students of Foundry College and prevent interaction between users of these two institutions. Proposed relocation of site boundary would not have significant impact on the character of the area subject to landscape condition to secure suitable planting in front of the new fence. The proposal would retain the existing access and parking arrangements and this is acceptable.</p> <p>The proposal is also acceptable in terms of landscape impact, ecological impact and environmental health impact. As such, the proposal would accord with the development plan and is recommended for approval.</p> <p>This item is before the Planning Committee as the applicant is Wokingham Borough Council.</p>

## PLANNING STATUS

- Major development location
- Heathrow Aerodrome consultation zone
- Water utility consultation zone
- Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area – 5km zone
- Landscape character assessment zone

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions:**

### Conditions and Informatives:

#### **Conditions:**

#### Timescale

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

*Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).*

#### Approved details

2. This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered FND-HLM-00-00-DR-A-(0004/P01; 0006/P02; 0008/P01; 0013/P01; 0014/P01; 0015/P01; and 0016/P01) received by the local planning authority on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and drawing numbered FND-HLM-00-00-DR-A-0002/P02 received by the local planning authority on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.*

#### External Materials

3. Except where stated otherwise on the approved drawings and application form, the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall be of similar appearance to those used in the existing building, unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory.  
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.*

#### Drainage Details

4. No construction shall take place until details of the proposed drainage system for the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The details

shall include how the site currently drains and will be drained after proposed development with consideration to SuDS.

*Reason: This is to prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off.  
Relevant policy: NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.*

#### Landscape Details

5. Prior to the commencement of the development, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include means of enclosure including boundary treatment, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and structure (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc). Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable.

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

*Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development)*

#### Parking to be provided

6. No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking space has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking space shall be permanently maintained and remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

*Reason: To ensure adequate on-site parking provision in the interests of highway safety, convenience and amenity.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

#### Hours of Work

7. No work relating to the development hereby approved, including works of demolition or preparation prior to building operations, shall take place other than between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

*Reason: To protect the occupiers of neighbouring properties from noise and disturbance outside the permitted hours during the construction period. Relevant*

*policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*

**Informatives:**

1. The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-commencement requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details. If this is not clear please contact the case officer to discuss.
  
2. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received. This planning application has been the subject of positive and proactive discussions with the applicant in terms of:
  - a full pre-application process was undertaken by the applicant;
  - amended plans being submitted by the applicant to overcome concerns relating to highway concerns;
 The decision to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF is considered to be a positive outcome of these discussions.

<b>PLANNING HISTORY</b>		
<b>Application Number</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Decision &amp; Date</b>
F/2005/4254	Proposed change of use of infant school to B1 and D1 (accommodation for education, children's and young persons' service with ancillary facilities), erection of a 2 storey addition to junior school and alterations to internal roads, new access and widening to Budge's Gardens	Approved on 31/08/2005
F/2013/0867	Proposed erection of single storey extensions to provide an additional teaching room and relocated administration area, plus internal refurbishment.	Approved on 26/06/2013
152986	Full application for the proposed erection of detached modular teaching and assessment and admin accommodation including two single storey teaching and training buildings, 1 teaching pod, storage shed and a steel framed canopy and side panels with associated hard and soft landscaping.	Approved on 13/01/2016
170423	Full application for the proposed installation of a single storey re-locatable temporary classroom block, to include entrance lobby, small group room and 2no classrooms	Approved on 03/04/2017
171192	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 170423 (03/04/2017) 5. Protection of Trees	Approved on 27/04/2017

<b>SUMMARY INFORMATION</b>	
Site Area	5509 m <sup>2</sup>
Previous land use(s) and floorspace(s)	Mixed use B1 (office): 481 m <sup>2</sup> and D1 (school): 347 m <sup>2</sup>
Proposed floorspace of each use	D1 (school): 904 m <sup>2</sup> , B1 (office): 0 m <sup>2</sup>
Change in floorspace (+/-)	+ 76 m <sup>2</sup>
Number of jobs created/lost	+11 (for Foundry College)
Existing parking spaces	44
Proposed parking spaces	No Change

<b>CONSULTATION RESPONSES</b>	
WBC Drainage	Recommended approval subject to condition
WBC Environmental Health	No objections or comments
WBC Highways	Recommended approval subject to condition
WBC Tree & Landscape	Recommended approval subject to condition

<b>REPRESENTATIONS</b>
<p><b>Town/Parish Council:</b> Objected to the proposal on safety concerns associated with the new access and loss of trees.</p> <p><b>Local Members:</b> Email received from Councillor Carl Doran enquiring about scheme of delegation for this application. Councillor Rachel Burgess commented on the application through the planning website and objected to the proposal on the following highway safety grounds.</p> <p><b>Neighbours:</b> At the time of writing this report, 84 objections/ comments were received from neighbours objecting to the scheme on following grounds:</p> <p><u>Highway safety:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed new access to Brambles Children’s Centre will be created using existing access to Keep Hatch Primary and Ashridge Nursery. This is not a safe proposition. Additional traffic to this area will cause major safety concerns for children using the primary and nursery schools.</li> <li>• Existing access is narrow with narrow footway on one side. Additional traffic will greatly impact the flow of traffic in this area.</li> <li>• Using existing school access to create new access for Foundry College is not acceptable.</li> <li>• The access driveway is private and this should not be opened up for additional vehicles.</li> <li>• Traffic flow into Bramble’s car park will be all through the day – thus increasing safety concerns.</li> <li>• Additional vehicular fume will have detrimental health impact on children.</li> <li>• Children rush from school to the park opposite. The new access will be in direct conflict with this movement.</li> <li>• Accident waiting to happen.</li> </ul>

- It is not clear how many parking spaces will be needed for Foundry College staff. From the information provided in supporting statement, it appears that the proposed parking will not be adequate for this site.
- Traffic survey that was carried out to audit the number of cars using the site took place on a Tuesday between 11:15 and 11:45am. This is not peak hour and the numbers do not reflect the actual number of cars coming and going to the area in school hours.

Officer's note: A revised plan has been submitted by the applicant removing the new access and the scheme now proposes to retain the existing parking and access arrangements. As such, this addresses most of the traffic related concerns. As for number of parking spaces, the proposal would not result in increase in number of staff and student and hence parking requirements will not change from existing. Since the scheme now proposes to retain the existing parking and access arrangements, there is no objection to the scheme on highway safety grounds.

#### Trees and Landscape:

- Loss of greenspace and relocating boundary closer to the neighbouring residential properties would result in residential users further exposed to abusive behaviour from pupils of Foundry College.
- Loss of trees will have negative impact on the visual amenity of the area.
- New fence will be closer to footpath reducing space to walk on.

Officer's Note: WBC trees and landscape officer has assessed the proposed removal of trees and relocation of fencing. Subject to condition securing acceptable plating scheme in front of the new fencing, the T&L officer has not raised any objection to the proposal.

#### Behaviour of pupils of Foundry College:

- Bad language and loud music is heard from Foundry College.
- Children walking to Keep Hatch Primary, Ashridge Nursery and Brambles Children's centre will be subject to bad language and abuse by pupils of Foundry College resulting in safeguarding concerns. There will be noise and disturbances from the proposed building work.
- Foundry College should not be located near other younger children's facilities since this will expose younger children to anti-social behaviour such as smoking, bad language and abusive behaviour.
- Proposed plans do not consider safety of younger children using the site.

Officer's note: Bad language and abusive behaviour are not material considerations in planning. However, the concern regarding noise of construction works is given due consideration and a condition is proposed (condition 7) to restrict hours of operation to minimise noise disturbances.

#### Other issues:

- The site is not big enough for expansion and an alternative site for Foundry College should be considered.
- The site is not suitable for long term need of Foundry College since it is located within a residential area closer to younger children's facilities.

- The proposed extensions would be overbearing to Ashridge Nursery.
- The proposal does not conform to policies CP1 and CP3 of Wokingham Council.

Officer's note: The proposal does not include additional pupil and staff intake. The subject scheme proposes to provide adequate facilities for the current cohort of 47 pupils of Foundry College.

#### APPLICANTS POINTS

- The proposal includes additional area needed for the school. This is achieved by proposing two single storey extensions of limited scale and remodelling of existing spaces.
- Subdivision of the building between Foundry College and Brambles Children's Centre will provide safe environment for both institutions and help Foundry College to safeguard their pupils.
- A new central courtyard is proposed for medical/ vulnerable pupils who will benefit from a calm and protected environment.
- Relocation of fence to include part of existing amenity into Foundry College will allow additional outdoor spaces that would be used by pupils.
- Hedging with fencing is proposed along the entire boundary of Foundry College that would limit interaction between pupils of Foundry College and other younger users of various institutions around the site.
- Internal layout is designed keeping various requirements of the school in mind.
- Proposed front extension would act as a safe and secure entry to Foundry College. The design is developed to provide a secure and safe environment for pupils of Foundry College.

#### PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	<b>NPPF</b>	National Planning Policy Framework
	<b>NPPG</b>	National Planning Policy Guidance
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	<b>CP1</b>	Sustainable Development
	<b>CP2</b>	Inclusive Communities
	<b>CP3</b>	General Principles for Development
	<b>CP4</b>	Infrastructure Requirements
	<b>CP7</b>	Biodiversity
	<b>CP9</b>	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	<b>CC01</b>	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	<b>CC02</b>	Development Limits
	<b>CC03</b>	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	<b>CC04</b>	Sustainable Design and Construction
	<b>CC06</b>	Noise
	<b>CC07</b>	Parking
	<b>CC09</b>	Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)
	<b>CC10</b>	Sustainable Drainage
	<b>TB21</b>	Landscape Character

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	<b>BDG</b>	Borough Design Guide
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## **PLANNING ISSUES**

### **Description of Development:**

1. The proposal includes expansion of existing Foundry College by erecting two single storey extensions – one to the front to create secure entry and other to the rear to create additional activity space. These extensions would increase the internal floor space by 76 sq.m. The proposal also includes change of use of part of the existing building from WBC Office to Foundry College and internal alterations to the building that would result in a net internal area of 904 sq.m for Foundry College.
2. Moreover, the proposal includes relocation of the existing fence to incorporate part of existing amenity green space within the playground of the school; erection of secure fencing all around the Foundry College and associated hard and soft landscaping.

### **Principle of Development:**

3. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. Policy CC01 of the MDD Local Plan states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The site is located within Major Development Location of Wokingham and as such the development should be acceptable subject to assessment of the impact of the development on the character of the street scene, the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers and highway safety.
4. Core strategy policy CP2 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that address the requirements of, amongst other groups, children, young people and families, including co-ordination of services to meet their needs. Similarly, section 8 of NPPF 2018 gives great importance to providing community services and paragraph 94 states that “it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education”.
5. Foundry College is a Pupil Referral Unit that supports pupils who have been permanently excluded or, who are at risk of permanent exclusion as well as those with medical needs who cannot attend school regularly. The existing school does not have adequate internal space and facilities required to support the current cohort of 47 pupils. It is considered that proposed expansion of the facility would be acceptable in principle subject to impact of the proposal on other material considerations as detailed in this report.



## Character of the Area:

6. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high quality design. Section R1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.
7. Foundry College is located within a predominantly residential area of Budes Green. It forms part of a larger group of institutional buildings including Bramble Children's Centre, Keep Hatch Primary School and Ashridge Nursery, all located in the immediate neighbourhood and to the west and south-west sides of the proposal site. The existing building on site is a large single storey building that is currently houses 3 different uses – Brambles children Centre, Wokingham Council's Children Services and Neighbourhood Team as well as Foundry College.
8. The proposal is for removal of the WBC Offices from the building and erect extensions to the single storey building to create additional teaching and learning spaces for Foundry College. The proposal will also subdivide the site into distinct uses – Brambles Children's Centre and Foundry College – both would fall within use class D1 and as such will not have any significant impact on the character of the existing building. The extensions are to be located to the front and rear of the existing building and would be approximately 76 sq.m in footprint. It is also proposed to permanently retain the modular classroom building sited near the north western boundary with Budes Road. The scale, mass and height of the modular building would remain similar to that previously approved under planning permission 170423. It is noted that the proposal would increase additional built-up area within the site including a new permanent building. However, this will not have any significant impact on the character of the area given the limited bulk and height of these extensions. The extensions are designed with materials distinctively different from the existing materials. Given their limited scale and institutional nature of the existing building, these variations in materials will be acceptable. The internal subdivision of the building would include erection of a 1.8m high fence at the north-west side of the building. This will not be readily visible from public vantage points and as such would not appear intrusive to the existing street scene.
9. The proposed change of use of amenity land located along the north-eastern and north-western boundaries to play areas will include relocation of the existing boundary treatment. The green amenity space borders the main Budes Green and Budes Road drives along a public walkway, is readily visible on approach from both directions on Budes Road and forms part of the neighbourhood's visual amenity. It also contributes to the largely open planned character of the area. The existing boundary treatment is in the form of 2m high post and wire fencing with dense hedging that forms part of the visual amenity of the area.
10. Some properties along Budes Road and Budes Green currently benefit from high boundary treatment in the form of hedging and similar landscape details. No hard edges in form of closed board fencing or brick walls are available within the immediate neighbourhood. The proposal includes a 1m gap between the relocated fencing and public footway which is proposed to incorporate new soft

landscape. This would compensate for the loss of visual amenity and reduce impact on the character of the area. As such, subject to a pre-commencement condition to secure acceptable landscape scheme for the 1m strip in front of the fencing, the proposal is considered acceptable (Condition 5).

11. The proposal retains existing access and parking arrangements within the site. This is acceptable and as such, the proposal is not considered to have any significant impact on the character of the host building as well as general character of the neighbourhood.

#### **Residential Amenities:**

12. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity and section R23 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that extensions relate to neighbouring properties.
13. Proposed extensions of the existing building will not have any significant impact on neighbouring properties since the extensions would be single storey and would maintain acceptable separation distances from the boundaries. Moreover, the proposed boundary treatment all around the Foundry College will include additional screening that will minimise any overlooking impact.
14. Objection was received from neighbouring properties on overbearing impact (on Ashridge Nursery School) and anti-social behaviour including use of bad language by Foundry College pupils. The proposed single storey rear extension would be approximately 20m from the Ashridge Nursery and as such, is not considered to have overbearing impact due to its limited height. Whilst it is acknowledged that anti-social behaviour can cause annoyance, it is not a material consideration in planning and as such is not given much weight for the purpose of subject application.

#### **Access and Movement:**

15. The scheme initially included a new access for Brambles Children's Centre utilising existing access to Keep Hatch Primary School. Following public consultation that received more than 80 objections to the new access, the proposal has been revised to remove the new access and the existing access and parking arrangement is now proposed to be retained. This is considered acceptable since the proposal will not result in additional school places and additional staff (11 no.) for the Foundry College will be replacing more than 30 existing staff of Council's offices currently using the parking.
16. The proposal is considered to comply with Council's parking requirements and there are no other highway safety issues. WBC Highways Officer has assessed the scheme and recommended approval subject to condition to permanently retain the parking spaces (Condition 6).

#### **Flooding and Drainage:**

17. The proposal site is in Flood Zone 1 but close to Flood zone 2. There may be increase in impermeable area as a result of the proposed extension and there is no objection to the principle of the development. However, the application does

not include existing and proposed details. Because of this, the Council's Drainage Officer has recommended a pre-commencement condition to secure drainage details in keeping with the Council's Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) requirements (Condition 4).

### **Landscape and Trees:**

18. The proposal includes change of use of green amenity space to school play areas that will involve removal of existing trees. The Arboricultural Survey identifies these trees for removal citing arboricultural reasons of poor health. Replacement tree planting is proposed which is acceptable. The Tree Protection Plan submitted with the subject application is acceptable.
19. There are no objections to the new boundary treatment. However, limited details have been provided with the subject application. The WBC Trees and Landscape Officer has assessed the scheme and recommended approval subject to condition to secure acceptable landscape details including replacement planting and boundary treatment details (Condition 5). As such, there is no objection to the proposal on Trees and Landscape grounds.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty**

20. In determining this application the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The duty is to have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to:
  - a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
  - b. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may include removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the special needs of those with a protected characteristic; encouraging participation in public life (or other areas where they are underrepresented) of people with a protected characteristic(s).
  - c. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
21. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. The Council should give greater consideration to decisions that have a disproportionately adverse impact on a protected characteristic and this impact may be unintentional. In appropriate cases, this may involve an understanding of the practical impact on individuals so affected by the decision. Regard should be had to the effect of mitigation taken to reduce any adverse impact.
22. Foundry College is a pupil's referral unit and the existing cohort includes pupils who are excluded or at a risk of being excluded from mainstream schools due to various reasons including health issues. The proposed extensions to Foundry College will be fully accessible for disabled users and a proportion of parking spaces will be provided for those with disabilities. A quiet area is designated to

support pupils requiring timeout for various reasons. Save for the potential positive impact on those with disability as a protected characteristic there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that groups sharing other protected characteristics will be disproportionately affected in an adverse way by this planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

**Other:**

23. There are no objections to the proposal with regard to sustainable location; environmental health; ecology; and archaeology. The subject scheme is acceptable in all other aspects.

**CONCLUSION**

24. The proposed expansion of Foundry College including change of use from Office (B1) to school (D1) to form an enlarged school; change of amenity land to school play area; erection of single storey extensions; relocation of existing temporary classrooms; and associated hard and soft landscape works are considered acceptable and is recommended that the application is approved subject to conditions included in this report.