

# Agenda Item 55.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
201022	12 February 2021	Twyford	Twyford

<b>Applicant</b>	Wokingham Borough Council
<b>Site Address</b>	Old School Hall, High Street, Twyford RG10 9AD
<b>Proposal</b>	Full application for the proposed restoration and conversion of existing building into a library, erection of a single storey lobby/link area and a two storey extension to provide multi-purpose community facilities including a café, plus associated landscaping and demolition of existing public toilets (phased)
<b>Type</b>	Full
<b>Officer</b>	Simon Taylor
<b>Reason for determination by committee</b>	Council application

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on Wednesday 10 February 2021
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Assistant Director – Place

<b>SUMMARY</b>
<p>The Old Polehampton Boys School is a prominent Grade II listed building at the intersection of Polehampton Close and High Street, at the western end of Twyford Town Centre and Conservation Area. The building dates from c1877 and it was last approved for use as a hall or theatre space. The Polehampton Trust charity are the freehold owners of this building and the adjoining property (Polehampton School House) that is separately listed building now converted to residential flats.</p> <p>The Trust have sought to develop the rest of Old Polehampton Boys School building into a community facility and in October 2016, approval was granted for the redevelopment of the building to a library, parish council office, police office, cafe and community facility. That consent has since lapsed.</p> <p>The Council agreed in principle to support the development of a new library on the site of the Old Polehampton Boys School in Twyford at the meeting of the Executive on 25 July 2019. This would involve the relocation of the existing library on the opposite side of Polehampton Close, which has been identified as being in need of an upgrade.</p> <p>Phase 1 of the application involves the refurbishment of the listed building to be used as library space, with a modest single storey rear extension as a new entrance to the facility. Phase 2 involves a two storey rear extension extending from the phase 1 extension and comprising a café and community facility. The total increase in floorspace is 253m<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>In NPPF terms, there is some harm to the listed building but it is concluded that it is less than substantial harm (ie minor). It also involves the loss of bat roosts within the listed building and the existing toilet block and the felling of four Category B and C trees, one of which is a Sycamore that has been identified as part of this assessment as containing characteristics that would support its categorisation as a veteran tree. There have been no objections from neighbours, Twyford Parish Council or the ward members.</p> <p>Weighing the harm against the benefits, the proposal represents positive benefits to the community with the provision of improved library facilities, a new community space and ancillary café facilities in a sustainable town centre location. The architectural design is</p>

appropriate and it allows for the re-use and enhancement of a listed building. When weighing these public benefits against the identified minor harm that is mitigated or addressed via additional pre commencement and pre occupation/use information in Conditions 4-22 requiring supplementary heritage details, ecological mitigation, enhancement and bat licensing, landscape enhancement, protection and strategies, parking provision, drainage details and access details. The resulting development represents a positive outcome for the area.

## **PLANNING STATUS**

- Major Development Location
- Twyford Town Centre
- Twyford Conservation Area
- Listed Building (Grade II)
- In the vicinity of other listed buildings
- Part WBC owned land
- Bat roost suitability
- Known bat roost
- Adjacent to priority habitat (Lowland mixed deciduous woodland)
- Flood Zone 1
- Classified road (High Street)
- Non-classified road (Polehampton Close)
- Adopted highway
- Radon affected area
- Nitrate vulnerable zone (groundwater)
- Heathrow Aerodrome wind turbine safeguarding zone
- Sand and gravel extraction consultation zone

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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

### **Conditions**

#### **1) Timescale**

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).*

#### **2) Approved details**

This permission is in respect of the submitted plans:

##### **Phase 1**

- a) A001 Rev A and A002 Rev A, dated 30 November 2020
- b) A002 Rev B, dated 15 December 2020
- c) A003, A004 and A005, dated 12 March 2020
- d) A010 Rev F and A011 Rev E, dated 30 November 2020

- e) A012 Rev D, dated 19 January 2021
- f) A013 Rev D, dated 19 January 2021
- g) A014 Rev D, dated 30 November 2020
- h) A030, dated 29 January 2021
- i) 2-001, 2-101 and 3-001, dated 12 March 2020
- j) 3-101 Rev B, dated 18 September 2020
- k) 4-001, dated 23 June 2020
- l) 4-002, 4-101 and 4-102, dated 12 March 2020
- m) 5-001, Rev A, dated 22 December 2020
- n) 5-101 Rev C, dated 30 November 2020
- o) 5-102, dated 22 December 2020
- p) 6-101, dated 12 March 2020
- q) 6-102
- r) 6-103 Rev C, dated 19 January 2021
- s) 7-101, dated 20 June 2020

## Phase 2

- t) A020 Rev G, dated 30 November 2020
- u) A021 Rev D and A022 Rev B, dated 18 September 2020
- v) A023 Rev B, dated 18 September 2020
- w) A024 Rev C, dated 19 January 2021
- x) A025 Rev D, dated 30 November 2020

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.*

### 3) Notice of commencement

A minimum seven calendar days notice of the commencement of the development shall be given in writing to the local planning authority at [development.control@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:development.control@wokingham.gov.uk) **prior to the commencement of phase 1**, quoting the above reference number and addressed for the attention of the Planning Manager and the Conservation Officer at [development.control@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:development.control@wokingham.gov.uk). The period of notice does not commence until receipt by the developer of an acknowledgement from the local planning authority that either the written notice or the email of notice has been received.

*Reason: To allow opportunity for inspection and monitoring of the works to help ensure the satisfactory control of the work to the listed building.*

*Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB24.*

### 4) Landscape strategy

Prior to the commencement of the development **for phase 1 and prior to the discharge of hard and soft landscaping details in Condition 5**, a landscape strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning

authority. The landscape strategy shall provide an understanding of how the urban form and visual quality of the buildings as part of phase 1 and 2 is to be enhanced through a planting scheme and this is to be used in guiding the design and layout of the hard and soft landscaping scheme (Condition 5) and boundary treatments (Condition 8).

*Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.*

#### **5) Hard and soft landscaping details**

Prior to the commencement of the use of the **phase 1 and/or phase 2 buildings**, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals for the relevant phase of development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

These details shall reflect the strategy approved under condition 4 and shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, means of enclosure, pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and structures, soft surfacing, play equipment and benches and all other structures within the children's activity area, composing facilities, green walls, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc). Soft landscaping details shall include a planting plan, specifications (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 for each phase prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with an alternative timetable approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting within the respective phase, 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.*

#### **6) Tree protection details**

Prior to the commencement of the development **for phase 1**, an Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works for the phase 1 works which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. It is to include an arboricultural watching brief for the works at and around Tree 1. No development or other operations for Phase 1 shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

Prior to the commencement of the **phase 2 development works**, a further Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works for the phase 2 works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No development or other operations for Phase 2 shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

No operations shall commence on site in connection with each phase of the development hereby approved (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) until the tree protection works required by the relevant Approved Scheme are in place on site.

No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the relevant Approved Scheme.

The fencing or other works which are part of the relevant Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works associated with the respective phase, including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval in writing of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

*Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.*

## **7) Landscape management details**

Prior to the commencement of the use of the **phase 1 and/or phase 2 buildings**, a landscape management plan for the relevant phase, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, other than privately owned, domestic gardens, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscape management plan(s) shall be carried out as approved.

*Reason: In order to ensure that provision is made to allow satisfactory maintenance of the landscaping hereby approved.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.*

## **8) Boundary treatment details**

Prior to the commencement of the use of the **phase 1 and/or phase 2 buildings**, details of all boundary treatments for the relevant phase, including to delineate the parking space for staff purposes, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by

the local planning authority. The approved scheme for each phase shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of each phase of the development. The scheme shall be maintained in the approved form for so long as the development remains on the site.

*Reason: In the interests of amenity and highway safety.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3,*

#### **9) Listed building method statement**

Prior to the commencement of the development **in phase 1, including any stripping out, demolition and alteration works**, a method statement for works to the listed building and a timetable for the works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be implemented in accordance with the details so-approved.

*Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building.*

*Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB24.*

#### **10) Listed building details**

Prior to the commencement of the development **in phase 1, including any stripping out, demolition and alteration works**, the following details (including drawings and schedules) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and shall be implemented as so-approved prior to commencement of the use:

- a) The means of abutment of the proposed fixed glazed rooflight to the rear elevation of the listed building
- b) All parts of the building to be removed, dismantled or stripped out, including the removal of internal features, floors, and wall or ceiling surfaces
- c) Materials to be used in the external surfaces of the building
- d) New joinery, including full sized moulding profiles
- e) Any areas of external brickwork required to be re-instated (as matching the existing brickwork in brick colour and size, mortar colour, and pointing and bonding detail)
- f) All new works and works of making good to the retained fabric, whether internal or external (finished to match the adjacent work with regard to the methods used and to material, colour, texture and profile)
- g) The relationship of the thermal insulation for the roof and the existing guttering

Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.

*Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building.*

*Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB24.*

### 11) Central partition details

Prior to commencement of development **in phase 1, including any stripping out, demolition and alteration works**, a scheme showing the retention of a section of the central partition so as to provide visual evidence of its function to subdivide the space into two teaching classrooms shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. An interpretive plaque illustrating the historic function of this building as a school shall form part of the approved scheme. The works shall thereafter be undertaken and the plaque erected in accordance with the approved scheme.

*Reason: To help ensure the satisfactory control of the work to the listed building in order to safeguard its special architectural or historic interest.*

*Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB24.*

### 12) Bat licence

Prior to the commencement of development **for phase 1 and for phase 2**, including any demolition or refurbishment works, a licence for development works affecting bats shall be obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (Natural England) and a copy submitted to and acknowledgement given by the local planning authority. Thereafter, mitigation measures approved in the licence shall be maintained for each respective phase in accordance with the approved details. Should the applicant conclude that a licence for development works affecting bats is not required the applicant is to submit a report to the council detailing the reasons for this assessment and this report is to be approved in writing by the council prior to commencement of works.

*Reason: The buildings host multiple bat roosts which are affected by the proposal. This condition will ensure that bats, a material consideration, are not adversely impacted upon by the proposed development, and that the Council demonstrates that the council has fulfilled its duties under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 2017.*

### 13) Biodiversity enhancement details

Prior to the commencement of **either Phase 1 or Phase 2 of the development, including any demolition works, internal refurbishment or works to the roof**, details of biodiversity enhancements pertaining to the relevant phase of development and their locations shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the council. The biodiversity enhancements shall thereafter be installed as approved.

*Reason: To incorporate biodiversity in and around developments.*

*Relevant policies: Paragraphs 170 and 175 of the NPPF, Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB23 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.*

### 14) Drainage details

Prior to the commencement of the development **for phase 1**, full details of the drainage system for phase 1 of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include how the site

currently drains, how it will be drained after phase 1 of the proposed development with consideration to SuDS and shall include an overarching strategy for how the drainage system for Phase 2 can be accommodated at the site in the future should the phases not be built out concurrently.

Prior to the commencement of the development **for phase 2**, full details of the drainage system for the site (inclusive of Phase 1 and Phase 2) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, accounting for how the site drains at the completion and occupation of the development, with consideration to SuDS.

*Reason: This is to prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off.*

*Relevant policy: NPPF Section 10, Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.*

#### **15) Thames Water main**

Prior to the commencement of the development **for phase 2**, information detailing how the developer intends to divert the asset/align the development so as to prevent the potential for damage to subsurface potable water infrastructure shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in consultation with Thames Water. Any construction must be undertaken in accordance with the terms of the approved information. No construction associated with phase 1 or 2 shall take place within 5m of the Thames Water main without the prior authorisation from Thames Water. Unrestricted access must be available at all times for the maintenance and repair of the asset during and after all construction works.

*Reason: The proposed works will be in close proximity to underground Thames Water strategic water main, utility infrastructure. The works have the potential to impact on local underground water utility infrastructure.*

#### **16) Construction Method Statement**

Prior to the commencement of any development **for Phase 1 including any demolition or refurbishment works**, a Construction Method Statement and Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Statement shall provide for:

- a) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
- b) Vehicle routing
- c) Loading and unloading of plant and materials
- d) Storage of plant and materials used during construction
- e) The erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate
- f) Wheel washing facilities
- g) Excavation methods and estimated volume of material to be removed from the site and subsequent number of HGV movements to and from the site
- h) Measures to control the emission of dust, dirt, odour and noise during construction
- i) The control of rats and other vermin
- j) A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works



- k) The control of surface water run-off
- l) The proposed method of piling for foundations (if any)
- m) Construction and demolition working hours
- n) Delivery hours
- o) Measures to ensure the safe operation or stability of the railway

Where revisions are proposed to the approved details as part of the demolition and construction works for Phase 2, a revised Construction Method Statement and Management Plan shall be submitted prior to the commencement of any development, including demolition, **for Phase 2**.

The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the demolition and construction phases of phase 1 and 2.

*Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience and neighbour amenities.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.*

### **17) Cycle parking details**

Prior to the commencement of the use of the **phase 1 and phase 2 buildings**, details of secure and covered bicycle parking for staff, occupants and visitors in relation to the relevant phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle storage/parking shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before occupation of each phase of the development, and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the parking of bicycles.

*Reason: In order to ensure that secure weather-proof bicycle parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel.*

*Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

### **18) Electric Vehicle charging details**

Prior to commencement of the development **for Phase 2**, an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This strategy shall include details relating to electric vehicle charging infrastructure, including a plan showing electric vehicle charging provision within the public car park in line with Appendix E of the WBC Living Streets: Highways Design Guide (2019), and details of installation of charging points and future proofing of the site. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed strategy thereafter.

*Reason: In order to ensure that secure electric vehicle charging facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

### **19) Remediation details**

Prior to the commencement of the **phase 1 development**, a scheme to investigate

potential contamination of the site and a timetable for the investigation works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include and be informed by a full desktop study of the entire site (including both phases of the development - to include scale map, historical information for the site and the surrounding area, geology, hydrology, hydrogeology, a risk assessment for human, buildings and environment, and a conceptual model).

Where the desk top study identifies the need for an intrusive site investigation as part of the scheme of investigation, the written report for such shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. The report shall contain the results, interpretation, analysis, a scheme/timetable of/for the remediation works, and conclusions. The remediation works shall thereafter be carried out as agreed or unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

A site condition report and validation certificate must be submitted post remediation to the planning authority and approved in writing, unless it has been agreed with the local planning authority through the desk top study or intrusive site investigation that no further remediation is necessary for the proposed end use.

*Reason: To protect the occupants of the development from contamination and to protect the workforce undertaking the development.*

*Relevant policies: National Planning Policy Framework Section 15.*

## **20) Sustainability details**

Prior to the commencement of **phase 1 or phase 2 of the development**, full details of internal and external sustainability measures to be incorporated into the respective phase of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved measures shall be implemented before the respective phases are first occupied and shall remain operational for the lifetime of the development.

*Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14, Core Strategy policy CP1, Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC05 and the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.*

## **21) Bin storage**

Prior to the occupation of any building within **Phase 1 and 2** respectively, details of bin storage facilities (including for food waste) for the respective phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The facilities shall be provided in accordance with the approved details and shall be permanently so-retained and used for no purpose other than the temporary storage of refuse and recyclable materials.

*Reason: In the interests of visual and neighbouring amenities and functional development.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04.*

## **22) Noise and odour details**

Prior to commencement of the **first use of the café in phase 2**, details of suitable ventilation and filtration equipment to suppress and disperse fumes and/or smell created from the cooking operations on the premises shall be submitted for approval in writing by the local planning authority. The equipment shall be effectively operated and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions for as long as the proposed use continues.

The approved equipment shall be installed and be in full working order prior to the commencement of use of the cafe. Details to include outlet height, which in general should be at least 1m above ridge height of the nearest building.

*Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Policy CC06.*

## **23) Car parking**

No part of the development hereby permitted **in phase 1** shall be occupied or used until the staff vehicle parking space has been provided in accordance with the approved plans of phase 1. The vehicle parking space shall be permanently maintained and remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

No part of the development hereby permitted **in phase 2** shall be occupied or used until the revised parking arrangements are provided in accordance with the approved plans of phase 2. 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 and CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

## **24) Storage of roof coverings**

Notwithstanding the details submitted, the existing roof tiles are to be carefully removed and safely stored whilst the hereby approved works to insulate the roof are undertaken, and are then to be reinstated. Where additional replacement clay roof tiles are required these shall match in all aspects (material, size, profile(s), colour and finish) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority prior to their use.

*Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building.*

*Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB24.*

## **25) Windows, screens and doors**

Notwithstanding the details submitted, the consent hereby given does not extend to include any alteration and/or removal of the existing windows, doors (external and

internal), door frames or the room screen (to the eastern end of the hall), other than the removal of central partition to the hall and the modification of the central window to the southern elevation of the hall as part of the doorway to the new link structure.

*Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building.*

*Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB24.*

## **26) Compliance with the ecology survey**

Development undertaken in accordance with **phases 1 and 2** is to be carried out in accordance with the mitigation strategy set out in the recommendations in Section 6 of the submitted ecological report (Ecology by Design, ref: EBD01329, dated 17 December 2020) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority or by any approved details in other conditions of this planning permission.

*Reason: To ensure that bats and reptiles, both protected and priority species (as per the NPPF), are not adversely affected by the proposals.*

*Relevant policies: Paragraphs 170 and 175 of the NPPF, Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB23 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.*

## **27) Retention of trees and shrubs**

No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be felled, uprooted wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed without previous written consent of the local planning authority; any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without consent or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

*Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that development is being carried out, of trees, shrubs and hedges growing within the site which are of amenity value to the area.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.*

## **28) Hours of construction work and deliveries**

No work or deliveries relating to the construction of the development hereby approved, including works of demolition or preparation prior to building operations, shall take place other than between the hours of 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am and 1pm 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.*

### **29) Demolition of toilet block**

The development in **Phase 2** shall not be occupied until the existing toilet block shown to be demolished on the approved plan has been so demolished and the resulting materials removed from the site.

*Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies TB21.*

### **30) Permeable surfacing**

The hard surfacing hereby permitted shall be constructed from porous materials or provision shall be made to direct run-of water from the hard surface to a permeable or porous area within the curtilage of the development. The hard surfacing shall be thereafter so-retained.

*Reason: To prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off.*

*Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.*

### **31) Hours of cafe**

No customer shall be permitted to be on the café premises outside of 7am-11pm, Monday to Saturday or 9am-8pm on Sundays and public holidays. No deliveries shall be taken in or dispatched from the site outside these hours.

*Reason: To safeguard residential amenities.*

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

### **32) Permission not given**

Notwithstanding the details submitted, no fixtures (i.e. flues/vents, external lighting, security cameras, satellite dish, cabling, pipework, alarm boxes, flag/hanging plant brackets etc.) other than those shown on the plans as approved shall be installed and/or affixed to the exterior surfaces of the listed building without written approval from the local planning authority prior to the works being carried out.

*Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building.*

*Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB24.*

## **Informatives**

### **1) Phases of Development**

This permission relates to two phases of development, as approved by Condition 2 and involving the conversion, renovation and change of use of the listed building and a single storey entrance extension for use as Twyford Library (Phase 1) and the

demolition of the toilet block and erection of storey rear extension for use as a community space, office space and café (Phase 2).

## **2) Thames Water**

A Groundwater Risk Management Permit from Thames Water will be required for discharging groundwater into a public sewer. Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991. Thames Water would expect the developer to demonstrate what measures he will undertake to minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer. Permit enquiries should be directed to Thames Water's Risk Management Team by emailing [trade.effluent@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:trade.effluent@thameswater.co.uk) by phoning 020 3577 9483. Application forms should be completed online

Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. Should you require further information please refer to the Thames Water website.

If you are planning on using mains water for construction purposes, it is important you let Thames Water know before you start using it, to avoid potential fines for improper usage. More information and how to apply can be found online at [thameswater.co.uk/buildingwater](http://thameswater.co.uk/buildingwater).

Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.

## **3) Network Rail**

Network Rail are the landowners across the western boundary and they must be consulted on matters of fencing height, type and materials, drainage, demolition, scaffolding and cranes, access, landscaping species and the children's play area.

Any works on this land will need to be undertaken following engagement with Asset Protection to determine the interface with Network Rail assets, buried or otherwise and by entering into a Basis Asset Protection Agreement, if required, with a minimum of 3months notice before works start. Initially the outside party should contact [assetprotectionwestern@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:assetprotectionwestern@networkrail.co.uk).

## **4) Blue badge parking**

The applicant is advised to contact the Highways Authority to allow for the provision of additional blue badge parking or the relocation of the existing blue badge parking closer to the Phase 2 building.

## **5) Pre-commencement conditions**

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.

**6) Demolition notice**

The applicant is reminded that a Demolition Notice may be required to be served on the Council in accordance with current Building Regulations and it is recommended that the Building Control Section be contacted for further advice.

Attention is drawn to Section 8(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the effect of which is that any demolition may not be undertaken (despite the terms of this consent) until notice of the works has been given to English Heritage, Historic Research and Conservation Support, Eastgate Court, 195-205 High Street, Guildford GU1 3EX (01483 252000) , and they have been given reasonable access to the building for at least one month following the grant of this consent, for the purpose of making a record or within that period, they have stated that they have completed their record of the building or that they do not wish to record it.

**7) Changes to the approved plans**

The applicant is reminded that should there be any change from the approved drawings during the build of the development this may require a fresh planning application if the changes differ materially from the approved details. Non-material changes may be formalised by way of an application under s.96A Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

**8) Advertisements consent**

This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent that may be required for the display of advertisements on the site for which a separate Advertisement Consent application may be required. You should be aware that the display of advertisements without the necessary consent is a criminal offence liable to criminal prosecution proceedings through the courts.

**9) Protected species**

This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent required under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for protected species. The applicant is advised to contact Natural England with regard to any protected species that may be found on the site.

**10) Listed building consent**

This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent in respect of Listed Building Consent that is required for external or internal alterations to the listed building(s).

## 11) Discussion

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 amended plans being submitted by the applicant to overcome various 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.

## PLANNING HISTORY

The building is Grade II listed, with the listing stated as:

*Former school. c1887, erected by The Polehampton Trust. Grey Reading brick with red Reading brick pilasters, strips, panels, cornices and dressings to windows, chimneys and gables. Tiled roofs with segmental and triangular pedimented Flemish gables having terracotta ball finials and, to the main elevation, a tall enriched brick chimney stack. Queen Anne style. Open courtyard plan with projection to east. Single storey. Plain entrance on main facade within a gabled lower wing, partly timber framed and having 4 lights with glazing bars beneath a tile hung gable with a vertically set window. Main windows are tall sashes with glazing bars and gauged brick segmental heads with keystones; western facing gable windows of Venetian type. Well detailed terracotta airbricks and metal bootscraper and rosette rainwater pipe brackets. Interior retains original features including open timber roof trusses. This school was built on the site of the demolished chapel of a school founded in 1721 by Edward Polehampton for the education of 10 poor Twyford boys. The master's house still exists (qv) and the school is attached to it, being a replacement for the original school room; it was still only for boys, a girls and infants school being built the following year in the village.*

App Number	Proposal	Decision
S/3/1958	Lavatory block	Approved 14 May 1958
S/1/1959	Addition of kitchen and dining room	Approved 14 January 1959
O/257/1965	Scout headquarters	Refused 12 January 1965
O/24/1966	Scout headquarters	Refused 2 March 1966
O/103/1966	Library (outline)	Approved 15 June 1966
03213	Vehicular access	Approved 2 October 1975
10682	Garage and access	Approved 10 April 1979
10683 (LBC)		Approved 5 July 1979
14023	Demolition of coach house for access	Approved 25 September 1980
14024	Car park and access	Approved 25 September 1980
16607	Public library	Temporary 12 February 1992
28064	Store building	Approved 5 August 1987
37441	Conversion to two flats and two storey extension	Approved 1 May 1991
37442 (LBC)		Approved 1 May 1991
38327	Car park to the rear	Approved 14 January 1993
38839	Public library	Temporary 12 February 1992
39537	CoU of school hall to theatre	Refused 18 December 1992
-	Appeal against refusal of 39537	Dismissed 9 September 1993



FP/1994/3174	Refurbishment of public toilets with ramp	Approved 21 December 1994
LB/2002/5642	Exterior renovation works	Refused 29 May 2002
LB/2002/6953	Exterior and interior renovation works	Approve 20 August 2002
153122	Restoration and conversion into a library and police office, single storey lobby/link and two storey extension for community facilities, café, theatre, history society room and ancillary facilities	Approved 11 October 2016
153123 (LBC)		Approved 11 October 2016
201023 (LBC)	Restoration and conversion into a library, single storey lobby/link and two storey extension for community facilities and café following demolition of existing public toilets	Considered concurrently

<b>SUMMARY INFORMATION</b>		
	Existing	Proposed
Site area	820m <sup>2</sup>	970m <sup>2</sup> (including part of car park)
Land use	Disused hall	Library with community hall and cafe
Floor space	123m <sup>2</sup>	376m <sup>2</sup>
Employment	Nil	Unknown
Dwellings	2 existing units (not part of application)	
Car spaces	41 in public car park at rear One staff space and two resident spaces at front of site	40 in car park at rear One staff space and two resident spaces at front of site
Cycle spaces	None	7 racks (14 spaces)

<b>CONSULTATION RESPONSES</b>	
WBC Conservation	Concerns were initially raised in relation to the impacts posed by the solar panels on the roof of the listed building and the glazed roof extension. To address these concerns, the solar panels were deleted from the listed building in phase 1 and the design of the glazed roof extension amended. Subject to further details in Conditions 9-11 and specific stipulations in Conditions 24, 25 and 32, the harm to the listed building is limited and no objection is raised.
WBC Drainage	No objections are raised but as there will be increase in impermeable area, further drainage details are required by Condition 14. There should be no drainage features or stormwater discharge to Network Rail land or assets without their consent.
WBC Ecology	The works would require a derogation licence from Natural England but can be covered by a bat licence (Condition 12). Details of biodiversity enhancements (bat boxes) and their location are required to protect the listed status of the building (Condition 13). Compliance with mitigation measures is outlined in Condition 26.
WBC Environmental Health	No objections are raised, subject to Conditions 16 relating to the control of environmental effects during construction, working hours, contaminated land, noise and odour management and opening hours. On the latter, the café can only operate between 7am and 11pm Monday

	to Saturday and 9am and 8pm on Sundays and bank holidays (Condition 31).
WBC Highways	No objection in terms of traffic generation, car parking and construction management. Initial queries were raised in relation to accessible parking, but this is addressed by Informative 4. Further details are required for EV charging (Condition 18) and cycle parking (Condition 23).
WBC Tree and Landscape	The loss of the Sycamore tree is regrettable but accepted subject to landscape enhancement through replacement planting. Further details of the hard and soft landscaping scheme are required in Condition 5. Tree protection forms Condition 6 and landscape management is required in Condition 7. All of these details are first to be guided by a landscape strategy in Condition 4.
WBC Community Engagement	No comments received.
WBC Waste Services	
Network Rail	No in-principle objection is raised, subject to the submission of further details relating to the design of the children's activity area, tree protection, site fencing and construction management. These details are requested as part of Conditions 5, 6, 8 and 16 respectively.
Thames Water	Measures to minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer would be required and subject to the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water, no objection is raised. There is sufficient water and water treatment infrastructure capacity though the building over or construction within 5m of a Thames Water mains is prohibited. These requirements are covered by Condition 15 and Informative 2.

<b>REPRESENTATIONS</b>	
Twyford Parish Council	No objection, subject to better provision for secure cycle, pushchair and mobility scooter parking.  <u>Officer comment:</u> Pushchair and mobility scooter storage would be best accommodated within the internal layout of the library building rather than an allocated external storage area where there are conservation and streetscape impacts and as it would then necessitate unassisted movement into the building. There is a compliant amount of cycle parking, as discussed in 'Highway Access and Parking Provision' and addressed by Condition 23.
Ward Member	No comments received.
Neighbours	No comments received.

<b>APPLICANTS POINTS</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The building/site is suitable in principle to accommodate town centre uses and also office uses</li> <li>The re-use and extension to the existing building to provide enhanced community space, allowing for the re-location of the library from temporary modular buildings into a permanent building is a public benefit that weighs in favour of approval</li> <li>There would also be public benefit arising from the re-use of the building facilitating the longevity of the listed building and in allowing it to be experienced and appreciated by the community</li> </ul>

- The public benefits of the scheme would outweigh “the less than substantial harm” identified to the significance of the Listed Building
- Subject to conditions, the development would not unreasonably impact upon the amenity of neighbouring dwellings
- Subject to conditions to secure on-site car and cycle parking, the development would not have a severe impact on the highway network

<b>PLANNING POLICY</b>		
National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
	NPPG	National Planning Policy Guidance
Core Strategy 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP2	Inclusive Communities
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP7	Biodiversity
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	CP13	Town Centres and Shopping
Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC04	Sustainable Design and Construction
	CC06	Noise
	CC07	Parking
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage
	TB15	Major Town, and Small Town/District Centre Development
	TB16	Development for Town Centre Uses
	TB21	Landscape Character
	TB23	Biodiversity and Development
TB24	Designated Heritage Assets	
Supplementary Planning Documents	BDG	Borough Design Guide SPD
	SDC	Sustainable Design and Construction SPD
	SPD	

<b>PLANNING ISSUES</b>	
<b>Description of Development</b>	
1.	<p>The proposal, as amended, involves the change of use of the existing hall for use as a new Twyford Library (including children’s library) with a part one/part two storey rear extension for community and café uses. More specifically, it involves the following works that have been incorporated into two phases for funding and timing purposes:</p> <p><u>Phase 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversion and renovation of the existing Grade II listed building including, disabled toilet and staff room, and access stairs, platform lift access into new entrance extension.</li> <li>• Single storey entrance extension with flat roof and rooflight to the rear of the listed building with signage to the side elevation denoting ‘Twyford Library’</li> <li>• Provision of a staff car space and cycle parking in the north western corner and public cycle parking racks in the south eastern corner</li> </ul>

- Permeable paving, benches, fencing and soft landscaping to the surrounds, including the provision of a children's activity area to the western side of the building

### Phase 2

- Demolition of the existing toilet block
  - Erection of a two storey extension with curved roof comprising of a 45m<sup>2</sup> community space with ancillary office space, plant room, store, accessible toilet and small kitchen on the lower floor and café (with servery, kitchen, office and store), toilets (including accessible toilets) on the upper floor and a staircase serving both floors
  - The loss of one car space and the provision of an electric vehicle (EV) charging space in the existing car park
  - Continuation of permeable paving on the eastern side of the site, with new accessible pedestrian ramps
  - Provision of four cycle stands
  - Removal of four mature trees and replacement landscaping
2. A listed building consent 201023 was submitted at the same time and is to be assessed concurrently.
  3. With minor changes, the application is a resubmission of planning permission 153122 and listed building consent 153123, which lapsed in October 2019.

### **Description of Site**

4. The Old Polehampton Boys School is a Grade II Listed building on the southern side of High Street, at the western end of Twyford Town Centre and within the Twyford Conservation Area. The Twyford-Henley branch railway line forms the western boundary and Polehampton Close forms the eastern boundary, with a public car park to the rear. There are some residential properties to the west before opening to open countryside and lakes. Commercial and retail premises in the town centre predominate to the east.
5. The school building dates from c1887 and is currently a disused hall. The site measures 970m<sup>2</sup> and slopes from the street by about 4m down to the rear boundary with the car park. There are two flats within the building on the corner of High Street and Polehampton Close but these are excluded from the application site.

### **Principle of Development**

6. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) Policy CC01 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.
7. The building is within a major development location within Twyford Town Centre, which is suitable for town centre uses in accordance with Policy CP13 of the Core Strategy. Town centre uses include retailing, office and community uses (including

libraries and village/community halls). Paragraphs 4.62 and 4.64 of the Core Strategy then note that the aims are to increase to improve the vitality and viability of centres within the borough with potential for additional floorspace to maintain the roles of the town centres.

8. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF seeks to support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation, including allocating a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of development likely to be needed, looking at least ten years ahead.
9. The Council has identified a need for a larger, more modern library in Twyford and the proposed site, which is opposite the existing smaller library, accords with the intent of Policy CP13, as it did when it was last assessed in 2015. The change of use of the existing school hall to a library accords with Policy CP13 as does the addition of 258m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace for community and retailing uses.
10. Policy TB15 of the MDD Local Plan indicates that retail development is to be of a scale that is compatible to the hierarchy of the centre. Cafés should be in secondary shopping frontages, contribute to the provision of day and evening/night-time uses, be compatible with other uses and enhance the vitality and viability of the area. The café is at the rear of the library as an ancillary function of the main library and children's library. It is not within a primary or secondary retail frontage but because it complements the existing library and because of its modest size, it is an appropriate use for the location.
11. Policy TB16 of the MDD Local Plan indicates that proposals for retail uses of more than 500m<sup>2</sup> that are outside the primary shopping require a sequential test or retail impact test. The café use is the only retail use in the proposed extension and it measures 78m<sup>2</sup> such that there is no assumed compromising of existing retail locations and no requirement for the tests.
12. More broadly, the proposal would result in public benefits, from facilitating the re-use of the existing building and extending the longevity of the building and allowing it to be experienced and appreciated by the community who will have access to the building as users of the proposed services. In principle, the conversion and extension to the existing building for the purposes of the proposed uses is acceptable, subject to other considerations, including an assessment of the harm upon the listed building, character of the area, trees, ecology, highway safety and neighbouring amenity, as outlined below.

### **Heritage and Conservation**

13. Section 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that development must ensure the preservation of listed buildings, including their setting, Paragraphs 192-196 of the NPPF require consideration of the harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset and Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan requires the conservation and enhancement of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, including their views and setting.
14. The Old School building is a Grade II listed former school building of late C19th in the 'Queen Anne' style. It is a distinctive building within a prominent position at the

intersection of Polehampton Close and High Street. It is within the Twyford Village Conservation Area although the rear extensions of Phase 2 will fall outside of the conservation area boundary.

15. Adjoining the old school building to the north is the Grade II listed, C18th Chequer brick, Polehampton School House which is now subdivided into two apartments. Chiswick House (C15th former hall house, now 3 houses), 24 High Street (C16th cottage, now offices) and the Duke of Wellington Public House (C17th house, now a pub) are other Grade II listed buildings in the immediate vicinity.
16. The existing building is sound but in need of modernisation as it does not have heating or toilet facilities. The proposal is to extend the building by way of a glazed link (Phase 1), then opening onto a two storey extension (Phase 2).
17. There is the loss of some features of interest, including part of the triple sash window on the southern side of the building and an existing moveable wooden and glazed partition within the building which divides the rooms of the building. The loss of these features is regrettable but understandable to achieve a workable connection between the two buildings and to achieve a building space that meets the requirements of the end users. As compensation, Condition 11 requires a scheme to be agreed to retain parts of the partition as visual evidence of the way the school rooms were formerly divided and to secure a scheme of recording any lost features of interest.
18. Internal changes to the listed building include the following:
  - Introduction of thermal insulation measures to the internal faces of the external brick walling to the building
  - Thermal insulation of the roof
  - Thermal improvement of the existing windows (and exterior doors)
  - Introduction of thermal insulation of the floors and introduction of underfloor heating
  - A series of metal rods spanning across the width of the hall at the level of the horizontal truss beams to provide structural support
19. These measures have been detailed from a heritage perspective in construction drawings. These have been reviewed by the Conservation Officer and no objection is raised and they form part of the approved details in Condition 2. Any proposal to remove them to facilitate thermal improvements would not be supported.
20. The outstanding aspect of the scheme involves the glazed roof element of the phase 1 link structure. Concerns remain about how this element would sit with the feature brickwork of the southern elevation, including separation from the wall itself. It is, however, concluded that this is not an unresolvable issue and further details are required in Condition 10.
21. Condition 10 also requires the submission of other minor details relating to the construction phase, including materials, joinery, brickwork and the relationship of thermal insulation with the guttering so as to ensure that the guttering still functions satisfactorily. Condition 9 requires a method statement detailing the timetable for all of the above works, Condition 24 requires safe removal and storage of the roof tiles

and Conditions 25 and 32 seek to retain existing windows and prohibit external fixtures.

22. The public benefit arising from the scheme would include the community benefits of a library and community hall uses which would allow the building to be experienced and appreciated by residents who would have access to the building as users of the proposed services. In addition, a purpose built library facility would bring enhanced benefits compared with the existing library facility which is contained within a smaller more constrained building. The provision of a 'community hub' where users can access a number of services within one building is considered to provide positive benefits.
23. There would also be economic benefits resulting from the scheme in terms of the income generation from the renovation and construction of extension itself, the cafe facility and the hire/lease options that could be available for the newly created and renovated floorspace which would bring wider sustainability benefits to the community.
24. With the provision of revised details, the Council's Conservation Officer does not raise any in principle objection (partly because they were approved in largely the same form in 2016). It is therefore considered that subject to the above requirements, the public benefits of the scheme would significantly outweigh the less than substantial harm (ie minor) identified to the listed building which would accord with the NPPF and Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan.
25. The proposal also adopts a satisfactory impression within the Twyford conservation area, as detailed below.

### **Character of the Area**

26. 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. Various guidelines in the Borough Design Guide aim to respect the character of the area, including
  - NR1 requires that development respond to features of the site and NR2 states that proposals should improve the area
  - NR3 requires a positive arrival impression and NR4 requires buildings address the street
  - NR5 notes that height, bulk and massing should respond to the local context and NR6 requires moderation where there are differences in height
  - NR7 requires that roofs be designed to the context of the area and NR8 requires high quality and simple materials and components
  - P2 and NR10 requires unobtrusive and compatible car parking and NR11 requires screening to servicing
  - NR12 requires appropriate boundary treatments
  - NR13 states that new public spaces should contribute to the quality of the public realm and NR18 requires a high quality environment for occupants
27. The site occupies a prominent location on Twyford High Street and within the conservation area, built to the street on the corner with a more expansive setback

from the street to its west. It is readily visible in views on Polehampton Close, partly because of the sightlines across the car park at the rear.

28. Externally, there are very little changes to the listed building and the streetscape presentation will remain largely unchanged. Fencing and hard and soft landscaping will contribute partly to the streetscape presence and these details are to be finalised as part of Conditions 5 and 8.
29. The proposed link (Phase 1) joining the old and new buildings has a glazed wall to its eastern side, a large expanse of glass to the rear elevation (which in time will be removed to allow access to Phase 2) and a pitched rooflight, framed by red Reading bricks to match the existing building. The flat roof is covered by a dark grey single ply roof membrane.
30. The form of the rear extension (Phase 2) is modern by comparison to the listed building and includes a curved roof, split into two stepped sections with the elevations articulated to break up the large expanse and mass and to provide more visual interest.
31. Through the design, form, glazing and materials, the rear extension as a whole adopts a relatively contemporary form and deliberately but successfully contrasts with the listed building. The flat roof link in phase 1 provides the required separation from the listed building.
32. The resulting bulk (expressed in building depth and volume) is comparable to the existing listed building but it does not overwhelm or dominate the listed building. This is because of the adequate separation achieved by the link structure, the lesser building width of the rear extension and because the slope of the site allows for the rear extension (which is two storeys with sloping roof) to sit 2.9m below the ridge height of the listed building (which is single storey).
33. The rear extension will be largely screened in views from the east on High Street by the eastern flank of the listed building or from the street vegetation through most of the year. It will be glimpsed in views from the railway bridge to the west but not sufficiently to gain an impression of the built form. It would be apparent in views from passing trains. In the views that are available, it maintains a satisfactory streetscape presentation.
34. The materials used in the rear extension will be Reading red brick to match those of the listed building, which is supported. There is a significant amount of glazing and these windows have adopted a proportion and form that successfully mirrors the windows to the eastern elevation of the listed building. Further material samples are required by Condition 10.
35. Externally, there would be improvements to the external spaces around the building, including demolition of the disused toilet block. This would provide benefits in terms of visual amenity and improvements to the character of the conservation area. Some excavation will be required to accommodate the rear extension but the alteration to the landform is acceptable.
36. On the basis of the above, the proposal achieves a satisfactory impression on the character of the area, including the conservation area, and is supported.



### **Accessibility (incorporating The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010))**

37. In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief.
38. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy also seeks to ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities, including for aged persons, children and the disabled. NR17 of the Borough Design Guide requires that new public areas be easily accessible.
39. The main entrance will be from Polehampton Close, with level paved access leading to the proposed extension at the rear of the listed building, which is part of Phase 1. The rear extension is marginally lower than the finished floor level of the listed building and a passenger lift allows disabled access between the two levels. Internally, the layout is open plan and a disabled toilet is provided. Full accessibility appears to be assured as part of Phase 1.
40. The two storey rear extension is accessible from Polehampton Close via new ramped access or from the carpark, which connects with the extension. There is a level threshold from the paved courtyard to the community space on the ground floor. The café on the first floor has level access from phase 1. An accessible toilet and open plan layout is proposed within both levels. This indicates that full accessibility is assured within Phase 2.
41. There is no internal access between the two floors of the rear extension in Phase 2. However, the spaces are intended to operate independent of each other, with the café complementing the library and the community space operating as a separate entity. On this basis, there is no real impediment to access, particularly when there is still wheelchair access within 60m via the proposed ramp and existing footpath on Polehampton Close.
42. There are blue badge parking spaces at the entrance to the car park, but these are located at the far end of the car park. The Council's Highways Officer has indicated a preference to locate the blue badge parking closer to the facility but because the spaces are outside of the red line site area and as there is no additional car parking proposed within the subject application, this will need to occur independently of the planning application. Informative 4 notes as such.
43. Based on the above, the proposal accords with Policy CP2 and there is no indication or evidence that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

### **Residential Amenities**

44. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity and Policy CC06 and Appendix 1 of the MDD Local Plan requires that development protect noise sensitive receptors from noise impact.

45. The development adjoins two residential flats within the school house building to the north. There is potential for some limited amenity impacts arising from the reactivation of the vacant building and from increased footfall visiting the library, including children. However, the change of use is within the same Class F use class from a hall to a library, which are both similar in nature, although a library use is typically a low intensity use such that the effects will be minimal and not unexpected within a town centre location.
46. The use of the cafe and community space (and associated plant) at the rear of the building (as part of Phase 2) will generate increased noise levels. However, the site is generally well removed from residential properties, with a railway line to the west, car park to the south and substation and pub to the east and it also experiences a degree of background noise of the pub and passing traffic. Even so, it is still appropriate to control the opening and delivery hours for the cafe in Condition 31 (7am and 11pm on Monday to Saturday and 9am-8pm on Sundays and bank holidays) and in doing so, the level of impact to surrounding properties is acceptable. It is not considered necessary to control the hours of operation in the other parts of the building given their uses and location.
47. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has also requested ventilation details for the café in Condition 22.
48. In terms of any impacts upon access to light, privacy and a sense of enclosure, the rear extension is approximately 35m from the nearest residential boundary (with the exception of the two flats on High Street) and this is ample separation to prevent any adverse impacts for existing residents.

## Access and Movement

### Parking

49. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off street car parking standards (including provision for charging facilities) and cycle parking standards.
50. The car parking standard for a hall is one space per 20m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace and one space per 30m<sup>2</sup> for a library. The café use has a parking standard of one space per 5m<sup>2</sup>. With an additional 253m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace, there is a net increase in the parking generation rate of 22 spaces.

	Existing		Proposed	
	Floorspace	Requirement	Floorspace	Requirement
Hall	123m <sup>2</sup>	6.15 spaces	125m <sup>2</sup>	6.25 spaces
Library	0m <sup>2</sup>	0 spaces	173m <sup>2</sup>	5.75 spaces
Café	0m <sup>2</sup>	0 spaces	78m <sup>2</sup>	15.6 spaces
Total	123m <sup>2</sup>	6 spaces	376m <sup>2</sup>	28 spaces

51. It is proposed that a staff car parking space will be maintained off the High Street entrance. Two other spaces will remain available for the two existing flats. There is also a public car park to the rear of the site for long and short stay, comprising 41 spaces (including 4 disabled bays), with one of the spaces lost to the extension in Phase 2. There are existing parking restrictions on Polehampton Close which ensures that there is no indiscriminate parking along the road.

52. As identified in the transport statement, many customers are likely to visit the library as part of a linked trip to the town centre. It is also worth noting that the use with the café (which has highest parking generation rate) is intended as a supplementary/ ancillary aspect of the library and it will also predominantly function as a linked trip as part of a visit to the library.
53. The site is well located within the town centre designation, being 200m from the centre of Twyford, within walking distance of a large part of Twyford and readily accessible by public transport, being located less than 250m from bus stops with regular buses to Reading and Wokingham and 450m from Twyford railway station. The proximity of the car park to the rear of the site to serve the scheme is a significant benefit in terms of providing parking for the scheme were visitors to require it.
54. The transport statement concludes that there is capacity within Polehampton Close to accommodate the local car parking demands and although the proposed extension would reduce the capacity of the existing public car park, this would not have a severe impact on the local highway network. The Council's Highways Officer does not disagree and raises no objection subject to conditions to secure the on-site vehicle parking.
55. The MDD Local Plan specifies one long term (staff) and one short term (visitor) cycle space per five library staff. One long term (staff) space as well as one short term (visitor) space for 15 visitors is required for the community use and one space is required for the café use. In the absence of final staff details, it is estimated that it amounts to approximately six spaces.
56. A total of seven cycle spaces are provided and these are spread across three areas and the two phases of the development. They appear as stands on the submitted plans, indicating that they are likely to be able to be used by up to 14 bicycles. On this basis, the Council's Highways Officer raises no objection.
57. P2 and P3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD require that the spaces are conveniently located (which they are). However, they should also be secure, undercover and compatible in the streetscene and there are no further details of surfacing or enclosures and because of the sensitivity of the listed building, the details are secured by Condition 17.
58. A rapid charge EV parking space is provided in the north western corner of the public car park (within the red line). It represents 2.5% of the total spaces in the car park. The installation is proposed with the agreement of the Council and details of the charging unit are secured by Condition 18.

#### Traffic

59. The transport statement dates from 2016 in support of a previous application but the Council's Highways Officer has accepted the findings. It is still concluded that traffic from this development would not have an adverse impact on the highway network.
60. Delivery arrangements for the library can be accommodated within the existing courtyard to the north of the listed building. Food deliveries for the café are likely to

be accommodated within Polehampton Close or within the existing car park. In both cases, there is unlikely to be any impediment to existing traffic flows and the arrangement is workable.

61. Due to the site location on High Street, limitations posed by the listed status of the building and the excavation of soil, a Construction Management Plan is required in Condition 16.

### **Landscaping and Trees**

62. Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character.
63. The site is characterised by its distinct change of topography, the railway line and trees, particularly those to the western and eastern edges of the site. This is illustrated in the Tree Condition Survey showing a good selection of 'A' and 'B' quality London Planes, Sycamore, Oaks and Tree of Heaven. The mature and broad canopies of the London Planes are suppressing nearby Oaks and the Tree of Heaven, but regular and sustained maintenance may help in this respect. Beyond the site further to the south and the Volunteer Centre are more mature Oak trees.

### Phase 1

64. Phase 1 allows for the retention of the 11m high T1 Sycamore alongside the Network Rail boundary. The contours around it will be altered with the extension of the retaining wall and changes to the stairs but this allows for increased soft landscaping and continued growth of the tree. As the rooting area is currently buried beneath hard standing, an arboricultural watching brief would be required in Condition 6 prior to the commencement of Phase 1.
65. The proposed technical measures to retain and enhance the rooting environment is noted as is the existing stepped retaining wall to the step risers being kept in situ. The addition of bow top fencing is not supported as it is a distracting feature and would benefit from a more contemporary design that complements the historic brickwork. Further discussion is required in Condition 8.
66. The provision of an outdoor children's space along the western boundary is supported and it is noted that Network Rail have given conditional support. Despite constraints from the proximity of the railway, the narrowness of the space and the shading from the T1 Sycamore, it still presents as a desirable space. Hard and soft landscaping details, which includes outdoor furniture and other treatments, are required in Condition 5. It would need to incorporate soft surfacing rather than paving and could feasibly involve a boundary treatment to screen the utilitarian character of the safety fencing.

### Phase 2

67. Phase 2 will require the removal of four trees – T1, T2 (12m high Oak), T4 (14m high Ash) and T5 (9m high Sycamore). The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer does not oppose the removal of T2, T3 and T5, all of which are Category C trees that

provide limited contribution, particularly when replacement planting is proposed. However, there are questions raised about the loss of T1.

68. There is agreement that the tree is a B1 category tree but the Council's Landscape Officer has concluded that the tree is displaying signs of a veteran tree i.e. one that is worthy of retention. It has shown sizeable growth since its last survey as part of the 2015 application and it shows signs of cavities, bark damage and rot holes (roosting feature for bats) and thus meets the criteria which is features of biological, cultural or aesthetic value that are characteristic of, but not exclusive to, individuals surviving beyond the typical age range for the species concerned.
69. The initial recommendation from the Council's Trees Officer was that the loss of the tree was unacceptable because of its growth and habitat potential. The assessment of the previous application in 2015 also proposed the removal of the Sycamore and this was not raised as an issue at the time. The change in stance since then is due to further investigations into the tree, the continued growth of the tree and the increased importance provided to trees in the 2019 version of the NPPF.
70. The applicant's arborist has submitted a further arboricultural report which fully considers the importance of the tree and the overriding reasons that justify its removal. This has been reviewed by the Landscape Officer, who concludes that it is regrettable that the Sycamore will be lost as part of the phase 2 works; however, overall, it is considered that the loss of the tree is not fatal to the application because there are exceptional reasons and suitable compensation.
71. In terms of any exceptional reasons or suitable compensation, the relocation of the two storey extension closer to Polehampton Close could feasibly allow for the retention of the tree. However, the building will still block some views of the tree, still intrude into the 10.7m root protection area and substantially reduce views of the listed building from Polehampton Close, and this is therefore not considered to be a practical solution. There will be replacement tree, and opportunities for landscaping can be increased as part of a consolidated hard and soft landscaping scheme in Condition 5. A management plan is also required in Condition 7 to ensure ongoing maintenance.

## **Ecology**

72. Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy states that sites designated as of importance for nature conservation are to be conserved and enhanced and inappropriate development will be resisted. Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network.
73. The site is located in habitat where bat roosts have previously been found and is surrounded by habitat suitable for use by foraging and commuting bats as it is adjacent to the wooded railway corridor.
74. A bat survey report was submitted with the planning application. It summarises the results of activity surveys for bats recommended in the earlier preliminary roost assessment dated July 2020. The activity results indicate that the listed building is used as a day roost for a low number of two of the more common species of bat.

The toilet block is also identified as a day roost of a common species of bat and this is proposed for demolition in Phase 2.

75. The proposed work would require a derogation licence from Natural England and the Council's Ecology Officer agrees that the current species and status of the roosts identified mean that the site could be covered through a conventional bat licence. In terms of mitigation, the provision of external bat boxes (Condition 13) appears sufficient to be granted a licence by Natural England and the proposal is satisfactory in terms of ecological viability.
76. The proposal seeks to remove all access for bats to the roof of the listed building during the reroofing works as this space will be occupied by energy saving insulation. As compensation roost features, external bat boxes have been proposed to work with the existing features of the building. The Council's Ecology Officer considers there to be sufficient scope to provide compensation roost features either within the roof voids using appropriate access features, or in external bat boxes but that the final detail can be secured through a pre-commencement condition. This element is covered as a pre-commencement requirement in Condition 13.
77. The ecological surveys, most recently updated in December 2020, have recognised that a bat roost is at risk of destruction during Phase 2. The mitigation strategy includes relevant measures and compensation roosts to be provided within this phase of the development. The Council's Ecology Officer considers there to be sufficient scope to provide compensation roost features within the proposed extension for Phase 2. Condition 12 secures the mitigation through the submission of licence details for each phase of the development and Condition 26 requires compliance with the other measures of the ecology report.
78. Subject to the above requirements, the Council's Ecology Officer raises no objection.

### **Secure by Design**

79. Phase 1 includes a secure children's activity area on the western side of the site. It will be enclosed by fencing to a height of 2m along the Network Rail boundary and by marginally lower fencing to the front and rear. It will be a secure space and poses limited opportunities for anti-social behaviour. The existing toilet block on the eastern side of the site will be retained and paving will be incorporated around it, resulting in a more inviting relationship to Polehampton Close. It improves the appearance and surveillance across the site and is supported.
80. The Phase 2 building design extends the development southwards toward the car park, but also westwards where it creates a staggered edge and a dead space between the railway line and the building. Some windows overlook the space but the residual space is very narrow and could attract misuse and anti-social behaviour. However, as it adjoins Network Rail land and will need to be fenced to their specifications, the likelihood of this occurring is reduced and it is concluded that the potential impacts are not sufficient to warrant variation to the scheme.

### **Building Sustainability**

81. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD require sustainable design and conservation. Solar panels were initially

proposed to the roof of the listed building. As they have now been removed from the proposal on heritage grounds, there are no other specific details (such as building materials, energy efficient appliances or water saving devices) that would commit to the building being considered as energy efficient. In their absence, these details are required by pre commencement Condition 20. Notwithstanding, it is feasible that the solar panels could be accommodated within phase 2 of the development, which does not include works to the listed building.

### **Waste Storage**

82. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan requires adequate internal and external storage for the segregation of waste and recycling and an appropriate area for ease of collection.
83. The community hall, café and library uses have varying levels of waste generation, including from food waste from the cafe. Whilst the carpark at the rear of the site provides for convenient refuse collection, there are no details relating to how waste, recycling and food waste will be stored and collected. Indeed, to account for food waste from the café (in phase 2), it may be beneficial to include composting facilities within the courtyard of phase 1, which would provide an educational tool for the children's outdoor activity area. These details are required as part of each phase of the development in Conditions 5 and 21.

### **Flooding and Drainage**

84. Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding. The site and access thereto is located within Flood Zone 1 and the proposal represents no additional flood risk or vulnerability. It is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy CC09.
85. Policy CC10 of the MDD Local Plan requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow. There will be increase in impermeable area and modest changes in ground levels, which pose implications for the existing drainage management. The Council's Drainage Officer raises no in principle objection but in the absence of drainage details, Condition 14 requires further details prior to the commencement of the development.
86. The site is near to Network Rail's boundary and there shall be no soakaway or drainage features within 5m distance of the western boundary. Stormwater discharge to the Network rail drain is also prohibited without their consent.

### **Site Contamination**

87. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has recommended Condition 19 to address potential contamination and any required remediation.

### **Employment Skills**

88. There is no requirement for an employment skills plan.

## Relationship to Railway Corridor

89. The Twyford-Henley railway corridor adjoins to the west. Network Rail has raised no objection in principle but to ensure that there is no adverse impact upon the safety, operation and integrity of the operational railway, the following comments are noted:

- a) The position of the children's reading area and benches may result in a risk of people climbing onto the boundary wall and fence and potentially falling down onto the railway
- b) It is recommended no trees are planted closer than 1.5 times their mature height to the boundary fence.

Officer comment: This is to be addressed as part of the hard and soft landscaping details in Condition 5.

- c) A suitable trespass proof fence (to at least 1.8m high or 2m alongside the children's activity area) is required adjacent to the boundary.

Officer comment: This is incorporated into the boundary treatment details that are required in Condition 8.

- d) It is recommended that the building be at least 2m from the fence to allow for maintenance

Officer comment: The rear extension in Phase 2 varies from 0.3m-2.0m from the boundary and, on average, about 1.8m from the boundary. It is not anticipated that maintenance access along this side of the building would be impeded as a result.

- e) Where trees exist on Network Rail, land the design of foundations close to the boundary must take into account the effects of root penetration

Officer comment: T3 (Oak) is within the rail corridor but the arboricultural impact assessment indicates that there is unlikely to be any adverse harm to the root protection area. Condition 6 requires additional details relating to tree protection, although it will remain protected by existing fencing.

- f) Demolition works must be carried out in accordance with the agreed method statement so that they do not endanger the safe operation or stability of the railway

Officer comment: This is incorporated into the requirement for a construction management plan in Condition 16 which will be consulted to Network Rail.

90. Other informatives relate drainage, tree planting and scaffolding, as noted in Informative 3.

## Community Infrastructure Levy

91. The application is not liable for CIL payments because it involves floorspace to be used for retail purposes (café) within a town centre location or a community facility (library and community space), both of which are exempt from liability.



## **CONCLUSION**

92. The proposal would provide positive benefits to the community in the provision of community facilities and the re-use and enhancement of a listed building. The improvements to the external space, including demolition of the disused toilet block would also provide benefits in terms of visual amenity and would enhance the character of the conservation area.
93. The site is situated within a sustainable location and proposes uses compatible with the site context. There is adequate parking within the vicinity of the site and the town centre to address the parking demand arising from the development.
94. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the listed building and the loss of a mature Sycamore that provides expansive canopy coverage is regrettable. However, as discussed above, the harm is adequately managed and the loss of the Sycamore is recognised as unavoidable and adequately compensated for. Subject to a series of conditions, the public benefits would outweigh the identified harm and as such it is considered that planning permission and listed building consent should be granted.

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