

Agenda Item 46.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
212228	15/10/2021	Shinfield & Swallowfield	Swallowfield

Applicant	Wokingham Borough Council
Site Address	Lambs Lane Primary School, Lambs Lane, Spencers Wood, Reading, RG7 1JB
Proposal	Full application for the retention of an existing single storey modular building for a temporary period of 7 years. (Retrospective)
Type	Full
Officer	Adriana Gonzalez
Reason for determination by committee	Applicant is Wokingham Borough Council

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 13 October 2021
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place

SUMMARY

The application involves the retention of a modular classroom building located within the main playground of Lambs Lane Primary School. The building was granted temporary planning permission under application ref. F/2010/2046 for a period of seven years. Following the expiration of the permission, this application seeks to retain the modular building for a further temporary period of seven years. It is noted there is no increase in the number of pupils (conditioned maximum of the school is 240 pupils).

Lambs Lane Primary School is a designated Resource Base providing education for children with physical disabilities with high levels of Special Education Need (SEN). The modular classroom building remains a key asset for the school to provide the essential support and resources these pupils need for an effective and inclusive education.

The report concludes that no part of the development results in any harmful impact on the character of the area, amenity of neighbouring occupiers, highways safety or landscaping. Paragraphs 1-18 provide further details to these material considerations. It is recommended that this application is approved as it accords with the NPPF and Wokingham Development Plan Policies.

PLANNING STATUS

- Part Modest Development Location (main school site) and part Countryside (school playing field and car park)
- Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
- Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
- Nuclear Consultation Zone - AWE Burghfield (within DEPZ)
- Landscape Character Assessment Area
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA Mitigation Zones – 5Km

RECOMMENDATION

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

Conditions:

1. Approved plans

This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered Location Plan LL-1121-01 A; Site Plan LL-1121-02 A and Elevations & Floor Plan LL-1121-03 A received by the Local Planning Authority on 28/06/2021. The development shall be retained in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

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

2. Development to be removed after temporary period

The modular classroom building hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition on or before 7 years of the date of this decision in accordance with a scheme of work to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: The type of building is not one that the Local Planning Authority is prepared to approve other than for a limited period, having regard to the materials and type of structure. Permission is only given because of the demonstrated educational need. Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP2 and CP3.

3. Cessation of temporary use

If the car parking area opposite the main school building should cease being used for the purposes of the school, then the approved modular classroom building shall be removed from the land, and the land shall be restored to its former condition before the development took place within 1 year of the date that the use of the car park ceased, in accordance with a scheme of work to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policy CP6.

4. Number of pupils

The planned number of children attending the school shall not exceed 240, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policy CP6.

Informatives:

1. 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 and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
170941	Proposed erection of a canopy to provide covered area for outside play in all weathers and protection of the equipment. The old structure to be removed and placed in the playground/field area	Approved 14/06/2017
F/2014/1809	Proposed erection of a single storey teaching unit on playground for a temporary period of 3 years, plus creation of a new class exit door to south elevation of main building	Approved 30/09/2014
F/2012/1416	Proposed installation of temporary modular unit for one year from August 2012 to August 2013 plus variation of condition no. 10 of planning consent F/2010/2046 to allow increase in pupil numbers for a period of 7 years from 240 pupils to 270 pupils	Approved 22/08/2012
F/2012/1365	Proposed erection of an outdoor buddy bench seating area with shade in front playground area.	Approved 31/07/2012
F/2010/2046	Proposed installation of a double modular classroom building for a temporary period of 7 years plus provision of staff car parking on part of the playing field	Approved 10/11/2010
F/2009/1975	Proposed erection of new building to be used as pre-school nursery and community centre for a temporary period of 7 years	Withdrawn 24/11/2009
F/2008/2677	Proposed erection of new building to be used as pre-school and community centre	Withdrawn 22/01/2009
F/2007/0166	Proposed siting of metal container for storage of equipment in association with the school	Approved 09/03/2007
F/2002/8013	Proposed single storey extension to school	Approved 15/01/2003
F/2000/2607	Proposed extensions to school to provide additional classroom and staff accommodation with disabled access	Approved 20/12/2000

SUMMARY INFORMATION	
Site Area	1.1 Ha (including playing field and car park)
Existing land use(s)	Learning & Non-Residential Institution (Use Class F1)
Existing floorspace	138sqm (modular building)
Number of pupils	210 pupils (conditioned maximum of the school is 240)
Change in floorspace (+/-)	No change
Number of jobs created/lost	No increase (currently 47 employees total)
Existing parking spaces	59 car spaces (no change)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Thames Water	No comments received
WBC Drainage	No objection
WBC Education (School Place Planning)	No objection
WBC Health and Wellbeing	No comments received
WBC Environmental Health	No comments received
WBC Highways	No objection
WBC Cleaner & Greener (Waste Services)	No comments received
WBC Property Services	No comments received
WBC Enforcement	No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Town/Parish Council: Swallowfield Parish Council state they have no comments.
Shinfield Parish Council state they have no comments.

Local Members: No comments received

Neighbours: A letter received from the occupant of The Shieling, with concerns on the following grounds:

- Initial temporary planning permission has lapsed by over three years.
- A condition to create a beech hedge on the western edge of the car park imposed on the original permission has not been complied with despite some replanting.
- It is wrong to submit a standalone planning application now for the renewal of approval for the temporary classroom and ignore the expiry of approval to the car park and associated traffic management plan. Original decision notice states the car park in the school playing field should be returned to its original state after 7 years.
- Permission should not be granted on a permanent basis; the type and deteriorating condition of the building does not warrant the status of permanency.

(Officer's note: the issues identified have been taking into consideration during the assessment of the application, and further details are provided below in relevant section of this report.)

APPLICANTS POINTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The modular classroom building remains a key asset for the school due to the increase in complex needs of some of the pupils. Lambs Lane Primary School is a designated Resource Base providing education for children with physical disabilities with high levels of Special Education Need (SEN).

PLANNING POLICY		
National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP2	Inclusive Communities
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP4	Infrastructure Requirements
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP8	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC02	Development Limits
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC04	Sustainable Design and Construction
	CC06	Noise
	CC07	Parking
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage
	TB16	Development for Town Centre Uses
	TB21	Landscape Character
	TB23	Biodiversity and Development
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	BDG	Borough Design Guide

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development:

- The application site comprises of an educational facility (Lambs Lane Primary School) with an existing modular building, located between the villages of Spencers Wood and Swallowfield. The school site is split with the school buildings and playground on one side of Back Lane, and the grass playing field and parking facilities, including drop-off zone on the opposite side of the road.

2. The modular classroom building is located on the main playground to the west side of the main school building. The building is accessed via a ramp and step arrangement. The building has been in position since 2011, following the grant of planning permission Ref. F/2010/2046. It is noted this permission was granted on a temporary basis and for a period of 7 years.
3. The application seeks to renew the planning permission for the modular classroom building following the expiration of the temporary planning permission granted under Ref. F/2010/2046. As stated within the Design and Access Statement (DAS), the building remains a key asset for the school due to the increase in complex needs of some of the pupils – Lambs Lane Primary School is a designated Resource Base providing education for children with physical disabilities with high levels of Special Education Need (SEN). The new permission is required for a period of 7 years.

Principle of Development:

4. 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.
5. Policy CC02 of the MDD sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map and therefore replaces the proposals map adopted through the Core Strategy, as per the requirement of policy CP9. Policy CP9 sets out that development proposals located within development limits will be acceptable in principle, having regard to the service provisions associated with the major, modest and limited categories. As the site is within a modest development location, the proposal is acceptable in principle.
6. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy also aims to ensure that new development contributes to the formation of sustainable and inclusive communities through the provision of community facilities (including educational buildings), and that the requirements of children are addressed. In this respect, the modular classroom building will continue to provide an important teaching space for the benefit of children with physical disabilities with high level of SEN. It is therefore considered that the development complies with the requirements set out in policy CP2, and the principle of development remains acceptable.

Character of the Area:

7. Policy CP1 states that development should maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment. 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.
8. The modular building measures 19.2m in length, 7.2m in depth, with a maximum roof ridge height of 3.8m. It comprises of two classrooms with entrance lobby and toilet facilities towards the centre of the structure. The building is proposed to be retained on the same location as existing, with no alterations to its external appearance. Given the nature of the school site which has a variety of architectural styles and extensions, and

given the siting of the building set back from the street, it does not appear unacceptably out of keeping with the established character of the street scene, therefore does not result in any significant harm to visual amenity or local character. As such, the development complies with Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.

9. It is referred within the DAS that the building is needed on a permanent basis, and this has been highlighted within the concerns raised by a local resident. It is noted that given the temporary nature of the form of the building which would continue to deteriorate over time, it would not be acceptable for this type of structure to be retained permanently and as such, only a temporary consent would be granted for the building.

Neighbouring Amenities:

10. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenities. The modular building is sited towards the northern side of the existing playground, with the nearest neighbouring property being that known as Sunnyside. Given the single storey nature of the building, and the fact that windows on its rear elevation are sealed shut and obscured, it is not considered there is any adverse impact upon neighbouring amenities in terms of loss of light, overlooking or overbearing.
11. Likewise, Policy CC06 and Appendix 1 of the MDD Local Plan requires that development protect noise sensitive receptors from noise impact. In this case, any potential noise and disturbance is unlikely to be significant and, in any case, would not be different to the existing situation. No objections are therefore raised on these grounds.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

12. Policy CP6 of the Core Strategy supports development proposals that do not cause highways problems. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off street parking standards, including provision for charging facilities. P3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD notes that parking spaces should be safe and convenient and sited to minimise impact upon safety.
13. The proposal only seeks renewal of the expired temporary permission for the modular classroom building. It is noted that the original permission (F/2010/2046) involved the provision of a staff car parking on part of the playing field opposite Lambs Lane, adjacent to the existing parking area, with alterations to provide a one way system with drop off zone. Planning records show that this staff car parking has been in place since planning permission was granted in 2011, and the Council has a long-term lease agreement for use of the adjacent car park (east of the playing field) for a period in excess of 7 years. No changes are proposed as part of this application to the locations of the existing vehicular and pedestrian accesses to the school.
14. In terms of parking provision, Appendix 2 refers that for Primary Schools (F1 Class Use) the requirement is 1 no car parking space per full time staff member. The applicant has confirmed that there are currently 47 members of staff on site of which 25.3 are full time, and there is no increase proposed in the number of staff or pupils. The existing parking provision between the site and the car park opposite the road is about 59 spaces, which is well in excess the required parking standard for the primary school use, in accordance with Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan. It is therefore considered that the existing parking provision is acceptable. The WBC

Highways Officer has raised no objection to the development on highways safety or parking grounds.

Flooding and Drainage:

15. Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding, and Policy CC10 of the MDD Local Plan requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow. The site and access thereto is located within Flood Zone 1 and the proposal represents no additional flood risk or vulnerability. No objections are therefore raised on these grounds. The WBC Drainage Officer has recommended that drainage details are secured by condition; however, given the building is existing and has been in place for more than seven years without modifications, in this case this condition is not considered relevant for the purpose of this application.

Landscape and Trees:

16. Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping, and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character. There are no protected trees on the site nor unacceptable loss of landscape features, since the proposals are essentially to retain the existing temporary modular building without any modifications proposed. No objections are therefore raised on these grounds.
17. With regard to the concern received that a condition to create a beech hedge on the western edge of the car park imposed on the original permission has not been complied with despite some replanting, it is noted that no part of this condition (5) of planning permission F/2010/2046 refers to a beech hedge specifically but to a scheme of landscaping. The site visit confirmed the presence of some planting to the western boundary of the staff car park, and this is acknowledged by the same local resident when mentioning there has been some replanting. In any case, this application is solely for the retention of the temporary classroom building as existing with no modifications proposed, therefore it is not considered reasonable nor necessary to include a landscaping condition given the scope of the development subject of this application.

CONCLUSION

18. The retrospective proposal does not involve any modifications or alterations to the overall built form of the existing building, which is considered acceptable on streetscape, neighbour amenity, as well as in terms of highways safety and parking provision. It is considered that the development accords with national and local planning policies, and it is therefore recommended for approval.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)
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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. The temporary modular building is intended to continue to support education for children with physical disabilities with high levels of SEN, and this is acknowledged in consideration of the application. Aside from this, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected

groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts upon protected groups as a result of the development.

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