

# Agenda Item 85.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
223348	09/02/2023	Woodley	Bulmershe and Whitegates;

<b>Applicant</b>	Wokingham Borough Council
<b>Site Address</b>	"Addington School", Woodlands Avenue, Woodley, Wokingham
<b>Proposal</b>	Full planning application for a single-storey modular building erected on hard standing(94m2 footprint)with external access ramp and steps. For a period of up to three years including minor alterations to landscaping.
<b>Type</b>	Full
<b>Officer</b>	Tariq Bailey-Biggs
<b>Reason for determination by committee</b>	WBC application - staff generation (on a 1-2-1 ratio)

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 8 February 2023
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Operational Lead Development Management
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>APPROVAL subject to conditions and informatives.</b>

<b>SUMMARY</b>
<p>The proposed development relates to the provision of a modular classroom building on the site of Addington School, which is a SEND school for children and young adults between 3 and 19 years old. Permission is sought for a temporary period of 3 years in order to allow for the introduction of 10 new pupils.</p> <p>It is considered that the proposal would be compatible with its immediate surroundings in the context of the school setting. It would also not give rise to concerns relating to parking or traffic impacts, or to the protection of the existing residential amenities of the nearest residents, given the location of the proposal. The building will not be in a location which is susceptible to floods.</p> <p>The proposal is considered to accord with relevant policies contained within the NPPF as well as WBC's adopted Core Strategy and Borough Design Guide. As such, it is being recommended for conditional approval.</p>

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY		
F/2006/8099	Proposed erection of new special school with associated landscape proposals, improvement to junction of Chequers Way and the service road adjacent to the swimming pool plus temporary buildings and new running track	Approved 08/11/2006
VAR/2008/1752	Proposed variation to condition 6 of planning consent F/2006/8099 to remove green roof	Approved 03/11/2008

	requirement and replace with a high performance multi-layer felt roofing system	
C/2009/0547	Application for submission of details to comply with the condition 18 of planning consent F/2006/8099 (Travel Plan for Bulmershe and for Addington School)	Approved 20/04/2009
190881	Full planning application for the erection of a new teaching block, extended car parking and the reconfiguration of the existing MUGAs and sensory garden.	Approved 13/06/2019
200996	Full planning application for the proposed new vehicular access to Addington School.	Approved 25/06/2020

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION	
Existing number of pupils	264
Proposed number of pupils	10
Existing number of teaching staff	Up to 266
Proposed number of teaching staff	6
Existing parking spaces	128
Proposed parking spaces	6
<b>CONSTRAINTS</b>	Modest Development Location Overhead cables 15m buffer Contaminated land consultation zone Tree Preservation Orders Site of Urban Landscape Value (Bulmershe) SSSI Impact Risk Zones Safety Hazard Areas MAH Pipelines

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
WBC Property services	No comments received.
WBC Environmental Heath	No objections.
WBC Drainage	No objections.
WBC Growth & Delivery	No comments received.
WBC Education (School Place Planning)	No comments received.
WBC Trees and Landscape	No objections, subject to a condition.
WBC Highways	No objections, subject to conditions.
Southern Gas Networks	Have objected to the scheme. Further consultation required post planning permission being granted, before any construction works are due to start.

## REPRESENTATIONS

**Woodley Town Council:** The Planning & Community Committee are concerned that the application only provides a tree count and not a tree survey and that the scheme may result in the loss of up to 7 silver birch trees. The Planning & Community Committee recommended that the plans only be approved on condition that the trees be retained. Officer comment:

An Arboricultural survey report and Arboricultural Impact Assessment Plan was received by the local planning authority on 02/12/2022, both documents when considered in this scheme. Please read the 'Trees and Landscape' section of this report for further information.

**Local Members:** No comments received.

**Neighbours:** No comments received.

## **PLANNING POLICY**

**National Planning Policy Framework**  
**National Design Guide**  
**National Planning Practice Guidance**

### **Core Strategy (CS)**

CP1 – Sustainable Development  
CP2 – Inclusive Communities  
CP3 – General Principles for Development  
CP6 – Managing Travel Demand  
CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area  
CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals

### **MDD Local Plan (MDD)**

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  
CC10 – Sustainable Drainage  
TB21 – Landscape Character

### **Other**

Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

## **PLANNING ISSUES**

### **Site Description**

1. The application site is located to the north of Woodlands Avenue in the Parish of Woodley. The site is bound by the Goals Soccer Centre to the north, with The Bulmershe School and Bulmershe Leisure Centre lying to the east. To the south lies Woodlands Avenue and Highwood Primary School beyond this, with playing fields situated to the west of the site. The site is surrounded by a mix of uses, predominantly consisting of community uses or schools, with residential properties located further away. There are public views of the school and the car park from both Woodlands Avenue and the access road for the school.

### **Description of Development**

2. The proposed development relates to a temporary, single storey flat roof modular building located on the grounds of Addington School in Woodly, Reading. The building would contain facilities for 10 new pupils, along with 6 new staff and includes a science classroom, store and office. The temporary building in question will be used to offset the loss of an existing classroom which is being refurbished for the benefit of the new intake of pupils. The proposal also includes minor alterations to the existing landscaping to provide level access to the new building.

### **Principle of Development**

3. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. 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.
4. Paragraph 95 of the NPPF states that it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. It also states that Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive, positive, and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. It continues to state that great weight should be given to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications.
5. The site is located within a major development location and as such the principle of development is acceptable, providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy aims to ensure that new development contributes to the formation of sustainable and inclusive communities through the provision of community facilities (including development for education), and that the requirements of children are addressed. In this respect, the modular classroom building provide an important teaching space for the benefit of children and young adults with special educational needs and disabilities.
6. It is therefore considered that the development complies with the requirements set out in policy CP2 and the NPPF and the principle of development would be acceptable.

### **Character of the Area:**

7. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that 'maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment'. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states planning permission will be granted if development is 'of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life'.

8. Addington School consists of a number of buildings, which are minimalist and institutional in design and appearance. The proposed modular building measures 9.8 metres in length, 9.2 metres in width, with a maximum roof ridge height of 3.6 metres. It comprises of one classroom with and entrance lobby, an office space and storage room. The proposed modular building would be located on the eastern side of the main buildings.
9. The facades would comprise of grey composite prefinished steel insulated wall cladding panels along with white UPVC windows, which would not be out of character with external characteristics of other buildings on the site. Whilst temporary in nature, it is not considered that the building would appear at odds with regards to its design in relation to other buildings located within the school grounds but would appear appropriate for its intended use and compatible in scale and appearance to its surroundings.
10. It is therefore considered that the proposed temporary modular building will have a minimal visual impact when considered in the context of its immediate surroundings within the school site, as well as the surrounding area. As such, the proposal is not considered to be harmful to the character of the surrounding area, therefore would accord with policy CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy.

#### **Residential Amenities:**

11. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity.
12. The nearest residential properties to the proposed location of the modular building are located along Rushbrook Road to the east. However, these properties are approximately 120 metres away from the proposed location of the building and would therefore be well in excess of the Borough Design Guide separation distances. It is therefore not considered that the location, scale and appearance of the modular building on the school site would result in harm to the existing residential amenities of surrounding residential occupiers by reason of loss of outlook, loss of privacy or by being overbearing.

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

13. CP6 of the Core Strategy relates to managing travel demand. CC07 of the MDD Local Plan sets out the Borough Parking Standards. The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed this application and is satisfied with the applicants supporting travel plan (Addington School Travel Plan, By Sue Tod SBM, October 2022).
14. The new building requires 6 new FTE staff members at the school and the existing car parking arrangements on site won't provide sufficient space for these staff. The supporting design and access statement notes that alternative parking has been agreed between the school and the Local Authority to use 6 spaces in the adjacent Bulmershe Leisure Centre. The Highways Officer has raised no objections to this parking arrangement, subject to a condition that requires the provision of vehicle parking and turning space. However, the new FTE staff members would utilise this existing car park at Bulmershe Leisure Centre, which

currently has adequate space for parking and turning vehicles. Consequently, this condition would be unnecessary, therefore, will not be attached to any approval.

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

15. Policy CC09 of the Managing Development Deliver Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding. According to the Environment Agency's mapping, the development is in flood zone 1 with a low risk of surface water flooding and is not a vulnerable development. As such, the Council's Drainage Officer has raised no objection to the principle of the development.

#### **Landscape and Trees:**

16. Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3 require a high quality design that respects its context. This requirement is amplified by MDDL Policies CC03 and TB21 which require development proposals to protect and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure, retaining existing trees, hedges and other landscape features wherever possible and incorporating high quality - ideally native – planting as an integral part of any scheme.
17. The site is located within the school campus next to a soft landscaped strip containing several, Silver Birch trees which are an important feature. The Council's Trees and Landscape Officer notes that none of the trees are protected but they are mostly categorised as 'B', and as such are material considerations. Tree T2 Silver Birch cannot be retained with the proposed layout. The siting of the temporary classroom as shown on drawing no. 0002-P02 dated 9.11.22 also shows an incursion into the root protection area of Tree T1 Silver Birch of 2.2%. However, it is stated in the DAS that the temporary classroom will be located over the existing tarmac.
18. The Trees and Landscape Officer comments that the proposed modular building is located approximately 2 metres north of the southern line of the tree protection fencing. If the classroom and ramp arrangement were located 2m to the south of their current location, the Trees and Landscape Officer believes that it would have been possible to retain tree T2 with some crown lifting. However, the agent has highlighted that the building cannot be moved south as this would result in the building clashing with access to the school's backup generator.
19. Following this, the Trees and Landscape Officer has agreed to a replacement silver Birch Tree, planted within the curtilage of the application site during the next planting season. A suitable condition has been attached. The Case Officer also recommends a condition which secures the protection of trees, shrubs and hedges throughout the time that development is carried out.

#### **Environmental Health:**

20. Core Strategy Policy CP3 requires that new development should be of a high quality of design that does not cause significant detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users and their quality of life.

21. The proposals are not introducing new development in terms of the land use, and as such, the day-to-day operations on site will remain the same as at present. The use of the site will remain unchanged. The Council's Compliance Officer considers that the submitted Noise Impact Assessment by DDX Acoustics dated 01/11/22 is acceptable and has raised no objections to the proposed development.

#### **Sustainable Design and Construction:**

22. Core Strategy Policy CP1 requires development to contribute towards the goal of achieving zero carbon development by including on-site renewable energy features and minimising energy and water consumption. This is amplified by MDDL policies CC04: Sustainable design and construction and CC05: Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks and the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (May 2010).

23. However, matters relating to energy efficiency measures in this instance would be covered under Building Regulations due to the minor nature of the proposals which would result in less than 1000sq.m of additional floorspace on the site.

#### **Conclusion:**

24. The proposal would facilitate a new classroom to allow for the introduction of 10 new pupils. It would not give rise to concerns relating to traffic impacts, or to the protection of the existing residential amenities of the nearest residents, trees or flood issues. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with relevant policies contained within the NPPF as well as WBC's adopted Core Strategy and as such is being recommended for conditional approval.

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

*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. 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.*

## **APPENDIX 1 - Conditions / informatives or Reasons for refusal**

*APPROVAL subject to the following conditions and informatives:*

### **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 application plans and drawings numbered 2001-P01, 0001-P01, 1002-P01, 2002-P01 received by the local planning authority on 08/11/2022 and the drawing numbered 1001-P06 received by the local planning authority on 11/11/2022. 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. Development to be removed after temporary period**

The development hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition on or before the date of 3 years from the date of this permission, in accordance with a scheme of work that shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

*Reason: Permission is only given because of the demonstrated educational need.  
Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP2 and CP3.*

### **4. Travel Plan**

No part of the development shall be occupied until the approved travel plan (Addington School Travel Plan, By Sue Tod SBM, October 2022). has been implemented. The travel plan shall be implemented, maintained and reviewed as approved.

*Reason: To encourage the use of all travel modes. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 9 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policy CP6.*

### **5. Landscaping**

Prior to the occupation of the building for the use hereby approved, or within the first planting season since the approved occupation of the building commences, a replacement Silver birch tree shall be planted within the curtilage of the application site. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting (or within a period of 5 years of the occupation of the buildings in the case of retained trees and shrubs) die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species or otherwise as approved in writing by the local planning authority.



*Reason: To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21 (and TB06 for garden development).*

## 6. Retention of trees and shrubs

No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained in the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement (Arbtech, BS5837:2012, 17 November 2022) and Arboricultural Impact Assessment Plan (Arbtech AIA 01) 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*

### **Informatives:**

#### 1. Reason For Approval

The development accords with the policies contained within the adopted / development plan and there are no material considerations that warrant a different decision being taken.

#### 2. 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.

#### 3. Mud On The Road

Adequate precautions shall be taken during the construction period to prevent the deposit of mud and similar debris on adjacent highways. For further information contact the Highway Authority on tel.: 0118 9746000.

#### 4. Approved & No Discussion/Amendment Required

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.

## **APPENDIX 2 - Parish Council Comments**

No comments received.