

Agenda Item 94.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
223604	10/03/2023	Wokingham	Emmbrook

Applicant	Mr T Searle (Wokingham Borough Council)
Site Address	"The Emmbrook School", Emmbrook Road, Wokingham, RG41 1JP
Proposal	Full application for the proposed erection of a two-storey 6th form centre with external stairway and disability ramp and a single storey office/admin extension with external disability stairway and disability ramp along with landscaping works following demolition of the existing admin block.
Type	Full
Officer	Adriana Gonzalez
Reason for determination by committee	Applicant is WBC There will be an increase in the number of staff/pupils.

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 8 March 2023
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place and Growth
RECOMMENDATION	APPROVAL subject to conditions and informatives

SUMMARY

The proposed development relates to the provision of a new sixth form building, reception/admin extension following demolition of the existing admin block and other landscaping works, on the site of The Emmbrook School which is a state funded secondary and sixth form school.

The Council has a statutory duty to provide education and to ensure there are school places for every child within the Borough. This is an important material planning consideration. The proposal is essential to accommodate the increased need for pupils within Wokingham. This will result in a total increase of 210 pupils and 22 teaching staff.

The scale and design of the proposed development would be compatible with its immediate surroundings in the context of the school setting, without any detriment to visual amenity or local character. Subject to appropriate conditions, it would also not give rise to concerns relating to flood risk and drainage, parking or traffic impacts, or to the protection of existing residential amenities of the nearest properties. Paragraphs 1-66 provide further details to these material considerations, and subject to conditions 1-20 the application is recommended for approval.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
220501	Full application for the erection of a single storey flat roof modular building of 300m2 to provide accommodation for common room and study area and associated administration offices for a temporary period of five years.	Approved 12/05/2022

190421	Application to vary condition 3 and 5 of planning consent 181565 for an artificial grass pitch with flood lights.	Approved 14/03/2019
160777	Full planning application for proposed erection of new two storey building to replace existing single storey temporary accommodation unit.	Approved 25/05/2016
140531	Proposed erection of a 3 storey building with link bridge to first floor to replace existing modular classroom accommodation.	Approved 24/07/2014

DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION	
Existing total number of pupils	1,198
Proposed increase in number of pupils	+210 (1408 total)
Existing total number of teaching staff	126
Proposed increase in number of teaching staff	+22 (148 total)
Existing parking spaces	126 vehicle spaces / 70 cycle spaces
Proposed parking spaces	+2 car spaces / +76 cycle spaces
Proposed additional floor space	521sqm approximately
CONSTRAINTS	Major Development Location – Wokingham Flood Zone 3 Potentially Contaminated Land Consultation Zone Bat Roost Habitat Suitability Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone Local Centre - Clifton Road Nuclear Consultation Zone – AWE 12Km Thames Basin Heaths SPA – 7Km Emmbrook Riverside Footpath Historic Flooding Electricity substation

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Environment Agency	No response received
Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue	No objection
WBC Property Services	No response received
WBC Environmental Health	No objection
WBC Drainage	No objection
WBC Highways	No objection
WBC Education (School Place Planning)	No response received
WBC Trees & Landscape	No objection
WBC Biodiversity	No objection
WBC Health and Wellbeing	No response received
WBC Cleaner & Greener (Waste Services)	No response received

REPRESENTATIONS

Town/Parish Council: No comments received

Local Members: No comments received

Neighbours: 4 letters of objection from local residents on the following grounds:

- Overbearing impact upon neighbouring gardens (**see paras 26-30**)
- Loss of privacy upon neighbouring properties (**see paras 20-25**)
- Flooding impact upon neighbouring gardens (**see para 38-49**)
- Encroachment upon boundaries of the neighbourhood (**red line plan submitted shows development entirely within the school site boundaries**)
- Loss of light upon neighbouring properties (**see paras 26-30**)

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Design Guide

National Planning Practice Guidance

Core Strategy (CS)

CP1 – Sustainable Development

CP2 – Inclusive Communities

CP3 – General Principles for Development

CP4 – Infrastructure Requirements

CP6 – Managing Travel Demand

CP7 – Biodiversity

CP8 – Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals

Management Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD)

CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC02 – Development Limits

CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping

CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction

CC05 – Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks

CC06 – Noise

CC07 – Parking

CC09 – Development and Flood Risk

CC10 – Sustainable Drainage

TB12 – Employment Skills Plan

TB21 – Landscape Character

TB23 – Biodiversity and Development

Other

Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

CIL Guidance + 123 List

Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING ISSUES

Description of Development:

1. Planning permission is sought for the proposed erection of a two-storey sixth form block, comprising a social space, study centre, classrooms, toilets and administration area. The existing reception/admin building at the entrance of the school is proposed to be demolished, and a new extension to the existing staff/admin block is proposed to provide a new welcoming entrance to the school with associated admin spaces. There would also be some proposed changes to layout elsewhere on the site to improve circulation through the school, as well as landscaping proposals.
2. The proposed development would allow for the school to expand from a 7FE to an 8FE, with an increase of 210 pupils, inclusive of 60 additional sixth form places (30 year 12 pupils and 30 year 13 pupils). Based on the existing level of staff, it is considered that the proposals would also result in 22 additional members of staff (16 full-time and 6 part-time).
3. The new sixth form building would be rectangular in shape and would measure approximately 21.6m in length, 11.2m in width and 9.9m in height. It would have stairs and access ramp on its south and east elevations. The new reception/admin extension would also be rectangular in shape measuring circa 16.2m in length, 10m in width and 4.8m in height, with an access ramp on its northern elevation.
4. The supporting Design and Access Statement clarifies that the proposed works are to be carried out as a phased development over several years as follows:
 - Phase 2a – extension to the existing staff/admin building
 - Phase 2b – sixth form block
 - Phase 2c – demolition of the existing reception/admin building and new hard landscaping/car parking
 - Phase 3 – minor modification to existing buildings, remodelling of connections, routes and other landscaping proposals.

Site Description and its Surroundings:

5. The Emmbrook School is a mid-century secondary school located to the south of Emmbrook Road, approximately 1.7Km north-west of Wokingham Town Centre, which consists of a number of buildings that are typical of schools of this age, being minimalist and institutional in terms of design and layout. The school is tightly constrained, being hemmed in by a railway line and the Emmbrook river, which presents a significant flood risk and much of the site is within Flood Zone 3.
6. Within the site, the school buildings are situated to the north of the site, nearest the access point, and further away from the railway line which runs to the south of the site. The school playing fields are located south of the school buildings.
7. The surrounding area is characterised by residential development.

Principle of Development:

8. 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.
9. 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.
10. This view is in line with the Government Policy Statement “Planning for schools development” issued in 2011, which is designed to facilitate the delivery and expansion of state-funded schools through the planning system. It is the Government’s intention that the planning system should operate in a positive manner when dealing with proposals for the creation, expansion and alteration of state-funded schools, and that there should be a presumption in favour of development of state-funded schools. This includes enabling schools to adapt and improve their facilities in response to growing demand. As this outcome is strongly in the national interest, planning decision-makers should support that objective in a manner consistent with their statutory obligations.
11. 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.
12. Given the national and local policy context, the proposal would be acceptable in principle, subject to other material considerations. These include no adverse impact on the character of the area, the retention of suitable play space, and no adverse impact on flood risk, traffic, highways safety, neighbouring amenity, biodiversity or sustainability.

Character of the Area:

13. Section 12 of the NPPF ‘Achieving well-designed places’, reinforces the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development, by ensuring the creation of inclusive and high-quality places. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF includes the need for new design to function well and add to the quality of the surrounding area, establish a strong sense of place, and respond to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.
14. The Government’s National Design Guide 2019 (NDG) is clear that well-designed places contribute to local distinctiveness. This may include introducing built form and appearance that adds new character and difference to places.

15. 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 that 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'. R1 and RD1 of the Borough Design Guide requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.
16. The Emmbrook School consists of a number of buildings, which are minimalist and institutional in design and appearance reflective of their function. The proposal forms three parts:
 - Demolition of existing reception/admin block and new reception/admin extension
 - New sixth form centre
 - Other works
17. The demolition of the existing reception/admin building and its replacement with a grasscrete parking area and landscaping would not harm the character and appearance of the area, with the result being a simple extension of the existing parking area and additional landscaping which would be an improvement in visual terms.
18. The proposed extension to the existing admin block to create a new welcoming entrance and new sixth form building would be distinctly contemporary in appearance with its simple architectural forms and design features. The Borough Design Guide indicates that non-residential development will be heavily influenced by the type of business the development is designed to accommodate. In this case, this is a school which is characterised by large institutional buildings. The proposed new building and extension would be clearly of forms and materials reflective of their intended educational purpose. It is not considered that the proposed building and extension are inappropriate in this location and therefore are acceptable and in accordance with CP3 of the Core Strategy and the Borough Design Guide.
19. Other works proposed to improve connectivity and accessible routes through the school, including landscaping proposals would result in positive improvements to the school in terms of appearance as well as providing more functional usable spaces. As these works are mainly at ground level, they would not result in any detriment to visual amenity or local character.

Neighbouring Residential Amenities:

Overlooking:

20. R15 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires the retention of reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms, with separation of 22m to the rear or 30m on the second floor and 10m to the street or 15m from the second floor.
21. The proposed extension to the existing admin block to provide a new reception/additional admin space would be single-storey and would sit behind (to the

south of) the proposed new sixth form building, so that it would not give rise to any overlooking impact upon the nearest residential amenities.

22. The proposed sixth form centre would be two-storey in height and would have windows on its north and west elevations facing the rear amenities of neighbouring properties facing Emmbrook Road and Emmbrook Gate. The Borough Design Guide SPD does not contain specific advice on separation distances relating to institutional buildings, and therefore it is considered the recommended distance between residential buildings is appropriate guidance.
23. The maximum recommended back-to-back distance for a 3 storey building (used as a worst case comparison) is 30m. In the case of this proposal, the distance between the proposed sixth form building and the rear elevations of nos. 113 and 115 Emmbrook Road would be in excess of 30m (i.e. 33m). With regard to no. 93 Emmbrook Gate, the distance between the development and the rear elevation of this property would be circa 19m, however it is noted that due to its positioning, any views towards no. 93 would be rather oblique.
24. Furthermore, the proposed plans show all proposed first floor windows on the north and west elevations of the new building would be obscure glazed, so that there would not be any detrimental impact upon these neighbouring private amenities in terms of loss of privacy. Condition 17 will ensure the windows remain obscure-glazed.
25. All other neighbouring properties would be sufficiently distanced from the new buildings.

Loss of light and Overbearing:

26. R16 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires appropriate separation distances to maintain privacy and limit sense of enclosure. R18 of the Borough Design Guide SPD aims to protect sunlight and daylight to existing properties, with no material impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties.
27. The demolition of the existing reception building and other proposed works to the school including landscaping are unlikely to result in any harmful loss of light or overbearing impacts to neighbouring residential properties.
28. The proposed extension to the existing admin block to provide a new reception/additional admin space would be single storey and would sit behind (to the south of) the proposed new sixth form building, so that it would not give rise to any loss of light or overbearing impacts upon the nearest residential amenities.
29. The proposed sixth form centre would be two-storey of maximum height 9.9m. Whilst there would be significant views of the building from adjacent residential properties, given the separation distances involved (33m to the rear of nos. 113 and 115 Emmbrook Road and 19m to rear of no. 93 Emmbrook Gate), it is unlikely the proposal would result in significant harm to these neighbouring amenities in terms of loss of light or overbearing impacts.
30. All other neighbouring properties would be sufficiently distanced from the new buildings.

Impact on Playground / Provision of Playing Field Space:

31. The proposal would not result in the loss of, or reduction of playing fields within the site and therefore no objection is raised in this regard.

Highways Access and Parking Provision:

32. 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.
33. There would be no change to the existing access arrangements for vehicles and pedestrians accessing the site. There would be an 18% increase in traffic over the existing operations on site, however the WBC Highways Officer is satisfied this would not have an adverse impact over the wider highway network.
34. A total of 126 car parking spaces are currently provided for the school and it is proposed that there will be 2 additional accessible parking bays (128 spaces total) and 5 spaces will be relocated to the area where the current reception building sits. Two Electric Vehicle Charging points are proposed to be installed as part of the wider landscaping works.
35. There are currently 70 cycle parking spaces on site to serve the school. It is proposed that there would be 76 additional cycle parking spaces and this is considered acceptable. Details of these additional cycle spaces will be secured by condition 12.
36. A Travel Plan has been submitted as part of the proposal. This has been reviewed by the WBC Highways Officer who advises that the document lacks a concrete commitment to the actions it proposes. There is also limited information on how some of the proposed actions will be achieved (i.e monitoring of cycle parking provision and increase marketing and promotion of the Travel Plan). More details will be needed in the final document as to what such actions will entail. On this basis, a revised Travel Plan is required, and this along with its implementation will be secured by condition 13.
37. Because of the location of the proposal within the school grounds, a framework construction method statement is a pre-commencement requirement at condition 4.

Flood Risk and Drainage:

38. The application site and access thereto is located within Flood Zone 3.
39. Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan indicates that all sources of flood risk should be taken into consideration and that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided. Development proposals in flood zones 2 or 3 should take into account the vulnerability of the proposed development. Policy CC10 of the MDD Local Plan requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow.
40. The NPPF indicates that development should be located sequentially and that development should not be permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding. If this

is not possible, the exception test will need to be applied. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a flood risk assessment. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;
- b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient;
- c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate
- d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and
- e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.

41. The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (Elliott Wood Partnership Ltd, dated 16/11/2022) and plans to factor in the potential for flood risk. It includes a sequential and exception text under section 6.3 of the report. The FRA notes that the sequential test is concerned specifically with the availability of sites that can accommodate buildings of this scale, including parking and amenity space. In the case of The Emmbrook School, it is noted that the Council has considered detailed school requirements for the future and concludes that the proposed works must be located on the existing Emmbrook School site, and therefore it is impractical to consider other site within the borough in lower flood risk areas.
42. In terms of locating the proposed sixth form building and new reception/admin extension in Flood Zone 1 to the west of the site, it was deemed practical and necessary to locate both where they are proposed due to the following reasons:
 - The new reception/admin extension has to be located at the front of the site to welcome staff, students and visitors
 - The area available in Flood Zone 1 is the only area of hardstanding within the site that is remote from the main vehicle routes and parking where outdoors play/exercise can be supervised
 - This hardstanding area is an essential resource that is used daily for PE purposes, and any construction on this area would have a significant impact on the day-to-day operations of the school
 - Construction of a multi-storey building in this area would have a significant adverse impact on neighbouring properties.
43. The proposed new building and extension are proposed to be located on existing hardstanding areas. In the case of the extension to form the new reception/admin block, this has been designed to replicate the footprint of the existing admin block to be demolished, so as not to have a detrimental effect on the flood plain. With regard to the new sixth form building, it is noted this has been raised to be approximately 1.12m above existing ground site level, and it is proposed to include several flood voids beneath the building to mitigate for an increase in built footprint. The finished floor levels and access will be above anticipated flooding levels (even taking into account 20% worsening of flooding due to potential climate change).
44. Improvements will also be made to the existing flood wall defence to the west of the site where there is currently a gap in the wall, to prevent flood water from entering the

buildings. Removable flood barriers/bollards will also be constructed at the entrance of the new reception/admin extension, as well as permeable block paving, grasscrete parking and soft landscaping are also proposed throughout the site as flood compensation measures.

45. It is also proposed to restrict the peak surface water runoff rate from the development site to 0/6l/s for 100 year + 40% CC return period. The use of blue roofs will be implemented within design for surface water network.
46. The WBC Flood Risk and Drainage Officer is satisfied with the information provided and has raised no objections to the proposals. Notwithstanding, conditions 6 and 18 are recommended to secure details of maintenance plan for the floodable voids and that development is carried out in full accordance with the FRA and mitigation measures detailed therein.
47. It is noted that the Environment Agency were consulted on this application on 13/12/2022 due to the proposals being within Flood Zone 3. No response was received during the statutory consultation period. Several attempts were made by the Council to engage with the EA to obtain comments on the proposals. The EA confirmed via email dated 17/02/2023 that their planning team are currently experiencing a high volume of applications and enquiries, alongside some temporary resource pressures and this is impacting upon their usual statutory consultation response timeframes. They are implementing measures to improve this position, through prioritising statutory applications and active recruitment, but they anticipate it will be between a few weeks to a month before they are able to commit adequate resource to begin to process this application (which will likely take a number of weeks to conclude, depending on complexity of review required).
48. The Council has a statutory duty to provide education and to ensure there are school places for every child within the Borough. This is an important material planning consideration. The proposal is essential to accommodate the increased need for pupils within Wokingham. School applications should not be delayed, especially where there is a demonstrable need to provide school places to cater for the increased need for pupils and where the Council has fulfilled its statutory duty to consult with relevant body, in this case the Environment Agency, and no comments on the proposals have been received to date.
49. On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposed development has adequately considered and mitigated for flood risk. Therefore, withholding planning permission on this basis without adequate technical justification is not considered reasonable.

Landscape and Trees:

50. 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.
51. There are no protected trees on the site nor unacceptable loss of landscape features since the proposed buildings are to be located within existing areas of hardstanding. The application is supported by a Tree Survey (Arbtech, October 2022), which

identifies the trees within and adjacent to the site. The WBC Trees and Landscape Officer has reviewed the information and has raised no objections subject to a condition requiring an Arboricultural Method Statement to provide details of tree protection during construction. Condition 5 will secure this.

52. Landscape general arrangement plans have been provided showing details of new planting treatments in areas affected by the proposals. No objections are raised by the WBC Trees and Landscape Officer subject to detailed hard and soft landscape proposals being secured by condition 7.

Environmental Health:

53. The proposal would be for a sixth form centre and reception/admin extension located within the school grounds, therefore there are no concerns in terms of land contamination.
54. The WBC Environmental Health Officer has evaluated the proposal and whilst raising no objection, has advised that a full noise impact assessment is carried out to cover both the development and operational phases of the proposal. In this case, the proposal would be confined within the school premises and would not introduce new development in terms of land use and as such, day-to-day operations on site will remain the same as present. Furthermore, the use of the site will remain unchanged, and although the new buildings would facilitate an increase in the number of staff and pupils attending the school, this is not considered significant in terms of concerns relating to noise and disturbance arising from the proposal, particularly noting the substantial separation distances to the nearest noise sensitive receptors. Any noise impact caused by demolition and construction phases in consideration of adjacent residential properties and mitigation measures can be assessed through a Construction Environmental Management Plan, to be secured by condition 4. Likewise, condition 20 will restrict permitted hours of work during construction.
55. The Officer has also indicated that the design of any external lighting will have to consider the nearby properties amenities. Details of external lighting will be secured by condition 16.

Ecology:

56. Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy requires the conservation of sites for nature conservation in accordance with national, regional, county, and local biodiversity action plans. 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.
57. The existing admin building comprises a flat-roofed structure surrounded by hardstanding and amenity grassland. The proposed sixth form building will be constructed on hardstanding which is of low ecological importance. The preliminary bat roost assessment submitted with the application considered the buildings on site proposed to be altered of negligible bat potential. As such, the proposals are very unlikely to affect protected species or priority habitats. The WBC Ecology Officer has raised no objections to the proposed development.

58. The site is within an amber risk zone for Great Crested Newts as modelled in the Borough's wide district licence. Considering the description of the site given in the ecological appraisal, the WBC Ecology Officer concludes it is unlikely that the proposals will lead to adverse effects on this species.
59. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF requires that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around development should be encouraged and integrated as part of the design. The recommendations made by the applicant's Ecologist do not specify the type and location of biodiversity enhancements proposed, therefore condition 14 is recommended requiring the precise details of the ecological enhancements and their implementation to be submitted for approval and installed prior to the occupation of the development.

Sustainable Design and Construction:

60. 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 MDD Local Plan 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). R21 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that new development contribute to environmental sustainability and the mitigation of climate change.
61. Policy CC04 specifically requires that all new non-residential proposals of more than 100m² gross non-residential floorspace shall at least achieve the necessary BREEAM requirements or national equivalent. The interpretation to this policy, in light of the changes to Building Regulations, has been clarified in the WBC's Climate Change Interim Policy Statement (December 2022).
62. The Interim Future Buildings Standard, which came into force on 15 June 2022, requires that new non-residential buildings achieve a 27% reduction in carbon emissions to secure compliance with Building Regulations. The appropriate BREEAM rating required under Policy CC04 of MDD Local Plan is one that reflects the levels of reduction in carbon emissions stipulated in the Interim Future Buildings Standard (i.e. the 27% reduction). The corresponding BREEAM rating, which requires this minimum level of reduction in carbon emissions, is BREEAM 'Excellent' rating.
63. A Sustainability Statement (RCDC, Ref. EME-RCDC-03-XX-RP-SU-0001, dated November 2022) has been submitted in support of the application. It outlines key features of the sustainability strategies for the project, and how the development will endeavour to meet the requirements outlined in policies CC04 and CC05 of the MDD Local Plan. Nonetheless, the proposal needs to demonstrate that it will achieve the BREEAM rating 'Excellent' or higher. This is further supported by the Council's Climate Change Interim Policy Statement adopted by the Council in December 2022. It is proposed that the submission of the design and post-construction certificates demonstrating that the BREEAM rating 'Excellent' or equivalent is achieved by the scheme is secured by condition 9.

CONCLUSION:

64. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle and would succeed in providing a new sixth form building of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate a much needed new educational unit and meet the growing pupil intake. Both the new sixth form centre and new reception/admin extension along with landscaping proposals would be appropriate in terms of its setting, scale and design, and would elevate the profile of the school, improving its visual appearance. Subject to appropriate conditions, no harmful impact would occur with regard to neighbouring amenity, highways, flood risk and drainage, biodiversity or trees and landscape.
65. The NPPF places an emphasis upon delivering sustainable development incorporating objectives for social, economic and environmental protection. These objectives are also referenced within Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy and Policy CC01 of the MDD Local Plan. The proposals will provide notable and tangible benefits, fulfilling many aspects which contribute to achieving the three dimensions of sustainable development, including the provision of much needed educational facilities that will accommodate the increased number of pupils within Wokingham whilst lifting the profile of The Emmbrook School through additional remodelling and landscaping works. It is also considered that sufficient measures have been taken into account in the design of the proposals to mitigate potential flood risk on the site.
66. Therefore, when applying an overall critical planning balance of all material considerations presented, this planning application is recommended for 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

APPROVAL subject to the following:

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 application plans and drawings numbered:

EMM-HLM-ZZ-00-DR-A-00001 Rev P02

EMM-HLM-ZZ-00-DR-A-00002 Rev P01

EMM-HLM-ZZ-00-DR-L-15001 Rev P03

EMM-HLM-ZZ-00-DR-L-15002 Rev P03

EMM-HLM-ZZ-00-DR-L-15101 Rev P03

EMM-HLM-P2-00-DR-A-00152 Rev P04

EMM-HLM-P2-00-DR-A-00162 Rev P04

EMM-HLM-P2-00-DR-A-00172 Rev P04

EMM-HLM-P2-RF-DR-A-00132 Rev P04

EMM-HLM-P2-XX-DR-A-00202 Rev P04

EMM-HLM-P2-XX-DR-A-00301 Rev P04

EMM-HLM-P2-XX-DR-A-00302 Rev P04

EMM-HLM-P3-00-DR-A-00153 Rev P04

EMM-HLM-P3-00-DR-A-00173 Rev P04

EMM-HLM-P3-RF-DR-A-00133 Rev P04

EMM-HLM-P3-XX-DR-A-00203 Rev P04

EMM-HLM-P3-XX-DR-A-00303 Rev P04

EMM-HLM-ZZ-00-DR-A-00100 Rev P04

EMM-HLM-ZZ-00-DR-A-00101 Rev P04

SuDS Statement (Elliott Wood Partnership Ltd, Rev P1, dated 16/10/2022)

Flood Risk Assessment (Elliott Wood Partnership Ltd, Rev P1, dated 16/11/2022)

received by the local planning authority on 01/12/2022; and

EMM-HLM-ZZ-00-DR-L-15200 Rev P02

received by the local planning authority on 23/02/2023. 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. **Phasing** – No development shall take place until a Phasing Strategy to include:
 - i) the development to be delivered in each phase;
 - ii) the sequence of development; and

- iii) where a phase consists of only demolition how the relevant part of the site will be secured until such time as works of construction are commenced; and
- iv) how earlier phases of the development will be able to operate satisfactorily while later phases are still under construction

has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Phasing Strategy.

Reason: To ensure comprehensive planning and delivery of the development and to safeguard the safety of pupils and school staff. Relevant policy: Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3 and CP6.

4. **Construction Environmental Management Plan** – No development shall take place within each Phase, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Environmental Method Statement and Management Plan in respect of that Phase has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for:

- i. the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
- ii. loading and unloading of plant and materials,
- iii. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development,
- iv. the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate,
- v. wheel washing facilities,
- vi. measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction,
- vii. a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works
- viii. the control of noise (including noise from any piling)
- ix. the control of lighting

Reason: In the interests of highway safety & convenience and neighbour amenities. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

5. **Protection of Trees** – a) No development or other operation shall commence within each Phase until an Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of 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 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).
- b) No operations shall commence on site within each Phase in connection with 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 Approved Scheme are in place on site.
- c) 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 each Phase within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.
- d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works within that Phase 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.

6. **Flood Voids details** – Prior to the commencement of the development within each Phase, details of the maintenance plan for the floodable voids shall be submitted for written approval to the local planning authority. The voids proposed as part of the development shall be permanently kept free of obstruction and shall be regularly maintained in accordance with the agreed maintenance plan.

Reason: To prevent any loss of flood water storage and to reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10 .

7. **Landscaping** – Before works proceed beyond the slab level within each Phase, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals relevant to that phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, means of enclosure, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and structure (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services and any fencing required etc). Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable.

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

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

8. **External Materials** – Before any Phase of the development hereby permitted is commenced above slab levels, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building(s) within that phase shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.

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

9. **Sustainable Design and Construction** – (a) Prior to construction work proceeding above slab level, a Design Stage Certificate for each building comprised in the development, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Design Stage Certificate shall be prepared by a suitably qualified assessor and shall demonstrate that that the building(s) will achieve a minimum BREEAM (or equivalent) rating of 'Excellent'.
- (b) Within three months of the occupation of each of the building comprised in the development, a Post-Construction Certificate in respect of that building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Post-Development Certificate shall be prepared by a suitably qualified assessor and shall demonstrate that the building achieved compliance with BREEAM (or equivalent) rating of 'Excellent' as a minimum.

Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development. Relevant Policies: Chapter 14 of the NPPF (Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change), Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policy CP1, Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies CC04 and CC05, and the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (2010).

10. **Electric Vehicle Charging** – No building/extension hereby permitted shall be brought into use until details for EVC points serving the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The EVC points shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before occupation of the development hereby permitted, and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the charging of electric vehicles and used for no other purpose.

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 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

11. **Parking** – No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking and turning space has been provided in accordance with drawing EMM-HLM-ZZ-00-DR-L-15200 Rev P02. The vehicle parking and turning space shall be retained and maintained in accordance with the approved details and the parking space shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times and the turning space shall not be used for any other purpose other than vehicle turning.

Reason: To provide adequate off-street vehicle parking and turning space and to allow vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear in the interests of road safety and convenience and providing a functional, accessible and safe development and in the interests of amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

12. **Cycle storage** - No building/extension hereby permitted shall be brought into use until details of secure and covered bicycle storage/ parking facilities for the occupants of and visitors to the development 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 the development hereby permitted, and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.

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 9 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

13. **Travel Plan** – No part of the buildings/extensions hereby permitted shall be brought into use until a revised Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Travel Plan shall be in general accordance with the principles of the Draft School Travel Plan SM/AH/MM/17360 dated December 2022 prepared by DHA Planning, and shall include a programme of implementation and proposals to promote alternative forms of transport to and from the site, other than by the private car and provide for periodic review. The travel plan shall be fully implemented, maintained and reviewed as so approved.

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

14. **Biodiversity Enhancements** – Prior to works proceeding beyond the slab level within a Phase that contains the new buildings/extensions, detailed plans for biodiversity enhancements in line with the recommendations given in the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment report (Arbtech, October 2022) and indicatively shown on the Landscape GA plans (Drawing Nos. EMM-HLM-ZZ-00-DR-L-15001 to 15002) shall be provided to the local authority for its approval. The approved plans shall thereafter be implemented in full.

Reason: to ensure that the proposal is in accordance with Section 41 NERC Act re. UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species (Species of Principal Importance), and complies with Planning Policies for Wildlife including CP7 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), and the National Planning Policy Framework which requires consideration of the potential biodiversity gains that can be secured within developments

15. **Drainage** – No building hereby permitted shall be brought into use until the sustainable drainage scheme for the site has been completed in accordance with the approved SuDS Statement (Elliott Wood Partnership Ltd, Rev P1, dated 16/10/2022). The sustainable drainage scheme shall be managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the agreed management and maintenance plan.

Reason: To prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10 .

16. **Lighting** – Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no floodlighting or other forms of external lighting shall be installed unless it is in accordance with details which have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Such details shall include location, height, type and direction of light sources and intensity of illumination. Any lighting, which is so installed, shall not thereafter be altered without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority other than for routine maintenance that does not change its details.

Reason: to protect residential amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3.

17. **Obscure glazing** – The first floor windows on the north and west elevations of the sixth form building hereby permitted shall be fitted with obscured glass and shall be permanently so-retained. The windows shall be non-opening unless the parts of the window which can be opened are more than 1.7 metres above the finished floor level of the room in which the window is installed and shall be permanently so retained.

Reason: To safeguard the residential amenities of neighbouring properties. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3.

18. **Flood Risk** - The development shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (Elliott Wood Partnership Ltd, Rev P1, dated 16/11/2022) and mitigation measures it details. The mitigation measures set out within the FRA shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the scheme's timing/phasing arrangements. The measures detailed above shall be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To reduce risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10 .

19. **Plant noise** – All plant, machinery and equipment installed or operated in connection with the carrying out of this permission shall be so enclosed and/or attenuated that noise therefrom does not exceed at any time a level of 5dB[A] below the existing background noise level [or 10dB[A] if there is a particular tonal quality] when measured at a point one metre external to the nearest residential or noise sensitive property.

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.

20. **Hours of work** – No work relating to the development hereby approved, including 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.

Informatives:

1. The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-commencement requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details.
2. 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. Whilst it would appear from the application that the proposed development is to be entirely within the curtilage of the application site, the granting of planning permission does not authorise you to gain access or carry out any works on, over or under your neighbour's land or property without first obtaining their consent, and does not obviate the need for compliance with the requirements of the Party Wall etc. Act 1996.
4. The applicant is reminded that this development may require an Environmental Permit from the Environment Agency under the terms of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2016 for any proposed works or structures, in, under, over or within 8 metres of the top of the bank of designated 'main rivers'. This was formerly called a Flood Defence Consent. Some activities are also now excluded or exempt. An environmental permit is in addition to and a separate process from Date: 29 June 2020 Head of Planning, Development RE & Regulatory Services obtaining planning permission. Further details and guidance are available on the GOV.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits>.
5. The applicant is advised that the fitting of a sprinkler system should be considered at the premises prior to the operation of the building(s)/extension(s) as approved.
6. Bats are a protected species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately and an ecological consultant contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.
7. Great Crested Newts are a protected species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This site is partially within an amber risk zone according to modelling undertaken to inform a Borough wide licence issued by Natural England. Amber zones contain suitable habitat and Great Crested Newts are likely to be present. The permission granted does not provide authorisation for development to proceed under the Wokingham Borough Council District Licence for Great Crested Newts. Should any Great Crested Newts or evidence of Great Crested Newts be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately and an ecological consultant contacted for further advice before works can proceed.

All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.

8. 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.

APPENDIX 2 - Parish Council Comments (Where relevant)

No comments received.