

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 2nd June 2021

Ward: Park

Application No.: 201862/REG3

Address: Alfred Sutton Primary School, Wokingham Road

Proposal: Retention of 1 no. double-stack demountable modular double classroom unit and temporary macadam playground for a further 5 years

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Date received: 22/12/20

Application: 8 week target decision date 19/04/21; extension of time agreed to 07/06/21

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT permission subject to the following conditions:

Conditions to include:

1. The temporary classroom, hardstanding and associated paths must be removed from the site within 5 years and 6 weeks of the date of this permission.

Within three months of, or in the first planting season following the removal of the temporary classrooms, whichever is sooner, soft landscaping, hardstanding and associated paths on the playing field land must be reinstated in accordance with the approved plans under application 140968.

Reason: To ensure the full implementation of the approved reinstatement scheme under 140968.

2. The development hereby approved is in accordance with the following drawings:

E02158-P-100 Rev A - Location Plan

E02158-P-101 Rev B - Block Plan

E02158-P-201 Rev A - Proposed Floor Plan

Received 29th March 2021

E02158-P-301 - Proposed Elevations

Received 22nd December 2020

Reason: To clarify which drawings are approved.

3. In connection with the removal of the temporary classroom hereby permitted, no demolition or associated works shall take place outside the hours of 8am to 6pm Mondays to Fridays and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. Works shall not take place at all on Sundays or Bank Holidays without the prior written approval of the local planning authority.

Reason: to protect occupiers of nearby properties from unreasonable disturbance from works connected with implementing this permission in accordance with Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site lies to the south east of the junction of Crescent Road with Wokingham Road and contains a Council-owned primary school which has a current pupil capacity of 450 plus 26 nursery places. Vehicular access is from Wokingham Road. The school buildings are comprised of three single storey Victorian red brick buildings and a newer single storey building. Planning permission was granted in 2014 for an expansion to the school site, and in 2013 a temporary two storey teaching modular teaching block was approved. Playing fields are located to the south of the main school site.
- 1.2 The site is bounded by the Maiden Erlegh school site to the west, the playing field to the south and residential areas mixed with commercial uses to the north and east.



2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Temporary planning permission is sought to retain the provision of a double stack modular building for a further 5 years, providing 4 classrooms, with associated hard play area on the playing field to the south of the existing school buildings. The modular classroom was originally granted planning permission in 2013 on a temporary basis (permitted under 130136) for two years.
- 2.2 Planning permission was then granted in October 2014 (140968/REG3) for a new teaching block incorporating an under 5s playgroup and school nursery, extension to the administration block and associated external works. The temporary modular classroom was required whilst these works were being carried out and was planned to be removed upon completion of the permanent extension. Further temporary permission was granted in 2015 under reference 150479 to retain the temporary classroom for an additional 18 months whilst works continued to progress on the

extension of the main school. The committee report for application 150479/REG3 is an appendix to this report.

- 2.3 Whilst the school extension has now been completed, the temporary classroom has remained in situ to date. Further planning permission is now applied for to keep the temporary classroom on site for another 5 years.
- 2.4 The applicant advises that the temporary classroom had been planned to be relocated to Moorlands Primary school as part of the proposed expansion (under application reference number 180171). However, pupil forecasting then determined that the places were no longer needed at that school, and it was decided that the project should not proceed and the modular classroom to remain at Alfred Sutton Primary School.
- 2.5 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the school is using the additional space to ensure that they are compliant in terms of safety (separation distances between pupils). To comply with pupil forecasting, the school also needs to ensure they have a 5% floating capacity available to provide accommodation to students, should the need arise.

2.6 Supporting information considered:

E02158-P-100 Rev A - Location Plan
 E02158-P-101 Rev B - Block Plan
 E02158-P-201 Rev A - Proposed Floor Plan

Received 29th March 2021

Planning Statement (received 16th February 2021)

E02158-P-301 - Proposed Elevations (received 22nd December 2020)

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

171356/REG3	Discharge of condition 14 of planning permission 140968/REG3	Approved
151234/REG3	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 11 of permission 140968.	Approved
150479/REG3	Extension of 18 months for the provision of one double-stack demountable modular double classroom already granted through application 130136	Approved
141911/REG3	Discharge of conditions 3,5,8,9 and 13 of planning permission 140968/REG3	Approved
140968/REG3	School expansion onto adjacent playing field. New build teaching block incorporating relocated Crescent under 5's playgroup and School Nursery. Extension to admin. block, plus associated external works.	Approved
130136/REG3	Provision of one double-stack demountable modular double classroom, associated external works and provision of a temporary macadam playground	Approved
12/00896/REG3	Provision of 1 temporary classroom unit and associated external works	Approved

11/00875/REG3	Single storey side extension for use as nursery school reception, cloak and administration office.	Approved
06/01583/REG3	2 m high black railing fence and gates to NW boundary on retaining wall	Approved
06/00417/REG3	Development of new early years classroom facility and administration accommodation, associated external works and contractors compound with two temporary classrooms	Approved
98/00084/REG3	New gateway and railings to playground	Approved
97/00357/REG3	Extension to existing school to provide new classroom. Regulation 3.	Observations sent

4. CONSULTATIONS

Statutory:

- 4.1 **Sport England** - It is understood that the proposal prejudices the use, or leads to the loss of use, of land being used as a playing field or has been used as a playing field in the last five years, as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595). The consultation with Sport England is therefore a statutory requirement.

Sport England has considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (in particular Para. 97), and against its own playing fields policy.

Sport England objected to both the original application this double-stack demountable modular double classroom (LA reference 130136) and the application for the School's expansion onto the playing field (LA reference 140968). Both of these applications were permitted by the Council in spite of Sport England's objection. These applications were referred to the National Planning Case Work Unit and were not called-in for the Secretary of State's determination.

Sport England withdrew their holding objection for this current application, subject to the following condition being included on the permission:

The temporary classroom, hardstanding and associated paths must be removed from the site within 5 years and 6 weeks of the date of this permission in accordance with the approved scheme.

Within three months of, or in the first planting season following the removal of the temporary classrooms, hardstanding and associated paths on the playing field land must be reinstated in accordance with the approved plans under application 140968.

Reason: To ensure the full implementation of the approved scheme under 140968.

This is to ensure the playing field is reinstated.

Non-statutory:

- 4.4 **RBC Transport Development Control**
No objections.

RBC Environmental Protection

4.5 No objections.

4.6 Public consultation

Two site notices were erected with the 21 day consultation period running from 8th March 2021 to 29th March 2021. No representations have been received.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Legal and Planning Policy Context

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

5.2 The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National:

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC6 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development)
CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)
CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
TR3 (Traffic, Access and Highway-Related Matters)
TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging)
EN9 (Provision of Open Space)
OU1 (New and Existing Community Facilities)
EN7 (Local Green Space and Public Open Space)
EN8 (Undesignated Open Space)
EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources)

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 The main issues are considered to be:

- i) The principle of retaining the ongoing temporary classroom accommodation
- ii) Ongoing loss of open space
- iii) Impact on neighbouring amenity
- iv) Other matters

i) The principle of retaining the ongoing temporary classroom accommodation

6.2 Reading Borough Council as local education authority has a statutory duty to provide a school place to every child of statutory school age. A rising population in Reading has seen increasing demand for primary places (also seen at national level). As a result, the local education authority needs to ensure adequate provision and facilities are in place to meet this demand.

6.3 As such, the principle of retaining additional school accommodation accords with Policy OU1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and meets the local education authority need to support the number of primary school places.

ii) **Ongoing Loss of Open Space**

6.4 The site is located adjacent to the designated Alfred Sutton Playing Field included under Policy EN7Ea within the Local Plan. Policy EN8 states '*There will be a presumption in favour of retention of undesignated open space*'. Whilst Sport England raised objection to the original proposal for the temporary classroom (approved in 2013), they have subsequently not objected to further temporary applications to retain the classroom, including this current application.

Sport England considered the continued loss of the playing field was only deemed acceptable should it be considered to meet with at least one of five exceptions listed in Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document. It has been considered the proposal would meet exception 4: '*The area of playing field to be lost as a result of the proposed development will be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new area of playing field:*

- *of equivalent or better quality, and*
- *of equivalent or greater quantity, and*
- *in a suitable location, and*
- *subject to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.'*

6.5 Sport England noted that it was disappointing that this permission result in the loss of this part of the playing field until 2026. However, they acknowledged that the proposal is justifiable in terms of their policies, as noted above; although this is subject to a suitably worded condition securing the temporary nature of the proposal, and the subsequently reinstatement of the land. As such, negotiation between Officers and Sport England was carried out to formulate a condition of this nature. The condition will read that once the temporary classroom is removed, the land will be required to be reinstated as in accordance with the details approved under previous application 140968 (the permanent extension to the school). This will mean that the details of the previous permission are complied with in entirety. The condition will require the classroom to be removed within 5 years and 6 weeks from the date of this permission, should it be granted, and the land reinstated within three months, or the first planting season, whichever is sooner.



Approved site layout under application 140968. The temporary classroom is circled, and when removed, the field will be reinstated, as seen in the plan.

6.6 In light of the above, and the demonstrated benefits of the retention of the temporary classroom for a further period of time, it is considered that the benefits of the proposal outweigh the temporary loss of open space and as such is considered acceptable in relation to Policy EN8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

iii) Impact on neighbouring amenity

6.7 At their closest point, the retained classrooms would be approximately 125m from properties on Wokingham Road, with Wokingham Road in between. The short side elevation of the unit would continue to face these houses, with both levels being blank. It is considered that this arrangement would not result in harm to the privacy of adjoining dwellings. The classroom would also be a sufficient distance from properties on Crescent Road and these properties are screened by existing school buildings. There are no other residential properties within close proximity.

6.8 It is considered that the scale of the proposal, together with the location, would not be sufficient to cause loss of light or loss of outlook to, or overbearing effects upon, any neighbouring properties for the extended time period the classroom would be on site.

6.9 The proposal will continue to facilitate an increase in pupil numbers at the school. This could reasonably be assumed to have an increased potential for noise associated with it. However, it is considered that within the context of the established school use, the noise would be of a similar level to the current day, and it is considered that there is no evidence to suggest that the proposals would result in significant harm to neighbouring occupiers. However, it is considered prudent to include a

condition relating to the removal of the classroom to ensure that residents are not disturbed. As such, no demolition or associated works shall take place outside of 8am - 6pm Mondays to Fridays and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. Works shall not take place on Sundays or Bank Holidays without agreement from the Local Planning Authority. These working hours are the same as those included on application 150479.

- 6.10 As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

iv) Other Matters

Equality Impact

- 6.11 In determining this application the Committee is required to have 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 and sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to these particular planning applications.
- 6.12 In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of these developments.

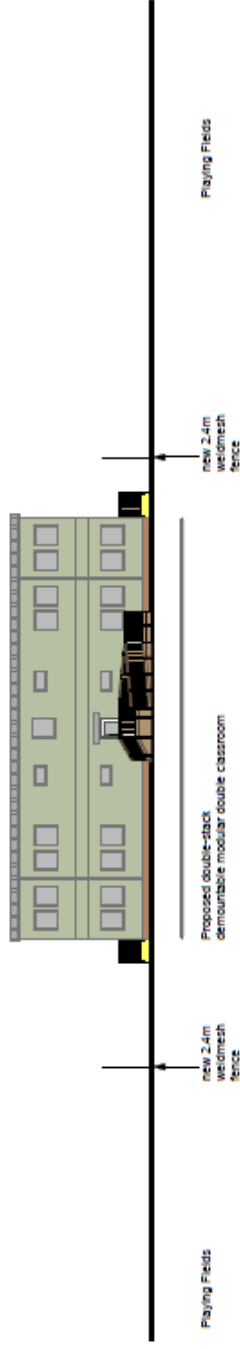
7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 It is considered that the temporary loss of open space would be acceptable in this case due to the justifiable and overriding need to provide additional classroom space at this school at the present time.

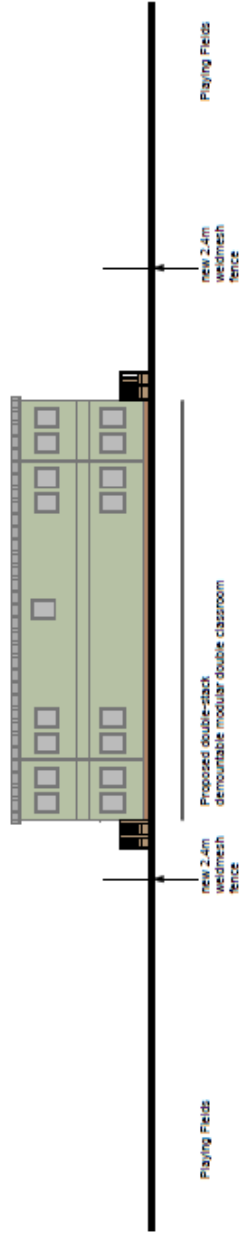
Case Officer: Connie Davis



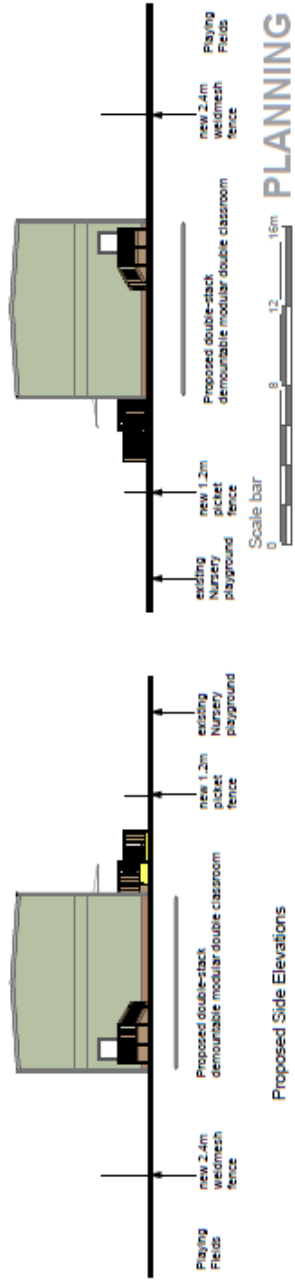
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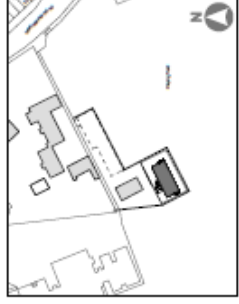
Proposed Front Elevation



Proposed Rear Elevation



Proposed Side Elevations



Hampshire County Council
 HCC Property Services,
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Notes
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Date	Drawn/Checked	Issue	By

Reading Borough Council
Alfred Sutton Primary School
Demountable Modular Classroom

Proposed Elevations

SCALE: 1:200 @ A3 DATE: 21.02.13 DRAWN: HCC/BEH CHECKED: HCC/BEH

PROJECT NO: E02158-P-301

Reading Borough Council
 HCC Property Services

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