

04 October 2023



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
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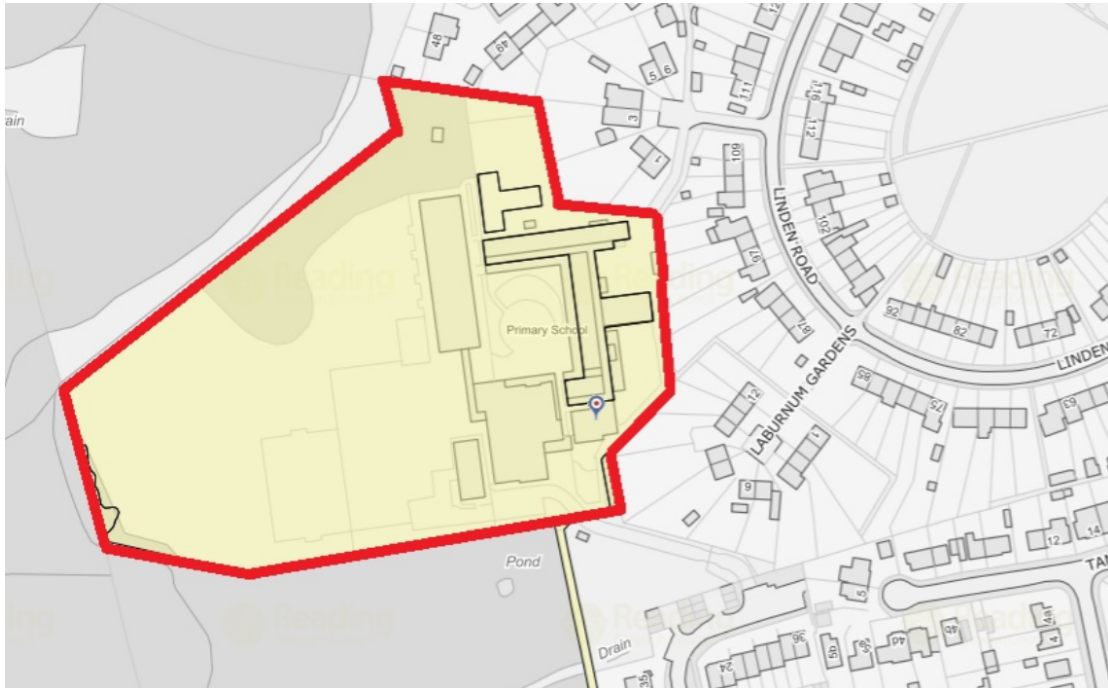
<b>Title</b>	<b>PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT</b>
<b>Ward</b>	Church
<b>Planning Application Reference:</b>	231046/REG3
<b>Site Address:</b>	The Ridgeway Primary School, Hillbrow, Reading RG2 8JD
<b>Proposed Development</b>	Retrospective retention of existing demountable 2 storey modular classrooms and temporary permission to further retain the modular unit for 5 years and minor associated works (amended description).
<b>Applicant:</b>	Reading Borough Council – Property Management
<b>Report author</b>	Marcie Rejwerska
<b>Deadline:</b>	11 October 2023
<b>Recommendations</b>	Grant planning permission, subject to conditions as follows:
<b>Conditions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Temporary Buildings (Reinstatement)</li><li>2. Approved Plans</li><li>3. Materials As Specified</li><li>4. Boundary Treatment (To be approved and installed as approved before occupation for SEND pupils)</li></ol>
<b>Informatives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Terms</li><li>2. Building Control</li><li>3. Complaints about construction</li><li>4. Encroachment</li><li>5. Positive and Proactive - Approval</li></ol>

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1. This report explains the proposal submitted by Reading Borough Council for retrospective permission to retain the two-storey demountable modular unit at The Ridgeway Primary School, and to obtain a further temporary permission for 5 years (until 2028). The unit has been vacant since 2017 and is in poor condition. The proposal seeks permission to undertake essential repairs to bring the unit back into use to provide classrooms for SEND students from January 2024. The continued use of the unit as proposed is acceptable and minimal concerns raised in terms of amenity impacts arising from the proposal, although a pre-commencement condition is recommended to secure further details of the proposed new fencing around the unit due to insufficient information being included within this submission.

## 2. Introduction and site description

- 2.1. The application is referred to Committee owing to it being for works to Council owned (Regulation 3) property.
- 2.2. The surrounding area is residential, and the school has existing access points from Willow Gardens and Hillbrow. The existing modular unit is set away from boundaries with residential properties.
- 2.3. The double modular unit was granted temporary planning permission in 2013, which was further extended in 2015 until 2016. The modular has been stood vacant at the site since 2017.
- 2.4. Site location plan:



### **3. The proposal**

- 3.1. The proposal is part retrospective to retain the modular unit at the site since the previous permission expired in 2016. Permission is also sought to retain the demountable modular two-storey unit on the grounds of The Ridgeway Primary school to accommodate SEND pupils, for an additional 5 years (until 2028).
- 3.2. The submitted planning statement identifies the need to retain the modular unit to provide classroom space for SEND students from January 2024.
- 3.3. The proposal also includes the erection of fencing, although insufficient details have been submitted in relation to the design and scale of this.
- 3.4. Submitted plans and documentation:
  - 3.4.1. Design, Access and Supporting Statement, received 10 August 2023
  - 3.4.2. Location Plan, received 16 August 2023
  - 3.4.3. Proposed Plan, received 16 August 2023
  - 3.4.4. E02348-P-301 Proposed Elevations, received 26 July 2023

### **4. Planning history**

- 4.1. 970916/REG3 – Construction of modular nursery building. Demolition of existing swiftplan building – Application permitted.

- 4.2. 051149/REG3 - Single-storey extension to existing modular nursery building. – Application permitted
- 4.3. 130192/REG3 – Provision of one double-stack demountable modular double classroom and associated external works. – Application permitted
- 4.4. 130299/REG3 – The provision of three temporary single storey portable buildings to provide meeting rooms and small group teaching spaces – Application permitted
- 4.5. 130733/APC – Discharge of conditions 9 and 11 of planning permission 13/00230/REG3 – Conditions discharged
- 4.6. 141554/FUL – Expansion from 1FE school to 3FE school – Application permitted (Committee decision)
- 4.7. 150481/REG3 – Retention of temporary double stack demountable modular double classroom for a further 18 months – Application permitted
- 4.8. 150568/APC – Discharge of condition 8 of planning permission 141554/REG3 – Conditions discharged
- 4.9. 150785/APC – Discharge of conditions 2, 17, 21, 23 and 25 of planning permission 141554/REG3 – Conditions discharged
- 4.10. 150822/NMA – Non-material amendment to planning permission 141554 for the addition of kitchen ventilation plant to Hall Block roof and a change of brise soleil design – NMA agreed
- 4.11. 150868/NMA – Non-material amendment to planning permission 141554 for amendments to proposed pitches and increase in hard play space – NMA agreed
- 4.12. 151482/NMA – Non-material change to planning permission 141554/REG3 for a change in material of the new hall roof from standing seam metal to felt. – NMA agreed
- 4.13. 151710/APC – Discharge of condition 8 of planning permission 141554/REG3 – Condition discharged
- 4.14. 151872/APC – Discharge of conditions 7, 13, 14, 16 and 19 of planning permission 141554/REG3 – Conditions discharged
- 4.15. 161429/APC – Discharge of conditions 9, 18 and 30 of planning permission 141554/REG3 – Conditions discharged
- 4.16. 180473/APC – Discharge of condition 20 of planning permission 141554 – Condition discharged

## **5. Consultations**

### **5.1. Statutory:**

5.1.1. Sports England – No comments to make.

### **5.2. Non-Statutory**

5.2.1. RBC Natural Environment – No comments to make.

5.2.2. RBC Transport Development – No comments received.

5.2.3. RBC Ecology – No objections.

5.2.4. RBC Environmental Protection - No comments to make.

5.2.5. RBC Education Division – No comments received.

### **5.3. Public:**

5.3.1. The following neighbouring properties were consulted by letter for both applications:

6 Laburnum Gardens, Reading RG2 7EN

7 Laburnum Gardens, Reading RG2 7EN

8 Laburnum Gardens, Reading RG2 7EN

9 Laburnum Gardens, Reading RG2 7EN

10 Laburnum Gardens, Reading RG2 7EN

5.3.2. No letters of representation received.

5.3.3. Site notices were sent to the applicant to display around the site.

## **6. Legal context**

6.1. 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'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

6.2. In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.3. Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

Policies:

CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

OU1 New and Existing Community Facilities

## **7. Appraisal**

7.1. The main considerations are:

I. Land use principles

II. Amenity impacts

### **I) Land use principles**

7.2. The proposed works seek to make the classrooms within the vacant unit available for SEND pupils, from January 2024 for a period of 5 years. The submitted planning statement notes that the unit's proximity to the access gate from Hillbrow means that SEND students will have a separate, quieter access point to the school.

7.3. The Ridgeway Primary School is currently 3FE (form of entry) but operating as 2FE, therefore there is no further proposal to expand the staffing at the school.

7.4. The modular unit was erected in 2013 prior to the permission and implementation of the rear extensions (planning permission 141554) and associated new playing fields. The area on which the modular unit sits were part of an area of playing field which was essentially lost through planning permission 141554.

- 7.5. As such, the retention of the modular unit is not considered to unreasonably reduce the amount of playing field space at the site since this was lost through the implementation of planning permission 141554 and therefore is considered to comply with Sports England Playing Fields Policy (Policy Exception 3), which reads "*The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch, and does not result in the loss of or inability to make use of any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins), a reduction in the size of the playing areas of any playing pitch or the loss of any other sporting/ancillary facilities on the site.*"
- 7.6. The existing playing fields at the school accommodate 3FE, therefore the proposal does not necessitate an additional provision of playing fields at the site.

## **II) Amenity impacts**

- 7.7. The unit is located away from boundaries with residential dwellings. The nearest residential properties are located on Laburnum Gardens, which back onto the school site.
- 7.8. There is no identified risk of harm to these properties from the appearance and siting of the modular unit nor from factors associated with its use, such as noise.
- 7.9. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
- 7.10. The proposal also includes erection of fencing around the existing modular unit although as insufficient information has been submitted within this application; a condition is recommended to secure these details via a pre-occupation condition.

## **8. Equality implications**

- 8.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues, and priorities in relation to this particular application.

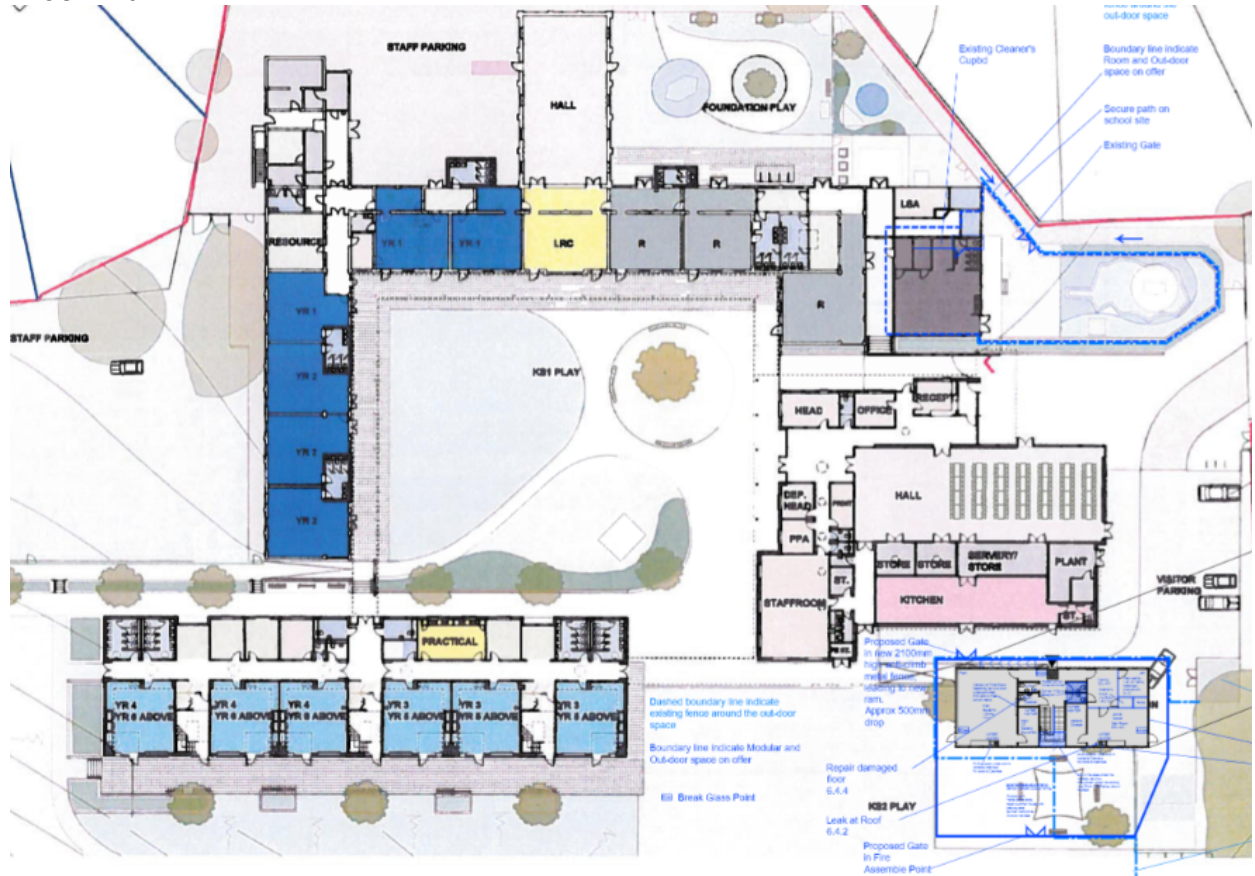
## **9. Conclusion & planning balance**

- 9.1 As with all applications considered by the Local Planning Authority, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 9.2 Any harmful impacts of the proposed development are required to be weighed against the benefits in the context of national and local planning policies, as detailed in the appraisal above. Having gone through this process officers consider that the proposal is acceptable both in terms of use, design, and the impact on the surrounding residential area.

9.3 It is considered that officers have applied a suitable planning balance when reaching this conclusion. As such, this application is recommended for Planning Permission to be granted subject to the recommended conditions.

# Plans & Appendices

## Block Plan



## Photos taken during site visit



Rear of the unit



Front of the unit