

30 April 2025



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
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<b>Title</b>	<b>PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT</b>
<b>Ward</b>	Church
<b>Planning Application Reference:</b>	PL/25/0292
<b>Site Address:</b>	Whitley Park Primary & Nursery School, Brixham Road, Reading, RG2 7RB
<b>Proposed Development</b>	Proposed upgrades to playground equipment, suitable for children with Special Educational Needs.
<b>Applicant</b>	Reading Borough Council
<b>Report author</b>	Gary Miles
<b>Deadline:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
<b>Recommendations</b>	Grant planning permission, subject to conditions as follows
<b>Conditions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <i>TL1 – Time Limit – Three Years</i></li><li>2. <i>AP1 – Approved Plans</i></li><li>3. <i>M3 – Materials As specified</i></li></ol>
<b>Informatives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <i>IF7 – Complaints about Construction</i></li><li>2. <i>I1 – Positive and Proactive</i></li></ol>

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The proposal is to upgrade the existing playground, so that it is suitable for children with Special Educational Needs. The existing equipment will be removed, and new SEND appropriate equipment will be installed. The playground equipment will have a positive impact on the children's health and wellbeing. The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its effect on the character of the area and the effect on neighbouring amenity.
- 1.2. The proposal is recommended for approval subject to the conditions as outlined above.

## 2. Introduction and site description

- 2.1. The proposed upgrade to the external play equipment at Whitley Park Primary & Nursery School will provide a purpose-built facility suitably for SEND.
- 2.2. The school was built circa 1950's with the nursery school added from 2011. The school is built around a U shape, consists of a single storey building spread over a large area. The school sits on a large plot, large areas of open green space surround the school and the playground areas.

- 2.3. The new SEND play equipment is to be located within the quad area, an area of land situated on the inside of the U-shaped buildings, as highlighted in red on the submitted Location Plan.
- 2.4. The application is required to be determined by Planning Applications Committee as Reading Borough Council is the applicant.

Site visit photographs 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024



Existing play area - looking south



Existing play area - looking north-easterly

### **3. The Proposal**

- 3.1. Full planning permission is sought to upgrade the existing playground equipment within the quad area, suitable for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The existing equipment will be removed, and new SEND appropriate equipment will be installed.
- 3.2. The play equipment will include the following: Adventure Trail, Sunken Trampoline, Climbing Wall, Rock 'n' Bowl Roundabout and Zig Zag Twister.
- 3.3. The play area will cover an area of approximately 14m by 9m.
- 3.4. The Adventure Trail will stand at a height of 2.7m and the Climbing Wall will stand at 2.5m tall maximum height.
- 3.5. The ground finish will be constructed from rubber safety surfacing, coloured blue.
- 3.6. The proposal also incorporates a minimum 128Nr drilled drainage holes filled with shingle.
- 3.7. Plans received:
  - Drawing No: PP-13801538v1-Location Plan, dated Feb 25
  - Drawing no: 2063/2024/P-01-Location Plan, dated Feb 25
  - Drawing no: 2063/2024/P-02-Block Plan, dated Feb 25
  - Drawing no: 2063/2024/P-03-Ground Plan, dated Feb 25
  - Drawing no: 2063/2024/P-04-Elevations, dated Feb 25
  - Drawing no: 2063/2024/P-05-Existing View, dated Feb 25
  - Drawing no: 2063/2024/P-06-3D\_View, dated Feb 25Received by the Local Planning Authority on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025
- 3.8. Other documents received:
  - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Form
  - Design & Access Statement, dated Feb 25

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025

#### **4. Relevant Planning History**

Pre-Application Advice - June 2024.

#### **5. Consultations**

- 5.1 The planning notice was attached to nearby street furniture on 13<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 and left in place for a minimum of 21 days for the duration of the public consultation period.

No letters of representation have been received.

#### **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:

##### **National Planning Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework (amended February 2025)

National Planning Practice Guidance

##### **Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)**

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)

##### **Local Plan Update**

- 6.4 The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft updated version of the Local Plan was published on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
- 6.5 Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become "out of date" when they are five years old. Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application and listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft

updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

## **7. Appraisal**

7.1. The main considerations relevant to the determination of this application are:

- i. Character and appearance
- ii. Amenity for nearby occupiers

### **i) Character and appearance**

7.2. Officers consider the proposal to upgrade the existing playground to make it suitable for children with Special Educational Needs and associated safe surfacing will fit in with the use and character of the existing space within the Quad. By virtue of the location within the Quad screened behind existing classrooms and school buildings would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the existing Quad area or the school and wider area as a whole.

7.3. The proposal is considered compliant with policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

### **ii) Residential Amenity**

7.4. Policy CC8 states that a development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties. The following points have been considered as part of this application:

7.5. The proposed upgraded SEND equipment located within the quad area of Whitley Park Primary & Nursery School will cover a small proportion of the existing open space within the Quad. The maximum height of the tallest items of play equipment will be 2.7m from the existing ground level.

7.6. By virtue of the proposed location within the Quad area (screened from view) and away from residential properties, the proposed upgrade to the SEND equipment is not considered overbearing or harmful to residential amenity.

### **iii) Biodiversity & the Green Network**

7.7. Policy EN12 states the key elements of the green network will be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced. On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. The proposals are subject to Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain provisions.

7.8. No trees or planting are to be removed as part of the proposal. The proposal covers an area less than 25 square metres, officers confirm no loss of biodiversity and do not consider an increase of biodiversity is required for this proposal due to its small scale.

## **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 application.

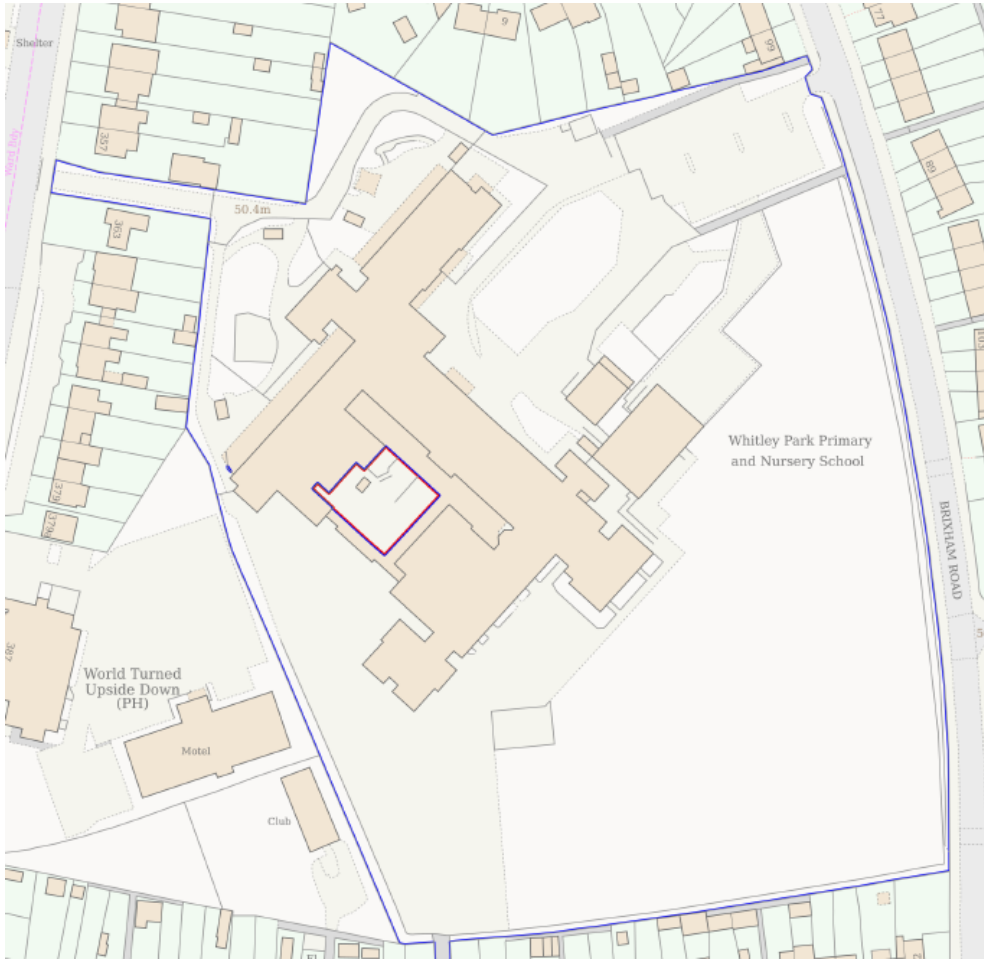
## **9. Conclusion & Planning Balance**

9.1 As with all applications for planning permission 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.

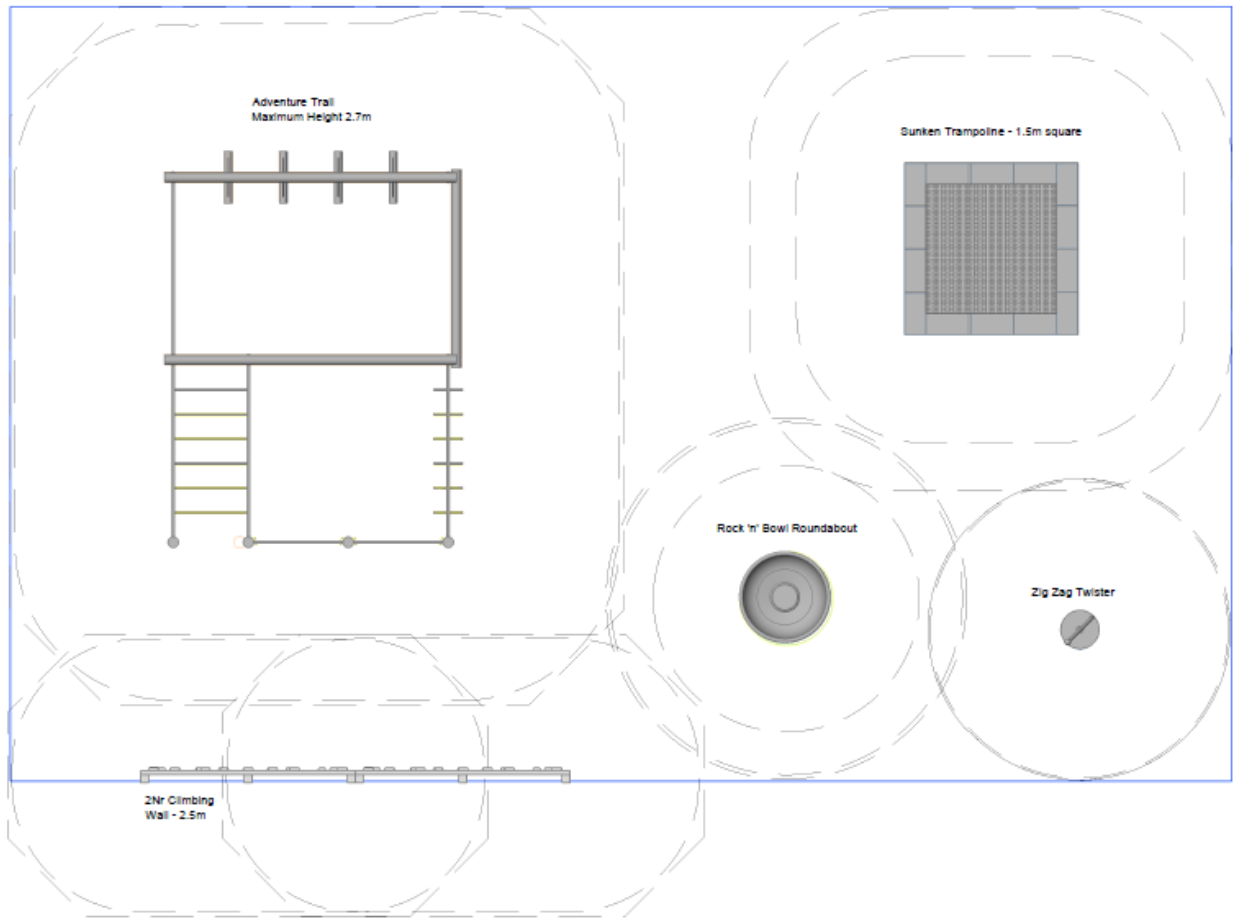
9.2 The proposal to upgrade the existing playground equipment, suitable for children with Special Educational Needs and associated safe surfacing is a public benefit in educational and social terms and is not considered detrimental to the character and appearance of the existing School or the wider area.

## **Plans**

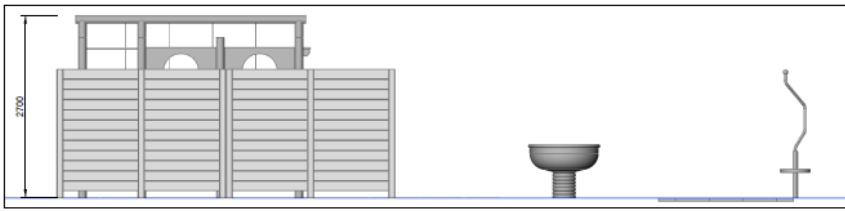
# Location Plan



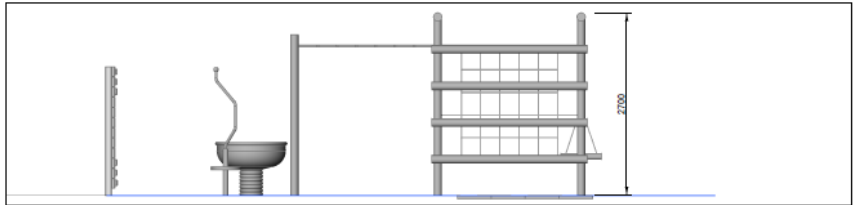
## Ground Plan (Proposed)



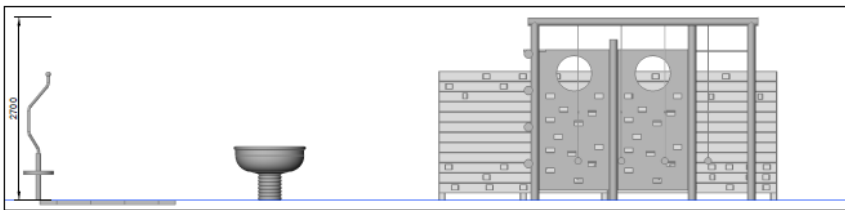
# Elevations (Proposed)



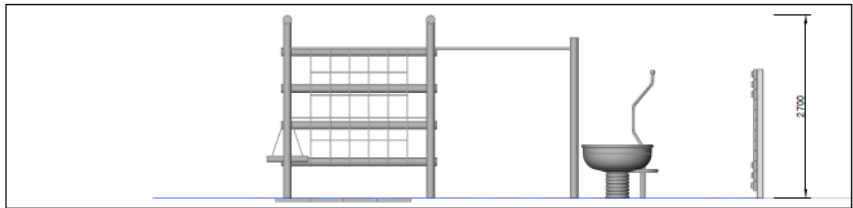
Front Elevation - South



Right Side Elevation - East



Rear Elevation - North



Left Side Elevation - West

Existing View



3D View (Proposed)

