

**ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

MAIDENHEAD DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PANEL

3 August 2016

Item: 5

Application No.:	16/02047/FULL
Location:	Knowl Hill CE Primary School Bath Road Knowl Hill Reading RG10 9UX
Proposal:	Construction of detached modular classroom building
Applicant:	Isabel Cooke
Agent:	Adrian Rose
Parish/Ward:	Hurley Parish
If you have a question about this report, please contact: Susan Sharman on 01628 685320 or at susan.sharman@rbwm.gov.uk	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Knowl Hill Primary School is a small school with only 100 pupils, however, due to limited classroom space, different age groups are being taught together at the same time. In addition, due to the need for more places, the school is increasing its intake of pupils (to 124 in September 2016). Although planning permission for a single storey extension to provide an additional classroom was granted earlier this year, construction of this has been delayed and hence the application for a modular building.
- 1.2 The application site is located in the Green Belt and the building is not a type considered to be appropriate in the Green Belt. However, given the temporary nature of the building, only limited weight is attributed to the harm to the Green Belt. On the other side of the planning balance and in line with Government advice, great weight is given to the need to expand the school, which clearly outweighs the harm to the Green Belt, and as such very special circumstances exist in this case to justify approving the application.
- 1.3 The proposal will not harm the character and appearance of the area, nor give rise to the need for additional on-site parking.

It is recommended the Panel grants planning permission with the conditions listed in Section 10 of this report.
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2. REASON FOR PANEL DETERMINATION

- The Council's Constitution does not give the Borough Planning Manager delegated powers to determine the application in the way recommended; such decisions can only be made by the Panel.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 Knowl Hill primary School is located on the south east side of Bath Road, occupying a small site adjacent to St. Peters Church. The main Victorian school building is predominantly single storey and sits back from the road within the south-west corner. There is a small car park accessed immediately off Bath Road and an enclosed playground area. A playing field lies to the north-east. The site is enclosed by 2m high fencing and mature hedgerows.
- 3.2 The site is located in the Green Belt, with open fields to the north, east and south. There sporadic residential and commercial development predominantly to the west of the site.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL AND ANY RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Ref.	Description	Decision and Date
15/03782/FULL	Construction of a single storey rear extension following demolition of existing side building and wc block.	Approved. 04.02.16.
07/01148/FULL	Construction of two timber structures (play centre and outdoor classroom).	Approved 28.06.07.

4.1 The application seeks planning permission for a single storey modular building to provide 2 classrooms. The building would be positioned to the north east of the main school building and would measure 16.4m wide, by 8m deep and 3.5m high.

4.2 Knowl Hill Primary School is a small school with 100 pupils, however, due to limited classroom space, different age groups are being taught together at the same time. In addition, due to the need for more places, the school is increasing its intake of pupils (to 124 in September 2016). The longer term plan is that the school will eventually become a one-form entry school, but before this can happen the existing and immediate issue of providing more space needs to be addressed. Planning permission for a single storey extension to provide additional classroom space was granted earlier this year, however, construction of this has been delayed because funding is not available and hence the application for a modular building.

5. MAIN RELEVANT STRATEGIES AND POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework Sections 7, 8 and 9.

Royal Borough Local Plan

5.2 The main strategic planning considerations applying to the site and the associated policies are:

Green Belt	Highways and Parking
GB1, GB2	P4, T5

Supplementary planning documents

5.3 Supplementary planning documents adopted by the Council relevant to the proposal are:

- Planning for an Ageing Population

More information on these documents can be found at:

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200414/local_development_framework/494/supplementary_planning

Other Local Strategies or Publications

5.4 Other Strategies or publications relevant to the proposal are:

- RBWM Parking Strategy - view at:

More information on these documents can be found at:

https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200414/local_development_framework/494/supplementary_planning

6. EXPLANATION OF RECOMMENDATION

6.1 The key issues for consideration are:

- i Whether the proposal is appropriate development in the Green Belt,
- ii The impact on the character and appearance of the area;

- iii Parking provision;
- iv The planning balance.

Whether the proposal is appropriate in the Green Belt

- 6.2 The application site is located in the Green Belt, wherein new buildings are inappropriate unless they fall within the list of exceptions set out in paragraph 89 of the NPPF. In this case, the proposed building is not a type included in the list of exceptions and therefore, it is inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In addition, the proposed building would result in some loss of openness of the Green Belt.
- 6.3 The NPPF advises that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be allowed except in very special circumstances. Substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt and very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 6.4 Consideration of whether very special circumstances exist to justify approving the proposal is set out under the 'Planning Balance' section of this report.

The impact on the character and appearance of the area

- 6.5 The proposed building will be positioned at the back of the site at least 60m from the Bath Road. Given its siting alongside the existing group of buildings and height (3.5m), together with the substantial boundary screening, it is not considered that the building will harm the character and appearance of the area.

Parking provision

- 6.6 At the time of writing the Highway Authority's comments on the application are awaited. However, while the number of staff will increase by 4 to 15, the existing on site car park has 16 spaces and therefore it is not anticipated that there will be a highway objection on lack of parking.
- 6.7 The Highway Authority's consultation response will be reported in the Panel update.

Planning balance and the case for very special circumstances

- 6.8 In terms of the planning balance, substantial weight is given to the harm caused by reason of the building's inappropriateness. However, it is considered that there is only limited harm to the openness of Green Belt. It is also material to the consideration that this overall harm is limited by the fact that the modular building would only be temporary for 3 years or until the approved extension is built and occupied should that occur within the 3 year temporary period (see condition 1). In addition, the proposal would not harm any of the five purposes of the Green Belt, and as explained further in this report, no other harm will be caused.
- 6.9 In favour of the proposal, the NPPF advises that the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local authorities are expected to take a positive approach to meeting this need and should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools.
- 6.10 In weighing up, given the temporary nature of the building only limited weight is given to the harm to the Green Belt while, in line with Government advice, great weight is given to the need to expand the school. In this case, therefore, there are other considerations that clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and as such very special circumstances exist to justify approving the application.

7. ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

7.1 This type of development is not liable for any financial contributions.

8. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

Comments from interested parties

2 occupiers were notified directly of the application.

The planning officer posted a statutory notice advertising the application at the site on 14th July 2016.

No letters of representation have been received.

Statutory Consultees

Consultee	Comment	Where in the report this is considered
Hurley Parish Council	Consultation response to follow.	To be reported in Panel update.
Highway Authority	Consultation response to follow.	To be reported in Panel update.

8.1 Sports England has not been consulted in this case as the land on which the building is to be sited is not a playing field as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order, 2015.

9. APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

- Appendix A - Site plan
- Appendix B - Front and rear elevations
- Appendix C - Side elevations

Documents associated with the application can be viewed at <http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/pam/search.jsp> by entering the application number shown at the top of this report without the suffix letters.

This recommendation is made following careful consideration of all the issues raised through the application process. The Case Officer has sought solutions to issues where relevant and possible to secure a development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area, in accordance with NPPF.

In this case the issues have been successfully resolved.

10. CONDITIONS IF PERMISSION IS GRANTED

1. The temporary building hereby permitted shall be removed from the land by 3rd August 2019 or before the aforementioned date should first occupation of the extension approved under 15/03782/FULL take place. On removal of the temporary building all works necessary for the reinstatement of the land to its former state within the following three months.
Reason: In the interests of the openness of the Green Belt and highway safety and convenience. Relevant Policies - Local Plan GB1, GB2
2. The materials to be used on the external surfaces of the development shall be in accordance with those specified in the application unless any different materials are first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved

details.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area. Relevant Policies - Local Plan DG1.

3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed below.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved particulars and plans.