

Planning Statement (Including Heritage)

Proposal: Expansion of the existing school including the construction of 3 linked single-storey buildings, a sports hall, playground, parking, landscaping, drainage, and associated development, following demolition of redundant buildings.

Site: Ingfield Manor School (Woodview Provision), Ingfield Manor Drive, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9AX

Report date: April 2026

Prepared for:
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1 Introduction

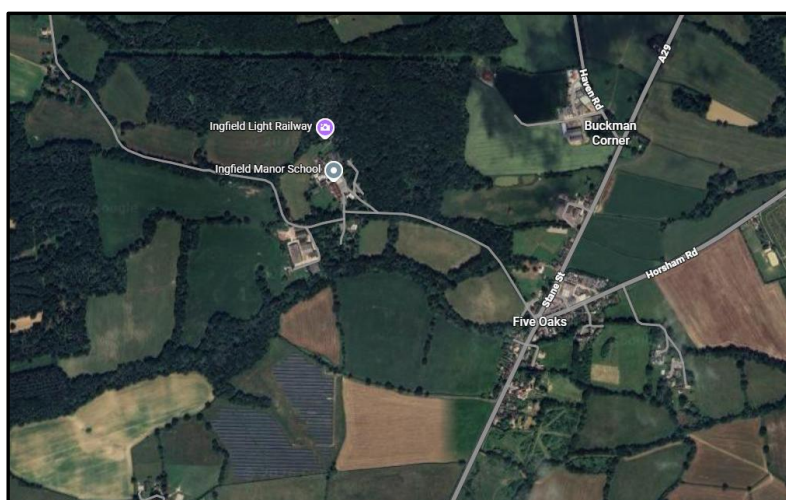
- 1.1. Ingfield Manor School, forming part of Salutem Care & Education, provides support and education for pupils with various learning difficulties and disabilities. This includes cerebral palsy, as well as vision impairment, hearing impairment and more complex medical needs. This site has been successfully operating as a SEND school for a significant period of time and the proposal seeks to replace redundant buildings on the site with new facilities, enabling the school to continue to support pupils into the future.
- 1.2. The school is located near Five Oaks, with access off the roundabout from Stane Street (A29), just north of Billingshurst, West Sussex. The wider school site includes the main school buildings (north of the site), woodland and car parking, along with outdoor space. To the southwest are existing agricultural buildings, which are outside of the school's ownership.
- 1.3. The proposal is for:

Expansion of the existing school including the construction of 3 linked single-storey buildings, a sports hall, playground, parking, landscaping, drainage, and associated development, following demolition of redundant buildings.

- 1.4. The site currently includes redundant school buildings, former accommodation associated with the school that is in a poor state of repair, and it benefited from a planning permission in 2019, which has now lapsed. The proposal seeks to replace the redundant buildings, which are a health and safety risk, with new specialist facilities to support Woodview School.

2 Site and Surroundings

- 2.1. The established school site is located to the north of Billingshurst with access from the roundabout at Five Oaks on Stane Street (A29). The access lane from the roundabout leads to the school site, with parking on the right-hand side, and the derelict buildings on the left. Continuing along the access lane leads to Slinfold Lane Farm to the west. The site is located within the countryside, with woodland to the north, and the wider area being a mixture of open farmland and woodland.

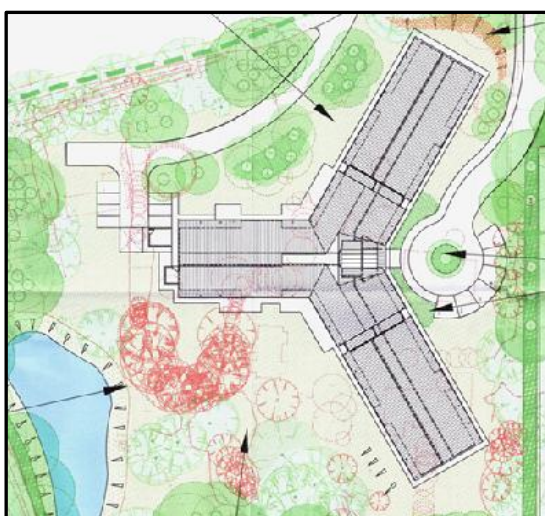


- 2.2. There is a network of footpaths and bridleways in the vicinity of the site. The access road is also partly a bridleway and there are footpaths to the south of the site.
- 2.3. The site is located to the south of the access road and includes numerous buildings in a poor state of repair, as shown on the enclosed drawings and accompanying photographs. The site is not currently used by the school, being unsafe for pupils, and the former residential gardens have become overgrown. To the south there are numerous trees, as shown on the enclosed arboricultural information, which are being retained.
- 2.4. The existing buildings on site comprise 7 two storey houses, garages and a larger three-storey hostel building, with associated hardstanding and parking areas. The buildings are vacant and in poor condition. Due to safety reasons, it has not been possible to gain access to the existing properties and bedroom numbers and sizes are estimated.
- 2.5. The site has a slight slope running from the north-east down to the south-west, with the woodland to the south not forming part of this application and being retained.



3 Planning History

- 3.1. The planning history is set out in the table below, including the wider school site.
- 3.2. Of particular note is the previous application for a new school building in this location that was approved in September 2019, reference number: DC-19-0117. The approval was for the “*erection of a 16-bed residential care facility ancillary to Ingfield Manor School (C2 residential institution Planning Use Class) with associated landscape and car parking*”. An extract showing the layout is below:



- 3.3. This previous approval included the erection of a new residential care facility, with a gross internal floor area of 1,520 m², comprising a single storey building with pitched roof and a ridge height of approximately 6.5 metres. The previously approved building was in the same broad location as the existing structures and is the area of this application.
- 3.4. Whilst the permission was not implemented, and has now lapsed, it is considered this demonstrates the principle of redevelopment on this part of the site, particularly noting the poor condition of the existing buildings on site.

App Reference	Site Address	Proposal	Decision
S106/25/0021	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Discharge of Planning obligations to approved application HRA/24/0006.	Pending
DC/24/1682	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Siting of two new school buildings, containing three classrooms, for educational use (Lawful Development Certificate - Proposed).	Permitted 5 March 2025
HRA/24/0006	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Application under Regulation 77 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 relating to the erection of three temporary classrooms.	Permitted 9 Sept 2025
DC/23/2280	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks West Sussex RH14 9AX	Erection of a prefabricated, single-storey building to provide 2No. classrooms (Class F1), with associated works.	Approved 28 Feb 2025
DC/23/1302	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks West Sussex RH14 9AX	Replacement of window to classroom to provide new Fire Exit to East Elevation and/classroom.	Approved 18 Sept 2023

App Reference	Site Address	Proposal	Decision
DC/19/0117	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Erection of a 16 bedroom residential care facility ancillary to Ingfield Manor School (C2 Residential Institution Planning Use Class) with associated landscaping and car parking.	Approved 5 Sept 2019
DC/18/2565	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Prior Notification for demolition of a number of redundant and derelict buildings at Ingfield Manor School.	Deemed consent 14 Jan 2019
DC/18/0080	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Removal of condition 3 to previously approved application BL/9/60 (Proposed erection of new boarding school for 50 children, 9 staff houses, 2 cottages and a block of garages).	Approved 8 March 2018
DC/18/0087	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Removal of condition 2 to previously approved application BL/42/76 (workshop).	Approved 8 March 2018
DC/18/0085	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Removal of condition 2 to previously approved application BL/146/72 (Erect workshop building and pedestrian access).	Approved 8 March 2018
DC/18/0084	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Removal of condition 1 to previously approved application BL/102/60 (4 det. houses, 2 det hostels, pair of semi-det cottages for staff, garage block, headmasters garage and attendant garden and site works).	Approved 8 March 2018
DC/18/0083	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Removal of condition 1 to previously approved application BL/103/60 (Proposed extension and alterations to form new boarding school).	Approved 8 March 2018
DC/18/0082	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Removal of condition 2 to previously approved application BL/80/60 (Proposed building of new boarding school for 50 children and 6 staff houses, 2 cottages, 1 hostel and block of garages).	Approved 8 March 2018
DC/18/0080	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Removal of condition 3 to previously approved application BL/9/60 (Proposed erection of new boarding school for 50 children, 9 staff houses, 2 cottages and a block of garages).	Approved 8 March 2018
DC/10/0984	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Stane Street Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Proposed 16 plus unit providing secondary teaching accommodation for up to 15 students.	Approved 14 July 2010
DC/08/2535	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Stane Street Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Proposed PSAS classroom extension.	Approved 13 Feb 2009
DC/07/2610	Ingfield Manor School Ingfield Manor Drive Stane Street Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Proposed covered walkway leading to fire escape staircase.	Approved 29 Feb 2008
BL/101/03	Spastics Society Ingfield Manor School Stane Street Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Demolish existing storage shed and erect wood structure to house administrative staff. Site: Ingfield Manor School Stane Street Five Oaks.	Approved 2 Sept 2003
BL/36/96	Spastics Society Ingfield Manor School Stane Street Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Erection of toilet block for disabled children. Site: Ingfield Manor School Stane Street Five Oaks.	Approved 12 June 1996

App Reference	Site Address	Proposal	Decision
BL/7/95	Spastics Society Ingfield Manor School Stane Street Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Classroom extension. Site: Ingfield Manor School Stane Street Five Oaks.	Approved 23 Feb 1995
BL/70/93	Spastics Society Ingfield Manor School Stane Street Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Extension to form toilet. Site: Ingfield Manor School Five Oaks.	Approved 18 Aug 1993
BL/118/90	Spastics Society Ingfield Manor School Stane Street Five Oaks Billingshurst West Sussex RH14 9AX	Training wing extension. Site: Ingfield Manor School Five Oaks Billingshurst.	Approved 10 Dec 1990

- 3.5. In addition to the above, the original permissions for the site dates from the 1960's. This includes the outline planning permission granting permission for the school in March 1960 (BL/9/60). The permission was for the: *"Proposed Erection of a new boarding school for 50 spastic children, nine staff houses and a block of garages."* A reserved matters application was granted in October 1960 (BL/80/60) for the: *"Proposed building of new boarding school for 50 spastic children on plot 161 and building of six staff houses two cottages, one hostel and block of garages on plot 159."*
- 3.6. A further planning permission was granted in December 1960 (BL/109/60) to form a new boarding school and also December 1960 (BL/102/60) for the *"Proposed erection of four detached staff houses, two detached staff hostels, pair of semi-detached staff cottages, garage block, headmasters garage, with attendant garage and site works."* These permissions all relate to the construction of the original school together with the associated buildings located around Woodland Close.
- 3.7. These buildings (considered staff accommodation, including associated garages) are now proposed to be demolished as part of this proposal.

4 Proposal

- 4.1. This application is for:

Expansion of the existing school including the construction of 3 linked single-storey buildings, a sports hall, playground, parking, landscaping, drainage, and associated development, following demolition of redundant buildings.



- 4.2. The proposal includes the demolition and clearance of the existing structures on site, which are in poor condition and unsafe. This represents a significant improvement to the existing environment and visual appearance of the site, given the overgrown nature and poor condition of the buildings, as shown in the existing photographs.
- 4.3. The proposal represents an extension to the existing school site, with the erection of school buildings in an 'L' shape, enabling an area for enclosed hard play and facilitating a phased construction approach. The sports hall is a separate structure, located where the existing larger, three-storey hostel building is currently situated.
- 4.4. The access will come from the existing driveway, utilising the existing access to the site and creating a circular route for cars and vehicles accessing the parking area and drop off. The proposal includes 46 car parking spaces for staff and visitors along with a secure cycle shelter for eight spaces.
- 4.5. The proposal seeks to concentrate the main new built form and hardstanding on the area already developed, protecting the existing trees where possible, including along the access drive and avoiding the woodland area to the south (adjacent to the site). Full details and Arboricultural Reports are enclosed as part of the application.
- 4.6. The new buildings are shown on the enclosed Design & Access Statement and drawings, with the proposal set out as four phases. The proposal to develop in phases has evolved to enable the construction to continue, whilst the school can occupy Phase 1 due to pupil demand and responsibilities. Phases 2 and 3 link to Phase 1, creating the 'L' shaped education area and comprise classrooms, staff areas, and specialist rooms (such as sensory). Phases 2 and 3 add additional classroom and science facilities, along with dining space and kitchen, medical and therapy rooms, library and staff space.
- 4.7. The buildings have been designed to link and provide a seamless new facility for the school. The 'L' shape creates a semi-courtyard area and encloses the main outside play, as shown on the site layout, creating a safe environment for the pupils that attend the SEND school.



- 4.8. The final fourth phase is for the separate sports hall and changing facilities building, providing a larger space for the pupils for sport and recreation, along with therapy, and acting as a larger meeting room as required. In addition, it is proposed that this will be available for community hire, as shown in the Community Use Agreement, outside of school hours.
- 4.9. Once fully operational, it is anticipated there could be around 60 students and around 35 staff in total, however, many of these will transfer from the existing school buildings and, therefore, this does not necessarily mean a net increase on site. Projections indicate the proposals will lead to an increase of approximately 15 pupils and 8 staff members.
- 4.10. The buildings provide the following floor areas:

	Gross Internal m ²	Gross External m ²
Phase 1	643	665
Phase 2	361	377
Phase 3	318	335
Phase 4	435	469

- 4.11. All the buildings are proposed to be single-storey, providing accessible access for all, and responding to the nature of the site, with the sports hall having a higher space to facilitate activities.
- 4.12. In terms of appearance, the building is a modular pre-fabricated building system and the single storey provides benefits of minimal height and sits comfortably within the wider setting. There are canopies over the entrance to the building, and the buildings are silver-grey clad with

coloured areas at the entrances, as shown in the Design & Access Statement. The sports hall building uses the same cladding with a different combination, comprising ceramic oak, rhinestone oak and marble oak in a vertical pattern to add visual interest.



5 Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024)

- 5.1. The NPPF identifies that achieving sustainable development is the purpose of the planning system and that includes the provision of homes, commercial development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner (paragraph 7).
- 5.2. There are three overarching objectives to this, an economic objective, a social objective, and an environmental objective. This proposal is considered to contribute to all three elements of sustainable development.
- 5.3. The principal objective of the proposal is to provide new educational facilities, which, alongside short-term construction benefits, will generate long-term economic advantages through the education and training it delivers. For the social objective, which is supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, it is an accessible school that provides support for a range of pupils, reflecting the current and future needs of the community. The proposal provides an environmental benefit, through the removal of redundant and poor-quality buildings, thereby greatly enhancing the safety and visual aspect of the site. In addition, the proposal is accompanied by a comprehensive landscaping scheme.
- 5.4. Paragraph 40 of the NPPF identifies the importance of early engagement and this proposal was subject to pre-application advice. This included a site visit and meeting, discussing various elements of the scheme and helping to shape the proposals throughout the design process. Furthermore, the proposal included consultation with stakeholders and the local community, as set out in the accompanying Statement of Community Involvement.
- 5.5. Chapter 8 of the NPPF relates to promoting healthy and safe communities and identifies that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. This proposal will provide significant benefits to the school and pupils, providing them with a safe and inclusive environment for their education. In addition, the current site is unsafe given the

condition of the existing buildings and therefore this proposal will further enhance the safety of the wider school site through removal of the existing buildings.

- 5.6. The proposal also includes a community use agreement for the sports hall, as set out separately below, and paragraph 98 of the NPPF identifies that there should be support for social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that the community needs. Along with providing specialist education facilities, the community use agreement also means the wider community will benefit from the new facilities.
- 5.7. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) gives great weight to school proposals through paragraph 100:

It is important that a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and a development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- a) Give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications and*
- b) Work with early years, school and post-16 promoters, delivering partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.*

- 5.8. Chapter 9 of the NPPF promotes sustainable transport and the proposal is supported by a Travel Plan and accompanying highway documents. The proposal is modest and utilises the existing school site, already benefitting from access via the roundabout at Five Oaks, and the amount of additional traffic is minimal and there will not be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or cumulative impact, on the road network as set out in paragraph 116.
- 5.9. Chapter 11 of the NPPF relates to making effective use of the land and that decisions should promote effective use of land and make as much use as possible of previously developed or brownfield land (paragraph 124). This proposal utilises previously developed land, which previously also benefitted from planning permission, and makes best use of this area, delivering an improvement to the built environment.
- 5.10. Chapter 12 relates to achieving well designed places, including the recognition of trees (paragraph 136), and the details of the design and layout are set out in the enclosed Design and Access Statement. The application recognises the wider setting, and adjacent woodland, and is accompanied by a comprehensive landscaping scheme resulting in a carefully designed layout that is suitable for the pupils and staff of the school.
- 5.11. Chapter 15 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and, paragraph 187, identifies that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, the site's biodiversity and, point B, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. This chapter of the NPPF also includes details around biodiversity and the application is accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment. In addition, the application includes a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment, considering the impact on the wider setting within the landscape. Comparing

the height and massing of the proposed new buildings with the existing buildings, including site layout, it is considered the proposal represents a positive influence on the wider landscape.

6 Local Plan

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

- 6.1. The proposals map does not identify any specific designations related to this part of the site, with the whole school outside of a built-up area boundary/settlement. The area to the north of Ingfield Manor Drive is designated as Ancient Woodland. The whole area is within a Bat Sustenance Zone.



- 6.2. The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), November 2015, sets out the planning strategy for the years up to 2031 to deliver the social, economic, and environmental needs of the plan area.
- 6.3. Policy 1, Sustainable Development, identifies that the Council take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. Policy 2, Strategic Development, identifies that the spatial strategy is to focus development in and around the key settlements. The policy also states, under point 8, that the spatial strategy to 2031 is to *“Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided it is not of a high environmental value”*.
- 6.4. Policy 26 relates to countryside protection and identifies that, outside of built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. The proposal must be essential to its countryside location and meet at least one of the criteria listed within the policy. In addition the policy identifies that proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location and that development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead to a significant increase in the overall level of activity and protects or conserves or enhances the characteristics, including development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, along with the patterns of woodlands, fields and hedgerows and other features.

- 6.5. The site is located outside of an identified settlement boundary, which are identified in Policy 3, Development Hierarchy. Therefore, whilst the site is situated in the countryside, it is an existing educational facility, with significant history and established links to the local community. Policy 26, relating to countryside protection, identifies that the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development and contains a list of sustainable development. Broadly, it is considered this proposal represents sustainable development against the three areas of sustainability identified within the NPPF. The existing school has a long-established history, and this proposed expansion is essential for its future growth and to enable it to deliver the level of care and education required. The proposal is of an appropriate scale to its location and it removes the low-quality buildings that are detrimental to the site and wider setting. The new buildings, as set out within the Design and Access Statement, are single storey, with the taller sports hall due to practical requirements, and represents an improvement to the site. The proposal, being located where there are existing buildings and also where previous permission was granted, continues the established nature of this area as suitable for education provision.
- 6.6. In addition, Policy 42, Inclusive Communities, states that:
- Positive measures which help create a socially inclusive and adaptable environment for a range of occupiers and users to meet their long term needs will be encouraged and supported. Particular account will be taken of the need to address the requirements stemming from:*
- 2) people with additional needs, including the disabled or those with learning disabilities.*
- 4) the coordination of services to fulfil the needs of young people.*
- 6.7. The whole proposal seeks to deliver much needed specialist education provision for young people. There is a clearly identified demand, including through the Neighbourhood Plan and as set out in the accompanying Justification Statement, that shows the need and benefits that this service and provision will deliver. The proposal is essential to continue to offer support for this specific need and addresses the points contained within, and is compliant with, Policy 42 where such proposals are encouraged and supported.
- 6.8. Policy 43 relates to Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation and, whilst this is primarily an education proposal, it does represent improved facilities for the local community. Furthermore, the sports hall is proposed to be available through a Community Use Agreement, thereby further benefitting the local community and delivering additional opportunities for leisure and recreation. Point 2 of Policy 43 states that “*Sites located outside built up areas will be supported where this is the only practical option and where a suitable site*”. The site is an existing school site and, therefore, is the only available, achievable, and suitable option for the expansion of the existing school.
- 6.9. Policy 10, Rural Economic Development, identifies that rural economic development enterprise will be encouraged to generate local employment opportunities and economic, social and environmental benefits for local communities. The policy acknowledges the countryside’s varied and productive social and economic activity which will be supported in principle. Whilst this proposal is not strictly economic development, the policy does acknowledge the social and environmental benefits for local communities through rural economic development. In terms of the countryside location, the policy identifies this can result in substantial environmental improvement and reduce the impact on the countryside, including reference to replacement

buildings. Whilst it is recognised preference is for the conversion or reuse of existing buildings, the current buildings are not in a suitable condition to be brought back into use and their demolition is proposed. In addition to their poor condition, whilst linked to the school, they were designed as residential accommodation and are not suitable for reuse due to layout and size. The second point of the policy relates to car parking requirements and there is sufficient space on site to ensure sufficient car parking is provided for staff, pupils and visitors. There is a long driveway leading to the school, so there will be negligible impact on the highway network.

- 6.10. Policy 24 relates to Environmental Protection and refers to addressing land contamination by promoting the appropriate reuse of sites. The existing buildings represent a health and safety risk, including potential contamination and asbestos, and their demolition and clearance is a significant benefit and improvement to the environment.
- 6.11. The policy also refers to other forms of pollution, and the application is accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment. The assessment confirms the site does not fall within any declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA). The report includes mitigation measures and the residual effects of construction dust and emissions from construction plant/vehicles upon the local area and sensitive receptors will be temporary and are not significant. The proposed development is not considered to conflict with national, regional, and local planning guidance, and air quality factors are not a constraint to planning consent.
- 6.12. It is considered that this proposal represents an improvement to the environment within the site, particularly through the removal of existing poor condition buildings that represent a significant health and safety risk.
- 6.13. Policy 25, Natural Environment and Landscape Character, identifies the importance of landscape character within the District, along with development patterns and habitats which will be protected against inappropriate development. The policy will support development that protects, conserves and enhance the landscape and townscape character. The application is accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) that concludes that the proposal represents an improvement over the existing situation. The existing buildings, notwithstanding their poor condition, are also taller than the proposed new classrooms. The higher new building, the sports hall, is located where the existing larger block is and will be a more discreet building in this location, including due to the proposed cladding options. The LVIA considers the impact from various viewpoints, including public rights of way, and concludes that:

There would be a notable improvement to the landscape character and views from the proposed redevelopment of the very run down existing built form. The redevelopment would be sympathetic to the existing landscape features and areas within and about the site.

Existing site (LVIA):



- 6.14. The design and materials proposed through the new building also reflect and enhance the setting of these buildings, including the new planting and landscaping. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy 25 and does protect and enhance the landscape both in the wider setting, from public vantage points, and within the site itself.
- 6.15. Policy 31 relates to Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity, including that proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should create and manage new habitats. The policy also identifies replacement planting for trees, and it is recognised the site falls within a Bat Sustenance Zone. The application is accompanied by comprehensive ecology reports and surveys for wildlife and appropriate mitigation measures.
- 6.16. Since the adoption of the HDPF, the statutory requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has been introduced at 10%. The application is accompanied by a BNG assessment, setting out the baseline for the site and the anticipated levels post development, including the proposed landscaping scheme.
- 6.17. The BNG assessment concludes that the proposal will result in an increase of biodiversity of 20%. However, the BNG metric also requires trading rules to be satisfied, and, due to the nature of the site, this has not been achieved. As set out in the accompanying BNG report, the proposal is to provide sufficient off-site credits to ensure the proposal complies with relevant guidance and legislation around Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 6.18. The proposal is accompanied by a detailed landscaping scheme, setting out the planting and ensuring that the proposal sits comfortably within the wider setting and backdrop to the woodland to the south. The trees on site are retained, as far as practicable, and the proposal includes significant replanting and enhancement where achievable.
- 6.19. Given the overgrown nature of the site, including the former residential gardens, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy 31 through a significant and detailed planting scheme to increase and enhance habitat and biodiversity. However, it is not possible to achieve the trading rules on site and, therefore, a suitable off-site contribution is proposed, which can be secured via planning condition.
- 6.20. Policy 32 relates to the Quality of New Development, supporting high quality and inclusive design for development. This should be an attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environment that recognises the locally distinctive characteristics and provides a sense of place. Policy 33 sets out Development Principles, and under Point 1, identifies that developments will be required to make efficient use of land and prioritise the use of previously developed land and buildings, whilst respecting any constraints that exist. The policy also identifies that development should avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers and users of nearby properties and land, ensure that scale, massing and appearance is of a high standard along with layout that relates sympathetically to the built surroundings, landscaping and open space. High standards of building materials and finishes, along with landscaping should be included within development and the retention of existing important landscape and natural features, such as trees, should be retained. The layout of any development should be orientated to gain benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy, noting the surrounding landscape and topography and that proposals should incorporate appropriate parking for vehicles and cycles, along with the storage of bins and cycling facilities.
- 6.21. Details of the design, including the evolution of the scheme is set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement. The proposal results in an improvement to the existing site, through the

removal of the existing buildings, and provides a carefully designed scheme that takes into account the unique requirements of the school. The buildings are arranged so that they can be delivered in phases and have suitable outdoor space for pupils. Car parking, utilising the existing driveway, has been proposed and set back slightly into the site maintaining the existing trees and the boundary treatment on the northern boundary, adjacent to the road. The area to the south of the site, where there is existing woodland, has been preserved and existing mature trees have been retained where possible aligned with the removal of the redundant buildings.

- 6.22. The Design and Access Statement sets out the size and scale of the buildings, which are single storey, both ensuring they provide suitable, accessible, and adequate accommodation for pupils and staff, whilst also minimising impact in the wider landscape. Following comments from the pre-application engagement, the proposed materials have evolved and the entrance to the different classrooms have introduced elements of colour and different cladding, specifically on the sports hall as the larger building within the scheme. It is considered this will sit comfortably within the wider landscape and setting, whilst meeting the detailed needs of the school through safety and accessibility for students.
- 6.23. Policy 34 relates to Cultural and Heritage Assets, stating the Council will sustain and enhance the historic environment. Chapter 16 of the NPPF also covers *"conserving and enhancing the historic environment"* and paragraph 207 states: *"The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' important and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance."*
- 6.24. The site is not located within a Conservation Area and there are no adjacent listed buildings. The nearest listed buildings being located along the A29, with the Smithy House (Grade II, list entry number: 1286398) and Cherry Tree Cottage (Grade II, list entry number: 1027113). Both are over 550m away from the proposed new school buildings, with intervening mature trees and vegetation, and are not visible from the site.
- 6.25. Whilst the proposal map does not show any Locally Listed Buildings in the vicinity, the pre-application response refers to *"Fold Farm House and its barn"* as a non-designated heritage asset. It is believed this is related to part of the cluster of farm buildings to the south-west of the site, the majority are modern barn structures. Notwithstanding this, there are significant trees in between the proposal and the farm buildings, which are perceived in combination with the modern barns. In addition, the existing buildings on site are in poor condition and have no heritage value. Their demolition, and replacement, is an enhancement to the site, as confirmed by the LVIA.
- 6.26. Therefore, there are no significant heritage assets in the vicinity, and, given the current condition of the site, it is considered there is no harm (in accordance with the NPPF).
- 6.27. Policy 35, Climate Change, identifies that proposals should seek to reduce energy use during construction and enhance energy efficiency for new developments, this can include decentralised, renewable and local carbon energy supply systems. Proposals should include provision for appropriate flood storage capacity, including green infrastructure and SUDS, and site layout design and construction techniques that provide resilience to climate change. Policy 36 relates to appropriate energy use and identifies the energy hierarchy and that an energy statement should be included to demonstrate compliance and consideration of energy efficiency.
- 6.28. A separate Energy Statement has been produced to consider compliance with HDPF Policies 36 and 37. The proposal adopts a modular building design, which is a fabric first approach with high

performance insulation, air tightness and low U-value glazing. The proposed heating and cooling for the buildings is via a high efficiency electric heat pumps and the proposal incorporates LED lighting and smart controls. In addition, the use of modular construction reduces waste by up to 90%, using responsibly sourced materials, and enables the future re-use of modules.

- 6.29. The proposal also incorporates roof mounted solar PV, with full details to be resolved at the detailed design stage.
- 6.30. The Energy Statement concludes that the proposed modular buildings fully align with policies 36 and 37 of the HDPF, delivering a highly energy efficient, low carbon, climate resilient development.
- 6.31. Policy 37, Sustainable Construction, also relates to energy efficiency and contains a number of other points around design including lighting and ventilation. The policy also seeks to encourage walking and cycling and the requirement for cycle storage and accessibility for sustainable forms of transport. The proposal should be flexible to allow future modifications on use and layout for adaptation and refurbishment along with enhancing biodiversity value.
- 6.32. The proposal incorporates cycle parking and bin storage, as shown on the enclosed drawings and seeks to deliver energy efficient new buildings, that will significantly benefit future students and staff. The application includes details of the proposed drainage, including for surface water and the surrounding woodlands and landscaping scheme ensures sufficient capacity with regards to run off and drainage. The buildings have been carefully designed taking into account the requirements of the school and offer a flexible space that can be adapted in future for the needs of the school.
- 6.33. Policy 40 relates to Sustainable Transport and contains several points relating to transport and road, rail, and cycling provision. Policy 41, Parking, identifies that adequate parking and facilities must be provided to meet the needs of anticipated users and consideration should be given to the needs of cycle parking, motorcycle parking, and EV charging.
- 6.34. The application is supported by a Transport Statement, which concludes that the proposed development accords with the applicable national and local policies. The report identifies that additional trips will be negligible, given many of the staff will in effect transfer from the existing school buildings and there will be a minimal increase in overall pupil numbers to the site. The proposal provides a total of 46 car parking spaces primarily for staff and visitors, which will also allow for some existing car parking demand from the existing school sites. The report considers that the proposal ensures sufficient car parking for both staff and visitors.
- 6.35. The proposal also incorporates cycle parking, which is on a site-specific basis. The proposal includes a secure cycle shelter for 8 spaces (4 stands) to aid and encourage the uptake of cycling by staff.
- 6.36. In addition, the existing school Travel Plan has been updated and is submitted as part of this application. The Travel Plan seeks to inform the potential for increasing public transport, lift sharing, and cleaner fuelled vehicles for staff and student trips to and from the school.
- 6.37. The conclusion in the Transport Statement states that:

The proposed development will make provision for car and cycle parking in accordance with local parking standards and the level of vehicular traffic associated with the use of the proposed development will not lead to severe

impact to the existing operation and free flow of vehicle traffic on the adjoining highway. In accordance with the NPPF, there are no transport or highway reasons why planning permission should be withheld or refused.

Neighbourhood Plan

- 6.38. The Billingshurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2021, covering the period 2019 to 2031.
- 6.39. The plan contains a number of objectives, with objective 2 stating *“Ensure that the provision of local infrastructure and facilities including medical provision and schools is adequate to address the needs of existing and future residents”*.
- 6.40. Aim 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan is working with key stakeholders to deliver improved health and education facilities, stating *“Increase capacity and improve services for education and medical facilities in the parish are needed and will be achieved through collaboration working between local and county partners”*.
- 6.41. Table 11, point 1, identifies a series of actions that have come through the community engagement process with the Neighbourhood Plan, and, therefore, are considered important matters, but are set out as “non-policy actions”. Point 5 of the table identifies a lack of school provision as one of the key issues.
- 6.42. Section 9 of the Neighbourhood Plan is for the environment and includes a section on sustainable urban drainage systems and biodiversity. Policy BILL16 sets out requirements for sustainable drainage systems and this proposal includes a detailed drainage strategy demonstrating how site drainage and surface water will be managed.
- 6.43. Policy BILL6, Integrated Infrastructure, states that *“Proposals for the development of community and utility infrastructure will be supported”*. In addition, Policy BILL4, provision of leisure and recreation facilities, states, under point B, that *“the delivery of new facilities or improvements to existing facilities will be secured”*.
- 6.44. It is considered the proposal meets these relevant policies through both the provision of an expanded school, thereby delivering infrastructure and support for the local community, but also through the sports hall and Community Use Agreement providing additional recreational facilities.
- 6.45. Policy BILL3, Energy Efficiency and Design, contains several points regarding energy and sustainability criteria. This includes energy efficiency through measures such as double glazing, incorporating on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels and ground and air source heat pumps, providing infrastructure for electrical vehicle charging, along with general points around high quality and thermal efficient building materials. The proposal replaces poor quality redundant buildings with a new highly efficient structure supporting pupils’ education for the future. The proposals, as set out in the enclosed Sustainability Statement and Design and Access Statement, demonstrate the incorporated sustainability and energy efficiency within the design.
- 6.46. Policy BILL1, Billingshurst Built Up Area Boundary, identifies that development will be focussed within the built-up area of Billingshurst. Whilst the site is located outside of the built-up area, it is within the existing and well-established school site and is previously developed land. The proposal replaces poor quality redundant buildings, bringing the site back into active use, and providing an enhancement to the local environment along with significant community benefits. Given this is an

expansion of the existing school site, it is considered the principle of development is established and supported.

- 6.47. Overall, it is considered the proposals meet and comply with the policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan. Primarily, there is an identified need for school and education provision, which is reiterated at various points throughout the Neighbourhood Plan. This proposal seeks to expand the existing provision at the school and will provide a new carefully designed scheme that enhances the provision for current and future pupils. The proposal is in a sustainable location, given the existing school site, and makes use of previously developed land, replacing the redundant buildings with new modern energy efficient designs.

7 Other Considerations

Phasing and Planning Conditions

- 7.1. Due to the timeframe for pupils, along with viability and programme, the proposal will be constructed in phases as shown within the Design and Access Statement. This has been designed to enable the first phase to be constructed and fully operational and occupied, whilst the other phases are constructed. The modular construction enables quicker and easier construction, thereby minimising any disruption to the school. Along with the DAS, the landscaping and drainage has been designed to be implemented within these phases.
- 7.2. Whilst the application seeks full planning permission, it is proposed that the first phase will be constructed and occupied prior to completion of the latter phases.
- 7.3. Therefore, any planning conditions should be worded and phased appropriately to enable the school to occupy phase 1, without requirements linked to the latter phases. Each phase has been designed to be implementable without reliance on latter phases, including in relation to construction, utilities, parking, and landscaping.

Statement of Community Involvement

- 7.4. The school have been committed to consultation and collaboration from the start of the project and have a long and established history of working with students and relevant organisations. The application is accompanied by a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 7.5. The school have undertaken a range of consultation methods with the local community, including a consultation website, contact with key stakeholders, an in-person open evening, and a feedback form. A community invite was issued and posted to 242 local residents and business addresses surrounding the site.
- 7.6. Key stakeholders were kept up to date throughout the consultation programme and written correspondence included Horsham District Council cabinet members, ward members, and neighbouring ward members. The Councillor for West Sussex County Council (Billingshurst) was also contacted, along with the Parish Councils and the Weald Community School.
- 7.7. Positive comments received on the proposals, including:
- *Overall, a good idea and good tidy up of the site that has been an eyesore and vandal attraction for some years.*

- *I have no problem supporting extra education facilities and development of the existing derelict site is overdue.*
 - *It is great that the school is expanding, I am very much in support of that, and of replacing the derelict buildings with something modern that doesn't require encroaching on the woodland. It also looks like the building will pay attention to sustainability in construction and operation, which is great.*
 - *Great plan for disabled education.*
- 7.8. In terms of changes and other considerations, comments related to the speed of cars on the driveway, travel arrangements, community use of the sports facilities, and questions around the public rights of way.
- 7.9. The SCI concludes that: *"The feedback although limited was very positive, all feedback about the expansion was that it was overdue and good for the school. There were concerns with the most mentioned being the traffic and speed of cars".*

Ecology

- 7.10. As set out above, and combined with the BNG assessment, a full suite of surveys has been undertaken for ecology. These are set out and contained within the accompanying Ecological Impact Assessment.
- 7.11. Full details of the surveys undertaken and their findings are contained within the report, it is noted that there are potential bats within the existing structures. The ecologists' recommendations will be fully followed, and all appropriate licensing will be acquired prior to any works being undertaken to the existing buildings.
- 7.12. The layout of the proposals enables work to be undertaken regarding phase 1, without the requirement to demolish the existing structures and buildings. The programme allows for all ecology works to be undertaken, whilst enabling phase 1 delivery to ensure the school can meet requirements for pupils.

Lighting

- 7.13. A plan showing the proposed external lighting is enclosed. The lighting plan proposes low level and sensitive lighting, acknowledging the setting of the site, whilst being sufficient for safety and navigation purposes around the school for staff and pupils.
- 7.14. The lighting plan has been reviewed by the ecologist and is suitable given the proximity to trees and woodlands to the south. The lighting will be controlled to ensure it only operates as necessary.

Amenity

- 7.15. The site is accessed via a long driveway (which also leads to a farm) and there are no immediately adjacent neighbours. The site forms part of the wider school site and does not introduce any new amenity concerns.
- 7.16. The lighting has been designed to be appropriate for the use and location, including being reviewed by the ecologist to minimise any impact upon the neighbouring trees and ecology.

- 7.17. There are no neighbours that will be disturbed by any noise, particularly as the site is already a long-established SEND school. The nearest structures, outside of the school, are agricultural buildings and these are separated by the existing woodland. The new buildings are of a high-quality design and meet all relevant acoustic standards. There are no nearby main roads, railway lines, or other noise generating uses, that will be disruptive to the school. The setting is suitable for educational use and complements the setting and existing school activities.
- 7.18. Any internal equipment and associated ventilation/extraction is unknown at this stage and will be specified through detailed design work.
- 7.19. The traffic, as set out in the accompanying transport documents, is a minimal increase for the school site. The length of the driveway and the proposed parking provision means there will be negligible impact upon the highway network to the detriment of neighbouring properties in Five Oaks. In addition, as demonstrated in the Air Quality Report, the site is suitable and traffic will not cause any air quality concerns.

Water Neutrality

- 7.20. As confirmed in the pre-application response, a water neutrality statement is not required for this proposal.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 7.21. Horsham District Council implemented a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule in 2017. CIL is liable on residential development and large format retail development. All other uses are zero rated, and, therefore, this proposal is not liable to pay CIL.

Arboricultural

- 7.22. A full survey of the existing trees on the site has been undertaken and accompanies this application. This identifies the category of trees within the site and adjacent to the boundaries.

Table 01 – Summary of Existing Site Vegetation

BS Category	No of Trees	No of Groups	No of Hedges and Vegetation Groups	Total
A	7	1	0	8
B	27	10	1	38
C	10	16	7	33
U	7	1	0	8

- 7.23. The report identifies the trees proposed to be removed, which are 7 category B, 13 category C, and 2 category U. The report includes suitable protection for trees and root protection areas during construction and sets out methods of construction to protect the existing trees.
- 7.24. The report concludes that:

*The project has been considerably planned to ensure the retention of all high value of trees and the vast majority of moderate value trees.
The vast majority of trees proposed for removal are lower value*

category C, and almost all of those trees specified for removal are non-native species, mainly overgrown hedgerows of Cupressus x leylandii, which have no ecological benefits to offer to the local area. (2.40)

The protection, compensation and enhancement detailed herein have been designed to ensure the ongoing favourable status of retained trees and vegetation, and the species which use these. Additionally, adherence to the detailed methods will ensure that all work complies with the relevant wildlife legislation and planning conditions. (2.43)

Provided that mitigation planting is in line with current guidelines and all other protection measures are properly enacted, the loss of trees from the site would be adequately compensated, and the proposals would accord with the requirements of BS5837. (2.44)

Flooding

- 7.25. The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), which has been undertaken with reference to the requirements of the NPPF and planning practice guidance. The FRA considers all sources of potential flooding and concludes *“The proposed development is considered to be at low risk from all analysed sources of flooding”*.
- 7.26. The conclusion, paragraph 6.3, states that: *“The FRA supports the planning application and demonstrates that there is an acceptable level of flood risk to the site. The development does not increase flood risk off-site or to the wider area”*.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1. The site is a long-established educational school, offering significant benefits to the community and delivering a high-quality level of care and education. The selected location is part of the existing school and comprises existing buildings that are in poor condition. The proposal is to demolish these and construct suitable new buildings, securing the future of the school, that also provides increased sustainability in terms of the materials and energy efficiency, but also for the environment and visual impact (as demonstrated through the LVIA).
- 8.2. The use of the previously developed site is supported by national and local policy, bringing the area back into use for a demonstratable need and supporting education provision. The site has no immediately adjacent neighbours and there is no adverse amenity impact, as demonstrated through the enclosed reports.
- 8.3. Whilst the site does involve the clearance of some lower grade trees, the accompanying reports demonstrate they offer little value and are part of the overgrown previous landscaping. The adjacent woodland is excluded from development and the accompanying BNG assessment demonstrates an increase above the required 10%. Whilst the trading rules cannot be satisfied on site, this will be achieved via off-site contributions.
- 8.4. The site has been extensively surveyed for ecology, and the ecologist will continue to advise during the construction period, ensuring all appropriate licensing and mitigation measures are secured.

- 8.5. Comprehensive engagement with the local community has been undertaken, as demonstrated through the SCI, and there is broad support for the proposal.
- 8.6. There are negligible highway implications, due to the length of the existing driveway and access to the school site, and additional parking has been included as part of the proposal.
- 8.7. Overall, the site is suitable for redevelopment, replacing the existing poor-quality buildings with modern classrooms and facilities specifically designed for the school. There is an ongoing need for education provision and there are no adverse impacts arising from the scheme. The site has been phased to support the school and new pupils, whilst ensuring that each phase can continue to be delivered. The school are proposing a Community Use Agreement to broaden and strengthen the links with the local community.
- 8.8. In conclusion, it is considered this proposal offers a significant opportunity to deliver much needed improvements to education provision, on a previously developed site, within an established school. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with both national and local policy.

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