Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/24/0664
Collyers School, 82 Hurst Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 2EJ

DESCRIPTION:

Installation of one temporary office building and two temporary double classrooms.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

HU/58/75	Conversion of grammar school into sixth form college by adaptations to existing and building new extensions (From old Planning History)	Application Permitted on 27.06.1975

SITE AND SURROUNDS

The application site is located to the north of Hurst Road, within the designated built-up area boundary of Horsham. The site comprises a Grade II Listed Building used as an educational facility. The site is surrounded by residential properties to the north, south, and west, with playing fields associated with the College located to the east.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The application seeks full planning permission for the siting of 1no. office building and 2no. double classrooms for a temporary period of 156 weeks.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 4 - Strategic Policy: Settlement Expansion
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 40 - Sustainable Transport
Policy 41 - Parking
Policy 42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities

Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than 5 years from their adoption. Horsham District Council is currently in the process of reviewing its development plan however at this stage the emerging policies carry only limited weight in decision making. As the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for the determination of this application must be considered as to whether they are 'out of date' (NPPF paragraph 11d). This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, whether the Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (NPPF footnote 8).

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the supply currently calculated as being 2.9 years. The presumption in favour of development within Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF therefore applies in the consideration of all applications for housing development within the District (unless footnote 7 or Paragraph 14 applies to relevant applications), with Policies 2, 4, 15 and 26 now carrying only moderate weight in decision making.

All other policies within the HDPF as itemised above have been assessed against the NPPF and are considered to be consistent such that they continue to attract significant weight in decision making.

Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Plan:
Policy HB1 – Location of Development
Policy HB3 – Character of Development
Policy HB4 – Design of Development

Horsham Town Design Statement

Planning Advice Notes:
Facilitating Appropriate Development
Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

HDC Conservation: No Objection

The need for the proposed buildings is understood, and due to their temporary nature, would not raise an objection to the scheme.

If however the length of time is extended, there would be an expectation that the temporary buildings should be replaced with structures that would reflect the quality of the wider campus most notably the grade 2 listed building. As a purely temporary solution it is not considered that the development would detract from the special interest of the listed building.

HDC Environmental Health: No Objection

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Historic England: No response received

Sport England (Initial Response): Objection

Not considered to meet any of the exceptions to the Playing Fields policy or to accord with paragraph 103 of the NPPF.

May reconsider this position should amended/additional details be provided to amend the proposed layout so that the eastern most building is sited on the existing hardstanding, and switch the smaller building show to the west of the hardstanding with the larger buildings shown to the north of the hardstanding; and a commitment to reinstate the site of the temporary buildings and the existing hardstanding to playing field within three months of the expiration of the temporary planning permission.

Sport England (Subsequent Response): Withdraw Objection

The application is not considered to meet any of the exceptions to the Playing Fields Policy or to accord with paragraph 103 of the NPPF. However, it is acknowledged that it is not possible for the proposed position of the temporary buildings to be altered, that the permission is for a temporary 3-year period only, and that the existing pitch provision of the playing field will not be impact during that period.

Having considered these factors, Sport England is able to withdraw the statutory objection subject to a condition being attached to any grant of planning permission requiring the existing hardstanding and the proposed temporary buildings to be removed at the expiry of the 3-year period and the land restored to its previous condition and use as a playing field returned within three months.

Parish Comments: No Objection

Subject to controls being applied to ensure that the temporary buildings are removed once works are complete.

Representations:

1 letter received from the Horsham Society which states that while there is no objection to the proposal for temporary buildings, it is essential that the three year limit which is sought is both applied and enforced.

Member Comments:

None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

Policy 42 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) states that positive measures that will help create a socially inclusive and adaptable environment for a range of occupiers and users to meet their long term need will be encouraged and supported. Particular account will be taken of the need to address the requirements stemming from, among other things, the co-ordination of services to fulfil the needs of young people.

The Planning Statement outlines that RAAC panels have been identified as unsafe during an inspection of the existing buildings, whereby it has been determined that these panels need to be removed as soon as possible. It is outlined that space is already limited within the campus and it is not possible to accommodate all personnel and pupils within the building while the works are undertaken. As such, alternative classrooms and office are required to facilitate the necessary removal works within a

reasonable timeframe. The application seeks temporary permission for a period of 156 weeks to enable the works to be carried out.

The proposed development would support the continued needs of the educational facility, providing classroom and office space while urgent works are undertaken to existing buildings on the site. The proposed development would therefore support the needs of young people within the District and is considered acceptable in principle, subject to all other material considerations.

Design and Appearance:

Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves and enhances the landscape character from inappropriate development. Proposal should take into account landscape characteristics, with development seeking to provide an attractive, functional and accessible environment that complements the locally distinctive character of the district. Buildings should contribute to a sense of place, and should be of a scale, massing, and appearance that is of a high standard or design and layout which relates sympathetically to the landscape and built surroundings.

Policy HB3 of the Horsham Blueprint Business Plan states that development is expected to preserve and enhance the Character Area in which it is located. The design of new development should take account of the local context and reflect the character and vernacular of the area, using architectural variety in form and materials, in order to avoid building design that is inappropriate to the Plan area. Policy HB4 continues that development is expected to demonstrate a high quality of design which responds and integrates well with its surroundings, meets the changing needs of residents, and minimises the impact on the natural environment.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; establish a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

It is proposed to locate the portacabins to the north of the existing complex of buildings comprising the site, to an area of land located within the sport fields. This area is currently partially laid with hardsurfacing where the portacabins would be arranged in a ‘U’ shape. The cabins would be single storey, modular structures comprising grey plasticol-coated galvanised steel cladding.

The proposed development would be located immediately to the north of a complex of modern buildings forming part of the college site. While it is recognised that the modular portacabins would be of limited visual quality and appearance, it is recognised that the temporary buildings would be of modest scale and located to the rear of the site, where they would not be overly visible from public vantage points. The temporary buildings would also be read in the context of nearby built form, where this is considered to reduce the visual prominence of the development.

For these reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would not result in significant harm to the townscape character and appearance of the site and surroundings to justify a reason for refusal. The development is therefore considered to accord with the above policies.

Heritage Impacts:

Policy 34 of HDPF recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and as such the Council will sustain and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets. Development should reinforce the special character of the District’s historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form, and design, including the use of traditional materials and techniques. Development should make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area, ensuring that development in Conservation Area is consistent with the special character of those areas. Proposed development should retain and improve the setting of heritage assets, including views, public rights of way, trees, and landscape features.

Following consultation with the Council’s Design and Conservation Officer, the need for the proposed development is understood, and due to the temporary nature of the proposal, it is not considered that the

development would detract from the special interest of the Listed Building. No objection has therefore been raised.

Amenity Impacts:

Policy 32 of the HDPF states that development will be expected to provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe, and adaptable environment that contribute a sense of place both in the buildings and spaces themselves. Policy 33 continues that development shall be required to ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land.

The proposed buildings would be located to the north-east of the existing complex of buildings, and would be positioned approximately 35m to the east of the residential properties located along Angus Close. The proposed development would result in no greater level of activity than the existing site, with the development located an appropriate distance from the nearest residential properties to limit potential impact through loss of light, privacy, and natural light.

For these reasons, the proposed development is not considered to result in harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties or users of land, in accordance with Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Highways Impacts:

Policy 40 of the HDPF requires developments to provides safe and suitable access for all vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, horses riders, public transport and the delivery of goods.

Policy 41 of the HDPF requires adequate parking and facilities to be provided within developments to meet the needs of anticipated users. Consideration should be given to the needs of cycle parking, motorcycle parking, charging plug-in or other low emission vehicles and the mobility impaired.

The proposed development would serve the existing staff and students, where it has been confirmed that the purpose of the development is not to increase the capacity of the college. It is not therefore considered that the proposal would increase parking demand at the site.

Water Neutrality:

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

The submitted Design and Access Statement outlines that the proposed buildings are required on a temporary basis to provide office and classroom space while emergency works are undertaken to existing buildings. RAAC panels have been identified during an inspection of these buildings, where these need to be removed as soon as possible before they cause a danger. The Statement outlines that it is not possible to accommodate staff and pupils in existing buildings, and temporary buildings are required to off-set the loss of existing space during the works. It has been confirmed by email that the temporary classrooms and office would be used to accommodate existing staff and pupils and would not accommodate additional persons.

For these reasons, there is no clear or compelling evidence to suggest the nature and scale of the proposed development would result in a more intensive occupation of the site necessitating an increased consumption of water that would result in a significant impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The grant of planning permission would not therefore adversely affect the integrity of these sites or otherwise conflict with Policy 31 of the HDPF, NPPF paragraph 186 and the Council's obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). This requires that development must achieve at least 10% BNG on all habitats within the development site.

The mobile classrooms and office building have been placed on the site, and the development subject of the planning application is therefore retrospective. The development is therefore exempt from the requirements of BNG.

Climate Change:

Policies 35, 36 and 37 require that development mitigates to the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reducing flood risk, reducing water consumption, improving biodiversity and promoting sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect the requirements of Chapter 14 of the NPPF that local plans and decisions seek to reduce the impact of development on climate change.

It is considered that the proposal would result in no further impact to climate resilience on the site.

Other Matters:

Sport England is a statutory consultee for development affecting playing fields. Following consultation, an objection has been raised on the basis that the hardstanding and temporary buildings would result in the incremental loss (albeit partly temporary) of parts of the playing field that are capable of being used for playing pitches or run off areas. The temporary building to the east of the hardstanding appears to be located very close to the rugby pitch and no information has been submitted to demonstrate that the relationship between the building, the pitch, and particularly its run-off area, is satisfactory. In addition, no justification has been provided as to why this temporary development needs to encroach further on the playing fields when the building could be sited or partially sited on the hardstanding.

The Applicant has advised that it has not been possible to relocate the eastern classroom and the office due to a sloped bank positioned to the north-west of the site. There is insufficient space to accommodate the large classroom building in this context, with the area of hardstanding necessary to meet fire regulations.

Sport England have been re-consulted on the additional information, where the justification for the layout of the development has been acknowledged and the objection has been withdrawn. A condition has been recommended which requires that the temporary classroom, office and hardstanding be removed from the site after three years and the land returned to its previous condition as part of the playing field. This condition is considered reasonable and necessary to ensure the continued availability of the playing field.

Conclusions:

The proposed development would support the needs of the college and would provide temporary accommodation while emergency works are undertaken to remove RAAC from existing buildings. The proposed development, given its temporary nature, is not considered to result in harm to the special character and setting of the Listed Building and wider townscape, and would not result in harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties or users of land. In addition, the proposal would not result in a significant impact on the Arun Valley protected sites. The development is therefore considered acceptable, in accordance with all relevant local and national policies.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

2 **Standard Time Condition**: The temporary classrooms and office accommodation hereby permitted shall be removed and the use hereby permitted shall be discontinued on or before the 09.09.2027, and the land shall be restored to its former condition and its use as playing field reinstated on or before 09.12.2027.

Reason: The proposed development is not considered satisfactory as a permanent measure in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/24/0664

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Elevation & Floor plan	Floor and Elevations Proposed Double Classroom Building 1&2	03KT	29.04.2024
Location & Block plan	Site Location Plan General	01GKT	01.05.2024
Elevation & Floor plan	Floor and Elevations Proposed Office Building SL102	04KT	29.04.2024
Location plan	Existing Site Location and Block Plan	01KT	01.05.2024
Location & Block plan	Proposed Site Location and Block Plan	02KT	01.05.2024

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Tamara Dale Date: 06.09.2024

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 09/09/2024