



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/0824

St Johns Roman Catholic Primary School, Blackbridge Lane, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 1RR

DESCRIPTION:

Demolition of modular classroom and erection of a replacement classroom.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/08/2211	The continued siting and use of a temporary classroom unit (County Consultation)	Application Permitted on 06.11.2008
DC/14/2327	2 new single storey classroom extensions on the south side of the school	Application Permitted on 19.12.2014

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site comprises St John's Roman Catholic Primary School, the school is located to the west of Horsham town centre within an established predominantly residential area. The application site relates specifically to a small area within the wider school grounds containing an existing modular classroom. The submitted location and block plan identifies an application site area of approximately 148 sqm. The existing modular classroom is positioned adjacent to the main school buildings and within the established school site. The building is not listed, and the site is not located within a designated Conservation Area.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

Planning permission is sought for the demolition/removal of the existing modular classroom and the erection of a replacement modular classroom. The existing classroom has reached the end of its operational lifespan and is described as being in a dilapidated condition and no longer suitable for modern educational requirements.

The replacement building would be positioned broadly on the footprint of the existing modular classroom and has been designed to closely reflect its existing size, scale, layout and general appearance. The principal change would be the incorporation of a dedicated internal toilet facility. The replacement classroom is intended to provide improved building quality, thermal performance, accessibility and functionality for pupils and staff while retaining the established educational use of this part of the site.

The submitted block plan shows that the replacement building would occupy substantially the same location as the existing modular building, with only a limited variation in its footprint.

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 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities
Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Plan:

Policy HB3 – Character of Development
Policy HB4 – Design of Development
Policy HB5 – Energy Efficiency and Design
Policy HB14 – Community and Cultural Facilities

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Parish 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:

None Received

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:

None Received

Parish Comments:

Parish Council: No Objection

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:

The application seeks the demolition/removal of an existing modular classroom and its replacement with a new modular classroom within the established grounds of St John's Roman Catholic Primary School. The existing modular classroom is already in educational use, and the proposal would not introduce a new or materially different use of the site. The submitted Planning Statement explains that the existing classroom has reached the end of its operational lifespan and is considered dilapidated and no longer suitable for modern educational requirements.

The proposal would provide a modern replacement educational facility, including improved building quality, thermal performance, accessibility and functionality, together with dedicated internal toilet provision. The development would therefore support the continued operation of an established community and educational facility rather than result in an expansion or change in the nature of the school use.

HDPF Policy 43 supports the provision and improvement of community facilities where they meet identified local needs and are appropriately located, while Policies 1 and 33 seek sustainable development of an appropriate form that responds positively to its context. The principle of replacing an existing educational building within an established school site is therefore considered acceptable and would support the continued provision of educational infrastructure within the local community.

The proposal is also consistent with the broad objectives of the Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Plan insofar as development should contribute positively to Horsham, be appropriately designed for its location and support the provision of necessary community infrastructure. There would be no loss of an existing educational facility; rather, the proposal would secure its continued and improved use.

Accordingly, the principle of the development is considered acceptable and accords with Policies 1, 33 and 43 of the HDPF and the relevant objectives of the Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Plan.

Design and Appearance:

HDPF Policies 32 and 33 require development to be of a high quality and to relate sympathetically to the character and appearance of its surroundings, having regard to matters including scale, massing, appearance and its relationship with neighbouring development.

The proposed modular classroom would replace an existing modular classroom in substantially the same location within the school grounds. The submitted block plan identifies the existing building and the approximate footprint of the replacement building and demonstrates that the proposed structure would occupy broadly the same developed area. The application site itself extends to approximately 148 sqm.

The Planning Statement advises that the replacement building has been designed to closely reflect the size, scale, layout and general appearance of the existing modular classroom. Its footprint and positioning would remain largely unchanged, with the principal alteration being the incorporation of internal toilet facilities.

Given the established educational character of the site, the presence of the existing modular classroom and the limited scale of the replacement development, the proposal would sit appropriately within the wider school complex. It would not represent a significant intensification of built development or result in a materially greater visual impact than the existing arrangement. Furthermore, the school building is not listed, and the application site is not within a designated Conservation Area.

Subject to the proposed external materials being implemented in accordance with the approved plans and application details, the development would preserve the character and appearance of the school site and surrounding area. The proposal is therefore considered consistent with HDPF Policies 32 and 33 and the relevant design objectives of the Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Plan.

Residential Amenity:

HDPF Policy 33 requires development to have regard to the amenities of existing and future occupiers and seeks to prevent unacceptable harm arising through matters including overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of daylight or sunlight, overbearing impacts, noise and disturbance.

The proposed classroom would replace an existing modular educational building within the established school grounds and would remain broadly within the same location and footprint. The nature of the use would remain unchanged, with the replacement building continuing to provide classroom accommodation ancillary to the existing primary school.

The development would therefore not introduce a new use or materially intensify activities at the site. The submitted information indicates that the proposal is essentially a like-for-like educational replacement intended to support the school's existing operational requirements.

Given the modest scale and siting of the replacement building within the established school grounds, together with the continuation of the existing educational use, the proposal is not considered likely to result in materially greater overlooking, loss of privacy, overbearing effects, loss of light or noise and disturbance to neighbouring residential occupiers compared with the existing situation.

The proposal would therefore have an acceptable relationship with surrounding residential properties and would accord with the amenity requirements of HDPF Policy 33 and the relevant objectives of the Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Plan.

Water Neutrality:

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 dwelling 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 193 and the Council's obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool, and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the development is completed. Off-site gains (on unregistered sites) and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

- The development qualifies as 'de minimis' under Regulation 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Conclusions:

The proposal would replace an existing modular classroom that has reached the end of its operational lifespan with a modern, fit-for-purpose modular classroom within the established grounds of St John's Roman Catholic Primary School. The replacement would continue the established educational use of the site while providing improved accommodation for pupils and staff, including improved accessibility, thermal performance and dedicated toilet provision.

The replacement building would occupy substantially the same location as the existing classroom and would be comparable in its scale, footprint and appearance. Consequently, it would integrate satisfactorily with the existing school complex without causing material harm to the character and appearance of the area or the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers.

Overall, the proposal represents an appropriate improvement to an established community and educational facility and is considered to accord with Policies 1, 32, 33 and 43 of the HDPF together with the relevant objectives of the Horsham Blueprint Business Neighbourhood Plan. There are no material planning considerations identified in respect of the principle of development, character and appearance or residential amenity that would warrant refusal of the application. As such, the development is considered acceptable and planning permission should be granted.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

- 2 **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3 **Regulatory Condition:** The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the application form and approved plans.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of visual amenity and 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/26/0824

Schedule of plans/documents **approved:**

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location & Block plan	Location & Block Plan	PL01 REV A	10.06.2026
Elevation & Floor plan	Existing Plan & Elevations	PL02	20.05.2026

