

Regulatory Committee – 8 December 2020

Proposed installation of Portakabin building to provide 2 temporary classrooms for a period of 104 weeks whilst asbestos removal takes place to the existing school buildings

**Exhall Grange School, Easter Way, Off Pro Logis Park,
Coventry, CV7 9JG**

NBB/20CC007

Application No.:	NBB/20CC007
Advertised date:	04 November 2020
Applicant(s)	Mr Craig Cusack Warwickshire County Council Shire Hall Warwick CV34 4RL
Agent(s)	Mr David Lillico Portakabin Ltd 141, Hinckley Road Coventry CV2 2QL
Registered by:	The Strategic Director for Communities on 22 October 2020
Proposal:	Proposed installation of Portakabin building to provide 2 temporary classrooms for a period of 104 weeks whilst asbestos removal takes place to the existing school buildings.
Site & location:	Exhall Grange School, Easter Way, Off Pro Logis Park, Coventry, CV7 9JG. [Grid ref: 433455.284143].

See plan in Appendix A

Recommendation

That the Regulatory Committee authorises the grant of planning permission for the installation of a Portakabin building to provide 2 temporary classrooms for a period of two years subject to the conditions and for the reasons contained within Appendix B of the report of the Strategic Director for Communities.

1. Application details

- 1.1 The application seeks consent for the temporary installation of a Portakabin building to provide two classrooms for a period of two years. The classrooms are required to provide accommodation for pupils while asbestos is removed from the classrooms in the main school building.
- 1.2 The flat roofed single storey modular building would be 9.8 metres by 16.8 metres and 3.5 metres in height.
- 1.3 External walls of the building would be a durable one-piece construction with high-performance, low maintenance plastisol-coated galvanised steel cladding.
- 1.4 The building would provide two classrooms, each 64 m² in area, with two toilets, one suitable for wheelchair access, and a storeroom for each classroom all accessed from the entrance lobby.
- 1.5 Access to the building would be via a ramp constructed to comply with Part M of the Building Regulations.
- 1.6 The proposed building would be located on the school's overflow car park located to the south-east of the school buildings.
- 1.7 Green bow top metal fencing, 1.8 metres in height, to match the existing school security fencing is proposed to be erected to the west of the temporary building to secure the classrooms from the publicly accessible school car park. Access gates are to be provided in the fencing to enable access for emergency vehicles.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 **Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council – Planning:** There are no in principle objections to the above-mentioned application for temporary classrooms for a period of 104 weeks at the Exhall Grange School site. The classrooms are located several metres away from any residential properties, and is set within the boundary of the Exhall Grange School, so does not have an overall detrimental impact on the visual or residential amenity.

The nearest property is 16 Carsal Close which is located over 50 metres away from the application site. You may wish to consult NBBC Planning Policy due to the greenbelt on the outskirts of the site, however this is unlikely to impact the development site over all. The site is also located within a low risk Coal authority area.

2.2 **Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council – Environmental Health:** No comments received.

2.3 **Councillor Pete Gilbert:** No comments received.

2.4 **WCC Equality and Diversity:** No comments received.

2.5 **WCC Fire & Rescue Service:** No objection. The minimum access criteria must be met:

- Minimum width of the access road is 3.7 metres along the entire length
- Minimum width of any gateways – 3.1 metres
- A fire appliance to gain access to within 45 metres of all points within the footprint of the Portakabin,

Where compliance cannot be met, please provide details of alternative measures you intend to put in place.

2.6 **WCC Highways:** No objection. The proposal is not going to result in more permanent vehicle movements, just movements associated with the removal workforce for the temporary period, which should not be significant.

The location of the temporary classrooms is an existing car parking area. According to the information provided the car park is no longer required, due to changes in pupil accommodation and reduced staffing. But even if more parking is required, there is space on site for overflow parking. As such, the public highway should not be relied on to provide parking.

Therefore, the Highway Authority's response in regard to the above application is one of no objection, as the proposal should not have a significant impact on the public highway network.

2.7 **WCC Archaeology:** No comments to make on this application.

2.8 **WCC Ecology:** Recommend a note relating to hedgehog as a protected species and a note relating to biodiversity enhancements be attached to any permission granted.

2.9 A site notice was displayed at the main entrance gate to the school on 04 November 2020.

2.10 Neighbour consultation letters were posted to the 3 nearest residential properties on 04 November 2020

3. Representations

- 3.1 No comments have been received in response to the neighbour consultation.

4. Previous Planning History

- 4.1 Planning permissions have been granted for a variety of works at the Exhall Grange site the most recent in 2018 was the approval of a single storey modular teaching unit following the demolition of an existing single storey building (Ref: NBB/18CC012).

5. Assessment and Observations

Location

- 5.1 Exhall Grange School is a community-maintained specialist school located to the north of Coventry; west of the Ricoh Arena and east of Prologis Park. The school site is located on Easter Way and accessed from Winding House Lane to the south.
- 5.2 The school occupies a large site with open land to the north-west and south including the Grange Farm local wildlife site. Land to the south-east of the school is predominantly residential. To the east and north-east of the Exhall Grange site are the grounds of Wheelwright Lane Primary and Nursery School and the buildings of the Pears Centre for Specialist Learning, previously occupied by the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB). The car park areas serving the school site are located to the south of the main school buildings.
- 5.3 The temporary classroom building is proposed to be located on the overflow area of the school car park to the south-east of the main school building.
- 5.4 The closest residential properties are those located in Carsal Close, some 50 metres to the east.
- 5.5 No trees or vegetation are required to be removed or impacted as a result of the installation of the temporary building.

Planning Policy

- 5.6 Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) February 2019 explains that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and what that means. Where proposals accord with an up to date development plan it means that development should be approved without delay.

- 5.7 In this case the up to date plan is the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Plan 2011 – 2031 adopted in June 2019. The application should therefore be determined (as required by Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) in accordance with those policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The courts have made it clear that for the purposes of section 38(6) it is enough that the proposal accords with the development plan considered as a whole. It does not have to accord with each and every policy in the plan. It is a matter of judgement for your Committee whether the proposal accords with the plan, considered as a whole, bearing in mind such factors as the importance of the policies which are complied with or infringed, and the extent of compliance or breach.

National Planning Policy

- 5.8 The NPPF states that the planning system has three overarching objectives; economic, social and environmental which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.
- 5.9 Paragraph 94 states that it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. They should:
- a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications.
- 5.10 Paragraph 127 states that planning decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

The Development Plan

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Plan 2011 – 2031 (adopted June 2019)

- 5.11 **Policy DS1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development** - When considering development proposals, the council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will always work proactively with applicants to jointly find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

- 5.12 **Policy DS3 – Development principles** – requires that all new development is sustainable and of a high quality. New development within the settlement boundaries will be acceptable subject to there being a positive impact on amenity, the surrounding environment and local infrastructure.
- 5.13 **Policy NE4 – Managing Flood Risk and Water Quality:** Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): New development will be required to implement appropriate SuDS techniques to manage surface water run-off. For all sites, surface water discharge rates should be no greater than the equivalent site-specific greenfield run-off rate, unless otherwise agreed by the LLFA.
- 5.14 **Policy BE3 – Sustainable design and construction** – requires that development proposals are designed to a high standard and contribute to local distinctiveness and character by reflecting the positive attributes of the neighbouring area.

Need for the temporary classroom.

- 5.15 The proposed temporary modular building would be required for a period of two years to provide two classrooms for pupils while their classrooms in the main school building are out of use as asbestos is removed. A condition is recommended for the removal of the classroom within 2 years of the date of the decision.
- 5.16 There would be no change to the numbers of pupils or staff attending the school as a result of the proposed development.

Amenity and Environmental Issues

- 5.17 The proposed single storey classroom would be positioned close to the existing buildings on an area of the school car park. There would be a separation distance of some 60 metres between the temporary building and the rear elevation of the closest property at 14 Carsal Close. The area of landscaping to the south-east of the car park would serve to screen any view of the application site from the residential properties in Carsal Close.
- 5.18 There are only limited views into the school grounds from the public highway, Winding House Lane 270 metres to the south of the school buildings. While the design and construction of the temporary building would be utilitarian and not suitable as a permanent building, it would be seen in only limited views against the backdrop of the existing school buildings and would not appear out of character for a school site.

- 5.19 The installation of the temporary classrooms would allow the maintenance of the school buildings with a significant benefit to the amenity of the school and its users by the removal of asbestos. The siting and design of the temporary building is not considered to have an adverse impact on the character of the area or on the visual amenities of the closest residents and is considered to accord with the aims of policies DS3 and BE3 of the local plan.
- 5.20 The application site is not within the Green Belt. The line of the Green Belt boundary runs along the western and southern boundaries of the Exhall Grange School site, with the school and the residential areas to the south-east, east and north-east of the school grounds excluded from the Green Belt.
- 5.21 The site for the proposed classroom is currently a hardsurfaced car park area. There would be no impact on trees, protected species or on the net biodiversity of the area as a result of the installation of the building in this location.

Highway and Parking Issues

- 5.22 Access to the school site is from Winding House Lane to the south. There is no increase in pupil numbers or staff as a result of the proposed temporary classrooms. The classrooms are required for the period of time while maintenance works are undertaken at the school to remove asbestos from the buildings. While there will be vehicle movements associated with the operation to remove asbestos, they would not be significant in number. The necessary maintenance work would not require planning permission and does not form part of this application.
- 5.23 The site of the temporary classrooms is the overspill car park which has capacity for 24 cars. The car park is currently used by a small number of vehicles which may be easily accommodated in the main car park. The school has a large car park with capacity for over 150 cars. The buildings on the school site have previously been shared by other users including WCC Occupational Health Service, Children's Community Nurses and Integrated Disability Services. These other users left the site some three years ago. As a result, the car park has more spaces available than required by the school alone.
- 5.24 The metal fence proposed to be erected to secure the classrooms would have a gated access to enable emergency vehicles to enter the site if necessary. A condition is recommended to ensure the provision of the access gates as detailed by the Fire Service.
- 5.25 Highways have raised no objection to the proposed temporary classrooms.

Heritage

- 5.26 There are no heritage assets including Listed Buildings or scheduled ancient monuments within the vicinity of the application site.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.27 The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 and not considered to be at risk of flooding. The application site is less than 1 hectare in area and as such did not require the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment. Drainage for the building would be linked to the school's existing foul and surface water drainage system.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The proposed building would be in position for a temporary period of two years while maintenance works are undertaken on the main school buildings. After that time the building would be removed, and the area restored to car park.
- 6.2 There is considered to be no significant adverse impact on the amenities of local residents or the appearance of the area as a result of the development and the application is considered to accord with the NPPF and policies DS3 and BE3 of the Local Plan and with the Local Plan overall.

7. Supporting Documents

- 7.1 Submitted Planning Application – Planning reference NBB/20CC007
- 7.2 Appendix A – Map of site and location.
- 7.3 Appendix B – Planning Conditions.

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