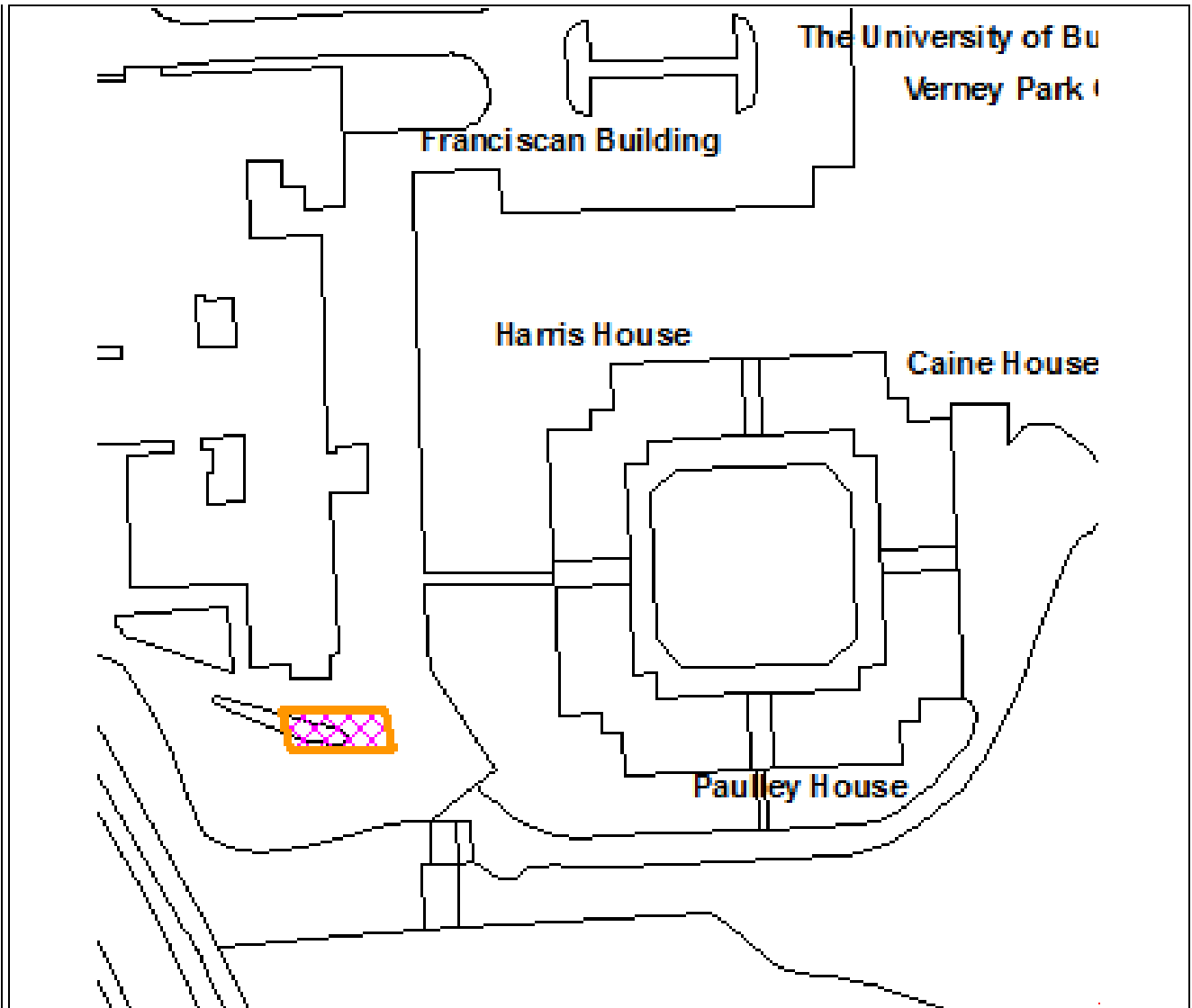


18/02126/APP



REFERENCE NO	PARISH/WARD	DATE RECEIVED
18/02126/APP	BUCKINGHAM The Local Member(s) for this area is/are: -	15/06/18
INSTALLATION OF A PORTAKABIN BUILDING	Councillor Robin Stuchbury	
UNIVERSITY OF BUCKINGHAM, VERNEY PARK CAMPUS, LONDON ROAD, MK18 1AD	Councillor Howard Mordue	
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1.0 The Key Issues in determining this application are:-

- a) Principle of development
- b) Impact on appearance and character of the non-designated heritage asset, street scene and wider area
- c) Impact on Residential Amenity
- d) Impact on Highways & Parking

The recommendation is that permission be **DEFERRED AND DELEGATED for APPROVAL** subject to the satisfactory receipt of an amended parking layout to address high matters and subject to conditions as considered appropriate by Officers. If this cannot be achieved then the application will be refused for reasons as considered appropriate by Officers.

CONCLUSION & PLANNING BALANCE

- 1.1 S68 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the decisions are made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF (revised 2018) is an important material consideration in planning decisions. It does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, but policies in the Development Plan need to be considered and applied having regard to the extent to which they are consistent with the NPPF.
- 1.2 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF requires that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are the most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole..
- 1.3 The proposal involves the installation of a Portakabin, alongside ancillary works to tarmac and formalise an existing car park, on the University of Buckingham Verney Park campus.

- 1.4 The Portakabin would be positioned four metres to the south side elevation of the Franciscan Building. This building is a former friary and school which is considered a non-designated heritage asset with distinctive and attractive architecture and materials. Based on advice received from the AVDC Heritage team, whilst the close proximity is not ideal, due to the proposed use the locality is acceptable, particularly given the temporary nature of the application. As such, the proposed works have been identified to cause no harm to the non-designated heritage asset.
- 1.5 It is considered that the proposal is considered necessary for the continued provision and enhancement of the facilities of academic services as the University undertakes a period of growth and to supplement the over-stretched teaching space within the Franciscan building.
- 1.6 Within the campus, the Portakabin would not be viewed directly or entirely in the context of Franciscan Building since it would be located in a car park and to the front elevation of a modern building. It would also be set distinctly back from the principal elevation of the Franciscan building which is considered to be the most architecturally significant aspect of the building. It is therefore considered that the current appearance and character of the building would be preserved.
- 1.7 As such, by virtue of its position and its proposed temporary usage, it is considered that the proposal would not result in harm the character and appearance of the Franciscan Building, as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 1.8 It is considered that the proposals would not significantly detract from the appearance of the building or the area in general, and would have no unreasonable impact on the amenities of local residents. The proposals would not significantly increase vehicle movements or demand for parking spaces associated with the university campus and so it is considered that there would be no additional conflict with policy GP24.
- 1.9 The proposals are considered to be consistent with the development plan policies EE8 of the BNDP, GP8, GP24 and GP35 of the AVDLP and to the guidance contained in the NPPF. There are no material considerations, or policies in the NPPF (2018) that provide a clear reason for refusal.
- 1.10 It is therefore recommended that the application be supported subject satisfactory receipt of an amended parking layout to address high matters and subject to conditions as considered appropriate by Officers. If this cannot be achieved then the application will be refused for reasons as considered appropriate by Officers.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The application needs to be determined by committee as Buckingham Town Council has raised material planning objections and confirms that it will speak at the Committee meeting.
- 2.2 In response to the Town Council's objection on the Portakabin as a visual intrusion, on campus, it is considered that the proposed development would be sufficiently subservient and distinctly set apart from the Franciscan Building. Moreover, the Portakabin would be also be positioned in a car park and to the front elevation of a modern building. As such, it is not considered that the Portakabin would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the Franciscan Building, as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 2.3 Regarding the Town Council's objection on the appearance of the Portakabin from the streetscene, there would be a significant distance between the development and the adjacent London Road. It would also be screened by dense vegetation for the majority of

the year. In winter, if the Portakabin became partially visible from London Road, only the shallower side elevation would be visible from this public viewpoint which would have a width of just 4.2 metres.

- 2.4 In relation to the Town Council's comment regarding alternative locations for the Portakabin, a pre-application enquiry was completed for this proposal where other sites were scoped. The selected site was identified to minimise harm to the non designated heritage asset while also providing a location that was accessible from the Franciscan Building, as the main teaching centre on campus, and that could easily be connected to utilities. It is also highlighted that the Portakabin would be a temporary structure to fulfil an interim shortage in teaching space.

3.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 This application relates to a site at Verney Park campus, belonging to the University of Buckingham, south-east of the town centre. The campus is located off London Road, Buckingham.
- 3.2 The campus has two buildings: towards the campus entrance (to the west), there is the three storey Franciscan Building, a non-designated heritage asset which is a former friary and school, and to the rear (to the east), there is a three storey modern quadrangle building comprising student accommodation.
- 3.3 From the north-west, the entrance road to the campus (off Bernadines Way) leads to two car parks including a formal car park to the north-east (comprising an estimated 70 car parking spaces) and an informal staff car park to the south-west of campus, linked by access roads. The south-west car park is adjacent to part of the Franciscan Building and site boundary adjacent to London Road. This boundary is distinguished with relatively dense mixed vegetation, including tall deciduous trees. The car park is situated on a gentle slope that gradually declines away from the boundary.
- 3.4 The remainder of the campus is comprised of green space.

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the installation of a Portakabin building in the south-west car park on the University of Buckingham Verney Park campus.
- 4.2 The Portakabin would be approx. 12.4 metres in length, 4.2 metres in depth and 2.98 metres in height.
- 4.3 In terms of materials, the walls would be constructed of plastisol steel cladding, the roof would be steel with a white plastisol finish, the door would be steel and the windows would have aluminium fittings.
- 4.4 The proposed use of the Portakabin would be for additional classroom space on a temporary basis.
- 4.5 The car park where the Portakabin would be situated is currently an informal parking area, without any marked spaces. The hardstanding in this car park would be formalised through installing tarmac surfacing and demarcating vehicle parking spaces. For the avoidance of doubt, since there is an existing area of hardstanding, formalisation of this car park would not be regarded as development.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

5.1 18/00594/APP - Installation of a Portakabin building – Withdrawn

6.0 PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

6.1 Buckingham Town Council objected to the application on the following grounds:

“Members felt that placing the cabin the car parking area was even more of a visual intrusion than siting it close to the building; it would still be an unlovely addition to the London Road street scene, especially in winter when the branches were bare and there was plenty of alternative space on the site where the cabin would be hidden.

7.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

7.1 Bucks County Council Highways commented to state:

- The proposed development would not have an impact on the operation of the existing highway network;
- The proposed car park provides parking spaces with dimensions that accord with the Council’s SPG Parking Guidelines;
- However, the car park does not allow enough space for manoeuvrability and minor amended plans have therefore been requested.

7.2 AVDC Heritage commented to state:

- The Franciscan Building is considered a non-designated heritage asset which, by virtue of its age, form and architectural features, contributes positively to the local character of Buckingham.
- Whilst the close proximity is not ideal, due to the proposed use the locality is acceptable, particularly as this would be a temporary development.
- The proposal would cause no harm to the significance of the heritage asset and condition was suggested to secure the temporary usage.

7.3 Buckingham and River Ouzel Drainage Board: No comments to make.

8.0 REPRESENTATIONS

8.1 No public representations were received on this application.

9.0 EVALUATION

a) Principle of development

9.1 As one of the three overarching objectives of delivering sustainable development, paragraph 8 of the NPPF highlights that the planning system should help to “build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places”. In a rural context, under paragraph 83 of the NPPF, this should be promoted by supporting through the “expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas”.

9.2 Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2015 and is therefore afforded full weight as a development plan. As a means to enable effective education and links to and from the local economy within the town, Policy EE8 of the BNDP promotes the development of new academic buildings for University use, including those on Verney Park campus.

- 9.4 With respect to the sustainability of the development location, the site is located within an established University campus close to the centre of Buckingham with relatively strong bus and pedestrian links as well as key amenities. It is noted that Buckingham is regarded as a strategic settlement in the Settlement Hierarchy forming part of the VALP evidence base.
- 9.5 In view of these policies, the development's capacity to promote the growth and diversity of the local economy is supported since the Portakabin would allow the continued provision of academic services as the University undertakes a period of growth and to supplement the over-stretched teaching space within the Franciscan building.
- 9.6 Overall, it is considered that the principle of the nature and location of development can be supported and would accord with policy EE8 of the BNDP.

b) *Impact on appearance and character of the non-designated heritage asset, street scene and wider area*

- 9.7 To achieve well-designed places, paragraph 127 of the NPPF stipulates that the planning system should ensure that development is designed to function well, to be visually attractive, to be sympathetic to the architecture of the locality and contribute positively to the appearance of the area, maintain a strong sense of place and to be inclusive and accessible.
- 9.8 Similarly, with regard to the materials and design details of a development, in line with GP.35 of the AVDLP, these must respect and complement physical characteristics of site, the building tradition of the locality, and the scale and context of the setting.
- 9.9 Due to the proximity of the proposed development to a non-designated heritage asset, the proposal must be considered in light of paragraph 197 of the NPPF. Paragraph 197 states that "a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset".
- 9.10 As the proposal is close to an established tree, it is necessary to apply AVDLP policy GP.40 which stipulates that the loss of trees and hedgerows of "amenity, landscape or wildlife value" will be opposed. Retention of trees is also required by Neighbourhood Plan policy DHE1.
- 9.11 Regarding the Portakabin location, the original and amended plans submitted as part of the withdrawn application (Ref: 18/00594/APP) sited the development to the front elevation of the Franciscan building. Following Town Council objections on both the original and amended schemes with the Portakabin in this location, pre-application advice was sought. The proposed location for the Portakabin was subsequently revised for the present application, specifically to the south side elevation of the Franciscan building.
- 9.12 The Portakabin has now been positioned in this location to allow easy access for students from the Franciscan Building which is the main teaching centre on campus. It is also necessary for the structure to be close to an existing building to allow it to be connected to utilities and services.
- 9.13 The Portakabin would be separated by a distance of approx. 4 metres from the southernmost side elevation of the Franciscan Building and so there would be a clear distinction between the heritage asset and the modern structure, with an intervening area of tarmac and relatively tall tree. It would also be notably set back from the principal elevation of the Franciscan Building which is considered to be of particular architectural impact. Moreover, with a height of approximately 2.9 metres, it would be notably subservient to the Franciscan Building. Additionally, the Franciscan Building is already

adjacent to the modern student accommodation building to the east which is considered to be of low architectural merit.

- 9.14 The Portakabin would also be located in the car park which is proposed to be tarmacked and formalised. During the core working hours of University staff, the Portakabin would therefore be viewed in the context of parked vehicles to the south and north-west, as illustrated on the proposed site plan.
- 9.15 It is acknowledged that the Franciscan building has a distinctive and attractive architecture while the proposed Portakabin, as a structure which would be composed largely of steel and aluminium. However, it is noted that the proposal is for a temporary structure and as such in considering the overall significance of the Franciscan Building, any impact the portakabin may have on the setting of the heritage asset would be acceptable considering the temporary nature of the application.
- 9.16 Furthermore, as the Portakabin would be a temporary structure to provide interim teaching space as the University undertakes a period of growth, it is considered unreasonable to request that the design and materials of the Portakabin is changed to be more sympathetic to the Franciscan Building. It is also considered too onerous to request screening of the proposal through planting or some other soft landscaping scheme. Additionally, it should be noted that any future planning permission would stipulate the retention of existing trees and vegetation to the boundary adjacent to London Road for the lifetime of the development.
- 9.17 Overall, the Portakabin would not be viewed entirely in the context of Franciscan Building. As such, by virtue of its position and its proposed temporary usage, it is not considered that the Portakabin would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the Franciscan Building, as a non-designated heritage asset. Subject to the imposition of an appropriate limited period condition, the proposal would therefore accord with AVDLP policy GP35 and NPPF advice.
- 9.18 With regard to the appearance of the Portakabin from the streetscene, there would be a distance of approx. 24.5 metres between the development and the adjacent London Road. For the majority of the year, the deciduous mature trees and vegetation would be of a sufficient density to screen the Portakabin from the public highway. When these trees lose their leaves in winter, if the Portakabin became partially visible from London Road, it would be slightly set down from the public highway since it would be on a downward slope. Moreover, it is a single storey structure of which only the shallower side elevation would be visible from this public viewpoint which would have a width of approximately 4.2 metres.
- 9.19 In summary, it is considered that the proposal would not appear overly prominent within the streetscene or the locality in general. The proposals are therefore considered to comply with the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan, policy GP35 of the AVDLP and the NPPF.

c) *Impact on residential amenity*

- 9.20 Policy GP.8 states that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would unreasonably harm any aspect of the amenity of nearby residents when considered against the benefits arising from the proposal.
- 9.21 Given the distances to residential properties and the location within the University Campus, it is considered that there would be no impact on residential dwellings. Therefore the proposal are considered to be in accordance with policy GP8 of the AVVDLP and to the guidance contained in the NPPF.

d) *Impact on highways and parking*

- 9.22 The Council's SPG Parking Guidelines stipulate that vehicle parking spaces must be, at a minimum, 2.4 metres in width and 4.8 metres in depth with a distance of 6m between rows for access where spaces are at right angles to the traffic lane.
- 9.23 As specified in the agent's supporting letter submitted with the application, the demand for staff car parking spaces would not be increased as a consequence of this development since the new teaching space would support the over-stretched teaching space within the Franciscan building. With the tarmacking and formalisation of the car park, the existing number of vehicle parking spaces would be retained while also allowing for the siting of the Portakabin.
- 9.24 Based on County Highways advice, the proposed development would not impact on the operation of the existing highway network. As the Portakabin is proposed to create additional teaching space for existing students, there would be no additional vehicle journeys and therefore no impact on highways as a consequence of this development.
- 9.25 Additionally, the proposed car park provides parking spaces with dimensions that accord with the Council's SPG Parking Guidelines.
- 9.26 However, the car park does not allow enough space for manoeuvrability and minor amended plans have therefore been requested.
- 9.27 It would therefore accord with GP.24 of AVDLP, the NPPF and the Council's SPG Parking Guidelines.

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