



Report to West Area Planning Committee

Application Number:	23/06695/R9FUL
Proposal:	Siting of 2 x modular buildings comprising 4 x temporary classrooms
Site Location:	Princes Risborough School Merton Road Princes Risborough Buckinghamshire HP27 0DR
Applicant:	Buckinghamshire Council
Case Officer:	Matthew McKane
Ward(s) affected:	The Risboroughs
Parish-Town Council:	Princes Risborough Town Council
Date valid application received:	18th July 2023
Extension of time:	15/12/2023
Recommendation	Condition Permission

1.0 Summary & Recommendation/ Reason for Planning Committee Consideration

- 1.1 The application is before committee for determination as the application site relates to a Buckinghamshire Council application.
- 1.2 The application site is a mixed secondary school for 11-18 year olds in Princes Risborough. This planning application is connected to, and supports, planning approval reference number 22/08395/FUL which is for a new four classroom teaching block which was granted planning permission in June 2023 scheduled to commence construction in summer of this year (2023) which arose as an urgent need to provide additional accommodation at the school and to fulfil this statutory duty. This application for the siting of 2 x modular buildings comprising 4 x temporary classrooms have therefore been applied for and is noted as being retrospective to accommodate pupils for the start of Autumn term September 2023 whilst the permanent classrooms are under construction.
- 1.3 The proposed development is considered acceptable in terms of their design, visual impact, impact on amenity, highway safety, ecology and surface water drainage matters. A suitably worded condition could be imposed for the removal of the proposed classrooms subject of this application as they are proposed to be temporary.
- 1.4 Recommendation – approval.

2.0 Description of Proposed Development

- 2.1 Princes Risborough Secondary school is located on the south east side of the town, in an elevated position, adjacent to the Upper Icknield Way, to the south east. The majority of buildings on the site date from the mid-20th century.
- 2.2 This planning application is connected to, and supports, planning approval reference number 22/08395/FUL which is for a new four classroom teaching block granted planning permission in June 2023 which was scheduled to commence construction in summer of this year (2023). The urgent need arose to provide additional accommodation at the school and to fulfil this statutory duty.
- 2.3 This application for the siting of 2 x modular buildings comprising 4 x temporary classrooms have therefore been applied for and is noted as being retrospective to accommodate pupils for the start of Autumn term September 2023 whilst the permanent classrooms are under construction.
- 2.4 The current proposals are to address capacity issues arising from what is understood to be an additional form of entry admitted in the 2021 – 2022 academic year, as well as an enlarging sixth form as a result of more students electing to continue at PRS for their sixth form education.
- 2.5 The proposed is for 2 x modular buildings comprising 4 x temporary classrooms, each approximately 16m (wide) x 10m (deep) x 3.3m (height), set 4.7m apart from one another. They would be constructed of walls: composite wall panels with plastisol coated steel external face, windows: Upvc frames. The structures would be located within the South West grounds of the school, just North-West of the existing M.U.G.A North-West on playing field grass, between the existing MUGA and a raised bank, beyond which is the main school car park. The school's main grass pitch provision is in a field on the south-east side of the Upper Icknield Way.
- 2.6 The application is accompanied with the following:
 - a) Application form.
 - b) Covering letter
 - c) Location plan
 - d) Existing site plan
 - e) Proposed site plan
 - f) Proposed plan and elevation

3.0 Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 The recent planning history is set out below. Historically the majority of applications were dealt with by Buckinghamshire County Council, prior to the formation of the unitary Buckinghamshire Council.

Reference	Development	Decision	Decision Date
17/05054/CONCC	Consultation from Buckinghamshire County Council (ref: CC/01/17) for creation of new 2 storey entrance block with classrooms and kitchen	CMTS	6 February 2017

	extension, central atrium and lift in phase 1; creation of 3 storey link block with classrooms, new drop-off area, additional car park spaces and new cycling bays and demolition of some parts of the school buildings in phase 2 and associated landscaping to both phases		
18/07389/FUL	Erection of two storey detached buildings for use by model railway club	PER	3 January 2019
PI19/00122/ADRC	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 5 (construction traffic management plan) pursuant to planning approval 18/07389/FUL	PECOND	12 March 2019
22/08395/FUL	Construction of new four classroom teaching block, dining hall canopy and MUGA	PER	13 June 2023
23/06935/ADRC	Application for approval of details subject to conditions 9 (planting and biodiversity enhancements), 10 (water efficiency) and 11 (ctmp) of planning ref: 22/08395/FUL	PECOND	15 September 2023

4.0 Policy Considerations and Evaluation

Principle and Location of Development

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP1 (Sustainable Development), CP3 (Settlement Strategy), DM29 (Community Facilities), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation)

DSA: DM1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development), DM12 (Green Space)

4.1 The site is located within the Princes Risborough Settlement Boundary and therefore development in relation to the school is acceptable in principle. Part of the school site is designated as Green Space.

4.2 The proposed development is considered acceptable in principle.

Transport matters and parking

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation)

- 4.3 The school site is served by two vehicular access points. The main, original, entrance is via Merton Road, on the north west side of the road. This serves the main (extended) car park, for staff and visitors. More recently a second access was created from New Road, to the east of the site. This was originally conceived mainly as an access for school buses, to take bus traffic away from the residential streets of Merton Road and Clifford Road. It now also serves the more recent sports centre, with visitors outside of school hours using the bus parking area for car parking.
- 4.4 The additional classrooms would have the potential to increase the overall capacity of the school, which currently has 6 forms of entry (6FE). The school was asked to take a “bulge” class in 2021, and that cohort has a 7FE. The school therefore requires additional capacity to accommodate the existing number of students it already has. In recent years more students are also continuing their education at the school post 16, for sixth form, and the additional classrooms would provide capacity for the enlarged sixth form.
- 4.5 The extant 2017 permission for the redevelopment of the school would increase the capacity of the school in two phases, first to 7FE then to 8FE. The pre-start conditions for that consent have been discharge and include proposals for managing school traffic. This indicated that the majority of community lettings would use the New Road entrance in the evenings, at weekends, with the Merton Road access being required for larger lettings. It also indicated the use of the New Road entrance for parents to drop off car borne students. It is understood that the school has already been operating this system, with cars dropping off on the access road and turning in the bus parking area. The car park extension, to provide additional staff car parking, has already been constructed.
- 4.6 This application proposes siting of 2(no) modular buildings comprising of 4(no) temporary classrooms whilst waiting for the construction of 4(no) classrooms permitted under application reference 22/08395/FUL. The Highways Officer is satisfied that the proposals would not increase the capacity of the school beyond what has already been permitted, and that the proposals will not have an adverse impact on the operation of the highway network, no highways conditions are recommended as part of this application. The siting of the temporary classrooms would not result in any loss of parking provision for the school.

Raising the quality of place making and design

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP9 (Sense of place), DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development), DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality)

- 4.7 The proposed temporary classrooms are single storey and located within the South West grounds of the school, just North-West of the existing M.U.G.A on playing field grass, between the existing MUGA and a raised bank, beyond which is the main school car park. The school’s main grass pitch provision is in a field South-East. The temporary classrooms are in a location where it would not be visible in wider views.
- 4.8 The majority of buildings on the site are flat roofed, and the adjacent classroom block is constructed of red bricks and has white timber fenestration. The modular buildings are considered to be generally in keeping with the design of the existing buildings on the site and as they will only be temporary so no significant impact on the setting of the adjoining Chilterns AONB would occur as a result.

4.9 Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of design and impact on character and appearance.

Amenity of existing and future residents

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality)

4.10 The proposed temporary classroom blocks are single storey and are located approximately 48m from the rear boundary lines of properties 20-24 Merton Road and about 70m from the rear elevation of the nearest property no. 20. In-between the classroom blocks is an embankment/line of trees and car park. Given the distance and existing screening the building would not have any adverse impact on light or privacy to the nearest residential properties.

4.11 Although the classroom use proposed is likely to generate some noise, this is in the context of the existing use of the school site and is unlikely to result in significant additional noise and disturbance to nearby residents. It is noted that a comment has been received requesting that the classrooms are not used for music/amplified speech, however this is not considered necessary or reasonable to impose given there is sufficient separation distance afforded between the proposed classrooms and nearest residential sites and property.

4.12 There is no objection to the proposed development from the Environmental Protection team.

4.13 The proposal is not considered to result in any significant residential amenity impacts that would warrant the refusal of planning permission or require planning conditions.

Environmental issues

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth), DM20 (Matters to be determined in accordance with the NPPF)

4.14 As the proposal does not increase the school's capacity it would not have any significant impact on air quality, and waste management arrangements would be similar to the existing. There are no known contamination issues on the site.

Flooding and drainage

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM39 (Managing Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Systems)

4.15 The cabins are elevated above the existing grasses area on pads. The downpipes from the rainwater gutters discharge onto the grassed area under the classroom blocks. Given the scale and nature of the development, the LLFA raise no objection to the proposal.

Landscape Issues

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development)

DSA: DM11 (Green networks and infrastructure), DM12 (Green space)

4.16 Details were provided to show that additional tree planting could be carried out within the school site to maximise canopy cover as required by Policy DM34 as part of application 22/08395/FUL. No further information is therefore required as part of this application. Issues relating to the development within the area of Green Space have been addressed above.

Landscape and visual Impact

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP9 (Sense of place), DM30 (Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) DM32 (Landscape character and Settlement Patterns)

4.17 The Upper Icknield Way, on the south-east boundary of the site, marks the boundary with the Chilterns AONB, to the south-east of the school site. The proposed classroom would largely be screened from the AONB by existing M.U.G.A and hedging. They do not, therefore, appear intrusive in views from the AONB, given that they would be viewed in the context of the overall school campus. As such these elements do not give rise to harm to the setting of the AONB.

Archaeology

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP9 (Sense of place), CP11 (Historic Environment), DM31 (Development Affecting the Historic Environment)

4.18 The site is located in an archaeological notification area. The Council's archaeologist advises that investigations have previously been carried out in the areas where development is proposed and have not revealed anything of particular interest. In addition, the form of the proposed classrooms suggests no ground excavation will be required. In this instance there is therefore no detrimental impact on designated heritage assets and no conditions are necessary to secure further investigation.

Green networks and infrastructure

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth), CP9 (Sense of place), DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development)

DSA: DM11 (Green networks and infrastructure),

4.19 The proposal retains existing planting and boundary treatments. Details were provided to show that additional tree planting could be carried out within the school site to maximise canopy cover as required by Policy DM34 as part of application 22/08395/FUL which would enhance biodiversity also. No further information is therefore required as part of this application in this regard.

Ecology

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development)

DSA: DM13 (Conservation and enhancement of sites, habitats and species of biodiversity and geodiversity importance), DM14 (Biodiversity in development)

4.20 It is considered that there is not a reasonable likelihood of protected species being present and/or affected by the proposed development for 2 temporary classrooms. Therefore, no supporting ecological information is required.

Community facilities

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM29 (Community Facilities)

4.21 As a school the site falls within the definition of a community facility. The proposals retain that community function and would facilitate the continuation of the community use.

Building sustainability

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP12 (Climate Change), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation), DM41 (Optional Technical Standards for Building Regulations Approval)

4.22 The buildings are already on site but are temporary and modular. Given the temporary nature of the development it would not be reasonable to seek to alter the design or secure environmental improvements in terms of water usage or climate change.

Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth)

DSA: DM19 (Infrastructure and delivery)

4.23 The development is not a type of development where CIL would be chargeable.

4.24 It is considered that there would not be other types of infrastructure that will be put under unacceptable pressure by the development to justify financial contributions or the direct provision of infrastructure.

4.25 The applicant has confirmed that he is willing to enter into a legal agreement.

5.0 Weighing and balancing of issues / Overall Assessment

5.1 This section brings together the assessment that has so far been set out in order to weigh and balance relevant planning considerations in order to reach a conclusion on the application.

5.2 In determining the planning application, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Section 143 of the Localism Act amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to the determination of planning applications and states that in dealing with planning applications, the authority shall have regard to:

- a. Provision of the development plan insofar as they are material,
- b. Any local finance considerations, so far as they are material to the application (such as CIL if applicable), and,
- c. Any other material considerations

5.3 As set out above it is considered that the proposed development would not accord with the council's green space policy. However, the material considerations of an urgent need to provide accommodation and the temporary nature of the classrooms are considered to outweigh the harm.

6.0 Working with the applicant / agent

6.1 In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF (2021) the Council approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments.

6.2 The Council work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applicant/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

6.3 In this instance:

- the applicant/agent was updated of any issues after the initial site visit,
- The applicant was provided the opportunity to address issues.
- The application was determined in accordance with the timescale agreed with the applicant.

7.0 Recommendation

7.1 Conditional Permission:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall remain implemented in accordance with the details contained in the planning application hereby approved and plan numbers 050.501-0, 050.503-0, 100.501-0 unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise first agrees in writing.

Reason: In the interest of proper planning and to ensure a satisfactory development of the site.

- 2 Within three months following completion of the four classroom teaching blocks associated with planning application reference number 22/08395/FUL, the temporary classroom modules subject to this application shall be removed from the site and all land shall be returned to its original state. Any disturbance to the land shall be reinstated and the land returned to its original condition. Photographs shall be submitted to the LPA, within 3 months of the removal of the temporary classroom modules as confirmation of compliance with this condition.

Reason: to ensure the restoration works to the green space are properly completed and so that the development is carried out in accordance with the terms of the assessment on what has been applied for.

INFORMATIVE(S)

- 1 In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF Buckinghamshire Council approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments. Buckinghamshire Council work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

In this instance the applicant was updated after the site visit and afforded the opportunity to address issues. The application was determined in accordance with the timescale agreed with the applicant.

APPENDIX A: Consultation Responses and Representations

Councillor Comments

None received.

Parish/Town Council Comments

Princes Risborough Town Council comments:

No comment received at the time of writing this report.

Consultation Responses

Strategic Access Officer – No objection (with respect to impact on public right of way).

Environmental Services – There is no objection in regards to the proposed development from Environmental Protection.

Lead Local Flood Authority – Given the scale and nature of the development, the LLFA removes their objection.

Archaeology Officer – The application site is located within an Archaeological Notification Area due to the discovery of human remains dating to the Neolithic and Roman periods. However, the two phases of archaeological investigations closest to the application area identified no archaeological remains. In addition, the form of the proposed classrooms suggests no ground excavation will be required. On this basis, we conclude that the nature of the proposals are such that they are unlikely to substantially harm the archaeological significance of any assets. We therefore have no objection to the proposed development and do not consider it necessary to apply a condition to safeguard archaeological interest.

Highways Officer - The application site is located along Merton Road, an unclassified residential road, subject to a 30mph speed restriction, which currently serves as the principal access to Princes Risborough School for staff, visitors and servicing facilities. Merton Road forms a priority junction with Clifford Road, which in turn connects to the A4010 (Wycombe Road), a strategic inter-urban route via a priority junction. There is also a secondary access via a priority junction off the A4010 (New Road).

This application proposes siting of 2(no) modular buildings comprising of 4(no) temporary classrooms.

Having assessed the submission, it appears that the proposed buildings are to provide pupil places whilst waiting for the construction of 4(no) classrooms permitted under application reference 22/08395/FUL. Highways comments for the previous application, dated 27th April 2023, ultimately raised no objections to the proposal subject to a condition. I also note the temporary classrooms are situated where the approved MUGA is located.

As stated within highways comments for the previous application, it was confirmed that the additional classrooms were to accommodate a bulge class for students admitted in 2021, as well as for retained students for higher level courses. In addition, it was confirmed that the proposals would not lead to additional capacity of the school beyond what was agreed in 2017 (ref: CC/01/17), or additional full-time equivalent staff. Given the above, and that these are temporary classrooms, I do not consider the proposal to result in an intensification of the site, nor would the proposals increase the site's parking requirement. As such, I am satisfied the development will not have a material impact upon the operation of the local highway network.

Mindful of the above, I do not have any objections to this application and no conditions to recommend with regard to highways issues.

Ecology - No Objection

The proposals involved the installation of two temporary buildings on existing hardstanding. It is considered that there is not a reasonable likelihood of protected species being present and/or affected by the proposed development. Therefore, no supporting ecological information is required.

Representations

Amenity Societies/Residents Associations

None

Other Representations

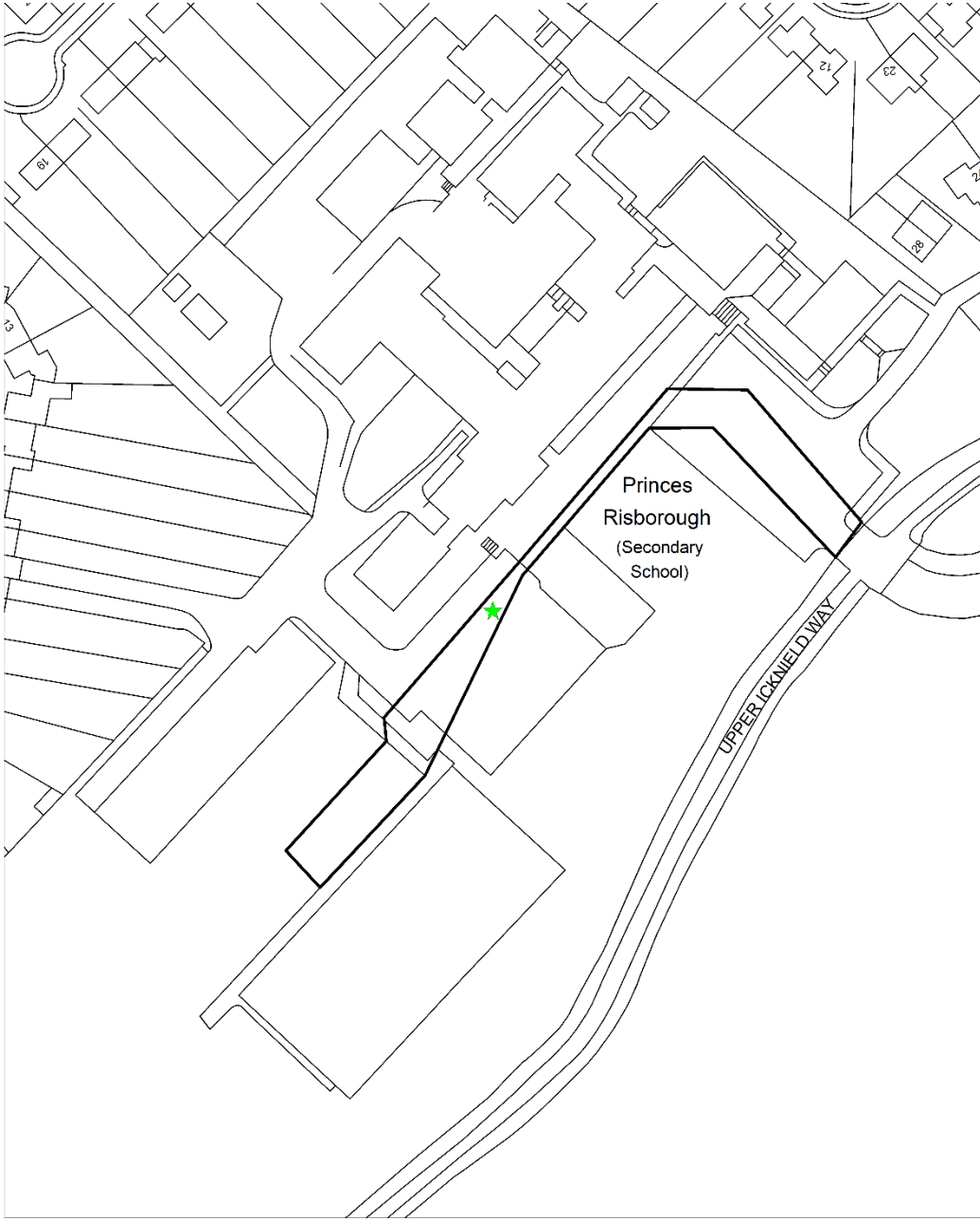
1 comment received neither objecting or supporting the application raising the following points:

- Application should be described as retrospective as has already been implemented.
- Request on any grant of approval that the classrooms are not used for music/amplified speech, controlled through planning condition to protect the amenity of adjoining residents.

No further comments were received at the time of writing this report

APPENDIX B: Site Location Plan

23/06695/R9FUL
Scale 1/1250



Planning Committee
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Ordnance Survey 100062456