

AGENDA ITEM NO.8/3(b)

Parish:	King's Lynn	
Proposal:	To install 2 Portakabin classroom buildings for a temporary period of 260 weeks (Retrospective)	
Location:	Springwood High School, Queensway, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 4AW	
Applicant:	Steven Bowdery	
Case No:	22/00289/F (Full Application)	
Case Officer:	Mrs Jade Calton	Date for Determination: 5 May 2022

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Called-in by Councillor Rust.

Neighbourhood Plan: No

Case Summary

The application relates to Springwood High School located at the northern end of Queensway, King's Lynn.

Permission is sought for the installation of two portacabin classrooms for a temporary period of 260 weeks (5 years).

King's Lynn is classified as the Sub-Regional Centre for the Borough within the Core Strategy's Settlement Hierarchy, which is the focus for major planned growth.

Key Issues

- Principle of Development;
- Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area;
- Impact on Neighbour Amenity; and
- Other Material Considerations

Recommendation

APPROVE

THE APPLICATION

The application relates to Springwood High School located at the northern end of Queensway, King's Lynn.

22/00289/F

**Planning Committee
09th May 2022**

Permission is sought for the installation of two portacabin classrooms for a temporary period of 260 weeks (5 years). The modular classrooms will be removed after 260 weeks, after which a permanent solution is intended.

The proposed modular classrooms will sit on purpose made foundations and sited behind the south-eastern corner of the existing school building within the associated playing field.

The Portakabin buildings each measure 3.5m in height x 9.8m in width x 16.7m in length. Together they have a combined floorspace of 327 square metres and incorporate a total of 4 class-rooms, 2 x lobby areas, 4 x store rooms.

The buildings are pre-fabricated and the external walls are constructed of plastisol-coated galvanised steel cladding in 'honesty yellow'.

The modular classrooms are required to accommodate existing students on site and have already been installed on site.

SUPPORTING CASE

A Design and Access Statement accompanies the application and offers the following supporting case: -

'Springwood High school is dedicated to ensuring that every student gains the best qualifications possible. We believe that excellent academic qualifications provide each student with the best life chances and opportunities to ensure a successful and fulfilled future. In the last two years the percentage of students gaining 5 higher grades including English and Maths has risen significantly.

We have a high expectation of both our teachers and our students. We set challenging targets for all and support each other to achieve them. We work hard to monitor accurately the progress of students, celebrate academic success and intervene where necessary.

A positive attitude to learning is an essential aspect of academic success. Our teachers regularly assess how engaged each learner is in their studies using an "attitude to learning" score. We celebrate students who have a good attitude to their studies and actively encourage those who need to improve in this area.

We offer a wide range of opportunities, both within and beyond the classroom - it is vital that every student participates in other areas of school life."

The buildings are required to free up congested classrooms. This will improve education levels in smaller classes and also free up classrooms to be used for extra curricular activities.

This is an interim solution until a permanent one is found.

There will be no loss of parking as a result of this application. And there will be no additional pupils or staff as a result—the classrooms will be occupied by reducing current class numbers. Therefore, there will be no impact on parking at the site.

Ramps will serve the main entrances, with steps to all fire escapes, all built to comply with the approved document Part M.

The Portakabin buildings have been chosen as a result of the flexible solution they can provide. The buildings can be installed quickly enabling pupils to begin using the specifically fitted out building much more quickly than a traditional build, and they can easily be removed from site with little impact when they are no longer required'.

PLANNING HISTORY

There is extensive planning history associated with the site, none of which is directly relevant to the current application.

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

NCC Highways: [Verbally] **NO OBJECTION**

REPRESENTATIONS

Councillor Rust called-in the application to Planning Committee in the interests of local residents.

ONE representation received from a local resident **OBJECTING** on the following grounds: -

- Increase in local traffic, in particular at pick up and drop off times,
- More dangerous and inconsiderate parking on the roads surrounding the school; and
- Unsociable behaviour including littering and loud music.

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS01 - Spatial Strategy

CS02 - The Settlement Hierarchy

CS03 - King's Lynn Area

CS08 - Sustainable Development

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016

DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DM2 – Development Boundaries

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main considerations in the determination of this application are as follows; -

- Principle of Development;
- Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area;
- Impact on Neighbour Amenity; and
- Other Material Considerations

Principle of Development:

The application site lies within the development boundary of King's Lynn and as such, the proposal is acceptable in principle in accordance with the Development Plan.

Character and Appearance:

The proposed temporary classrooms are located to the rear of the existing school building and as such are not visible from the main public domain.

Furthermore, the south-western corner of the school grounds is bounded by mature trees which offer some screening of this part of the site from the public highway.

Notwithstanding this, it is not considered that the siting of two mobile classrooms would be an incongruous feature within the grounds of a large school such as this. Modular classrooms are commonly used as a means of providing required classroom space within school grounds.

It is considered therefore, that the proposal would have no adverse impact on the local setting or character of the area, in accordance with Local Plan Policies CS08 and DM15 and the general provisions of the NPPF.

Neighbour Amenity:

The proposed modular classrooms will be sited approximately 51m from the rear boundary of the closest neighbouring residents at Nos. 20 and 22 Queensway (located to the south-west) and approximately 60m from the rear boundaries of the neighbouring properties on the northern side of Baldwin Road (located to the south).

The proposed buildings are roughly in line with the southernmost part of the existing school building, with a playing field and tennis courts between the proposed buildings and adjacent residential boundaries.

As previously stated, the south-western boundary of the school site comprises mature trees which provides partial screening from neighbouring residents.

Taking into account the above, together with the fact that the proposed modular classrooms will be sited within an existing school complex and will accommodate existing students, it is not considered that the proposal would cause any harm to the amenities of neighbouring residents.

As such the proposal accords with Local Plan Policies CS08 and DM15 and the provisions of the NPPF, paragraph 130.

Other Material Considerations:

Crime and Disorder: -

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires Local Authorities to consider the implications for crime and disorder in the carrying out of their duties. The application before the Committee will not have a material impact upon crime and disorder.

Representations: -

Third party representations have been taken into consideration in reaching the recommendation of this application and will be addressed accordingly: -

In regard to increased traffic, parking issues and unsociable behaviour, the proposed modular classroom buildings will not give rise to these matters given that they intend to accommodate existing students already attending the school.

Given the nature and scale of the application, it was not necessary to formally consult NCC Highways. However, given the concerns raised by local residents, the case officer discussed the proposal with Highways to seek clarification on the highway safety issues raised.

Verbally, the Highways Officer confirmed that they would raise no objection to the proposed modular classrooms. Notwithstanding the fact that they will accommodate existing students and staff, given their scale and nature they would be de minimis. Furthermore, taking into account the use of the site as a whole, the introduction of the modular classrooms would cause no material impact on highway safety.

It is noted that the proposed modular classrooms have been installed on the site since the submission of the application. A breach of Planning Control is not illegal and there is provision in law to enable the applicant to apply retrospectively. The retrospective nature of the application has been included in the description to make it clear.

CONCLUSION

Modular classrooms are not out of character in a school setting and they are well screened in the locality by the existing boundary treatment and existing school buildings.

Given they are relatively small scale and are screened, together with distances involved, it is not considered that the temporary classrooms would adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring residents.

It is not anticipated that the siting of the classrooms would give rise to existing traffic, parking issues or antisocial behaviour given that it is intended to accommodate existing pupils and staff to free up capacity within the school as classrooms are currently overcrowded. There is no intention to increase the number of students or additional staff as a result of the proposal.

A condition will be applied to control the temporary siting of the modular classrooms and ensure their removal after the specified period.

Taking the above into consideration, it is your officer's opinion that the siting of two portacabin classrooms would be acceptable on this existing school site and there would be no adverse impact on visual or neighbour amenities or to highway safety. The proposal

therefore accords with Local Plan Policies CS02, CS08 and DM15 and the general provisions of the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

- 1 Condition: The development hereby permitted has been determined in accordance with the following approved plans; DBLCLASSROOM and DLSHSPLBP.
- 1 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning
- 2 Condition: This permission shall expire on or before 5 years from the date of this permission and unless on or before that date application is made for an extension of the period of permission and such application is approved:
 - (a) the modular buildings shall be removed from the application site;
 - (b) the use of the land shall be discontinued; and
 - (c) there shall be carried out any work necessary to reinstate the application site to its condition prior to the implementation of this temporary permission.
- 2 Reason: In order that the Local Planning Authority may retain control over the development, in accordance with the NPPF.