



PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Planning Committee

BY: Head of Development and Building Control

DATE: 1st February 2022

DEVELOPMENT: Retrospective application for the installation of a free-standing storage container.

SITE: St Andrews Church of England Primary School Nuthurst Street Nuthurst
Horsham West Sussex RH13 6LH

WARD: Nuthurst and Lower Beeding

APPLICATION: DC/21/2691

APPLICANT: **Name:** The Governors of St Andrew's CE Primary School **Address:** St
Andrews CE Primary School Nuthurst Street Nuthurst RH13 6LH

REASON FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA: At the request of Councillor Bradnum

RECOMMENDATION: To approve permission for a temporary 12 month period subject to appropriate conditions

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 To consider the planning application.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

- 1.2 In January 2021 a retrospective application (DC/20/2366) for the installation of a free-standing storage container was approved on condition that the storage container shall be removed and the land shall be restored to its former condition on or before the 27 January 2022. As part of this permission it was considered that the storage container was not suitable as a permanent form but that it met a need for additional storage, with the temporary permission providing time for more suitable alternative provision to be made.
- 1.3 This current application seeks to retain the storage container for a further 12 months, until January 2023. The supporting information states that the school has not been able to put in place a long term plan to overcome the disruption that has been caused to its operations during the Covid 19 pandemic. The temporary retention of the container is therefore sought to allow the school to formulate a long term plan and come up with alternative proposals for additional storage.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

- 1.4 The application site is located south of the Grade II listed St. Andrews Church along Nuthurst Street, and within the Nuthurst Conservation Area. The site is located outside of any defined built-up area.
- 1.5 The main access to the school site is to the south side of the school, off Harriots Close. The location of the storage container, the subject of this application, however, is the north side of the school, near to the rear gated access of the school grounds which is used only by pupils and parishioners when attending St Andrews Church.

2. INTRODUCTION

STATUTORY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The following Policies are considered to be relevant to the assessment of this application:

2.2 National Planning Policy Framework

2.3 Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF 2015)

Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development

Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection

Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development

Policy 33 - Development Principles

Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets

Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

2.4 RELEVANT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Nuthurst Neighbourhood Plan 2015. Of relevance to this application is Policy 10 (Housing Design), Policy 11 (Community Facilities) and Policy 12 (Education Uses).

Nuthurst Parish Design Statement (2017)

2.5 Nuthurst Parish Design Statement

2.6 PLANNING HISTORY AND RELEVANT APPLICATIONS

DC/20/2366 Retrospective application for the installation of a free-standing storage container. PER 27.01.2021

DC/19/2390 Erection of a single storey extension to south elevation, refurbishment to existing main entrance and offices and installation of windows and doors to existing early years classroom PER 22.01.2020

N/39/97 Erection of fence new vehicular and pedestrian access and layby PER 19.11.1997

N/35/83 Extension to equipment store and re-site timber shed (From old Planning History) PER 09.03.1984

3. OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 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

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

- 3.2 **HDC Conservation Officer:** The structure is not reflective of that which might be expected in this location and does fail to preserve the character of the conservation area. The temporary permission of one year was to enable alternative arrangements to be made. If this has been difficult due to the current situation then there would be no objection to a further temporary permission of another year.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

- 3.3 **Nuthurst Parish Council:** Whilst the Parish Council would like to be able to support the School, it strongly objects to this application because a permanent large metal container is totally inappropriate in the Nuthurst Conservation Area. The Parish Council recommends that if the School needs permanent storage, it should make an application for a building of suitable design for the Conservation Area and which meets policies 33 and 34 in the HDPF.'
- 3.4 5 representations were received objecting to the proposal, stating that of objection were received, stating that the storage container is an eye sore and not in keeping with the surroundings and is not an appropriate development within the conservation area.

4. HOW THE PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION WILL PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS

- 4.1 Article 8 (Right to respect of a Private and Family Life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) of the Human Rights Act 1998 are relevant to this application, Consideration of Human rights forms part of the planning assessment below.

5. HOW THE PROPOSAL WILL HELP TO REDUCE CRIME AND DISORDER

- 5.1 It is not considered that the development would be likely to have any significant impact on crime and disorder.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENTS

- 6.1 The primary school was formed as a National school in the nineteenth century and appears on the first edition O.S. County series map 1874. The school has been extended piecemeal throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries but the principal range (the east elevation) is little changed, although the windows have diluted the historic character of the building. The building is viewed as a positive contributor to the character of the conservation area and is considered a non-designated heritage asset in its own right.
- 6.2 During construction works for a new extension to the school (application reference no. DC/19/2390), which began in July 2020 immediately after the end of the summer term, it was necessary for the school to empty several of the rooms of all furniture and equipment, and for that purpose a temporary storage container was installed adjacent to the rear entrance to the school.
- 6.3 It is understood that when the school re-opened to all students in September 2020 social distancing requirements under the new Covid regulations required much of the furniture and

equipment in all classrooms and the main school hall to be removed in order to make the school Covid-secure, and the only available space for this was the storage container that had been installed during the building works. Retrospective planning permission for the storage container to temporarily remain in place until 27 January 2022 was approved in January 2021, on the basis that it is temporarily required to house excess furniture and essential equipment that cannot be left within the school during Covid restrictions.

- 6.4 This application seeks to extend temporary permission granted under DC/20/2366 to temporarily remain in place a further 12 months until 27 January 2023 as the school has still not been able to put in place a long term plan to overcome the disruption that has been caused to its operations during the Covid 19 pandemic, to allow the school to formulate a long term plan, or to come up with alternative proposals for additional storage that would meet with the Council's approval.
- 6.5 Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) indicate that new development should be of a high standard of design and layout, with regard to natural and built surroundings, in terms of its scale, density, massing, siting, materials, orientation and character. Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) states, inter alia, that the council will sustain and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets. Development will not be permitted which would have an adverse impact on the setting or special architectural character or appearance of a listed building.
- 6.6 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF (2021) states that 'when considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be)'. Paragraph 200 continues to state that 'any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alterations or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification'.
- 6.7 The free-standing storage container is of no design merit and is not reflective of a structure that would be expected in this location, appearing as an intrusive and incongruous addition to the site which fails to preserve the character of the conservation area. It is therefore considered that the permanent retention of the storage container would not be acceptable.
- 6.8 The existing storage container is of a scale and siting which does not result in an unacceptable impact on neighbouring amenity. The container provides additional accommodation in connection with the established educational use of the site, and is not of a nature of scale which would lead to significant potential for harmful levels of noise or disturbance. The container has been sited on land under the ownership of the applicant, as evident from the submitted certificate, with access for maintenance considered to be a private matter outside the scope of this planning application.

Conclusions:

- 6.9 While the proposal is not considered to result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity, the storage container is of a utilitarian design which fails to preserve or enhance the setting of surrounding heritage assets, most notably the school building and Nuthurst Conservation Area.
- 6.10 This level of harm is less than substantial and is further tempered by its temporary nature. It is considered that the public benefit of the proposal, in providing additional short-term storage space which supports the functioning for the school in providing a safe environment for staff and children, outweighs this level of harm. It is therefore considered that a further temporary planning permission for a further 12-month period can be justified. This approach would

ensure the visual harm is limited to the short-term and would allow the school to continue to make use of the storage container during the current situation.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS:

7.1 That planning permission be granted subject to the following condition:-

1. **Regulatory (Time) Condition:** The storage container hereby permitted shall be removed and the land shall be restored to its former condition on or before the 27 January 2023.

Reason: The storage container is not considered satisfactory as a permanent form of development in accordance with Policies 33 and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Background Papers: DC/21/2691
DC/20/2366