



PLANNING BY DESIGN

FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION

**The Change of Use of one Residential Bungalow to a
Nursery and External Alterations at Newton Lodge,
Crosfields School, Shinfield Road, Reading RG2 9BL**

Planning Statement

**Written and prepared by Planning by Design on
behalf of Heath Potter**

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Planning By Design (**The agent**) has been instructed to act on behalf of Heath Potter (**the applicant**) to submit a pre-application enquiry to Wokingham Council (**Local Planning Authority**) for a The Change of Use of one Residential Bungalow to a Nursery and External Alterations (**the proposal**) at Newton Lodge, Crosfields School, Shinfield Road, Reading RG2 9BL (**the site**).

In support of this application, the following Planning Statement has been constructed to demonstrate the suitability of this site for this proposal and evaluate its accordance with national and local planning policy along with supplementary design guidance.

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying pre-planning Transport Statement.

1.2 The Site

The site is Newton Lodge, Crosfields School, Shinfield Road, Reading RG2 9BL. Crosfields School is an independent day school for ages 3 – 16. The school is located approximately 3.5km south of Reading centre, between the residential areas of Whitley Wood and Earley. Newton Lodge is currently a residential dwelling within the grounds of the school.

The area is a built-up residential area.

The Site Location Plan is provided in Figure 1.

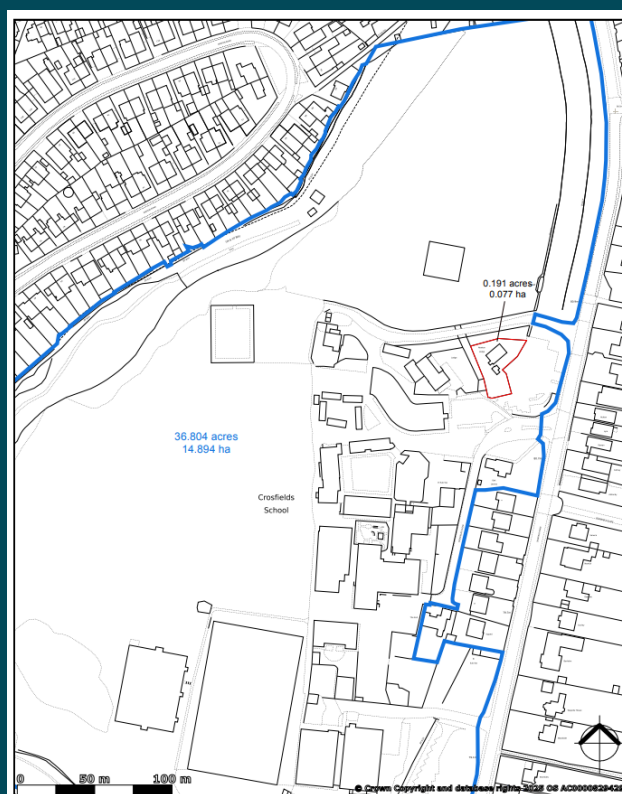


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

1.3 Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing transport conditions at the site and to outline the likely impact on the local highway. The report will define the likely trip generation.

2 The Proposal

2.1 Overview

It is proposed to change the use of the site to a nursery to accommodate up to an additional 20 children.

The maximum class size across the school is 20. The nursery currently has two classes, with this proposal adding a third. The new building will have capacity for 40 additional pupils, so in future a further class may be added. The school overall has a maximum capacity of 850 pupils, and the travel and transport arrangements confirm that the current parking provision and highway capacity can accommodate this. This maximum capacity numbers are rarely met.

In the 2023-24 term, the school had 770 pupils enrolled, and in the 2024-25 term 730 pupils were enrolled. The new term (2025-26) will start with 690 enrolled. The existing nursery has 19 pupils enrolled for the new term. Therefore, the school is operating significantly under capacity, meaning the 20 additional nursery places will not exceed the agreed capacity.

The core hours of the school are 8am – 4pm. The site opens earlier and stays late for breakfast club, meaning the site is open 7:30am – 5:45pm.

The property was last occupied as a residential property by the Deputy Head of the school, with the premises vacated on 31st July 2025.

2.2 Staff

The ratio of staff to pupils is 1:4. Therefore, an increase of 20 pupils would result in an additional 5 members of staff full-time equivalent. A further increase to 40 pupils would result in 10 additional members of staff.

3 Policy Considerations

3.1 Introduction

This section will outline the important policy considerations.

3.2 National Policy – National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National planning guidance, a key material consideration in planning decisions, is primarily outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF advises that, when determining

applications, local planning authorities should promptly approve proposals for sustainable development that align with an up-to-date development plan.

One of its core principles is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out in Paragraph 11. Local planning authorities are directed to support development proposals that contribute to economic, social, and environmental objectives, provided they accord with an up-to-date development plan.

Paragraph 95 of the NPPF is particularly relevant, as it emphasises the importance of ensuring a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Nurseries, as providers of early years education, fall under this category. The NPPF encourages local authorities to take a proactive, positive, and collaborative approach to meeting educational needs and to work with relevant stakeholders to identify and resolve planning issues.

The NPPF also highlights the importance of making effective use of land (Paragraphs 119–123), including the reuse of previously developed or underutilised buildings. Paragraph 93 supports the retention and development of accessible local services that enhance community well-being, such as childcare facilities.

3.3 Local Policy

Wokingham Core Strategy (2010)

CP1: Sustainable Development

Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that:

- 1) Maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment;*
- 2) Minimise the emission of pollutants into the wider environment;*
- 3) Limit any adverse effects on water quality (including ground water);*
- 4) Ensure the provision of adequate drainage;*
- 5) Minimise the consumption and use of resources and provide for recycling;*
- 6) Incorporate facilities for recycling of water and waste to help reduce per capita water consumption;*
- 7) Avoid areas of best and most versatile agricultural land;*
- 8) Avoid areas where pollution (including noise) may impact upon the amenity of future occupiers;*
- 9) Avoid increasing (and where possible reduce) risks of or from all forms of flooding (including from groundwater);*
- 10) Provide attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes; 1*
- 11) Demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car in line with CP6; and*
- 12) Contribute towards the goal of reaching zero-carbon developments⁴¹ as soon as possible by:*
 - a. Including appropriate on-site renewable energy features; and*
 - b. Minimising energy and water consumption by measures including the use of appropriate layout and orientation, building form, design and construction, and design to take account of microclimate so as to minimise carbon dioxide emissions through giving careful consideration to how all aspects of development form.*

CP2: Inclusive Communities

To ensure that new development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities (including the provision of community facilities) to meet long term needs, planning permission will be granted for proposals that address the requirements of:

- a) An ageing population, particularly in terms of housing, health and wellbeing;*
- b) Children, young people and families, including the co-ordination of services to meet their needs;*
- c) People with special needs, including those with a physical, sensory or learning disability or problems accessing services; and*
- d) The specific identified needs of minority groups in the borough, including Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and black and minority ethnic groups. Proposals for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople (including allocations in other Development Plan Documents) will demonstrate that:*
 - i. The site is located either within or close to the development limits of a settlement in policy CP9 in order to maximise the possibilities for social inclusion and sustainable patterns of living; and*
 - ii. The proposed site is not disproportionate to the scale of the existing settlement whether singly or cumulatively with any existing sites in the area.*

CP3: General Principles for Development

Planning permission will be granted for proposals that:

- a) Are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life;*
- b) Provide a functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable scheme;*
- c) Have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses.*
- d) Maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species;*
- e) Use the full potential of the site and contribute to the support for suitable complementary facilities and uses;*
- f) Contribute to a sense of place in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings (especially existing dwellings) including the use of appropriate landscaping;*
- g) Provide for a framework of open space in secure community use achieving at least 4.65 ha/1,000 population provision together with recreational/sporting facilities in addition to private amenity space;*
- h) Contribute towards the provision of an appropriate sustainable network of community facilities;*
- i) Do not lead to a net loss of dwellings and other residential accommodation or land; and*
- j) Do not lead to a loss of community or recreational facilities/land or infrastructure unless suitable alternative provision is available.*

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they have responded to the above criteria through the submission of Design and Access Statements, clear and informative plans, elevations and street scene and where required Masterplans, Development Briefs, Concept Statements and Design Codes.

4 Planning Alignment

4.1 Introduction

This section will assess the above proposal and show its alignment with the above identified planning policies.

4.2 Principle of Development

The proposal seeks the change of use of Newton Lodge from a residential dwelling to a nursery, with limited external alterations. The principle of development is strongly supported at both national and local level. Paragraph 95 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that local planning authorities should give great weight to the need to create, expand, or alter schools and childcare facilities to ensure a sufficient choice of places for children and families. The proposed development is therefore fully aligned with national objectives for sustainable communities.

Although Newton Lodge is currently classed as a residential property, its location within the secure grounds of Crosfields School and its close proximity to the existing nursery mean that it is not realistically suited to continued occupation as an independent home. The property was last occupied by a member of staff and, given its position and relationship with the school estate, it is highly unlikely to be desirable as a conventional dwelling. The school would not place the dwelling on the open market for safeguarding reasons. Therefore, reusing it for an educational function is both logical and sustainable, making efficient use of a vacant building in accordance with NPPF Paragraphs 119–123, which encourage the reuse of underutilised land and buildings.

At the local level, Wokingham Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP2 and CP3 support the principle of community and educational development that enhances social inclusion, contributes to sustainable patterns of living, and provides high-quality facilities. The proposed change of use is consistent with these objectives.

4.3 Economic Considerations

The proposed nursery will result in the creation of approximately five additional full-time equivalent jobs, directly supporting local employment. This is consistent with the economic objectives of sustainable development set out in Paragraph 8 of the NPPF and Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy, which requires development to contribute positively to the local economy.

The provision of additional childcare places also has indirect economic benefits, enabling parents and carers in the local community to access reliable early years provision and thereby increasing their ability to participate in the workforce.

4.4 Environmental Considerations

Newton Lodge will be adapted rather than rebuilt, thereby limiting environmental impact and making efficient use of existing resources. This approach directly supports the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CP1, which seeks to minimise the consumption of new resources and promote the reuse of existing buildings.

There will be no adverse impacts on landscape, ecology, or flood risk. The limited external alterations will be contained within the established school site, which is already heavily developed. The accompanying Transport Statement demonstrates that the increase in trip generation will be modest and manageable, with no material impact on air quality or emissions. The proposal therefore complies with the environmental objectives of the NPPF and the requirements of Policies CP1 and CP3.

4.5 Social Considerations

The social benefits of the proposal are significant. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and to ensure the provision of accessible services that enhance the well-being of communities. Early years childcare facilities are specifically recognised as critical to meeting the needs of families.

By providing up to 20 additional nursery places (with capacity for 40), the proposal directly supports local families in Whitley Wood, Earley, and surrounding areas, helping to meet demand for high-quality childcare provision. This is fully consistent with Core Strategy Policy CP2, which requires new development to contribute to sustainable and inclusive communities, with particular reference to the needs of children, young people, and families.

4.6 Highway Considerations

The Transport Statement submitted with the proposal demonstrates that the development will not have a severe impact on the local highway network, in line with NPPF Paragraph 111. The additional drop-off and pick-up activity associated with 20 children will be modest and will be managed within the existing access and parking arrangements of the school.

The site benefits from sustainable transport links, with public bus services operating along Shinfield Road and pedestrian/cycle infrastructure connecting to nearby residential areas. This supports Policy CP1(11), which requires development to reduce reliance on private cars and encourage sustainable travel patterns.

4.7 Conclusion

The proposed change of use of Newton Lodge to a nursery is entirely consistent with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF. The building's location within the school estate makes it unsuitable for long-term residential occupation but ideally placed for educational use. The scheme delivers clear economic, social, and environmental benefits, makes efficient use of an underutilised property, and accords with the relevant policies of the Wokingham Core Strategy.

5 Summary and Conclusion

5.1 Summary

This Planning Statement has been prepared by Planning by Design on behalf of Heath Potter to support a pre-application enquiry to Wokingham Council for The Change of Use of one Residential Bungalow to a Nursery and External Alterations at Newton Lodge, Crosfields School.

- The development makes efficient use of an existing vacant building, avoiding the need for new construction and supporting the objectives of sustainable development. It will create approximately five new full-time equivalent jobs, contributing positively to the local economy and enabling greater workforce participation through access to childcare.
- Environmental impacts are minimal, with no adverse effects on landscape, ecology or flood risk, and the limited increase in traffic is demonstrated in the Transport Statement to be acceptable.
- The proposal delivers notable social benefits by providing up to 20 additional early years places (with capacity for 40), directly supporting families in the surrounding area and enhancing life chances for children.
- Design changes are modest and retain the domestic scale and character of the building while adapting it for secure and functional nursery use, and the site is accessible by sustainable modes of transport.

5.2 Conclusion

This report has demonstrated that the proposal aligns with national and local planning policies and therefore deem it to be acceptable.

5.3 Next Steps

We welcome comments on the acceptability of the proposal from the Local Planning Authority.

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