

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	261658
Site Address:	Luckley House School, Luckley Road, Wokingham, RG40 3EU
Expiry Date:	10 September 2026
Site Visit Date:	16 July 2026
Proposal: Full application for the proposed retention of 1 no. modular classroom building plus associated air conditioning units.	

PLANNING POLICY	
National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP2 – Inclusive Communities CP3 – General Principles for Development CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM15 - Site History
Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (LPU)	C5 – Parking and electric vehicle charging DH2 – Safeguarding amenity HC5 – Environmental protection
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
970643	Proposed single storey extension to school to form conservatory	Approved 22/08/1997
981824	Proposed alterations and extension to existing assembly hall	Approved 24/07/1998
980610	Proposed upgrading interior and extension to Assembly Hall	Approved 24/07/1998
011892	Proposed erection of two storey library building with classrooms for school use	Approved 20/02/2002
041945	Proposed single storey rear extension to art room	Approved 18/11/2004
082049	Proposed erection of two storey building for music with classrooms and rehearsal room for school use.	Approved 08/08/2008
081627	Proposed erection of new maintenance building	Approved 18/07/2008
110948	Proposed construction of new entrance into school site from Luckley Road, plus revision of traffic circulation and improvements to roads, parking, and related infrastructure.	Approved 09/09/2011
112183	Application for variation to condition 2 of planning consent F/2011/1038 for the amendment of plan numbers (the revised drawings include changes to car parking layout and access for pedestrians and vehicles)	Approved 13/01/2012
120451	Application for variation of condition 2 of planning approval F/2011/1038 for the amendment of plan numbers (the revised drawings include changes to road, parking & footpath layouts, and site access control).	Approved 07/06/2017
190673	Full application for the proposed construction of a reduced size multi-use synthetic turf sports pitch with a 3m - 4.5m high fence and 6no 12m column floodlights	Approved 14/06/2019
201056	Full application for the proposed changes to fenestration, including the replacement of existing UPVC windows with aluminium windows, plus re-cladding to the southeast and southwest elevations of Drake Hall	Approved 09/06/2020
210025	Full application for the erection of a 1.7m high brick wall following demolition of the existing wooden fence.	Approved 17/02/2021
210293	Application for advertisement consent for 1no. externally illuminated entrance sign.	Approved 31/03/2023
230992	Full application for the proposed erection of a temporary classroom for a period of three years	Approved 12/07/2023

	plus installation of associated air conditioning units.	
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CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments received.
WBC Drainage – No objection, subject to condition.
WBC Highways – Request for further information. Information supplied from the planning agent via email on 03/09/2026.
WBC Built Heritage Officer – No objection.
WBC Education (School Place Planning) – No comments received.

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments received.
South East Water – No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No comments received.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	No comments received.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

Luckley House School occupies large grounds to the south-east of Wokingham Town Centre, entered from Luckley Road. The original building on the site, Sir Ernest Newton House built in 1907 is a designated Grade II listed building, listed due to its special architectural and historic interest. Drake Hall is one of several new buildings added over the second half of the 20th Century to provide necessary accommodation for the school.

The application building comprises a single-storey modular structure providing four classrooms. It is located in the northeastern corner of the site approximately 70m east of the designated heritage asset.

Proposal:

This application seeks approval for the permanent retention of the temporary building including no. 4 existing air conditioning (AC) units.

The existing building was approved to cater for a small increase in pupil numbers from 350 to 365 (Luckley House School is registered as a school for 380 pupils). The planning agent confirmed (email dated 03/09/2026) that the permanent retention of the building would not result in any increase in pupil or staff numbers.

The Planning Statement sets out the justification for the permanent retention of the modular classroom building. It explains that, whilst the school has a long-term masterplan for the site, its current priorities and funding commitments do not allow for the implementation of a comprehensive redevelopment programme at this time. Consequently, the building continues to serve an operational need, providing teaching

accommodation that remains in regular use, and as such, seeks its permanent retention to meet the school's educational requirements.

Principle of Development:

The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

NPPF Policy HC1(2) states that local authorities should attach considerable importance to providing for sufficient education facilities (including early years, school and post-16 provision).

The site is located within a major development location settlement limits and as such the principle of development is acceptable under NPPF Policy S4 and providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy.

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

CS Policy CP2 aims to ensure that new development contributes to the formation of sustainable and inclusive communities through the provision of community facilities (including development for education), and that the requirements of children are addressed. In this respect, the modular classroom building provides additional teaching space for the benefit of children and young adults, therefore the development complies with the requirements set out in policy CP2 and the NPPF and the principle of development would be acceptable.

Character of the Area:

The existing classroom building comprises a modular structure raised approximately 0.4m above ground level on stilts. It measures approximately 15m in length and 12.1m in width and features a shallow pitched roof with a maximum ridge height of approximately 3.8m.

Planning permission 230992 acknowledged that the building's material palette, comprising grey horizontal Marley Board fibre cement cladding and uPVC windows, was not wholly reflective of the external appearance of other buildings within the school site. However, a sample of the proposed cladding was reviewed by the case officer and was considered acceptable within the context of the school campus and its surrounding built form.

The building has remained unaltered since its construction in 2023. Whilst it is visible from sections of Luckley Road, it is proportionate in terms of its scale and massing relative to the wider school site. Its siting is discreet, positioned to the side of the eastern car park and screened by the high close-boarded boundary fencing adjacent to the staff and service vehicle access.

The associated air conditioning units are ground-mounted within protective enclosures and are not visible from the public realm. As such, they are not considered out of keeping with the service infrastructure and equipment typically associated with educational establishments.

Overall, consistent with the conclusions reached under planning permission 230992, the building does not result in any significant visual harm to the school site or the wider street scene. The retention of the modular classroom building is therefore considered to preserve the character and appearance of the surrounding area and accords with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy.

Heritage:

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on Local Planning Authorities to have 'special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses.'

Policy TB24 of the Managing Delivery Document (Local Plan) supports development that will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets.

Luckley House School was Grade II listed on the 15th of July 1987. The Grade II listed Main School House, designed by Sir Ernest Newton and completed in 1907, is a substantial brick-built country house in the Free Elizabethan style. The building is distinguished by its symmetrical elevations, prominent chimneys, leaded casement windows, decorative brick detailing and landscaped setting. It forms the principal heritage asset within the school site and makes a positive contribution to the character and historic interest of the campus.

The Council's Built Heritage Officer was consulted and raised no objection to the proposal. In the original permission (230992) the Built Heritage Officer acknowledged that the modular classroom building introduced additional built form within the setting of the Grade II listed Main School House. However, the impact was considered limited given the building's reversible nature and location within an established area of school development and parking.

In summary, the Officer has concluded that while permission is now sought for its permanent retention, the structure remains a modern modular building with an inherently limited lifespan and is not expected to form a permanent feature of the site indefinitely. Accordingly, any impact on the significance of the listed building through changes to its setting is considered limited and would amount to less than substantial harm, which should be weighed against the public benefits of providing continued educational accommodation.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity.

The nearest residential properties are located along Luckley Road and Luckley Wood, due to the separation distance between these properties and the location of the existing building within the school grounds, it is considered the development does not result in

harm to the existing residential amenities of surrounding residential occupiers on grounds of outlook, loss of privacy or overbearingness.

Noise

The modular classroom building benefits from four air conditioning units located on its north-eastern and south-eastern elevations. The impact of these units was considered under planning permission 230992. As part of that permission, the specification details of the proposed air conditioning units were secured through the approved plans condition, with the approved documentation confirming a maximum sound power level of 67dB(A). The units have remained unaltered since their installation in 2023.

The nearest residential properties to the air conditioning units are no. 30 Luckley Road, approximately 30m to the north, no. 33 Luckley Road, approximately 36m to the east, and no. 45 Luckley Road, approximately 30m to the south.

Since the installation of the units in 2023, the Local Planning Authority has not received any complaints relating to noise generated by the air conditioning equipment. In the absence of any evidence demonstrating adverse impacts on neighbouring occupiers and noting that the approved units remain in situ and unchanged, it is considered that the development does not result in unacceptable noise disturbance and continues to provide an acceptable level of residential amenity.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The application seeks the permanent retention of the existing modular classroom building located to the east of the staff and service vehicle access. The Council's Highways Officer was consulted on the proposal and raised no objection, subject to there being no increase in staff or pupil numbers associated with the development. The applicant's agent has confirmed, by email dated 3 September 2026, that the proposal would not result in any increase in either staff or pupil numbers.

The Highways Officer also noted that the air conditioning unit located nearest to the southern corner of the building has the potential to restrict safe passenger access to and from vehicles parked adjacent to the building. Whilst this observation is acknowledged, the unit has been in situ since the building was erected in 2023 and there is no evidence that it has adversely affected the operation of the car park or pedestrian access arrangements during that time. Given the established arrangement and the absence of any identified highway safety concerns, it is not considered necessary or reasonable to require the relocation of the unit.

Accordingly, the proposal is not considered to give rise to any adverse highway safety or parking impacts, and no objection is raised on highways grounds.

Flooding and Drainage:

Section 18 of the NPPF, Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy and Policies CC09 and CC10 of the Managing Development Delivery DPD seek to ensure development is protected from flood risk, incorporates sustainable drainage measures where appropriate, and does not increase surface water runoff.

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at the lowest risk of fluvial flooding. The site is also identified as being at low risk of surface water flooding.

Under planning permission 230992, it was recognised that the development would result in only a limited increase in impermeable surfacing, and the Council's Drainage Officer raised no objection to the proposal. Whilst additional drainage details were requested during the assessment of that application, it was ultimately concluded that such information was not necessary to determine the application.

The Council's Drainage Officer has again been consulted as part of the current application and has requested further drainage information. However, the modular building has been in situ since 2023 and there is no evidence that its presence has resulted in drainage, flooding or surface water runoff issues. Given the established operation of the development and the absence of any identified drainage concerns, it is not considered necessary or reasonable to request additional drainage details in support of the permanent retention of the building.

Accordingly, the proposal is not considered to give rise to any unacceptable flood risk or drainage impacts and is therefore considered to accord with Section 18 of the NPPF, Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy and Policies CC09 and CC10 of the Managing Development Delivery DPD

Conclusion:

The application seeks planning permission for the permanent retention of an existing modular classroom building and associated air conditioning units within the grounds of Luckley House School. The building has been in continuous use since 2023 and continues to provide essential teaching accommodation to meet the school's operational needs.

The proposal is acceptable in principle and supports the continued provision of educational facilities in accordance with the aims of the Development Plan and the NPPF. The building is appropriately sited within the school campus and does not result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.

The proposal would result in a limited impact on the setting of the Grade II listed Main School House. However, having regard to the advice of the Council's Built Heritage Officer, this would amount to less than substantial harm at the lower end of the spectrum.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of HE6 of Section 20 of the NPPF, this harm is outweighed by the public benefits associated with the ongoing provision of educational accommodation.

The development is also considered acceptable in terms of neighbouring amenity, highway safety, parking, flood risk and drainage, with no technical objections that would justify refusal.

Taking all matters into account, the proposal accords with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and the NPPF and is therefore recommended for approval.

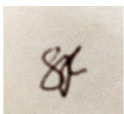
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development.

Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010): In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	2 September 2026
Earliest date for decision:	13 August 2026

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	7.9.26

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Major Development Location
Thames Basin Heath SPA Mitigation Zone – 5km
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone – Red
Westcott Ward
Wokingham Parish