



Wokingham Borough Council **Planning Statement**

Shinfield Infant and Nursery School - Alteration Works

December 2025

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Wokingham Borough Council

Planning Statement

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by WSP UK Ltd (WSP) on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council (the 'Applicant'), to support a joint application for Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for the demolition of the front boundary dwarf wall, fencing and gate, and insertion of a replacement school gate adjacent to the footpath along Hyde End Road/School Green (B3349) (the 'Proposed Development') at Shinfield Infant and Nursery school, Shinfield, Wokingham. Figure 1 below shows the application site.

Figure 1. Shinfield Infant and Nursery School



1.1.2 The dwarf wall is located within the curtilage of the school which is a listed building and therefore Listed Building Consent is required in addition to Full Planning Permission for its demolition.

1.1.3 A joint application for Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent will be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for

determination under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

1.2 Need for the Project

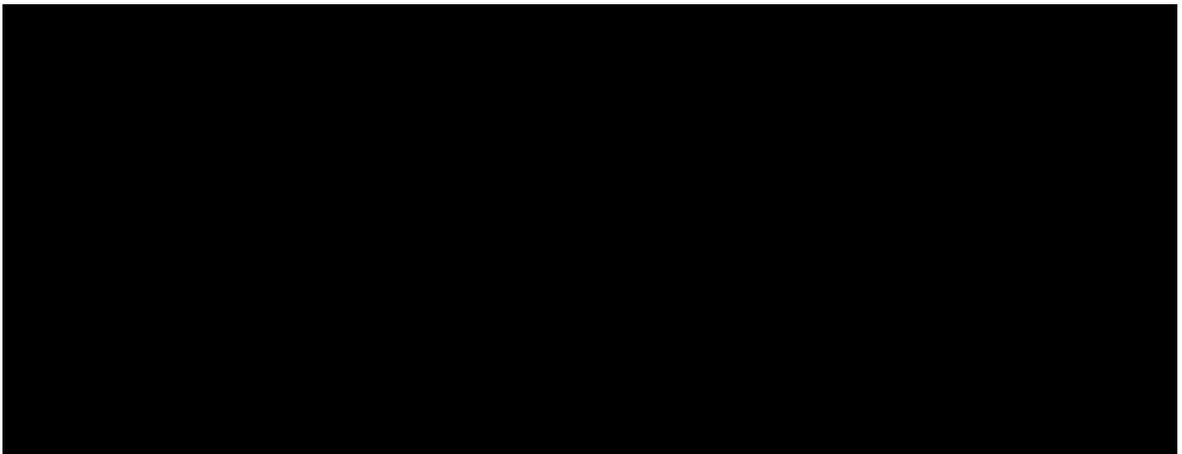
- 1.2.1 The Proposed Development is required to facilitate the development of a new and widened footpath along Hyde End Road/School Green (B3349). The proposal for this footpath is submitted as part of a separate Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) application and is therefore not the subject of this planning application. The widening of the footpath is essential and has the support of Shinfield School, as there is currently no suitable pedestrian route that provides safe access for children and parents travelling to Shinfield School from Lailey Path, adjacent to Hyde End Road/School Green (B3349).
- 1.2.2 The current access to Shinfield Infant and Nursery School is via a gate positioned at the intersection of B3349 and Millworth Lane (Figure 2). This location requires children, parents and carers to cross the road twice, creating a safety risk. Pedestrians currently walk along the grass verge to avoid crossing the road twice, which is a safety concern and highlights the desire line of pedestrians.
- 1.2.3 The absence of a dedicated footpath and the gate's position force pedestrians to navigate busy traffic, increasing the likelihood of accidents. The current arrangement disrupts traffic flow on the B3349, as vehicles slow down or stop unexpectedly for crossing pedestrians. The lack of a continuous, safe pedestrian route deters seamless and safe access to the school.
- 1.2.4 The Proposed Development, including footpath widening, will provide safe and direct access to the school for all users. It will also reduce conflict between pedestrians and vehicles, improving traffic flow and encourage active travel by creating a safer environment for families.

Figure 2. Existing Gate to Access the School



1.2.5 A Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) application for the new footpath has been submitted to the LPA along with the joint Planning and Listed Building consent application for the Proposed Development.

1.2.6



- The Proposed Development is a small-scale development and would not be subject to statutory Biodiversity Net Gain under the Environment Act 2021 and the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, as it meets the de minimis exemption criteria for the following reasons:
- No Priority Habitat Impact: The site has been checked against Natural England's Priority Habitat Inventory and contains no priority habitats within the red line boundary.
- Habitat Impact Below Threshold: The proposal affects an area of less than 25 m² of non-priority habitat and does not impact any linear habitat exceeding 5 metres.
- Existing Hardstanding: The majority of the development footprint comprises existing sealed surfaces (hardstanding), which have a biodiversity metric score of zero.

1.2.7 Therefore, the statutory requirement to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain does not apply to this Proposed Development.

1.3 Application Contents

1.3.1 This planning application is accompanied by the following documents in accordance with the national and Wokingham Borough Council's validation checklists and supporting pre-application advice received:

- Application Form and Certificate of Ownership
- Cover Letter
- Site Location Plan
- Site Plan
- Elevations
- Design and Access Statement (included within this Planning Statement)
- Heritage Statement

Table 1-1 Application Drawing Schedule

Drawing Reference	Revision Number	Drawing Title	Scale
8093402-WSP-IP-PLN-010	P01	Site Location Plan for Full Planning and Listed Building Consent Application	1:1250
8093402-WSP-IP-PLN-011	P01	Existing Site Plan for Full Planning and Listed Building Consent Application	1:200
8093402-WSP-IP-PLN-012	P01	Proposed General Arrangement for Full Planning and Listed Building Consent Application	1:200

Drawing Reference	Revision Number	Drawing Title	Scale
8093402-WSP-IP-PLN-013	P02	Existing and Proposed Elevations for Full Planning and Listed Building Consent Application	1:200
8093402-WSP-IP-PLN-014	P01	Existing Photo Elevations and Viewpoint Locations for Full Planning and Listed Building Consent Application	1:200

2. Site and Surroundings

2.1 Site Description

- 2.1.1 Shinfield Infant and Nursery School, “the site” is located at School Green, Shinfield, within the administrative area of Wokingham Borough Council. The application site is located within a generally sub-urban area to the south of Reading and west of Wokingham.
- 2.1.2 To the north of the application site lies the School Green War Memorial Park with two residential dwellings located to the immediate north. School Green (B3349) road runs immediately to the south of the site running in a southwest direction with residential properties located further to the south.
- 2.1.3 There is a new housing development to the west and south-west which has created an increase in footfall from this direction to the school, with no formal footpath from Lailey Path that continues to the school.
- 2.1.4 The existing school building is a Grade II Listed Building (the school and site forms List Entry No: 1136149 (Historic England) with the site having undergone subsequent extensions and alterations since it was constructed. The listing details (not an exhaustive list) confirms the school dated 1707 extended 19th Century and altered in the 20th Century. The school was built by Richard Piggott, Master Cutler of London. The building includes brick, tiled hipped, gabled and coped gabled roofs of varying heights. Irregular plan and consists of one and two storeys, and two storeys with attics. The road front element includes C18 part in centre with brick plinth, first floor string, moulded, modillioned wood cornice, flanking chimneys either side of hipped roof; two hipped dormers with two light leaded casements.
- 2.1.5 The area is designated as a 5km Linear Mitigation Zone for the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (TBH SPA), however, the Proposed Development would not be considered likely to impact this area, noting the proposed scale of the works which are minor.

2.2 Surrounding Environment

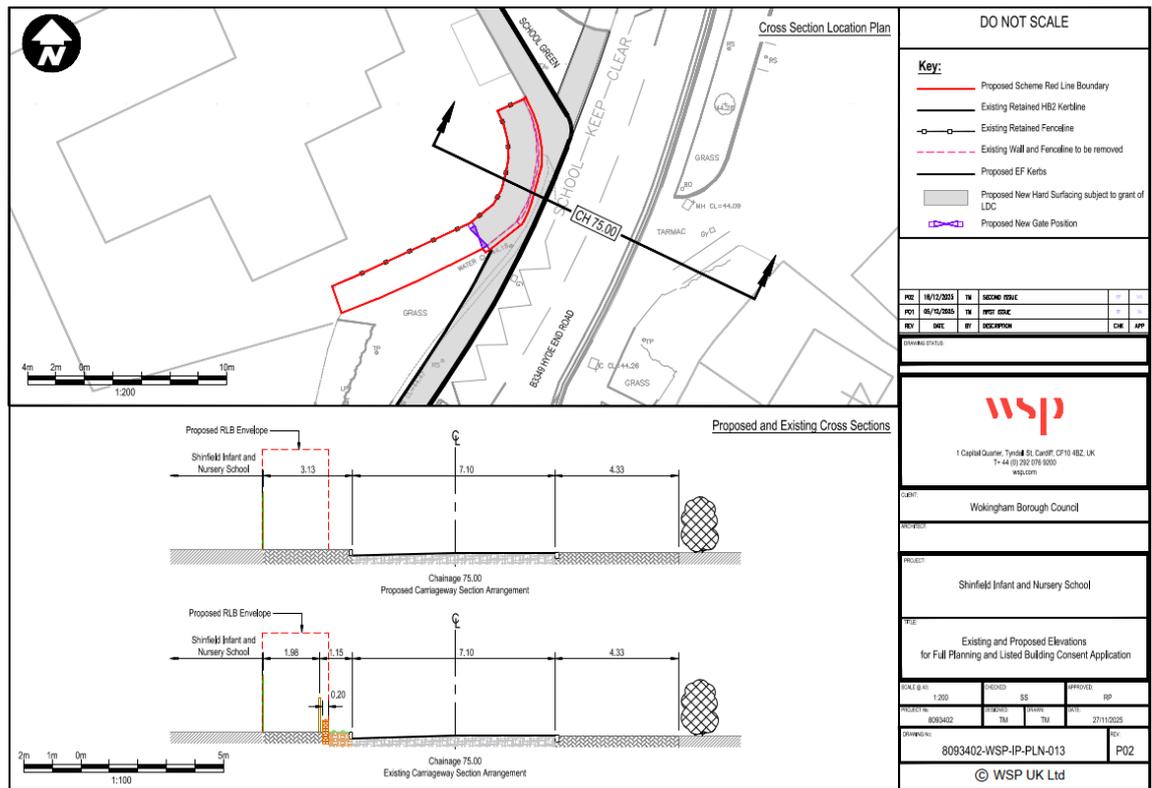
- 2.2.1 The site is not located within or within close proximity to any international, national or locally designated sites for nature or geological conservation. It is however located within the Impact Risk Zones for two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – the Stanford End Mill and River Loddon Risk Zones for two SSSI (located approx. 2.5km to the south-west) and the Longmoor Bog SSSI (located approx. 5km to the south-east). The Proposed Development would not however, be considered likely to impact these sites, noting the proposed scale of the works and the distance to these sites.

3. Design and Access

3.1 Design

- 3.1.1 The Proposed Development will preserve the existing fence and wall directly fronting the school and remove the front dwarf wall and fence along the Hyde End Road/School Green (B3349).
- 3.1.2 The replacement school gate will be installed to replicate the existing gate in all aspects, including dimensions, material, and finish. No changes to the design, appearance, or structural specifications are proposed.
- 3.1.3 The proposed elevation viewpoints are illustrated in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Elevation Viewpoints

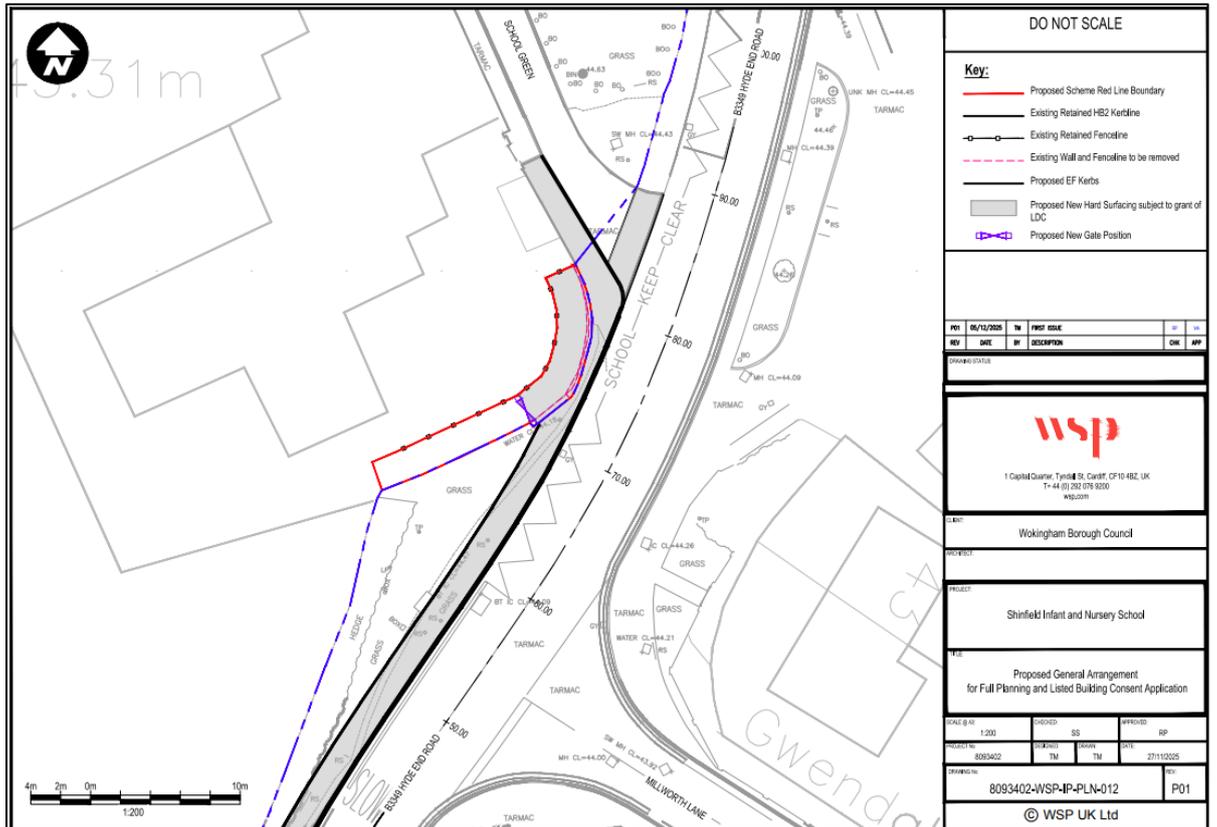


3.2 Access

3.2.1

Access to the school will be provided via the newly widened footpath along Hyde End Road/School Green (B3349), which is being delivered as part of the LDC application. A newly positioned school gate will serve as the main entrance to the school, as indicated on Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Proposed New Footpath



4. Planning History

4.1.1 The following planning applications have been identified as being material considerations in the consideration of this planning application, the subject of this Planning Statement following a search of the LPA's online database accessed on 23rd October 2025:

Table 4-1 Planning History

LPA Ref.	Address	Description	Outcome	Decision Date
232001	Shinfield Infant And Nursery School School Green Shinfield Wokingham RG2 9EH	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. single storey 6m x 4m timber pod.	Approved	21 st November 2023

5. Planning Policy and Considerations

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section sets out the planning policy context for the Proposed Development. In accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning applications must be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless 'material considerations' indicate otherwise. The following section introduces the relevant legislative and policy framework in relation to planning matters. This section covers the relevant national and local planning policy. It also identifies the main planning considerations arising from the development plan applicable to this planning application as well as the material considerations warranting the grant of Planning Permission for the Proposed Development.

In the context of the consideration of the main effects of the Proposed Development, the main planning considerations are:

- Principle of the Development;
- Accessibility and Highway Safety; and
- Heritage.

5.1.2 The adopted development plan relevant to the Proposed Development comprises of:

- Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (January 2010)
- Wokingham Borough Development Plan Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Enhancing the Borough's environment and character through exceptional development (February 2014)

5.1.3 WBC is also currently preparing a new local plan which will deliver the new planning strategy for Wokingham, for the period to 2040.

- 'Right Homes, Right Places', Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023 - 2040 Proposed Submission Plan

5.2 National Planning Policy

5.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and its implications.

5.2.2 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that "*The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner*".

- 5.2.3 The objective of sustainable development can be summarised as *“meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*.
- 5.2.4 To achieve this objective, at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11) which includes approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.
- 5.2.5 The Proposed Development facilitates the delivery of healthy, inclusive and safe places.
- 5.2.6 Chapter 8 Paragraph 96 part (b) of the NPPF states that *“Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas”*.
- 5.2.7 Paragraph 202 states that *“Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value²³. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations”*.
- 5.2.8 Chapter 16 Paragraph 215 states that *“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”*

5.3 Local Planning Policy

- 5.3.1 The adopted development plan relevant to this site comprises:
- Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (January 2010)
 - Wokingham Borough Development Plan Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Enhancing the Borough's environment and character through exceptional development (February 2014)
- Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (January 2010)**
- 5.3.2 Policy CP1: Sustainable Development states *“Planning Permission will be granted for proposals that protect environmental quality, minimise pollution, safeguard water resources with proper drainage, and promote efficient use and recycling of materials and water. Developments must avoid high-value agricultural land and polluted areas, reduce flood risks, and deliver safe, attractive, adaptable designs. They should also support sustainable transport by reducing reliance on private cars, and contribute to zero-carbon*

goals through renewable energy, efficient design, and reduced energy and water consumption.”.

- 5.3.3 Policy CP2: Inclusive communities states that *“Planning Permission will be granted for developments that create sustainable, inclusive communities by meeting the long-term needs of older people, children, families, and those with special needs, while also addressing the requirements of minority groups such as Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Show people, and ethnic communities. Proposals for traveller sites must be located near settlements to promote social inclusion and ensure they are proportionate to the scale of the existing community”.*
- 5.3.4 Policy CP3: General Principles for development states that *“Planning Permission will be granted for developments that are appropriately scaled and well-designed, safeguard ecological, heritage and landscape features, and enhance biodiversity. Proposals must provide safe, accessible, adaptable schemes that integrate with their surroundings, contribute to a strong sense of place, and include adequate open space, recreational facilities, and community infrastructure. They should avoid any net loss of housing or community assets and demonstrate compliance with these criteria through clear design and access documentation.”*
- 5.3.5 Policy CP8: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area states that *“Development which alone or in combination is likely to have a significant effect on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects are delivered.”*

Wokingham Borough Development Plan Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Enhancing the Borough’s environment and character through exceptional development (February 2014)

- 5.3.6 Policy CC01: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development 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.*
- Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:*
- a. Any adverse impacts of planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) taken as a whole; or*
 - b. Specific policies in the National Planning Policy Framework indicate that development should be restricted.”*
- 5.3.7 Policy TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas) states that *“Proposals within or affecting the setting of Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments or Conservation Areas shall pay special attention to: i. Conserving original architectural features such as windows, doors, chimney stacks, walls and gates ii. The*

scale, proportions, design and materials of new proposals in relation to the existing heritage asset iii. Retaining original or historic garden or landscape features.”

Emerging Policy

Right Homes, Right Places - Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023 - 2040 Proposed Submission Plan

- 5.3.8 Draft Policy SS2 Spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy has identified the site as “Modest Settlement”. The policy defines Modest Settlement as places which provide a reasonable range of services and facilities that serve the needs of those that live there. In general, they are medium sized villages. To maintain and enhance their role, these places will accommodate an appropriate level of housing growth, where opportunities exist.
- 5.3.9 Draft Policy ER 5 The Hierarchy of Centres states that: *“All centres will be supported and strengthened to ensure they continue to be the focus of local communities. Development proposals that protect and enhance their role and function will be supported in principle.”* The policy identifies the location of the school as Local Centres.
- 5.3.10 Draft Policy C1 Active and sustainable transport and accessibility states that: *“Development proposals should prioritise travel by active means (including walking, cycling and wheeling), public transport, and incorporate inclusive infrastructure which provides connections to and within the development. This should focus on making the most efficient use of existing highway, including, where appropriate, reallocation of space to more sustainable mode”.*
- 5.3.11 Draft Policy DH5 The Historic Environment states that: *“Where development proposals have the potential to affect a heritage asset and/or its setting, a heritage assessment should be prepared in a level of detail proportionate to the asset’s importance. This assessment should be submitted as part of a planning application and should describe the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, before assessing the potential impact of the proposal on its significance”.*

Other Considerations

Wokingham Borough Local Transport Plan 4 (2025) Connecting People and Places

- 5.3.12 The Local Transport Plan 2025 (LTP4) aims to “connect people and place” and is structured around the themes of Create Healthy and Safe Places, Reduce Environmental Impacts and Develop the Economy. LTP4 outlines the ambition to deliver safe and accessible walking and cycling routes, reduce car dependency for short journeys such as the school run, and support access to schools through the development of a Sustainable Routes to School Strategy.

5.4 Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

- 5.4.1 The application site is located within the borough's settlement limits as set out in the local plan. In principle, development in this location is supported taking into consideration compliance with relevant policies and an assessment against material planning considerations, including accessibility, highway safety and heritage constraints. These matters have been addressed below.

Accessibility and Highway Safety

- 5.4.2 As set out in Policy CP1 and Policy CP2 the Proposed Development delivers functional and accessible spaces that enhance safety and convenience for children and parents travelling to and from the school.
- 5.4.3 Furthermore, in line with the Core Strategy and the emerging local plan, the Proposed Development addresses the needs of children and families, supporting the creation of sustainable, inclusive communities by improving connectivity and fostering a safe, welcoming environment.
- 5.4.4 The Proposed Development addresses a clear safety and accessibility need by supporting the objectives of Policy C1 of the adopted local plan and Wokingham Borough Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), which aims to deliver safe and accessible walking and cycling routes, and support access to schools.

Heritage

- 5.4.5 A Heritage Statement is submitted in support of the planning application for the Proposed Development. The Heritage Statement provides an understanding of the significance of Shinfield Infant and Nursery School, a Grade II listed building (designated as 'The School'), as well as other heritage assets within the wider study area. It also considers the contribution of the asset's setting to its significance.
- 5.4.6 The Heritage Statement assesses the likely impact of the proposed works on that significance, in support of the planning application for the Proposed Development. Additionally, it evaluates the impact of the Proposed Development on the boundary dwarf wall.
- 5.4.7 The School is located within the Shinfield Area of Special Character (AoSC). This AoSC includes School Green, a triangular green space featuring a war memorial and a car park (Wokingham District Council, 1994). The AoSC also comprises several two storey residential buildings, a Co-op store, and The Bell & Bottle Public House. The area is defined by low-density, two storey buildings. The streetscape is open and spacious, offering clear views across School Green to the school and adjacent buildings, complemented by several mature trees that contribute to the area's character.

- 5.4.8 The NPPF defines significance as *'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.'* The determination of the significance is based on statutory designation and/or professional judgement against these values (guided by Historic England's Statements of Heritage Significance 2019). The Grade II listed school building is identified as 'high' significance. The school was listed as Grade II in January 1967. The existing wall is presumed to date at least to the late 19th century and to be part of the developments at the school that happened at that time.
- 5.4.9 The wall contributes to the school's historic boundary definition. The wall is assumed to be curtilage listed to the Grade II listed School and, as such, its removal would require Listed Building Consent.
- 5.4.10 The removal of the front boundary dwarf wall would result in a physical impact and alter the way the asset is currently experienced; however, its overall historic interest and significance would not be harmed. The repositioning and cleaning of the gate will maintain its functional and visual role, ensuring its contribution to the setting remains intact.
- 5.4.11 The proposed works would not affect the building's status as a local landmark, nor its visual or historic connections with the School Green. Views towards the asset from School Green will remain unchanged, although the experience when travelling along Hyde End Road will be altered. Appropriate mitigation measures, including controlled demolition methods, physical barriers, and safe systems of work, will be adopted by the demolition contractor to avoid unnecessary harm.
- 5.4.12 The heritage statement concludes that the Proposed Development would result in *less than substantial harm* to the significance of the Grade II listed school. The works are limited to boundary features and do not affect the principal building fabric or its setting in a way that undermines its historic character.
- 5.4.13 In accordance with NPPF Paragraph 202, this level of harm must be weighed against the public benefits, which in this case include: improved safety for pupils and staff and enhanced accessibility. The proposal addresses safeguarding concerns by providing a safer entrance adjacent to the footpath, reducing conflict between pedestrians and vehicles.
- 5.4.14 Overall, the Proposed Development aligns with the principles of the NPPF and complies with Policy CP3 and MDD Policy TB24 by supporting education, improving health and safety, and respecting heritage significance.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1.1 Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent are sought for the following works:
“Demolition of the front boundary dwarf wall, fencing and gate, and insertion of a replacement school gate adjacent to the footpath along Hyde End Road/School Green (B3349) at Shinfield Infant and Nursey school, Shinfield, Wokingham.”
- 6.1.2 In accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This statement assesses the Proposed Development’s compliance with the adopted Development Plan and relevant material considerations.
- 6.1.3 The Proposed Development is essential and has the support of Shinfield School, as it provides safe and inclusive access for all users travelling to the school from Lailey footpath, adjacent Hyde End Road/School Green (B3349).
- 6.1.4 The submitted Heritage Statement concludes that the Proposed Development would result in *less than substantial harm* to the Grade II listed school, which is clearly outweighed by the significant public benefits.
- 6.1.5 The Proposed Development complies with Core Strategy Policy CP3 and MDD Policy TB24 and aligns with the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 6.1.6 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it is respectfully requested that full Planning Permission and listed building consent should be granted without delay.

wsp

