

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250183
Site Address:	Emmanuel Church Centre, South Lake Crescent, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 3QW
Expiry Date:	23 May 2025
Site Visit Date:	20 February 2025
Proposal: Full application for the proposed siting of 1 no. prefabricated cabin following removal of the existing 2 no. cabins, plus alterations to parking, access and landscaping and other associated works.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Scale and Location of Development Proposals – Major Dev. Location (Woodley)
Public Open Space
Landscape Character Assessment Area
Land Terrier Leasing
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
JCEB Mineral Safeguarding Areas

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 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 CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB17 – Local Centres and Neighbourhood and Village Shops TB21 – Landscape Character
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	DM1 - Sustainable Development DM2 - Climate Change – Mitigation and Adaptation DM9 - Protecting Health, Safety and Amenity DM10 - Flood Risk DM12 - Sustainable Transport Movements DM14 - Ancillary development DM15 - Site History
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

	CIL Guidance + 123 List Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document Woodley Design Statement
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PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
40541	Provision of pitched roof to single storey part of building and provision of porch	Approved 22/02/1993
40961	Siting of a portacabin for use by playgroup	Approved 01/09/1993
960479	Proposed Renewal Of Permission 40961 For The Retention Of Mobile Unit	Approved 08/11/1996
050648	Application for temporary permission for the installation of a portakabin for Sunday school and midweek meetings.	Refused 12/09/2005
052444	Application for temporary permission sought for 5 years for the erection of building for Sunday school & midweek meetings.	Approved 18/11/2005
092104	Proposed addition of 2 portacabins to Emmanuel site for storage and meeting room (Part retrospective)	Approved 06/10/2009
163552	Full planning application for the proposed erection of a two storey side and rear extensions plus a single storey side/rear extension to the existing building.	Approved 03/07/2017
191989	Full planning application for proposed single storey side extension to existing church building following demolition of existing portacabin plus changes to fenestration, internal alterations and proposed installation of solar panels to existing building.	Approved 26/09/2019

CONSULTATION RESPONSES
Internal
WBC Property Services – No comments received. WBC Environmental Health – No objection. WBC Drainage – No objection. WBC Highways – No objection subject to conditions. <i>Officer comments: This will be discussed within the main report.</i> WBC Landscape and Trees – No objection.
External
None

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objection.
Ward Member(s)	One Councillor has asked that the application be listed for planning committee if it is recommended for refusal.
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site is located within a predominantly residential area of Woodley, and it is located approximately 800m south of Woodley Town Centre. The site features a two-storey community / church building with an associated parking area. There are currently two existing portacabins on site.

Description of Development:

This application seeks permission for the proposed replacement of the existing two portacabins with a single portacabin. The proposed portacabin would be used by three foodbank charities which serve the local community, and therefore the portacabin would be ancillary to the church. The proposed portacabin measures 3.5m x 12.2m and has a maximum height of 3.5 metres. In addition, this application also proposes alterations to car parking, landscaping and other associated works.

The three charities, Lunch Bunch, Share, and the Woodley Foodbank, currently operate a community service from Emmanuel's Church. The submitted planning statement has provided the following description of these charities:

"Lunch Bunch is a charity that provides packed lunches for children in need during school holidays, whilst Share provides the community free access to fresh food. The Woodley Foodbank serves the local area and helps fight food poverty. Food parcels can be collected from Emmanuel Church on most weekday mornings. The Woodley Foodbank also has drop-off points at Waitrose, Asda, and other local locations. They accept tinned or dried food, financial donations, and plastic bags to use for parcels."

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.

Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy states that 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 children, young people and families, including the co-ordination of services to meet their needs. This proposed prefabricated cabin would be used by 3 no. food charities providing assistance to the local community to help meet their needs, and the operation of the portacabin is therefore ancillary to

the activities of the church. The proposal would have significant social benefits for the local community given the charitable nature of activities that would be conducted within the portacabin. The proposal is therefore supported in principle as per Policy CP2.

The site is also located within settlement limits and as such the development should be acceptable 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.

Character of the Area:

The proposed portacabin would be sited 0.9 metres from the site's northern boundary on an area of grassland and hardstanding that adjoins the parking area. Its utilitarian appearance would be in visual/architectural contrast to the main community building. However, it would be well set back from the roadside and its single storey form ensures that the portacabin would not be unduly visually dominating. Hence, the portacabin would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area. Additionally, the proposed single portacabin would be an improvement on the existing situation as there would be a net loss of one cabin. The removal of the two unauthorised existing portacabins would be secured via condition.

The proposed alterations to the parking layout would not have an adverse visual impact on the character of the area. Additionally, the proposed soft landscaping will enhance the visual appearance of the site.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity and R23 of the Borough Design Guide (BDG) SPD requires that extensions relate to neighbouring properties.

With regards to the proposed portacabin, this would be sited 0.9 metres from the densely vegetated boundary with the neighbouring property no. 78 South Lake Crescent. The modest single storey nature of portacabin ensures that there would be no adverse impact on no. 78 in terms of overlooking or loss of light. The portacabin would be aligned with the side of the neighbouring dwelling no. 78, and therefore it is not considered to have a significant overbearing impact on this property.

As indicated in section 4 of the submitted planning statement, visitors to the portacabin would arrive in the mornings and afternoons of Monday to Friday. Hence, a condition is recommended to limit the use of the facility for visitors from 8:00AM to 6:00PM Monday to Friday.

Any food preparation would take place in the main church building. A condition is recommended to ensure that no hot food preparation occurs within the portacabin as it is not fitted within ventilation or extraction equipment. In terms of noise, the intended charity uses are unlikely to generate any adverse noise events that would harm the amenities of the surrounding residential properties. Additionally, the proposal would not generate an adverse amount of traffic movements within the site.

The car parking and landscaping alterations would have no impact on any of the surrounding residential properties.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

The Council's Highways Officer was consulted on this application, and they have no objection to the proposal subject to a number of conditions.

The Highways Officer is satisfied with the level of parking provided and with the positions and dimensions of the proposed cycle racks, however, they have recommended a condition to ensure that the cycle provisions are covered and secured. Ensuring that the cycle parking is covered and secured is not deemed necessary and it would be unreasonable to have this detail covered by a condition. Accordingly, the condition is not recommended.

It was understood that the western access was to be widened to be 6m wide. However, the access as shown on the submitted 'Site Plan as Existing' had been erroneously calculated. The agent has since confirmed in an email submitted on 13/06/2025 that this access has consistently been 6m wide, and this was evidenced through photographs provided. Therefore, the suggested condition for the widening of the access is not required, and accordingly, it is not recommended.

Conclusion:

For the reasons stated above, the proposal is acceptable in local plan policy terms and therefore is recommended for approval.

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, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. 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.

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.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	19 June 2025

Earliest date for decision:	20 February 2025
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Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	20/06/25