

Application reference number	2026/0428
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Application Type	Full Planning Application
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Proposal Description:	Erection of a single storey portacabin modular building providing nursery facilities
Location:	Brierley Church Of England Primary School, Beech Close, Brierley, Barnsley, S72 9EJ

Applicant	Mr Tom Myers
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Number of Third Party Reps	4 representations have been received.	Parish:	
		Ward:	North East

SUMMARY

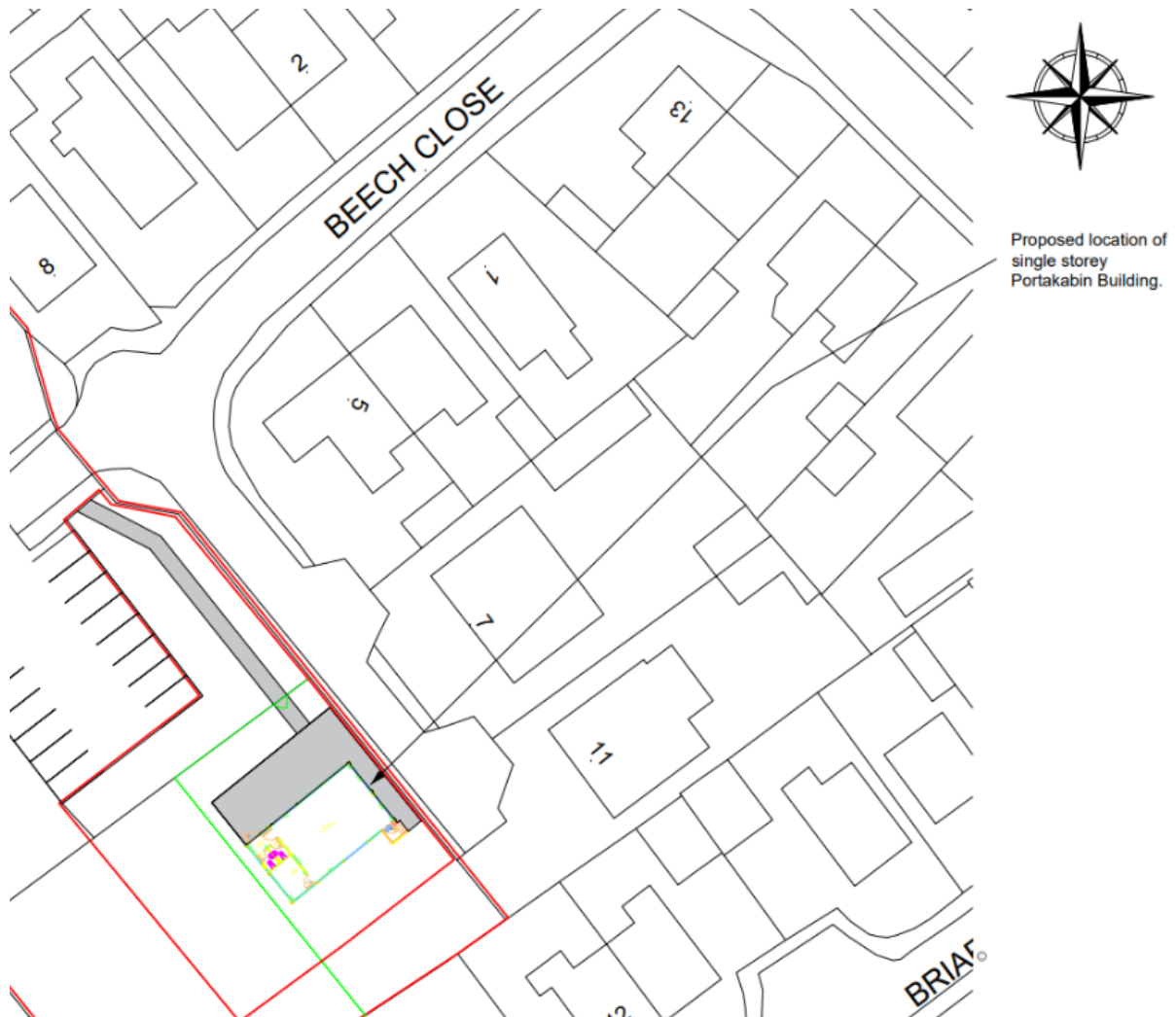
The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a single storey portakabin modular building providing nursery facilities.

The site lies within the Brierley CoE school grounds which is allocated as Urban Fabric in addition the site is within the Brierley Conservation Area

On balance the proposal is considered to be acceptable as it would have limited harm to the character of the conservation area, visual amenity and will have no adverse impact on residential amenity or ecological value of the site and is considered to be acceptable in policy terms. The proposal is therefore considered to be an acceptable and sustainable form of development in line with paragraphs 7 and 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2026).

Recommendation: **GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions**

Proposed site plan



Proposed Elevations (amended)



Site Description

The application site lies within the grounds of Brierley Church of England School which is accessed off Beech Close. The area in question is the south east corner of the site and is currently just grassed over and bound by shrubs and fencing. To the north west of this is the school parking with the main school buildings further beyond.

Relevant Site History

<i>Application Reference</i>	<i>Application description</i>	<i>Status</i>
2006/0706	Erection of extension to form new main entrance area and staff accommodation to Primary School	Approved
2009/0478	Extensions and alterations to existing school building.	Approved
2012/0368	Erection of a single storey classroom extension to primary school.	Approved

Policy Context

The Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for Barnsley consists of the Barnsley Local Plan (adopted January 2019).

The Local Plan was adopted in January 2019 and is accompanied by seven masterplan frameworks which apply to the largest site allocations (housing, employment, and mixed-use sites). In addition, the Council has adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans which provide supporting guidance and specific local policies which are a material consideration in the decision-making process.

The Local Plan review was approved at the full Council meeting held 24th November 2022. The review determined that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering its objectives. This means, no updates to the Local Plan, in whole or in part, are to be carried out ahead of a further review. The next review is due to take place in 2027, or earlier, if circumstances require it.

Local Plan Allocation – Urban Fabric & Brierley Conservation Area

In reference to this application, the following policies are relevant:

Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development – States that proposals for development will be approved where there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents. Development will be expected to be compatible with neighbouring land and will not significantly prejudice the current or future use of neighbouring land. Policy GD1 below will be applied to all development.

Policy GD1: General Development – Development will be approved if there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents. Development will be expected to be compatible with neighbouring land and will not significantly prejudice the current or future use of neighbouring land.

Policy D1: High quality design and place making – Development is expected to be of a high-quality design and will be expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive, local character and other features of Barnsley.

Policy BIO1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity – Development will be expected to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological features of the borough.

Policy POLL1: Pollution Control and Protection – Development will be expected to demonstrate that it is not likely to result, directly or indirectly, in an increase in air, surface water and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration, light or other pollution which would unacceptably affect or cause a nuisance to the natural and built environment or to people.

Policy HE1: The Historic Environment - We will positively encourage developments which will help in the management, conservation, understanding and enjoyment of Barnsley's historic environment.

Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety – New development will be expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users within and surrounding the development with safe, secure and convenient access and movement.

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents

In line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Barnsley has adopted twenty-eight Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) following the adoption of the Local Plan in January 2019. The most pertinent SPD's in this case are:

- Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Sustainable Construction and Climate Change Adaptation

The adopted SPDs should be treated as material considerations in decision making and are afforded full weight.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2026)

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework 2026 sets out the overarching planning framework for England. It has replaced the previous version published in December 2024 and introduced a revised structure comprising national decision-making policies organised by policy code rather than paragraph number. Paragraph 1 confirms that the NPPF is a material consideration of critical importance for making decisions on development proposals in England.

Paragraph 15 confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and NPPF Policy S3 sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, with paragraph 17 setting out the three overarching objectives of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Relevant policies have been taken into account throughout the assessment of this application according to the issues raised by the proposal.

The most relevant sections are:-

Section 3 - Decision making policies
Section 4 - Achieving sustainable development
Section 14- Achieving well designed places
Section 15 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
Section 19 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Section 20 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The National Design Guidance (2019) is a material consideration and sets out ten characteristics of well-designed places based on planning policy expectations. A written ministerial statement states that local planning authorities should take it into account when taking decisions.

Relevant Consultations:

Biodiversity- No objection subject to conditions

Highways DC – No objection.

Conservation Officer – No objection. Comments were made in regard to improving the design however it was not considered that harm would be caused to the conservation area.

Representations

The application has been advertised in accordance with Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning Development Management Procedure (England) Order 2015.

Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties and a site notice was placed nearby. The application has also been advertised via site notice, in the press and on the Council website.

Four representations have been received from members of the public raising the following concerns:

- Increased traffic/vehicle movements
- Impact on neighbouring properties (noise/disturbance)
- Drainage
- Visual appearance

Assessment

Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that: 'Where in making any determination under the planning acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'.

The NPPF (2026) at paragraph 3 states that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The main issues for consideration are as follows:

- The principle of the development
- The impact on visual amenity / character of the conservation area

- The impact on the highway network
- The impact on biodiversity

For the purposes of considering the balance in this application the following planning weight is referred to in this report using the following scale unless the NPPF states otherwise:

- Substantial
- Considerable
- Significant
- Moderate
- Modest
- Limited
- Little or no

Principle of development

The proposed site is an existing community facility and is within an area of Urban Fabric and therefore has no specific allocation within the Local Plan. Local Plan Policy I2, Educational and Community Facilities supports the provision of schools, educational facilities and other community facilities. One of the borough's ambitions is to invest in education and skills to support the development of the economy and increase educational attainment and the importance of access to a good education is emphasised. As such, the proposed additional building to support a nursery associated with the school is considered in line with policy I2 of the Local Plan.

Given the site's location within the operational school grounds, the nature of the proposal, and its alignment with relevant Local Plan policies supporting enhancements to education facilities, the principle of development is considered acceptable. The site is also within the Brierley Conservation area and further consideration has been given to this below in terms of any heritage impacts.

Visual amenity and impact on the character of the conservation area

The site currently comprises an area of grassland within the school grounds and is located within the Brierley Conservation Area. However, the site lies on the edge of the conservation area and is considered to have been included primarily due to its proximity to nearby heritage assets and areas of historic and architectural interest, rather than any particular significance of the application site itself, which lacks distinctive heritage features.

The Design and Conservation Assistant has reviewed the proposal and concluded that it would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Notwithstanding this, concerns were initially raised regarding the design quality and visual appearance of the proposed portacabin. In response to these concerns, amendments have been made to incorporate a timber-effect vinyl wrap to the external elevations. Whilst this does not fully overcome concerns regarding the temporary and utilitarian appearance of the structure, it represents an improvement over the originally submitted design and helps to soften its visual impact.

The Design and Conservation Assistant indicated a preference for higher quality external materials. However, discussions with the agent confirmed that the available project funding does not allow for additional design enhancements. Taking this into account, together with the improved appearance of the amended scheme, it is considered that, on balance, the proposal is acceptable in this instance. Furthermore, the portacabin will be well screened

from public view, particularly the rear elevation, which is not proposed to be treated with the timber-effect wrap, thereby limiting its visibility within the wider conservation area.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would have limited impact in terms of visual amenity or character of the conservation area and is in compliance with Local Plan Policy D1 and HE1; this carries moderate weight in favour of the development.

Residential Amenity

The proposed new building is not considered to cause significant harm to residential neighbours. The building is set away from the school boundary and is partially screened by existing shrubs and hedgerows. As such, there would be minimal opportunities for overlooking or loss of privacy.

Furthermore, the building is modest in scale and would accommodate a limited number of children and staff, meaning that any additional activity associated with its use is unlikely to give rise to significant levels of noise and disturbance that would materially harm the living conditions of nearby residents. The building would operate as part of the existing school site and would facilitate a use that is closely associated with the established educational function of the premises. As a result, the proposal is not expected to generate any significant increase in activity beyond that already experienced within the school environment.

Taking these factors into account, it is considered that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers through overlooking, loss of privacy, overbearing impact, loss of light, noise or disturbance. Accordingly, the development is considered acceptable in terms of residential amenity and complies with policy GD1 of the Local Plan. This carries moderate weight in favour of the proposal.

Highway Safety

The site is located within the existing school grounds which has an established access off Beech Close. The building would be positioned on an existing grassed area within the site and would not affect the current vehicular or pedestrian access arrangements or result in the loss of any existing parking provision.

On this basis, Highways DC are satisfied that the proposal would not have a material impact on the surrounding Highway Network or the parking provision available within the school grounds.

Based on the above assessment it is considered that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the highway network and as such is in compliance with Local Plan Policy T4; this carries moderate weight in favour of the application.

Biodiversity / Ecology

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became mandatory for all applications in April 2024 except where one of the exemptions (as set out in the Planning Practice Guidance) are met.

An updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment and associated biodiversity metric have been submitted following an initial response from the Biodiversity Officer.

The BNG assessment continues to set out that the pond on site will be retained as part of the proposals. On this basis, the Biodiversity Officer has suggested a condition which includes the management of the pond to maintain this habitat on site.

The BNG assessment indicates that through enhancement of the condition of an area of grassland on site and the planting of two trees a gain of 0.036 habitat units (14.9%) can be achieved and the BNG requirement can be met. As it is considered that no significant habitat enhancement is proposed a condition for a BEMP, as set out above is considered appropriate.

Precautionary working methods are set out in the PEA in relation to habitats, protected / priority species and the appropriate removal of non-native invasive species. The measures will also be secured by condition.

Overall, there is no objection from the Biodiversity Officer and the proposal is acceptable in terms of Biodiversity and accords with policy BIO1 of the Local Plan. This carries moderate weight in favour of the proposal.

Representations

Four representations have been received from members of the public raising concerns relating to increased traffic, noise and disturbance, drainage, and the visual appearance of the proposed building. These matters have been carefully considered as part of the assessment of the application.

In respect of highway impacts, the Council's Highways Officer has reviewed the proposal and raises no objections, noting that the development would not alter existing access arrangements or result in the loss of on-site parking provision.

With regard to residential amenity, the proposed nursery accommodation would form part of the existing school site and would accommodate a limited number of children and staff. It is therefore not considered that the proposal would generate a significant level of activity, noise or disturbance that would materially harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

The site is not within a high risk flood zone and there is no evidence to suggest that the development would give rise to unacceptable drainage issues. A condition has been included to ensure surface water is disposed of within the site and further drainage details would be checked by Building Control.

Concerns regarding the appearance of the building are acknowledged; however, amendments have been secured to improve its visual appearance through the introduction of a timber-effect external wrap. Whilst a higher quality form of development may have been preferable, the proposal has been improved from the original submission and, given its limited scale, screening from public views and lack of harm to the character and appearance of the Brierley Conservation Area, the visual impact is considered acceptable.

Consequently, the matters raised do not warrant refusal of the application.

PLANNING BALANCE & CONCLUSION

In accordance with National decision making policy S3 of the NPPF (2026) the proposal is considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The proposal would not negatively impact visual amenity, character of the Conservation Area, highways safety of biodiversity, and this weighs in favour of the application.

All other material planning considerations have been fully explored by the appropriate consultees who have raised no objections to the proposal and holistically this weighs moderately in favour of the application.

The proposal is therefore, on balance, recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions