

Planning Statement

EXTENSION TO SCHOOL

**WEST RIDING SCHOOL, ARDSLEY ROAD, WORSBOROUGH DALE,
BARNSELY, S70 4RE**

**PREPARED FOR: NEXUS MULTI ACADEMY TRUST
PREPARED BY: T SHIELS
CHECKED BY: J ROBERTS**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared to support the submission of an application for full planning permission for the construction of an extension to West Riding School to provide vital additional space.

The site is the former Worsbrough Youth Centre. Planning consent was granted in February 2023 for conversion of the former youth centre to create a Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) School. The works to facilitate the approved conversion are now well underway.

The existing building can provide education for 24 children at Key Stage 3 level. There is an identified pressing need for additional teaching capacity. The proposed extension would allow the capacity of the school to be increased to 50 pupils and would also allow for teaching at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 levels. This would, therefore, significantly broaden the benefits that the school can deliver. The development would also create 5 additional jobs.

The application site lies within the Green Belt. The size of the proposed extension does not exceed the size of the original building. It is a form of development which is appropriate in the Green Belt and fully in accordance with local and national Green Belt policy.

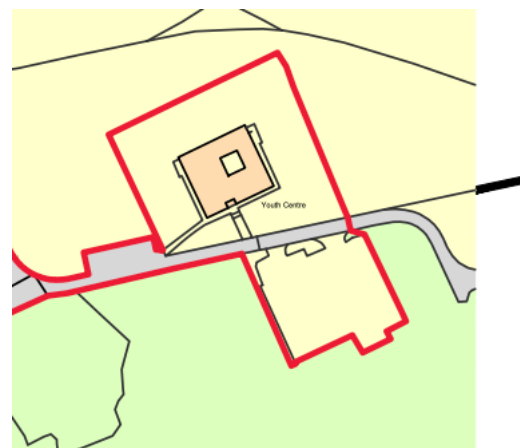
The design of the extension is entirely appropriate and would result in no harm to visual amenity. The extension has been designed in conjunction with a biophilic designer to provide a specific focus on the promotion of mental well-being for building users. The extension would provide very high calibre new teaching space which would have immense benefits for pupils and staff alike.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the supporting plans and technical reports which demonstrate the credentials of the scheme in more detail.

This statement now proceeds to give details of the site. The details of the proposal are then set out. The planning merits of the scheme are then discussed in relation to relevant planning policies contained in the statutory development plan, together with Government guidance principally set out in the NPPF. In particular, it will be demonstrated that the proposal would not be detrimental to Green Belt openness. The development would give rise to no adverse impacts in respect of amenity or highways considerations.

2.0 THE SITE

The application site is the former Worsborough Youth Centre which lies to the south east of Ardsley Lane and a short distance from the built-up area of Worsborough:



The site previously housed Elmhirst School, prior to its demolition in 2019. Planning consent was granted in February for change of use of the existing building to form a new educational facility that will operate as a SEND school.

The site lies within the Green Belt. The site is not within a Conservation Area. There are no listed buildings in the vicinity of the site.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for an extension to the existing building.

More information about the proposal can be found in the accompanying plans and supporting technical documents. The key elements of the proposal are as follows:

- The extension is not larger than the existing building. It would, therefore, not be a disproportionate addition and complies with the NPPF and local plan policy in this regard.
- The extension would provide three additional classrooms, as well as meeting room and break out space.
- The additional space would allow the capacity of the school to increase from 24 to 50 pupils and would also allow an expansion to provide teaching at Key Stage 4 level.
- Staff numbers are to be increased from 13 to 18.
- The additional capacity would meet an essential need that has been identified by the applicant in their capacity as an experienced and reputable provider of educational establishments.
- The development does not require any additional parking provision or changes to the established access arrangement, as discussed in detailed in the accompanying Transport Statement.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY AND PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

The most relevant planning history for the site comprises of:

2022/1296 Change of use to Class F1(a) - Provision of Education as a Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) school with external alterations to the building and to the external areas of the site including the car park and footpath layouts. Application approved February 2023.

Due to the resource pressures faced by the LPA, pre-application discussions have not been requested in this instance. The applicant has, however, enlisted the services of JR Planning, West 8 Architecture and a team of technical consultants to advise on the design of the development.

5.0 ALLOCATION AND POLICIES

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the Development Plan consists of the Barnsley Local Plan which was adopted in January 2019 and the Joint Waste Plan.

Material considerations exist in the form of national policy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as updated in July 2021 and the suite of documents comprising National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). The Council's SPDs are also considered of relevance.

The site is within the Green Belt as identified under the local plan.

National

The NPPF is reflective of the guidance contained within the NPPG. The following sections of the revised NPPF are considered of direct relevance to the current proposal:

- Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 - Decision-making
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land

- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The overarching message of the NPPF is that LPAs should adopt a positive and pro-active approach to planning proposals, particularly those that result in sustainable development. LPAs should not place unnecessary burdens on developers and should look to support appropriate schemes such as this.

Barnsley Local Plan

- SD1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- GD1 General Development
- T3 New Development and Sustainable Travel
- T4 New development and Transport Safety
- D1 High Quality Design and Place Making
- LC1 Landscape Character
- BIO1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- GB1 Protection of Green Belt
- GB2 Replacement, extension and alteration of existing buildings in the Green Belt
- CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3 Flood Risk
- Poll1 Pollution Control and Protection

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Regard has been had to the LPA's design and biodiversity & geodiversity SPDs.

6.0 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

Sustainability

As will be discussed in more depth below, the proposal is of the extension of an existing building and the size of the extension would not be disproportionate to the original building. The development therefore accords with local and national Green Belt policy.

Notwithstanding the need to comply with Green Belt policy, the main emphasis of current national planning policy is to ensure proposals are compliant with the definition of sustainable development set out within the NPPF. Sustainability is multifaceted. The Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice is to be found throughout the Framework, taken as a whole. To achieve sustainable development, the Framework states that economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

The proposal would be wholly sustainable using the definition set out in the NPPF for the following reasons:

- **Social:** The proposal represents the second phase of a development to provide a high-quality educational establishment for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is an enormously important facility that will have significant social benefits for pupils.
- **Economic:** The development would provide growth and investment in the locality. Additional economic activity would be created during the construction phase. The extension would facilitate the creation of 5 additional jobs over and above those created by the change of use permission.
- **Environmental:** The extension is not disproportionate to the original building and would not be harmful to the Green Belt. Furthermore, the development would have no adverse impacts on biodiversity interests or visual and landscape character.

Green Belt

The NPPF states that new development is inappropriate within the Green Belt, with defined exceptions provided in the 'closed list' of development types set out in paragraphs 149 and 150.

Paragraph 149 confirms that the extension of a building is an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Policy GB2 of the Local Plan confirms that extensions will be allowed provided that they do not exceed the size of the original building. The proposed extension is smaller than the existing building and would not be a disproportionate addition. It therefore fully complies with the NPPF and policy GB2 and is an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt.

Provision of Educational Facilities

Policy I2 supports the provision of education facilities. The principle of the use of the site as a school has been established through the recent permission for change of use. The application now seeks an appropriate extension which would greatly enhance the quality of teaching spaces and would allow the school to meet the needs of a larger number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is a pressing need for this essential educational provision. It is also significant that the existing space would allow for education provision to be provided across both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The continuity of education at the same site would be of utmost importance to the educational wellbeing of pupils and is a significant benefit of the proposed development. The proposal fully accords with policy I2.

The principle of development is therefore acceptable.

Design

The existing building has a functional flat roof design that is of its time. The proposed extension reflects the flat roof character of the existing building and has a simple form that is both in keeping with the existing building and minimises the impact on Green Belt openness. The detailing of the extension allows for the introduction of appropriate contemporary

features including a parapet to the roof, feature window and attractive fenestration pattern. The extension would therefore be simple and entirely in keeping with the character of the existing building, but would also have an appropriate level of architectural merit in its own right. The extension would cause no harm at all to visual amenity or character and fully accords with policies D1 and LC1 and adopted design guidance.

Amenity and Pollution Control

The site is a significant distance away from the nearest residential dwellings, with a separation distance of about 100m. As such, the relatively low level of noise and disturbance associated with a small school of 50 pupils would not result in any harm to the amenity of the occupiers of nearby dwellings. The modest scale of the extension would result in no harm by way of overshadowing or oppressiveness and its position would not result in any overlooking.

It is acknowledged that the site shares an access with two residential properties. The increase in pupil numbers therefore requires consideration in this respect. However, the mitigating factors that applied to the change of use application continue to be relevant as discussed in the highways section below.

The development will have no adverse amenity impacts and will not result in unacceptable levels of noise or other pollution. The proposal is fully policy compliant in this regard.

Highways

The previous approval includes the reconfiguration of the existing car park to provide 28 parking spaces. The proposed extension does not require any additional parking provision. The extension will increase staff numbers from 13 to 18, so all staff parking can be easily accommodated with a significant remaining allowance for visitors.

As set out in detail in the accompanying travel plan, due to the school providing specifically for SEND needs, there is a requirement for funded transport to and from the site. The

existing capacity for 24 pupils would involve 20 of the pupils accessing the school by funded minibus. The intended arrangement is for three minibuses arriving and departing at staggered times. The use of three minibuses for 20 pupils involves unused seats. As such, the intended increase in pupil numbers to 50 would not result in a proportional increase in the number of minibus trips. Instead, one additional minibus is planned, and the total of four minibuses would be sufficient to meet the travel needs of all 50 pupils. One additional bus trip in the morning and afternoon would have no material impact on the local highway network and would result in no material amenity impacts. Parental drop offs would remain a very small proportion of the preferred pupil access method and can be easily accommodated within the dedicated drop off zone.

Whilst the overall parking provision does not need to be increased, the new application includes a minor alteration to the layout of the car park in order to provide better circulation and pedestrian routes. These changes are positive and would have no adverse impacts.

Overall, the proposal would give rise to no issues in respect of highways safety and efficiency and is fully policy compliant in this respect.

Ecology

The extension is contained within the area that is contained by palisade fencing and that forms a very clear curtilage separate to the surrounding open land. No trees require removal. The existing building is not of a type that would support any kind of protected species habitat. The development will have no impact on protected species or on the biodiversity value of the site. The applicant is happy to discuss any suitable measures to secure biodiversity net gain.

The development proposal fully accords with local and national policy in this respect.

Flood Risk

The application site is within flood zone 1 as identified by the Environment Agency so is not at undue risk of flooding. The site area is well below the threshold at which an FRA is required for development within flood zone 1.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The proposal is an appropriate form of development in the green belt which would have no harmful impacts. The development would deliver an essential facility for special education needs.

The proposal applies with all relevant local and national planning policy and should be approved.

The Applicant is willing to discuss any issues that may arise during the consideration of the proposal with the LPA.