

Planning Statement

Section 73 minor material amendment application
for the retention of an existing mobile classroom at
Stilton C of E Primary School, Church Street, Stilton,
Peterborough, PE7 3RF

Cambridgeshire County Council

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Issue Sheet

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Planning Statement

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This planning statement has been produced by Lanpro Services Limited on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council to support a planning application seeking to extend the temporary planning permission for a mobile classroom building at Stilton C of E Primary School, Church Street, Stilton, Peterborough, PE7 3RF.
- 1.1.2 The retention of the mobile classroom is required for further period of five years. This is outlined in a justification of needs letter from Cambridgeshire County Council, accompanying this submission. The permanent classrooms at the school are currently in use by pupils of the primary school. An additional mobile classroom is therefore required for the school to be able to provide before- and after-school places for children attending the school. Pressure on the Council's capital budget is such that the Council has now reached its borrowing limit. Therefore, there are no plans to provide a permanent solution for Stilton Primary School within the near future. The proposal therefore seeks the retention of the mobile classroom unit until 31 August 2028.
- 1.1.3 This planning application is a Regulation 3 application under the Town and Country Planning General Regulations (1992) legislation which enables Local Authorities to apply for planning permission for development whereby they have a significant interest or are the landowner.
- 1.1.4 This Planning Application is made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) and seeks to vary condition 1 attached to the decision notice for permission referenced H/5012/18/CC dated 14 August 2018.
- 1.1.5 A Non-Material Amendment under Section 96A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) has been submitted in parallel with this application. The Non-Material Amendment proposes to amend the original description of development as described in the supporting letter which accompanies the application.

1.2 Submission Documents

- 1.2.1 The following documents have been submitted to support this planning application:
- Planning Statement (this document)
 - Justification of Need Letter, dated 18 October 2022
 - Location Plan ref Mc35-LP-001-P
 - Site Plan ref Mc35-SP-001-P
 - Building Plan ref Mb626p-01-000
 - Elevations ref Mb626e-01-000
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2 Site Description and Proposal

2.1 The Site

- 2.1.1 The site of the mobile classroom for which a temporary extension of permission is being sought is located within the grounds of Stilton C of E Primary School, Stilton in Huntingdonshire District.
- 2.1.2 Stilton is an historic Fen-edge village located approximately 10km south of the city of Peterborough and 20km north of the town of Huntingdon. The facilities in the village include pubs, a post office and convenience store, and a pharmacy.
- 2.1.3 Stilton C of E Primary School is located to the west of the centre of the village in a predominantly residential area. The school is one-form entry, from reception to year 6. Teaching takes place in the 7 permanent classrooms. It is expected that intake in each of the next two years will be between 29 and 31, which is the upper limit of the intake capacity of the school. The provision of pre-school and after-school childcare takes place in the existing mobile classroom as there is not sufficient room within the main school building.
- 2.1.4 The single-storey main school building is located towards the south of the school grounds, with an area of car parking between the school building and Church Street. To the rear is hard-standing playground and a grass playing field.
- 2.1.5 The mobile classroom is sited to the east of the car park, close to the eastern boundary of the school site. To the east, north and west of the school site are dwelling houses. The eastern boundary alongside the mobile classroom is a picket fence, with a ditch and hedge beyond that. To the south is Church Street, from which the school site is screened by a mature hedge. Across Church Street to the south is the mediaeval parish church of St Mary Magdalene.
- 2.1.6 The mobile classroom which is the subject of this application is 12 metres wide and 8 metres deep. It consists of a single classroom, a storeroom, an entrance/cloakroom area and three. The building has a shallow sloping roof and is mushroom in colour. The structure is suspended from the ground and has a timber skirting. Access to the building is via two ramps, to the west and north, or via steps to the north west, all leading to a raised platform. A fire escape and steps are located on the south side of the building.
- 2.1.7 Permission for this mobile building was originally given in 2018 for use until 2023.

2.2 Designations

- 2.2.1 The site is in Flood Zone 1.
- 2.2.2 A number of listed buildings are located close to the school. Facing the school across Church Street to the south is the Grade II* listed parish church of St Mary Magdalene. The graveyard of the church contains four Grade II listed funerary monuments. Immediately to the west of the school is Elm Farmhouse, at Grade II listed house. Approximately 200 metres to the east of the school is the Grade II listed Manor Farmhouse. Beyond this is the Conservation Area, containing a number of other listed buildings.
- 2.2.3 The mobile classroom is outside the Stilton Conservation Area.

2.3 Relevant Planning History

2.3.1 The relevant planning history available on public-access records for the site is set out below.

Reference	Description	Date of Decision	Outcome
H/01246/75/CC	Erection Of 1 "Elliott" 3-Bay Mobile Classroom For Educational Purposes	23 Jan 1976	Approved
H/01134/84/CC	Retention Of 3-Bay Mobile Classroom & Erection Of Addtl 3-Bay Mobile Classroom	23 Jan 1985	Approved
H/00765/86/CC	Erection Of One And Retention Of Two 3-Bay Mobile Classrooms	15 Jul 1986	Approved
H/01686/88/CC	Erection Of A 3-Bay And Retention Of Three 3-Bay Mobile Classrooms, One In Revised Location	24 Oct 1988	Approved
H/00786/89/CC	Extension To Provide 3 Classrooms And A New Kitchen	16 Aug 1989	Approved
H/01434/93/CC	Retention Of A 3-Bay Mobile Classroom	25 Jan 1994	Approved
H/00208/97/CC	Retention Of A 3-Bay Mobile Unit	12 Aug 1997	Approved
H/5012/18/CC	Erection of a 4 bay temporary mobile classroom to accommodate the breakfast and afterschool club for a temporary period until 31 August 2023	14 Aug 2018	Approved

2.4 The Proposal

2.4.1 This proposal seeks to extend the operational time period of the planning permission for the mobile classroom currently on this site for a period of 5 years, until 31 August 2028. This requires a Section 73 application to vary the relevant condition and a Section 96a application to amend the description of the permission. This Planning Statement relates of the Section 73 application.

2.4.2 When the mobile classroom is no longer needed, the building will be removed and the site will be returned to its former condition.

2.4.3 The suggested description for this application is:

“Section 73 planning application for a 4 bay temporary mobile classroom for a temporary period.

“Informative This application seeks to retain the existing modular building for a further period until 31 August 2028 without compliance with condition 1 of planning permission H/5012/18/CC.”

2.4.4 The currently permitted period is set out in condition 1 of the planning permission H/5012/18/CC which reads:

“Time Limit for one 4-Bay Mobile Classroom Building - This permission shall be for a temporary period only and shall expire on 31st August 2023, and the 4 bay mobile classroom hereby permitted shall be limited for a time period and shall be removed from the site by 31st August 2023 and the land shall be restored to its former condition.”

2.4.5 In order to extend the time period until 31 August 2028, the following change to the text of the condition is suggested (new text in bold):

*“Time Limit for one 4-Bay Mobile Classroom Building - This permission shall be for a temporary period only and shall expire on 31st August **2028**, and the 4 bay mobile classroom hereby permitted shall be limited for a time period and shall be removed from the site by 31st August **2028** and the land shall be restored to its former condition.”*

2.4.6 The associated Section 96a application seeks to vary the description of the permission. The current description is:

“Erection of a 4 bay temporary mobile classroom to accommodate the breakfast and afterschool club for a temporary period until 31 August 2023.”

2.4.7 The proposed revised wording of the description is:

“Erection of a 4 bay temporary mobile classroom for a temporary period.”

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Decision Making

3.1.1 Under Section 38 of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ('The 2004 Act'), the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the approved development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This chapter identifies the national and local planning policies that provide the framework within which any planning application will be made.

3.2 National Planning Policy

3.2.1 National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published in March 2012. The NPPF has since undergone consultation and subsequently revised submissions have been published in July 2018, February 2019 and July 2021. This provides a framework within which regional and local policy is set.

3.2.2 The NPPF sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, identifying that sustainable development consists of economic, social and environmental roles.

3.2.3 Paragraph 8(b) outlines that part of the social objective of sustainable development is to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.

3.2.4 Paragraph 11 advises that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-making this means approving development which accords with the local development plan without delay. Where there are no relevant policies of the policies are out of date, permission should be granted unless:

- The application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusal; or
- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

3.2.5 Chapter 8 sets out that the planning system should play a role to play in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Local Authorities should plan positively for the provision of community facilities and ensure that services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable for the benefit of the community.

3.2.6 Paragraph 95 of Chapter 8 states that:

It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and*
- b) work with school promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.*

3.3 Local Planning Policy

3.3.1 The Local Development Plan for this site consists of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (adopted in May 2019) and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (adopted in July 2021). Stilton does not have a Neighbourhood Plan.

[Huntingdonshire Local Plan](#)

3.3.2 The following policies of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan are relevant to this application.

- LP 1 Amount of Development
- LP 2 Strategy for Development
- LP 5 Flood Risk
- LP 9 Small Settlements
- LP 11 Design Context
- LP 12 Design Implementation
- LP 14 Amenity
- LP 15 Surface Water
- LP 16 Sustainable Travel
- LP 17 Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
- LP 22 Local Services and Community Facilities
- LP 30 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP 31 Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
- LP 34 Heritage Assets and their Settings

[Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan](#)

3.3.3 Policy 5 of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan requires that the Mineral Planning Authority be consulted on all applications for development within Mineral Safeguarding Areas unless they are exempt. The relevant exemptions are for development that falls within a settlement boundary and for temporary structures.

[Supplementary Planning Documents](#)

3.3.4 Huntingdonshire has adopted Supplementary Planning Documents of relevance to this application.

3.3.5 The Landscape and Townscape SPD, adopted in March 2022, aims to guide the preparation of planning application so as to enhance the quality of new development.

3.3.6 The Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD, adopted March 2017, seeks to ensure that good design is incorporated into new development.

4 Key Planning Considerations

4.1 The Principle of Development and Need

- 4.1.1 As set out in the Justification of Need letter from Cambridgeshire County Council, Stilton C of E Primary School currently has a need for one mobile classroom to supplement the permanent capacity and allow the Local Authority to meet its duty to provide sufficient early education and childcare places.
- 4.1.2 All of the permanent classrooms at the school are currently in use by pupils of the primary school. The additional mobile classroom is therefore required for the school to be able to offer before- and after-school places to children in the area, meeting the statutory requirements of the County Council.
- 4.1.3 Local planning policy envisages continued population growth in Stilton village. While most growth in the district will be focussed on market towns and strategic sites, Policy LP2 allows for up to a quarter of the planned growth to be dispersed in smaller towns and villages.
- 4.1.4 Policy LP9 designates Stilton as a 'small settlement'. This policy states that, in such locations, development will be supported if it is sustainable in terms of access for users by sustainable modes of transport and of the effect on the character of the immediate area and the whole settlement.
- 4.1.5 Pressure on the Council's capital budget is such that the Council has now reached its borrowing limit. Therefore, there are no plans to provide a permanent solution for Stilton before- and after-school provision within the near future.
- 4.1.6 The retention of the mobile classroom is therefore required for further period of five years, until 31 August 2028. At this time, the needs of the school will be reviewed.
- 4.1.7 Paragraph 95 of the NPPF states that there should be sufficient school places to meet the needs of communities and that planning authorities should regard proposals positively.
- 4.1.8 The policies of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and the NPPF, and the justification of need from Cambridgeshire County Council demonstrate that the principle of development for the proposed is acceptable.

4.2 Design, Access and Layout

- 4.2.1 The mobile classroom which is the subject of this application is 12 metres wide and 8 metres deep. It consists of a single classroom, a storeroom, an entrance/cloakroom area and three. The building has a shallow sloping roof and is mushroom in colour. The structure is suspended from the ground and has a timber skirting. Access to the building is via two ramps, to the west and north, or via steps to the north west, all leading to a raised platform. A fire escape and steps are located on the south side of the building.
- 4.2.2 The design of the building is unobtrusive and unimposing. In its form and design, the building is subservient to the main school building.

4.3 Sustainability

- 4.3.1 The use of mobile classrooms as temporary response to pupil numbers is considered sustainable. It allows for adequate educational space while avoiding the need for investment in new buildings if the changes in numbers are not permanent. The mobile

classroom has a long design life and can be used at another location when it is no longer required at this site.

4.4 Amenity

4.4.1 The mobile classroom is located approximately 20 metres from the nearest dwelling houses, to the east. The dwellings are separated from the classroom by a ditch, a footpath, a well-established hedgerow and a driveway, which together form both landscape screening and visual separation.

4.4.2 The amenity of the residents of The Nurseries is not harmed by the use of this building.

4.5 Highway Safety

4.5.1 Access to the site is through the main school entrance on Church Street. This proposal will have no negative impact on highway safety.

4.6 Transport

4.6.1 This proposal does not entail an increase in the number of pupils attending the school or in staff numbers. There will therefore be no impact on the transport network.

4.7 Heritage, Landscape and Character

4.7.1 The application site is close to a number of listed buildings. The listed building setting most likely to be impacted by the mobile classroom is that of the parish church of St Mary Magdalene, which is Grade II* listed.

4.7.2 The mobile classroom is a single-storey building with a low-pitched roof. In scale and design, it is in keeping with the main school building. The boundary of the site fronting the road is marked by a well-established hedge approximately 1.2 metres high, which further mitigates visual the impact of the classroom on the street scene (see Figure 2).

4.7.3 The mobile classroom is separated from the church by Church Street, a wide two-way road (Figure 1). This reduces the harm that the mobile building could be considered to cause to the setting of the church.

4.7.4 In its comments provided in response to the 2018 application, Huntingdonshire District Council stated that, 'we would not consider the classroom to have a negative impact on the setting of the church due to its separation from the churchyard by Church Street'.

4.7.5 As the classroom is only be permitted on a temporary basis, any harm to the setting of the listed buildings is not permanent.

4.7.6 The harm to the Grade II* listed building opposite the site and to other nearby listed buildings is considered to be less than substantial and must be weighed against the benefits set out above.



Figure 1: Church Street, looking west. The church is on the left and the mobile classroom is on the right.



Figure 2: Church Street, looking northeast. The main school building is on the left and the mobile classroom is on the right.

4.8 Flood Risk

4.8.1 The whole of the school site is in Flood Zone 1, representing the lowest level of risk from flooding.

4.9 Biodiversity and Ecology

4.9.1 The location of the mobile classroom is of limited ecological value. The presence of the mobile classroom does not harm the ecology of the site.

4.10 Minerals Safeguarding

4.10.1 The site is within the Minerals Safeguarding Area for brickclay, as designated by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste and Minerals Local Plan. This site is located within the built up area of Stilton village, which meets the definition of being within a settlement boundary for the purposes of the Plan, and the structure is temporary. The proposal therefore meets the criteria for exemption from the requirement to consult the Minerals Planning Authority.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 This application seeks to extend by 5 years permission for the existing installation of a mobile classroom at Stilton C of E Primary School in Huntingdonshire.
- 5.1.2 The local education authority has established that this facility is required by the school.
- 5.1.3 National policy (NPPR paragraph 95) strongly supports applications for educational facilities that respond to established need. Local policy envisages continued growth in Stilton, which will require educational provision.
- 5.1.4 This need outweighs the less than substantial harm that the mobile classroom causes to the setting of a listed building.
- 5.1.5 There are clear public benefits to this application, and it is supported by policies. It is therefore respectfully requested that permission should be granted for this planning application.