

Ref : CP/12501  
Date : 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Blackpool Council  
Planning Department  
PO Box 17  
Corporation Street  
**BLACKPOOL**  
**FY1 1LZ**

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **RE: PLANNING APPLICATION FOR A MODULAR CLASSROOM AT PARK COMMUNITY ACADEMY, WHITEGATE DRIVE, BLACKPOOL, FY3 9HF**

I write regarding the above site, for which planning permission is sought for the construction of a modular classroom, which would be located to the south of the main school building and situated upon an existing grassed area.

The following supporting documentation has been prepared and is submitted to accompany this application:

- Dwg Ref: PWC-CAA-XX-XX-DR-A-1000 P1 Existing Site Plan
- Dwg Ref: PWC-CAA-XX-XX-DR-A-1001 P3 Proposed Site Plan
- Dwg Ref: PWC-CAA-XX-XX-DR-A-1002 Location Plan
- Dwg Ref: PWC-CAA-XX-XX-DR-A-2000 P1 Proposed Plans and Elevations

### Site Description

This application relates to Park Community Academy, located to the east of Whitegate Drive.

Park Community Academy supports pupils between the ages of 2 and 19 with a wide range of learning needs.

The school is sited on a wider complex of local facilities and services, including Woodlands School and Whitegate Health Centre.

The proposed modular classroom is intended to provide additional classroom space for the school to support their outdoor learning facilities. It would also provide temporary support for the school whilst the 'Stables Building' is being extended (subject to separate planning application ref: 24/0079). The development would be located on a grassed area at the rear of the site. The classroom will have ramp access leading up onto a raised deck which will provide entry into the building.

Elsewhere on site, to the east is a detached classroom block, with a MUGA, grassed field and car park beyond this. To the north sits the main school building with other classroom buildings, car parking, and external play areas to the west. The closest residential dwellings are located c. 60m to the south, along Kenwyn Avenue.

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**Building Surveyors**  
**Town Planners**  
**Principal Designers**

## Planning History

The application site has been the subject of multiple planning applications, which provide an indication of the history of the site and are considered of relevance for determining the appropriateness of the current proposal.

23/0636 - Construction of a new stand-alone hall and reconfiguration of the external playground alongside the re-design of the existing school entrance. – Approved 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023. This development is currently subject to a S73 application to alter elements of the proposals (ref: 24/0020) and works are due to commence in the Easter holidays 2024.

22/0923 – Reconfiguration of the existing school hall, increase of pitch roof height and erection of a single storey rear extension – Approved 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023. Not implemented.

19/0401 – Erection of single storey extension to Jubilee building and additional external play area – Approved 16<sup>th</sup> August 2019

19/0236 – Erection of two storey school hall, main entrance, filling in courtyard and associated works following demolition of existing school hall and kitchen building – Approved 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019. Not implemented.

18/0322 – Extension of car park to provide an additional twenty car parking spaces to those approved under planning permission 16/0731 and associated boundary fence – Approved 16<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

15/0300 – Erection of single storey extension to north elevation to form toilet facilities – Approved 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

The site's planning history demonstrates that the school has been the subject of a series of alterations and extensions to expand and improve the school at a sustainable rate.

The new development would comprise of a singular timber clad modular classroom to support the use of the outdoor classroom and forest school areas at the school. In the short-term it would also aid the school in providing additional classroom accommodation whilst development works at the school are ongoing. The classroom would comprise 54sqm GIA and be 2.1m in height to the eaves. The building would feature a slanted roof and there would be a timber external deck.

## Policy Context

By virtue of the site being an educational facility, Para. 99 of the NPPF is relevant to this particular development. Para. 99 stipulates that local authorities should take a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to new development within schools, stating:

(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.

Criteria (a) is applicable to this application, as the proposed development would be an alteration to the current site, resulting in the addition of a classroom, which would provide more flexibility for the school when utilising their external learning spaces. Furthermore, allowing for the alleviation of capacity pressures relating to the development of the 'Stables Building', wherein existing classrooms within this building will be unavailable for a period of approximately 12 months.

The proposals do not support an increase in the number of pupils on roll at the school. It will however, provide flexibility in the accommodation available.

The site is identified as green infrastructure on the policy map for the Local Plan Part 2 2012-2027. As such, the development should be considered against the relevant policy, CS6 of the Core Strategy which refers to Para. 75 (now Para. 103) of the NPPF.

Para. 103 allows green space to be built on if:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the land to be surplus to requirements; or
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

The green space on which the new classroom would be sited has no formal use. The polytunnel which is currently located here would be retained by the school and relocated to the south of the new building. Moreover, the development takes up a minimal area of the existing green space on site and will be used to facilitate outdoor activities carried out within the remaining green space. Therefore, the classroom would have a functional use and be of benefit in utilising the existing forest school and outdoor classroom areas.

Policies CS7 and DM17 require that new development in Blackpool be well designed as well as enhancing the character of the local area. Whilst this building would not have an impact on the local skyline, the use of timber cladding clearly complements the outdoor space in which it is sited. Moreover, as noted in previous applications, the site is not noted for its architectural merit. This development, alongside other approved development on the site will improve the overall aesthetics of the school by introducing modern designs, as well as utilising materials which mirror their natural surroundings.

As per the Validation Checklist for minor developments and Policy DM18, full-fibre broadband connectivity should be provided. As this particular development is within an existing educational site, the building will be connected to the existing broadband currently available in the area.

On the matter of sustainability and energy efficiency, suitable methods of energy efficiency will be considered at the detailed design stage, such as air source heat pumps and PV and assessed as to whether they are appropriate

for the building. PV panels will be provided on the recently approved sports hall to the north-east of the application site.

The drainage system for the new building will be connected to existing manholes already present within the site.

#### Concluding Remarks

The proposals detailed in this application are made in accordance with the policies set out within the NPPF and Blackpool Council's Development Plan.

I trust that the information submitted in support of this development is sufficient to enable this application to be considered favourably. However, should you require any further information, please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours faithfully,

**Claire Parker**  
for and on behalf of  
**CASSIDY + ASHTON GROUP Ltd**  
**Architects Building Surveyors Town Planners**