

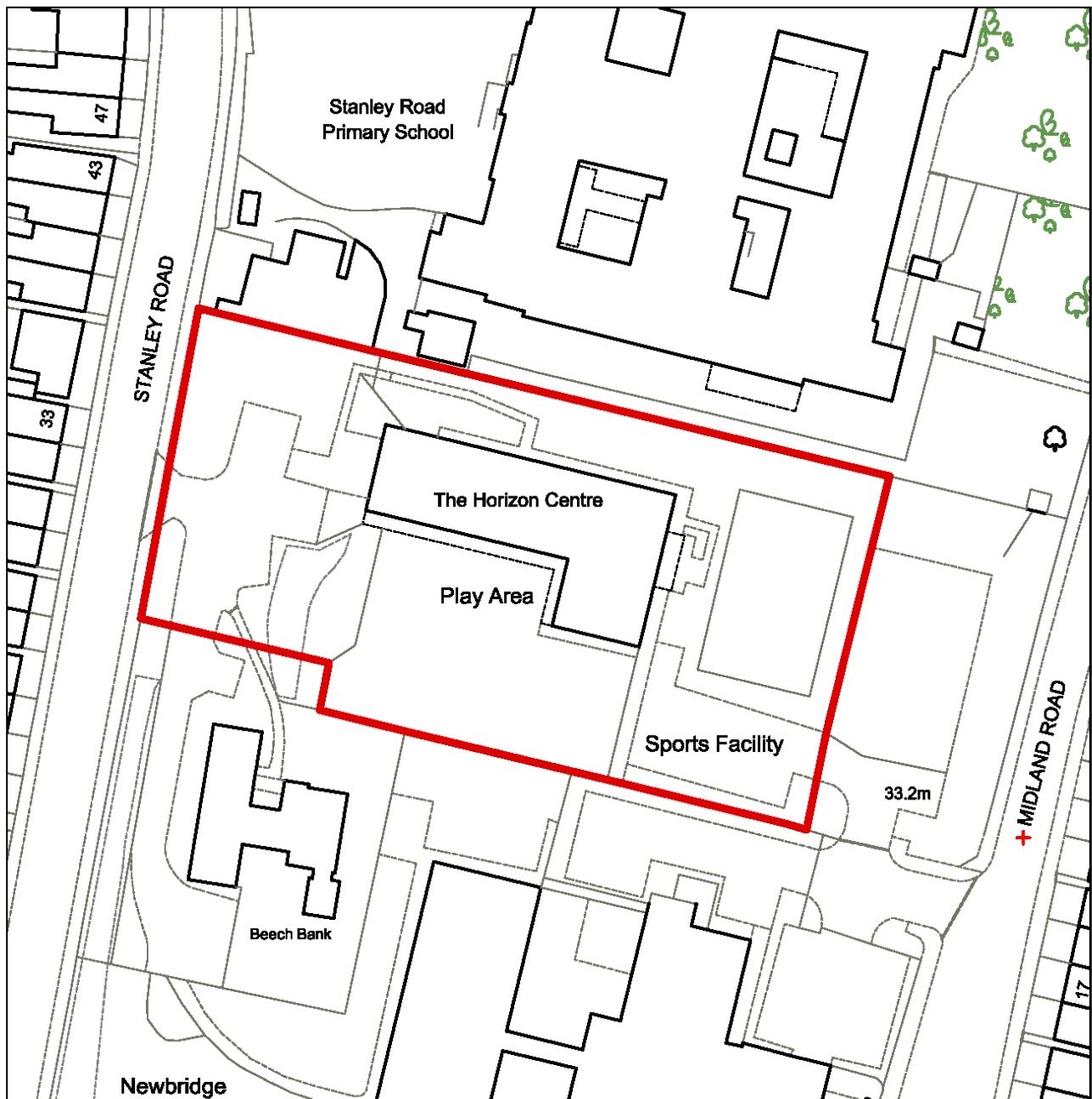
<b>Application Number</b>	<b>23/00569/FUL</b>
<b>Site Address</b>	<b>Horizon Community Centre, Midland Road, Worcester, WR5 1DS</b>
<b>Description of Development</b>	Single storey extension to accommodate classroom space.
<b>Expiry Date</b>	30 August 2023
<b>Applicant</b>	Worcester City Council Fenella Bellinger
<b>Agent</b>	Mrs Claire Miller
<b>Case Officer</b>	Miss Ruth Lambert
	ruth.lambert@worcester.gov.uk
<b>Ward Member(s)</b>	Cathedral Ward
<b>Reason for Referral to Committee</b>	Worcester City Council Application
<b>Web link to application</b>	<a href="https://plan.worcester.gov.uk/Planning/Display/23/00569/FUL">https://plan.worcester.gov.uk/Planning/Display/23/00569/FUL</a>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>The Corporate Director - Planning and Governance recommends that the Planning Committee gives delegated authority to grant planning permission pursuant to Regulation 3 of The Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 (as amended subject to the conditions set out in section 9 of this report.</b>

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The application was registered on 5 July 2023 and was due for a decision on 30 August 2023. An extension of time for the determination of the application has been agreed until 20<sup>th</sup> October to allow determination by the Planning Committee.
- 1.2 The application has been referred to the Planning Committee as the applicant is Worcester City Council.

## 2. The site and surrounding area

2.1 This application relates to a community hub located to the west side of Midland Road which is operated by Worcester Community Trust in partnership with the City Council.



## 3. The proposals

3.1 The applicants are proposing a small, single storey extension to the existing building to create an additional classroom. The extension will accommodate a new classroom space with storage. This will enable the Hub to offer a wider range of training courses and increased access to rental rooms for the local community. The extension will be located on the southern side the existing Hub, next to the children’s play area. The proposed classroom would create an additional 35 sqm in floor area and a externally be maximum of 5.1 metres in height with a ridged roof and constructed in materials to match the existing.

Proposed floor plan



Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the application/appeal to be determined in accordance with the Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.2 The Development Plan for Worcester now comprises:

- The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) which was adopted February 2016, and;
- The Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy, which was adopted on December 2012.
- The Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan which was adopted in July 2022.

### **South Worcestershire Development Plan**

4.3 The following policies of the SWDP are considered to be relevant to the proposal:

SWDP 21-Design  
SWDP 25-Landscape  
SWDP 37-Built Community Facilities

### **Supplementary Planning Documents**

4.4 The following Supplementary Planning Documents are relevant to the application proposals:

- Design Quality SPD

The Design Quality SPD was adopted on 5th March 2018. The document encourages high standards of design for development proposals in accordance with the aims and interests that the NPPF seeks to protect and promote in this regard. The Design Quality SPD is consistent with the planning policies in the SWDP.

### **Other material considerations include:**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)**

4.5 The latest revision of the NPPF (the Framework) was published by the Government on the 5th September 2023. For the purposes of this application the revisions do not alter the key considerations or references, many of which are identical to the previous version. Where paragraph numbers are referred to within the report, they are taken from the latest revision. Any relevant changes that are directly relevant to this application will be highlighted within the main body of the report.

4.6 The NPPF explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. This is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

#### **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and National Design Guide**

4.7 The Government also publish National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) to compliment the NPPF that has been revised and updated in the meantime and comprises, amongst other matters, Air quality, Design, Housing and economic land availability assessment, Noise, Travel plans, Transport assessments and statements in decision-taking, Flood risk and coastal change, Use of planning conditions, Flexible options for planning permissions, and Planning obligations. Similarly in October 2019 the Government has published the National Design Guide.

## **5. Planning History**

5.1 There have been no relevant previous applications.

## **6. Consultations**

### **Public Consultation by Applicant**

6.1 A public consultation exercise was carried out in May 2023, this was done as in person and online consultation

### **Consultation as Part of the Planning Application**

6.2 Formal consultation, including display of site notices, has been undertaken in respect of the application. The following comments from statutory and non-statutory consultees and interested third parties have been received in relation to the original and amended proposals and are summarised as follows:

### **Neighbours and other third party comments: None**

### **Arboriculture consultant: Initial comments:**

There are several mature trees on the site which are protected via a Tree Preservation Order (TPO206). This covers a mature Sycamore tree (T1) and Lime group G1, which appear to be the main arboricultural constraints to the proposed development.

It is considered that although the development is reasonably small, there is still potential for unacceptable damage to occur to these features during the construction phase.

To ensure the potential impacts are kept to an acceptable level, the trees which could be impacted through the proposed development should be surveyed in accordance with BS5837:2012. This information should then be utilised to produce a detailed tree protection plan which will provide all information for tree protection measures required during construction. The plan should include specification and locations for tree protection fencing/ground protection and any other relevant information required during construction.

### **Following the submission of Method Statement: No objection subject to compliance with recommendations in report.**

### **Drainage Engineer: No objection**

### **Worcestershire County Council (Highway Authority): Initial comments**

There is no objection in principle to the proposed development of a single storey extension to accommodate classroom space at the Horizon Community Centre however, the submitted Design and Access Statement says that This will enable the Hub to offer a wider range of training courses and increased access to rental rooms for the local community. Whilst the proposed extension will be modest in scale, approximately 50sqm and there is no change in staff numbers (1.5 full-time equivalent) as per the Application Form, the proposed development nonetheless represents an intensification of use and further details would be expected. The Hub website describes the existing rooms which are for public hire, as having a seating capacity of 120 in the Hall; 14 in Meeting Room 1 and 18 in Meeting Room 2 although details of the current levels of usage have not been provided.

In particular, it is stated that there is no change to the existing 16 parking spaces and 4 accessible spaces however these spaces are not shown on plan and the red line drawing includes access from Stanley Road. More parking is available via the Midland

Road access and these details should be clarified. The Hub website refers only to several free parking spaces.

It is acknowledged that the site which is located in a densely residential area on the edge of the city centre, is easily accessible on foot or by cycle and as per the Hub website, there are 2 public car parks Tallow Hill and St Martin's Gate Multi-Storey Car Park within 500m. However, it would be expected that these details are presented in a brief transport note as part of the application and cycle parking is required in line with standards in the Streetscape Design Guide.

The Applicant should be requested to submit further details to support their application, in particular to show accurate details of the access and parking provision and the Highway Authority therefore submits a deferral until the additional information has been provided.

**Comments following further information being submitted:**

Further to the deferral comment, the Applicant has provided supporting information as requested, via a detailed Transport Note which has clarified the existing access and parking arrangements on the site, and in addition to the 16 on-site spaces, some on-street parking availability has been observed in the vicinity. Details of the current usage of the community centre have also been submitted, plus an in-depth assessment of the accessibility of the site by sustainable modes. On the basis that the proposed extension will be modest in scale, approximately 50sqm to include storage and corridor space, and there is no change in staff numbers and no change in parking provision, there is **no further objection** from Highways.

Nonetheless, as additional measures, the Applicant is willing to apply a car park management plan to cover any periods of high parking demand and also to introduce cycle parking and Highways concurs with the suggested conditions.

**Worcestershire Regulatory Services (Nuisance):** Can the applicant provide details of the proposed location of the MVHR inlet and outlet and noise levels for further comment.

A response has been received from the applicant and final comments from WRS are awaited.

Comments received from WRS: The submitted information relating to the proposed MVHR systems indicate that noise from them should not adversely impact the nearest sensitive receptor(s). Therefore I have **no objection** to the application in terms of noise.

**West Mercia Constabulary Crime Risk Manager: Comments**

I note that consideration has been given to the recessed downpipes. Windows and roof lights should be to the police preferred, Secured by Design standard PAS24:2022. The principles and standards of the Secured by Design initiative give excellent guidance on crime prevention through the environmental design and also on the physical measures. Within Secured by Design guide details the police preferred specification. I would encourage the applicant to apply for this award. Details can be found at [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com)

- 6.3 Members have been given the opportunity to read all representations that have been received in full. At the time of writing this report no other consultation responses have been received. Any additional responses received will be reported to members verbally or in the form of a late paper, subject to the date of receipt.
- 6.4 In assessing the proposal due regard has been given to local residents comments as material planning considerations. Nevertheless, I am also mindful that decisions should not be made solely on the basis of the number of representations, whether they are for or against a proposal. The Localism Act has not changed this, nor has it changed the

advice that local opposition or support for a proposal is not in itself a ground for refusing or granting planning permission unless it is founded on valid planning reasons.

## **7. Planning assessment**

### **The Principle of Development**

- 7.1 The application site is located within the Cathedral Ward on the outskirts of the City Centre. The proposal is for the erection of a classroom extension and associated landscaping. The proposed extension will accommodate a new classroom space with storage. The extension will be located on the southern side of the existing building. The proposal will enable the HUB to offer a wider range of training courses and increased access to rental rooms for the local community.

### **Design and visual impact**

- 7.2 The NPPF confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, and notes that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.
- 7.3 Paragraph 126 of the NPPF highlights that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 7.4 Policy SWDP 21 – ‘Design’ is relevant and requires all new development to be of a high-quality design which integrates effectively with its surroundings, in terms of form and function, whilst also reinforcing local distinctiveness. The siting and layout of a development should reflect the given characteristics of the site in the terms of its appearance and function, the scale, massing and height of the development must be appropriate to the setting of the site and the surrounding landscape character, detailing and materials should be of high quality and appropriate to its context, developments should incorporate the required parking facilities and provisions for the storage of bicycles and the development should provide high quality hard and soft landscaping.
- 7.5 In terms of the existing context, the application site consists of a brick-built building with pitched roofs, parking facilities to the east of the site and hard and soft landscaping surrounding including a small play area. The proposed extension would be located on the south elevation it is proposed to include a pitched roof, replicating the pitch of the existing roof and constructed in the same materials.
- 7.6 The design and choice of materials will result in an extension which reflects the characteristics of the host property, integrating into its surroundings whilst reinforcing its local distinctiveness. The proposed materials are of good quality and would allow a sympathetic extension which will blend into the host building.
- 7.7 In terms of overall design, it is considered that the proposal accords with the relevant expectations of Policy SWDP 21, the extension will provide the needed additional space for the service users and the local community whilst not unacceptably detracting from the appearance or setting of the host building or the surrounding area.

## **Highways**

- 7.8 The proposals include an extension to the host building to allow for an additional room to enable the HUB to offer a wider range of training courses and increased access to rental rooms for the local community. The site already benefits from off street parking of 18 spaces and 4 accessible spaces, all demarked. The applicant has advised that the majority of service users currently walk to the HUB and there are no current parking capacity issues. The parking arrangements will remain unchanged as it is considered that there is adequate parking available to accommodate the existing site and the new classroom. As part of the application process Worcestershire County Council have been consulted on the proposals who advised that they have no objections to the proposals in principle but did request further information be provided in terms of the use of the various rooms and current vehicle numbers-this information has been accepted by the Highways Engineer. Cycle parking in line with standards is expected this has been agreed by the applicant and a condition to this effect is recommended.

## **Preserved Tree Issues**

- 7.9 The southern boundary of the site is characterised by mature trees, one of which is a sycamore protected by a tree preservation order. Initial comments from the Arboricultural consultant requested that a detailed tree protection report be submitted detailing how the trees would be protected during construction in accordance with BS5837:2012. A report was submitted by a qualified arborist and the report concluded that the development could be constructed without causing undue damage to the trees. The recommendations in the report were considered acceptable by the Council's Consultant.

## **8. Conclusion and planning balance**

- 8.1 The NPPF identifies a series of the components that are considered critical to achieving sustainable development. As set out in the above policy assessment of the proposed development, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with the requirements of the adopted development plan and material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.
- 8.2 The extension would not detract from the character or appearance of the surroundings and would have a neutral impact on the adjoining green space area. The proposal for which planning permission is required will not harm the immediate and surrounding area of the application site and will provide the required additional space for its service users and the local community.
- 8.2 Considering the above, and subject to the imposition of planning conditions, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable.
- 8.4 All comments received as part of the consultation process have been acknowledged and consider all material planning issues have been considered in the determination of this application. Having regard to the totality of the policies in the NPPF, it is considered that the proposed development is sustainable when looking at its social, economic and environmental credentials in the round.



## 9. Recommended Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To conform with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the following approved plans and associated documents and the specifications and recommendations contained therein, except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission

P200 Design Statement

P001

P111

P121

P105

P130

P110

Public Consultation Details

Tree Constraints, Impact Assessment & Tree Protection Method Statement by BJ Unwin Forestry Consultancy revised 8/8/23

Response to WCC Highways by Firlands Transport Planning received 11/9/23

Reason: To ensure compliance with the approved scheme.

3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match in type, colour, texture, size, coursing, jointing and pointing to those used in the existing building.

Reason - To ensure that the new materials are in keeping with the surroundings and/or represent quality design in accordance with policy SWDP21 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan.

4. The Development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until a car park management plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The measures shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved car park management plan for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: To ensure the safe operation of approved car park(s).

5. The Development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until 6 cycle parking spaces have been provided with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the provision shall be retained for the purposes of cycle parking only at all times.

REASON: To facilitate access by sustainable modes.

6. The works hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations in the Tree Constraints, Impact Assessment & Tree Protection Method Statement as carried out by B J Unwin Forestry Consultancy and revised on 8/8/2023.

Reason:- To maintain the visual and environmental quality of the site and surrounding area in accordance with policy SWDP25 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan and aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.