



---

## Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 23 July 2025

**by Jennifer Wallace BA(Hons) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

**Decision date: 30 SEPTEMBER 2025**

---

### **Appeal A Ref: APP/A3655/W/24/3357904**

#### **Hoe Bridge School, 224 Hoe Place, Old Woking Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 8JE**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Hoe Bridge School against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
  - The application Ref is PLAN/2022/1189.
  - The development proposed is construction of new two-storey Senior School building (Use Class F.1), reorganisation and resurfacing of existing parking area served by existing access to Old Woking Road, formation of entrance only access from White Rose Lane and associated works (amended description and amended plans and additional documents submitted August 2024).
- 

### **Appeal B Ref: APP/A3655/Y/24/3357905**

#### **Hoe Bridge School, 224 Hoe Place, Old Woking Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 8JE**

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
  - The appeal is made by Hoe Bridge School against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
  - The application Ref is PLAN/2022/1190.
  - The works proposed are the demolition of a section of brick wall in association with the development proposed under related planning application ref: PLAN/2022/1189 (for the Construction of new two-storey Senior School building (Use Class F.1), reorganisation and resurfacing of existing parking area served by existing access to Old Woking Road and associated works).
- 

## **Decisions**

1. Appeal A: The appeal is dismissed.
2. Appeal B: The appeal is dismissed.

## **Applications for Costs**

3. Applications for costs in relation to both Appeal A and Appeal B have been made by Hoe Bridge School against Woking Borough Council. These are the subject of separate decisions.

## **Preliminary Matters**

4. These decisions address both planning and listed building consent appeals for the same site and the same scheme. To prevent duplication and for the avoidance of doubt, I have dealt with both appeals within a single decision letter.
5. The proposal includes the partial demolition of a brick wall which is stated to be 'curtilage listed'. The evidence before me indicates that the wall is historically associated with the Grade II\* listed building Hoe Place. By virtue of s1(5)(b) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) the wall shall be 'treated as part of the [listed] building'. Additionally, the proposal is proximate to other listed buildings. Consequently, in determining the appeals I

have had regard to the relevant statutory duties set out in sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Act.

6. I have used the description of development and works from the appeal forms as they more accurately reflect the proposal in light of the amendments made while the scheme was being considered by the Council.

### **Main Issues**

7. The main issues for Appeal A are the effect of the proposal on:
  - the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers; and
  - the character and appearance of the area
8. The main issue for Appeal B, and a further main issue for Appeal A is whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II\* Listed Building Hoe Place, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

### **Reasons**

#### *Living Conditions*

9. The proposed access point would be immediately adjacent to 46 White Rose Lane which has two windows facing directly toward the appeal site located a short distance from the boundary. The sites are separated by a post and rail fence. While there are some trees along the boundary, at my site visit there was overgrown shrubbery on the school site. There was an existing field access gate. The appellant's transport evidence indicated that 37% of pupils walking to school used this entrance.
10. This would become the new vehicular access to the site at certain times and would also provide a new pedestrian footpath. This footpath would run adjacent to the boundary with No.46. However, this would only be for a very short distance as the access and footpath turn towards the grounds. This turn begins before the path runs adjacent to the dwelling and continues to move away from the boundary. The noise report identifies that the installation of a 1.5m acoustic fence would prevent any adverse effects to the occupiers of the property from the noise associated with the use of the access and specified where that fence should be sited. This extended to the edge of the appeal site. The Council's Environmental Health officer concurred with this, recommending that the fence be secured by condition.
11. The appellant's highways case is predicated on the assumption that there will be an increase in the proportions of pupils using non-car modes of transport. There is considerable evidence before me in the form of Transport Notes reflecting discussions between the appellant and Suffolk County Council as the local highways authority (LHA). It is clear from this documentation that it is fully anticipated that the access from White Rose Lane would be used by pedestrians accessing the site.
12. The comment from the LHA in response to the planning application does not contain any assessment of the proposal but rather recommends conditions and other highway related conditions and informatives. Some of these, including a travel plan, would be secured by the planning obligation submitted as part of Appeal A. There is only the briefest, general explanation for these. The Council's

officer report relies on the proposed modal split including the 15% active travel and on the use of conditions on various matters in reaching its conclusion that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, and the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would not be severe.

13. The conditions suggested to me include the provision of pedestrian visibility splays. While the appellant disputes the need for this splay, the proposal seeks to increase the number of children - among the most vulnerable of road users – walking to the site. A reasonable proportion of those walking would be likely to use this access, notwithstanding the lack of footpaths along White Rose Lane. There is therefore no substantive evidence before me to justify departing from the advice of the LHA in this respect.
14. The proposed condition sets out the position from which this splay must be measured from the back of the footway and outwards from the edge of the access. This would be immediately adjacent to the 1.5m acoustic fencing which was found to be necessary by the relevant professionals for both main parties. While the Council has indicated that the position of the fence could be altered without affecting the efficacy of the acoustic fence, there is no technical evidence before me to demonstrate that would be the case. I therefore could not be certain that appropriate visibility splays could be secured while ensuring there would not be an adverse level of noise and disturbance to the occupiers of No.46.
15. The changes in ground levels and distance of the proposed building from No.46 and the dwellings on the opposite side of White Rose Lane mean that there would not be an unacceptable loss of privacy to the occupiers of those properties. Effects of any floodlighting could be controlled by condition. However, it is expected that any well-designed development would have acceptable effects in these respects and these factors would therefore be neutral in my assessment.
16. The proposal would therefore not have an acceptable effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. It would be contrary to Woking Core Strategy (October 2012) (CS) Policy CS21 which requires development to be designed to avoid significant harm to general amenity resulting from noise.

### *Character and Appearance*

17. White Rose Lane is a fairly long carriageway which leads into the centre of Woking. Its character varies along its length, reflecting the transition from the semi-rural outskirts of Woking to its urban centre. In the vicinity of the appeal site, the substantial planting screening the surrounding dwellings and the boundary treatment to the appeal site belie the extent of development in the area. At my site visit, although only a snapshot in time, there were regular vehicle movements along White Rose Lane.
18. The proposal would see the introduction of a hardstanding to the existing access, and the creation of additional parking, turning and associated hard landscaping to the front of the proposed school building. An expansive existing area of gravel would continue to be used for parking, and a number of the mature trees along the access road would be retained. There would be an inevitable urbanising effect from the development taken as a whole. However, the Council has not advanced any argument with respect to the effect of the siting of the proposed school building. In the context of that building, the proposed hardstanding would not

appear incongruous, but rather as the expected surrounds necessary to meet the needs of a school with respect to access and circulation space.

19. The access point itself would be immediately adjacent to No.46, which is the most prominent building along White Rose Lane given its position adjacent to the road and the limited landscaping in contrast to the dwellings opposite. Despite the landscaping and change in levels, there are notable areas of hardstanding providing the access to the dwellings opposite. When looking towards Old Woking Road, the steady stream of traffic along that road is readily visible, as are the existing highway works in the form of the chicane and the traffic island at the junction. Consequently, the area appears at most semi-rural. The installation of a further access point and speed table would not be incongruous with the character of the area.
20. Levels in the site are lower than the road, and the dwellings opposite. This serves to minimise the visual impact of the proposed hardstanding, as would its layout moving into the site where some screening would be provided by the retained vegetation and the substantial boundary wall which surrounds the site. Given the siting of the access and hardstanding, viewed in the context of the outskirts of Woking, there would be no discernible effect on landscape character.
21. The appellant's highway evidence demonstrates that there would not be a material change to the number of vehicle trips to the site. There would be a change in that vehicles would enter the school site via the proposed White Rose Lane entrance. However, this lies only a short distance from the junction with Old Woking Road which appears to be very well used. The additional vehicle movements would take place during term time, for limited hours in the peak periods during the day and would be for access only. Consequently, there would not be unacceptable harm to the character of the area arising from the use of the new access.
22. The proposal would therefore have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would be in accordance with CS Policy CS24 which requires development to conserve existing character.

### *Listed Building*

23. Hoe Place<sup>1</sup> is a Grade II\* listed building dating from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and remodelled externally circa 1810. It was originally a house set in an expansive parkland surrounded by a substantial boundary wall to the highway. It has been in use as a school since 1928. The special interest and significance of Hoe Place is primarily derived from its historic and architectural interests in illustrating a grand early 18<sup>th</sup> century house which has evolved in both its design and use over time. It also has group value with the nearby Grade II listed Chapel<sup>2</sup>. The substantial brick boundary wall of up to 3m in height encloses the site along both Old Woking Road and White Rose Lane and, relevant to the appeals, also includes a section which runs perpendicular to the site boundary and is stated to have formed part of outbuildings. The boundary wall, including this section, has historic, physical and functional associations with Hoe Place. Consequently, it contributes in a positive and meaningful way to the asset's heritage interests.

---

<sup>1</sup> List Entry Number 1044695 first listed 22 July 1953, most recent amendment 6 January 1984

<sup>2</sup> List Entry Number 1378265 listed 6 January 1984

24. The proposal involves works to remove a portion of the section which runs perpendicular to the site boundary to allow for the access road to be created. Due to the loss of historic fabric and the effect of this on the understanding of the historic layout and use of the site, the proposed removal of part of the wall would inevitably harm the significance of Hoe Place.
25. I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the Grade II\* listed building Hoe Place, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses and would harm its significance as a designated heritage asset.
26. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be), irrespective of whether this would amount to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to significance. Paragraph 213 further advises that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.
27. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of Hoe Place. This would be a moderate level of harm, as there would be the permanent removal of historic fabric, tempered by the fact that part of the outbuilding wall would be retained. Nonetheless, I attach considerable importance and weight to this harm, particularly given the importance of the Grade II\* listed building. In such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework confirms that these harms should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
28. In this case, the public benefits that would arise would be from the provision of additional school places in years 9-11 in a co-educational private school and so would widen choice in education as supported by paragraph 100 of the Framework. It would also support the continued operation of the school and meeting the demand for school places generated by new housing. I also note the positive support the proposal has received from the school community and the ways the school supports other community facilities such as sports clubs and holiday childcare provision. There would also be economic benefits during the construction stage of the development and the employment opportunities that would be created during both the construction and occupation stages. There is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate how the proposal would directly support the ongoing maintenance of the Listed Buildings. However it is a likely outcome from the ongoing use and expansion of the school and as such would provide a heritage benefit.
29. These public benefits would outweigh the moderate level of less than substantial harm I have identified. However, this assessment presupposes Appeal A is to be allowed. As that is not the case, the only public benefits that would arise would be the economic benefits arising from the demolition and making good of the wall. These would be very limited and of a temporary duration and so the harm to Hoe Place would not be outweighed.
30. The proposal would not preserve the Grade II\* listed building Hoe Place or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. This would be contrary to the requirements of sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Act and the provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. It would also conflict with CS Policy CS20 and Development

Management Policies Development Plan Document (October 2016) Policy DM20 which require development to protect the heritage assets of the Borough and/or their setting.

## **Other Matters**

### *Other Heritage Considerations*

31. The proposed school, and the associated works would be sited away from Hoe Place and the Chapel, separated by intervening development in the form of the extension to Hoe Place, another more modern school building, and access road and parking. The setting of both listed buildings as it relates to these appeals is clearly defined by the well established boundaries around the grounds and the educational activities that are accommodated within them such as the artificial pitches and swimming pool. The proposed siting of a further school building and associated development would continue the pattern of built form in proximity to the northern boundary of the site. There would therefore be a neutral effect on the setting of both Hoe Place and the Chapel.
32. The Heritage Statement also identifies two other Grade II listed buildings in proximity to the site: Roundhill Cottage<sup>3</sup> which originally served Roundhill Farm and Barn 50 Yards East Of Hoe Bridge House<sup>4</sup> which is now incorporated into the Links Business Centre. The significance of both of these buildings is derived from their architectural and historic interest in the agricultural development of the area, however given wider changes in the area, their settings appear limited to their immediate surrounds. Given the position and nature of the proposed development, I find that the settings of these listed buildings would be preserved and their significance as designated heritage assets would not be harmed. I note the Council had no concerns in this regard either.
33. The significance of the Hockering Conservation Area (CA) lies in its regular street pattern and form of large, individually designed houses set in commensurately sized plots and its historic interest for its links to the Arts and Crafts movement. It is a discrete area of development, and its setting, comprised of various forms of semi-rural and suburban development, has a neutral effect on its significance. Consequently there would be no effect on the setting of the CA from the proposal.

### *Highways*

34. The Transport Assessment (TA) carried out surveys to establish trip rates and modal split at the school. From here, trip generation was estimated. It also considers ways that modal split could be altered to reduce the number of single car trips and increase more sustainable modes of transport. Off-site highway works are proposed to improve pedestrian safety and drop off times are staggered to manage traffic levels.
35. There are limitations to walking in the area given the gaps in footpath coverage and the private nature of the Hockering. Notwithstanding, this does not appear to prevent walking given the proportion of pupils who use the White Rose Lane entrance. It is not unreasonable to assume increased use of minibuses could be achieved as the proposal is for a school to serve older children, or that there could be an increase in cycling. The Council and the local highways authority are

---

<sup>3</sup> List Entry Number 1236746 listed 6 January 1984

<sup>4</sup> List Entry Number 1044696 listed 6 January 1984

satisfied with the submitted details, subject to the imposition of conditions and a legal agreement to secure the travel plan and highway works. There is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate these findings are not robust.

36. Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) (CIL Regulations) and paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) set out three tests that planning obligations must meet. The above measures are necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms and with regard to ensuring highway safety. It is directly related to the development and would be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development proposed. I am therefore satisfied that the planning obligation would meet the requirements of the CIL Regulations and the Framework in respect of this issue. I therefore give it limited weight in the determination of this appeal.
37. However, given the lack of a formal footway along White Rose Lane, I can only take the back of the footway as being the boundary of the appeal site. The visibility splays would appear to involve the use of land falling outwith the red line of the appeal site and into what appears to be the garden of No.46. While the Council has confirmed it considers from on site observation this splay could be achieved, there is no substantive evidence of this before me. I note the landowner is the same for both this property and the appeal site albeit No.46 is leased to tenants. Were I minded to allow the appeals, this is a matter which could have been further considered.

### *Flood Risk*

38. The site is identified as being at varying levels of flood risk. Appeal A has been accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (FRA) which is necessary as a part of the built development falls within an area identified as being in flood zones 2 and 3<sup>5</sup>. I accept that this is a sequentially preferable location for the proposed development given its connection to the existing use of the site, levels of flood risk on the site and the presence of other constraints. As a more vulnerable use, it is also necessary for the exceptions test to be passed. I am satisfied that the wider sustainability benefits of providing additional school places in proximity to an existing settlement would outweigh the flood risk and that the development would be safe for its lifetime due to the proposed finished floor levels. Compensatory storage would also be provided to account for the loss due to the development. Consequently, I am also satisfied that flood risk would not be increased elsewhere.

### *Biodiversity and Ecology*

39. An Ecology Impact Assessment was submitted. This identified the proximity of the site to the Hoe Stream Site of Nature Conservation Interest. Subsequent further surveys with respect to bats were carried out which concluded there were not bats in the trees proposed to be removed. I have no reason to think that the ecological effects of the development could not be managed by condition.
40. The proposal would result in the loss of some Category A and B trees. However the site would remain verdant with considerable tree planting. Additional landscaping could be secured by condition.

---

<sup>5</sup> Having regard to paragraph 175 of the Framework updated after the decision was issued.

### *Neutral Factors*

41. Archaeology could be addressed by condition. There is no objection to the contemporary design and materials of the proposed school building. However these are to be expected of any well-designed development and so would be neutral in my assessment.

### *Green Belt*

42. It is not in dispute that the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It would harm the openness of the Green Belt by virtue of its scale, mass and the associated access and parking necessary to support the use. There would be harm to the Green Belt purpose of assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Paragraph 153 of the Framework confirms that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt.
43. Paragraph 153 goes on to confirm that inappropriate development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. There would be benefits from supporting the existing school, the provision of additional school places in proximity to Woking where future housing growth is anticipated, the associated support it would provide for surrounding community facilities and the use of the school's facilities by external organisations. There would be further benefits from the employment that would be generated by the proposal and the support for the ongoing stewardship of the listed buildings on site. Taken together, and were I otherwise minded to allow Appeal A, these other considerations amount to the very special circumstances that would clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

### **Conclusion**

44. **Appeal A:** The proposal would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the Framework, of sufficient weight to indicate the decision should be taken otherwise. For the reasons given, I conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed.
45. **Appeal B:** For the reasons given, I conclude that Appeal B should be dismissed.

*Jennifer Wallace*

INSPECTOR