

Eastleigh Borough Council
Eastleigh House
Upper market Street
Eastleigh
SO50 9YN

Our Reference: 103031

12 May 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

**Bright Horizons Hedge End Day Nursery and Preschool, Pomeroy Crescent,
Hedge End, Southampton, SO30 2LF
Planning, Design and Heritage Statement**

Verve Planning

info@verveplanning.com
www.verveplanning.com

Reg no. 11491335

We are pleased to submit on behalf of our client, Bright Horizons Family Solutions Limited (the Applicant), an application for planning permission for a stand-alone classroom building in the grounds of the above day nursery.

Along with this Planning, Design and Heritage Statement, the planning application comprises:

- The completed application form and certificate of ownership;
- Site Location Plan;
- Existing Site Plan
- Proposed Site Plan;
- Proposed Internal Layout Plans;
- Proposed Roof Plan;
- Proposed Elevations;
- Transport Note, prepared by i-transport;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Preliminary Method Statement, prepared by New Leaf Environmental Limited;
- Email dated 1.4.25 from County Archaeologist at HCC;
- Completed online Biodiversity Checklist; and
- Completed CIL form.

The planning application fee of £588 (plus portal service charge of £85) has been paid via the Planning Portal payment scheme.

The Applicant

Bright Horizons Family Solutions Limited is the UK's leading childcare provider. They have been in operation for over 30 years and now have a portfolio of almost 300 nurseries across the UK, including Hedge End Day Nursery and Pre-school and also Bright Horizons Fair Oak Day Nursery and Pre-School in Winchester Road, Fair Oak. The age group for the nurseries is between 3 months to 5 years. Bright Horizons' mission is to make a difference to children, families and employers, by providing the highest quality early care and education for each child in each nursery, every day.

Site and Surroundings

Hedge End Day Nursery and Preschool is a popular and well established day nursery and pre school, located off Pomeroy Crescent within the residential area of Hedge End. It sits on a generous plot extending to circa 0.2 hectares in area.

The two storey nursery building has the capacity to accommodate up to 57 children between the ages of four months to five years, with a total of 18 members of staff on site per day.

The site also comprises of 20 car parking spaces (including one disabled space) to the west of the building, along with covered cycle parking, enclosed bin and buggy storage and a long mature garden to the rear.

The nursery building is grade II listed, being referred to by English Heritage as comprising of 'the former farmhouse for Dowds Farm'. The original building dates back to the 17th century has been subsequently extended as outlined in the planning history section below.

There are no other listed buildings nearby and no Conservation Areas in the vicinity of the site.

According to the Government's Flood Map for Planning, the site lies within Flood Zone 1, which means it has a very low risk of flooding from rivers or sea. The latest Flood Map also indicates that the site is at very low risk from surface water flooding.

[REDACTED] Primary School (to the north) and the [REDACTED] residential development to the west and



Wellstead Primary School located to the north of the application site



Salvation Army Church with southern elevation of 17th century element of the listed day nursery building visible in the background.

The day nursery is in a sustainable location, approximately 16 minutes walk or 4 minute cycle from Hedge End Train station and close to Hedge End Retail Park. It is also close to a number of bus routes.

There has been considerable residential development in Hedge End over recent decades including at Dowds Farm. The day nursery is therefore ideally suited to cater for the large and growing residential catchment area.

Proposed Development

In order to help address the increased demand for pre-school places in the area, Bright Horizons is looking to build a stand-alone classroom measuring 11m x 5.5m (60.5 sqms) in the grounds of the day nursery. The building would be occupied by either 16 no. 3 – 4 year olds with two members of staff, or 15 no. 2 year olds with three members of staff.

The proposed building would be sited predominantly on an area of existing hardstanding to the rear of the existing nursery building and close to the northern boundary with the adjacent school. Externally the walls of the building would be fitted with fibre cement horizontal planks in Anthracite Grey to ensure a natural appearance.

The proposed building would have an external play area to the rear of the main building and would utilise the existing refuse facilities, buggy store and cycle store on the site.

The hours of opening would not change, with the day nursery continuing to operate from 8.00am until 6.00pm Monday to Friday.

Relevant Planning History

The original Dowds Farmhouse dates back to the early seventeenth century. It was substantially extended in the early nineteenth century, mid nineteenth century and more recently.

Following the adoption of the Development and Design Brief for 'Land at Dowd's Farm,' by Eastleigh Council in 2002, outline planning permission (ref 40065/0) was granted in December 2004 for up to 765 residential properties, district park, primary school, offices/and/or light industry and associated, landscaping, roads and infrastructure on the Dowd's Farm development, on the proviso that Dowds Farm was retained and incorporated in the layout of the wider development. Numerous applications for reserved matters for housing, infrastructure and the district park were permitted by the council from May 2005 to March 2010.

In 2011 planning permission was granted under F/10/66882 for the construction of the adjacent community centre/worship hall with ancillary café, offices, classrooms and ancillary works.

The farmhouse had been vacant for approximately 10 years. It was in an extremely poor state and consequently was on the Buildings at Risk register.

Planning permission was granted in February 2011 (F/11/68402) for the change of use of the property from residential to either former use class A2, office/research and development (B1a and b), community facilities/day care facilities (D1), with ancillary car parking & access to Pomeroy Crescent and the felling of trees to help ensure the continued future of the historic building. In granting planning permission, the LPA considered that day care provision was an ideal end use for this building in this

location and would be likely to attract customers/users from the extensive new housing within Dowd's Farm and the Grange Park estates.

In January of the following year, planning permission and listed building consent were granted (F/11/69881 and L/11/69882) for the change of use of the grade II listed building to a day nursery. The applications also included the demolition of existing extensions on the east and west side of the building and their replacement with new additions. The extensions were modern in appearance and contrasted with the existing listed building through their appearance and the choice of materials – black zinc cladding and extensive glazing (for the west elevation entrance).



View of the rear of the building with its modern extension

The scheme was designed to clearly identify the “old” and “new” elements to the building. The scheme also included extensive restoration works (ie new windows and doors, removal of some internal walls and ceilings) and a new access off Pomeroy Crescent, together with the provision of 20 car parking spaces and the felling of trees along the western boundary.

More recently, planning permission and listed building consent have been granted for the installation of AC units internally and externally.

Planning Policy Context

The Development Plan for the area comprises The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 which was adopted on 25 April 2022.

The following policies are considered to be relevant to the applications:

- Policy S1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
- Policy S2 – Approach to New Development
- Policy S8 – Historic Environment
- Policy S10 – Community Facilities
- Policy DM1 – General Criteria for all new development

- Policy DM11 – Nature Conservation
- Policy DM12 – Heritage Assets
- Policy DM13 – Transport
- Policy DM14 - Parking
- Policy DM36 – Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities

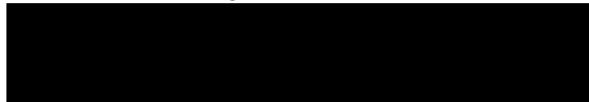
The council is only at an early stage in its Local Plan review, having undertaken a consultation on Issues and Options during December 2024 and January 2025.

Material Considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) along with the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) are important material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

Other Local Documents or Guidance include:

- Quality Places (November 2011)
- Parking Standards



Principle of improved day nursery facilities at the site

There is strong policy support for the expansion of existing nursery facilities to support the government's policy on providing 15 and 30 hours Funded Early Education for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

The government is keen to ensure that sufficient day nursery facilities are provided to meet the demand for pre-school provision. This is highlighted in the recent change to paragraph 100 of the NPPF 2024 which confirms the importance of ensuring that a sufficient choice of early years places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. It requires local planning authorities (LPAs) to take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.

Paragraph 100 goes on to state that LPAs should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications.

At the local level, Strategic Policy S1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) requires new development in the Borough to enhance social equality by ensuring equal and easy access to a range of community facilities and services and by promoting the development of employment, education and skills training opportunities.

Strategic Policy S10 of the Adopted Local Plan recognises the need to ensure adequate provision of facilities to serve the borough's communities, especially in areas like Hedge End which have experienced significant housing growth.

Bright Horizons have confirmed that the day nursery occupancy is high and is forecast to remain high because of the significant level of house building in the wider area that is bringing in new families all of the time. There are on average 3-5 tours with prospective parents each week. However, the day nursery cannot currently accommodate the high demand for places, and it has internal and external waiting

lists. The demand for places is similarly high in Bright Horizons' other nearby day nursery at Fair Oak.

The proposed stand-alone building would provide additional childcare provision in an accessible location close to the community it serves, thereby helping to meet the needs and expectations of working parents.

The principle of providing additional childcare facilities on this well-established day nursery site is therefore consistent with all tiers of planning policy and guidance.

Layout and Design

Policy DM1 of the Local Plan requires new development (among other things), to make efficient use of land and be compatible with adjacent uses in terms of mass, scale, materials, layout, design and siting.

The proposed stand alone classroom would provide much-needed additional accommodation in a convenient location on the site, close to the main day nursery building and the northern boundary of the site with the adjacent school. It would be sited in a broad location. Even with the proposed surfaced amenity area in addition to a



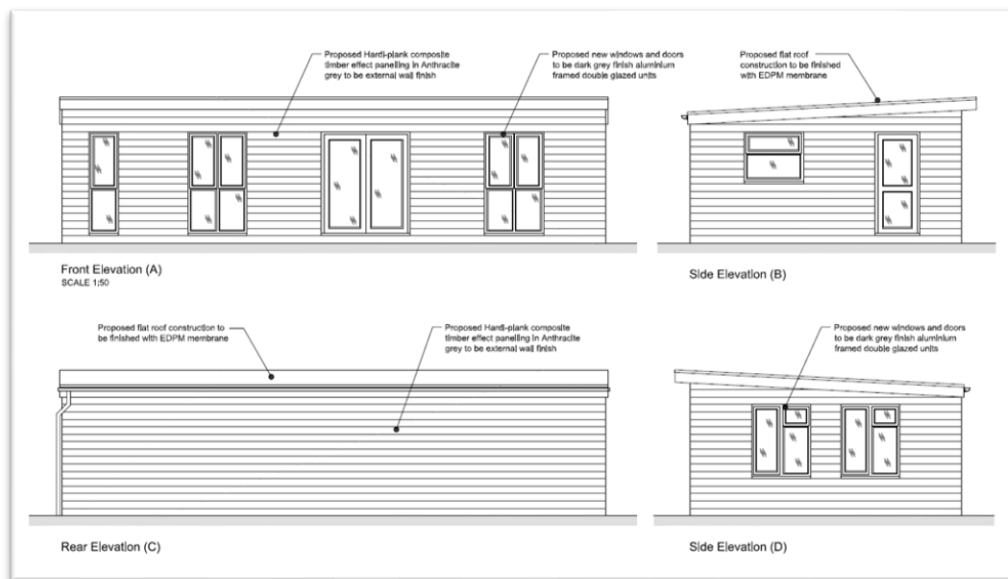
Proposed building to be sited predominantly on the existing hard surfaced play, replacing the existing timber shed.

The proposed single storey building is modest in size and would be constructed from high quality, composite, timber effect horizontal boarding. It would be anthracite grey in colour to harmonise with the zinc cladding of the modern extension on the rear (east of the building). These materials would also help the building to assimilate into the rear garden setting.



Proposed extension of the existing building with a shallow mono pitched roof extension.

The building would have a shallow mono pitched roof to minimise the height and bulk of the building. It would be finished with an EPDM membrane.



Extract from proposed elevations showing the external appearance of the proposed building to assimilate into the rear garden setting.

Overall, the design and layout of the building would respect the character and appearance of the host building and the locality generally, in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Local Plan.

Heritage Statement

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states: "In considering whether to grant Listed Building Consent for any works, the Local Planning Authority ... shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving

the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses".

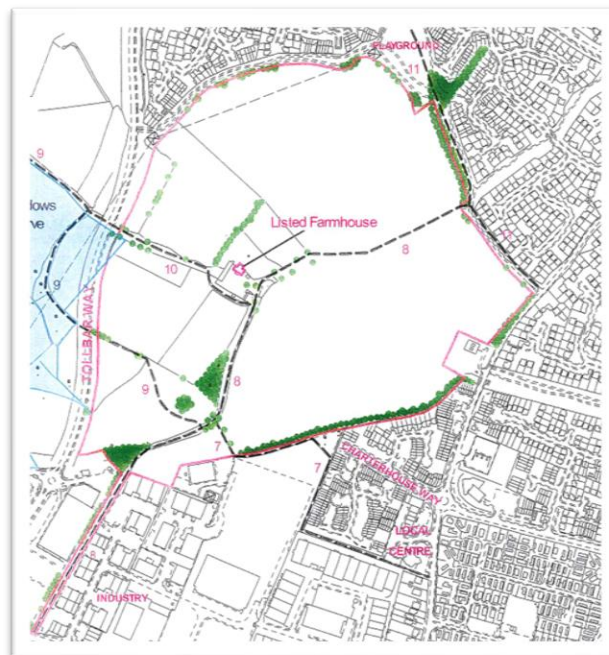
Policy DM12 of the Local Plan states that development of a heritage asset or within its setting will be permitted provided it does not harm or detract from the significance or special interest of the asset and sustains and enhances its special character and qualities.

The property was listed in July 2002 around the time that the Development and Design Brief for 'Land at Dowd's Farm' was being prepared by Eastleigh Council.

According to the listing description, Dowd's Farmhouse is an interesting 3 room plan early C17 timber framed house (which faces south) with large mid C19 brick extension at the rear.

At that time, the listed farmhouse was set within a rural setting, centrally within the Dowd's Farm site which extended to 27.8 hectares. Access to the farmhouse was from a gravel track running north eastwards from a gate on Botley Road as shown on the map below. Even at that time, according to the Development and Design Brief, the listed farmhouse and associated land *"was a fragment of undulating mixed farmland and woodland, now enclosed to the north and east by recent housing development and to the south by industrial development"*.

The listed building itself was surrounded by an overgrown curtilage and a former orchard to the north.



Extract from constraints map in Dec 2002 Development and Design Brief.

The development and design brief required the farmhouse to be retained because of its architectural and historical merit and incorporated in the layout of the wider development. It stated that the retention of the building in an appropriate setting would provide a context for the development and a sense of historical continuity.

As referred to in the planning history section above, the former farmhouse was saved from near collapse in c.2011 when it was restored and subsequently extended for its current use as a day nursery. The extensions included a modern addition to the rear following the demolition of existing extensions on the east and west side of the building.

The council has acknowledged that the setting of the listed building has changed very significantly over time, as a result of the planning decisions taken on the site and the wider area.

The former farmhouse no longer has a rural setting but is entirely surrounded by modern development, including the Salvation Army Church to the south, Wellstead Primary School to the north and residential development to the west and east, the majority of which are larger in scale and bulk to the more modest proportions of the original listed building.

The original access to the farmhouse has also been replaced by a new access off Pomeroy Crescent, a residential road looping off Wellstead Way.

The original early 17th century part of the building now faces towards the northern boundary. The 'new' front of the building now faces south. A new stand-alone classroom would be added to the rear and would be seen in the context of the larger scale, mid C19 extension and the more recent modern rear addition. It would not be overly dominant from the original C17 part of the building.

The proposal would therefore not detract from the significance of the listed building, in accordance with Policy DM12 of the Local Plan.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Policy DM1 of the Local Plan requires all development to be designed to avoid an unacceptable impact on the amenities of new and existing residents.

The proposed building would be slightly set in from the northern boundary. It would be single storey in height with the lowest section of the mono pitch roof adjacent to the side boundary. Furthermore, there would be no windows or doors in its northern elevation facing towards the school. Overall, the proposed building would not appear unduly obtrusive in view from the adjacent school above the height of the existing fence and would not result in any issues of overlooking or loss of privacy.

The proposed building would be sited a significant distance from the nearest residential dwellings to the east and west. As such the new classroom would not generate any significantly greater noise and disturbance to neighbouring properties compared to the existing use of this part of the site as an external play area.

The living conditions of neighbouring occupiers would therefore be safeguarded in compliance with Policy DM1 of the Local Plan.

Highway Matters

Policy DM13 of the Local Plan requires new development to achieve safe and convenient access to the public highway and encourage sustainable transport.

The day nursery is well located within the established residential area of Hedge End and offers realistic sustainable travel opportunities to and from the site.

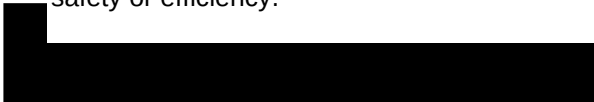
The nursery's location allows parents to drop off and pick up their children on their commuting journey with regular bus services providing a connection around Southampton and Hedge End, as well as rail services from Hedge End station.

Access would continue to be taken from Pomeroy Crescent and there would be no changes to the servicing or refuse arrangement of the day nursery.

Surveys of the existing parking demands of the site have been undertaken and presented within the Transport Note prepared by i-transport. This demonstrates that the existing parking provision would be sufficient to accommodate the demand arising from the increased child capacity.

The standalone classroom would have a negligible impact on trip generation and the traffic demand arising from it would not have a material impact on the performance of the highway network.

The Transport Note therefore confirms that the proposed classroom would be consistent with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, including paragraph 115. Consequently, the proposals would not be detrimental to highway safety or efficiency.



All of the trees on the entire Dowd's Farm site are protected by a group tree preservation order. The planning application is therefore accompanied by a detailed arboricultural report demonstrating that the proposed classroom building can be accommodated on the site, in the position proposed, without adversely impacting on the health and long-term retention of any of the existing trees in the rear garden of the nursery or the adjoining school site.

In order to provide sufficient height clearance, the tree report recommends that the canopy of T12 lying in the grounds of the adjacent school (close to the side boundary) has its canopy slightly raised where it overhangs the site. This is outlined in more detail in the tree report, with these works having been discussed with the school.

Overall, the tree report concludes that the proposed development would not have any significantly detrimental impact on retained trees.

Ecology

The application is exempt from providing the statutory 10% biodiversity net gain due to the de minimus exemption. The majority of the stand-alone building will be sited on existing hardstanding and therefore less than 25 sqms of on-site habitat will be lost.

Nevertheless, a wildflower area is proposed to be planted in the front garden area of the day nursery to compensate for the limited removal of shrubbery along the northern boundary (to accommodate the new classroom building) thereby ensuring on site biodiversity improvements. Furthermore, in accordance with Policy DM11 of the Local Plan, Bright Horizons would be willing to provide a bird and bat box on site, full details of which can be secured by (pre-occupation) condition.

The application is also accompanied by a completed biodiversity checklist which confirms that no further ecology reports are required.

Conclusions

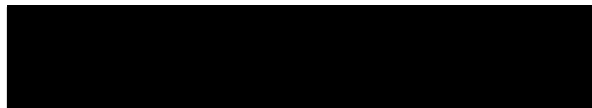
The proposal involves the construction of a stand-alone classroom building in the grounds of this well-established and popular day nursery. It would provide additional high quality childcare provision, to help meet an identified need for more pre-school places within the Hedge End area.

As set out above, the proposed development has been carefully designed to ensure that it can be delivered in a manner which would not be harmful to setting or significance of the host listed building, the health of any existing trees, the amenities of neighbouring properties or highway safety.

We therefore consider that the application should be supported by the Council and planning permission be granted without delay.

We look forward to receiving confirmation of receipt and validation of the application at the earliest possible opportunity.

Yours faithfully

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Tania Tindale.

Tania Tindale

Enc: As referred to above

cc: Ian Winney, Bright Horizons