

21 November 2025



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Submitted via the Planning Portal (ref. PP-13855076)

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of our client, Leighton Park School, we write in relation to the current full planning application (ref. PL/25/0758) at Leighton Park School, Reading, RG2 7DE for:

“The erection of an Entrance Lodge and associated access.”

Following the receipt of comments from statutory consultees, this application is made up of the following documents:

- Application Form;
- CIL Form;
- Covering Letter (updated following consultee responses);
- Site Location Plans (ref. 240119-10-001 and 1240119-10-002);
- Existing Site Plan (ref. 249119-20-001);
- Proposed Site Plan (ref. 240119-20-101) (updated following consultee responses – November 2025);
- Proposed Floor / Roof Plans (ref. 240119-30-101);
- Proposed Elevations (ref. 240119-40-101) (updated following consultee responses – November 2025);
- Indicative Proposed Foundation Details (ref. 25280-001-001) (submitted following consultee responses);
- Tree Survey / Tree Protection Plan / Arboricultural Method Statement (updated following consultee responses); and
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation.

Payment of the appropriate fee of £383 (£298 planning application fee plus £85 Planning Portal service charge) was previously made following the initial submission via the Planning Portal.

Site context and background

Leighton Park School is located approximately 2 miles to the south east of the centre of Reading. It is bound between the A327 Shenfield Road to the west, and Pepper Lane to the north and east. The School site comprises a number of school buildings and leisure facilities associated with its current use as an independent educational facility. The wider Leighton Park School site contains a Grade II Listed Building (list

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entry no. 1113577). The Listed Building is located more than 200m southeast of the proposed siting of the Entrance Lodge.

The application site (outlined in red on the accompanying Location Plan) comprises of predominantly grassland / shrubs and is located directly behind the main School entrance gates adjacent to the School's visitor car park. The application site is sited on land that is protected by tree group 'W2' which forms part of the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 27-07.

Proposal

It is proposed that the Entrance Lodge will be situated at the primary site access off Shinfield Road, on the southern side the access road, adjacent to the School's visitor car park. The Entrance Lodge would be strategically positioned behind the main entrance gates of the school to facilitate arrival to and from the site.

The proposed Entrance Lodge consists of two main rooms: a storage room and a guard room with a kitchenette. A WC (incinerator-type toilet) is proposed in the centre of the Entrance Lodge, which can be accessed via the storage room. The kitchenette aspect of the Entrance Lodge will not contain a sink or plumbed-in water supply. Fenestration is only proposed on the principal (north) elevation, which consists of two glass doors and a large window for security and visibility. A gutter is proposed at the rear of the lodge with a water butt for rainwater collection. No mains water connection is proposed with power supply provided via a below ground connection from the existing green cabinet at the site entrance to the front of the Entrance Lodge, as shown on the updated Proposed Site Plan (ref. 240119-20-101) for clarity following the statutory consultee responses.

The existing low level wall will be retained along the access road in front of the Entrance Lodge. However the top course of the existing retaining wall will be removed to form the first step to access the Entrance Lodge.

The indicative proposed foundation details for construction of the Entrance Lodge are shown on the additional accompanying plan ref. 25280-001-001).

Some light pruning (some crown lifting, some minor reduction of a limb) of the Turkey Oak T6 canopy is proposed in advance of construction of the Entrance Lodge, as per the updated accompanying Arboricultural Method Statement.

The intention is for the Entrance Lodge to serve as a vital component of the school infrastructure. It will play a pivotal role in facilitating the management of deliveries and it will serve as a welcoming point for all guests, providing them with the necessary assistance and guidance upon arrival. The proposed Entrance Lodge is integral to improving safeguarding for students and operational efficiency of the school premises.

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this case, the Development Plan comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted November 2019). Relevant material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) and the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) (2015) (as amended).

Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted November 2019)

The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted in November 2019 and sets out policies for development up to 2036.

The key adopted Local Plan policies relevant to this application are set out below:

- **CC6: Accessibility and the intensity of development** – This policy ensures the scale and density of development will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling, and public transport to a range of services and facilities.
- **CC7: Design and The Public Realm** – This policy requires all development to be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading and makes a positive contribution to the ease of movement.
- **TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters** – This policy states that development will be permitted where they would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network and where there would be no risk to the safety of people using that road.
- **EN12: Biodiversity and the green network** – This policy requires all developments to not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity and to provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. It mandates developments to protect and enhance possible features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the site and provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements wherever practical. Off site compensation can happen in exceptional circumstances where the development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site and it is demonstrated the impacts cannot be 1) avoided, 2) mitigated or 3) compensated on site.
- **EN13: Major Landscape Feature** – The policy states that planning permission will not be granted for any development that would detract from the character or appearance of a Major Landscape Feature. Any new development should seek to maintain and enhance the natural beauty and visual amenity of the identified major landscape feature.
- **EN14: Trees, hedges and woodlands** – This policy states that, *'Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance'*. Adds that new development should make provision for tree retention and include measures to ensure that the trees are adequately maintained.
- **EN15: Air Quality** – This policy requires all development to have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality. It states development that would detrimentally affect air quality will not be permitted unless the effect is to be mitigated.
- **OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities** – Supports proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities, including appropriate additional development proposals for educational facilities.
- **EN18 Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems** – This policy states that development should be directed to areas at the lowest risk of flooding, as per the Sequential and Exceptions Test set out in the NPPF. Further to this, smaller schemes are encouraged to incorporate SuDS and runoff rates must not be greater than existing site conditions.

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

The NPPF (December, 2024) sets out the Government's policies for the planning system and makes clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development which has economic, social and environmental objectives that are mutually supportive and interdependent.

Paragraph 100 states that Local Planning Authorities should give 'great weight' to the need to alter schools. Paragraph 187 states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting valued landscapes and recognising the character of trees and woodlands. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF requires for proposals to be 'high quality and sustainable buildings'.

Assessment

Principle of development

The site is located within the built-up area of Reading, where Policies OU1 and CC7 support the principle of improvements to education facilities and seek to ensure safe and accessible environments. The proposed Entrance Lodge is integral to enhancing safeguarding for students and operational efficiency of the school premises. The siting of the proposed Entrance Lodge is located at the principal vehicular access/ entrance point into the Leighton Park School site to support improved arrival and wayfinding and allow for enhanced security at the School site. By enhancing the safeguarding and operational efficiency of Leighton Park School, the Entrance Lodge contributes positively to the school's overall function.

The principle of the proposed development is therefore considered acceptable in accordance with relevant Reading Borough Local Plan Policies as well as material considerations drawn from the NPPF.

Trees/Landscaping

Policy EN13 (Major Landscape Features) aims to preserve the overall character and appearance of the area. The minimal footprint and strategic positioning of the Entrance Lodge mitigates any potential visual impact on major landscape features, consistent with the policy's emphasis on minimising adverse effects on the landscape.

Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands) seeks to protect and maintain important trees. Further to this, the NPPF (2024) highlights the importance trees make to contributing to the character and quality of urban environments, whilst also helping to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The siting and design of the Entrance Lodge has therefore been carefully planned to minimise disruption to the surrounding tree group protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 27-07.

As discussed with Officers and indicated in the updated Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement (prepared by Future Tree, July 2025), there is potential the Oak Tree (Turkey Oak T6) may interfere with the installation of the Entrance Lodge. Therefore in order to accommodate the Entrance Lodge, some light pruning (crown lifting and some minor reduction of the limb) of the canopy of the tree would take place, as shown in the drawings included in the amended Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement (July 2025). No cuts would exceed 5cm and all pruning would be conducted to comply with the British Standard 3998:2010 Tree Works Recommendations.

Design, Appearance and Accessibility

The proposed Entrance Lodge would have a maximum height of 3050mm (3.05 meters), with a flat roof, and an overall footprint of approximately 9594mm (9.594 meters) in length and 5344 mm (5.344 meters) in width. The hut has an angular layout with two main areas: a reception/ guard room/ kitchenette area and a storage room. The reception area includes a desk for security personnel, visitor seating, and large windows for

visibility. The private office has a workstation and storage for delivery items. Between the two main areas, there would be a W/C for staff use. The proposal balances functionality and aesthetics, ensuring security while creating a welcoming environment.

The Entrance Lodge will primarily be made from timber cladding, render with external lighting is proposed on the front elevation to enhance security and safety.

As discussed with Officers, the existing low level wall will be retained along the access road in front of the Entrance Lodge. However the top course of the existing retaining wall will be removed to form the first step to access the Entrance Lodge.

Local Plan Policy CC7 calls for development to be of a high quality design that maintains and enhances surrounding locality and does not have a detrimental effect on amenity. The proposed Entrance Lodge is of a modern, whilst also high-quality, design, which is not out of character with the local area and school site itself.

This placement aligns with the driver's side upon arrival, ensuring that the security building is situated as close to the entry point as possible. This design choice eliminates the need for drivers to park before checking in with security, enhancing the overall efficiency and safety of the entry process.

Ecology

The site includes woodland, modified/ amenity grassland and existing hardstanding. Submitted alongside this application is a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) prepared by Soltys Brewster (March 2025) to consider the potential impacts of the proposals.

The PEA explains that the site comprises of low and negligible value habitats (modified grassland and hardstanding) and concludes that the development would not impact surrounding trees and the loss of shrubs would be minimal. Measures have been recommended for avoidance, mitigation and enhancement of ecological features on and surrounding the site, including protected species.

The exception threshold for a BNG assessment is 25m² and the proposal would impact approximately 32m² of area-based habitats. Alongside the Ecology Report, a Biodiversity Metric Calculation has been submitted with this application. The Ecologist determines that the scheme would achieve a net-gain of 10.91% through new tree and woodland planting at the School site.

Highways Safety, Parking and Waste Storage Details

There are no changes to existing parking arrangements or access under this proposal. The visitor car park will be retained. In accordance with the Parking Standards and Design (Reading Borough Council, 2011), additional parking is not required with this form of development. The proposal would not impact waste provisions. Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with the requirements set out in Local Plan Policy TR3 as there would not be a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network or any risk to the safety of road users. Rather the lodge seeks to improve arrivals at the site entrance.

Heritage

In accordance with policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment), the proposal will not detrimentally affect the character or setting of listed buildings near to the site. The listed building on the school site, which is Grade II, is located more than 230m southeast of the site, therefore there is a sufficient distance from the siting of the proposed Entrance Lodge. In a wider context, there are two more listed buildings, both Grade II, which are also located a substantial distance from the proposal for the works not to impact their character or setting.

Air Quality

The site lies within the defined Air Quality Management Area. The 2024 – 2029 Air Quality Action Plan for Reading states that ‘development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality’. The works would not detrimentally impact air quality and is not considered to require mitigation for a proposal of this scale/ type of works. Therefore, the proposal is considered to align with Local Plan Policy EN15 (Air Quality).

Summary

The purpose of the proposed Entrance Lodge is to improve arrivals and wayfinding and to enhance security for Leighton Park School at the primary site entrance, through a high-quality and modern building. The submitted information accompanying the application demonstrates that there would be no harmful impacts as a result of the proposed development.

Following the statutory consultee responses received on this application and discussions with the Case Officer, amended plans and additional information has been provided to satisfy previous concerns raised. On this basis, the proposed works accord with the development plan and it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

I trust that the additional information and amended plans are acceptable however, please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Sebbage", written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Sebbage BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI
Associate Director