CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/05124
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Site Inspection:	Not visited - within secured area
Consultation ends:	04 October 2023
Case officer:	Julie Mitchell

Site Address:	UKHSA Porton Down, Manor Farm Road, Porton, Salisbury, SP4 0JG
Proposal:	Proposed modular temporary office building
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

Site Description and Proposal

The site is situated in the countryside to the east of the Large Village of Porton, as defined by Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) policies CP1 (Settlement Strategy), CP2 (Delivery Strategy) and CP4 (Amesbury Community Area). The site is however also allocated as a Principal Employment Area known as Porton Down and as defined by WCS policies CP5 (Porton Down) and CP35 (Existing Employment Sites). Access to the site is served off a long access road (Manor Farm Road) which extends along the eastern boundary of the site and leads from the Winterslow Road to the south.

This application site is within a large complex of buildings which form the Porton Down Complex. The application is made by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) (formerly known as Public Health England). The UKHSA operate within a larger complex of office and industrial buildings at Porton Down which includes Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) and Porton Science Park. The complex is situated behind a security fenced boundary and there are therefore very limited public access/views into the site.

This is a full application proposing a temporary modular office building of two storey height. The building is located between an existing two-storey building to the south and a large building to the north and is enclosed on all sides by existing development within the complex. The proposal is to replace an existing modular building located elsewhere within the complex which is to be removed.

Policies

National Context:
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Local Context:
Wiltshire Core Strategy:
CP1 (Settlement Strategy)
CP2 (Delivery Strategy)
CP3 (Infrastructure Requirements)

CP4 (Amesbury Community Area)
CP5 (Porton Down)
CP35 (Existing Employment Sites)
CP51 (Landscape)
CP57 (Ensuring High Quality Design & Space Shaping)

Salisbury District Local Plan policies (Saved by Wiltshire Core Strategy):
E8B – Boscombe Down & Porton Down
E19 – Existing Employment Sites in the Countryside

Relevant Planning History
There is extensive planning history for the Porton Down site. None relates specifically to the proposal which is within the confines of the secure area of the complex.

Consultation Responses

Idmiston Parish Council
Idmiston Parish Council supports this application

Highways
Planning permission is being sought for a modular temporary office building to replace an existing modular portacabin which is in poor condition. Whilst the proposed modular office will be located in a different position to the existing building, the staff will move from the old building to the new building. It is noted that there will be no increase in staff numbers.

There is no highway objection to this proposal.

Representations
No

Planning Considerations and Assessment

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Principle of Development:
Whilst the site is situated in the countryside it is within an existing complex of buildings which together are designated as a Principal Employment Area, by WCS policies CP5 (Porton Down) and CP35 (Existing Employment Sites). The supporting text to Core Policy 5 (Porton Down) notes that ‘Porton Down is a prized asset in Wiltshire'. It comprises three organisations, DSTL, UKHSA (formerly HPA) and the Porton Down Science Park. Both Saved SDLP policy E19 and WCS policy

CP35 (Existing Employment Sites) also permit the enlargement of existing employment sites in the countryside where the proposed development would take place within the existing boundaries of the site. In this instance the proposals involve a modular building which is entirely contained within the existing site boundaries which is noted to replace a similar modular building elsewhere on site which needs replacing. It is therefore considered that the proposals are acceptable in principle and comply with the relevant planning policies in this regard, subject to the detail in terms of the implications for the character of the area, highway safety and neighbouring amenities.

Visual and Landscape Impacts:
The proposed building comprises a two storey modular building of rectangular form with a flat roof. The size, design and materials fit with the rest of the complex and will be screened from the limited public views of the site by existing building and is not considered to have an adverse impact on the character of the area.

Neighbour Amenity:
Due to the sufficient distance between the proposals and any neighbouring properties there is no potential in terms of overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing effects from the physical development for neighbouring residential amenities.

Highways Safety:
The proposal is served by the existing access and has no implications in terms of highway safety given that the office facility will not materially increase traffic. The Highways Officer has raised no objections.

Conclusion:
The proposed modular building is considered to be acceptable in its context having regard to its scale, siting and design, with no demonstrable impacts on neighbouring amenities or highway safety. It is therefore considered to be in accordance with the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy and the aims of the NPPF. Approval is recommended.

Conditions: (2)

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

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Location Plan dated 31 August 2023
Site Plan EMB-TSQ-00-00-DR-A-0001 P5 dated 06.02.23
Floor Plan WRBE1204 Rev C dated 15/12/2022 (revised 17/07/2023)
Elevations WRBE1204 Rev D dated 15/12/2022 (revised 17/07/2023)

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.