

September 2021



Planning Policy Statement

Proposed Modular building (revised scheme)

Land adjacent to Marford Community Centre, Pant Lane, Marford, LL12 8SH

On behalf of Elite Systems (GB) Limited

Prepared by:


ALISTAIR FLATMAN PLANNING
...a Positive Approach

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Policy Statement has been prepared on behalf of Elite Systems (GB) Limited to support a planning application for a single storey modular building on grassed area to west of existing Community Centre Building in Marford.
- 1.2 The proposed modular building will provide purpose built space for a playgroup with access to outdoor playspace. The proposal is a revised scheme to that approved in June 2019 – further details below.
- 1.3 The applicant for the proposed modular building is Wrexham Borough County Council.

Background: - Planning History and Need.

Planning History

- 1.4 The site benefits from planning permission for a modular building for use as a playgroup (LPA ref P/2019/0282). This consent however is subject to a temporary consent due to the construction of that building. The revised scheme (subject to this application) is for a higher spec building of a more durable construction designed to be a more permanent building on site. The proposed building is similar size albeit squarer in footprint (as opposed to long and thin as approved) with materials of a high quality both visually and in terms of durability. It is therefore considered that granting of consent need not be subject to any timescales in terms of removing the building from site as per the current consent.

Need

- 1.5 The Welsh Government recognises that childcare is one of the biggest challenges facing working families in Wales. Supporting families with quality, flexible and affordable childcare supports economic regeneration, can reduce pressures on family income and help parents to participate in work, thus reducing a family's risk of poverty. It also supports the wellbeing of children through positive and rich childcare experiences. There are therefore clear social and economic benefits arising from the provision of this important playgroup provision. Wrexham CBC are working with the school and their local communities to support this initiative and deliver new pre-school spaces for local children.
- 1.6 The proposed modular building is designed for pre-school children and will deliver an attractive indoor learning and play environment together with access to outdoor playspace. The building also includes necessary welfare (wc and cloaks) kitchen, store and office space for the effective operation of the playgroup.
- 1.7 Funding for this pre-school project is provided by the Welsh Government as part of its commitment to improving childcare in the wider community.

The Application Site

- 1.8 The site is located centrally between Marford (to east) and Gresford (to west) at the junction of B5445 and Pant Lane adjacent to the existing community centre. The site itself currently comprises grass / concrete hardstanding to the south west of the community centre building with trees along western

boundary and B5445 to the south. There is a timber garden shed structure sited on the concrete base at present. The site is not used for parking or as playing field.

- 1.9 The site sits within the settlement limit of Marford (as drawn in the Wrexham UDP Proposals Map).
- 1.10 The site is not subject to any designations or allocations in the Local Plan (Wrexham UDP).
- 1.11 Further details of the site are set out in Section 2.

Planning History

- 1.12 As stated above, the site already benefits from planning permission for a modular building in this location to provide for a playgroup use (LPA ref P/2019/0282). The principle of a modular building (including removal of tree on site) and this use adjacent to the community centre is therefore considered acceptable.

The Proposed Development

- 1.13 The proposed development comprises a new single storey, modular building located on an area of grass / concrete hardstanding to the south west of the existing community building.
- 1.14 The proposed modular building will be single storey and provide play / learning space together with welfare facilities, kitchen and office. Access to the building is on the north elevation via a new footpath created within the site.
- 1.15 Outdoor playspace remains around the building. The existing timber shed located on the concrete base will be relocated within the site.
- 1.15 The proposal will not impact on the services offered by the community centre. One tree will be removed as has been approved under current planning permission.
- 1.16 The proposed modular building will be a simple, shallow pitch roof building clad in materials (plastic coated steel sheeting [colour wedgewood blue] with EDPM membrane to roof) to create an attractive building on the site.
- 1.17 Further details on the proposed development are set out in Section 3.

The Planning Application

- 1.18 This statement describes the application site and nature of the proposal (Chapters 2 and 3) together with an assessment of planning policy issues (Chapters 4 & 5) of relevance to the application. Assessment of the planning application is set out in Chapter 5. Conclusions are set out in Chapter 6.
- 1.19 This statement will fully justify the proposal for the site and will advance justification for the proposed modular building.
- 1.20 On the basis of the information provided in this statement, the associated supporting documents and on the application drawings, a presumption in favour of development can be maintained in this particular instance, the application being in accordance with the advice set out in the Wrexham UDP.
- 1.21 The planning application is supported by the following:

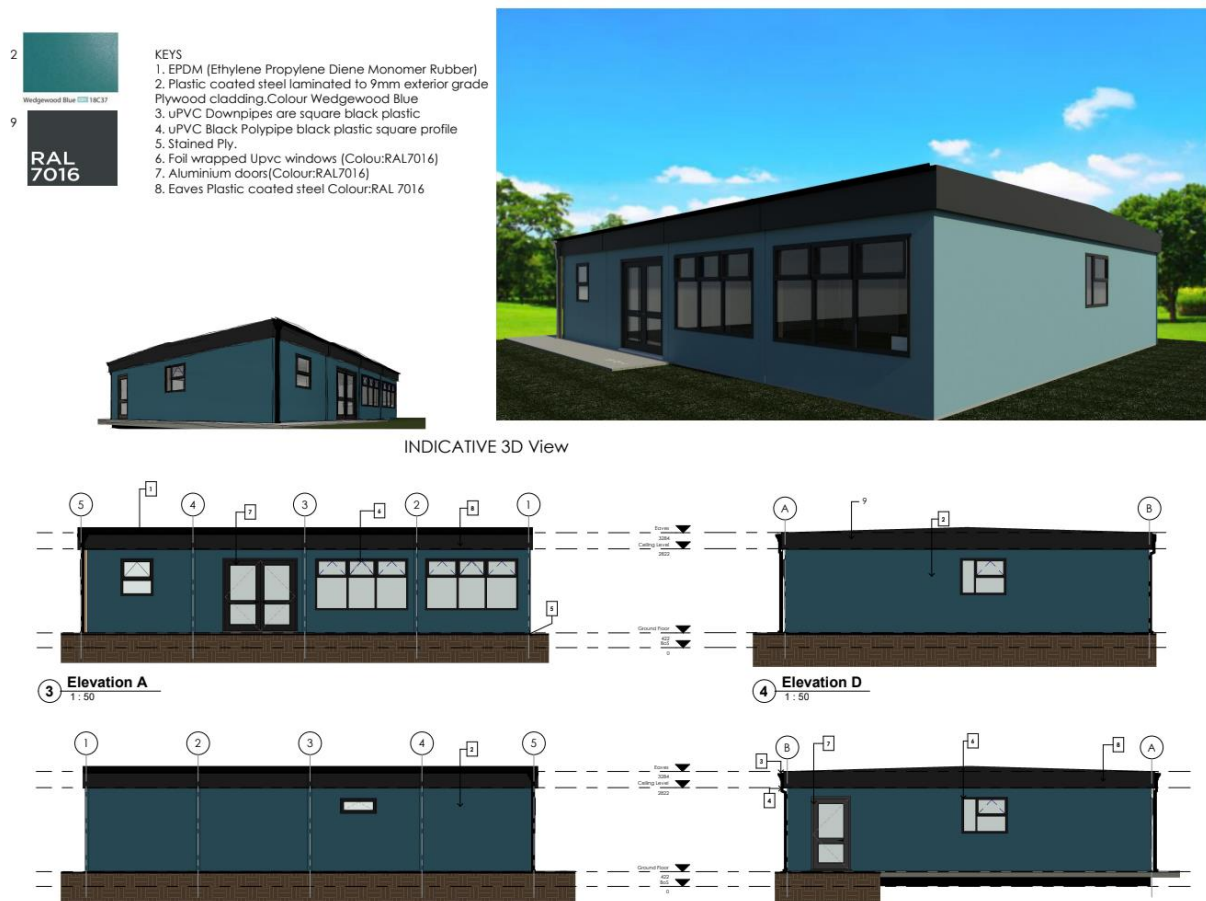
- i. Completed application forms, with all certificates signed and dated;
 - ii. Site Location Plan prepared by Elite Systems;
 - iii. Site Layout Plan, Floorplans and elevations prepared by Elite Systems;
 - iv. Design and Access Statement prepared by Elite Systems;
 - v. Planning Statement prepared by Alistair Flatman Planning;
- 1.22 The submitted additional technical information is considered sufficient to enable the Local Planning Authority to determine the clear merits of the proposed development.

2.0 Site Description

- 2.1 The site is located centrally in the settlement with Marford to the north and Gresford to the south west adjacent to the existing community centre at the junction of B5445 and Pant Lane.
- 2.2 The site itself comprises an area of grass with concrete hardstanding to the west of the community centre building. There is a timber shed currently on the concrete hardstanding (to be relocated). Access to the site is from Pant Lane to the north of the site. There are trees along the western edge of the site.
- 2.3 Existing parking and areas of open space to the north are unaffected by the proposal.
- 2.4 The site sits within the development limits of Marford / Gresford.
- 2.5 The site is not subject to any specific allocation or designation in the Wrexham UDP.
- 2.6 The site is not subject to any heritage, landscape or ecological designations and sits in Flood Zone 1.
- 2.7 The southern boundary to B5445 is a timber fence with trees to the western boundary. Playspace and parking are located to the north with the community building to the east.

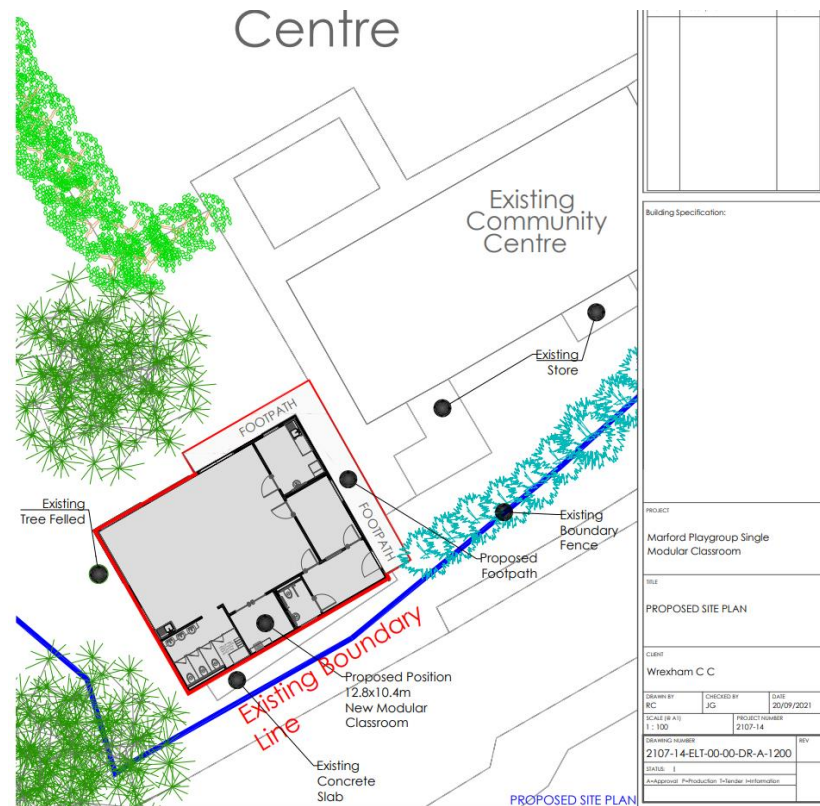
3.0 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The proposal comprises a new single storey modular building to provide play area / learning space for a playgroup. This is a revised scheme to that approved in 2019 with a squarer, more durable building.
- 3.2 The building is to be located on an existing grassed area / concrete base to the west of the community centre building. This location can be easily accessed from existing footpaths linking the site to Pant Lane.
- 3.3 The proposal consists of an 12.8m x 10.4m footprint (single) modular building with shallow pitch roof including play / learning space, wc, kitchen, store, office and lobby. The design intention is to create a building of interest within the site which reflects its use – the proposed materials will be plastic coated steel sheeting (colour wedgewood blue) whilst the roof will be a black EDPM membrane. Eaves, windows and doors will be grey.
- 3.4 The choice of materials reflect the use of the building to create a building that is visually interesting. The modular building is a simple shallow pitch structure with height of 3.2m falling to 2.8m at eaves. The extract below shows the proposed elevations.



- 3.5 The design and appearance of the building seeks to deliver an attractive building on the site that will sit comfortably with its surrounds.

- 3.6 Access to the building will be via a lobby on the eastern elevation of the building via new footpath linking to existing footpaths serving the site. Outdoor play areas will be retained to the north of the building. The proposed site layout is shown in the extract below:



- 3.7 The proposed new modular building is of hybrid timber/steel frame. A large effort has been made in the design stage of the building to ensure that the building has a low carbon impact as possible (in line with current regulations set out in AD part L2). Examples of this are: LED lighting has been specified throughout, PIR controlled lighting to main areas with daytime dimming and a highly efficient A/Cs and heaters has been specified throughout the building. The building is sufficiently insulated with glass fibre quilt insulation, and polyurethane foam board to achieve significantly improve upon the elemental u-value standards as set out in the building regulations.
- 3.8 Level access is provided to the building along the rear / east elevation via external footpaths and an internal lobby area.
- 3.9 The proposed modular building will deliver the following:
- lobby space – 10 sqm
 - kitchen facility - 9 sqm
 - play area / learning space at 72 sqm
 - store room at 7 sqm
 - Unisex wc at 12 sqm with fully accessible wc at 3 sqm
 - office at 10 sqm
- 3.10 Further details are set out in the submitted Design & Access Statement.

4.0 Planning Policy Review

Planning Policy Wales – Edition 10 (Dec 2018)

- 4.1 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government.
- 4.2 Paragraph 1.2 of PPW sets out its primary objective, namely to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation. A well-functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places.
- 4.3 Figure 3 in PPW sets out the Key Planning Principles to achieve the right development in the right places. Of these principles, the following is most relevant:

Creating & sustaining communities

The planning system must work in an integrated way to maximise its contribution to well-being. It can achieve this by creating well-designed places and cohesive rural and urban communities which can be sustained by ensuring the appropriate balance of uses and density, making places where people want to be and interact with others. Our communities need the right mix of good quality/well designed homes, jobs, services, infrastructure and facilities so that people feel content with their everyday lives.

- 4.4 The PPW also sets out guidance on Community Facilities. Paragraphs 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 advise:

4.4.1 Community facilities perform various functions which cover a broad range of activities and services that can be delivered by the public, private and third sectors. Community facilities contribute to a sense of place which is important to the health, well-being and amenity of local communities and their existence is often a key element in creating viable and sustainable places. They can include schools, cultural facilities, health services, libraries, allotments and places of worship.

4.4.2 Planning authorities should develop a strategic and long-term approach to the provision of community facilities when preparing development plans based on evidence. When considering development proposals planning authorities should consider the needs of the communities and ensure that community facilities continue to address the requirements of residents in the area.

Development Plan – Wrexham UDP

- 4.5 The site falls within Wrexham Borough County Council and as such the Development Plan for the site comprises the adopted Unitary Development Plan (Feb 2005). Whilst it is noted there is a draft Local Development Plan, it has yet to be adopted and so it has been afforded limited weight in assessing the proposal.

- 4.6 The UDP proposals map identifies the site as sitting within the settlement limits of Marford and is not subject to any allocations or designations.
- 4.7 The key issues are considered to relate to principle, community uses and design.
- 4.8 The relevant UDP policies are identified below;
- Policy GDP1 – Development Objectives – criteria based policy setting out key principles for assessment of planning applications
 - Strategic Policy PS2 - Development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.
 - Policy T8 - Parking
- 4.9 The relevant policies are assessed in Chapter 5

5.0 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 5.1 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) acknowledges the importance of community facilities and the contribution they make to a sense of place. Such facilities, such as schools and playgroups / pre-school / nurseries are important to the health, well-being and amenity of local communities and their existence is often a key element in creating viable and sustainable places.
- 5.2 The Welsh Government recognises that childcare is one of the biggest challenges facing working families in Wales. Supporting families with quality, flexible and affordable childcare supports economic regeneration, can reduce pressures on family income and help parents to participate in work, thus reducing a family's risk of poverty. It also supports the wellbeing of children through positive and rich childcare experiences. There are therefore clear social and economic benefits arising from the provision of this important playgroup provision.
- 5.3 The proposed modular building is located on an existing concrete plinth and grassed area close to existing community centre. The site has no formal recreation use and will not impact upon the adjacent parking areas.
- 5.4 The proposal will enhance the community offer within the village and is easily accessible from both Pant Lane via existing footpaths. Furthermore, the site is not subject to any designations or allocations in the UDP that would preclude development.
- 5.5 The location of the playgroup adjacent to the existing community centre and in an accessible location within Marford / Gresford makes locational sense in terms of accessibility.
- 5.6 The building is well designed for its purpose with indoor playspace together with welfare and kitchen facilities to ensure a high quality childcare facility can be offered for families.
- 5.7 The associated social and economic benefits arising from the proposed childcare facility are clear and the proposal will enhance community facilities in the village.
- 5.8 In terms of UDP Policies PS2 and PS3, the proposal is considered to be consistent with their aspirations in that it will not detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment (PS2) and whilst sited on a grassed area, the site is not of any ecological, recreational or agricultural value and as such its development is consistent with guidance set out in Policy PS3. The loss of a single tree has been accepted through granting of the 2019 application.
- 5.9 The proposal is therefore consistent with guidance set out in the PPW in respect of community facilities and the aspirations of the Welsh Government in terms of providing quality childcare together with Strategic Policies PS2 and PS3 of the Wrexham UDP
- 5.10 The principle of the proposal in this location is therefore considered acceptable.

Design

- 5.11 Wrexham UDP Policy GDP1 sets out development objectives listing a number of criteria against which proposals should be assessed. This includes matters of design and layout.
- 5.12 The submitted plans and Design and Access Statement which accompanies this application, provides details of the design of the scheme and demonstrates how development could be accommodated on the site and how this would fit with its surrounds.
- 5.13 The proposal comprises a detached, single storey modular building finished in coloured wall panels (wedgewood blue) to deliver an attractive building that sits comfortably on site and its surrounds. Its design reflects its purpose whilst the siting and layout delivers safe playspace internally and to the north of the building.
- 5.14 The proposed building is located in an area currently set to grass / concrete to the west of existing community centre building, close to car parking and with no formal or active use as sports pitch, games area, playing field or open space. This location ensures there is no loss of car parking, play ground or playing fields.
- 5.15 Taking the above into account it is considered the proposed modular building is consistent with Policy GDP1 in that:
- The scale, design and layout of the proposal, together with its use of materials, accords with the character of this site and its surrounds and will make a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality (criteria a of GDP1);
 - takes account of personal and community safety in the design and layout of development (criteria b of GDP1);
 - makes the best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources (criteria c of GDP1);
 - ensures safe and convenient pedestrian access to and from the site as well as convenient access to bus stops on Chester Road (B5445) (criteria d & e of GDP1);
 - the development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding or contamination (criteria i of GDP1), and
 - secures the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area (criteria k of GDP1).
- 5.16 The scale, design and height of the proposed modular building has therefore been appropriately considered in relation to the site and its surrounds and as such complies with requirements of UDP Policy GDP1.

Amenity

- 5.17 The siting and internal layout, together with access to existing outdoor play space to the north ensures it does not harm the living conditions of those residents living to the west of the site.
- 5.18 As such the design, siting and operation of the proposed modular building ensures there will be no significant impact on living conditions of nearby residents.

Highways

- 5.19 The proposed playgroup is to be located adjacent to the community centre in an accessible location within Marford and will provide a new facility for the community. Additional staff are expected for the proposed playgroup although this is not considered to generate any significant extra traffic movements. The site is in accessible location within Marford.
- 5.20 The proposal will not result in any loss of onsite parking and it is expected that there will be a high percentage of linked trips as parents / carers drop off children to nearby school.
- 5.21 The proposal represents an alternative design to that approved in 2019. The proposal is in the same use as the 2019 consent and also a similar floor area.
- 5.22 In light of the above, it is considered the proposed development will not give rise to any issues of highway safety and will not have a detrimental impact on the local highway network.

Trees and Landscaping

- 5.23 The proposed modular building will result in the loss of a tree within the site. This has been accepted by the Council previously. Boundary trees along the western edge of the site will be retained.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 This Planning Policy Statement has been prepared on behalf of Elite Systems (GB) Limited to support a planning application for a single storey modular building on grassed area to west of existing Community Centre Building in Marford.
- 6.2 The proposed modular building will provide purpose built space for a playgroup with access to outdoor playspace. The proposal is a revised scheme to that approved in June 2019 – further details below.

Background: - Planning History and Need.

Planning History

- 6.3 The site benefits from planning permission for a modular building for use as a playgroup (LPA ref P/2019/0282). This consent however is subject to a temporary consent due to the construction of that building. The revised scheme (subject to this application) is for a higher spec building of a more durable construction designed to be a more permanent building on site. The proposed building is similar size albeit squarer in footprint (as opposed to long and thin as approved) with materials of a high quality both visually and in terms of durability. It is therefore considered that granting of consent need not be subject to any timescales in terms of removing the building from site as per the current consent.

Need

- 6.4 The Welsh Government recognises that childcare is one of the biggest challenges facing working families in Wales. Supporting families with quality, flexible and affordable childcare supports economic regeneration, can reduce pressures on family income and help parents to participate in work, thus reducing a family's risk of poverty. It also supports the wellbeing of children through positive and rich childcare experiences. There are therefore clear social and economic benefits arising from the provision of this important playgroup provision. Wrexham CBC are working with the school and their local communities to support this initiative and deliver new pre-school spaces for local children.
- 6.5 The proposed modular building is designed for pre-school children and will deliver an attractive indoor learning and play environment together with access to outdoor playspace. The building also includes necessary welfare (wc and cloaks) kitchen, store and office space for the effective operation of the playgroup. Funding for this pre-school project is provided by the Welsh Government as part of its commitment to improving childcare in the wider community.

The Application Site

- 6.6 The site is located centrally between Marford (to east) and Gresford (to west) at the junction of B5445 and Pant Lane adjacent to the existing community centre. The site itself currently comprises grass / concrete hardstanding to the south west of the community centre building with trees along western boundary and B5445 to the south. There is a timber garden shed structure sited on the concrete base at present. The site is not used for parking or as playing field.

- 6.7 The site sits within the settlement limit of Marford (as drawn in the Wrexham UDP Proposals Map). The site is not subject to any designations or allocations in the Local Plan (Wrexham UDP).

The Proposed Development

- 6.8 The proposed development comprises a new single storey, modular building located on an area of grass / concrete hardstanding to the south west of the existing community building.
- 6.9 The proposed modular building will be single storey and provide play / learning space together with welfare facilities, kitchen and office. Access to the building is on the north elevation via a new footpath created within the site. The proposed modular building will be a simple, shallow pitch roof building clad in materials (plastic coated steel sheeting [colour wedgewood blue] with EDPM membrane to roof) to create an attractive building on the site.
- 6.10 Outdoor playspace remains around the building. The existing timber shed located on the concrete base will be relocated within the site. The proposal will not impact on the services offered by the community centre. One tree will be removed as has been approved under current planning permission.

Planning Assessment

- 6.11 The principle of a modular building / playgroup use on the site has been accepted given there is an extant consent on the site (LPA ref P/2019/0282). This proposal simply proposes a revised scheme using a more robust, durable and attractive modular building representing an enhanced scheme to that currently approved.
- 6.12 The proposed modular building is required to deliver clear aspirations of the Welsh Government to improve childcare facilities for families and the communities in which they live. The proposed modular building sits in an accessible location adjacent to the community centre and will not result in loss of any parking, playground or playing field. The site comprises a grassed area of little ecological or recreational value and the development will not result in any harm to landscape / townscape, countryside, open space or the quality of the natural environment. The principle of such development is therefore acceptable.
- 6.13 The location of the modular building makes locational sense in terms of accessibility and providing best possible transition for children from pre-school into school. The building is well designed for its purpose with indoor and outdoor playspace together with welfare and kitchen facilities to ensure a high quality childcare facility can be offered for families.
- 6.14 The proposed modular building is a simple mono pitch building providing internal playspace and welfare / kitchen / office space together with access to safe outdoor playspace. Materials comprise wall cladding panels (colour wedgewood blue) to create an attractive building that sits comfortably on site and with its surrounds. As such the design is appropriate to the function of the building and its wider surrounds whilst its location ensures there is no significant harm to residential amenity.
- 6.15 As such it is considered the proposed modular building is appropriately designed with submitted drawings and supporting reports demonstrating how

the proposal can be accommodated on the site and that there are no technical reasons preventing the proposal being developed.

- 6.16 In view of the above, it is considered the scheme satisfies national and local policy and represents a suitable and sustainable development proposal for the site that addresses all the relevant and material considerations. In this context, the proposal satisfies Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and it is considered that planning permission should be granted.