

Application Number:	P/LBC/2026/04555
Webpage:	Planning application: P/LBC/2026/04555 - dorsetforyou.com
Site address:	Leeson House Field Studies Centre, Access To Leeson House, Langton Matravers, BH19 3EU
Proposal:	New extension for WCs and showers, internal alterations and external alterations.
Applicant name:	Dorset Council
Case Officer:	Cari Wooldridge
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Wilson

1. Reason application is going to committee:

This application is reported to the Planning Committee as the applicant is Dorset Council and the application site is Council owned.

2. Summary of recommendation:

GRANT planning permission subject to conditions as set out in Section 17.

3. Key planning issues

Issue	Conclusion
Impact on the Grade II Listed Heritage Asset of Lesson House and Langton Matravers Conservation Area	Acceptable subject to condition.

4. Description of site

- 4.1 Leeson House is a large, detached building located on the hillside to the south of Coombe Hill, Langton Matravers. It is accessed via a private driveway which also serves The Coach House to the northwest. Originally a farmhouse, the building developed into a country house and was then used as a boarding school before and after the second World War. During the war, the house and grounds were used to develop secret projects such as radar. The Grade II Listed building became a Field Study Centre in 1967 and is now operated by Dorset Council as part of the Dorset Council Outdoor Education Service which is part of Children's Services.
- 4.2 The Field Study Centre provides residential educational facilities for Primary to A Level field trips and accommodates up to 80 students and 12 accompanying staff. Self-catering stays for large groups are also accommodated, and residential bookings are taken 7

days a week throughout the year. In addition, a wide range of day visits and outreach activities are offered.

- 4.3 The red line of the application site is tightly drawn around the main building (Leeson House), its northern courtyard and the vehicular access. The wider blue line includes the adjacent Grade II Listed outbuilding, The Coach House, other related buildings, parkland and woodland directly adjoining the site and areas of parking and turning. The site lies outside the Langton Matravers settlement boundary but within the part of Langton Matravers Conservation Area covering Coombe and Leeson Park. It is also within the Dorset National Landscape and Purbeck Heritage Coast being directly surrounded by mature trees and landscaping with agricultural fields (former parkland) beyond. The nearest residential development within the Langton Matravers settlement boundary is along Steppes Hill approx. 78m to the west.

5. Description of development

- 5.1 The application proposes a new single storey extension of approx. 24sqm in footprint off the north elevation of Lesson House to provide additional WCs and showers. The flat roof extension will have a maximum height of 3.45m (top of parapet wall and rooflights) and will be finished externally in timber cladding to match that of the west wing elevations.
- 5.2 Internal alterations are proposed to the existing west wing to provide a new dormitory room (2 bed) and a separate staff store.
- 5.3 At first floor in the main part of the house it is proposed to replace an existing w.c. / powder room with a shower room.
- 5.4 External alterations including the insertion of a window (to match existing) to serve the new dormitory room, insertion of in-slate vent, and a replacement Purbeck Stone wall along the eastern boundary of the higher-level courtyard.

6. Background and relevant planning history

- 6.1 There is an extensive history of planning and listed building applications associated with the Field Study Centre use of the site. The most recent planning history is summarised in the table below.

Application No.	Description	Decision	Date
P/PAP/2024/00556	To provide critically needed WC & shower facilities for Leeson House	Summary of response: Proposals are acceptable in principle.	Issued 18/02/2026
P/PDE/2025/00047	PV panels to roof	Planning permission and Listed Building Consent required	18/03/2025
P/FUL/2024/03475 & P/LBC/2024/03894	Demolition of existing stone/brick structure & replace with a new single storey extension to provide WC & shower	Withdrawn	05/09/2024

	facilities; Relocate existing equipment store room to the hall, by way of constructing a mezzanine structure; Provide a new dormitory, which is to include a new window to the extension granted planning permission in 2013. Convert existing powder room to a shower room.		
6/2013/0667	Construction of ground floor extension to provide accessible dormitories with adult bedroom, accessible shower room, store.	Granted	22/05/2014
6/2013/0650	Accessible facilities - provide accessible dormitories, adult bedroom with en-suite, accessible shower room and store. Provide accessible platform lift and stairs to enable access from dining room to hall and dormitories. Provide WC to hall.	Granted	30/01/2014

- 6.2 The current listed building consent and planning application have been submitted following the withdrawal of planning application P/FUL/2024/03475 and listed building application P/LBC/2024/03894 in 2024. An options appraisal was subsequently undertaken by the applicant to determine the most appropriate area to install the required shower and w.c. facilities. This was followed by the provision of positive planning and conservation pre-application advice on a scaled down proposal in early 2026.
- 6.3 The current application – Option C of the appraisal – proposes:
1. Ground floor single storey extension off north elevation to provide additional shower and w.c. facilities.
 2. Conversion of existing ground floor staff boot room into new dormitory (2 bed) and insertion of window in west elevation to match existing. Internal alterations to create new staff equipment store.
 3. Creation of new wet room in existing first floor w.c. / powder room.
- 6.4 The applicant's supporting documentation advises that the standards / requirements for safeguarding have changed since the building first became used as a Field Studies centre. It has become increasingly difficult to manage safeguarding, particularly with respect to how shower and toilet facilities are shared. There is a need to be able to segregate different groups using the centre – by age, by gender, or simply because they are from different schools and engaged on different activities as separate groups. There are particular safeguarding concerns for trans-gender students. During the last academic

year, Leeson House has had 9 schools request alternative or flexible accommodation due to a child or student with anxiety due to transitioning gender. Individual, more private toilet/ shower facilities with full length floor to ceiling walls would provide for this need. In addition to the safeguarding concerns, there are also too few toilets and showers at the centre and the additional flexibility proposed by the application is required. The supporting statement includes detailed evidence of the identified need and compliance requirements.

7. List of heritage constraints

Grade: II Listed Building: Leeson House. List Entry: 1171880

Grade: II Listed Building: Outbuilding in rear courtyard of Leeson House, immediately north-west of the house. List Entry: 1120304 - Distance: 2.55m

Within Langton Matravers Conservation Area

8. Consultations

- 8.1 All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website. A summary is provided below:

Consultees

1. DC - Conservation Officers

Development would not change the character or appearance of the Conservation Area given the distance and overall lack of public intervisibility between the proposed development and public rights of way.

Application seeks to alter, demolish and otherwise build off of relatively modern rear extensions to the building which would not result in any identifiable harm to special interest of the Listed Building.

As indicated in the pre-application response, a condition should be applied to any consent for a sample or image of the raised stone wall to be approved by a member of the Conservation team. This wall must follow the drystone design guidance in the SPD.

No objection subject to condition.

2. DC - Asset & Property

No comment received.

3. Langton Matravers Parish Council

No comment received.

4. Southeast Purbeck Ward – Cllr Ben Wilson

No comment received.

Representations received

- 8.2 The application was publicised by way of a site notice on the main entrance gates and an advertisement in the Bournemouth / Dorset Echo. No representations were received in response to the consultation.

9. Duties

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 - includes a general duty to 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 when considering whether to grant listed building consent.

10. Relevant policies

Development plan

In this case the development plan comprises:

Local Plan Adopted Purbeck Local Plan:

The following policies are considered to be relevant to this proposal:

E2: Historic environment

E12: Design

Material considerations

Emerging local plans:

Policy DM4: Emerging development plan proposals of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant plan policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan are to the policies of the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

The Dorset Council Local Plan

The emerging Dorset Local Plan is being prepared in accordance with plan-making processes set out in the Levelling Up and Regenerating Act 2023 and Local Planning Regulations (2026). As the plan is still at an early stage of the plan making process, limited weight can be attached to it when taking decisions on planning applications. Decisions on planning applications should continue to be assessed against the policies in adopted development plans, national planning policy and any other relevant material considerations.

National Planning Policy Framework (17 August 2026)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published on 17 August 2026, sets out the Government's national planning policies for both plan-making and decision-making in England.

When determining development proposals decision-makers are required to take a positive and proactive approach and to seek to approve sustainable development where possible.

The NPPF introduces a permanent presumption in favour of sustainable development, through Policies S3 to S5 (which replaces the former "tilted balance" contained in paragraph 11 of the previous NPPF) and sets out the principles for development within and outside settlements. The Framework also confirms that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Other relevant NPPF chapters and policies include:

- Chapter 3: Decision making policies. Local planning authorities should approach decision making positively, proactively and proportionately. They should work with applicants through pre-application engagement and consultations and aim to resolve concerns through planning conditions or obligations where possible to avoid delay and to enable an approval rather than a refusal. Applications that accord with the development plan, the NPPF and other material considerations should not be refused where they can clearly be approved.

DM1 Preparing development proposals

DM2 Information requirements

DM3 Determining development proposals

DM4 Emerging development plan proposals

DM5 Development viability

DM6 Use of planning conditions and obligations

DM7 Relationship with other regulatory regimes

DM10 Removal of national permitted development rights

- Chapter 4: Achieving Sustainable Development. The objective of the policies in this chapter is to meet development needs through sustainable patterns of development, including by maximising the potential for growth on suitable land within settlements, enabling development which will support the rural economy, rural communities and the provision of infrastructure, and limiting development away from settlements to help safeguard the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

S3 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

S5 Principle of development outside settlements

S6 Neighbourhood plans and the presumption

- Chapter 14: Achieving well-designed places. Development should be high quality, respect and enhance local character, deliver sustainable and attractive places, and accord with relevant design policies. Proposals that demonstrate good design and place-making should be supported, while those that fail to meet established design standards should be refused unless clearly justified.

DP3 Key principles for well-designed places

DP4 The design process

- Chapter 20: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment – Great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets. Development that preserves or enhances designated or non-designated heritage assets should be approved. while any harm must be clearly justified and weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Proposals causing substantial harm to, or loss of, heritage assets should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where overriding public benefits outweigh the harm.

HE4 Securing the conservation of heritage assets

HE5 Assessing effects on heritage assets

HE6 Proposals affecting designated heritage assets

HE9 Conservation areas

Other material considerations

All of Dorset:

Dorset Council Interim Guidance and Position Statement Appendix B: Adopted Local Plan policies and objectives relating to climate change, renewable energy, and sustainable design and construction. December 2023.

Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance for Purbeck area:

District Design Guide SPD

Managing and using traditional building details in Purbeck

Langton Matravers Conservation Area Appraisal

11. Human rights

Article 6 - right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted development plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the human rights of the applicant or any third party.

12. Public Sector Equalities Duty

As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have “due regard” to this duty. There are 3 main aims: -

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty.

The application seeks to provide enough toilets and showers on the ground floor of the building near an adjacent dormitory in a location where the need is greatest. It will ensure that suitable accommodation and facilities are provided for a growing number of children that are transitioning gender or who require more privacy when showering, changing, or using the toilet for other reasons. The proposal will also provide the applicants with more flexibility to segregate visiting groups, or by gender, age, activity etc. as appropriate. The proposals will provide the ability to address existing safeguarding concerns whilst also providing much needed additional toilets and showers at the site.

13. Public Benefits

No significant benefits identified.

14. Assessment

Impact on the Grade II Listed Heritage Asset of Leeson House and Langton Matravers Conservation Area

- 14.1 The application site falls within the Langton Matravers Conservation Area and Leeson House is Grade II Listed Building. An outbuilding in the rear courtyard of Leeson House (immediately north-west of the house) is also a Grade II Listed Building.
- 14.2 Leeson House is a former country house with its earliest fabric dating from the 17th Century. The house has seen extensive alterations throughout the 19th and 20th Centuries with the former seeing a substantial growth in the building's overall footprint. The building is a Grade II Listed, the list description of which is included below:

Country House, now used as Field Study Centre. Original section C17 - now used as kitchens etc. Main section added in early C19 and enlarged in mid-C19. Stone walls, part plastered; slate roofs with parapets and coped gables to main section; plastered stacks. Irregular plan. 2 storeys and attic. Main block in early Gothic Revival style. Garden front has projecting bays at each end and gabled dormer in centre. Octagonal finials at springing and apex of gables. On ground floor, left gable has pair of french doors with

hoodmould. Right gable has a sash window with glazing bars, under hoodmould. 2 similar windows in centre section. First floor has range of 4 similar windows. At attic level, each gable, and the central dormer each have a casement window with glazing bars, under hoodmould. At right end of main block, a slightly lower wing with exposed stone walls and slate roof with parapet and coped gables. 2 storeys. Part-glazed door. Ground floor has one sash window with glazing bars. Similar window on first floor, in gabled dormer with brick dressings. At left end a Gothic timber conservatory. Behind this a projecting porch with exposed stone walls. Entrance in return wall, with 4-centred arch flanked by octagonal turrets. At rear of main block, the original C17 house - no visible early features. Also, a large later C19 addition, partly flat-roofed and altered in C20. Internally, entrance hall has plaster vault and archways with ogee-shaped timber surrounds. Main stair has Gothic style balustrading. Several ground floor rooms contain imported C17 carved woodwork; probably Flemish. One fireplace surround dated 1664. RCHM Monument 4. (Dorset Vol. II).

- 14.2 The current proposals follow the provision of pre-application advice in February 2025 in which the Conservation Officer advised that the proposed single storey extension and further enhancement of the courtyard area (option c) to provide a more welcoming space would form a positive improvement that would enhance the setting of the listed building. However, in respect of the replacement stone wall between the new extension and the lower courtyard to the east, the Conservation Officer advised that a sample panel be built or submitted as an image for approval. The current Conservation Officer has requested the same condition, and this can be included on the decision (Condition for approval prior to commencement of works on the new wall).
- 14.3 In addition to details of the wall, the pre-application advice noted that rooflights, ventilation slates, pipework and extracts / vents should be sited so as not to draw visual attention. The submitted plans include full details which are judged to be suitably screened and of an acceptable design for impacts to be acceptable.
- 14.4 In conclusion, the proposed development is judged to have no effect on the significance of the Grade II Listed heritage assets of Leeson House and the courtyard outbuilding in compliance with NPPF Policies HE5 and HE6. In addition, the proposal complies with Policy E2: Historic environment of the Purbeck Local Plan 2024.

15. Environmental implications

There will be some carbon emissions associated with the new development. However, the construction will meet Building Regulation standards, and no significant adverse environmental impacts have been identified.

16. Summary of issues and the planning balance

For the above reasons the application is found to accord with the policies of the Purbeck Local Plan 2024 and the National Planning Policy Framework, and there are no material planning considerations that would warrant refusal.

17. Recommendation

To Grant listed building consent subject to the following conditions:

1. The work to which this listed building consent relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the consent is granted.

Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by reason of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

23/043/D1A The location plan

23/043/D2A Block plan of the site

23/043/10 B AMENDED Proposed Floor Plans

23/043/20 C Proposed Roof Plan

23/043/40 A Proposed Elevations

23/043/30 C AMENDED Proposed Elevations and Section

Reason: To preserve the architectural and historical qualities of the building.

3. The proposed Velux flat roof lights as shown on approved drawing no. 23/043/20 A 'Proposed Part Roof Plan' shall be implemented in accordance with the 'Velux flat glass ISU 2093' details submitted on 20th August 2026.

Reason: To preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the heritage asset.

4. The courtyard wall shall be constructed of Purbeck Stone to match the existing as detailed on approved plan 23/043/30 C dated March 2024. Prior to construction, a sample panel of the proposed walling measuring at least 1 metre by 2 metres shall be erected on site, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall proceed in accordance with details of the sample panel as have been agreed and the sample panel shall remain on site until the wall has been completed in full.

Reason: To preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the heritage asset.

Informative Notes:

1. This permission should be read in conjunction with any decision relating to planning permission reference number P/FUL/2026/04554 and attached conditions.
2. The Purbeck Stone wall sample panel should be completed in accordance with the guidance and examples of good practice included on pages 10 - 12 of the Purbeck Design Guidance – Managing and using traditional materials in Purbeck: [Local Distinctiveness: Materials](#)
3. Informative: National Planning Policy Framework

In accordance with policy DM3 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive approach to development proposals and is focused on providing sustainable development.

The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- offering a pre-application advice service, and
- as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this case:

- The applicant/agent was updated of any issues and provided with the opportunity to address issues identified by the case officer.
- The applicant was provided with pre-application advice.