

Timeline of college building

- 1955** Newick house opened
- 1972-1973 –** Birchwood Grove School and Newick House School opened in Birchwood Grove Road both with Victor Hallam prefabricated structures.
- 2007/8 –** Birchwood Grove School (mainstream) completely rebuilt, Old Victor Hallam building and prefabs were demolished. The grounds given by WSCC were that it was “not suitable to meet the requirements for modern national curriculum”. With the cooperation of Woodlands Meed and close working relation with the heads of the two schools ensured that the build could happen cost effectively and any issues dealt with.
- 2009 –** following extensive discussions WSCC resolved to close Newick House School & Court Meadow Special Schools and to open a new generic 4 -19yr Foundation School on the Schools current site which was owned by WSCC off Chanctonbury Road (grounds of Oakmeeds) and conducted full public consultation to do so.
- 2010** WSCC submitted a formal Proposal(ref 17082016) which following a public hearing was approved by a Determination of Official Schools Adjudicator. in 2010 (Ref STP/000486).
- 2012 –** Woodlands Meed School opened for 2 - 14 yrs on Chanctonbury Road site. Funding was not immediately available to complete the school & college on one site. Whilst funds were sought to build the 14 – 19 unit on the Oakmeeds T block plot it was agreed that 14 – 19 year olds would be accommodated on the old Newick House site on a **temporary basis**. To accommodate pupils during this temporary period a program of largely cosmetic work was undertaken to the building including repairs to the failing structure and roof specified to give it a 15year life.
- During the planned works to patch up the NH site, due to an over run on costs there was a value engineering exercise which included substituting standard flammable cladding for the originally specified Fire Resistant cladding. This HCL cladding is the same as that installed on the Bolton students accommodation where the recent fire was noted to have spread alarmingly quickly (October 2019).
- 2013 –** Birchwood Grove School granted planning permission to add 2 classrooms and re-arrange car parking. This additional construction work on the site was carried out with the cooperation of Woodlands Meed.
- 2016 –** WSCC issued a 125 year lease to Burgess Hill Academy (Oakmeeds) for the whole campus including the promised T block plot identified as the location for the building to complete Woodlands Meed School. This effectively removed the opportunity for Woodlands Meed to be on one site contrary to the OSA Determination.
- 2017 –** A Task and Finish group was set up when a suggestion to replace two of the huts was rejected as impractical because it didn't meet the needs of the learners, did not deal with the issue of the defective main building. After 2 meetings of the task and finish group they were 'postponed' until after the elections due to purdah. These meetings were never reinstated despite several requests and promises to the contrary.
- The Governors put forward their own proposal for a new build prepared by a specialist school team which WSCC refused to discuss or consider.
- 2017 –** OSA referred WSCC to the DfE for breach of statutory duty and creating a split site without following statutory procedures. Director of Education and senior officers called to DfE to explain situation and promised to provide 'suitable accommodation'. After 6 months of inactivity the DfE intervened

again and WSCC were instructed to comply. At this point WSCC / Governors worked collaboratively to explore options to provide suitable accommodation.



Governors craned in a portable hygiene room as a temporary measure to accommodate needs of some children in wheelchairs transitioning from school to college. WSCC refused to pay for it in spite of savings where children affected could stay in county rather than being relocated in an out of county provision. On top of the initial costs of installation a £1000 per month rental is paid out of school funds.

- 2018 –** Hampshire County Council were commissioned by WSCC to undertake a feasibility study resulting in a recommendation that a new build on the unused impractical field which is part of the college campus to the south was the best option.
- Ofsted inspected Woodlands Mead – resulting in GOOD. specifically noting during feedback that the college site was unable to deliver the full curriculum on site due to the limitations of the buildings.
- 2019 –**
- February -** Funding of up to £20m agreed in capital plan. Draw down of £500k for feasibility and design approved by WSCC e.g. to take the project up to commencement of building.
- Feb – May** Project Manager in place, Architects appointed, Building contractor presented and agreed in principle, plans drawn up for discussion, scape framework agreed. Governors challenged Faith & Gould (WSCC retained consultants) because they had recommended Atkins as architect despite being a part of their group of companies.
- June –** Without explanation, project manager replaced, framework abandoned, several obstacles and delays started. Noted a change in emphasis from getting build complete for September 2021 to costs and lots of red tape. Options considered
- Option 1 (replace buildings on field whilst college in use) - agreed as best option
 - Option 2 (.phased construction with students in situ) Rejected as impractical
 - Option 3 (decant WM students School site during construction works) Rejected as impractical and too expensive.
 - Option 4 (decant to an alternative location) Rejected as too expensive.
- July (4th) –** New project manager stated that a large number of surveys, reports etc needed to progress. Promised full involvement for all project team over the summer. No meaningful engagement between WSCC project team & Governors since. All information has been as a result of freedom of information requests and gleaned from listening to WSCC web casts.