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London Borough of Hillingdon
Civic Centre High Street
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VIA EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir or Madam,

Erection of Fencing | The Barn House, 38 Meadow Way, Eastcote, HA4 8SY

McLoughlin Planning has prepared this letter to support a planning application for the erection of new fencing at the Barn House, a Montessori Children's Nursery in Eastcote. For the case officer's ease of reference, this letter sets out the following:

- Site Description, Planning History and Designations
- The Proposal
- Planning Policies
- Planning Assessment
- Conclusion

Per paragraph 38 of the NPPF, the applicant would like to work proactively with the London Borough of Hillingdon (hereby referred to as the "LPA") to use the full range of planning tools available to reach a positive conclusion.

Site Description, Planning History and Designations

The proposal site is a historic barn from which a Children's daycare nursery (Blossom Tree Montessori) operates. The barn is situated on a corner plot, on the junction between Meadow Way and Field End Road. The building is located along the western boundary of the proposal site, with car parking and green space located within the remainder of the plot. Access to the site is provided through an established vehicular route onto Meadow Way to the South.

Regarding neighbouring land uses, immediate neighbours to the north and west are predominately residential dwellings. To the south, the property adjoins a public library and Eastcote High Street, with access to everyday services and public transport.

In terms of planning designations, the Hillingdon Council planning policies map advises that the proposal site lies inside a defined settlement boundary and there are no environmental designations (for example, Green Belt or AONB). The proposal site is also not within a Conservation Area. However, both The Barn House and the neighbouring Field End Farmhouse are Grade II listed. The Environment Agency's Flood Risk Maps confirm that the proposal site is in Flood Zone 1 (low risk).

The property's planning history is provided in a table in Appendix A. For the proposed works in this planning application, it is considered the planning history does not provide any direct material considerations.

The Proposal

The existing nursery has approximately 100 registered local children. Because of the layout, siting and orientation of the Barn House, there is presently only a very small outdoor space located to the north of the barn (please see the supporting plans provided). This does not offer sufficient outdoor play space to help with the children's development and education. Furthermore, additional fencing is required to support safeguarding because of the property's orientation and location on a corner plot (for example, during drop-off and pick-up times and for moving between the indoor and outdoor spaces).

Reviewing the proposal site holistically, the nursery intends to make better use of and extend the available green space at the front of the building to provide small groups of children to benefit from outdoor play space to improve and address the current shortfall of outdoor space. Both for safeguarding and visual impact reasons, the proposed outdoor space would be set back from the eastern boundary (adjoining Field End Road), with additional hedgerows proposed along the outer boundary of the proposal site to offer both a visual softening to the existing boundary, visual privacy to the nursery, and to respond to the established character of Field End Road, where hedgerows are an established characteristic of the local area.

The nursery also seeks to balance its safeguarding and outdoor play space requirements with responding to the barn's heritage value. The barn is a Grade II listed building. In the 1970s, the barn was in a very poor state of repair. Repairs undertaken in the late 1970s were crude, resulting in the loss of original fabric when the building was turned into offices. Referring to previous planning applications officer's reports (see reference: 16015/APP/2023/912), conservation officers describe the conversion works as "fairly brutal", with the timber framing internally being one of the few elements which are well preserved. The large clay roof is also described as "impressive".

The proposed development would not require any internal works or works attached to the listed building. Instead, care has been taken to respond to the building's setting and communal heritage value. On this basis, the proposal has taken a two-pronged approach: (1) a native hedgerow with the existing post and rail fence along the eastern and southern boundaries is proposed to strengthen the site's connection with established local character and to provide visual privacy in a manner which is standard practice around farm buildings; and (2) an internal fence which provides the necessary safeguarding protection and outdoor play area for children. As the fence would be set back from the boundary behind the existing and proposed boundary treatments, there would only be glimpsed views of the proposed fencing (please see the supporting street scene plan provided).

In addition, within the car park, the proposed fencing would adjoin timber planters, which would include native species to provide further soft landscaping around the timber fencing. The use of soft landscaping and natural timber fencing is a material palette which is visually sympathetic and blends with the tones and character of the barn.

Whilst the proposed internal site changes, hedging, and planters do not require planning permission or listed building consent, they have been shown on the proposed plans to evidence the holistic and considered approach adopted for the proposed internal fencing (for which Planning Permission is being sought).

Planning Policies

As set out under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 and Paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), an application for Planning Permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this instance, the development plan consists of the Hillingdon Strategic Policies (Part 1), Development Management Policies (Part 2), and the London Plan (2021). Material Considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and supplementary guidance documents.

Hillingdon Strategic Policies (Part 1)

- Policy HE1: Heritage
- Policy BE1: Built Environment
- Policy CI1: Community Infrastructure Provision
- SO12: Reduce the Reliance of the Use of the Car
- Policy T1: Accessible Local Destinations

Development Management Policies (Part 2)

- Policy DMHB1: Heritage Assets
- Policy DMHB2: Listed Buildings
- Policy DHB11: Design of New Development
- Policy DMHB14: Trees and Landscaping
- Policy DMHB15: Planning for Safer Places
- Policy DMHB19: Play Space
- Policy DMC15: Children's Play Areas
- Policy DMT6: Vehicle Parking

London Plan (2021)

- Policy GG3: Creating a Healthy City
- Policy D4: Delivering Good Design
- Policy HC1: Heritage Conservation and Growth

Planning Assessment

As the site is located within a defined settlement boundary, design and impact on heritage assets and neighbouring amenities need to be assessed. Each of these planning considerations has been considered further below.

Design

The London Plan policy D4 requires new developments to deliver high-quality design and place-making through a design-led approach. Local Plan policy BE1 requires development to be designed to be appropriate to the identity and context of Hillingdon's buildings, townscapes, landscapes, and views. Development should also create safe and secure environments. Policy DHB11 echoes much of policy BE1, also requiring developments to harmonise with the local context, including building lines, setbacks, and streetscape.

Great care has gone into the design process to successfully balance the needs of the nursery to safeguard and promote children's well-being, with the visual impact from public viewpoints against local character & appearance and heritage. The latter will be discussed separately below.

When considering the local character and types of boundary treatments along Field End Road and Meadow Way, there is a mix of stone walls, timber close board fencing, post and rail fencing, and mature hedges and trees. In this instance, the applicant will retain the existing post and rail fence on the boundary to maintain the established character from public viewpoints of the corner plot. Native hedging will be planted behind the existing fencing, replicating the appearance of neighbouring properties, such as Field Farmhouse, thereby strengthening the existing local character and appearance of Field End Road.

Because hedges retain gaps and means of escape (particularly whilst maturing), an additional set-back internal fence is required for the proposed play space to safeguard children using the space and entering and exiting the nursery through the primary access. Planning permission is being sought for this additional fencing.

The proposed fencing would be a closed-board timber fence with trellising and timber planters. This type of fence is for safeguarding (both in terms of access and visual safeguarding from surrounding viewpoints). The overall height of the fencing will vary between 1 and 1.5 metres high (with an additional 0.5m trellising), which will benefit from soft native planting in the adjoining planters. Because of the nature of the use on-site, it is considered that this type of fencing would be visually expected and appear in keeping.

As the proposed fencing would be set back from the property's boundaries and would be set behind a proposed native hedgerow, passersby would only have glimpsed transient views of the trellising on the top of the fencing (please see the proposed street scene plan). Using timber fencing also means that the texture, material, and colour tone respond to the fabric of the host building and combined proposed hedgerow and would be visually sympathetic. Overall, the proposed design, material palette, and height of the internal site fencing, when considered alongside the proposed hedge planting, are considered in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan policies BE1 and DHB11.

Impact on Heritage Assets

The Barn House and the neighbouring property to the north (East Field Farmhouse) are Grade II listed buildings. The London Plan requires development plans and strategies to demonstrate a clear understanding of the historic environment, the heritage values of sites or areas, and their relationship with their surroundings. Developments are expected to also demonstrate that they will conserve the heritage asset's significance and appreciation within their surroundings.

Local Plan policy DMHB1 requires development to sustain or enhance the significance of the heritage asset. Development should not result in harm or loss of significance to an asset unless it can be demonstrated that it will provide a public benefit that would outweigh the harm or loss in accordance with the NPPF. Similarly, Local Plan policy HE1 requires developments to conserve and enhance Hillingdon's historic landscape and listed buildings. The NPPF also requires applicants to describe the significance of the heritage asset, with a level of detail proportionate to the asset's importance.

In this instance, the barn is a former agricultural building that used to form part of a wider farm known as Field End Farm. The farm changed from arable to dairy farming in the 19th Century, with the large barn and neighbouring farmhouse (also Grade II listed) being the surviving buildings of the properties' agricultural heritage.

Records through previous planning applications submitted advise that the barn fell into a state of disrepair in the 1970s before it was converted into office use and a children's daycare nursery. Based on online records, much of the building was replaced and altered at this time. Referring to previous planning applications officer's reports (see reference: 16015/APP/2023/912), Conservation Officers describe the conversion works from the

1970s as "fairly brutal", with the timber framing internally being one of the few elements which are well preserved. The large clay roof is also described as "impressive".

The structural frame, group value of the barn with the neighbouring farmhouse, and its reminder of Eastcote's previous agricultural history before becoming part of Greater London are also what is considered to retain the barn's historical significance and communal value.

The proposed fencing will not alter or directly interact with the listed barn, thereby preserving the fabric of the listed building. Therefore, the focus is instead on how the proposed works respond to the setting and character of the building. The proposed use of hedging along the existing boundary of the property, alongside the existing post and rail fencing, is considered to respond positively to both the setting of the listed building and the character of Field End Road. Particularly, the use of hedging & fencing is recognised as shaping historical patterns of land in the historical and present-day farming landscape and their relationship with surrounding land uses.

The proposed internal timber fencing will be left untreated to darken naturally over time, resulting in a colour tone and appearance which blends with the materiality of the existing host barn. Its layout and siting within the internal courtyard of the barn also means passersby would only get transient and glimpsed views of the proposed trellising, with the architecture of the barn, including the grandeur of the clay tile roof and timber weatherboarding on the northern and southern elevations remaining visually accessible and recognisable for their contribution to the barn agricultural heritage.

The applicant recognises that close-board timber fencing is not traditionally a common agricultural form of boundary treatment. However, the height and type of fencing proposed are essential for safeguarding local children's access to the nursery facility and offering significant benefits for further outdoor play space to support local children's development and learning. With an accessible green space to the front of the barn, the fencing will provide a safer environment and opportunities for outdoor learning, supporting the children's long-term well-being. This is considered a significant material consideration and public benefit in favour of the proposal.

Finally, it is a material consideration that the fallback position remains that the applicant can erect fencing up to 1 metre high in the same layout and position as proposed without the need for planning permission. It is because of the additional height required for safeguarding purposes that Planning Permission is being sought.

Overall, balancing the public benefits of the proposed development with the holistic approach to sensitively mix the use of outer and internal boundary treatments to preserve the communal value of the barn and its setting to Eastcote, the proposed development is considered the proposed development will preserve the setting of the listed barn and the adjoining farmhouse, also offering public benefits to local Nursery children, thereby complying with the requirements of policies HE1 and DMHB1 of the Local Plan, the London Plan and NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Local Plan policy DMHB11 advises that new development should incorporate good design principles, including enhancing local amenities and ensuring development does not adversely impact adjacent properties and open space amenities.

The proposal site's corner plot location means it has neighbours to the north and west. The proposed fencing would not impact the neighbouring property to the west, as the barn is situated between both areas. To the north, the proposal will offer further privacy to the adjoining residential property, compared to the existing post and rail fencing, which leave

the sites vulnerable to overlooking. Like the proposed front boundary treatment, a mixture of hedging and new fencing is proposed to retain visual consistency and offer privacy without resulting in an overbearing impact on Field End Farmhouse.

Overall, the proposed works are considered to respond positively to neighbouring properties and protect their privacy and outdoor amenities in accordance with policy DMHB11.

Parking and Highways

Providing a functional and suitable outdoor play area for the children at the existing Nursery requires the removal of 4 parking spaces. Seven existing parking spaces would remain on site for parents to drop off children.

Local Plan policy T1 requires all developments to encourage access by sustainable modes of transport, including good cycling and walking provision. The London Plan, policy T6 also advises that car parking should be restricted in line with levels of existing and future public transport accessibility and connectivity, with car-free development being the starting point for all development proposals.

Whilst Local Plan policy DMT6 advises that development proposals must comply with parking standards outlined in Appendix C, Table 1 – there is no set standard for nurseries, which is subject to site-specific considerations. Furthermore, London Plan policy T6(k) advises that minimum parking standards for outer London boroughs must only do so for parts of London in PTAL 0-1. The proposal site has a PTAL score of 3.

The proposal site benefits from being close to Eastcote Central High Street, several bus stops, and Eastcote Underground. Surrounding streets are strictly controlled through parking permits, thereby preventing on-street parking (it should be noted that the nursery does not benefit from the opportunity to apply for parking permits locally).

The context means that the Nursery currently experiences approximately 70% of children and parents walking, cycling or scootering to and from the nursery. The same applies to staff, with the nursery hiring local people who commute by alternative means other than the car to the nursery. Therefore, the existing car park rarely reaches full capacity, with excess parking areas being efficiently absorbed into the proposed children's play area instead. The nursery also does not benefit from access to local parking permits, preventing the risk of overspill spaces to surrounding residential streets. The nursery gives parents sustainable travel materials and guides to encourage and support alternative means of travel.

With both the Local Plan and London Plan encouraging sustainable travel and seeking developments to find opportunities to encourage alternative means of travel, the proposed development is considered to successfully reduce reliance on private cars. This is balanced by the availability of public transport locally and the facility's accessibility from the neighbouring residential areas by walking and cycling. The applicant is also happy to work with the Council through suitably worded planning conditions to provide allocated cycle parking on-site.

On this basis, the proposed development accords with the objectives of SO12 of the Local Plan (Strategic Objectives), Policy T1, DMT6 and London Plan Policy T6, with the development successfully promoting sustainable travel and reduced reliance on the private car.

Conclusion

The proposed development seeks planning permission for the erection of fencing on the boundary and internally within the proposal site known as the Barn House. The proposal will better safeguard children coming and going to the Nursery and provide opportunities for further outdoor play space for the children's well-being. The design approach is holistic, including new hedge planting and internal landscaping within the proposal site. Whilst these elements do not require planning permission, they have been shown on the site plans provided to illustrate the intended approach.

This supporting planning letter has demonstrated that the proposed fencing has taken the opportunity to celebrate the barn's agricultural past, using a sympathetic palette of materials, visual style, and height in keeping with neighbouring boundary treatments. The proposed development will also protect neighbouring amenities.

Overall, the proposed development accords with the requirements of the Local Plan, London Plan and relevant material considerations. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.

Yours sincerely

Chris Moore BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI
Director

Appendices

Appendix A: Planning History for The Barn House, 38 Field End Road, Eastcote, HA4 8SY

Year	Reference	Description	Decision
2023	16015/APP/2023/912	Internal alterations and fitting out works to create children's day care nursery (Application for Listed Building Consent).	Approval
2021	16015/APP/2021/3372	Single storey side extension including conversion of boiler room to meeting room over two floors; new side gate and door and new doors and windows to the two-storey side building (Listed Building Consent).	Refusal
2021	16015/APP/2021/3373	Single storey side extension including conversion of boiler room to meeting room over two floors; new side gate and door and new doors and windows to the two-storey side building.	Refusal
2012	16015/APP/2012/2596	Construction of stud wall on first floor to divide office space (Listed Building Consent).	Approval
2011	16015/ADV/2011/70	Retention of freestanding signboard.	Refusal
1999	16015/S/99/3001	Installation of a non-illuminated 'v' sign board.	Refusal
1997	16015/N/97/0640	Layout of six additional car parking spaces.	Approval
1997	16015/P/97/0641	Installation of internal partitioning to first floor (Application for Listed Building Consent).	Withdrawn
1979	16015/H/79/0680	Alterations to elevation (P).	Refusal