

16019 PA 02.00 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Ministeps Nursery



*Rear of Ministeps Nursery
150 Joel Street, Northwood Hills,
Middlesex, HA6 1NL*

MINISTEPS NURSERY

INTRODUCTION

Ministeps Nursery, 150 Joel Street, Northwood Hills, Middlesex, HA6 1NL, is a fairly recently built Nursery (Ref: 698/APP/2011), serving the Northwood Hills community. The Nursery offers an inviting atmosphere for both children and babies to learn and play in a stimulating environment. It currently accommodates space for 38 children between the hours of 8am to 6pm from Monday to Friday and a manager's residential flat on the first floor.

SITE

The site is based in a residential area of Northwood Hills in the London Borough of Hillingdon. The Nursery is situated at the corner of Joel Street and Norwich Road and is located to the north east of Hayden School. Both Avenues consist mainly of large detached houses, set back from the street.

The plot welcoming, with a large front hard-landscaped entrance area with a number of staff parking spaces, plenty of outdoor play area in the rear garden, bin and cycle stores and a residential garden to the rear of the site.

The primary elevation of the existing property faces south east and is finished with white render.

EXISTING PROPERTY

The existing Nursery is a converted dwelling house, consisting of various rooms for different age ranges as well as spaces dedicated for stimulating the childrens sense (the Sensory Room), and encouraging innovation (the Inventors Room). Upon entrance, the staff room is to the left while access to the residential flat and an additional room for under 2 years olds is from the main staircase within the hallway of the ground floor. The rear garden and common spaces are located on the ground floor and are directly accessible from both rooms A and B as well as externally through a side gate.

PLANNING HISTORY

The property has undergone the following applications:

- 698/APP2008/2114 – Planning Application refused
- 698/APP/2010/1947 – Appeal refused
- 698/APP/2011/2951 – Planning Application **Approved**
- 698/APP/2013/3079 - Conditions discharged – Approved
- 698APP/2014/1661 - Variation of Conditions
- 698/PRC/2016/187 – Pre-Application – **Positive Feedback**

The approved (698/APP/2011/2951) and built scheme consists of a 'change of use of dwellinghouse to a Nursery School (D1), including single storey side and rear extensions, two storey front extension, canopy to front, side and rear, alterations to the elevations and relocation of pedestrian and vehicular accesses, retention of a one bed staff flat at first floor level'.

The Pre-application (698/PRC/2016/187) proposed to replace the existing residential flat on the first floor to a new class room and staff room and also to replace the existing residential garden at the far end of the rear garden into further play space for the nursery. The main concerns received from the Council's feedback included the loss of the residential unit, parking and pedestrian access proposed. These concerns are looked at in further detail below. Further evidence to support the loss of a residential unit and the changes to the forecourt are attached to this application.

DESIGN APPRAISAL

The scheme proposes a change of the first-floor C3 flat to a D1 day nursery classroom in line with the rest of the building. The proposal includes an indicative layout of the first-floor level to replace the existing residential flat and classroom with two new classrooms for under 5 year olds and a new staff room that consists of a kitchen and amenity space as the current scheme doesn't have adequate staff facilities. The scheme also benefits from additional outdoor garden play space where the current wildlife garden is. In turn, the wildlife garden will be relocated to the rear of the site to replace the residential flat's private garden.

Scale and Layout

Internally, the scheme proposes an indicative layout of the first floor to include an additional classroom and staffroom by replacing the residential flat.

The current residential flat's access point is from within the nursery itself. This is a security risk for the nursery and as such has also been difficult to market. The accompanying estate agent letters strongly suggest that in order to market the property, a new separate access point will need to be made in order to provide both privacy for the tenant and security for the nursery.

Additionally, Ministeps have raised the concerns based on Ofsted's legal statements such as the following:

- 'An effective system is in place to ensure people on the premises are suitable to do so. (If renting, all tenants would need a DBS and references. Tenants would want friends/family to visit however this would not be possible due to suitability of person.)
- People are to inform provider to disclose any convictions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect suitability to be with children. This would apply to tenants and their visitors as they are on the same premises.'

Please see the accompanying Ministeps letter for reference.

As such, changing the use from C3 to D1 would be better suited for the building both security wise and logistically.

The proposal has no alteration to the existing size, mass or scale of the nursery and all window openings are proposed to retain as existing.

Appearance and Landscaping

No alterations are proposed to the external facades of the property.

No trees will be removed in order to accommodate the proposal.

Sustainability

Although the old regime of assessing sustainable design has been scrapped by the Government, this scheme intends to develop a sustainable dwelling to meet current Building Regulations.

A more energy efficient nursery is the desire. Materials will be reused wherever possible thus allowing reuse of embodied energy. The property will include high levels of insulation and the glazing will be efficient in order to prevent excessive heat loss.

A new electric car charging point will also be installed in the forecourt.

Access

The proposal includes reinstating an original vehicular crossover to allow for secondary vehicle egress onto Joel Street, serving a 'drop-off / pick-up' facility. Following the pre-application advice, the crossover will have 1.2m clear separation from the adjacent crossover of No. 48 Joel Street. Additionally, the vehicle visibility splays will be 2.4m x 43m in both directions.

As the existing pedestrian path will be removed to accommodate the new crossover, a new pedestrian path will be located adjacent to the vehicle egress. This will have visibility splays of 2.4m x 2.4m in each direction.

As per the Transport Statement, the pedestrian routes will be clearly signed and bollards will be installed on the forecourt between the vehicle and pedestrian route.

The proposal also provides 2 car parking spaces in the forecourt which will be designated for staff and 2 new additional cycle stands will be provides adjacent to the 4 that currently exist to the south west of the site.

There is also ample on-street car parking in extremely close proximity to the nursery.

For further parking / traffic details, refer to the attached ADL Transport Statement for this application.

The Decision Notice for the approved application (698/APP/2011/2951) raises 5 Conditions which we wish to address in this planning application:

Condition No.	Approved Condition Wording	Pre Application	Note
2	The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans (numbers 1129/1.01 Rev A, 1129/2.01 Rev A, Design and Access Statement, Noise Impact Statement, Transport Statement) and shall thereafter be retained/maintained for as long as the development remains in existence.	We submit the drawings 16019 PA 0101 and 16019 PA 0201.	- 16019 PA 0101 - 16019 PA 0201
5	The premises shall be open for the use hereby approved between the hours of 08:00 hours and 18:00 hours on Monday to Friday only and shall be closed on Bank Holidays.	Relaxing the opening hours constraints from 8:00am to 7:30am in order to offer a breakfast club. This will spread out the drop offs as only some parents will opt for this club. This will reduce any traffic concerns during the existing 8:00am drop off time and consequently mitigate any excess noise concerns through administrative measures, therefore, accords to Policy OE3 of the Unitary Development Plan. We have also proposed an in/out driveway as the original building used to have an existing crossover where the current pedestrian access point is (please see drawings). This would reduce the any potential congestion during drop offs and pick-ups. The applicants also have a Travel Plan in place to encourage walking to school and use of public transport.	- ADL Transport Statement

6	No more than 38 children shall be accommodated at the site at any one time.	Removing the restriction on accommodating for only 38 children to allowing an additional 16 under 5-year-olds (total of 54 children). Staff will increase by 4 in order to have the correct staff to children ratio. These numbers can be reached by utilising the ratios in the guidance of the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage', which states the ratios as follows: <i>3.57. The premises and equipment must be organised in a way that meets the needs of children. In registered provision, providers must meet the following indoor space requirements*:</i> <i>Children under two years: 3.5m² per child</i> <i>Two year olds: 2.5m² per child</i> <i>Children ages three to five years: 2.3m² per child</i> <i>* These calculations should be based on the net or useable areas of the rooms used by the children, not including storage areas, thoroughfares, dedicated staff areas, cloakrooms, utility rooms, kitchens and toilets.</i> This will have no detrimental impact on the noise and traffic controls to the surrounding area as there is a substantial landscaped buffering at the site boundaries and a new 2m timber fence at the rear of the garden as well as new administrative measures for drop off times. This combination will contribute in mitigating any additional noise and traffic to safeguard the amenity of the surrounding properties in accordance with Policy OE3 of the Unitary Development Plan. Furthermore, there is plenty of off street parking to accommodate drop-offs / pick-ups.	- 16019 PA 0201 - ADL Transport Statement
7	The outdoor play area within the site shall be restricted to a maximum of 19 children at any one time and only between the hours of 10.00 and 16.00 on any day that the Nursery is open.	Proposing additional outdoor play space by relocating the Wildlife garden to the rear of the site (replacing the existing private residential garden) in order to accommodate the additional 16 children. This will have no detrimental impact on the noise to the surrounding area as there is a substantial number of trees and hedges around the site	- 16019 PA 0201 - Ministeps Letter

		boundary and a new proposed 2m timber fence, creating an efficient buffer and will safeguard the amenity of the surrounding properties in accordance with Policy OE3 of the Unitary Development Plan. The removal of the residential garden also eliminates the potential security concern of a non-staff member within the outdoor play space of the Nursery. The garden is and would be maintained to a high standard by the nursery gardener. The outdoor space creates an attractive environment, resulting in an appealing outlook for the neighbours.	
8	The residential unit shown on Drawing No. 1129:2.01 Rev A shall be used for no purpose other than as a use falling within Use Class C3 Dwellinghouse.	Omission of the residential unit. Replacing the residential unit on the first floor with an additional classroom room and a staff room as, the current Manager's flat is not utilised. The manager's residential flat is currently not utilised as, the access point is from the stair within the hallway of the ground floor Nursery. This is not ideal and can be considered as a security concern within a safe place dedicated for children to play and develop. We therefore believe that in accordance with Policy H3 7.3 of the Unitary Development Plan, the <i>'dwelling unit is unfit for habitation within the meaning of the Housing Act, 1985 and is incapable of being brought up to an acceptable standard'</i>. As per the comments in the pre-application advice, <i>'Only in very exceptional circumstances will the loss of residential accommodation be permitted. Paragraph 7.8 of the Hillingdon Local Plan (November 2012) sets out those exceptional circumstances. These exceptional circumstances include where there are access issues relating to residential accommodation located over retail or other commercial premises, where the dwelling is unfit for habitation and where the existing dwelling is located adjacent to established uses that cause nuisance and disturbance.'</i>	- 16019 PA 0201 - Estate Agent Letter 1 - Estate Agent Letter 2 - Ministeps Letter

		As such, this scheme should be deemed as an exceptional circumstance. Additionally, although marketing has been carried out for this residential flat, it has not been occupied to date (see the accompanying Townsends and Robsons letters).	
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CONCLUSION

Overall, we believe that the removal of the residential flat and private garden is logical and essential for the safeguard of the children within the nursery and allows for a better articulated space for staff on the first floor as well as an additional children's room. The scheme proposes levels of engineering and administrative measures to mitigate and potential noise concerns and traffic issues and we therefore believe the proposal would have no impact on the surrounding properties in accordance with Policy OE3 of the Unitary Development Plan.

This scheme supports the local authority in providing further nursery places within the borough and also creates further job opportunities in the local area.

Reports from local authority and Ofsted demonstrate that the setting has developed to now provide consistent learning opportunities inside and outside the nursery, through the use of free flow. Ofsted guidelines also recommend that nurseries provide free flow to allow children to explore both in and out throughout the day.

Furthermore, as no external changes to the building are proposed, the scheme would have no impact on the character of the surrounding area.

The Nursery has been operational for over one and a half years with no incidents or complaints from nearby residents. We believe these proposed changes will enhance the on-going positive resources provided by the Nursery by fully utilising the property.