

SECTION '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

Application No : 15/00082/FULL3

Ward:
Orpington

Address : 16 Station Road Orpington BR6 0SA

OS Grid Ref: E: 545907 N: 165878

Applicant : Mr John Samuel

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Change of use from dwelling house (Class C3) to children's day nursery (Class D1), single storey rear extension and widening of existing vehicular access.

Key designations:

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Birds
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
London City Airport Safeguarding
Open Space Deficiency
Stat Routes

Proposal

The proposal incorporates a 9.9m single storey rear extension, a balcony at the rear of the existing first floor element and the widening of the vehicular access at the front, and the conversion of the building from a dwellinghouse to a children's day nursery. A total of five parking spaces would be provided within the existing front garden area. The rear of the site will comprise a children's play area.

The proposed nursery would accommodate a maximum 91 children of varying ages and 20 members of staff would be employed. The opening hours indicated on the planning application are 07:00 - 19:00 Monday - Friday. The proposed floor plans indicate that the building will be divided into three sectors: Babies (23); Toddlers (28); and Pre-School (40).

The application is accompanied by a Planning Statement, a Transport Statement, a Travel Plan, a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment an Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement

Location

The application site incorporates a part one/two storey detached dwelling situated along the northern side of Station Road, and an overall site area of 0.075 hectares. The site is located approximately 180 metres to the west of the junction of Station Road and Orpington High Street and 500 metres to the east of Orpington Railway

Station. The neighbouring buildings comprise mainly of residential development with flats located to the side and rear of the site.

The southern (front) and western site boundaries contain a number of trees, those along the western side being the subject of a Tree Preservation Order (No 368). Consequently, the existing building itself is well screened from the highway.

Consultations

Comments from Local Residents

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and representations were received which can be summarised as follows:

- traffic disruption
- noise pollution
- no objection in principle to use, but size and scale of proposal is excessive
- increase in number of traffic movements to and from the site
- area is always heavily congested, particularly during peak travel hours
- unlikely that many people would take children to nursery by non-car means
- relocation of play area will move closer to boundary and lead to additional disturbance
- loss of trees at the site
- unsuitable nature of location for proposed purpose
- given there are six other nurseries existing within one mile of this site, it is very easy to see that the majority of children arrive by car
- it has been witnessed that traffic congestion at pick up and drop off times is horrendous
- given the proposed age range cars will need to be parked and children taken into the school, a process that will take at least five to ten minutes; proposal will necessitate a very large number of cars finding somewhere to park during this process
- inadequate on-site parking for staff
- unrealistic expectation that the majority of employees will walk or take public transport
- regular congestion and gridlock along Station Road
- restrictive parking along Station Road from 07:00 - 19:00
- neighbouring road, The Approach, is an important cut through and at peak times there is always a queue of traffic waiting to turn into Station Road
- only car park within a reasonable distance is at 'Tesco' store, 150m towards the High Street - this would seem to be for customer use only
- footpaths all the way up Station Road are narrow and already well used, and not conducive for children travelling by bicycles
- parking restrictions would have to be enforced on a daily basis to maintain traffic flow
- increased danger of widening the entrance
- loss of natural screening of trees and shrubs

The following comments were also raised by the Chairman of the Knoll Residents' Association:

1) We understand that there will be places for some 91 children. Given the paraphernalia involved in transporting pre-school children/toddlers etc, it seems highly likely that many of these will be brought/taken away from the nursery by car. As many/all, the parents will be working mums it also seems likely that there will be peaks of activity between 7-30 and 8-30 in the morning and 17-30 to 18-30 in the evening. The proposed site is just 150 metres away from Tesco. Traffic already backs up from the traffic lights, often considerable distances. This congestion will be made worse if cars have to queue up to get into the proposed site (there seems to be limited capacity within the site for cars to turn round and exit plus, of course, there will drop off time while children are taken from the car to the nursery with their buggies/toys etc). There is also likely to be congestion as cars coming up Station Road seek to cut across traffic coming down Station Road. It is easy to foresee large amounts of congestion at peak times, and also probably other times as it seems likely that it would only require two cars to seek to enter the site for there to be problems turning; thus requiring one to stay in the road until the other has finished its business and reversed.

2) We are also concerned about parking. We understand that there are only 5 car parking spaces for the 19 staff likely to be present most times. While we have read the applicants comments, it seems unlikely that 75% of staff will be commuting by public transport or walking. This will cause parking overflow on the already congested neighbouring roads.

Comments from Consultees

Technical Highways objections have been raised.

Any further consultee comments will be reported verbally at the meeting.

Planning Considerations

The following policies are applicable in respect of this application:

Unitary Development Plan
H1 Housing
C1 Community Facilities
C7 Educational and Pre-School Facilities
NE7 Development and Trees
BE1 Design of New Development
T1 Transport Demand
T3 Parking
T6 Pedestrians
T7 Cyclists
T18 Road Safety

National Planning Policy Framework

Planning History

There have been previous applications at the enquiry site, mainly relating to the redevelopment of the site to provide flats, although none relating to its use as a children's nursery. Details of the previous applications are summarised in the table below:

Reference	Description	Status
97/00616	Two storey rear extension and conversion of existing garage to residential accommodations	Permitted
05/01145	Erection of a 3 storey building comprising of three 1 bedroom flats and nine 2 bedroom flats together with associated parking	Application refused
05/03140	Erection of a three storey building comprising 9 two bedroom along with 3 one bedroom flats together with associated car parking.	Application refused
06/02662	Erection of three storey building comprising 10 two bedroom flats together with revised access on to Station Road	Application refused and dismissed at appeal
07/00395	Erection of three storey building comprising 8 x two bedroom flats and 1 four bedroom flat together with associated car parking	Application withdrawn

Conclusions

The main issues for consideration relate to the appropriateness of the proposed use in this location, its effect on neighbouring amenity, and its effect on general highways conditions in the surrounding area.

Taking local planning policies into consideration no objection is raised in principle in regard to the conversion of the existing dwelling to a children's nursery, since this would serve an identified need (justified, in part, by the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment accompanying the application). Accordingly, the proposed loss of housing stock could be supported in the context of Policy H1, and no objection is raised in principle to the proposed use.

In regard to residential amenity, the site is surrounded on all sides by residential properties with flatted development abutting the site along its eastern and western boundaries. In the case of the residential block to the east (No 14), the existing block projects some 4 metres beyond the rear elevation of the host building and, given the single storey form and depth of the proposed rear extension, it is not considered that this addition will lead to an adverse impact on the living conditions of that property. A wider separation is maintained between the subject property and the other neighbouring properties by way of the surrounding garden areas of the respective properties which provides something of a buffer. Although the use is likely to generate considerable activity, it is anticipated that most of this will be confined to within the nursery building, so it is highly unlikely that all of the 91 internees will utilise the children's play area at the rear of the site; furthermore, the use will be mainly be confined to weekday working hours. Nonetheless, in order to

limit potential noise to neighbouring properties, it is considered that sound screening along the boundary enclosures could be a potential condition requirement.

Turning to highways considerations, the site fronts Station Road which forms part of the A232 route. The road is relatively narrow and heavily used, and is unsuitable to on-street parking, meaning that the nearest on-street parking is along The Approach which is situated a short distance to the west of the site. The proposal incorporates a total of five off-street parking spaces.

Based on the number of proposed children and staff who could potentially be based at the nursery (stated to be 91 and 20 respectively), it is considered that the site would lack sufficient off-street parking to accommodate the associated parking demand, meaning that a high proportion of children travelling by car would have to be dropped off along surrounding roads. The Council's Highways engineers have expressed concerns that, as a result of the proposed numbers, more vehicles would enter the site than there are spaces available which could well hamper vehicles being able to turn around within the site. Reversing back to the highway would not be acceptable in this location. Whilst the applicant has offered to restrict the on-site parking exclusively to nursery staff only, in view of the particular characteristics of this location, including the nature of the surrounding highway network, and the traits and times of the proposed use, there remain concerns that parents dropping off/collecting children would not necessarily park within the available designated bays and as close as possible to the entrance of the site which could lead to a proliferation of parked cars within unsuitable locations. It is not considered that the Council would be able to exert sufficient control - either through parking enforcement, the proposed Travel Plan or planning enforcement - to resolve the potential problems this would cause.

In summary it is considered that the proposal is lacking in adequate on-site car parking and will be likely to lead to increased demand for on-street car parking in the surrounding area prejudicial to the free flow of traffic and conditions of general safety along the highway

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on the file refs set out in the Planning History section above, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: APPLICATION BE REFUSED

The reason for refusal is:

The proposal is lacking in adequate on-site car parking and will be likely to lead to increased demand for on-street car parking in the surrounding area prejudicial to the free flow of traffic and conditions of general safety along the highway, thereby contrary to Policy T18 of the Unitary Development Plan.