

The top of the page features a dark teal header bar. Below it, a faint, light-colored architectural line drawing of a building's structural frame is visible. The company name 'Clifford Consultants' is printed in a bold, teal font.

Clifford Consultants

Town Planning

Date: 14/12/2012
Our Ref: 12/01/ful
Your Ref:

Design, Access and Heritage Statement

The Old School House
7 London Road
Purbrook

1. Introduction

1.1. This Design, Access and Heritage statement has been prepared to support the following proposal:

Change of use of part of the building to D1 (Day Nursery) for an additional 30 children

1.2. The Old School House is a Grade II listed building and a former school house. It currently benefits from permission for part residential, part day nursery for 25 children (03/61558/003).

1.3. The site is located on the west side of London Road in Purbrook, north of the Ladybridge Roundabout, which connects to the A3 (M). It is directly south of the Parish Church of St John the Baptist. Both buildings are listed and within the St. John's Conservation Area.

1.4. As the site currently holds permission (Ref 03/61558/003) for a day nursery for 25 children, and there was also previously a nursery in the adjacent church for 35 children (thereby totalling 60), the proposed use of The Old School House for a day nursery for 55 children is not expected to have a substantial impact on the surrounding area. No internal or external changes are proposed.

1.5. The use of part of the building as residential is no longer necessary. As the previous permission had a condition (6) that the residence and the nursery had to be operated in conjunction, it is proposed that this application will supersede the previous permission and this condition is released. The reason for the condition was 'to ensure a satisfactory form of development in the interests of residential amenity and highway safety.'



Site Context. Red is site. Blue are car parking areas.

2. Site Context

2.1. The property is located within the village of Purbrook, between Widley and Waterlooville. London Road (A3) is the main spine road between Portsmouth and Waterlooville. The A3 (M) connects Portsmouth to London and is to the east of Purbrook.

2.2. Directly across London Road from the site is a row of shops within the Purbrook Local Centre. To the south is an empty plot of land proposed as a Tesco Express. There is a public car park off of Ladybridge Road with pedestrian access to the shops and the site. This could be used for staff parking. Another car park for the parish church is located off of Marrelwood Gardens and has a footpath through the churchyard to the property. This is proposed to be used for dropping off and picking up children.

2.3. London Road is well serviced by buses going to and from Portsmouth and Waterlooville. There are bus stops adjacent to the site. A pedestrian crossing is directly to the north of the site.

3. Policies

National Policy

3.1. The NPPF has a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' so development proposals which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.

Building a strong, competitive economy

3.2. Paragraph 21 of the NPPF states:

Local planning authorities should:

- *support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances;*

Promoting sustainable transport

3.3. Paragraph 35 states:

- *Developments should be located and designed where practical to accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;*
- *give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities;*
- *create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones;*
- *incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles; and*
- *consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport*

Promoting healthy communities

3.4. Paragraph 70 states:

To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- *plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*
- *guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*
- *ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community; and*

- *ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.*

Historic Environment

3.5. Paragraph 131 states that local planning authorities should take into account when determining applications:

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation'*
- *The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*

Local Policy

3.6. The Local Development Framework includes Havant Borough Council's Core Strategy (2011). Relevant policies include: CS2, DM2, DM10, DM12, DM14 and CS16. This should not be read as an exhaustive list.

3.7. The existing use is part of the building as a day nursery for 25 children and part residential. It has recently been marketed for wholly residential use (subject to planning permission), but as it is at most a three bedroom dwelling, it does not fall into any 'affordable dwelling' category due to its size and price. Therefore, there has been little interest in it as a residential property. Therefore, CS9 (Housing) is not relevant to the proposal. Although it would be the loss of a residential dwelling, the benefits of retaining a community and employment use outweigh any harm.

3.8. Purbrook is recognised as a local centre within Policy CS2 (Employment). The policy seeks to 'retain and enhance local markets' and 'support small and independent businesses.' Although technically not within the boundaries of the local centre, the retention and expansion of the building as a day nursery would enhance the local shops as parents picking up and dropping off children can combine their trips to include shopping.

3.9. According to DM2 (Protection of Existing Community Facilities and Shops), there is a presumption against the loss of community facilities unless it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer needed or there is a new facility to provide the community use. Since its closure, there have been no new day nurseries in the area to provide the local area with child care. The change of use would continue the existing use and expand it to allow for a larger percentage of the population to use the facilities.

3.10. Day nurseries typically only have two issues with regard to planning permission, both of which are able to be controlled through conditions. These would be noise pollution and parking. I will deal with each in turn:

3.11. DM10 (Pollution) indicates that development which may cause noise pollution will be permitted when the 'health and safety of existing and future users of the site, or nearby occupiers and residents is not put at risk.' The previous permission limited the number to 25 children, and there was no condition to limit the number of children outside. The church adjacent held the nursery for a further 35 children and they also used the outdoor space on the development site. Whilst there were no complaints from the neighbours regarding noise in the eight years of operation, a condition limiting the number of children outside at any time can be an acceptable way to mitigate any possible issues.

3.12. The previous nursery used the church car park for dropping off and picking up children only and had a condition on the decision notice regarding it. It is proposed that the same car park can be used again, which would not affect the access to the neighbouring properties at Marrelswood Gardens. Staff car parking would be at the public car park off of Ladybridge Road. In addition, due to the proximity of bus stops and neighbouring residential areas, parents would be

encouraged to walk, bike or take the bus in lieu of driving, which would minimise the number of cars using the car park. There are plenty of secure places within the curtilage of the site to store bicycles and prams.

3.13. As day nurseries run for different hours than schools, not all of the children would be picked up or dropped off at the same time. Times are staggered throughout the morning and afternoon to be flexible for parents' needs. It is unlikely that the church car park would be completely full. There is an existing car park with three spaces within the curtilage of the property with access to London Road. This would not be used for normal staff or parent parking. Hampshire County Council's Parking Standards indicates that for a highly accessible area, the required spaces for a day nursery is 1.5 per 4 full time staff. With 55 children, there would be about 12 full time staff, which would equate to 4.5 parking spaces. The 15 parking spaces in the church car park is more than sufficient for the development. This would comply with DM12 (Mitigating the Impacts of Travel) and DM14 (Car and Cycle Parking on Development (non-residential)). There is therefore no real change in the number of vehicles using the church car park.

3.14. There are no internal or external alterations proposed for the development. The change of use of part of the building to a day nursery would not have an effect on the listed buildings or their settings, or on the character of the Conservation Area. As stated above, a travel plan and conditions will limit the effect the development will have on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and will encourage the use of public transport or walking. Thus, the development will comply with Policy CS16 (High Quality Design).

4. Heritage statement

4.1. The listing for The Old School is under Purbrook First School. It states:

Church school. Mid C19 Gothic style hall, with cross hall to the rear, porch, bell tower, and later minor extensions, Coarse flint walling with stone dressings, tile roof. Elevation to the road (east) has a large gable with 2 windows, having plate tracery above double lights, linked by a transom. Bell tower with pyramid roof, panelled eaves with gablet. Porch wing has a doorway with a pointed arch with a relieving arch above of brick and yellow stone voussoirs. The general treatment is applied elsewhere, in a simpler form.

4.2. The Conservation Area Appraisal for St. John's Conservation Area reiterates the architectural qualities of the school and its significance within the streetscene of Purbrook in combination with St. John's church and the former Methodist chapel. The conservation area is small, only consisting of those three main buildings along London Road and the nine houses of Marrelswood Gardens. The church and the old school are Grade II listed whilst the former Methodist chapel and the former vicarage are locally listed. All of the buildings make a positive contribution to the character of the area. The woodland to the south forms the entrance to Marrelswood Gardens and to the church car park. The woodland and all of the trees in the conservation area contribute to the character as well. The former petrol station to the south of The Old School makes a negative contribution and it is hoped a building of quality will be placed there to enhance the area.

4.3. The significance of The Old School lies in its history as a church school which was in operation until 1994. It consisted of the one main school room, which had a stove in the centre of the room with a pipe that went out a hole in the roof. Although covered up, the remains of this hole can still be seen. The main room has large windows on the north and east elevations, typical of Victorian school houses. All of the fireplaces are intact as are the architectural details throughout. The school room has a scissor trussed roof, which are a prominent feature in the room. Doors and doorways throughout have gothick arches which contribute to the character and architectural interest of the building. The bell tower is a prominent feature in the street scene and is noted in both the listing and the CA appraisal.

4.4. The history of the building as a school room and later a day nursery indicate that the building was designed with children and learning in mind. It should be retained as a place for children and the redevelopment of the rest of the building will contribute to the significance.

4.5. Although it is included in the listing, the single storey extension does not fully contribute to the quality of the building. It was the former office of the head teacher, now the utility room. It has dark close boarded timber walls and a corrugated roof. Also within the curtilage of the building is a single storey outbuilding which has a CLD for its retention. It provides useful storage and staff rooms and a covered outdoor space for inclement weather. These are both to be retained in the proposed development.

4.6. The connection with St. John's church is significant in that The Old School was originally a church school, and was built around the same time as the church. They physically share a boundary wall and the two buildings and the car park are connected via a path through the churchyard. Previously, the day nursery operated a baby section and pre-school out of the church, with additional children (2-5 year olds) in The Old School. The two groups used the school's outdoor space as the church had none. There is no proposal for any continuation of a nursery in the church.

4.7. The proposal for the change of use of part of the building as a day nursery would positively enhance the listed building and the conservation area by bringing back the original use of the building for use by children. There are no alterations proposed with the development and so the physical character of the building will not be altered.

5. Design and Access Assessment

Layout

5.1. The layout of the building will remain the same as the existing. No alterations are proposed. The existing day nursery area will be used for the older (2-5 year olds) and the existing residential area will be used for the babies (0-2 year olds). They will share the external play areas.

Amount

5.2. The proposed number of children would be 55. The existing permission is for 25 children on the development site. The church, which had 35 children, was already in D1 use. Altogether the previous use was for 60 children on the two sites.

5.3. The hours of opening will be 0730 to 1800 Monday to Friday, commensurate with other day nurseries in the Borough.

Scale

5.4. The scale of the development will be similar to the existing use when combined with the nursery at the church.

Appearance

5.5. No internal or external changes will be made. The appearance will be the same.

Landscaping

5.6. The landscaping will remain the same as the existing.

Access

5.7. The development site is located on London Road, a major North-South road which connects Waterloo with Portsmouth and Havant. The site is close to Ladybridge Road which connects to the A3. It is in a well-connected site that is ideal for parents who commute to and from these major areas. There are major bus routes along London Road and a bus stop is directly outside of the development site.

5.8. The site is located in the local centre of Purbrook and there is a public car park behind the row of shops along London Road with pedestrian links to London Road and the shops. This would be the staff parking area. At the end of Marrelswood Gardens, the car park for St. John's church is available for use for the day nursery. It provides 15 car parking spaces for parents to pick up and drop off children. A footpath through the churchyard connects the car park to the site. The site itself has a small car park for three cars, and can be used as disabled parking if necessary, although it will mainly not be used due to the traffic on London Road. There is therefore no real change in the number of vehicles visiting the nursery.

5.9. Most of the site is on ground level, with only two rooms available for children to access on the first floor. It is considered that the site is accessible for disabled children and parents.

5.10. The existing access arrangements will not be altered with the development. Most traffic would go through Marrelswood Gardens to the Ladybridge Roundabout and not affect traffic entering London Road. There is therefore no change to the previous arrangements.

6. Conclusion

6.1. It is considered that the proposed development would comply with national and local policies and that the use of the site as a day nursery would be the most appropriate use of the site in conservation terms. As a Grade II listed former school, the building would benefit from having children playing and learning in it, and it would benefit the Purbrook area in general.

6.2. It is respectfully requested that the proposed development is approved.