

London Road Lodge

Nonsuch Park

Ewell

KT17 2DL

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Change of Use C3 (Dwelling) to E (Day Nursery) including
erection of outbuildings



PREPARED FOR

LEE CLIFT

INTRODUCTION

This planning statement has been prepared by Change the Use in support of an application for Full Planning Permission for a change of use at London Road Lodge in Nonsuch Park.

The planning application seeks a change of use from C3 (dwelling) to E (Day Nursery). The proposals also include associated landscaping works, renovations and the erection of several outbuildings.

SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The application site is located within Nonsuch park, adjacent to the north-west entrance from London Road (A24) and fronting onto the public footpath, The Avenue. The site consists of a single two-storey property with an array of trees and shrubbery surrounding.

The site features a rich heritage being the location of one of two early 19th century gatelodges to Nonsuch Park House (Redgate Lodge), which was later demolished to accommodate the current property on site.

The existing property being constructed during the late 20th century provides residential accommodation across ground and first floor levels, however has not been used for residential use for a significant length of time (over 10 years), having been left vacant and falling into a state of disrepair.

Benefiting from excellent on-foot accessibility from Stoneleigh and Ewell, the location of the site within Nonsuch Park and proximity to a highly residential area is ideal for pedestrian access. This area features typical pedestrian facilities such as sufficient footways on both sides of the road, dropped kerbs and street lighting.

Cycle access is available with pedestrian link cycle routes available north-bound along the A24 and off-road, south-bound along the Avenue within Nonsuch park.

Vehicular access is suitable with the strong road network links being located adjacent to the A24 with car parking available via the large parking area immediately adjacent. Public transport alternatives include through the Bluegates bus stop, a 4-minute walk away.

The location and layout of the site can be seen in the images below.



Image 1: Site aerial view facing west (Bing Maps)



Image 2: Site aerial view facing north (Bing Maps)



Image 3: Site aerial view facing east (Bing Maps)

PLANNING HISTORY

The site has been subject to a series of planning applications similar to the proposed as shown in the table below.

Reference	Description	Decision
18/01420/FUL	Change of use from a C3 Dwellinghouse to a D1 Nursery.	Awaiting decision
18/01421/ADV	We will be installing three signs 1. Hanging Sign 2. Hoarding Sign on two posts 3. Above Door Sign at the pedestrian entrance	Approved
14/01857/FUL	Change of use from C3 dwelling to a mixed use with D1 use at ground floor level incorporating a single-storey rear extension to form Veterinary Practice with C3 residential flat at first floor level and formation of new access way to the west of London Road Nonsuch Park entrance and laying out of parking area.	Approved

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The planning application seeks a change of use at London Road Lodge from residential dwelling under a C3 use to Day Nursery under the current E use class.

The applicant currently operates an additional day nursery within Nonsuch Park – Little Oaks, and aims to use the site at London Lodge House as a sister nursery. This will allow them to expand their existing customer base and to provide for an age group not currently catered to within the existing operation.

The proposed London Lodge House nursery will accommodate between 25 to 35 children between the ages of 3 months to 5 years old supported by 12 members of staff.

The proposed application seeks to fully-refurbish the existing premises including the restructuring of the internal layout to accommodate open plan space across both floors and additional toilet facilities appropriate to the proposed use. Included in the application will be the replacement of external windows and doors as well as improved insulation to improve the energy efficiency of the building.

Externally, a learn-to for coats and bags on the east-facing side and open outdoor classroom on the west-facing side of the property are proposed. Timber cladding is to be erected, replacing the existing green tiling on the north-side elevation.

Within the site associated soft and hard landscaping works are proposed as well as the erection of several outbuildings including two outdoor classrooms, office and storage room. The proposed outbuildings are to be of the same style and timber build of those at Nursery Lodge (see images below).

Further, plans for an allotment space, recycle and refuse area and secure cycle parking are included to encourage greener lifestyles with initiatives in place to encourage their use by the children and parents.

Submitted with this application is a Development Plan detailing further information regarding the operation of the day nursery.



Image 4: Outdoor classroom with office located at Nursery Lodge



Image 5: Open outdoor classroom located at Nursey Lodge

SIGNAGE

Signage is to be erected in two locations, one at the access gate to Nonsuch Park and another on the site entrance. The signage proposed is to be the same in material and design as the existing signage at the Nursey Lodge site. Details of this can be seen in the accompanying drawings and the image below.



Image 6: Existing signage located at Nursey Lodge

SCALE

The existing site occupies an area of 1500 m² (0.15 hectares) with the property occupying an area of 70 m². Internally the property provides accommodation of approximately 100 m² across both floors of the existing residential dwelling.

Following the proposed change of use including the erection of several outbuildings and outdoor classrooms the site will provide for approximately 200 m² of E use internal floor space.

LANDSCAPING

The site currently features an array of flora including a scattering of trees (including several TPOs) and shrubbery which, due to the expanse of time in which the property has remained unoccupied; has resulted in much overgrowing.

The proposals will include a level of vegetation works and site clearance to accommodate the proposed outdoor classrooms, increase the open space area, enhance the aesthetic of the site and for safety reasons. Hard and soft landscaping works are incorporated into the proposals to accommodate access tracks connecting the existing building and multiple outbuildings.

An ecological report is submitted with the application to ensure all development is done with due regard and appropriate for the site. The applicant hopes to establish a relationship with the local planning authority's arboricultural/ecology team to ensure the proposals are in scope of local planning regulations.

ACCESS

The existing access to the site fronting onto the Avenue is to be retained solely for service use with a new access proposed on the south-eastern corner as the principle entrance for children, parents and staff.

The main entrance has primarily been relocated for safety reasons to ensure children are not accessing the site directly through a car park. A small canopy is proposed at this entrance for aesthetic purposes.

It is hoped to be secured at a later date, the erection of hardscaping outside of the entrance of the site, within Nonsuch Park to create a safe gathering area for parents and children to minimise the disturbance on the other users of the park.

PARKING

The applicant is open to discussions on the vehicular parking proposals and has been in contact with the Nonsuch Park management authorities regarding short-stay use of the existing car park adjacent to the site. There are several other parking facilities within Nonsuch Park including a smaller parking area further along London Road (A24). The applicant has proposed plans for a "walking bus" to collect children from other car parks within Nonsuch Park to take them safely to the site.

The applicant plans to use initiatives to reduce any possible significant parking congestion through a variety of methods, primarily through the encouragement of alternative means to access the site through greener options. Staff and customers will be encouraged to walk and cycle to the site, making use of the pedestrian and cycle facilities on the area and a proposed cycle storage area.

The majority of the customer and staff base intended to use the proposed nursery is suggested to be from a walkable/cyclable distance, coming primarily from Stoneleigh and Ewell.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday to Friday: 07:30 – 18:30

Saturday: Closed

Sunday: Closed

STAFF NUMBERS

10 – 12 staff proposed (4 part-time).

NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into effect on 19 February 2019. The document effectively condenses previous planning policy guidance into one document (with the exception of certain Planning Policy Statements).

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development as stated in Section 2's Achieving sustainable Development. Paragraph 7 states:

'The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'

The NPPF explains in paragraph 8 that achieving sustainable development is possible through three overarching objectives:

- *'An economic objective - to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy*
- *A social objective - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities*
- *An environmental objective - to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment'*

Section 12 on achieving well-designed places states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should ensure that developments:

- *'will function well and add to the overall quality of the area*
- *are sympathetic to local character and history*
- *establish or maintain a strong sense of place*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development*
- *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users'*

The NPPF also deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment with emphasis placed on heritage significance. The framework states that local authorities should sustain and enhance heritage assets and place weight on conservation towards these assets.

The national policy does however state that weight should be given on the possible harm of developments against the benefits of the proposal. Paragraph 196 states:

'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.'

Local Planning Policies

The Epsom and Ewell Core Strategy (2007) and the Development Management Policies Document (2015) sets out the Council's policies regarding planning and building developments.

The following policies apply to the proposed development:

- Core strategy
 - Policy CS 1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 - Policy CS 3 – Biodiversity within the borough
 - Policy CS 5 – Protection of historic buildings and conservation areas
 - Policy CS 12 – Community Infrastructure
 - Policy CS 16 – Sustainable transport

- Development Management Policies
 - Policy DM 4 - Biodiversity and New development
 - Policy DM 5 – Trees and Landscape
 - Policy DM 8 – Heritage Assets
 - Policy DM 9 – Townscape Character and Local Distinctiveness
 - Policy DM10 - Design Requirements for New Developments
 - Policy DM 34 - New Social Infrastructure
 - Policy DM 37 - Parking Standards

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Sustainable Development

The NPPF emphasises that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be at the heart of plan-making and decision-taking which means that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole. Significant weight should be placed on developments such as this which bring economic investment and regeneration.

The proposed change of use would wholly support the aims of the NPPF by investing in the local economy, bringing a vacant and disused building within the borough back into gainful use, creating employment opportunities and improving the well-being of the area's community. National policy is fully supportive of the development of facilities that support sustainable development through economic and social investment.

The favour of sustainable development sought by the NPPF is matched within local policy CS1 with the Council encouraging development that contributes positively to social, economic and environmental conditions in the area. Changes should protect and enhance the natural and built environments, helping create places of high quality.

Biodiversity

Local policy states under CS3 that any new development must seek to minimise any detrimental impact upon the borough's biodiversity ensuring that mitigating measures are in place upon development. Further to this within the Development Management policies, DM4 and DM5 ensures the retention of protected species and trees respectively.

Due to the nature of the development proposing a level of site clearance within an area of high biodiversity and in line with Policy DM4, an ecological report was conducted prior to any proposals and is submitted with this planning application. Additionally, the report conducted in the previous application (18/01420/FUL) for planning permission has factored into the current ecological assessment.

The proposed development is seen to cause no detrimental impact on the biodiversity on the area but rather restore a habitat in need of attention. The applicant has encouraged the establishment of an ongoing relationship with the local authority conservation officers and with the Nonsuch Park management team to ensure any development will maintain a cautious approach to protected species, ensuring no harm is brought through the proposals.

Green initiatives are proposed including the use of cleared land for planting and allotment space, the encouragement of recycling/ use of compost bins and the use of the green environment to educate children on recycling and greener lifestyles.

Heritage and design

Located within the Grade II listing for Nonsuch Park, the development must abide by local and national guidelines to ensure the protection and retention of assets deemed culturally significant. Policy CS5 mandates higher standards of design to protect and enhance such assets. Developments must comply with the following criteria:

- create attractive, functional and safe public and private environments;
- reinforce local distinctiveness and complement the attractive characteristics of the Borough;
- make efficient use of land and have regard to the need to develop land in a comprehensive way

The protection of heritage assets is equally addressed local Policy DM8, with the Council stating that every opportunity to conserve and enhance heritage assets should be taken by new developments.

The principles of high quality and positive design aimed at contributing to local character and distinctiveness are addressed in Policies DM9 and DM10. The proposed development is seen to bring a positive addition to the heritage site though the proposed renovations and clearing of overgrown forestry.

Community Infrastructure demand

Under the criteria for New Social Infrastructure laid out in local policy DM34, the council state that planning permission will be granted where a proposal meets the following guidelines:

- a) it meets an identified need;
- b) it is delivered, where practicable, in multi-use, flexible and adaptable buildings or co-located with other social infrastructure uses which encourage dual use and increase public access;
- c) it is in a location that is accessible by public transport, walking and cycling;
- d) it is of high-quality design providing inclusive access for all;
- e) it does not have a significant adverse impact on residential character and amenity; and
- f) it makes an appropriate provision for on-site car parking, access to public transport, cycling and walking, and the effect on traffic movement and highway safety is in accordance with Policy CS16.

With regards to an identified need, the childcare provision within the Ewell/Stoneleigh area is currently at a level insufficient to adequately cater for the demand. The website www.daynurseries.co.uk (an online resource that shows daycare facilities in Epsom and Ewell) currently shows only six day-nurseries in the Nonsuch Ward including the existing Little Oaks Forest School. Many families from within the Stoneleigh Ward would be able to access the new facility at London Lodge.

Recent 'Childcare Sufficiency Assessments' in 2011 and 2016 identify population growths for 0-4 years old's in the county which will rise for ten years along with population growth increasing with new housing projects in and around Epsom. It identifies that in the area where London Lodge sits, is one of low penetration high occupation, suggesting that this could potentially be a good area to establish a new provision for nursery age children. The Sufficiency assessment indicates there is a high occupancy rate for childcare places in the area, based on the knowledge obtained from already operating a Nursery School in the local area, we are aware of a growing demand for childcare places for Forest School provision.

Sustainable Accessibility

In line with local policies, the need to reduce the demand of vehicular parking and congestion must be met with initiatives that encourage greener forms of accessibility. The proposed development will meet the demands of CS16 by encouraging non-car modes of accessibility through the use of the pedestrian, cycle and public transport access the site benefits from.

Policy DM37 states that an appropriate level of off-street parking must be provided to meet the demands of any development. Under the proposals, the provision of greener transport initiatives and parking via the existing Nonsuch Park parking facilities, is seen to meet this demand.

CONCLUSION

With the above & accompanying information, it is respectfully requested that this application for a change of use from C3 (Dwelling) to E (Day nursery) be approved.

It is deemed that this change of use does not affect the surrounding area adversely and should be viewed as a positive addition to the local community. The day nursery will be addressing a social/community infrastructure deficiency and bring socio-economic benefits to the community in a time of great need such as employment generation.

The existing property is in a state of disrepair and in need of regeneration, with the proposed development renovating in a manner that respects the heritage and biodiversity of the site to provide a positive addition to Nonsuch Park and the borough.

The proposed development is in line with the NPPF and local policy, and we therefore, look forward to validation of the application and approval from the Council.