

Background

Outside space is a crucial to children's development and day to day enjoyment at their early years (and later) setting. Upper Knapp Farm Day Nursery is well known for the quality of its gardens and outside resources that its children can enjoy and has played a key part in the nursery becoming successful and sought after. Quality outside space is rightly valued by most parents for assisting with their children's physical and mental well being. The log cabin is intended to further the nursery's outdoor play and learning offering by providing an all weather space, separate from the main nursery building and dedicated to all things 'outdoors' – including displaying and playing with nature finds, listening to and watching rain through the double doors, playing with natural materials, understanding and appreciating insect and other small life they may find and related story telling.

The land at the top of the garden, which we do not own (outlined in red below), has been unused by its owners for 25 years but we have maintained the stone walls and repaired one collapse, cut trees causing the collapse and later trees threatening the wall and other overgrowth. For the last 15 years the children have also enjoyed playing on some of this land. We have made a vegetable garden here that the children and staff enjoy. The children also eat the fruit and vegetables they have helped plant and nurture. In the last 2 years we have extended the play area to the far end of the land so that the children can run and play in a wide open 'forrest school' type space. We have asked to purchase the land from the latest owner who bought it in November 2019 (unknown to us at the time). Unfortunately the new owner wishes to apply for planning permission to develop it and will not sell it to us at the price they paid for it (without planning permission) thus putting it out of our price range.

Our plan was to buy this land and turn it into a proper forest school and it was here that we had intended to place the log cabin. At the top of the garden the cabin would be well away from the heritage building but, we feel, would fit well into its curtilage. It would also make excellent use of the space for the benefit of young children from the area. Were we to have acquired the land we would have been happy to put a restrictive covenant on it preventing any building development in the future thus protecting what little remains of the historical situation of Upper Knapp Farm. What does remain, with historic walls running continuously on both sides to the end, is the minimum we feel the historic building deserves. Since the 1980s it has become surrounded by housing and related roads and infrastructure. We are restricted by covenants from formally objecting to development applications on the land but wish the planning officers and conservation officer to be aware at least of some of the background to this historic part of Upper Knapp Farm or Nasse Court as it was once known.



Heritage Statement

The proposed log cabin is intended for use by the children to extend their enjoyment of the outside space at the nursery and increase opportunities, in all weather, for outside learning and play activities that are valuable and important in child development.

It will sit on part of the existing patio area currently used throughout the working week as a children's playground. There is an existing 8m² timber shed in the patio area used for storage and this will be relocated to the play garden above where there is just space to accommodate it between trees.

We do not believe that there will be significant impact on the heritage setting of the main building for the following reasons:

1. The proposed log cabin is not attached to the main building which is constructed from local Marlstone.
 - a. It is obviously distinct, being constructed of wood, and it will be clear that it is not an extension but rather a modern temporary outbuilding
 - b. It has no foundations and is removeable
2. It will take the place of an existing 8m² shed used for storing equipment and toys. There is therefore already a wooden structure, albeit 60% smaller, in the planned location. Therefore there is some precedent for a structure here.
3. The new structure will not cause the demolition or removal of any historic structures existing in the garden. Very old stone steps adjacent to the proposed cabin in the owner's area will not be touched.