



Supporting statement for restricting access to Woburn Road and the provision of additional toilet and hygiene facilities.

We are requesting planning permission firstly, to ensure safety and security of our students and staff and secondly to ensure our students have access to toileting and washing facilities which are fit for purpose.

The issues have arisen on risk assessments in two areas:

1. Traffic (pedestrian and vehicular) on Woburn Road present a risk of verbal assault and physical violence to staff and students.
2. COVID adaptations and an increase in pupil numbers, including the introduction of a single sex bubble at the request of the Croydon LA Education Directorate, have stretched the toilet facilities beyond what is acceptable for the safe and humane running of the school.

1. Traffic

Woburn Road is a Private Road with a Pedestrian Right of Way. Ownership resides with the Archdiocese of Southwark (St Mary's Catholic High School). It is parcelled with the footprint of the school as demonstrated below

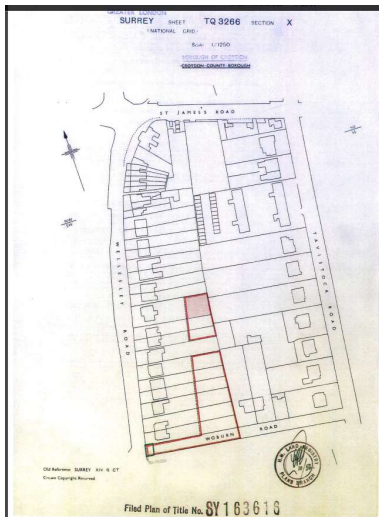


Image 1

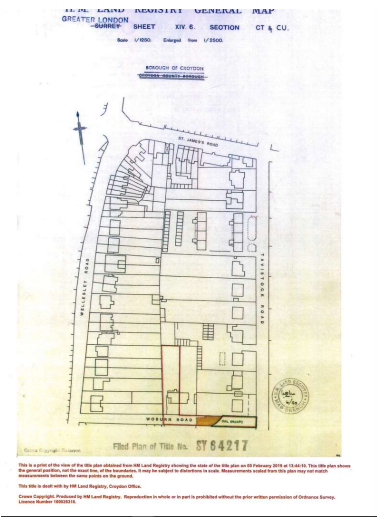


Image 2





There is a tunnel through the school on Woburn Road with classrooms either side, and above, the road.



Image 3 (Woburn Road facing toward Wellesley Road)

Year 7 and Year 8 students use the Lower Playground and therefore need to cross Woburn Road to access toilet facilities, canteen, and specialist rooms (eg Science labs). A year 7 student in lessons who needs to use the toilet currently has to climb 45 steps on the south side of the road and descend 21 steps on the north side of the road to use the toilet or wash their hands.

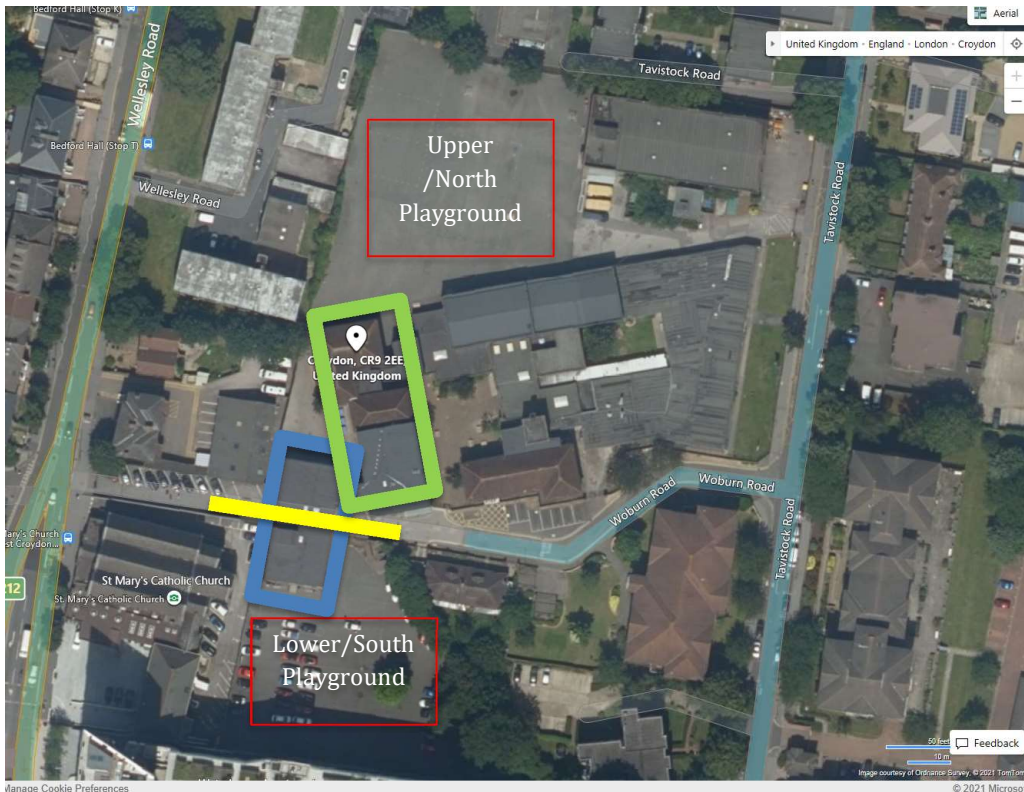


Image 4





We made the adaption of crossing the road during lunch time when we can staff the crossing. As you can see from image 5 below there, are increased risks as a result of this, exposing the students to members of the public consuming alcohol and drugs on Woburn Road during all hours of the day, including school hours. Staff have been threatened by members of the public who want to park on Woburn Road. We have erected a vehicle traffic calming measure, but this does not prevent pedestrians' verbal abuse and threats.

With the opening of two new hostels on Lansdowne Road there is a higher incidence of members of the public travelling on Woburn Road with alcohol and drugs, to the point where we have had to call the emergency services for several people under the influence.

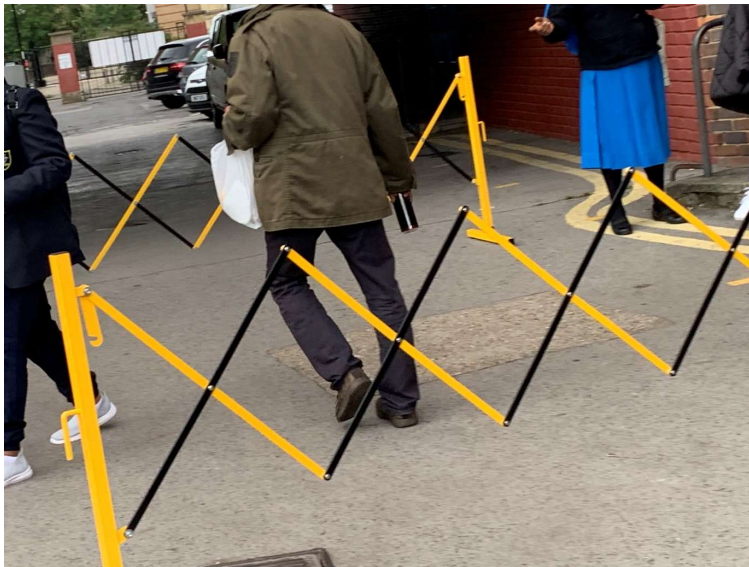


Image 5

Members of the public regularly park without consideration for the day to day running of the school, or indeed, for the safety of members of the community. Image 6 below is a car blocking an entrance gate for year 9 and year 10 and also a fire evacuation point.



Image 6

2. COVID Adaptations

St Mary's was approached by the LA in August to support Virgo Fidelis by housing one year group for 24 months in a single sex bubble. This we did at short notice and the arrangement is in operation and appears to be working well. Note was made at Cabinet in January of how supportive and responsive St Mary's was.

The blue outline in image 4 shows where there are 15 classrooms spread over 4 floors (approximately one third of the schools classrooms). This block contains 1 set of toilets which we currently use for year 7 girls.

The green outline in image 4 shows a collection of 17 classrooms spread over two floors. There are two toilet blocks in this section of the school. Many of the toilet facilities are dispersed across the rest of the one story section of the school, but impractical for use, either for staff or students. In the area provided for Virgo Fidelis there are two toilet blocks side by side - which means necessarily that the Virgo Fidelis students have very good access, but the St Mary's students are now less well serviced. During COVID that is presenting a significant challenge to manage, and even as we look forward to coming out of COVID we know there are risks for variants that the Oxford vaccine does not guard against. And the positioning of the current toilet facilities is not fit for purpose.

We have considered all other options including adding portacabin toilets in the south playground, but it is practically impossible to see how this installation could happen given the physical restriction.

St Mary's Catholic High School is one of the few schools left in the centre of Croydon following the closure of two faith maintained Schools in the last twelve months. We also host one of the highest numbers of Looked After Children in the LA, supporting significantly the LAs role as coporate parent. Playing host to some of the most vulnerable and one of the most diverse school populations in Croydon, I believe





this is a necessary step to ensure safety and security for all members of the school community.

I do recognise that there will be some inconvenience to members of the public caused by this, however Bedford Park will afford a similar route with very little disruption to pedestrians.

I thank you for taking time to consider this application

St Mary's Catholic High School

