

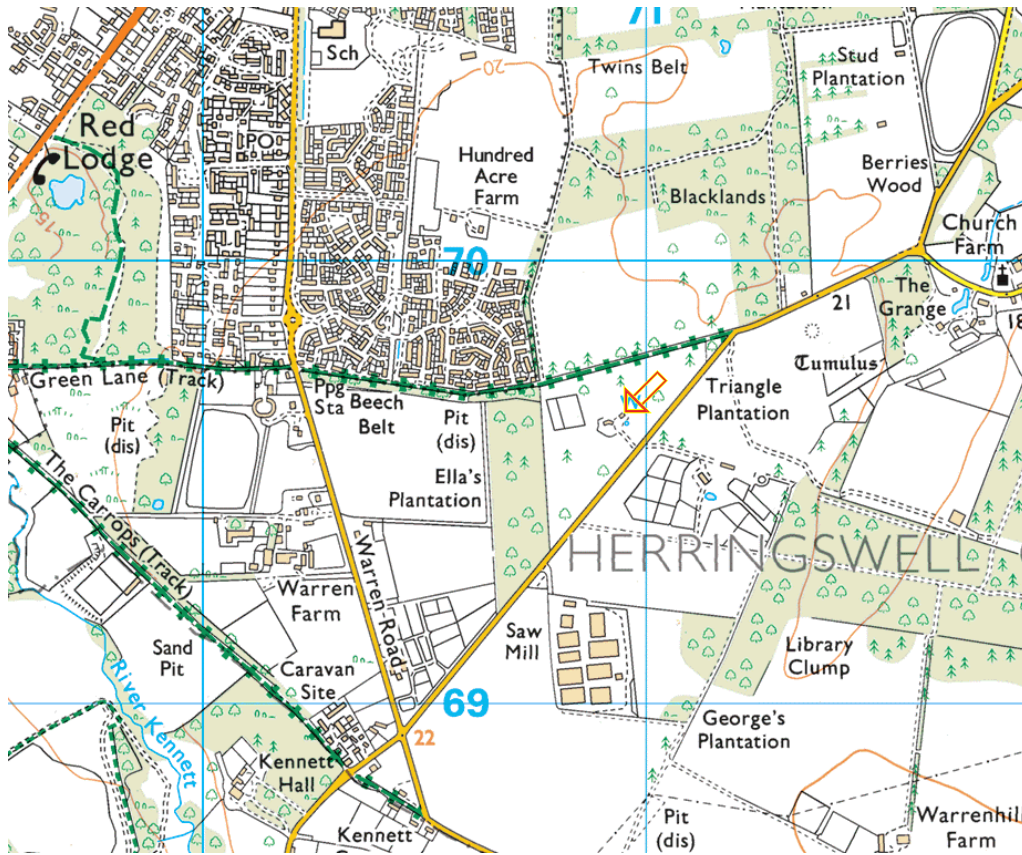
# DESIGN ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT

*FOR*

**Change of use for existing dwelling (C3) to form a  
nursery school (E[f])**

*AT*

**Trianglewood  
Kennett Road  
Herringswell  
IP28 6SS**



**Streetmap**



**Aerial Photo**



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement is prepared in support of a planning application for change of use of an existing dwelling (C3) to a nursery school (E[f]).

1.2 The report should be read in conjunction with the following plans and supporting information:

- 21139 5** Location Plan
- 21139 4D** Proposed Block Plan
- 21-139-003** Existing Elevations
- 21-139-002** Existing Floor Plans
- 21-139-101** Proposed Floor Plans

**Highway Statement**  
**Ecology Appraisal**  
**Ecology HIA**

## 2.0 CURRENT USE

The building although currently unoccupied comprises a substantial 4-bedroom residential property that sits within extensive grounds, consisting of approximately 33 acres in total.

Designed by renowned local architect George Mitchell, the house was constructed in 1933, reflecting an Arts and Crafts butterfly style appearance.

The main dwelling is arranged over two floors and provides a Gross Internal Floor Area of approximately 2,657 Sq Ft.

The overall site also contains two adjoining residential units know as 'Well Cottage' and 'Woodland Cottage' and these do not currently form part of the change of use application.

**3.0 PROPOSED USE**

3.1 This application seeks to change the building's current use to provide space for the operation of a nursery school facility.

It is anticipated that in the first year of operation the school will provide accommodation for approximately 24 children per day, with this figure rising to 46 over the following two years.

3.2 It is proposed that the hours of operation will be from 07.30 to 18.00, 5 days per week, with the school being open for a typical 51-week period during any calendar year.

3.3 The applicants have provided the following statement in support of the application:-

*'Triangle Wood is an exciting new concept of a forest school style nursery and outdoor, woodland learning experience. Set within the existing Triangle Wood House and idyllic surrounding woods and pasture, we envisage opening our doors to welcome children aged from three months to four years old.*

*We will provide childcare to suit the needs of working parents, from 7.30am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday, all year round (apart from Christmas week and Bank Holidays). We will also provide morning and afternoon sessions for pre-school aged children and we will offer Early Years funded hours for these sessions to make this idyllic provision accessible to all.*

*There are many widely recognised advantages to a forest school provision. A woodland nursery incorporates all of the essential areas of the Early Years curriculum, whilst allowing children to flourish in a natural, scenic environment.*

*Children will develop independence and self-confidence and will feel empowered as they learn more about themselves and their own natural environment. This wholesome approach, with exploration at the heart of our ethos, will guide the children's planned daily activities and experiences.*

*Children will have opportunities to learn naturally and organically, whilst learning how to care for our animals, which will include alpacas, Shetland ponies and chickens. Children will also grow their own fruit and vegetables and discover the importance of seasonality and provenance. Children will also be able to prepare their own lunches or picnics with their own produce and learn how to make healthy choices.*

*Inside the Nursery, we will offer French and Spanish lessons to the pre-school aged children, together with Music and Dance, from specialist teachers. Our small room sizes and generous staff ratios ensure that children will receive bespoke care and be nurtured in a homely yet stimulating environment.*

*As part of our commitment to the preservation of the local environment and to reduce car emissions, we will provide a raised, wooden walkway from Red Lodge to the Nursery, thus providing idyllic childcare easily accessible to Red Lodge residents by foot or by bicycle/tricycle.*

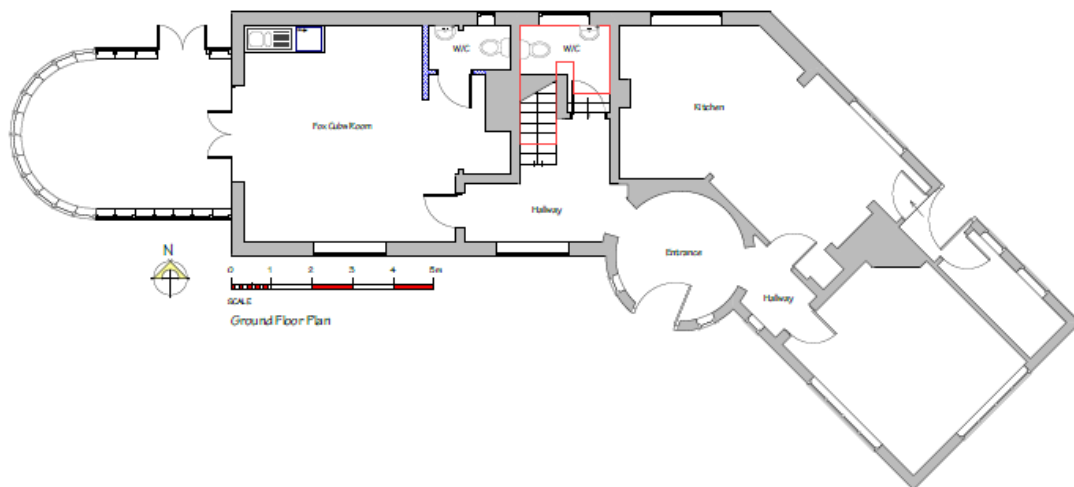
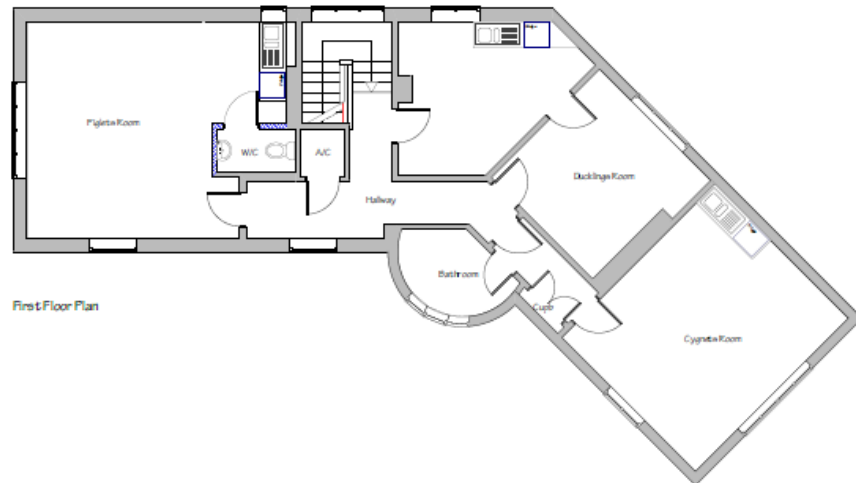
*We also intend to provide "Stay and Play" sessions in the Nursery grounds for parents and their little ones.*

*When the Nursery is fully operational, we envisage providing employment opportunities for 25 people, including nursery practitioners, kitchen staff, grounds staff and cleaners. We also intend to source our catering supplies locally and all other Nursery requirements locally wherever possible.*

*We are extremely excited to offer a unique, outdoor woodland learning to all children in the locality. We will encourage the children to be mindful and responsible for the natural world around them and protective of the animals under their care'.*

**4.0 DESIGN**

The dwelling in its current form is well suited for use as a nursery facility. A few minor internal alterations are proposed, such as the creation of an additional toilet, as shown on drg no. 21-139-002. There are no proposed changes to the external appearance of the building.



**5.0 ACCESS & PARKING**

- 5.1 The proposed nursery will be served by the existing access, connecting to Kennett Road.
- 5.2 A separate Highway Statement has been prepared and is included within the supporting documents, which concludes that, *"It is considered that this is a safe location for this Nursery use. There is no evidence to suggest that this proposal will result in unacceptable impact on highway safety. I believe that the proposed development is acceptable in highway terms and meets the highway design standards and policy"*.
- 5.3 A total of 21 onsite car parking spaces will be provided, with a clockwise pick-up and drop-off system operating at the front of the property.
- 5.4 In addition, covered cycle parking will be provided close to the school building and a new walkway will be established to provide a pedestrian link to Red Lodge and the Kings Warren development, located to the northwest of the application site - as shown on drg. no.21139 4D.

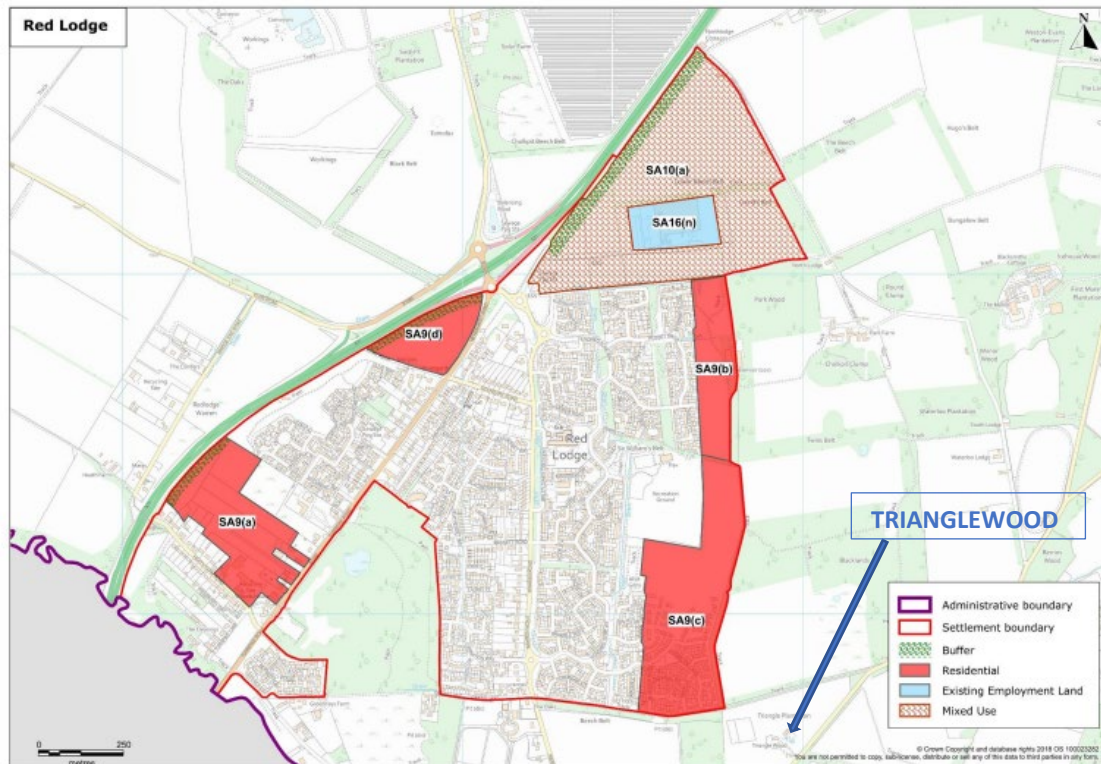
**6.0 ECOLOGY**

- 6.1 As the application site is within the 1.5km Constraints Zone of the Breckland SPA supporting ecological assessments have been included within the submission documentation.
- 6.2 The assessment concludes that, *'given that the development does not represent a new building but a change of use from an existing building, and that there will be no permanent residents associated with the nursery, any potential impacts will be reduced to a negligible level, either alone or in combination'*.

**7.0 PLANNING JUSTIFICATION**

7.1 Although the site lies outside of a defined settlement boundary, the application does not seek the erection of any additional buildings, only the change of use of an existing structure.

7.2 As shown below, the settlement of Red Lodge is located within walking distance and provides direct access to a significant, expanding catchment area. Therefore, the creation of a footpath link can provide a sustainable connection to the proposed nursery and closest settlement, preventing the creation of isolated development.



7.3 The NPPF in paragraph 123, encourages Local planning authorities to take a positive approach towards applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed, when considering alternative community uses.

123. Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs. In particular, they should support proposals to:

- a) use retail and employment land for homes in areas of high housing demand, provided this would not undermine key economic sectors or sites or the vitality and viability of town centres, and would be compatible with other policies in this Framework; and
- b) make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools and hospitals, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space.

7.4 With regard to local need the applicant has provided an additional statement which highlights an under provision of early age childcare facilities in the local area.

*We aspire to open a nursery in a unique, woodland setting which will provide much needed childcare support for the residents of Red Lodge and Kentford.*

*Red Lodge is a rapidly expanding village, with housing being built to cater to all housing requirements. Due to their excellent value for money, these new housing developments are very popular with families.*

*Kentford has likewise seen recent new housing developments, such as Regal Meadows and the upcoming Lodge Park, with many new families moving to the area.*

*The current provision of childcare in Red Lodge and Kentford is set out below.*

- 1. Colourbox Red Lodge (accepting children from 3 months, 31 places, all year round childcare);*
- 2. Colourbox St Christopher's (pre-school for children rising three years old, 8am to 6pm, 12 places)*
- 3. The Pinecones (attached to The Pines Primary School, term time only, 8am – 4pm for children rising three years old).*
- 4. Greenhays (from three months, all year round childcare, 38 places).*

*There is currently no nursery providing childcare in Kentford.*

*As both Red Lodge and Kentford look to expand further and appeal to working families, childcare support for parents of very young children will be essential.*

*Both parents who work from home and those who work further afield (the close proximity of these towns to both the A11 and A14 make them a popular choice for parents who work in Cambridge, Bury St Edmunds or London) are keen to have their children in a nearby nursery.*

*Our setting is uniquely rural and will provide the children with a woodland environment, in which they will learn about growing and cultivating seasonal produce and caring for our animals. Increasingly, children are not growing up with gardens at home and we want to teach our children awareness of their environment and conservation.*

*To ensure that our setting will be accessible to all children, we will offer the 15 weekly (for 38 weeks of the year) funded hours to eligible children, in morning and afternoon sessions. Suffolk County Council is required by the Government to find a childcare place for all children eligible for these hours and, as these villages grow, places are further in demand. Term time only places will also be available and we will accept payment by Employers' Childcare Vouchers.*

*As well as providing much needed childcare, we also intend to offer 'Stay and Play' sessions for parents, carers and children in our woodland setting. We hope these sessions, led by a member of our Nursery staff, will be both educational and fun for both children and their parents alike!*



7.5 In terms of current Local Plan Policies, Policy DM41 requires that proposals for the provision and enhancement of community facilities (such as a day nursery) will be permitted where they contribute to the quality of community life and the maintenance of sustainable communities.

**Policy DM41: Community Facilities and Services**

The provision and enhancement of community facilities and services will be permitted where they contribute to the quality of community life and the maintenance of sustainable communities.

Proposals that will result in the loss of valued facilities or services which support a local community (or premises last used for such purposes) will only be permitted where:

- a. it can be demonstrated that the current use is not economically viable nor likely to become viable. Where appropriate, supporting financial evidence should be provided including any efforts to advertise the premises for sale for a minimum of 12 months; and
- b. it can be demonstrated that there is no local demand for the use and that the building/site is not needed for any alternative social, community or leisure use; or
- c. alternative facilities and services are available or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves with good access by public transport or by cycling or walking.

Where necessary to the acceptability of the development the local planning authority will require developers of residential schemes to enhance existing community buildings, provide new facilities or provide land and a financial contribution towards the cost of these developments proportional to the impact of the proposed development in that area, through the use of conditions and/or planning obligations.

7.6 As mentioned above the close proximity to Red Lodge and the creation of a pedestrian link means there is an opportunity to deliver childcare to local residents without being solely car dependent, which would contribute to the quality of community life and help to maintain a sustainable community.

**8.0 CONCLUSION**

8.1 No significant building operations are required - the application seeks a change of use of only.

8.2 The new facility would create a unique site for nursery provision allowing children room and space to connect with the natural environment.

8.3 There is national and local planning policy support for sustainable community development facilities.

8.4 The nursery would provide much needed additional day care facilities, providing an economic benefit for working families within the local community of Red Lodge and the surrounding area.