

## **DESIGN & ACCESS PLANNING STATEMENT**

### **KINDER CITY NURSERY, 320 HITCHIN ROAD, LUTON LU2 7SR**

#### **1.0 PREFACE**

- 1.1 The proposal is for the construction of a new, upper floor level within the upper volume of the existing building.
- 1.2 The development is to be a modest and discreet scheme to provide more internal floorspace in the existing facility to maintain the viability of the property.

#### **2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The proposal is for the construction of a new, second floor and facilities within the volume of the existing, two storey Nursery building.
- 2.2 The new floor space will allow the better utilisation of staff and services for accommodation and care of children. There will be some scope for increasing the numbers of these children and provide an enhanced community service within Luton.

#### **3.0 THE SITE AND ITS LOCATION**

- 3.1 The existing site covers about 1,330m<sup>2</sup> with a width of about 21.5m and length of about 29m. The existing building has a gross plan of about 200m<sup>2</sup> with two floor levels.
- 3.2 The building may have been built as a Baptist or Congregational Chapel after the First World War. This was converted into a Nursery about ten years ago, possibly with the insertion of a new first floor
- 3.3 The former Chapel has a generous internal volume under the pitched roof and uses extensive timber trusses and steel ties to achieve a wide span of about 11m with a central internal height of about 6.7m above the first floor level.

#### **4.0 PLANNING POLICIES**

- 4.1 The LPA may reference policies in the Luton Local Plan 2011-2031 as adopted on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017.
- 4.2 Policy LLP1: "Presumption in favour of sustainable development". This is a general, "Spatial Strategy" sustainability policy and endorses the proactive and positive support of development.
- 4.3 Policy LLP25: "High quality design". This is a broad-brush policy aiming to enhance the built environment.
- 4.5 NPPF(September 2023) Section 12 "Achieving well-designed places". This promotes the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places as something that the planning process should endorse. It has a general aspiration for urban design and supports the development of

#### **5.0 LOCAL PLANNING**

- 5.1 The property is not within a Conservation Area and is not a Listed Building.
- 5.2 The site is in an existing area of residential and commercial uses and does not require the loss of any alternative use land.
- 5.3 The LPA website entry for the area does not include any record of applications or alterations to the property or use.

## **6.0 DESIGN**

- 6.1 The proposal uses the existing volume under the extensive roof to accommodate a new nursery level. The proposed increase in occupancy will be for around 10-12 children and allow more economical use of existing staff numbers.
- 6.2 The insertion will require careful design in terms of structural performance, economy and buildability. These considerations are outside of the LPA planning remit.
- 6.3 The internal layout will involve additional toilets and staircase. Subject to the extent of alterations to the existing structure, the headroom will be limited in many areas. A workable headroom of 1.5m would be acceptable towards the eaves but, if the ties are retained, the central headroom under retained trusses would be limited unless raised by new structural insertions.
- 6.4 The scheme could involve the addition of several rooflights to the existing roof. These are likely to be in the form of conventional top-hung units that could be readily inserted into the existing timber roof fabric without the need for expensive external access. The rooflights would provide high level illumination to the second floor and not offer any over-looking views of any adjacent properties.

## **7.0 ACCESS**

- 7.1 The existing site features a generous plot with extensive parking provisions and adequate external amenity space for the Nursery. The existing setting will allow level and unhindered access from the highway and garden.
- 7.2 The internal spaces have been arranged to facilitate wheelchair or ambulant disabled persons on the ground floor.
- 7.3 The existing, generously sized on-site car park provides twenty spaces set in two rows with a wide central aisle accessed from an existing crossover from the highway.
- 7.4 The nature of the arrival and departure of children through the day means that the car park is not fully occupied during the day. This leaves plenty of space for the longer term occupation with staff vehicles although the nature of local employment means that most assistants and cleaners walk to the site.

## **8.0 COMMENTS**

- 8.1 The proposals are for a more productive use of the existing, heated, internal volume.
- 8.2 The
- 8.3 Architecturally, there will be little alteration to the existing building other than the removal of an existing, external fire escape stair

## **9.0 SUMMARY**

- 9.1 The applicant considers that all objective LPA policies have been met and that the application should be supported by a full planning approval.
- 9.2 The LPA should support the application in a positive and pro-active manner as required by the NPPF and professed by the Council in numerous planning decisions.