

London Borough of Barnet
Building Control
2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale,
London, NW9 4EW

March 2024

HSSS 7151

OLD FINCHLEIANS CLUB, 12 SOUTHOUVER, LONDON, N12 7JE
RETAINING OF NURSERY CLASSROOM - MODULAR PORTABLE CABIN

The applicant seeks extension of existing planning application, ref:19/3635/FUL, date:29/04/2021.

The Old Finchleians Club site, established in 1968 is located on the western side of Southover and functions as a social club on evenings and weekends while accommodating Southover pre-school on weekdays during term time. The Pre-School offers a stimulating curriculum based on the Early Years Foundation Stage framework for children aged 2 - 4 years and is staffed by highly qualified childcare professionals.

Prior to planning approval, the nursery provided childcare for 2–4-year-old children during term time and operated with limited timings from Monday to Friday 08.30 - 3:00 pm. The nursery could not provide full time wraparound childcare due to time restrictions within the main club house. The demands for full time wraparound childcare for under 3's have rapidly grown hence the various government initiatives. Due to the increased population within the local community, urgent requirement for wraparound childcare provision has become evident and has prompted the £289 million funding (2023 Spring Budget) from the government.

Following the proposal approval in 2021 and much discussion between the clubhouse committee and Barnet council, the clubhouse committee allocated the disused space within the car park for the porter cabin classroom to provide childcare provision for under 3's with extended operating hours from 7am to 7pm in response to the high demand for the early-years childcare in the vicinity.

A three-year period was initially given to explore a more permanent solution to accommodate the growing needs of wraparound childcare; however, more time is required by the clubhouse committee to eventually offer extended hours within the main building. The original proposal of the temporary portable cabin installation of 54m² GIA for up to 20 children has proven to be a great success within the local Barnet community leading to increased demand of the facilities to provide help and support for working parents with children under twp.

Southover Pre-school can only afford to operate in conjunction with wraparound care, as there is more demand for after-school care, emphasizing the critical need for the portable cabin classroom. Operating only until 3pm is not economically feasible.

The addition of the temporary portable cabin has significantly contributed to providing wraparound childcare as per government guidelines and the initiative being rolled out from April 2024 giving working parents of two-year-olds, 15 hours of free childcare every week. The addition creates space that is safe, comfortable, and stimulating, fostering a positive and nurturing atmosphere within the lush green grounds of the Old Finchleians Club.

The portable cabin conveniently sits at the end corner of the site behind mature hedges and positioned away from the residential area. A low cabin height allows the structure to blend in with the hedges facing Southover. The portable cabin is a temporary structure with no fixed foundation and shall not cause any damage to existing hedges and roots on both sides.

The existing Nursery Travel Plan with legal agreement is welcomed to be renewed with the new planning application and the fee of £3,000 to be paid to Barnet Council as per the original planning covenant.

It is to be noted that the portable cabin classrooms have been warmly welcomed in the local community with no complaints ever being received and the nursery actively supporting the crackerjacks charity for children in need (Registered Charity No: 1146586).

In light of the above, we strongly believe that granting an extension to keep the portable cabin in place for a further 3 year period will play a vital role in supporting the local community by providing additional early years childcare provision for working parents. Therefore, we kindly request the extension of the existing planning permission to be granted.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Paly

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Part I Architectural Assistant/Party Wall Surveyor