



Northwood Residents' Association

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Reply Email: planning@northwoodresidents.co.uk

To:
Christos Chrysanthou – Planning Officer
Planning Dept
LB Hillingdon

Date: 25th April 2024

Dear Christos,

NORTHWOOD POLICE STATION, 2 MURRAY ROAD, NORTHWOOD

Two Planning Applications: Planning Ref: 46639/APP/2024/816 and 46639/APP/2024/817 for:

Proposed Change of Use to a Children's Nursery and Listed Building Consent for Alterations

We at the NRA object to the proposed change of use primarily on the grounds of increased traffic and air pollution given that the building is located at one of the busiest junctions in Northwood, and we object to the proposed extension and alterations given it is a Grade II Listed Building.

Proposed Change of Use to Pre-School Age Nursery:

Those who live in Northwood already experience significant traffic stress within the Northwood town centre, particularly at school drop-off and pick-up times, but also at other unforeseen times during the day.

Given the limited on-site car parking, the applicant has stated in the traffic management plan that parents will be given effectively a 10 minute slot. However, given the existing traffic stress, it will be very difficult indeed for a parent to arrive at exactly the right time, and will more than likely arrive early, and then cruise around the local already busy streets, looking for a car parking space. This will be likely to involve blocking driveways and pavement parking. This is something that the area already struggles with and given the number of children and teachers who it is proposed will be attending the nursery, there is significant concern about this becoming even worse.

The numbers who will attend the nursery stated in the application are now 114 nursery-aged children and 28 teachers. It is also stated in the application papers that there will be 178 traffic movements every weekday.

The applicant already accepts that many of those travelling will come by car. However, urging parents to use public transport or walk will be relatively meaningless. This is also shown by the existing traffic stress and pollution in particular during existing school drop-off and pick-up times in Northwood. Good intent will not change what will



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actually happen based on years of experience within Northwood, and this building is right in the centre of Northwood at one of its busiest junctions.

The statement within the application that staff will not drive to work will be unenforceable. Equally, stating that parents will be encouraged to walk their children to the nursery or use public transport will also be unenforceable. This has been the view taken by the Planning Committee in connection with other applications for other properties in Northwood and elsewhere in the Borough.

Within the application, there is the suggestion that parents will be able to use the Waitrose car park and the Green Lane car park whilst they drop-off and pick-up the nursery-aged children. However, it has been stated multiple times in other applications around the Borough that applicants cannot rely upon car parks outside their site, because they will be reliant on what is in effect a third-party parking provision. This is due to the fact that spaces outside the control of the applicant cannot be guaranteed in perpetuity.

Should staff drive, knowing that they cannot park on site, in the application papers it is suggested that they could park some distance away and use parking within the local road network where parking is permitted all day where there is no parking management scheme. Those spaces tend to be taken up by commuters already and there was also no certainty that those spaces will remain outside the parking management scheme, because one can be applied for at any time. Therefore, once again, it cannot be assumed that the spaces will be available in perpetuity.

As well as the increased traffic caused by the proposed use which will go at low speed both because of the amount of traffic there will be, and because parents will be cruising at low speeds around the area looking for a parking space, it will significantly increase air pollution.

In the application papers they refer to two nurseries that have closed. One was at the David Lloyd Sports Centre which has a huge car park. The other was located at The Grange on Rickmansworth Road which had a larger car park than the Former Police Station. Both were located outside the town centre itself. Whilst there might be a demand, using this location at what is already one of the busiest junctions in Northwood, clearly adversely impacts the local community so far as traffic and air pollution is concerned and the harm outweighs any proposed gain.

The applicant has made comments about the population within HA6. However, they have not made it clear enough that HA6 includes areas well outside Northwood and includes areas with a different age profile to those within Northwood itself.

Also within the applicants papers, they state that up to 40 police officers and civilian staff were working at the Former Police Station in addition to movements associated with patrolling officers and visiting members of the public. This has been raised before, and it is clearly known that for many years that almost all of the time there were only very few police officers and volunteers who worked within the Former Police Station. The statement made in the application needs to be corrected to state at almost all times there were just a few people working at the Former Police Station.

By way of comparison:

I would refer to **21 Maxwell Road Northwood:**

Application number 33030/APP/2019/2247 for the change of use of a shop unit from A1 Retail to D1 Pre-school nursery, with **reasons for refusal** being that use as a day nursery does not provide adequate on-site car parking, on-site pick up and drop off facilities, to the detriment of child safety, and fails to have regard to existing highway and pedestrian safety concerns. The proposed use will result in an increase in parking stress on the highway network and



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surrounding area which is already subject to considerable pressure and would create an environment that would present considerable hazard to pedestrians and will be disruptive to residents of neighbouring dwellings.

In addition, the potential rise in traffic and in parking in and around the site would be detrimental to the public and highway safety.

A second application relating to **16 Murray Road Northwood**:

Application Number: 4626/APP/2019/629 Northwood which included amongst other things the conversion of ground and first floor from part Class C3 and part Class D1 to Class D1 (Nursery) was refused. This part of the **application was refused** on the basis that as a day nursery the premises do not provide adequate on-site car parking, on-site pick-up and drop-off facilities, to the detriment of child safety and fails to have regard to existing high and pedestrian safety concerns. The proposed use would result in an increase in stress on the local highway network and surrounding area which is already subject to considerable pressure and would create an environment that would present considerable hazard to pedestrians and will be disruptive to residents of neighbouring dwellings.

It will be seen that both applications relate to properties very close by to the subject property, and with similar reasons for refusal to those being put forward here against the proposed change of use of the Former Police Station to a day-nursery..

Application for Listed Building Consent:

Secondly, there is the application for Listed Building Consent to make external alterations to the building.

The building is Grade II listed and there should be no alterations carried out to the exterior, and we urge the council to protect the building in this way.

There is reference in the application documents to the building being in disrepair. Those items covered by the Listing should be repaired, but not altered.

The Listing also requires the Call Box and Lamp to be located in its original position outside the property. That is where it should be now, so that the Listing is respected.

The proposed extension is out of character with the remainder of the building, particularly relating to materials, but also because as a Listed Building it should be respected as such and protected as such. (See Page 16 of the Design & Access Statement)

Within the application papers there is a suggestion that this use would provide better public access for the local community than residential use. It should not be forgotten that as a Former Police Station, access by the public was only as far as the Reception area. Equally, if the use were as a nursery that would not permit public access to the interior.

It should also be noted that the Listing includes the Police Lamp, Callbox, Boundary Fence and Gates. All of this should be protected. It is noted that the applicant only wants to place the Police Lamp and Call Box inside the building, rather than placing them in the precisely set positions outside, and proposes making changes to the boundary fence. All of this goes against the Listing.



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Whilst altering the fence is to provide in and out access, it still doesn't overcome the significant increase in traffic and air pollution that the change of use would entail.

Conclusion:

On the basis of the above reasons the NRA requests that both applications are refused.

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