

<u>Ward:</u>	Alexandra
<u>Description of Proposal:</u>	Change of Use from Residential (C3) to a Mixed Land Use of Residential (C3) and Primary School (D1) for up to 72 children and 15 staff at Mayfield, Old Malden Lane with parking facilities/mini bus drop off and collection from the Richard Challoner School (additional information received)
<u>Plan Type:</u>	Full Application
<u>Expiry Date:</u>	28/01/2019

This planning application has been brought to the Neighbourhood Committee for comment. The application for the abovementioned development will be determined at the Development Control Committee in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

The Proposal

1. This application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the existing 5 bedroom house and ancillary outbuildings to a mixed land use including a 3 bedroom residential flat (Class C3) occupying the first and second floors, and a full time forest primary school (Class D1) for up to 72 children and 15 staff occupying the ground floor and garden area, including use of the 4 existing outbuildings for teaching accommodation.
2. The application is for a change of use only, and no extensions or additional buildings are proposed.
3. The proposed primary school would be run by Little Forest Folk who opened London's first full time outdoor nursery in Wimbledon in January 2015. Due to demand for spaces they have since opened nurseries in Wandsworth, Fulham, Barnes and Chiswick. The current proposal seeks to provide a primary school, which follows the same outdoor education curriculum approach. The current scheme would extend the outdoor environmental education concept to primary school children aged between 4-11 years of age.
4. During the school time (daytime) the ground floor of the existing dwelling house will provide:
 - A 25.1sqm technology and design room (capacity for 12 children),
 - A 23.9 sqm dining hall with learning space (capacity 8 children)
 - A 27.4sqm "Focus on Mastery" room (capacity for 12 children),
 - A 15.9sqm kitchen (for up to 6 children);
 - Toilets; and

- A utility room.
5. The four existing outbuildings would be retained and converted for the following use:-
 - Shed 1 converted to an Art studio (for up to 16 children);
 - Shed 2 converted to a Science laboratory (for up to 6 children);
 - Shed 3 converted to a workshop (for up to 6 children);
 - Shed 4 converted to a greenhouse (for up to 6 children).
 6. The proposal includes on site outdoor area for wildlife investigation, bug hotels, water experiments and conservation projects to enhance the ecological value of the site. Within the curtilage of the site, there will be an open outdoor storytelling area and mini theatre. No structures or built form would be required for these uses.
 7. The proposed school would have school hours between 9.30am and 3.30pm Monday to Thursday term time only (144 days a year).
 8. It is advised that whilst initially the school would cater primarily for those children attending the existing nurseries, that as the school becomes more established, the school would hope to take a greater proportion of pupils from the local area, reducing the reliance on the mini buses. It is advised that the school would also "provide 12.5% of the school spaces as free school spaces for less privileged local children, who may want to attend".
 9. The school would operate a daily minibus service which would collect and drop children off at pick up points. The application originally proposed that the mini buses would drop off and collect from the neighbouring River Club site. The travel arrangements have subsequently been revised, and it is now proposed that the mini buses would drop off and pick up from the Richard Challoner School, which is 560m to the north west of the application site.
 10. As part of the submitted Travel Plan, it is proposed that all parents of students and all staff members would sign agreements that they are not to travel to the school by car. They would be informed that the access road is private and that they are only to meet at the minibus collection points or travel by foot or bicycle and enter through a new gate in the northern boundary.
 11. The Richard Challoner School have agreed that the Little Forest mini buses, with children and staff, can drop off and pick up on their premises, off the public highway. The Agreement with the Richard Challoner School would be for 2 years. Accordingly, this application seeks a temporary two year permission, which would also allow for a continued search for more permanent school premises.

12. In terms of the upper floors, it is proposed that the first and second floor of the existing house would be converted into a self-contained 3 bedroom flat, with kitchen, living room and 1 bedroom on the first floor and 2 bedrooms on the second floor. The ground floor would be used by the residents after school hours and on weekends. The flat would be occupied by the Founders of the school and their children. The garden space to the east of the house will be accessible to residents on weekends and holidays. The existing forecourt parking area would be retained for the residents.

Previous Relevant History

04/16316/FUL	Erection of single storey side extension	Permit 5 Year Condition and Conditions 04/08/2004
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Consultation Responses

13. Neighbouring Occupiers: Notification letters were sent and a site notice displayed on the access road.
Number of objectors: 29
Number of supporters: 35
14. **Objections:** The grounds are summarised as follows:
- i. Highway Issues: The existing junction is for private access only and has very limited traffic. It is a dangerous junction with vehicles travelling at significant speed along Old Malden Lane not being able to see cars or vehicles that are turning out of the lane. It is located on a bend which worsens this problem. Placing additional vehicle movements, particularly from the proposed use of a school The statement on access by people, children, and parking is just not practical or enforceable.
 - ii. Notwithstanding the statements regarding the non-use of the road, the reality will be very different due to peoples attitude as to why they need to use the access road with their vehicle or deliveries to the proposed school. What provision is made for visitors to arrive during the day, open evenings, etc. The unmade road is narrow and passing places will ruin the verges.
 - iii. Travel plan assumptions unrealistic.
 - iv. The walking bus route is quite a hike for youngsters and question the suitability of this walk in bad weather through what are pretty boggy areas when it rains. The only other alternative would be to walk them along Old Malden Lane, a dangerous road at the best of times.

- v. Old Maiden Lane is a narrow road, mini buses dropping off children from out of this area is no benefit and will cause problems, parking or dropping off at Richard Challoner school is not a solution, this school is so busy with their own mini buses and the junction near the school is already too busy, this will cause more traffic problems.
 - vi. Inappropriate and incompatible development in Metropolitan Open Land – contrary to policy, and creates a dangerous precedent in terms of failing to protect the current usage and amenity value of the area. Whilst the use for purposes of sport and recreation is in line with current land usage in this area, the use for other commercial purposes is not. Previous proposal for school within land at River Club was refused given MOL designation and increased car traffic onto Old Malden Lane.
 - vii. Noise disturbance to local residents, also note that the applicant's noise assessment was carried out at a time when a playing field was in use at the fields owned by Richard Challoner School. These fields are only in use once or twice a week and so their contribution to noise levels should not form part of the background noise and as a result of this the conclusions of the applicants report are misleading and should not be relied upon.
 - viii. Drainage - currently a domestic cesspit.
 - ix. Suitability of accommodation to provide schooling.
 - x. Ecology: No ecological impact assessment carried out (subsequently submitted).
15. In addition to the above, a resident's group representing up to 8 households has submitted counsel opinion/objection and detailed highway objection to the proposal. The issues raised are discussed in the main body of the report.
16. **Support:** The letters of support relate to the unique educational opportunity for local children, understanding the importance of nature and sustainable living. It would open up the education options for children and their parents.
17. Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS): The proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on heritage assets of archaeological interest.
18. Epsom & Ewell Borough Council - The main concerns of our residents are the unsuitable footpaths for children walking to school along Old Malden Lane and the access to Old Malden Lane not providing suitable visibility splays. Epsom

and Ewell Borough Council considers these concerns to be valid planning concerns and therefore would like to state that we have no objection in principle subject to the access of Old Malden Lane being considered by the highways authority of Kingston Upon Thames as safe and acceptable for children at key stages 1-2

19. Secure by Design (Metropolitan Police): Overall no adverse considerations with the change of use or the use of a suitably organised walking bus. However, note that path and playing fields can become waterlogged. Also, query what happens in respect of 'open evenings' or 'parents evenings' normally associated with schools causing localised traffic issues, sometimes several times a year.
20. Achieving for Children: Generally supportive, consider that if the proposed Little Forest Folk primary school is established, it will help to ease the forecast demand for two additional forms of Reception entry places from within the Surbiton area. That is because the Little Forest Folk have already received a significant number of expressions of interest from families living in Surbiton.

Little Forest Folk is a social enterprise which runs five popular and successful nurseries for two to five year old children in south-west London, and will no doubt run very successful primary schools also. Ofsted has graded three of the nurseries as 'outstanding' and the other two are yet to be inspected.

21. Neighbourhood Engineering: No highway objection. Supported by a Transport Statement and Travel Plan, both of which are robust.

The proposed access arrangements for staff and pupils, whereby both would arrive by minibus and then walk to the Mayfield School site via a route from the Richard Challoner School Car Park, continuing along the boundary of that school's playing fields before arriving at the Mayfield School site is considered acceptable, providing that the rights of access over the 2-year school operational period are secured by Section 106 Agreement.

It is noted that there have been objections received concerning the unsuitability of the B264 Old Malden Lane as a means of pedestrian access into the site (via the private access road leading to Mayfield). Highways share this concern and would expect the applicant to take all reasonable measures to ensure that access to the school via this route is restricted for only delivery/servicing and emergency access.

22. Travel Plan Officer: The travel plan advises the school will put on mini buses for all the pupils not in walking distance (there will be a walking bus for them) and have parents and staff sign an agreement not to drive them to school.

The revised travel plan is agreed as a functioning travel plan. The only misgivings are is that there seems little potential to change modal shift from mini bus use to more sustainable modes, and if children need to be collected or dropped off later the parents/carer will have to drive. The contingency in case of lateness seems sound. Recommend that the Action Plan gives consideration to switch to E.V or hybrid mini-buses within 3-5 years and installing charging points for the mini-buses.

23. Environmental Health Officer (Pollution Control): Initially raised objection due to insufficient information in respect of noise generation. The objection has been overcome following submission of a detailed acoustic report, and the EHO is satisfied that the noise of children will be sufficiently attenuated by the separation distance (between the children and nearest residences), screening and the existing ambient noise level (including its acoustic character) for there to be no demonstrable impact upon local residences and meeting levels of NOEL (No observed effect level) according to planning policy.

Site and Surroundings

24. Mayfield is a 5 bedroom Edwardian house, with a garden which contains 4 outbuildings. The curtilage of the site is approximately 5000 sqm, and together with the access road, and the overall site area would be approximately 11,607 sqm inclusive of footway, access road and Richard Challoner School access.
25. The site is located within designated Metropolitan Open Land, in an area which is open in character, with three houses in the immediate vicinity which are surrounded by open fields and sports pitches and playing fields.
26. The site is accessed by a private unmade single track road off Old Malden Lane. It is within close proximity to the borough boundary, and the access onto Old Malden Lane which is approximately 200m to the west, is within the Borough of Epsom and Ewell. The private access road is owned by Rokeby School.
27. To the west is the shared boundary with The Coach House which has an access drive that runs the length of the boundary to the actual property which is sited to the north west of the application site. To the west of the Coach House's access drive is Wighill, which is also a residential house.
28. The northern and north eastern boundaries of the application site are bound by Hogsmill River and Six Acre Meadow public open spaces. To

the east of the application site is an open field beyond which is the Hogsmill River and then residential properties fronting onto Old Malden Road. To the south of the private road is the River Club leisure facility.

29. The character of the site is relatively open, with the small grouping of houses surrounded by sports pitches, leisure uses and public open space. There are several sports fields within the locality, including Richard Challoner School grounds to the north west of the site.
30. The site has very poor public transport accessibility (PTAL 1B). The Old Malden Neighbourhood Centre is located approximately 800m to the north and Malden Manor train station is approximately 900m from the site if one travels along the roads with formal footpaths. There are also well-established footpaths through the public open space that link the application site with Malden Manor Station. Worcester Park and Tolworth railway stations are approximately 1.4km and 2km from the property.
31. The site is not within a Conservation area. The existing building is not Listed Area of Archaeological Significance.
32. There are no Tree Preservation Orders on site but there is a Tree Preservation Order covering a group of trees at Wighill and the Coach House, the properties to the west of the site.
33. The existing house and all the existing outbuildings are located within Flood Zone 1.
34. Other Core Strategy site designations include the Green Chains, and the Tolworth Key Area of Change. The Hogsmill Valley SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation), which encompasses Six Acre Meadow, directly abuts the sites's northern garden boundary.

Assessment

35. The main considerations material to the determination of this application are:
 - Principle of Proposed Development, including MOL and land use considerations
 - Impact on Character of Area
 - Impact on Neighbour's Residential Amenity
 - Highways, Access and Parking
 - Legal Agreements (including the ability to bind other parties to secure access arrangements)
 - Sustainability

- Other Material Considerations, including Drainage and Biodiversity

Conclusion

36. All comments raised will be taken into account in the assessment of the planning application.