

MEMORANDUM



From: Chief Officer, Environment & Technical **To:** Chief Officer Planning & Regulatory
Our Ref: ET/DC/P/2020/0670 **Your Ref:** SEH/P/2020/0670
Date: 20th January 2021

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

TOWN AND COUNTRY (GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 1995

Location: O. S Grid Ref: 343 532 Homestead Nursery, Old Wrexham Road, Gresford, Wrexham.

Development: Construction of outside classroom.

I refer to your consultation / email dated 02/11/2020 in respect of the above.

Access

The proposed development site is located on Old Wrexham Road which is rural, classified road subject to a 60mph speed limit. However, I would estimate typical vehicle speeds at being around 30mph along this section given the geometry of the road.

Assuming typical speeds of 30mph, Manual for Streets would normally require any proposed / existing access to provide visibility splays of 2.4 x 43m in both directions measured to the nearside edge of the adjoining highway.

Visibility from the existing / proposed access is adequate providing splays in excess of 2.4 x 43m measured to the nearside edge of the adjoining highway in both directions. However, this is subject to the regular maintenance of the existing hedgerows.

The existing access is approximately 18m wide, reducing to 7.3m wide at 6.9m behind the adjoining carriageway. The access is gated at this point. The access is surfaced with hard bound materials. The access road serving the nursery is typically 4.7m wide beyond the gates.

The majority of vehicles (parents / guardians) visiting the site appear to access the nursery via the A5156 Llan y Pwll Link Road to the south. The section of Old Wrexham Road between the nursery and the link road has no footway or lighting provision. This section of Old Wrexham Road is typically restricted in width and cannot accommodate the simultaneous passage of 2 vehicles. However, there are a limited number of informal passing places along this section but these are located opposite existing private driveways / accesses ie/ The Homestead 7& Fairfields which is far from ideal.

Site observations indicate that the majority of parents / guardians arrive and depart by car and typically access from the south off the Llan y Pwll Link Road and depart to the south. This section of Old Wrexham Road is also used by vehicles cutting through who are not associated with the nursery. Observations indicate that during the busier drop off times more than 1 car waits at either end of this narrow section of Old Wrexham Road giving way to each other due to the limited carriageway width. This is considered to be incompatible with through traffic interests and is a potential source of danger to road users and pedestrians.

TAN 18 promotes developments that have good access by walking and cycling so as to reduce the reliance on car use in the form of appropriately lit footways / cycleways. The lack of footway and lighting provision along this section of Old Wrexham Road raises concerns in respect of pedestrian safety. This narrow section of carriageway typically has mature hedgerows either side of the carriageway with very limited opportunity for pedestrians to step aside (ie/ no verges) when vehicles approach.

This section of Old Wrexham Road would not benefit from any significant increase in vehicle movements. The proposed increase in children taken on at the nursery (ie/ potentially 50 children) in respect of planning application ref: P/2020/0670 could potentially result in up to 200 additional vehicle movements per day assuming all parents travel by car. This number of additional vehicle movements is considered to be significant. However, it is recognised that these movements can be spread out in the morning and evenings but the frequency of such trips cannot be controlled.

The submitted Design & Access Statement in respect of the current application for an additional outside classroom indicates that off road parking is provided for up to 50 cars and there will be no need for any increased numbers as the proposed classroom only services the existing number of children (ie/ 96 no.) and no additional staff.

Based on a gross floor area of 50m², LPGN 16 – Class D1 Use would normally require a maximum of 4 spaces. If the proposed classroom is purely to accommodate some of the existing permitted number of children (ie/ 96 no.) then it would be difficult to object to the proposed development on this basis.

Traffic Generation

I understand that the nursery has 52 existing staff operating staggered shift patterns so they do not all arrive and finish at the same time. I understand that all staff park within the staff car park away from the main buildings.

The previously submitted Transport Statement in respect of planning application ref: P/2020/0097 indicated that the increase in number of children taken on at the nursery will be gradual and there will be a need to employ additional staff as numbers increase. As the required ratio of staff to children is aged dependent and precise intake is unknown, it is difficult to assess precisely how many parking spaces would be required at the nursery. Any increased staff numbers will inevitably increase vehicle movements and parking demand at the site. The increase in children taken on at the nursery (ie/ potentially 50 children) could result in up to 200 additional vehicle movements per day assuming all parents travel by car. This number of additional vehicle movements is considered to be significant.

I understand that parents drop off and collect their children at staggered times throughout the day. I understand that the majority of children are dropped off between 8am and 9.15am, the busiest time being 8:30am.

I understand that the majority of children are collected between 4pm and 6pm with 5:00 – 5:30pm being the busiest time. This period is not as busy as the morning as it is longer and more staggered. I understand that no incidents / accidents have been reported and parents are happy with the drop off / collection arrangements parking in the main car park and walking up to the nursery buildings.

Parking & Turning Provision

The existing site appears to have a drop off and turning point by the main building and a staff car park just inside the main entrance. As part of a previous planning consent (ref: P/2019/0189) at the site, the staff / parent car park was increased in size from a capacity of 18 to 28 spaces.

Since this time, the car park appears to have been increased in size. It would now appear capable of accommodating around 50 cars. However, when parents arrive, they appear to park randomly within the car park. To improve parking arrangements at the site, I would recommend that the car park is surfaced with hard bound materials eg/ bituminous macadam, with spaces being marked with white lining material in accordance with LPGN16 requirements. The existing car park is surfaced with granular sub-base material and appears to flood on occasion at the bottom of the site.

I visited the site on 24/02/2020 between 07:55 – 08:45. Occupancy of the car park ranged between 21 no cars (at 7:55am) to 43 cars (at 8:09am). Between 8:00am and 8:27am there was always at least 25 vehicles upwards parked in the car park.

I assume that the 20 cars parked around the perimeter of the car park were staff vehicles (as suggested by the submitted Traffic Statement). I assume that there is a likelihood that staff numbers will need to increase if the number of registered children / application is supported. It is inevitable that the proposed development (ref: P/2020/0097) will result in increased numbers of parents dropping off their children requiring parking. On a pro-rata basis this would suggest that parent parking has the potential to increase from 23 spaces to around 35 spaces not including the 20 or more spaces required for staff parking which is also likely to increase.

It would therefore appear that the existing car park may well be of insufficient size to accommodate the proposed development. It may well be the case that around 65 spaces (ie/ 30 staff / 35 parents) could be required if the nursery reaches full capacity. I previously recommended that If the application (ref: P/2020/0097) is to be supported I would recommend that the car park is improved to provide 65 spaces with car park being surfaced with hard bound materials ie/ bitmac with spaces marked out with white lining materials.

If the previous application (ref: P/2020/0097) is supported, I previously suggested that it may be considered appropriate to impose a condition which requires the periodic car park surveys to ensure that adequate spaces are provided. Such a condition could require the further extension of the car park should this be deemed necessary.

If supported, I would recommend the applicant provides a suitably scaled plan indicating any proposed improvements to the car park in terms of capacity (number of spaces), details of hard bound surfacing spaces marked out with white lining materials in accordance with LPGN 16.

In respect of planning application (ref: P/2020/0097), I previously recommended that unless that applicant can address the issues raised, I would recommend that the application is **REFUSED** for the following reason:-

The additional traffic generated by the proposed development along this narrow section of Old Wrexham Road without the benefit of adequate footway and street lighting provision would be incompatible with through traffic interests and a potential source of danger to road users including pedestrians.

However, in conclusion If the proposed classroom is purely to accommodate some of the existing permitted number of children (ie/ 96 no.) then it would be difficult to object to the proposed development.

Supplementary Notes

The applicant's attention should be drawn to item nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 of the supplementary notes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. K. S.', written in a cursive style.

Chief Officer, Environment & Technical