

PLANNING STATEMENT

**North Bridge House Nursery School
33 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London NW3 5JY**

Erection of First Floor Extension

Prepared on behalf of Cognita Schools Ltd

June 2020

Planning Statement

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Section 1 INTRODUCTION

The current nursery school functions well, but the rooms are small to meet current numbers and space standards. It is proposed to provide a new adequately sized multi purpose room for overall nursery use at the school. This application seeks planning permission for:

- The construction of a first floor extension at the existing school. It sits above an existing flat roofed element, which is used for outside play and teaching at the building, and is set towards the tree lined boundary with No. 35 Fitzjohn's Avenue.
- Above this extension on the proposed flat roof outdoor terrace will tie in and be enlarged. Walling will surround this additional terrace to ensure there is no direct overlooking of the rear garden of No. 35 Fitzjohn's Avenue. There would be no increase in overlooking to No. 33 Fitzjohn's Avenue.
- A sunlight and daylight study has been undertaken by Abbey Consultants, which concludes that the proposals would be acceptable. The proposals would not increase any overlooking or dominance to adjacent properties. It is not considered to adversely impact on any neighbouring property.

- The proposal is to be constructed of high quality brick and has been designed to sit within and not adversely impact adjacent properties or the Conservation Area, which the school is sited within.

This statement provides the planning justification for the proposed development having regard to National Planning Policy, the Development Plan and other material considerations.

This Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposals will be a positive gain for the pupils and parents and will benefit Camden Council through its education provision, it would not adversely impact on the surrounding area. The proposal will preserve the Conservation Area.

A Design and Access Statement accompanies the application, as does a sunlight and daylight study. These both support the the application proposals.

This Statement sets out the following:

- Section 2 describes the background context of Cognita Schools Ltd
- Section 3 describes the site and surrounding area.

- Section 4 sets out the relevant planning policy framework.
- Section 5 provides the justification for planning permission.
- Section 6 sets out the conclusions.

Section 2 BACKGROUND CONTEXT

Cognita, owner of North Bridge Nursery School, was formed in 2004.

The company employs over 2,900 teachers and support staff in 56 schools across the UK and international schools in Brazil, Spain, Singapore, Vietnam and Thailand. There are over 15,200 pupils on the roll of these schools. The schools fit a broad profile, including Pre-Prep, Prep and Senior Schools.

Over the years, Cognita has championed the values that are important to millions of parents across the country. 'The basic skills of literacy and numeracy; a broad and balanced curriculum which excites all children; a secure, disciplined learning environment in which each child is known and valued; we do not need to reinvent the 21st century'. 'What we want is what concerned parents have always wanted: teachers who care equally about the subjects they teach and the children for whom they are responsible, who have the highest possible expectations of each and every one of their pupils, and who can keep order and explain ideas with clarity and enthusiasm that captures the child's imagination'.

Cognita's vision is to own and manage a family of independent schools, each of which enjoys an excellent reputation within its community. Each school's reputation will grow as a result of consistently meeting the aspirations that parents have for their child's education. Their child will

be happy and enthusiastic about the school. The school will be seen to invest in its relationship with individual parents and it will be recognised as keen to nurture a culture that treats parents as customers.

The Group will implement three key strategies in all its schools, in order to deliver this vision. It will:

- Protect, preserve and develop the atmosphere, ethos and culture of each school so that it promotes its own identity
- Recruit, retain and develop very good teachers in order to provide the very best education. It will therefore recruit and retain the best head teachers, invest in regular and appropriate staff development programmes, develop programs to support, measure, review and reward excellent performance, foster best practice initiatives between schools and departments, implement regular internal quality control reviews that audit education delivery and performance, and invest in the development and maintenance of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Develop excellent communications between the school and its parents through frequent and routine communications, easy access to information, the provision of easy access of staff at all levels, regular forums including staff and parents,

the promotion of schemes to encourage parental involvement, programs that adopt appropriate technologies.

The group will exercise four unique sources of competitive advantage in developing these strategies. The Group:

- Maintains a staff of leading educationalists, who are very successful and experienced in education, in teaching and in the development of schools
- Is run by professional management, who have broader business skills than are to be found in most schools
- Has access to funds for the development of people, organisation, facilities and systems infrastructure
- Enjoys the benefits of scale of being a large group. It employs a large cadre of excellent teachers, able to exchange best practice experiences, it is financially robust and it can deliver savings and efficiencies through its support services

Section 4 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Development Plan provides the statutory policy framework against which planning applications should be made. Decisions should normally be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Other material considerations such as Ministerial Statements and National Policy Guidance should be taken into account in reaching decisions.

National Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) and Updated February 2019

The NPPF sets out clearly the rational and aim of sustainable development in paragraph 7 and 8, namely:

- an economic role – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future

generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

- an environmental role – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making the effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

And in paragraphs 10 and 11 it emphasises that at the heart of the NPPF is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking. This means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.

Paragraph 38 advises Councils should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Paragraph 94 advises that ‘the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take **a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement**, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- **give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools;** and
- work with schools promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted’.

Paragraph 95 recognises potential malicious threats and the need to take appropriate and proportional steps to reduce vulnerability, increase resilience and ensure public safety and security.

Section 12 through paragraphs 124 to 132 sets out the importance of understanding site context and good design. In paragraph 127 it emphasises the need of planning policies and decisions to ‘address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment’.

Section 15 of the NPPF sets out the guidance on conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Through paragraphs 170 to 177 it

seeks to protect flora and fauna with ‘opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged’, while ensuring no adverse air quality or noise issues arise.

Lastly, Section 16 sets out the position in relation to conserving and enhancing the historic environment through paragraphs 184 to 202.

Through paragraph 192 it advises that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The Adopted London Plan

The London Plan March 2016 (The Spatial Development Strategy for London Consolidated with Alterations Since 2011) is based on planning for substantial population growth in the short to medium term while

ensuring London has the schools and other facilities needed by a growing number of younger people, while also addressing the needs of a rapidly ageing population.

The London Plan has 3 main themes, which are:

- Growth
- Equity
- Sustainable Development

Education and Employment

Key POLICY 3.1 Ensuring Equal Life Chances for All

Strategic

The Mayor is committed to ensuring equal life chances for all Londoners. Meeting the needs and expanding opportunities for all Londoners – and where appropriate, addressing the barriers to meeting the needs of particular groups and communities – is key to tackling the huge issue of inequality across London.

Planning decisions

Development proposals should protect and enhance facilities and services that meet the needs of particular groups and communities. Proposals involving loss of these facilities without adequate

justification or provision for replacement should be resisted.

POLICY 3.18 Education Facilities

Strategic

The Mayor will support provision of early years, primary and secondary school and further and higher education facilities adequate to meet the demands of a growing and changing population and to enable greater educational choice, particularly in parts of London with poor educational performance.

The Mayor strongly supports the establishment of new schools and steps to enable local people and communities to do this.

Policy 4.1 Developing London's Economy

Strategic

A The Mayor will work with partners to promote and enable the continued development of a strong, sustainable and increasingly diverse economy across all parts of London, ensuring the availability of sufficient and suitable workspaces in terms of type, size and cost, supporting infrastructure and suitable environments for larger employers and small and medium sized enterprises, including the voluntary and community sectors.

To drive London's transition to a low carbon economy and to secure the range of benefits this will bring.

To support and promote outer London as an attractive location for national government as well as businesses, giving access to the highly-skilled London workforce, relatively affordable work space and the competitive advantages of the wider London economy.

To support and promote the distinctive and crucial contribution to London's economic success made by central London and its specialist clusters of economic activity.

To emphasise the need for greater recognition of the importance of enterprise and innovation.

POLICY 5.3 Sustainable Design and Construction

Strategic

The highest standards of sustainable design and construction should be achieved in London to improve the environmental performance of new developments and to adapt to the effects of climate change over their lifetime.

POLICY 5.4 Retrofitting

Strategic

The environmental impact of existing urban areas should be reduced through policies and programmes that bring existing buildings up to

the Mayor's standards on sustainable design and construction. In particular, programmes should reduce carbon dioxide emissions, improve the efficiency of resource use (such as water) and minimise the generation of pollution and waste from existing building stock.

POLICY 7.14 Improving Air Quality

Strategic

The Mayor recognises the importance of tackling air pollution and improving air quality to London's development and the health and well-being of its people. He will work with strategic partners to ensure that the spatial, climate change, transport and design policies of this plan support implementation of his Air Quality and Transport strategies to achieve reductions in pollutant emissions and minimize public exposure to pollution.

POLICY 7.15 Reducing and Managing Noise and Managing and Enhancing Soundscapes

Strategic

The transport, spatial and design policies of this plan will be implemented in order to reduce noise and support the objectives of the Mayor's Ambient Noise Strategy.

Adopted Camden Local Plan July 2017

Policy C2 Community Facilities

The Council will work with its partners to ensure that community facilities and services are developed and modernised to meet the changing needs of our community and react new approaches to the delivery of services.

The Council will:

- seek planning obligations to secure new and improved community facilities and services to mitigate the impact of developments. The Council may also fund improvements to community facilities using receipts from the Community Infrastructure Levy where this is identified on the Council's CIL funding list;
- expect a developer proposing additional floorspace in community use, or a new community facility, to reach agreement with the Council on its continuing maintenance and other future funding requirements;
- ensure that facilities provide access to a service on foot and by sustainable modes of travel;
- facilitate multi-purpose community facilities and the secure

sharing or extended use of facilities that can be accessed by the wider community, except for facilities occupied by the emergency services due to their distinct operating needs;

- support the investment plans of educational, health, scientific and research bodies to expand and enhance their operations, taking into account the social and economic benefits they generate for Camden, London and the UK. In assessing proposals, the Council will also balance the impact proposals may have on residential amenity and transport infrastructure;
- seek the inclusion of measures which address the needs of community groups and foster community integration;
- ensure existing community facilities are retained recognising their benefit to the community, including protected groups, unless one of the following tests is met:

a replacement facility of a similar nature is provided that meets the needs of the local population or its current, or intended, users;

- the existing premises are no longer required or viable in their existing use and there is no alternative community use capable of meeting the needs of the local area. Where it has been demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction there is no

reasonable prospect of a community use, then our preferred alternative will be the maximum viable amount of affordable housing;

- take into account listing or nomination of 'Assets of Community Value' as a material planning consideration and encourage communities to nominate Assets of Community Value.

In the explanatory text it recognises that in paragraph 4.33:

Hampstead and Belsize Park have a very high concentration of schools where significant issues exist concerning the 'school run'. We will refuse applications for new schools or the expansion of existing schools in these areas, unless it can be demonstrated the number of traffic movements will not increase. Policy A1 Managing the impact of development refers to how the Council will manage the impact of traffic movements.

Policy A1 Managing the Impact of Development

The Council will seek to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. We will grant permission for development unless this causes unacceptable harm to amenity.

We will:

- seek to ensure that the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours is protected;
- seek to ensure development contributes towards strong and successful communities by balancing the needs of development with the needs and characteristics of local areas and communities;
- resist development that fails to adequately assess and address transport impacts affecting communities, occupiers, neighbours and the existing transport network; and
- require mitigation measures where necessary.

The factors we will consider include:

- visual privacy, outlook;
- sunlight, daylight and overshadowing;
- artificial lighting levels;
- transport impacts, including the use of Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and Delivery and Servicing Management Plans;

- impacts of the construction phase, including the use of Construction Management Plans;
- noise and vibration levels;
- odour, fumes and dust;
- microclimate;

Policy A4 Noise and Vibration

The Council will seek to ensure that noise and vibration is controlled and managed.

Development should have regard to Camden's Noise and Vibration Thresholds (Appendix 3). We will not grant planning permission for:

- development likely to generate unacceptable noise and vibration impacts; or
- development sensitive to noise in locations which experience high levels of noise, unless appropriate attenuation measures can be provided and will not harm the continued operation of existing uses.

We will only grant permission for noise generating development, including any plant and machinery, if it can be operated without causing harm to amenity. We will also seek to minimise the impact on local amenity from deliveries and from the demolition and construction phases of development.

Policy D1 Design

The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development:

- respects local context and character;
- preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2 Heritage;
- is sustainable in design and construction, incorporating best practice in resource management and climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- is of sustainable and durable construction and adaptable to different activities and land uses;
- comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character;

- integrates well with the surrounding streets and open spaces, improving movement through the site and wider area with direct, accessible and easily recognisable routes and contributes positively to the street frontage;

is inclusive and accessible for all;

- promotes health;
- is secure and designed to minimise crime and antisocial behaviour;
- responds to natural features and preserves gardens and other open space;
- incorporates high quality landscape design (including public art, where appropriate) and maximises opportunities for greening for example through planting of trees and other soft landscaping,
- incorporates outdoor amenity space;
- preserves strategic and local views;
- for housing, provides a high standard of accommodation; and

- carefully integrates building services equipment.

The Council will resist development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Policy D2 Heritage

The Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.

Conservation areas

Conservation areas are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas.

The Camden CIL Charging Schedule and Section 106

All developments should be assessed against the CIL charging schedule. Developments may require Section 106 contributions.

Having run through in detail the planning policy position to understand the material considerations, it is now considered appropriate to focus in on each of the issues, and how these policies would relate to the proposals before the Local Planning Authority.

Section 5 JUSTIFICATION FOR PLANNING

The current nursery school functions well, but the rooms are small to meet current numbers and space standards. It is proposed to provide a new adequately sized multi purpose room for overall nursery use at the school. This application seeks planning permission for:

- The construction of a first floor extension at the existing school. It sits above an existing flat roofed element, which is used for outside play and teaching at the building, and is set towards the tree lined boundary with No. 35 Fitzjohn's Avenue.
- Above this extension on the proposed flat roof outdoor terrace will tie in and be enlarged. Walling will surround this additional terrace to ensure there is no direct overlooking of the rear garden of No. 35 Fitzjohn's Avenue. There would be no increase in overlooking to No. 33 Fitzjohn's Avenue.
- A sunlight and daylight study has been undertaken by Abbey Consultants, which concludes that the proposals would be acceptable. The proposals would not increase any overlooking or dominance to adjacent properties. It is not considered to adversely impact on any neighbouring property.

- The proposal is to be constructed of high quality brick and has been designed to sit within and not adversely impact adjacent properties or the Conservation Area, which the school is sited within.

Education, Employment and Opportunity

The NPPF July 2018 sets out clearly the rational and aim of sustainable development in paragraph 7 and 8, namely:

- an economic role – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental role – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making the effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural

resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

These proposals reinforce the present and future economic role not just for teachers at the school but future employment for pupils when they leave school. By investing in improving existing facilities we lay the foundations for a fully educated and fully active workforce in the future, thereby driving the economic success of the economy. By providing the right facilities for pupils it allows them to develop and to reach their full potential.

The school provides a crucial role in educating pupils on their roles and responsibilities and guides them on the path to adulthood and society. The school supports strong, vibrant and healthy communities and by providing the right buildings and accommodation through a high quality built environment it meets the community's needs.

The proposals will provide and meet the pupil requirements. It also meets the key requirement of paragraph 94 on which **‘the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement,**

and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- **give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and**
- **work with schools promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted’.**

Crucially, it also meets the emphasises at the heart of the NPPF that there is a **‘presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking. **This means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay’.**

This strategy complies with NPPF July 2018 policy. The London Plan promotes education services in policy 3.18 encouraging Boroughs to ensure the demand for these services are being met while the newly adopted Local Plan through education provision Policy C2 Community facilities advises new social and community facilities will be supported, subject to movement and amenity within Belsize and Hampstead due to number of existing facilities. This proposal is for improvements to the existing school buildings only.

Design and Conservation Area

Good design is central to all objectives of the London Plan and is specifically promoted by the policies contained within Chapter 7, which address both general design principles and specific design issues. London Plan Policy 7.6 sets out the overarching design principles for development in London.

All development within the Borough should create a high quality urban environment. There should be an approach to accessible and inclusive urban design that considers how good design, quality public realm and land use can be integrated.

The canopies attach to the existing dining hall. The resurfacing over the existing hard surfacing and the play will improve the existing playground. These proposals have a different context and it is proposed these are The proposals are considered to sit well and respect the Conservation Area.

These proposals are considered to meet the NPPF July 2018 as well as Policies A1 Impact of Development, D1 Design and D2 Heritage of the Camden Local Plan July 2017.

Secured By Design

Both the London Plan and local policies seek to address crime.

The existing building is secure and no new features are required. The Cognita Schools Group and North Bridge House Pre Prep have many years experience in ensuring high quality and secure design for its students.

The door openings will be retained in the same positions and site perimeter and security will remain as existing. There would be no new openings around the site and access and egress will be as existing. The rear garden area is secure around and behind the building and no works are considered necessary to it.

The proposal is considered to provide a safe and secure environment and to meet the key proposals in Secured by Design as well as London Plan policy 7.3.I.

The proposal will therefore accord with NPPF July 2018, London Plan and local policies on safe design.

Overshadowing/Loss of daylight/Overlooking

Abbey Consultants were instructed to review the Sunlight & Daylight impacts of the proposal at North Bridge School Nursery to support the

planning application - full report can be found as additional document along with other application items.

The conclusion of the report states that the proposed development is in full compliance with good practice and will have a low impact on the light receivable by its neighbouring properties. Therefore, the design satisfies all of the requirements set out in the BRE guide 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight' by Paul Littlefair (2011).

Summary from the Report:

The VSC analysis concluded that 100% of the window casements to the existing dwellings at 35 Fitzjohn's Avenue exceed the good practice figure of 0.8x the pre-development values, averaging 0.986x pre-development levels across the assessment, well in excess of good practice guidance and therefore satisfying the BRE daylight requirements.

All windows which face within 90 degrees of due south have been tested for direct sunlight. All windows pass both the total annual sunlight hours test and the winter sunlight hours test. The proposed development therefore satisfies the BRE direct sunlight to windows requirements.

Annual sunlight analysis has been carried out for the rear garden of 35 Fitzjohn's Avenue, which concluded (as per the results in appendix 6) that the garden would be scoring well in excess of the 50%

recommendation outlined within the BRE guidance and the 80% of pre-development values.

The shadow analysis concludes that while there is some additional overshadowing in the mornings of the winter months, however due to the existing massing and roof line it doesn't represent a significant increase as confirmed by the annual sunlight calculations which confirmed that there was no decrease in area of the garden receiving at least 2 hours of sunlight per day.

The above numerical results confirm that the proposed development will have a low impact on the light received by its neighbouring properties and therefore the development design satisfies all of the requirements set out in the BRE guide 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight'.

These proposals are considered to meet the NPPF July 2018 and updated February 2019 as well as Policies A1 Impact of Development, D1 Design and D2 Heritage of the Camden Local Plan July 2017.

Transport and Parking

The proposal seeks to enhance existing school play facilities. The proposal play only and no additional pupils or transport movements or parking would be generated.

Noise

National Guidance is set out in NPPF and Building Bulletin 93 'Acoustic Design of Schools', BB10 'Ventilation in School Buildings', while more local guidance is set out in the London Plan Chapter 7 policy 7.14. Policy A1 Managing the Impact of Development and Policy A4 Noise and Vibration work to reduce noise pollution and its impacts and protect Noise Sensitive receptors from noise. These seek to control and minimise noise and disturbance.

The planning system has the task of guiding development to the most appropriate locations. It will be hard to reconcile some land uses, such as housing, hospitals or schools, with other activities which generate high levels of noise, but the planning system should ensure that, wherever practicable, noise-sensitive developments are separated from major sources of noise (such as road, rail and air transport and certain types of industrial development). It is equally important that new development involving noisy activities should, if possible, be sited away from noise-sensitive land uses. Where it is not possible to achieve such a separation of land uses, local planning authorities should consider whether it is practicable to control or reduce noise levels, or to mitigate the impact of noise, through the use of conditions or planning obligations.

The schools hours will remain the same.

No additional external noise sources will be generated through the proposal.

Section 7 CONCLUSION

As set out in the section 5 above, the proposal has been considered in line with national and local policy, and it is considered that the proposed development would accord with the relevant policies.

The proposal has been carefully sited in relation to the site, neighbours and the Conservation Area.

The materials are to meet Camden policies and ensure the development sits well within the site, as viewed by neighbours and the Conservation Area.

As such, the proposal would accord with the strategic aims of local and national policy.