

Ref: 2020/0929/p, comments regarding nursery and dual use report.

Written by Laura Phasouliotis, (Mc Cole), of 4 Lancaster Stables, NW3 4PH. I have been in childcare for over 40 years I am the Proprietor and Principal of Toddlers Inn Nursery School NW8 (Westminster) capacity 44 children and a director of Abacus Ark nursery group which has 3 sites, 1 in Camden, capacity 60 children and 2 in Wandsworth capacities 100 and 70 children respectively. I am writing this report on behalf of all the residents of Lancaster Stables.

I have a wealth of knowledge and experience in this field.

If the nursery is not properly planned and managed, we will suffer a loss of amenity due to disruption. Although the classroom floor areas shown on the plans is adequate for 120 children within the regulations, there are insufficient ancillary rooms which would be required for the number of child-care staff required, provision of meals and management space. Such use would result in there being no space for gym facilities at all.

**My overall concern is that the application submitted is flawed in respect of safeguarding the Children attending the nursery.**

The applicant has asked for D1 use in addition to the old D2. D1 being used for a new nursery and D2 for use as a Gym. There is no mention of Gym on some parts of the application. It appears that the applicant wishes to run both businesses on the premises simultaneously during the hours applied for, 7am – 7pm and the Gym at extended times? The floor plan submitted for the building, indicates that the applicant could breach the regulations, (see below), set out by OfSTED in its statutory framework, under the 'The safeguarding and welfare requirements.

*(The safeguarding and welfare requirements are given legal force by Regulation 4 made under section 39(1)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006), of keeping Children safe.*

Detailed reasons for concerns:

**Security:**

Although it is suggested by the applicant that there will be security in place, by way of key pads etc, to the areas that the Children and care-staff use thereby isolating them from other users of the building, the main stairwell and lift are located in the centre of the building. This indicates that the stairwell and lift become a common area for all users. There does not seem to be any practical way to maintain the separation of visitors (not being parents), and children.

There does appear to be a possible division of the building by having the nursery parts towards the rear of the building only but this of course reduces the available space for children (projected numbers thereof), by the removal of Nursery Room 5 from calculations.

This would entail the exclusive use of the mid/rear staircase for the Nursery only.

**Safety:**

A nursery is effectively a sterile area. Clean and tidy with all sharp objects removed or secured in an approved cupboard or drawer. My own Nursery premises have been used on occasion for adult meetings but this has resulted in the remove of all nursery equipment prior to others being on premises and a deep clean and thorough search of the premises after they have left. Joint use of areas would be impractical on a daily basis. Mixed use cannot be achieved safely in any practical way. Issues such as security of fixtures and fitting, equipment specific to each use being separated and the cleaning and security of the rooms become overwhelming issues.

**Fire evacuation for Children in an emergency;**

The nursery rooms shown 1, 2, Baby room and 4 are towards the rear of the building and have what appears to be another staircase connecting them, however the baby room would require a fire evacuation process resulting in each member of allocated staff having to carry 3 babies down

stair cases? It is normal and sensible to have baby rooms on the ground floor to alleviate this problem utilising appropriate evacuation cots on wheels, in the case of evacuation.

'3.55 Providers must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises in the case of fire or any other emergency, and must have an emergency evacuation procedure.

*Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 2017*

**Adult attendance:**

It has been suggested by the applicant that the foot-fall of parents dropping off and picking up their children will be staggered over the day, thus minimising the build-up of traffic outside the entrance to the nursery?

I am aware from personal experience that this is not the case.

- A. Staggering is unlikely to work as parents will have set hours of work and there is likely to be a usual school start time.
- B. The envisaged catchment area is large, making it more likely parents will drive to the site.
- C. I am also aware that the area of Belsize Park & Hampstead is already very well served by such facilities and could only attract children from such businesses with special facilities and a reputation which is yet to be earned.
- D. It is impractical to have staggered times throughout the day, this causes far too much disruption to staff and children and also compromises security.

However, any Gym use means that inside the building particularly on the first floor, adults other than parents will be moving freely up and down the main stairwell and lift for most of the day.

The fact that no Gym facilities are shown on any plan, specifically changing rooms and showers means a true assessment of security cannot be made at this time. I do not see any part of the premises available on the plans for such designation?

Laura Phasouliotis (McCole)

**Principal Toddlers Inn Nursery School**

**Director – Abacus Arc Nursery Group.**