



Camden Council  
Planning Department  
5 St Pancras Square  
London  
N1C 4AG

6<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Planning Application**  
**St Mary Brookfield Church Hall, 34A York rise, NW5 1SB**

On behalf of our client, Wildwood Nature School, today we have submitted a planning application via the Planning Portal. The application seeks permission to change the use of the vacant ground floor (formerly a community hall - use class F2) into a primary school (use class F1). The application is supported by the following:

- CIL Form
- Community Engagement Leaflet
- Design and Access Statement including Schedule of Community Uses and Activity, Existing and Proposed
- Draft Operational Management Plan
- Existing and Proposed Drawings
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Letter from Church
- Site Location Plan
- Transport Statement
- Travel Plan

**Background**

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2022, a request was submitted to the Council for pre-application advice to change the use of the ground floor to a primary school. Following a meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2023, pre-application advice was issued on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2023. The advice concluded:

*Subject to demonstrating that there would be no net loss of community facilities in terms of type, scale and hours and days of use, the proposed use would be acceptable under the Council and Neighbourhood community use policies.*

*The proposal is likely to be a source of noise from users and services and it will therefore be necessary to demonstrate by way of an Operational Management Plan and Plant Noise Assessment, that the resultant noise and disturbance levels would be no higher than existing ambient levels for any neighbouring occupiers.*

*Subject to details of design and materials the proposed external alterations to the site and building should be acceptable in the context of the townscape and the Conservation Area.*

More specifically, the advice identified the following matters:

1. Specify the exact uses and quantify use – planning policy matter.
2. If uses have relocated, set out detail – planning policy matter.
3. 'Hit and miss' fence preferable to a close boarded fence.
4. Include in the Design and Access Statement arrangements for keeping the planting in front of the fence free of rubbish.
5. Demonstrate how excessive noise from the outdoor classroom would be prevented.
6. External flues, ductwork, etc... should be carefully considered in terms of noise and visual impact.
7. Transport issues.

### **Planning Policy**

Points 1 and 2 relate to the principle of the proposal, e.g., a change of use from F2 to F1.

The Camden Local Plan (2017) sets out the policies and proposals that guide development. Policy C2 is particularly relevant as it relates to the provision of community facilities. As set out in paragraph 4.21, the term *community facilities* relate to a wide range of uses including:

*...childcare, education, adult learning and training, healthcare, police stations, youth provision, libraries, public houses, community halls, places of worship and public toilets.*

Therefore, both the existing and proposed uses are community uses.

Policy C2 seeks to retain existing community facilities as well as promoting new ones. Part g. is particularly relevant stating the Council will:

*ensure existing community facilities are retained recognising their benefit to the community, including protected groups, unless one of the following tests is met:*

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

*ii. 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;*

With regard to the first test set out in i, what is proposed is a replacement community use which will primarily cater for the local community as set out in the supporting School letter. Therefore, the first test is met.

Although the requirement is to pass just one test, we also consider that part ii has been met as one community use is being replaced by another; we are not seeking to introduce a non-community use.

Appendix A of the Design and Access Statement contains information about the former use which was a nursery. However, this ended in July 2022 with no relocation taking place as the nursery ceased to trade. We understand that Brookfield School nursery expanded to include 2 year olds, so the majority of York Rise children were able to get a place there. In addition, a new nursery opened at Mortimer Terrace in September 2022.

Outside normal nursery times, the hall was used intermittently although in recent years this has become even more infrequent as set out in Appendix A and the letter from the Church.

The Dartmouth Park Neighbourhood Forum Neighbourhood Plan (2020) forms part of the development plan. Policy CM1 relates to community facilities and states:

*Retain and develop Dartmouth Park's community facilities, by:*

*(a) ensuring that development of any of the existing community facilities identified in Appendix 3 and shown on the plan at Fig. A2 either maintains the existing facilities or provides an equivalent or better facility on the same or another site within the Neighbourhood Area, unless it has been demonstrated by a marketing exercise undertaken over a period of not less than 12 months that the facilities are no longer required or are not economically viable and that there is no suitable alternative community use for the facility; and*

*(b) where a development is likely to create an additional demand on community facilities in the Neighbourhood Area that would cause the existing capacity of such facilities to be exceeded, requiring a contribution towards supporting and improving the existing community facilities or towards the provision of new community facilities within the Neighbourhood Area that is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.*

Paragraph 5.13 states:

*The further community facilities that are particularly needed in Dartmouth Park include provision for young people (especially for after-school activities), an increase in flexible spaces for regular classes and community meetings, more public noticeboards, and public toilets.*

St Mary Brookfield Church Hall is listed in Appendix 3.

The proposal will not result in the loss of a community facility; it will simply replace one with another. In addition, it will include after-school activities for which the Plan identifies a particular need. In this respect, Appendix A of the Design and Access Statement includes after school activities/use of the hall. The result will be a multi-use facility.

In conclusion, we consider the proposal complies with local planning policy.

### **Hit and Miss Fence**

The proposal includes a hit and miss fence.

### **Arrangements for keeping the planting in front of the fence free of rubbish**

This area will be maintained by the school's management and cleaning teams.

### **Demonstrate how excessive noise from the outdoor classroom would be prevented**

The applicant is committed to ensuring that the levels of noise created by the school remain acceptable to the neighbouring properties.

The additional fencing and planting proposed to the front of the building will serve to greatly reduce any noise created by families dropping off and picking up their children from the school in the mornings and afternoons. There will always be a member of staff at the entrance to supervise morning drop offs and afternoon pick-ups. The school has a very welcoming approach to families, so they will be invited into the building at these times rather than expected to congregate outside, as is the case with many schools. This should also serve to reduce noise levels.

The side passage which abuts the back of the properties on Laurier Road will be used as an outdoor classroom for small groups of 5-10 children at any one time. There will always be a minimum of 1 member of staff to supervise the children. The passageway will be in use as an outdoor classroom either between 10am-12pm or 1pm-3pm on school days. Most days, it will only be used for 1 of these 2-hour windows, as the children will be out in the woods for the rest of the day. This space will only be used Monday-Friday during term times, between the hours of 10am and 3pm. This should create significantly less noise than the neighbours will have been used to from York Rise Nursery, which used the alleyway as their main outdoor play space throughout the day.

The school is not proposing to add any external plant rooms or other features which would add to the noise levels of the building.

### **External flues, ductwork, etc... should be carefully considered in terms of noise and visual impact**

There is no need for flues, ductworks, etc...

### **Transport issues**

The supporting Transport Statement address all of the points raise in the pre-application advice.

### **Conclusion**

We have carefully considered the pre-application advice and consider the matters identified have been successfully addressed.

### **Statement of Community Involvement**

Prior to submitting this application, the applicant consulted neighbours on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2023. This took the form of a leaflet (submitted). The flyer was posted through the doors of the 50 closest neighbours of the hall on York Rise and Laurier Road as follows:

1. 15, 17, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 32B, 32A, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 38B, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 48 Laurier Road
2. 24A, 36, 38, 39, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50 York Rise
3. 42, 44 Dartmouth Park Road

The applicant received 1 response from a neighbour backing onto the passageway who was concerned about security - the plan attached to the flyer didn't show that the gate that's currently there which will be moved further back. The applicant explained there'll be a secure fence and gate along so there'll be additional security as compared to the current situation. He was happy to hear that.

We look forward to discussing this proposal with the planning team.

Yours sincerely



**Mark Pender**  
**PPM Planning Limited**