

PLANNING STATEMENT

On behalf of Tiddlywinks Nursery Group

Land fronting Croft Lane, Bury BL9 8QH

Proposed children's day nursery

June 2023

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This statement has been prepared by Martin Planning Ltd for submission as part a revised planning application made to Bury Council on behalf of:

Tiddlywinks Nursery Group
6 Manchester Old Road
Bury
BL9 0TB

Dated: 13 June 2023

PLANNING STATEMENT

Land fronting Croft Lane, Bury BL9 8QH

Proposed Children's Day Nursery

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of Tiddlywinks Nursery Group in support of a planning application for the development of a children's day nursery on land fronting Croft Lane, Bury. The application site previously formed part of the curtilage of Roach Bank Inn (129 Croft Lane) and was used as a car park. Now physically and legally separate from the former public house building it forms a vacant parcel of land bounded by a fence.
- 1.2 The proposal forms a revised scheme to that submitted in July 2022 (Ref: 68684), which was withdrawn by the applicant in October 2022. Following pre-application discussions a new scheme is proposed which has been reduced in scale.
- 1.3 As with the previous proposal, the objective continues to be to deliver a high quality and attractive development in a landscaped setting. In so doing the development will bring forward a site within the settlement boundary for a use that complements other nearby community uses and will regenerate a vacant site in need of investment and renewal. Most importantly it will provide an essential service in delivering childcare to enable parents/carers to go to work which in turn will support the local economy whilst providing valuable early years education for young children.

2. Application Site

- 2.1 Previously used as a car park to the adjacent former public house (Roach Bank Inn) the application site extends over 0.18 hectares (0.45 acres) and fronts Croft Lane within Bury. It forms part of a continuous frontage of development on a plateau above the valley of the River Roach.

- 2.2 The application site, which is irregular in shape, is on a shallow gradient which rises from south west to north east alongside Croft Lane over about a metre. Extensive areas of the site form level hardstanding. The site is fenced and gated and generally has a poor visual appearance, typical of a vacant previously used car park which has not been used for several years.
- 2.3 There is an established access into the site from Croft Lane which used to form the vehicular access into the former public house. Croft Lane forms part of the strategic road network and becomes Pilsworth Road further to the north. It links the A56 Manchester Road with Junction 3 of the M66 motorway.
- 2.4 This area forms the northern extent of Hollins and comprises a mix of uses including residential, community and commercial uses. To the north of the site is an area of open space beyond which is the Blackford House Medical Centre and chemist. To the south, the former public house (in separate legal ownership) is used as a training centre. Beyond that is row of terraced properties and further commercial premises. Opposite the site and set back from road behind a grassed verge are several residential properties. To the west the land slopes down towards the River Roach.
- 2.5 In planning terms the site forms part of the urban area within the settlement boundary and part of a wide river valley designation.

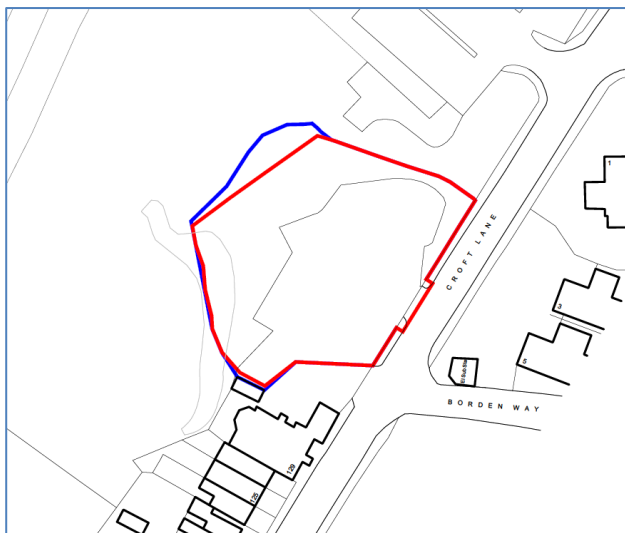


Figure 1: Site Location Plan (Source: Studio KMA)

- 2.6 Planning permission was previously granted for the redevelopment of the site for housing in 2017 (Ref 61135). This did not progress and the site remained vacant. Given this history and having regard to its sustainable and accessible location it is evident that the application site is suitable for redevelopment. Such a development would improve the appearance of the site, create an attractive streetscape and would provide the applicant with the opportunity to deliver an exemplar nursery to serve the local area.

3. The Applicant

- 3.1 Tiddlywinks Day Nursery was founded in 1994 by husband and wife team, David and Imelda Mihell. The vision started at the Hill Lane nursery, Blackley, their former home. Over the years Tiddlywinks has steadily expanded from their original 18 place nursery to the current provision of 7 day nurseries, providing daily care for over 700 children and 5 Tiddlywinks Out of School Clubs, providing daily care for over 185 children across north Manchester. In 2007 they were joined by their sons to operate the family business.
- 3.2 The company ethos is to offer families a high quality, flexible, child centred service where parents can be confident in the care and education their child will receive. They do this in locations in Blackley, Higher Blackley, Ancoats, Clayton, Crumpsall and Walmersley. There is also an out of school club in Walmersley as well as two on Victoria Avenue, Blackley (E-ACT Blackley Academy and St Clare's RC Primary School), Clayton and Middleton. All are served from the Head Office located on Manchester Road in Bury.
- 3.3 Tiddlywinks is a well-respected award winning nursery provider within Bury with parents scoring its facilities at 10/10 (Source: Daynurseries.co.uk).
- 3.4 Initial discussions have taken place with Child Care and Support Services. It has been confirmed during those discussions that another 'outstanding' nursery within the area would be welcomed.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 The proposal is to develop a new exemplar nursery for Tiddlywinks.
- 4.2 The development would provide day nursery facilities for young children within a contemporary building. This will be complemented by a play area to the rear of the proposed building. To the front car park spaces are proposed which will be accessed from the existing vehicular access/egress position.
- 4.3 The nursery is proposed over two floors. At ground floor level is a baby room, a tweenies room with associated w/cs and store, a kitchen, laundry, reception, office and a 1 to 1 room. Accessed via a lift and stairs, level 2 has a pre-school room and a tweenies room 2 (both with associated w/cs and stores).
- 4.4 The design of the building seeks to present a contemporary forward looking image which engages with its users by providing a welcoming and safe environment. Thoughtful design is important to provide children with the appropriate learning and play environment and to provide a building block for their future.

4.5 The proposal will create jobs in a range of full and part time roles.

5. Planning History

5.1 A search of the planning records shows the following previous planning applications.

Application No.	Proposal	Decision
61135	Outline application for the construction of 7 dwellings	Approved 25.07.2017
62912	Temporary extension to the existing car park including earthworks, laying hardcore surface for 18 spaces	Approved 15.11.2018
68684	Erection of private day nursery, together with outdoor forest school and play area, access, associated infrastructure and landscaping (Use Class E(f))	Withdrawn 20.10.22

Table 1: Planning History

5.2 This history demonstrates that the principle of the redevelopment of the application site has previously been accepted.

6. Planning Policy and Guidance

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 In coming forward with this proposal consideration has been given to the Development Plan. Specifically:

- Bury Unitary Development Plan (adopted August 1997).

6.1.2 In addition, the emerging Bury Local Plan is a material planning consideration and has been considered where relevant to the proposals.

6.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)

6.2.1 The main principle of the NPPF is that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

6.2.2 As described in the NPPF (paragraph 8) there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. We consider that the proposal accords with all three aspects as follows:

- Firstly, an **economic role** is met by revitalising a redundant site. The proposal will generate investment in the locality. Employment will be created for those involved in the scheme's construction and on a permanent basis for those working in the day nursery. It will also enable parents and carers to go to work.
- Secondly, a **social role** is fulfilled as the scheme will provide child care.
- Thirdly, an **environmental role** will be achieved as the proposal brings forward a development that takes full account of all environmental objectives. It will deliver a sustainable development and reuses a brownfield site as supported by Paragraph 119 of the NPPF. It also has regard to all ecological and environmental factors.

6.2.3 A further relevant aspect of the NPPF is the encouragement to take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which are currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose where this would help to meet identified development needs (paragraph 123).

6.2.4 The provision of high quality and beautiful buildings and places is also seen as fundamental with good design being recognised as a key aspect of sustainable development to create better places in which to live and work (Section 12).

6.2.5 Taking account of these issues, as further addressed in this statement and the other submitted statements and given the presumption in favour of sustainable development, it is considered that the NPPF provides a supportive framework for the application proposal.

6.3 Bury UDP (1997)

6.3.1 Relevant policies include:

- EN1/2 Townscape and Built Design
- EN1/3 Landscaping Provision
- EN1/7 Throughroutes and Gateways
- EN6/4 Wildlife links and corridors
- EN7/2 Noise Pollution
- HT2/4 Car parking and New Development
- CF1/1 Location of New Community Facilities
- CF5 Childcare Facilities
- OL5/2 River Valleys

6.3.2 Related guidance is also provided in the following:

- SPD 2 Wildlife Links and Corridors
- SPD11 Parking Standards in Bury
- SPD16 Design and Layout of new development in Bury

6.3.3 As shown by the following extract, the Proposals Map identifies the site within the settlement boundary. It further forms part of a River Valley (Policy OL5/2) and a Wildlife Link and Corridor (Policy EN6/4).



Figure 3: Extract from the UDP Proposals Map (Source: Bury Council)

 Application Site

- 6.3.4 In locating new community facilities **Policy CF1/1 – Location of New Community Facilities**, considers proposals with regard to their impact on: residential amenity and the local environment; traffic generation and parking; scale and size of development; access to shops and services; relationship to the local community; accessibility by public transport, needs and requirements of the disabled.
- 6.3.5 The above is supported by **Policy CF5 – Childcare Facilities**, which states that the Council will look favourably on proposals for childcare facilities, including nurseries.
- 6.3.6 In assessing new development proposals, **Policy EN1/2 -Townscape and Built Design** states that the Council will give favourable consideration to proposals which do not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the particular character and townscape of the Borough's towns and villages. **Policy EN1/3 - Landscaping Provision** requires development to make provision for incidental open space and landscaping, whilst **Policy EN1/7 - Throughroutes and Gateways**, comments that the Council is concerned to improve the quality of development along identified through-routes, such as on Croft Lane, and for it to display a high standard of design and landscaping.
- 6.3.7 In relation to **Policy EN6/4 - Wildlife Links and Corridors**, the Council will seek to consolidate and, where appropriate, strengthen wildlife links and corridors, and will not permit development which would adversely affect identified areas. In particular, the Council will seek to ensure that new development within or adjacent to identified links or corridors contributes to their effectiveness through the design, landscaping and siting of development proposals and mitigation works, where appropriate.
- 6.3.8 Specific to this broad location, **Policy OL5/2 - River Valleys** seeks to restrict development that will lead to the division of the open parts of the valleys into sections.
- 6.3.9 With regard to amenity, **Policy EN7/2 - Noise Pollution**, seeks to limit noise pollution and the Council will not permit development which could lead to an unacceptable noise nuisance to nearby occupiers and/or amenity users or development close to a permanent source of noise.
- 6.3.10 **HT2/4 - Car Parking and New Development** confirms that the Council will require all applications for development to make adequate provision for their car parking and servicing requirements in accordance with the Council's car parking standards.

6.4 Policy Appraisal

- 6.4.1 The subject site is identified within the settlement boundary in the Development Plan with in principle support being given by **Policy CF5 – Childcare Facilities** for the provision of facilities such as nurseries.
- 6.4.2 The proposal develops a brownfield site, supported at various levels of planning policy and will bring forward a high quality development that has due regard to the requirements of **Policy EN1/2 - Townscape and Built Design** in terms of its design which will enhance the appearance of the site and the streetscene, as well as **Policy EN1/3 - Landscaping Provision** in bringing forward a building within a landscape setting. Together this will have a positive effect on Croft Lane which **Policy EN1/7 - Throughroutes and Gateways**, seeks to visually enhance.
- 6.4.3 Development control considerations have been instrumental in guiding the design of the scheme including an assessment of ecological issues, amenity considerations and parking provision in accordance with the relevant policies set out above, particularly **Policy CF1/1 – Location of New Community Facilities**.
- 6.4.4 In assessing **Policy OL5/2 - River Valleys** it is noted that the policy states that new buildings or the change of use of existing buildings or the change of use of land will not be permitted. However, there are exceptions to this where a proposal will not lead to any subdivision of open spaces attached to the river valley. Additionally, where an area does not form part of the green belt (as is the case here) it needs to fall into one of several specified forms of development. Related to this we comment as follows:
- The application site has previously formed the commercial curtilage to the adjacent public house. It includes an area of hardstanding and is fenced. As such, its redevelopment will not lead to the subdivision of an area of open space, in compliance with the first element of Policy OL5/2;
 - It is also of note that planning permission has previously been granted for the application site's redevelopment for housing (61135);
 - The application site does not form part of the green belt;
 - The proposal will represent limited infilling within Unsworth at a scale agreed as part of pre-application discussions, comprising a development of two storeys and thus triggering one of the policy exceptions (Point (b) (i)).
 - It will further provide an essential community service for local people.

6.4.5 The proposal therefore accords with this policy. However, as a general comment we note that Policy OL5/2 forms part of the UDP adopted in 1997. As such it predates the NPPF originally released in 2012 and more recently updated in 2021, which places a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For the reasons given in paragraph 6.2.2 above the proposal will meet all three sustainability objectives and triggers such a presumption. This should strongly weigh in support of the proposal.

6.4.6 **Policy EN6/4 - Wildlife Links and Corridors**, is of further relevance and seeks to consolidate and, where appropriate, strengthen wildlife links and corridors. In particular, the Council will seek to ensure that new development within or adjacent to identified links or corridors contributes to their effectiveness through the design, landscaping and siting of development proposals and mitigation works, where appropriate. This has all been taken into account and has been informed by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment.

7. Planning Considerations

7.1 Principle of Development

7.1.1 As identified by the policy context above there is support for the provision of childcare facilities including nurseries. These are fundamental in supporting the economy by allowing parents to work and for children to benefit from early years education.

7.1.2 The applicant, Tiddlywinks is an established and well respected provider of childcare within Bury and north Manchester and seek to expand this provision by the development of the application site with a new nursery. This will have a valuable role within the local community and will support economic objectives, including the creation of jobs in various roles.

7.1.3 Childcare will be provided for young infants/babies up to pre-school age. The environment will be welcoming, fresh and modern within rooms for the different age groups for indoor learning and play. This will be complemented by an external area to the rear of the building for play and outside learning. This will include new tree planting.

7.1.4 The focus of the proposal in providing sustainable development should therefore be regarded as acceptable in principle with the various levels of support this is given by the NPPF and at a local level. Specifically, as identified in Section 6 above planning policy provides a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

7.1.5 The proposal will further regenerate a redundant brownfield site and will inject new life and investment into this, a further objective of the NPPF.

- 7.1.6 There is therefore policy support for the principle of the proposal on several levels whilst taking into the requirements of the designation of the site as part of a River Valley under Policy OL5/2.

7.2 Need

- 7.2.1 There is an increasing need for good quality childcare. In this regard, the applicant is already recognised as an outstanding provider of childcare by OFSTED within the Bury Council area for: the effectiveness of leadership and management; quality of teaching, learning and assessment; personal development, behaviour and welfare and outcomes for children. Recent discussions with Child Care and Support Services have confirmed that the provision of another 'outstanding' nursery would be welcomed.
- 7.2.2 The following plan identifies existing childcare provision within the area. This illustrates a gap in provision in the area in which the nursery is proposed, east of the A56 (shown in green).

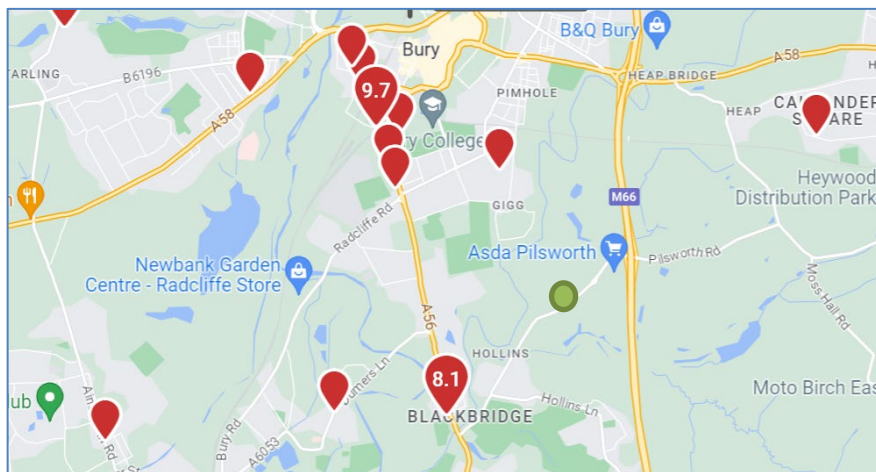


Figure 4: Location of existing nurseries (Source: Daynurseries.co.uk)

- 7.2.3 As widely recognised, high quality early education and childcare has an important and positive effect in children's development in terms of learning, physical wellbeing and learning to socialise. As an existing day nursery provider within the Bury Council area, Tiddlywinks understands local childcare needs. At the present time, there is currently the scope to improve the take up of funding for 2 year olds.
- 7.2.4 Tiddlywinks has therefore identified a need for the type of day nursery it proposes.

7.3 Design Considerations

- 7.3.1 The ***Design and Access Statement*** prepared by Studio KMA which is submitted with the planning application details the design philosophy behind the scheme
- 7.3.2 In planning terms, the proposed development has had particular regard to policy objectives of achieving a high standard of development having regard to the initiatives to improve the appearance of Croft Lane as a through-route within the area as well as regenerating a previously developed site. Taking account of the fundamentals of good design the scheme seeks to:
- Understand its context;
 - Respond to its context;
 - Design sustainable development;
 - Design a safe, accessible and welcoming development.
- 7.3.3 The layout makes optimum use of the site whilst taking account of its location and visual context.

7.4 Amenity

- 7.4.1 The nearest residential properties are located opposite the site, set back from Croft Lane, at a distance of about 45 metres from the proposed nursery building.
- 7.4.2 High quality development is proposed that uses a palate of material that picks up on local character. It will also include good quality landscaping.
- 7.4.3 It is considered that the proposal respects the amenities of local residents as well as having regard to the amenity of the occupiers of the proposed building. A ***Noise Impact Assessment*** forms part of the application submission.

7.5 Ground Conditions

- 7.5.1 The submitted ***Phase 1 Environmental Assessment Report*** indicates that the application site can be classified as moderate risk in terms of contamination. This classification is due to the potential for made ground to be present in shallow soils and the presence of a number of off-site land uses which have the potential to contaminate the soils. Further detail is provided in the Phase 2 Report as to how this can be mitigated.

- 7.5.2 The additional ***Coal Mining Risk Assessment*** concludes that the risk associated with coal mining related issues are low based on information from the Coal Authority and geological interpretation and can be suitably mitigated through informed professional practice and vigilance during construction.

7.6 Transport and Movement

- 7.6.1 As previously set out, the application site meets sustainability objectives being accessible to a range of travel modes and with good pedestrian links to the site. In addition, the proposal makes provision for the parking of cars and spaces for bicycle storage. This takes account of the need for spaces generated by the development. The ***Transport Statement*** that accompanies the planning application expands on this.

7.7 Ecology

- 7.7.1 A ***Preliminary Ecological Survey*** is submitted with the planning application which assesses the site ecological characteristics and makes recommendations in the context of the proposed development with a view to improving biodiversity.

7.8 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.8.1 The submitted ***Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Strategy*** concludes that the application site is at low risk from flooding being within Flood Zone 1. The Sustainable Drainage Strategy further sets out how on site drainage will be addressed.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 In conclusion, we consider that the principle of development for the use proposed is acceptable in this location. It will offer much needed childcare provision as well as creating jobs.
- 8.2 In coming forward with this planning application policy considerations have been fundamental in informing the proposal. The terms of Policy OL5/2 are met as the proposal forms limited infilling in a settlement and at a scale commensurate with surrounding development and will not result in an area of open space being subdivided.

- 8.3 Further, detailed matters pertinent to the proposals including: sustainability; amenity, need; design considerations; transport and movement; flood risk and drainage; ecology; ground conditions and security have all been appropriately addressed – relevant to the considerations under Policy CF1/1 in locating new community facilities.
- 8.3 Having regard to the contents of the statement and the other documents submitted with the application which outline the merits of this proposal we request that planning permission is granted. Should you require any further information or explanation please let us know.