

LITTLE STARS PLAYGROUP BUILDING
ASCOT WAY
RUSTINGTON, WEST SUSSEX BN16 3SB

Received

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Introduction

This is a proposal to demolish and remove what is a rather old and inadequate building used by the Little Stars playgroup, and to replace it on exactly the same site with a new building that will be more suitable for the children attending the playgroup and those working there. This statement has three pages.

Policy Background

The development is within the Built-Up Area and careful consideration has been given to the policies set out in the Arun District Local Plan and the current West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 and the proposal does not conflict with these. The existing playgroup for children from the age of 2 to 5 serves the residential neighbourhood in which it is located and liaises with the local primary school Georgian Gardens. It is well attended and clearly meets a need of the local community and is one that needs to be maintained and encouraged and I believe has the backing of West Sussex County Council.

Design Principles

The key design point is that the existing building has planning approval from around 20 years ago and so far as I am aware has not resulted in any planning criticism, so that if the new design is similar but more attractive because of its newness then it should be acceptable, as the fundamental planning requirements on design have not changed. Clearly a building to be used by children of from 2 to 5 years really needs to be a single-storey structure and this is what has been designed. It is also important that the building should require low maintenance and have good thermal insulation qualities which this design also gives.

The existing building fits in with the neighbouring flats and houses and also the open space that adjoins it on the north and west sides and the proposed replacement will do the same.

It is also important that the building should not be hidden away but readily visible to people generally so that a sense of community belonging is fostered.

Use

As the proposed use is the same as the existing and the site has been used for a playgroup for at least around 20 years there is no change to justify. It is quite normal to have a playgroup building in a residential area and often such

a building adjoins an open space and a playground as is the case here so that if appropriate the children can at times use these areas.

The Amount of Development

The existing building has a gross internal floor area of around 66m² and the new building will have around 105m². The additional floor space will allow much more appropriate accommodation to be provided. For example, at present there is no disabled w.c. facility, proper kitchen or cleaners store. Also, the present children's w.c./ baby change area is very inadequate as is the office. The new building will provide much better facilities in all these areas.

Although the site for the replacement building will remain the same size, the external play areas will be much the same as the building is to be positioned on the site slightly more to the east.

Layout

The drawings submitted with the planning application show that the building is to be constructed against the northern boundary of the site and the front of it will line up approximately with the block of flats lying to the south and the front boundary wall of the parking area serving those flats, which is immediately adjacent to the site of the playgroup building. This positioning of the building will allow the external play areas which will be to the south and west of the building to be maximised and more easily supervised than if they were to be more split up. Having the main external play area to the south will also give a brighter area than would be the case if it were to be provided to the north.

Scale

The eaves height of the proposed building at 3065mm is virtually unchanged from the eaves height of the existing building at 3060mm. The ridge height of the proposed building will be low at 3228mm. The width of the building will be 12000mm and the depth 10000mm. It will be a rectangular shaped building but with the south-west corner 3000mm x 3000mm missing. The building will be wider than the present one but this will not be significant in the context of other nearby buildings or the open space.

Landscaping

Between the building and the pavement the area will be grassed as existing and with paved access paths and a hard standing for the waste and recycling bins. The external play areas will be a mixture of hard but porous paving and porous soft play areas laid with woodchip or similar.

The brick boundary wall to the south will remain and the other boundaries will be of 2m dark stained timber close-boarded fencing so that security will be satisfactory.

Appearance

The typical section through the proposed building and the planning application describes the materials to be used and the other drawings show the architectural details. It will be a building that will look a lot nicer than the existing one and will therefore enhance the street scene and the area generally.

Access

The existing site has no on-site car parking facilities and none are to be provided for the new building. During our various visits to the site we have normally seen only one car parked in the street outside belonging to a staff member, probably because traditionally many people working in the child care field are quite young and do not own cars.

Some of the parents and others dropping off children or collecting them from the playgroup will do so by car, but many walk. Those that do use cars stop only very briefly and only at limited times.

There should be no change from the existing so far as cars coming to the site are concerned.

The layout shows level access for the front door to address some disability issues which is not available at present. Level access into the outside play areas is also available from the front of the site through the security gate.

Buses are available nearby and Angmering Station is maybe only a five minute walk from the property so both of these facilities should discourage car use.

Room on the site can be made available for the storage of any cycles used by the staff to get to work.

Peter D King FRICS
Chartered Surveyor

20 April 2009