

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT S/00674/000

Registration Date:	21-Jun-2011	Applic. No:	S/00674/000
Officer:	Ian Hann	Ward:	Central
Applicant:	Ms. Jean Cameron, Slough Borough Council		
Agent:	Mr. Jeffrey Lewis, Slough Borough Council St. Martins Place, 51, Bath Road, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 3UF		
Location:	Land Between, 79 & 83, Grasmere Avenue, Slough, SL2 5JE		
Proposal:	ERECTION OF A PEDESTRIAN ACCESS GATE TO ALLOW FOR THE REINSTATEMENT OF A PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO THE WEXHAM LEA SURE START CHILD CARE CENTRE FROM GRASMERE ROAD		

Recommendation: Approve Limited Period Permission

Background

At its Meeting on 2nd September 2011, Planning Committee deferred decision on this application to allow a Member site visit to be undertaken. That site meeting took place on 2^{6th} September 2011 at 15:00 pm. The Member site visit was attended by Councillors Doods, Bains, O'Connor, Strutton, Swindlehurst and Rasib of the Planning Committee. Also at the visit were Councillors Chaudhry and Dhaliwal in their capacity as Ward Members.

Members first viewed the application site from Grasmere Avenue before entering the school site via the existing pedestrian access in Grasmere Avenue and walked to the site of the proposed access via the car park and pedestrian access way.

Members then watched the collection of children from outside the Children's Centre and witnessed the volume of traffic entering and leaving the site as well as the difficulties in moving around the site. Members then viewed the situation further toward the vehicle access on Wexham Road where there is a pick up / drop off zone. Members then left the site via the pedestrian access onto Grasmere Ave where some members of the public were waiting to make comment about the traffic disruption being practically bad on Grasmere Ave and that they would want to speak at the next Committee meeting so details were given to them as to who they will need to contact to make the appropriate arrangements.

Members asked if details of any incidents within the car park could be provided. The applicants have been asked to provide such details and these will be provided on the Committee Amendment Sheet.

Members also asked if there was any agreement with / or any restriction on the school in managing the traffic during drop off and pick up. After considering the planning history with regards to the site there are no planning restrictions regarding pick up and drop off arrangements as the conditions attached to the original planning application for the site only deal with ensuring that the parking and pick up / drop off areas are as per the approved plans. It is not for the planning regime to regulate the running of the schools with regards to the drop

off and collection of children as this is a management issue for the schools to consider, with input from the Highways and Transport department if public highway safety is also a concern.

Officers have now received a signed letter of undertaking as a commitment to pay £3,000.00 for the off site measures as mentioned in the previous report and Amendment Sheet placed before this Committee, as attached.

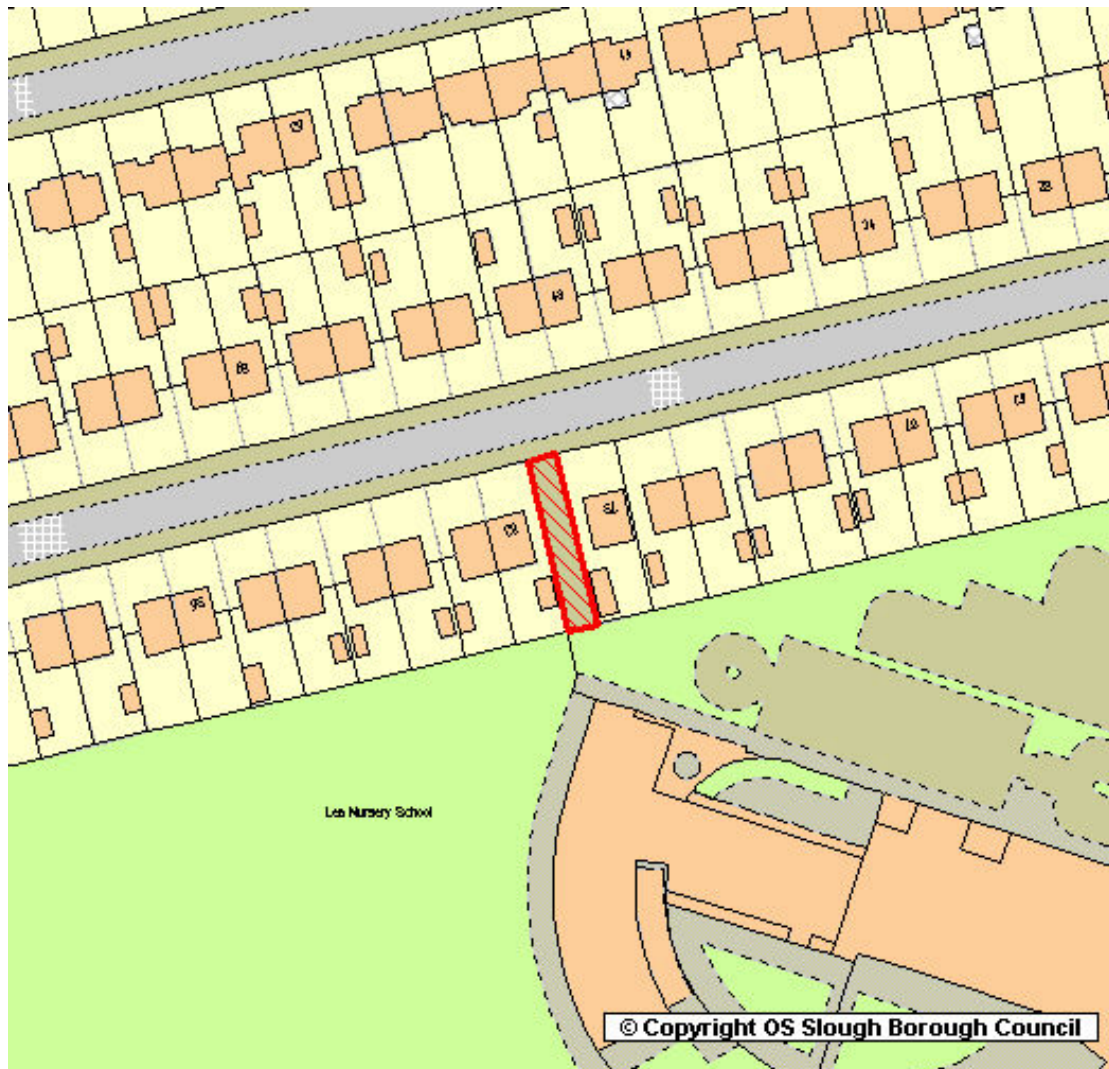
Given the applicant's agreement to make a financial contribution as outlined above, the Officer recommendation now reads:

Approve subject to conditions.

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FROM 8th SEPTEMBER 2011 PLANNING COMMITTEE

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Location:	Land Between, 79 & 83, Grasmere Avenue, Slough, SL2 5JE		
Proposal:	INSERTION OF GATE ON ACCESS TO WEXHAM ROAD CHILD CARE CENTRE		

Recommendation: Approve Limited Period Permission



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1.0 **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 Having considered the policy, background and the comments from neighbours and consultees it is recommended that the application be approved subject to conditions.
- 1.2 Under the current constitution this application is being brought to Committee for decision as it is a Council application for which objections have been received.

PART A: BACKGROUND

2.0 **Proposal**

- 2.1 This is a full planning application for the insertion of a new gate into an existing closed off access that will allow for a pedestrian access off of Grasmere Avenue to Wexham Road Childrens Centre. As well as assisting in allowing the people to access the Children's Centre and Lea Nursery and Mighty Acorns, who all use the site, it will also allow access to the new satellite library, which is planned to open in the Children's Centre in November 2011.
- 2.2 The access will be positioned in the place of an existing access and the Gate will be positioned 1.2m away from the footpath of Grasmere Avenue and will have a height of 2m.

3.0 **Application Site**

- 3.1 The application site is located between numbers 79 and 83 to the south side of Grasmere Avenue. The existing access is currently blocked off by high level chain link fencing and is currently in an overgrown state. The path has a width of 5m and a depth of 27m.
- 3.2 The surrounding area consists of semi detached residential properties. The area is residential in its nature.

4.0 **Site History**

- 4.1 There is no relevant planning history with regards to this site. It is understood that the existing access was used for the old school building that stood on the site before the Iqra School was built but no details are retained as to when it was closed off.
- 4.2 A planning condition attached to the permission to allow the Iqra School to be built saw the existing vehicular access between numbers 53 and 55 turn into a pedestrian only access. This may be subject to a planning application to be returned to a vehicular access at a later date, this is not related to this application.

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5.0 **Neighbour Notification**

5.1 79, 83, 48, 50 Grasmere Avenue, Slough

Four letters of objection have been received with summarised comments about the following:

- There are already two existing access points (one on Wexham Road and one on Grasmere Avenue) which is adequate for the Children's Centre and associated Schools.

Response : This is discussed in the report below.

- The new access point will increase the amount of traffic and congestion as parents will avoid the main access on Wexham Road to use this access, making the area more dangerous for pedestrians.

Response : This is discussed in the report below.

- The new access will increase parking problems for Grasmere Avenue as parents will park at the new access point, increasing the further problems on Grasmere Avenue. Including access being blocked, including the GP surgery and could result in emergency vehicles being blocked from getting down the road.

Response : This is discussed in the report below.

- Security for the adjoining properties will be compromised as it allows an escape route and would allow vandalism to take place.

Response : This is discussed in the report below.

- Noise and disturbance will increase, hindering enjoyment of the homes and gardens.

Response : This is discussed in the report below.

- A previous planning permission was made to open this access but was refused.

Response : It was intended to open this access as a pedestrian access under proposals for the major redevelopment of the school but a decision was then taken not to open this access. However the current proposals are assessed on the information that has been received and any decision will be taken based on current planning policy.

- Unnecessary additional costs to tax payers.

Response : The funding of schemes are not material planning considerations and will not form part of the consideration process.

5.2 A petition containing 111 signatures has also been submitted outlining the following issues:

- There are adequate access points to the school and associated centres.

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- There will be an increase in traffic and congestion, as parents will try to use the access point to drop off and collect children and increase the risk of a serious accident or fatality.
- The risk of increased vandalism and crime.
- Increase in parking problems for the residents including blocked drives and double parking and the risk of delays to emergency vehicles.
- Additional noise, disturbance and loss of privacy.
- Public money will be wasted on additional accesses that already have adequate access.

6.0 **Consultation**

6.1 **Transport and Highways**

Full details have not yet been received from Transport and Highways but they have indicated that proposals are likely to disperse dropping off/picking up activities and pedestrian movements in and around the school; therefore are likely to support the application in planning terms which includes transport/highways assessment.

Full details will be given on the Committee Amendment Sheet.

6.2 **Thames Valley Police**

No response. Full details will be given on the Committee Amendment Sheet.

PART B: PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.0 **Policy Background**

7.1 **National guidance**

- Planning Policy Statement 1 (Creating Sustainable Communities)
- Planning Policy Guidance 13 (Transport)

Local Development Framework, Core Strategy, Development Plan Document

- Core Policy 7 (Transport)
- Core Policy 8 (Sustainability & the Environment)
- Core Policy 12 (Community Safety)

Adopted Local Plan for Slough

- EN1 (Standard of Design)

7.2 The planning considerations for this proposal are:

- Need for Development
- Impact to neighbouring residential properties
- Design, appearance and impact on the street scene
- Parking / Highway Safety

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8.0 Need for Development

- 8.1 The application is submitted on behalf of Wexham Road Children's Centre as a new satellite library is planned to be incorporated into the building and this now provides an opportunity for improved pedestrian access to the Children's Centre, Lea Nursery and Little Acorns.
- 8.2 The applicants have stated that parents and young children who visit the Children's Centre on foot enter the site at the Iqra School end of the site and therefore have to cross car parks in order to reach the Children's Centre, which raises several safety issues. Although pedestrian hatched pathways are provided across the site, these cut through busy elements of the car park and with cars also parking on the pedestrian pathways pedestrian safety is an issue for those walking through the car park with young children. The insertion of a second pathway would ease these safety concerns, without significantly increasing traffic to the site and encourage more people to walk to the site with a safe route of access being provided to the Children's Centre.
- 8.3 The new path would also be used in conjunction with the new satellite library and would provide a safe access route for people coming from the west of the site to use this new service and will give people the opportunity to enter the site on foot rather than relying on cars to enter via the Wexham Road vehicular access.
- 8.4 The provision of a footpath to serve the Children's Centre and the satellite library is therefore considered acceptable, subject to there being no highway safety issues and it not having a detrimental impact upon the character of the area or the amenity of neighbouring properties.

9.0 Impact to Neighbouring Residential Properties

- 9.1 The impact on adjacent residential properties is assessed against Core Policy 8 and Local Plan Policy EN1.
- 9.2 Core Policy 8 of the Local Development Framework, Core Strategy, states that *"The design of all development within existing residential areas should respect the amenities of adjoining occupiers."*
- 9.3 Policy EN1 of the Adopted Local Plan states that *"all development proposals are required to reflect a high standard of design and must be compatible with and/or improve their surrounding"*, in accordance with the criteria set out in that policy.
- 9.4 Due to the limited nature of what is proposed in reopening the access and inserting a pedestrian gate this will not have an impact upon neighbouring amenity in terms of it being an overbearing impact. Both properties immediately adjacent to the alley way have high level close boarded fencing and there would be no issues with regards to loss of privacy resulting from these proposals.

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- 9.5 Concern has been raised that the proposed access would result in anti-social behaviour or result in additional criminal activity. The Applicant's have confirmed that the gates would be closed before 9.00am and after 4.00pm when such unsocial behaviour would be most likely to take place, and provide a level of security that would be at a par to the current provision for the blocked off access and this can be secured via condition. In addition to this a condition can be added to any permission securing additional lighting for the access way to deter it being used as an escape route or anti social behaviour. It is therefore considered that the reopening of the access would not result in an increase of anti social behaviour or increase the risk of crime in the area.
- 9.6 These proposals would not result in an increase of pupils to the schools and only a limited increase to the people using the Children's Centre for the satellite library, estimated at between 40 to 60 users a week, based on the fact that 20 people would use the mobile library when it visited the Wexham area. It is therefore considered that the numbers of people using this access would not result in levels of noise that will affect the amenity of the neighbouring residents.
- 9.7 No objection is therefore raised in terms of the impacts on adjoining residential properties as the proposal is considered to be consistent with Core Policy 8 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policies EN1 and EN2 of the Adopted Local Plan.
- 10.0 **Design, Appearance and Impact on the Street Scene**
- 10.1 Design and external appearance is assessed against PPS1, Core Policy 8 and Local Plan Policy EN1.
- 10.2 Planning Policy Statement 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) advises that *'Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted'*.
- 10.3 Core Policy 8 of the Local Development Framework, Core Strategy, states that: *"All development in the Borough shall be sustainable, of a high quality design, improve the quality of the environment and address the impact of climate change."* Part 2 to that policy covers design and in sub section b) it states: *"all development will respect its location and surroundings"*.
- 10.4 Policy EN1 of the Adopted Local Plan states that *"all development proposals are required to reflect a high standard of design and must be compatible with and/or improve their surrounding"*, in accordance with the criteria set out in that policy.
- 10.5 These proposals will see the clearance of the existing overgrown access way which currently has a detrimental impact upon the street scene as it is in stark contrast to the well maintained frontages within the street. The removal of the overgrown area will help improve the appearance and character of the area.

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- 10.6 The proposed gates will not be a dominant feature or have any detrimental impact upon the street scene.
- 10.7 The proposals are therefore considered to be in keeping with the character of the area and will not have a detrimental impact upon the street scene. The proposal is considered to be consistent with guidance given in PPS1, Core Policy 8 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policy EN1 of the Adopted Local Plan.
- 11.0 **Traffic and Highways**
- 11.1 The relevant policies in terms of assessing traffic and highway impacts are contained in Core Policy 7.
- 11.2 Core Policy 7 requires that development proposals will have to make appropriate provisions for reducing the need to travel, widening travel choices and making travel by sustainable means of transport more attractive than the private car, improving road safety, improving air quality and reducing the impact of travel upon the environment.
- 11.3 As previously stated this proposal will not increase the numbers of children using the schools and nurseries on the site so will not result in an increase in traffic numbers or result in additional parking problems with no increased trip numbers. As a safer access will be provided without the need of parents and children crossing the car park this may allow more people to walk to the site. The library use itself will result in between approximately 40-60 people using this service site each week and will not result in an excessive number of additional trips that will have a detrimental impact upon highway safety or result in an increase in parking pressures around the surrounding streets.
- 11.4 These proposals will not have any impact upon Highway Safety and comply with Planning Policy Guidance 12 and Core Policy 7 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

PART C: RECOMMENDATION

12.0 **Recommendation**

- 12.1 Approve subject to conditions.

13.0 **PART D: LIST OF CONDITION(S)**

Condition(s)

1. This permission is for a limited period which will expire on 05/11/2012 when the access shall be securely closed, unless prior permission has been given by the Local Planning Authority for continuation for a further period. The access shall be secured in accordance with details to be submitted to The Local Planning Authority no later than 1 calendar month prior to the expiry of the permission for approval in writing. These works shall be carried out within one month of the cessation of the

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above date.

REASON To enable the Local Planning Authority to review the position in the light of the prevailing circumstances and the impact of the use during the limited period in accordance with Policy EN1 of The Adopted Local Plan for Slough 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall be implemented only in accordance with the following plans and drawings hereby approved by the Local Planning Authority:

(a) Drawing No. Plan and Elevation Drawing, dated June 2011, received 16/06/2011

REASON To ensure that the site is developed in accordance with the submitted application and to ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the amenity of the area and to comply with the Policies in the Development Plan.

3. Details of the gate used on the development hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the scheme is commenced on site. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

REASON To ensure a satisfactory appearance of the development so as not to prejudice the visual amenity of the locality.

4. Samples of external materials to be used in the construction of the access way within the development hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the scheme is commenced on site and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the details approved.

REASON To ensure a satisfactory appearance of the development so as not to prejudice the visual amenity of the locality.

5. No development shall take place until a scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for external site lighting including details of the lighting units, levels of illumination and hours of use. No lighting shall be provided at the site other than in accordance with the approved scheme.

REASON In the interests of the amenities of the area and to comply with Core Policy 8 of The Slough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy 2006-2026, Development Plan Document, December 2008.

6. The access shall be locked and secured outside the hours of 0900 hours to 1600 hours on Mondays - Fridays and 1000 hours to 1200 hours on Saturdays, unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON To ensure surrounding properties are secured and to help minimise anti social behaviour.

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Informative(s)

1. This decision has been taken having regard to the policies and proposals in the Local Plan for Slough 2004 and the Slough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy 2006 - 2026, as set out below, (to Supplementary Planning Guidance) and to all relevant material considerations.

- Planning Policy Statement 1 (Creating Sustainable Communities)
- Planning Policy Guidance 13 (Transport)

The Slough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy 2006-2026,
Development Plan Document, December 2008

- Core Policy 7 (Transport)
- Core Policy 8 (Sustainability & the Environment)
- Core Policy 12 (Community Safety)

The Adopted Local Plan for Slough 2004

- EN1 (Standard of Design)

This informative is only intended as a summary of the reasons for the grant of planning permission. For further detail on the decision please see the application report by contacting the Development Control Section on 01753 477340.