DELEGATED APPLICATIONS ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS: Reflections Day Nursery, 54 Richmond Road WB/10/0455/FULL and WB/10/0456/LBC

DATE OF SITE VISIT: 1.7.2010 (with applicant)

NEIGHBOURS CHECKED: Y

ADDITIONAL NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATIONS: N

PROPOSAL, SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

54 Richmond Road is a Grade II Listed Building in the Richmond Road Conservation Area. Planning permission was granted in October 2003 (WB/03/01051/FULL) for change of use to a child care nursery together with the erection of a conservatory, the widening of the existing vehicular access and laying out of the car park. The main accommodation floors are built over a basement so that floor levels are raised up significantly compared to adjoining ground level.

There is a formal stepped entrance leading up to the main front entrance in a recessed porch. External timber steps to provide access from the rear play room into the garden were permitted in 2004.

These applications follow initial discussions involving the Council's Conservation & Design Architect to provide wheelchair access to the nursery and associated facilitating alterations, comprising:-

- lowering the thresholds to the french windows at the rear and replacement doors;
- addition of white-painted, timber platform, ramp and handrails to rear elevation;
- re-forming paved area to provide a designated route to access the ramp/platform;
- call assist button to front entrance;
- new timber painted fence around secure area to east side of building.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

WB/03/01051 Change of use to child care nursery, erection of conservatory, widening of existing vehicular entrance and laying out of car park - Approved conditionally October 2003.

WB/04/0733/LBC External steps and fence – Consent July 2004

WB//05/0132/FULL & 133/LBC – Basement steps - Approved March 2005

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

Saved Local Plan policies: BE1, H18
Submission Core Strategy: Policy 16

PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment (2010)

RELEVANT CONSULTATION RESPONSES AND REPRESENTATIONS:

Executive Head of Housing, Health and Community safety: No Comments

Conservation Area Advisory Committee: The requirement to provide disabled access to Listed Buildings can present some difficult problems to ensure that the external appearance is retained as nearly as possible to that originally intended. The Committee considered that this application needs a more sympathetic approach and should be given further study. The overall effect of the railings and size of the ramp is overbearing and detracts considerable from the rear elevation, it is suggested that the ramp should descend from the right hand door curving into the garden area gradually to the lower level. A landing joining the two doors could be carried across if this is a necessary access requirement. The railings could be of a more ornamental design giving a lighter appearance than those shown.

No representations received from third parties.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT:

The Government identifies the requirement to facilitate sustainable and inclusive patterns of development through (amongst other things) ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design as a fundamental objective for the planning system. One of the key principles that should be applied to ensure all decisions on planning applications to contribute to the delivery of sustainable development is the need for clear, comprehensive and inclusive access policies – including physical access – which consider peoples' diverse needs and aim to breakdown unnecessary barriers and exclusions that benefits the entire community (PPS1, paragraph 13). It is recognised, therefore, that this proposal to provide wheelchair access to the facilities of the existing building would meet one of the key principles of sustainable development. The main concern is ensuring that this can take place in a manner that is compatible with safeguarding the special historical character and architectural importance of the Listed Building. Earlier discussions with the Council's Conservation & Design Architect precluded the inclusion of an access ramp at the front of the building, owing to the serious deleterious impact such a structure would have on the architectural composition and appearance of this grand house.

As originally submitted, the design of the ramp was largely influenced by the need to comply with Building Regulations which specify acceptable angles of incline over any distance together with the need for resting platforms etc. This resulted in an excessively large, unsightly and cumbersome structure which detracted from the vertical composition of the existing building which, at the rear, is sub-divided into three main elements. The existing 2 sets of external steps (plus the steps into the basement) respect this vertical sub-division, but the proposal to create an enlarged platform (with access from both rooms 1 and 2) proposed a large horizontal structure cutting across these original elements.

Owing to the levels involved (some 800mm) it is apparent that any ramp would inevitably constitute a relatively large structure with serious implications for the character and appearance of the building. However, following a further meeting and discussions with the Conservation Architect, an alternative solution of a vertical scissor lift has been proposed. This mechanical solution allows for a more compact form of wheelchair access to the building.

A revised drawing has been received on this basis showing a vertical scissor lift providing access onto a platform with access to room 2 (identified as the applicant has the most important access route from the rear) together with re-positioned external steps, contained wholly within the central section of the building. The lift/platform would be enclosed on the east side by the walled 'stairwell' leading to the basement and a new section of white-painted rendered wall (800mm high), and on the west side by the re-position steps on a white-painted, rendered base (rather than timber as existing). The platform and the stairs would be enclosed by black-painted railings to match those enclosing the adjacent basement 'stairwell' (and which are considered more elegant than the rather chunky, domestic-looking, white-painted timber balustrades which frame the existing steps from room 1). The precise model of the scissor lift has not been identified by the applicant, although the drawings show largely glazed doors with minimal framing. A very utilitarian-looking model with bulky framework would not be acceptable on this elegant building. However, it is considered the precise model of lift could be dealt with as a condition of planning permission.

It is necessary to remove the existing step to create a flush threshold from the platform into room 2. The revised drawing (scale 1:20) shows an enlarged opening with alterations to create inward-opening French windows serving room 2 with taller door. Although the drawing stipulates that the new door mouldings would match those existing, the Conservation Architect requires a more detailed section, but is satisfied this could be dealt as a condition of planning permission.

The revised drawings also show a more sensitive re-alignment of the fencing enclosing the secure area on the east side of the building. This would now consist of more elegant 1.1m high black-painted metal railings and gates (to match the existing railings to the basement) with the existing timber fencing removed. Within the enclosed area to the side of the building an access route will be formed using concrete pavors (to match the existing pathways at the rear) with a security lock and digital intercom fixed onto the existing gates towards the front (south).

RECOMMENDATION

WB/10/0454/FULL

APPROVE subject to:-

1. Standard time limit (5yrs)
2. Permission relates to approved drawings

3. Precise details of vertical scissor lift to be submitted prior to commencement
4. Detailed section not less than 1:2 showing profiles of mouldings of existing and proposed replacement doors
5. External finish of base of platform, external steps and enclosure of vertical platform lift to consist of white-painted smooth render to match existing building
6. Railings/gates (including railings enclosing enlarged secure area to east side of building) shall consist of black painted metal to match those existing around the basement stairwell.
7. Details of the size, position and appearance of the wireless alert bell to the front entrance as submitted unless otherwise approved in writing
8. Details of security lock and intercom to be submitted and approved
9. Pavor to designated route on east side to match existing unless otherwise approved in writing by the LPA.

WB/10/0455/LBC

GRANT CONSENT subject to:-

1. Standard listed building consent time limit (5yrs)
2. Permission relates to approved drawings
3. Precise details of vertical scissor lift to be submitted prior to commencement
4. Detailed section not less than 1:2 showing profiles of mouldings of existing and proposed replacement doors
5. External finish of base of platform, external steps and enclosure of vertical platform lift to consist of white-painted smooth render to match existing building
6. Railings/gates (including railings enclosing enlarged secure area to east side of building) shall consist of black painted metal to match those existing around the basement stairwell.
7. Details of the size, position and appearance of the wireless alert bell to the front entrance as submitted unless otherwise approved in writing
8. Details of security lock and intercom to be submitted and approved
9. Pavors to designated route on east side to match existing unless otherwise approved in writing by the LPA.
10. At all times during the progress of the work hereby granted consent, adequate measures shall be taken to protect the remaining part of the Listed Building from collapse or structural damage.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:

As amended, the proposal to provide inclusive wheelchair access to the existing day care nursery facilities would fulfil one of the key principles identified in national planning policy contained in PPS1 as contributing towards the delivery of sustainable development whilst, subject to control over the precise details of design, safeguarding the special historic character and architectural importance of this grade II Listed Building. It would not therefore conflict with saved policy BE1 of the Worthing Local Plan, or national planning policy guidance contained in PPS5.

HUMAN RIGHTS:

Article 8 (Right to Respect of a Private and Family Life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) of the Human Rights Act 1998 are relevant to this application. It is accepted that the proposal, if approved, would have some impact on the neighbouring properties. However, it is considered that on balance, existing residential quality of life would not be significantly adversely affected as a result of the proposal. Accordingly it is considered that it is acceptable with regard to Article 8 and Article 1.

IS RECOMMENDATION CONTRARY TO LETTER (S) OF REPRESENTATION?

Plans amended to address concerns of CAAC.

Delegated Decision

Case Officer
Sign.....[redacted].....Date.....1·9·2010.....

Authorising Office[redacted]
Sign.....[redacted].....Date.....3·9·10.....