

List of measures in the application's design that answer queries and comments of Beaufort Road residents

Application Ref 21/0847/FUL

Martin Habel April 2021, Copyright. Referring to the design carried out 2018/19

There are a variety of comments lodged as objections to the scheme, all of which have answers already in the submitted drawings and reports. This list of answers may assist Officers and the Planning Committee in assessing these.

It should be noted that several of the objections are multiple on line letters by a single party. (No 40 Beaufort Road has 3 letters, No 30 Beaufort Road has 2 letters, and No 36 Beaufort Road has 2 letters) . Despite this, it should also be noted that the proposals have 25 letters of objection and 185 letters of support at the current time of writing, indicating significant local support for the scheme.

1. MOL and Loss of Green Area

- **MOL**

The suggestion by No 30 Beaufort Road and No 6 Beaufort Road is that the scheme disregards controls on development in MOL. This is incorrect. The scheme carefully considers the spread of existing buildings in relation to the MOL and proposes the minimum extension required to meet the needs of the Playcentres. The Planning Officers have worked with the team to ensure this. In addition, there are clear 'Very Special Circumstances' which justify the development on MOL, in accordance with Planning Policy. A detailed VSC report was submitted with Option Appraisals demonstrating the impossibility of repair and extension and that no alternative was possible and summarising the overwhelming need for the services provided by the Playcentres in the Borough. No 40 Beaufort Road suggests a different location such as 150 metres to east. This however would not be compliant with MOL protection, would lose many trees and compromise use.

Regarding "Conservation Area excessive spread": The visual Impact test criteria for Conservation Area and MOL have been met, with no perceived material increase in spread when perceived from the public area. The visual impact has also been minimised by the design of the buildings. A full Visual Impact Assessment has been provided by Terra Firma and is submitted with the application. This concludes that the low nature and sympathetic form of the buildings in appropriate cladding substantially reduces visual impact over what is there presently which is not visually attractive. In addition, it should be noted that the proposed building is lower for the most part than the existing and substantially lower than neighbouring buildings..

- **Loss of Green Area**

No 36 Beaufort Road claims a significant loss, but there is negligible change to open usable green area. It should be understood that the larger footprint primarily occupies the already concreted area and there is no increase in lateral extent.

2. BUILDING MASS and SCALE

- **Building Mass:**

This is a point raised by No 6 Beaufort Road. Few people realise that in the last 60 years regulations on minimum floor areas have increased greatly. While originally maintenance sheds could be instantly repurposed for children this is very much not the case now. The existing premises is rotting, without insulation, uses exposed electrics and plumbing, uninsulated floors, uninstalled heating, single leaf walls of brick and single glazing. The current facility is therefore unsuitable to deliver the vital services for children that the Playcentres charity provides.

New standards require concealed services, installed heating and greatly increased floor space per child. Staff/child ratios have increased. Toileting is subject to stringent standards increasing areas. The requirement to accommodate physically disabled needs means large toilets. As a result, floor area in replacement like-for-like child numbers has to be much larger. In addition, the users of the Playcentres require special toilets, wash down areas, more manoeuvring floor space and more one-to-one space. On top of this there is the need for staff toilets, offices and counselling. Thus what would do 60 years ago is, of necessity, far larger today.

The design has ensured, as outlined above, that the minimum extension is proposed which would meet the requirements needed. Facilities and areas have been integrated and shared as far as possible. This has the benefit of increasing sustainability scoring. The submitted plans therefore have reflected a design process which has sought to minimise the mass of the buildings proposed whilst ensuring they are fit for purpose to meet a demonstrated local need.

- **Scale and Design**

The buildings are designed to be sympathetic to the tree shapes that surround and much of the scheme is principally single storey with a roof ridge of 5m, and so lower than the 5.4 of the sharp ridges of the existing. The higher portion of the proposal is set well back from public view. Curves and placement were all guided by the requests of English Heritage and Heritage England and Planning Officers as being a more sympathetic scale for the Park.

The floor plan has been discussed with the officers and was reduced as far as possible. It was demonstrated that the proposed floor plan must accommodate extremely demanding space requirements, disabilities and ablutions, as well as security issues that did not require

legislated and required best practice floor space when the buildings were first used 60 years ago. The lateral spread or depth of the proposals remain similar to the existing. The building has been designed to respond to the needs of its intended users whilst appearing sympathetic and discreet. The design approach has incorporated elements which draw from the landscaped setting of the Playcentres to ensure it responds appropriately to its context.

3. NOISE

The submitted Design and Access Report records meter readings along the boundary to Beaufort Road during the play centre use in 2019 (pre-Covid.) This showed that highest noise levels came from maintenance vehicles passing on the intervening service road and from adult football on the pitches. Irrespective of this, the same external activities will continue as before.

No 30 Beaufort Road objects to noise from inside as unsatisfactorily controlled by staff closing windows. The scheme drawings clearly mark windows facing Beaufort Road as sealed shut and obscured glass. (see submitted drawings 15A, “acoustic attenuating glazing” note on drawing 3A, the note on drawing 3A and note the “obscured glass glazing” to first floor plan 4A). *This can be ensured by a suitable Planning Condition.*

The potential externally sourced noise by play is criticised but the open areas for children will not generate significant additional individuals as the new charities handle small groups of disabled and SEN children. *The times of use can be ensured by Planning Condition.*

4. LOSS OF VIEW

No 40 Beaufort Road states a loss of view. While loss of view is not a material consideration in planning law it is worth pointing out that ground floor dwellings are screened, particularly by high dense hedge at Beaufort Lodge. The views from houses are unchanged but there was a comment in 2019 in earlier consultation with Beaufort Road that the landscape needed refreshing. This is in the scheme.

One comment (No 40 Beaufort Road) stated there is more than one two story building proposed. This is incorrect. Approximately a third of the single building in the application has a first floor use. An additional comment is that it is “even higher than a standard roof”. This is incorrect: a standard low pitch roof of 22.5 degrees would be approximately 1.5 to 2m higher. Flat roofs were objected to by English Heritage. No 42 Beaufort Road states height obstructs view of Park. However, all the houses have an unchanged view (except landscape improvement) but two flats have a view slightly changed. The view from these flat windows to the west is unchanged (apart from the enhanced landscape), and directly in front changes from a large concrete slab, dilapidated building and sheds (see photo on submitted drawing 14A) to sedum planted roof, a far more attractive prospect.

Examination of these views from the flats in question shows that sitting and standing eye height would be approximately 4m and 4.3m and 6.5m and 7m above ground for first and second floor in Beaufort Lodge respectively. The existing play centre ridges are at 5.4 m so already in the long view eye line on first floor.. The proposed curved ridges are 5m above ground generally, and rising to 6.5m on the two floored element. However this latter roof has its ridge approximately 17m away from the flats. There is also an ameliorating perspective effect when viewing such a curve.

5. PROXIMITY

The proposed building is at a distance generally accepted as Good Practice, and it is screened at ground by trees and hedging. The closest part of the proposed building is at least 15m away from the Beaufort Road properties. There is no habitable room to habitable room window loss of privacy. It is on land that is not an adjoining activity as park and English Heritage use (access road) surrounds the proposal on all four sides. There is intervening service road, hedging and space. The proposed building has sealed and obscured glazing on the elevation facing Beaufort Road properties. Outside play activity is to be no closer than it was before. Setting out dimensions are included in the Application.

6. POTENTIAL LOSS OF LIGHT

No 40 Beaufort Road in a second letter complains of loss of light. This is unlikely to be the case. The current play centre extends to approximately 15 -16 metres from Beaufort Lodge facade. The proposal places the new building approximately 2 metres further away than existing, as shown on the submitted drawings. The buildings are surrounded by park and the majority of the Beaufort Road properties overlook this landscape aspect.