

Planning Committee Report	
Planning Ref:	PL/2025/0000864/FUL
Site:	School House Briton Road Coventry CV2 4LF
Ward:	Upper Stoke
Proposal:	Change of use from residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to children's nursery (Use Class E(f))
Case Officer:	Tom Cox

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to consider the above application for the change of use of the existing residential dwellinghouse (Use Class C3), located adjacent to Stoke Primary School, to a nursery for up to 15 children (Use Class E(f)). The proposal includes some minor internal and external changes to accommodate the change of use but does not include any alterations to the footprint of the building.

BACKGROUND

This application is being considered by Planning Committee as the application has received a petition sponsored by an Elected Member which objects to this application. The petition has 32 signatures, 1 no. additional objection has also been received.

KEY FACTS

Reason for report to committee:	The application has received a petition sponsored by an Elected Member that objects to this application.
Current use of site:	Dwellinghouse (Use Class C3)
Proposed use of site:	Nursery (Use Class E(f))

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Committee are recommended to grant planning permission subject to conditions.

REASON FOR DECISION

- The proposal is acceptable in principle.
- The proposal will not adversely impact upon highway safety and impacts will be appropriate managed and mitigated in accordance with Policy AC2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017.
- The proposal will not adversely impact upon the amenity of neighbours, with noise reduced to a minimum and use of the site limited to school opening hours.
- The proposal accords with Policies: DE1 and JE7 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan, together with the aims of the NPPF.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a residential dwellinghouse, located to the south of Stoke Primary School on a residential street on Briton Road. The property is detached and has a larger footprint than other residential plots in the area which are generally terraced with comparatively smaller overall plots. The property has an existing garage, and a driveway which has space for 2 cars, with an associated dropped kerb and vehicular access. Based on the information submitted as part of the application, the property is a former caretaker's house associated with Stoke Primary School which was occupied until 3 years ago and since then it has been used for purposes ancillary to the school such as classes and staff meetings. However, its last known lawful use was a dwellinghouse.

To the north of the site is the main car park for the school, which is allocated to staff members, and vehicular access to the school playing fields is located to the south with the main playing fields to the east. The closest residential plot is 6m to the south along Roman Road, with the closest dwelling house situated 20m from the proposed nursery.

The property has all its permitted development rights intact, and there are no known site constraints which would impact the development or change of use of the property.

APPLICATION PROPOSAL

Under this application, the applicant is seeking to change the use of the existing dwellinghouse, within Use Class C3, to a day nursery, within Use Class E(f). The proposed nursery will accommodate up to 15 children per session, with the intention of providing 2no. sessions every day, one in the morning and another in the afternoon. The applicant does not intend to extend the footprint of the dwelling house but does propose some minor internal and external alterations to accommodate the change of use.

External alterations include the conversion of the existing garage to the front of the property to create an office/staff room for nursery workers, and the property's private garden will be developed as a secure outdoor play area for the children. No alterations are proposed to the footprint, although some minor alterations, such as upgraded boundary treatments, may be required to meet regulatory requirements.

Internal alterations include the removal of non-structural stud walls to allow for appropriately sized play and learning spaces to accommodate the change of use.

PLANNING HISTORY

Whilst there have been planning applications on the main school (Stoke Primary School), there are no recent or relevant planning applications applicable to the application site which refers only to the School House.

POLICY

National Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. The NPPF increases the focus on achieving high quality design and states that it is "fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve".

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) adds further context to the NPPF and it is intended that the two documents are read together.

Local Policy Guidance

The current local policy is provided within the Coventry Local Plan 2017, which was adopted by Coventry City Council on 6th December 2017. Relevant policy relating to this application is:

- Policy DE1: Ensuring High Quality Design
- Policy CO1: New or improved social community and leisure premises
- Policy AC1: Accessible Transport Network
- Policy AC2: Road Network
- Policy AC3: Demand Management
- Policy AC4: Walking and Cycling

Emerging Local Policy Guidance – Local Plan Review Reg 19 Consultation

Local Plan review is currently at Reg 19 consultation. Relevant emerging policy relating to this application is:

- Policy DE1: Ensuring High Quality Design
- Policy CO1: New or improved social community and leisure premises
- Policy AC1: Accessible Transport Network
- Policy AC2: Road Network
- Policy AC3: Demand Management
- Policy AC4: Walking and Cycling

Supplementary Planning Guidance/ Documents (SPG/ SPD):

SPD Coventry Connected
SPD Householder Design Guide

CONSULTATION

Non-Statutory

No Objections received from: Highways

No Objections received from: Environmental Protection

Neighbour consultation

Immediate neighbours and local Councillors have been notified.

1no. letter of objection and 1no. petition sponsored by an Elected Member (which has received 32 signatures) have been received against the application, raising the following material planning considerations:

- a) Concerns about the hours of operation and number of children in attendance and the cumulative impact on residential amenity with the adjacent Stoke Primary School.
- b) Concerns about the additional impact on parking stress in the area and concern that the additional vehicle movements will cause additional harm to the amenity of the area and increase risk to pedestrians and highway safety.

The following non-material planning considerations were raised, however these are not matters that can be given due consideration in the planning process:

- a) The residents have stated that Briton Road should be a resident only parking area. This is not a matter that can be considered under this application, and the residents are advised to follow the appropriate procedure. Further details of this can be found on the council website, the council's traffic management department have been made aware of this petition.

Any further comments received will be reported as late representations.

APPRAISAL

The main issues in determining this application are principle of development, impact upon the character of the area, impact upon neighbouring amenity, and highway considerations.

Principle of development

In considering the principle of development, reference should be made to the relevant local and national planning policies which are applicable to the provision of childcare.

Paragraph 100 of the NPPF emphasizes the importance of having a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places available to meet the needs of existing and new communities.

Policy CO1 of the local plan also states that proposals for new or improved social, community and leisure premises should be considered based on:

- a) The appropriateness of their proposed location in relation to their scale and intended catchment;*
- b) Compatibility with nearby uses;*
- c) Accessibility by a choice of means of transport; and*
- d) Compatibility with other Plan Policies.*

Whilst the surrounding area is primarily residential, the dwellinghouse is situated adjacent to Stoke Primary School and has a historic relationship with the school and is currently used for school activities, such as classes and meetings. The proposed nursery for up to 15 children per session (up to 30 per day) is unlikely to have a significant impact on the character of the surrounding area given the established

school adjacent to the site. Given its proximity to the school, it is an appropriate location with compatibility with those uses nearby, notably the adjacent school. The proposal is also accessible by a choice means of transport. The proposal would therefore accord with Policy CO1, subject to all other material planning matters being found acceptable.

The property is surrounded by the school grounds and does not share a boundary with any of the nearby residential dwelling houses along Briton Road and Roman Road due to its location, with the school buildings to the north and an access route to the school playing fields to the south, the playing fields extend around 70m beyond the rear boundary to the east. The closest property is no.16 Briton Road, which is approximately 18m from the footprint of the existing dwelling house and other properties to the west of Roman Road. The respective plots are approximately 6m to the south of the side boundary of the application site. Given that it already appears to have a much larger footprint than the surrounding residential plots, the proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact on the character of the area.

Given the existing size of the school, the intensification of the use of the School House to accommodate no more than 15 children at any one time, the change of use is not considered to cause any significant issues. The principle of the change of use from a dwellinghouse to a children's nursery in this location is therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy CO1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017, and the relevant parts of the NPPF.

Impact on visual amenity

Concerning the impact on visual amenity, the key external alterations, which will be visible from the street scene will be the conversion of the existing garage to an office/staff room for nursery staff. As a result of this, the garage entrance will be bricked up and replaced with a new UPVC window. In consideration of this proposal, Policy DE1 notes that development will be expected to contribute positively to the character of the street scene.

It is noted that the property is an anomaly within the surrounding residential area, as it is detached, larger in size and includes a garage within the main mass of the main dwellinghouse. There are no similar examples of dwellinghouses like this in the immediate surrounding area. Given that garages are not characteristic of the local area, the removal of the existing garage door and insertion of a window to facilitate the conversion of the garage into an office, lobby and WC is an acceptable alteration and in accordance with Policy DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 as it would not impact on the character of the area. It is also noted that despite the change of use, the property will largely continue to appear as a residential dwellinghouse within the street scene.

The other external alterations include alterations to the rear garden to convert it into a secure outdoor play area. Whilst the information submitted relating to this is limited, it is not considered to impact on the visual amenity of the street scene and character of the area, as views of this will be limited from public areas. It is also noted in the design and access statement submitted that some other minor alterations may be required such as updated boundary treatments, to meet regulatory requirements.

With due consideration to all these things, the impact on visual amenity is acceptable and in accordance with Policy DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017.

Impact on residential amenity

When considering the impact on residential amenity, relevant matters generally relate to noise as there are no significant alterations to the built development on site.

Paragraph 198 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should: *'ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment.'* It goes on to state that in doing so they should: *'mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development.'*

It is noted that the proposed nursery will include the conversion of the garden into an outdoor play area for the children. Due to the proximity to neighbouring properties to the south along Roman Road, the environmental protection officer has requested a noise management plan or a noise reduction plan (as the applicant's plan is entitled). This should indicate the hours of use, number of children utilising the outdoor area at any one time and behaviour management.

The applicant has submitted a plan which details this information. The close relationship which the proposed nursery will have with the school means that it will operate around school hours, with the approximate opening hours being between 8.35am and 3.30pm. Two sessions will run throughout the day, the first starting at 8.35am and finishing at 11.45am, and the second commencing at 12.10pm and finishing by 3.15pm with the provision closing at 3.30pm.

Each session will have up to 15 children in attendance with outdoor times limited to between 9.15am and 11.30am in the morning, and 12.40pm and 3.00pm in the afternoon. The applicant has advised that no more than 8no. children will be using the outdoor area at any one time as will be managed by staff. As noted in the plan, there will be two groups of children within each session and only one using the outdoor area at any one time, meaning the number of children outside can be easily managed.

Given the opening times of the nursery which will be similar to the primary school, albeit in closer proximity to the residential properties on Roman Road, it is considered that sufficient information has been provided to indicate potential adverse impacts resulting from noise will be limited provided the use is managed in strict accordance with the noise reduction plan submitted, this will be conditioned as such. The Local Planning Authority's Environmental Protection officer has no objections to the application, and the proposal is considered to accord with Paragraph 198 of the NPPF.

Highway considerations

Policy AC1 'Accessible Transport Network' states that development proposals which are expected to generate additional trips on the transport network should: a) Integrate with existing transport networks including roads, public transport and walking and cycling routes to promote access by a choice of transport modes. b) Consider the transport and accessibility needs of everyone living, working or visiting the city. c)

Support the delivery of new and improved high quality local transport networks which are closely integrated into the built form. d) Actively support the provision and integration of emerging and future intelligent mobility infrastructure.

Policy AC2 of the Local Plan states that where 'New development proposals which are predicted to have a negative impact on the capacity and/or safety of the highway network should mitigate and manage the traffic growth which they are predicted to generate to ensure that they do not cause unacceptable levels of traffic congestion, highway safety problems and poor air quality.'

Policy AC3 of the Local Plan acknowledges that the provision of car parking can influence occurrences of inappropriate on-street parking which can block access routes for emergency, refuse and delivery vehicles, block footways preventing access for pedestrians, reduce visibility at junctions and impact negatively on the street scene. Proposals for the provision of car parking associated with new development will be assessed based on parking standards set out in Appendix 5. The car parking standards also include requirements for the provision of electric car charging and cycle parking infrastructure.

Concerning the impact on the highway, it is noted that provision for 2no. off-street parking spaces for the existing 3-bedroom dwellinghouse would be acceptable and in accordance with the parking standards laid out in Appendix 5 of the Coventry Connected SPD. It is also noted that the property has an existing garage. However, the existing dimensions, measured as 2.5m x 4.8m, would not be of sufficient size to formally contribute to the parking provision on site. Furthermore, this is proposed to be lost as part of the development with the garage converted into an office for nursery workers.

As noted in the parking standards outlined in Coventry Connected SPD, there is a requirement for 1no. parking space per 2no. FTE staff, the existing provision would therefore accommodate for up to 4no. staff members. However, given that the overall use of the school site will be intensified because of this development, the Local Highways Authority have sought clarification on how parking will be managed and how any impacts on the highway can be mitigated. Many residents have raised concerns about the wider impact on on-street parking, which is understood to have a significant impact on residents along Briton Road and is the main reason that objections to this application have been raised. There are concerns that further intensification of the site's use will lead to increased risk to pedestrians and other highways safety concerns.

The applicant has clarified that the proposed nursery will operate as part of the school and will be staffed by 3no. existing members of staff who will be redeployed to manage this facility. Therefore, there is no further requirement for additional staff parking to accommodate the intensification of the use. The applicant has noted that parents will be able to use the existing driveway to drop-off and pick up their children. There is space for up to 2no. cars in the driveway, this will alleviate some of the impact of the parking situation which residents have raised concerns about.

Concerns raised by residents related to highways safety have been noted, particularly at pick up and drop off times. However, the proposed nursery use will only account for 15no. additional children at any one time. Additionally, by allowing parents to park on the driveway of School House, this will alleviate some of the parking stress which is felt by residents. The proximity to the school allows the opportunity for joint trips for parents to drop siblings off at school and nursery at the same time. It is therefore considered that the proposed development is in an appropriate location and the overall impact on the highway will be limited and any impacts have been appropriately managed and mitigated in accordance with Policy AC2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017.

The Local Highways Authority have no objection to the application, and the proposal is therefore considered to have an acceptable impact on the highway and would accord with Policy AC2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017.

Concerning any other matters related to highways, as part of the petition which has been submitted to the Local Authority, requests have been made for Briton Road to become a resident's only parking area. This is a minor planning application which would not trigger any consideration of contributions towards a residents parking scheme and the parking provision is considered acceptable for this development so it would not be reasonable to require this application to address existing issues. It is a matter which residents should pursue with the Local Highways Authority. In the interests of seeking to assist those residents, the officer has contacted highways to understand the process which should be followed to progress this matter.

The officer has spoken to the relevant highways officer about this matter who has advised that this request needs to be dealt with by the Traffic Management team and cannot be considered as part of the determination of this planning application. Information regarding these matters is available on the council website.

Equality Implications

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:-

(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers have taken this into account and given due regard to this statutory duty, and the matters specified in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in the determination of this application.

There are no known equality implications arising directly from this development.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle and will not result in any significant impact upon neighbour amenity or highway safety, subject to relevant conditions. The reason for Coventry City Council granting planning permission is because the development is in accordance with: Policies DE1, CO1, AC2 and AC3 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan Policies together with the aims of the NPPF.

CONDITIONS/REASON

1.	The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
Reason	<i>To conform with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)</i>

2.	The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Proposed Site Plan DWG PR201; Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations DWG PR200; C6179-PL-DOC-001-Design-and-Access-Statement; Noise Management Plan (received 15.07.2025); Officer correspondence (received 15.07.2025);
Reason	<i>For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.</i>

3.	Other than where specified on the approved plans, no facing materials shall be used other than materials similar in appearance to those used predominantly in the construction of the exterior of the existing building.
Reason	<i>To ensure that the proposed development has a satisfactory external appearance in the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.</i>

4.	The use hereby permitted shall not take place other than between 8.30am hours and 3.30pm hours Mondays to Fridays.
Reason	<i>To safeguard the amenities of nearby occupiers in accordance with Policy DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local</i>

	<i>Plan.</i>
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5.	The proposed use shall operate only in strict accordance with the noise reduction plan as listed within the approved plans which permits a maximum of 8 children using the outdoor play area at any one time.
<i>Reason</i>	<i>To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining occupiers of the development in accordance with Policy DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 and the emerging Local Plan.</i>