

Our Ref: 2786 (Final V1.0)

30th March 2026

Development Control Department
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Nutgrove Villa
Westmorland Road
Huyton
L36 6GA
(Submitted via the Planning Portal)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Erection of a Detached Building - Kids Planet, 2 Sandstone Drive, Whiston, Prescot, L35 7NJ

This letter accompanies an application in relation to the erection of a detached composite building as ancillary use to the long standing, well-established nursery, Kids Planet.

The Site and Proposals

The applicant, Kids Planet, is a family-owned award-winning group of over 240 nurseries across the UK. Kids Planet are responsible for the care and education of over 30,000 children and are fully committed to ensuring each child is given the best opportunities. In 2018, Kids Planet set up their own in-house Teaching Academy where teaching and learning is at the heart of it all.

Kids Planet nursery at Whiston provides necessary and vital childcare for parents and children living in the local area and, in order to continue to provide this important facility and future proof the business, the nursery requires additional space by way of a detached composite building. The proposed building is to be sited to the southwest of the main nursery building within the curtilage of the existing nursery site. The site and its surroundings are shown in the below aerial image Figure 1.

The building measures 12m x 4m (48m²) x 2.5m in height with a flat EPDM rubber roof, ash composite finish and dark grey/ black window and door surrounds. An image of the type of building proposed is shown in Figure 2 below.

No alterations are proposed to the existing nursery building.



Figure 1 – Site and surroundings.



Figure 2 – Type of building proposed.

Planning History

- 20/00244/TWA - Remedial Works to 19no Trees – Approved
- 15/00821/FUL - Application to vary condition no. 2 and no. 18 attached to planning permission 13/00404/FUL (Change of use of office building (use Class B1) to children's day care centre (use Class D1) to include external alterations to west elevation to access new play area , alterations to car parking area together with associated works) which require the development to be carried out in accordance with approved plans and restricts opening hours to allow for amendments to elevations, site layout/landscaping and revised opening hours – Approved (Appeal dismissed disputed hours APP/V4305/W/16/3157866)
- 13/00404/FUL - Change of use of office building (use Class B1) to children's day care centre (use Class D1) to include external alterations to west elevation to access new play area, alterations to car parking area together with associated works – Approved.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

Paragraph 2 of the NPPF states that “applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It explains that in the context of decision taking, this means approving proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.

Paragraph 12 confirms that the presumption in favour of sustainable development established by the Framework does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that conflicts with an up-to-date local plan should not usually be granted planning permission, and decisions that depart from an up-to date development plan should only be taken if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

Paragraph 85 of the NPPF prescribes significant weight to the need to support economic growth and productivity and states the following:

Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.

Chapter 8 of the NPPF Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities aims to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and states the following:

Paragraph 100 of the NPPF states it is important that sufficient choice of early years, school and post 16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to develop that will widen choice in education.

Knowsley Local Plan Adopted Core Strategy (January 2016)

Spatial Vision – Knowsley in 2028 *Knowsley’s economy will be stronger and more diverse, providing employment choices for local people and helping to drive economic growth in the wider Liverpool City Region. Knowsley will be attractive for businesses to invest in, providing a range of employment land and premises to meet their needs. The new Learning Centres coupled with investment in primary schools, adult training and skills initiatives, will raise educational attainment, skills and aspiration levels, so Knowsley’s people can access a wider range of jobs and better meet the needs of employers.*

Knowsley’s communities will be better connected to local employment opportunities, health care, education, shopping, leisure and recreation provision.

Strategic Objective 1 - Sustainable Economic and Employment Growth

To encourage and maintain sustainable economic and employment growth in Knowsley, complementary to that within the wider Liverpool City Region, by accommodating employment related development, improving skills within the workforce, and promoting enterprise, entrepreneurship and innovation.

Strategic Objective 9 - Promoting Health and Wellbeing in Knowsley

*To address existing health inequalities and encourage enhancements to the **health and wellbeing** of Knowsley’s residents by ensuring a health promoting environment and provision of healthy lifestyle options for those living and working in the borough.*

Policy SD1 – Sustainable Development echoes paragraph 11 of the NPPF ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ and seeks to ‘*pro-actively work with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area*’.

Policy CS2 Development Principles

1) New development in Knowsley and the preparation of subsequent stages of the Local Plan will be expected to support the following development principles:

Principle 1: *Promote sustainable economic development, tackle the causes of deprivation and disadvantage and narrow the gap between the richest and poorest neighbourhoods by:*

- a) Meeting needs for new housing, employment, retail and other service provision;*
- b) Improving business productivity and employment levels in Knowsley;*
- c) Reducing economic, environmental, education, health and other social inequalities between Knowsley and other parts of the UK*

Principle 3: Reduce the need to travel and increase accessibility by:

d) Supporting the provision and retention of shared space, community facilities and other local services (such as local shops, health facilities, education Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy January 2016 Chapter 5 Spatial Strategy Page 51 provision, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship).

Knowsley Unitary Development Plan (June 2006) Saved Policies

Policy H5 – Development within Primarily Residential Areas states *some non-residential development and uses, such as corner shops, and local services, may be appropriately sited within Primarily Residential Areas. In many cases such uses are indeed needed to provide facilities close to where people live. Such uses should be carefully sited and designed to avoid causing loss of amenity for neighbours to ensure that such uses do not adversely affect occupiers of neighbouring property’.*

Policy OS7– Educational Uses and Sites states *‘proposals for the development of new schools, colleges or other training facilities, or for alterations or extensions to existing educational or training facilities will be granted planning permission provided that they are located and designed in a way which is convenient and accessible to pupils, students and other members of the community which they are intended to serve and would not conflict with the securing of students or residential amenity’.*

Planning Considerations

Principle of the Development

The application site is located within a predominately residential area in Whiston. The proposal involves the siting of a detached composite building which will provide additional ancillary space in association with the existing long-established nursery, Kids Planet.

The building will sit entirely acceptably alongside the associated business. The scheme will support the operations of an existing local employer and constitutes economic development which is heavily supported by both local and national planning policies.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in principle subject to there being no adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area, residential amenity or the local highway network.

Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area and Visual Amenity

The proposed building will be located within the curtilage of the existing nursery, which is bounded by a mixture of low walling, timber fencing, and a number of well-established trees. The proposed building is single storey therefore views of the building from the B5201 and Sandstone Drive are well screened by boundary treatments and the main nursery building.

The proposed building is sited away from the main entrance of the site therefore views from Blundell Road will be limited due to the established tree line to the east of the site, as such, the building will not appear prominent within the street scene nor will the building impact negatively upon the character or appearance of the surrounding area.

There are no alterations proposed to existing boundary treatments or landscaping.

Impact upon Residential Amenity

The building is proposed to be sited to the southwest of the main nursery building within the curtilage of the existing nursery site. There are no adjoining neighbouring dwellings to the site therefore no overbearing impacts, overshadowing or overlooking would occur.

The site comprises a long-standing nursery, located within a predominately residential area and given the existing use of the site it is anticipated there would be no adverse impacts to neighbouring residential amenity in terms of noise impacts above and beyond the current use, as a result of the proposals.

Highway Safety

The proposals involve the siting of a detached composite building which will provide ancillary space in association with the existing long-established nursery, Kids Planet.

The proposed building will be sited within the main carpark. The majority of parking on site is by staff; however, the car park is not fully utilised as not all staff travel by car, some walk and some bike to work. This leaves capacity within the existing parking area to accommodate staff and visitor parking, and parents dropping their children off as presently occurs. Parents will continue to access the site on foot, which is no different to the current use of the site.

It is therefore considered that the proposals will not materially increase the number of vehicle movements associated with the site, and any loss of car parking spaces as a result of the development will not prejudice the safe or efficient use of the highway network.

Other Matters

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 which has a low probability of flood risk.

The site does not contain any habitats for protected species, and the scheme does not propose the removal of any vegetation or trees. In terms of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), the building will be sited on a sealed surface therefore is exempt.

Conclusions

The scheme will support the operations of an existing business and will support employment in the borough whilst continuing to provide necessary and vital childcare for parents and children living in the local area.

The use of the proposed building is entirely compatible in association with the long-standing, established nursery Kids Planet. The building is single storey and will not harm the character or appearance of the area, or the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings and will not prejudice the safe or efficient use of the highway network.

The proposal will have no adverse impacts on flooding.

There are no habitats for protected species on the site and, as the building is to be sited on a sealed surface, the development is therefore exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain.

The proposals therefore constitute sustainable development which accords with the requirements of both local and national planning policy. Therefore, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development established by Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework, it is respectfully requested that the application be approved.

Should further information be required, please contact the agent JMI Planning.

Yours faithfully,