

SPEECH TO CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE

18th March 2017

C/5008/16/CC Morley Memorial Primary School, Cambridge

I speak as the local councillor for Queen Edith's and a 'Morley mum', as we call one another locally. Morley Memorial Primary School is over 100 years old, one of the oldest schools in Cambridge. It is named after a former Liberal MP, Samuel Morley.

Morley's first principal, a Mr Horobin, declared at the school's opening in 1900,:

“It is the birthright of every child to have the best possible education”

The school still sticks to this principle, and it is at the heart of the development proposals before you today.

I would like to talk first about the building used to house the Early Years classes, children of 4 and 5. It is a two-storey house.

In the Reception class at school, children are exploring, learning through play. A lot of their learning takes place outdoors and it's important that the children have easy access to the outdoor space. This isn't possible in a two-storey building with stairs.

Stairs also mean one of the classes is inaccessible for anyone in a wheelchair — pupil or teacher.

It's on a different side of the road to the rest of the school. Over the road may not seem very far — but any journey involving 4 and 5 year-olds takes time, especially in the winter months. Those of you who are parents will know how long it can take to get a 4 year old to put outdoor coat and shoes on – imagine what it is like for a teacher having to get 60 of them ready to go out and then across the road safely. All this eats into lesson time.

New classrooms will not only provide for the Reception children to be with the rest of the school but they will provide better for food technology and IT. And there will be improvements to boiler, toilets, and windows.

All changes that would improve the learning experience and fulfil the original aim of the first principal, to provide the best possible education.

I have listened carefully to the objectors, and I have had similar correspondence at home from people with concerns.

Education is a chief priority for many of my constituents in Queen Edith's – but we must acknowledge the local concerns about parking, vehicle movements, noise and safety.

This application is only for the main school site on Blinco Grove, but there are understandable concerns about how the different use of the EY building might increase parking and traffic – big problems already.

But parking and traffic are part of a much wider problem than just Blinco Grove. We should not allow parking to block improvements to the community, but address them.

Deliveries and construction traffic

I strongly support the condition on delivery times but am concerned that construction vehicles may still be around at the time that children are coming out of school. Condition 8.19 says no deliveries between 13.30 and 15.00. I would like to see this pushed back a little, as if a vehicle arrives just before 3, it could still be offloading when children come out of school.

I hope that the school can make provision for builders' vehicles to park in the school car park if the work is during school holidays.

A new residents' parking scheme will mean there will be no parking allowed in the street from 10-5, and residents in other nearby streets are pushing for parking restrictions.

To sum up, I urge you to pass the application – and make this nineteenth century school fit for the twenty-first century.