The Spinney Nursery
Windmill Drive | London SW4 9DE
For Lambeth Council

RIBA Stage 1 report - preparation and brief

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Approved Inspector Services

Original document size: A3
Contents

1. Purpose of this report 3
2. RIBA Plan of Work 3
3. Site location and description 4
4. Outline brief contained in the tender 5
   4.1 Client consultation and objectives 5
5. Existing building 6
   5.1 The building and its users 6
6. Four options: 7
   6.0 Existing building 8
   6.1 Option 1 - minimal extension 9
   6.2 Option 2 - mid-sized extension and upgrade 10
   6.3 Option 3 - smaller new building 11
   6.4 Option 4 - larger new building 12
7. Health and Safety 13
8. Planning and highways implications 13
9. Target programme 14
10. Design team details 15

Appendices (separate document)
Appendix A: Outline specifications and supporting information
   Appendix A1: Architect outline specifications
   Appendix A2: Structural engineer outline specifications
   Appendix A3: Service engineer outline specifications
Appendix B: Outline cost estimates
Appendix C: Dimensional survey drawings
   Appendix C1: Existing building plans
   Appendix C2: Existing building sections
   Appendix C3: Existing building elevations
Appendix D: Photos of the model
1. Purpose of this report

The RIBA plan of work describes 8 distinct work stages (0-7). These are intended to make clear what design and coordination work will be undertaken when and what decisions are required for the project to proceed from stage to stage. Based on our understanding that this project will be procured using a ‘traditional’ contract, the specific plan of work has been generated and shown here (right).

Towards the end of each stage, Civic Architecture Office will produce a work stage report for Client review. The stage is completed when required decisions and approval to proceed to the next stage contained in the report have been confirmed in writing by the client. The project programme is subject to this process.

For the Spinney nursery, we understand that an initial appraisal and business case has already been completed by Lambeth Council as client in order to proceed with a tender process for a design team. Our work therefore commences at Stage 1 with the main output being a project brief. A number of high-level options are contained in this report with significant implications for the budget and for the kind of building that will be provided. Outline assumptions have been made to arrive at these options. Conclusion of this stage will occur on client confirmation of:

- The chosen option, the required floor area and therefore project budget
- A project brief that reflects the above. This will become the project brief for the appointment contract. Whilst more detailed decisions about the building will be required later, the overall brief should remain unchanged during the project.
- The assumptions, such as standards to be followed and where necessary approval to instigate further site investigations such as trial pits during the next stage.
- The target project programme

The report incorporates information from our design team, as included in our tender documents and listed on the front page.
3. Site location and description

The Spinney Nursery is located off Windmill Drive on the southeastern side of Clapham Common. Clapham Common is divided between two Local Authority administrations: Lambeth and Wandsworth Councils with the boundary running roughly north south through the middle of the park. The building is adjacent to a public WC building serving a playground. The nursery have use of the centre room in this adjacent building as a store room. The nursery has its own outdoor play area and ‘field’ and is surrounded by mature trees. Access is via a gated park road. There are residential properties and a hotel and restaurant to the east. The site is within a designated Conservation area. The site is relatively flat. The buildings on the site are single storey and buildings to the east are generally 2 and 3 storeys. There is a cafe to the east on the Common and a bandstand reputed to be London’s oldest. The red boundary line on this plan indicates the area that the Council has advised is under the control of the Nursery. A confirmation of the ownership boundary will be required prior to a planning application.
4. Outline brief contained in the tender

As provided by Lambeth Council:

Outline Brief

The Spinney is a small children's centre on Clapham Common. They currently cater for about 16 pre school children and wish to expand so the centre can increase the number of children by 4-8 and space requirements are for 2.8m² per additional child. They have space in the existing grounds for an extension to provide a new building that directly communicates to the existing centre. Some small internal alterations to the existing building will also be required as will a new stand alone classroom in another part of the existing grounds. They are keen to explore how these new buildings can be sustainable and reflect best practice in new design, perhaps with green roofs or other eco friendly features. They are particularly keen to expand in order to include more children with disabilities. The total value of the job is likely to be around £100K.

Scope of Work

We will use the standard RIBA form of agreement for this contract and the intention is that you will provide a complete service to Lambeth for the design and construction of the project from initial consultation with the client to final sign off of defects. You will be responsible for tendering the works and obtaining three compliant tenders, evaluating the tenders and producing a report and recommendations for Lambeth Officers to use to appoint the successful contractor.

You will be responsible for obtaining planning permission and all other necessary statutory approvals. Following the appointment of the contractor you will be responsible for supervising the works, assuring CDM compliance issuing instructions to the contractor and certifying valuations for payment.

4.1 Client consultation and objectives

The tender interview was held at the nursery and during the visit, nursery staff expressed further aspirations for the buildings, which were clarified over subsequent visits and on detailed inspection of the existing buildings.

Visits to the building took place on 15th and 22nd April. A meeting was held at Lambeth Council offices on 6th May with Clive Wilson, Jane Chrisofi and Karen Nugent to discuss emerging options and further clarify the brief.

An outdoor classroom as part of landscaping works to the ‘field’ next to the nursery was requested and it was agreed that this would be designed and constructed by UEL students as part of their studies in the Autumn of 2015, to be progressed with Alan Chandler and not included within this main project.

The key objectives expressed were:

• Provision of the maximum number of places (factors of 4) possible, subject to the client business plan
• Exemplar provision for Special Educational Needs (SEN)
• Operation as an assessment centre for SEN
• Community Nature resource centre, providing broader functions than simple nursery including environmental education
• Multiple 'fronts' to the building, reflecting the different functions and making use of the storage space in the playground WC building
• A fully accessible, safe and comfortable environment
• A stimulating and varied environment for children with different needs
• More efficient use of space and a building that is easier to manage and operate
• If possible, a new, fit-for-purpose entrance and reception area, maintaining the existing entrance area for staff only.

Specific clarifications on the original brief were:

• Early Years Framework Standards requires 2.5 msq play area for 2 year olds and 2.3 msq for 3 year olds. **We have assumed a 50/50 split and an average provision of 2.4 msq per child**
• The standards do not refer to ancillary space, except to exclude it from the above and **we have assumed a ratio of 50% ancillary space to play area**
• The existing building is a half-brick construction, mostly uninsulated, does not have proper heating and is not wheelchair accessible. For this reason, more than small alterations may be required to make the building fit-for purpose. Given the low standard of the existing building and the potential cost of upgrading the existing we also consider **options for a new building instead of extending the existing.**
• **The budget may therefore vary in relation to the above**
• Temporary provision for the nursery to remain open during the works should be considered
• The scope of work will be as defined in the RIBA standard form of agreement and plan of work
• **No other special standards are required to be met, beyond the statutory level**
5. Existing buildings

The nursery building is a purpose-built single-storey structure, with a total Gross Internal Floor Area of approximately 86 msq. A reed screen runs around the outdoor play area and a full-height metal gate is the main point of access. The building is constructed from a half-brick wall overclad with painted timber. The hipped, pitched roof is clad with man-made tiles and the windows and doors are single-glazed timber frame. Eaves are overhanging and rainwater pipes discharge onto the surrounding surfaces, not directly into drains. Internally the walls are simple stud partitions with all services and cabling surface-mounted. There is a suspended plasterboard ceiling and loose-fill insulation above. Heating is via radiant heaters which are not adequate for the space and the nursery staff complain of being too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer. There is a domestic grade kitchen which doubles as a reception, a store-room, two children’s WCs in cubicles and a separate disabled / adult WC. There are manual timber shutters over the doors and windows. Our engineers have made further commentary on the building in the appended outline specifications. The nursery also has use of the central store in the adjacent public WC building that opens onto the park. This has a metal roller shutter and has simple timber shelving internally. A dimensional survey was carried out by CAO and is included in the appendices.

5.1 The building and its users

The building currently does not cater well for its users. We spent several hours observing the nursery in operation from opening to close. Opening up the building is time-consuming due to the shutters. Thresholds are not accessible and we observed a child with physical disabilities being manually lifted in his walker in and out of the building. There is no storage area for specialist disability equipment, no separate area suitable for confidential meetings, no appropriate wet area or changing area. The single, undifferentiated play area is noisy and does not offer 'quiet' spaces for the children. Apart from coat hooks there is no area for children's belongings and there is no easily accessible, appropriate file storage area for children's records and administration. The staff computer is located on the countertop in the kitchen. The outdoor play area is well-used and is very pleasant with appropriate equipment and a variety of surfaces for the children. It is partially overshadowed by the surrounding trees, but much is unshaded which can be a problem for small children in the summer.
6. Four options

Our initial appraisal was that a cost approximating the budget mentioned in the tender brief can be achieved with a new extension creating 8 new places, with only very minor adjustments to the existing building. Accessibility can be partially, but not fully addressed through the use of external ramps. This option (1) does not address many of the objectives of the brief and the significant shortcomings of the existing building, which cannot be described as truly fit for purpose and complying with current standards.

On examining the existing building in more detail, it quickly became clear that bringing the existing building up to (or close to) current standards requires significant investment. The existing building has been constructed in the most minimal way possible to achieve its current, narrowly-defined function and upgrading requires much of the fabric and services to be replaced. If the layout is not reconfigured as part of these works, it is possible to do so at a slightly lower cost than for the cost of the same size new building and so option 2 considers this ‘mid’ option, with a slightly larger extension, creating 12 additional places, plus additional storage / meeting space. This would result in a building that is close to current standards, but still does not address many of the objectives described earlier.

Given the costs of reconfiguring the existing building would be similar to creating a new one, option 3 considers an entirely new building. It is anticipated that the existing foundations and below-ground services could be retained and re-used in the new structure (subject to further site investigations). The size of the new structure is dependent on the Client’s needs and business case. We have shown two scale options: option 3 same size as option 2 and a larger option 4.

These options are shown on the following pages as diagrams - they have not yet been designed, but are sufficient to identify areas and outline scope of work for costing purposes. Outline specifications showing indicative works have been prepared to assist this process. These remain subject to further investigations, design and client decisions on level of works required etc. On conclusion of this work stage, CAO will develop a concept design during Stage 2 for the chosen option and to enable a more specific cost estimate. The cost estimates shown here will serve as a budget for this work.

In each option we have attempted to show the total number of places for children that can be provided. This is not a straightforward assessment however, as the number of places is dependent on several factors including the actual useable play area, the ancillary facilities and the age and needs of the children. This assessment has to be approved by OFSTED after completion of the building and so cannot be confirmed at the design stage. The relationship between storage, play space and ancillary space is quite different between the options and so we have made an approximate assessment of the ‘effective’ play space in each option. The proportion of the effective play space compared to the whole differs in each option depending on layout, access arrangements etc and so is only a guide at this stage. It is anticipated that the Client’s business plan will indicate an optimal number of places which we will then endeavour to accommodate within the limitations of the budget of the chosen option.

In each option, a decision has yet to be made about whether the nursery is required to remain open during the construction period. For this reason, a separate cost has been identified for a temporary classroom to enable continued operations.
6.1 Existing Building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total play area</td>
<td>56.8 msq</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of play spaces</td>
<td>15 (OFSTED approved)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective play area</td>
<td>36 msq (63%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancillary space</td>
<td>28 msq (48% of total play area)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Existing building play area is currently sufficient for 23 places but is limited due to facilities and storage constraints. Current no. of places = 15
6.2 Option 1 - minimal extension

**Total play area** 76 msq  
**Total number of play spaces** 23  
**Effective play area** 55.2 sqm (72%)  
**Ancillary space** 28 (37% of total play space - assumes further outside space used as storage)

**Advantages:**
- 8 additional places provided (2.4 msq / child average)
- Lowest cost option

**Disadvantages:**
- Not fully accessible
- Uninsulated building, inadequate comfort environment, high carbon footprint  
  - The typical cost of heating an uninsulated building of this size would be £2,600 per year, if it were to be heated fully (currently it isn't), compared with around £200 per year for a similar sized new building.
- Space lacks variety and stimulation
- Poor natural daylight in some areas
- Building difficult to operate
- No confidential meeting area, inadequate storage, no reception area
- Building cannot perform wider functions

**Outline cost estimate:** £175,351  
Includes fees, 10% contingency and 10% client on-costs  
Excludes VAT and temporary classroom

Including temporary classroom: £209,488

NB: cost estimates are based on assumptions and may change depending on client requirements, external factors or the results of site investigations - please refer to the appendices for details.

No. of spaces for children subject to Ofsted approval.
6.3 Option 2 - mid-sized extension and upgrading

Total play area: 85.6 msq
Total number of play spaces: 27
Effective play area: 64.8 (76%)
Ancillary space: 36 (42% of total play area)

Advantages:

- 12 additional places provided (2.4 msq / child average)
- Additional ancillary area
- ‘Near’ to current standards achieved, including insulation and heating

Disadvantages:

- Ideal configuration of space not achieved and some operational difficulties remain
- Limited ancillary space, no dedicated reception
- Single point of access
- Building not ideal to perform wider functions
- Environmental aspirations not fully met
- Significant cost to achieve sub-optimal building

Outline cost estimate: £329,565
Includes fees, 7.5% contingency and 10% client on-costs
Excludes VAT and temporary classroom

Including temporary classroom: £363,702

NB: cost estimates are based on assumptions and may change depending on client requirements, external factors or the results of site investigations - please refer to the appendices for details.

No. of spaces for children subject to Ofsted approval.

Nursery extension feasibility option 2

- Existing building minimal adjustments
- Existing building interior and exterior to be fully upgraded and adjustments including 1 No. additional WC
- Existing ancillary space 28 m²
- New extension additional storage/meeting space 8 m²
- New extension play area for 12 places x 2.4 m²
- Timber decked area with canopy
- Landscape works
- New extension boundary
- Total Internal Floor Area of New Extension 36.8 m²
- External Footprint of The Building (G.E.F.A 43 m² only of New Extension)
6.4 Option 3 - smaller new building

**Total play area** 82 msq  
**Total number of play spaces** 28  
**Effective play area** 67.2 msq (82%)  
**Ancillary space** 42 msq (51% of total play area)

**Advantages:**
- Up to 28 places provided in total  
- Public and staff separate entrances  
- Dedicated reception area  
- Dedicated storage space  
- Natural daylight throughout  
- Fully accessible  
- Varied and stimulating space provided for children with varied needs  
- High environmental performance  
- Educational resource centre function and aspirations provided for  
- Lowest risk option  
- Building can be extended later

**Outline cost estimate:**  
£398,475  
Includes fees, 5% contingency and 10% client on-costs  
Excludes VAT and temporary classroom

Including temporary classroom:  
£432,612

NB: cost estimates are based on assumptions and may change depending on client requirements, external factors or the results of site investigations - please refer to the appendices for details.

No. of spaces for children subject to Ofsted approval.
6.5 Option 4 - larger new building

**Total play area** 96 msq
**Total number of play spaces** 32
**Effective play area** 76.8msq (80%)
**Ancillary space** 48 msq (50% of total play area)

### Advantages:
- Up to 32 places provided in total
- Public and staff separate entrances
- Dedicated reception area
- Dedicated confidential meeting area
- Dedicated storage space
- Natural daylight throughout
- Fully accessible
- Varied and stimulating space provided for children with varied needs
- High environmental performance
- Educational resource centre function and aspirations provided for
- Lowest risk option
- Building can be extended later

### Disadvantages:
- Highest cost option

### Outline cost estimate: £496,876
Includes fees, 5% contingency and 10% client on-costs
Excludes VAT and temporary classroom

Including temporary classroom: £531,013

NB: cost estimates are based on assumptions and may change depending on client requirements, external factors or the results of site investigations - please refer to the appendices for details.

No. of spaces for children subject to Ofsted approval.
### 7. Health and Safety

In April 2015, new Construction Design and Management (CDM) regulations came into force. These regulations put obligations on Clients in relation to construction projects above certain thresholds, including to appoint a Principal Designer and to formally notify the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as soon as practicable of any project that is above the threshold.

Civic Architecture Office have been asked by the Client to act as Principal Designer for this project. This means that we will coordinate the Health and Safety information during the design stages of the process and will include this information in the tender issue to construction contractors and hand it over to the successful contractor. Each member of the design team is obliged to continuously review risks to Health and Safety during both the construction and operation of the building, to carry out risk assessments and mitigate risks; and to record these in designer’s risk assessments.

This project is likely to be notifiable and on conclusion of the stage 1, the Client is obliged to formally notify the HSE.

At this stage, there are no clear design proposals and so as yet no specific, foreseeable risks. However the building is in a public park and the use as a nursery present evident risks for any construction project and we will comply with the CDM regulations to mitigate these. This will also be used to inform decisions about the type of construction used, the location of temporary accommodation, etc.

### 8. Planning and highways implications

There is no proposed change of use, but the site is within a Conservation area and is visible from the park, though the existing building is largely concealed behind the public WCs. There is no change of use required and this is not anticipated to be a controversial proposal. The existing building does not have architectural merit and we anticipate the Local Planning Authority will not resist demolition if a new-build option is chosen. The need to provide adequate accommodation will be relevant as will the opportunity to design a higher quality building as a single piece, rather than extending a low-grade existing building. None of the trees appear to be overhanging the building, however some are in close proximity and could be affected by any extensions. We will consult the tree officer once during the next stage.

In the new-build option with a new public entrance, this will be set back from the road to ensure a buffer zone. There is limited opportunity for parking on Windmill drive and as the catchment area is localised, the proposal is not anticipated to cause significant parking problems.
9. Target Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RIBA Workstages</th>
<th>Strategic Definition</th>
<th>Preparation and Brief</th>
<th>Concept Design</th>
<th>Developed Design</th>
<th>Technical Design</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Handover</th>
<th>In use</th>
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<td>Months</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>July</td>
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<td>November/Dec</td>
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<td>Completed by client</td>
<td>CAO appointment</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>User observation</td>
<td>Staff and user briefings</td>
<td>feasibility options</td>
<td>client briefing</td>
<td>Stage 1 report issued</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Target programme - dates subject to site investigations, detailed design, client and statutory approvals at each stage.
10. Design team details

Architect: Civic Architecture Office
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