

EX LIBRIS

Caversham Children's Centre

One Saturday morning, back in what felt like early spring, I walked along Amersham Road to the community center. Outside I was greeted to the sight of professional jugglers and children practicing various circus skills. Inside the hall were a series of colourful stalls, young children were romping around having a great time and I spent a very enjoyable hour or so chatting to various members of Reading Borough Council staff.

I suspect that like many readers, my knowledge of this part of Caversham is rather scanty. It is undoubtedly an area that requires a great deal of attention from various agencies. It is also an area with many hard working residents who welcome the great improvements that are taking place.

I think I may have written about the controversial move of Caversham Nursery from its current position adjacent to Westfield Road park. I have no doubt this will inconvenience many but in the harsh world of economic choices, I thought I should look at its replacement. I was impressed by the plans and even more by the dedication and enthusiasm of the staff. We all recognize that Reading has many social problems and to a large extent their origins are concentrated in certain areas. If this project helps to reduce these problems then it may be a price worth paying. So what is involved? Well I thought I would let the organizers speak for themselves; so this is what they have to say and what they are asking of the local community.

We are trying to find out your thoughts on the proposed location and designs of your Children's centre.

The aim of the project is to provide a Children's centre in Caversham that supports

families of under 5's to have access to full day-care and education facilities, family and health support services and the provision of information, advice and guidance services.

The centre is to accommodate the existing Caversham Nursery which is to be re-located from its existing site. This is to include full day-care for up to 56 part time and 12 full time places. This will be complimented by community facilities consisting of meeting/training rooms, a crèche, storage and administrative support facilities.

It is expected that the new centre will enhance and work in tandem with the existing community facilities. Following initial consultations, the preferred solution is to have a stand-alone building off the Amersham road

The reasons for this area:

- Good frontage onto Amersham Road
- Prominent position, good community presence
- Maintains good relationship with existing community building
- Existing car park can be utilised and shared
- Minimum flood risk area
- Shape of building allows for separate community and children's areas
- Good views across the site
- Good pedestrian access
- Set back from hard court area allow views through to youth play areas and existing building
- Opportunity for new forecourt

Below is a diagram of the proposed changes. I know that the Council would very much like to receive feedback, so please do write to them if you have any comments. I

for one would like to see improved public transport. I heard several comments about the infrequency of the 27 bus route which runs only hourly and not at all on evenings and weekends. I am led to believe that one part of the planning permission was that public transport should be improved to provide linkages with the main bus network. Perhaps this is in the pipeline. I certainly hope so. It is a long, long walk from this development to the nearest regular bus route along the Gosbrook Road.

SITE PLAN OF THE PROPOSED CHILDRENS' CENTRE, AMERSHAM ROAD



622 WORDS PLUS DIAGRAM