

From: The Headmaster
Christopher Ray BA, PhD, CPhys



The John Lyon School

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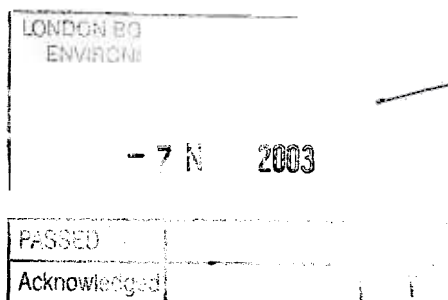
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Graham Jones,
Head of Planning,
London Borough of Harrow,
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Ref WEST/695/696/94/FUL

October 10th 2003



Dear Mr Jones,

On the 23rd June 1995 an agreement was reached between the London Borough of Harrow and John Lyon School on a planning application to extend the School's educational facilities to include a sports hall and swimming pool and a new library.

One of two main conditions laid down was that the school should restrict further development to a defined building envelope. The second was that the School should restrict the number of pupils to 525 unless agreed by the Council.

I am now writing, on behalf of the Governors of the School, to ask for permission to increase the upper number of pupils enrolled for full-time education to 600 (an increase of 14.3%). We have no plans or needs to build beyond the defined envelope.

Since 1995, three relevant factors have arisen which require the school's attention:

First, there appears to have been a considerable increase in the use of cars by parents, bringing their sons to and collecting them from the School each day. Although we have been unable to quantify this increase with any precision, many local residents tell us that the volume of school traffic has risen substantially. However, it is also clear to many local residents that many road users are not associated with John Lyon and use Middle road as a short-cut to the top of the Hill.

We have, however, now made a full transport survey for our current pupils: the results of this survey are attached. At present, some 50% of our pupils arrive at school by car (with approximately 200 car journeys to and from School per day involved). At peak times the congestion on and around Middle Road is considerable. Despite our repeated requests to parents to use other forms of transport if at all possible, they continue to use cars and we cannot prevent them from doing. Even so, there is evidence that many car-driving parents have responded to our request for them to drop and pick up their sons on streets away from the Hill itself. However, we recognise that the consequent reduction of traffic on the Hill involves a

corresponding increase elsewhere. Our encouragement to parents to carry more than one pupil in each car appears to have had some success, with some 20% (108) of our pupils arriving with other pupils in some 45 cars per day. Whilst this latter strategy has helped, we are eager to find an additional and acceptable solution which is likely to produce an overall and very significant reduction in traffic.

Secondly, there has been an increase (albeit modest) in the use of cars by pupils. Although we have now placed restrictions on the use of cars by pupils, we cannot prevent them from driving to the general locality. Again, we need to find an alternative and acceptable solution.

Thirdly, when the School was inspected in 1998, we were asked to review the curriculum with a view to considering the introduction of new subjects, especially at sixth-form level. However, we cannot staff such courses economically without a moderate increase in pupil numbers.

The Governors of this school have agreed that we should run a school bus service specifically designed to reduce the use of cars to and from school by parents and by pupils. Such services have been successful and have a positive environmental impact in many other London area schools. Last year an unsubsidised pilot scheme was run on two routes. The present operation is managed for us by Brent Community Transport.

However, many of our parents found that the price of an unsubsidised service was too high (some £25-30 per week) and the uptake was modest: some 80% of our boys live in Harrow postal code areas and their proximity to the school appears to encourage car use by parents. Convenience and cost are clearly factors that all parents weigh when making decisions. Although we are a fee-paying school, very many of our parents earn relatively modest incomes and over 20% of our pupils receive a significant level of assistance with fees from the school and its associated charities.

This year we have decided to extend the service and provide a subsidy of up to £50,000, helping us to reduce the price to £15-16 per week for up to 80 pupils, aiming to cut the daily use of cars by up to 50 per day. ~~We have been very encouraged by the response from parents so far, with~~ 40 boys travelling by school bus, thus reducing traffic by some 25 cars per day.

Three routes are now in operation, selected by Brent Community Transport, following a detailed analysis of the locations of those indicating an interest in the service. These routes, serviced by mini-buses at present, are under constant review and are adapted as necessary to accommodate new users. The experience of other schools appears to be that the use of any such service grows steadily over time.

At present each route costs the school £20,000 per annum, with about a third to a half of the costs being recovered from parents subscribing to the service: the amount recovered clearly depends upon the number using any one route. Based on present patterns of use, the projected cost to the school this year is £40,000.

We would like to extend the service from September 2004 to September 2006, providing a bus service for up to 300 pupils. Our aim is to cut car traffic to and from school down significantly. However, the School will be unable to maintain a subsidy and therefore anything like a successful service from September 2004 without increasing its income.

You will appreciate that the level of subsidy is such that only a significant increase in fees (which would cause significant financial problems for many parents) or an increase in the

number of pupils in the school would enable us to provide the kind of service which we believe is needed to have a significant impact upon local traffic flow. We believe that an 14.3% increase in pupil numbers would be sufficient for us to provide a service which would be of significant benefit to all concerned.

Such an increase would also enable us to expand our curriculum economically and fulfil the educational recommendations of our inspectors.

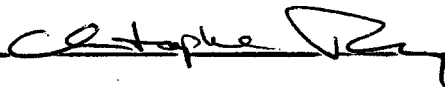
I have spoken to a meeting of the Harrow Hill Trust, outlining our plans and hopes. I have also written to local residents informing them of our strong desire to cut down traffic on the Hill – to be good neighbours.

The major survey conducted at the start of this year has enabled us to provide an accurate baseline and will provide the foundation for continual monitoring. We would happily accept that if traffic is not reduced significantly the requested maximum of 600 should be reduced. However, we would ask for a five-year period before a review takes place and a further three years to adjust the number of boys in the school to the agreed level. In any case, it would require up to three years before the school could reach an agreed maximum of 600 pupils: we have no plans to make any sudden jump, but will need to approach the maximum in stages over a three year period.

We would consult local residents through a questionnaire each year to monitor their reactions to the strategy and their view of its success or failure.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Christopher Rav

The John Lyon School: Transport Survey 2003

Type of journey for each pupil

