

Planning Statement Addendum

Reading Scouts and Guides HQ

June 2023

Turley

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Client

Reading Scout and Guide Headquarters Joint Management Committee

Our reference

REAS3005

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement Addendum has been prepared by Turley on behalf of our client, Reading Scouts and Guides, in response to officer comments received following a site visit on the 31st of May.
- 1.2 These comments largely relate to the Pre-School on site and the proposed uses of the building.
- 1.3 In support of the addendum, further materials to support the application is submitted and should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement.

Plan / Document	Reference
Hard Surfacing and Landscape Plan	CB_01_316_002
Amended Elevations and Floor Plans	CB_01_316_SGHQ_01 Rev D

- 1.4 It is also proposed that a slight change to the description of development is required in order for the existing uses to be accommodated on site adequately, with the principal use being F2 (b) as a hall or meeting place for the principal use for the local community which can include F2(c) (areas or places for outdoor sport or recreation), E(d) (Indoor sport, recreation or fitness) and E(f) (Creche, day nursery or day centre). The proposed description of development is detailed below:

“Demolition of the existing structure on site, and the erection of a two storey 500 sq.m (Use Class F2 (b)/(c) and E (d)/(f)) building with associated parking and landscaping.”

- 1.5 The remainder of this addendum to the Planning Statement is structured as follow:

Section 2 provides further details on the pre-school

Section 3 provides further details on the proposed use of the building.

Section 4 details the indicative soft and hard landscaping plan

Section 5 provides a conclusion

2. Pre-School

Existing Pre-School on Site

- 2.1 The following section outlines the existing Pre-School, Little Owls, level of activity at currently present at the site in order to provide further understanding into how the business operates as existing, and the changes proposed in respect to this planning application.
- 2.2 Little Owl Preschool is a Local Authority registered provider of Early years care for children aged 2 - 5 years. The Pre-School offer both funded and paid for places and offer 15 hours per week Monday to Friday. The Pre-School operates across 'normal school hours' and does not impact on Scout/Guiding activities.
- 2.3 The Pre-School's setting is integral to the local community of Whitley and the surrounding areas. There is a high intake of disadvantaged children based on a variety of needs, social & economic. In addition, there are a large cohort of children whom have English as their second language.
- 2.4 The current premises have been home to Little Owl Preschool for over 6 years. We feel fortunate to be able to offer our service to the community and our location is accessible for many parents, who can incorporate bringing their children to the site whilst also dropping siblings at local schools.
- 2.5 The facility at present provides space inside and out for the children to play, learn and explore. However, the current layout of the existing building creates, at times a barrier for independence and experience and a stretch on staff deployment. The proposed design provides for a more cohesive design with spaces which are better connected and orientated which would enable the Pre-School to enhance children's and staff experience and ensure they are able to plan for accommodate future requirements for children families and Staff safely and securely.

Staffing Levels

- 2.6 At present, there are 4 part time staff and 2 volunteers that run the Pre-School 9.30am – 12.30 Monday to Friday.
- 2.7 It is anticipated that the number of staff could increase to 6 part time staff, and 3 volunteers under the proposed development as a result of the increased usable space within the building whilst operating at the same capacity. This is considered to enhance learning and reduce preparation and deconstructing time of themed sessions owed to greater space flexibility.
- 2.8 The Pre-School would retain its 15 hours a week use of the building, with potential to increase this number to 30 hours a week without conflicting with the Scouts and Guiding Use as the Pre-School would be term time and during school hours.

Number of Children on Roll

- 2.9 There are currently 15 children that attend the Little Owls Pre-School, Monday-Friday. As a result of the condition and layout (as detailed in paragraphs 2.1-2.5 of this Addendum) of the current building, this number cannot increase and those in the local community are unable to be offered a place. The Pre-School continues to receive expressions of interest for places and it is considered that the existing condition and use of the building remains a barrier to user experience and offer.
- 2.10 It is anticipated that the number of children could increase to 25 under the proposed development, which would not have an impact on the Scout use of the building as the times the Pre-School is open are to remain outside of Scouts hours.

Proposed Building and areas for use for the Pre-School

- 2.11 The proposed areas of use within the scheme are marked on the accompanying plan produced by Copper Baillie.

3. Use of the Building

- 3.1 The principle use of the building is, as the Headquarters of the Reading Scouts and Guides, Use Class F2(b)/(c) whilst also accommodating other ancillary uses. Other ancillary uses, which already occur on site, include the Pre-School (Use Class E(f) and Indoor recreation groups (Use Class E(d)).
- 3.2 Alongside these uses, the ancillary supplies store homes Scout and Guide kit for members, who often travel from outside Reading to buy Scouting supplies. The supplies store is currently run by volunteers and will remain run by volunteers.
- 3.3 The store, as indicated on the plan produced by from Cooper Baillie is ancillary to the Scout group use. It operates solely for the Scout group as a means to store uniform and equipment for the Scouts only and therefore is not considered to be Use Class E.
- 3.4 The above existing uses would remain at the site post construction and considered to be Use Classes F2(b)/(c) and E (d)/(f) and as such a proposed amended to the description of development is also sought to reflect this.
- 3.5 The below table sets out the existing uses that occur within the building and the times of use. From the table it is clear that the Scouts and Guides use is the principle use at the site and would remain the principal use post construction.

User	Use Class	Duration of Use
Scouts; (including Explorers)	F2(b)/(c)	Tuesday 19:00 - 20:30; Wednesday 19:30 - 21:30; Thursday 17:30 - 18:45; Thursday 19:00 – 21:00.
Guides (Including Achilles)	F2(b)/(c)	Friday 18:00 - 21:00; Sunday 13:30 - 16:00
Scout and Guide Uniform and Supply Store	F2(b)/(c)	Open during normal Reading BC school term uniform & supplies time (in half terms, closed the Tues and Wed but remain open the Saturdays): Tuesday 19:00 – 20:30; Wednesday 16:00 - 17:00; Saturday 10:00 – 12:00 and 14:30 – 17:00
Sunday School	E(f)	Sunday 13:30 – 15:30
Little Owls Pre- School Nursery	E(f)	Normal RBC school days, 9:00 – 13:00 Nursery (inc. 30 mins each end of 3 hrs daily). (8:45 – 15:30 should a 30hr a week provider show an interest – as this would still not clash with other users).

4. Indicative Soft and Hard Landscaping

- 4.1 An indicative hard and soft landscaping plan is submitted alongside this addendum.
- 4.2 The plan produced by Cooper Baillie provides detail that the existing boundary treatment will be retained, the existing trees within the redline will also be retained.
- 4.3 New grass is proposed to the rear of the site, alongside new tree planting on the southern boundary.
- 4.4 It is considered that the indicative landscaping is suitable for the use and context of the site.

5. Summary and Conclusions

Summary

- 5.1 Reading Scouts and Guides Headquarters have been provided with an exciting opportunity to bring forward the redevelopment of the existing building at Northcourt Avenue for a new purpose-built building which is fit for purpose and energy efficient, having successfully passed the criteria check with a bid to the Youth Investment Fund, and their application now passing to the “interview” stage.
- 5.2 Instead of the traditional fundraising that the charity would have to undertake to raise the funds to redevelop the site normally, which would take an extortionate amount of time to provide the use of the building for the advantage of the youth in the area, the Youth Investment Fund provides an opportunity to obtain funds in a period where time is of the essence.
- 5.3 The existing building serving the Scouts and Guides Headquarters has reached the end of its life, with maintenance costs to keep the building in useable condition becoming increasingly more expensive given the age of the building and the rise in material costs in recent months. In addition, the current structure is unable to accommodate the requirements of prospectus clubs and community groups, providing a missed opportunity to aid with running costs for the charity.
- 5.4 The opportunity would create spaces which are flexible to accommodate their existing requirements but could also offer wider community benefits which will enable the building to have a broader age range and use reach to benefit the wider community in an area with high levels of deprivation all within the existing operating use classes F2 (b)/(c) and E (d)/(f).
- 5.5 As such, it is also proposed that a slight change to the description of development is required in order for the existing uses to be accommodated on site adequately, with the principal use being F2 (b) as a hall or meeting place for the principal use for the local community which can include F2(c) (areas or places for outdoor sport or recreation), E(d) (Indoor sport, recreation or fitness) and E(f) (Creche, day nursery or day centre). The proposed description of development is detailed below:
- “Demolition of the existing structure on site, and the erection of a two storey 500 sq.m (Use Class F2 (b)/(c) and E (d)/(f)) building with associated parking and landscaping.”*
- 5.6 In accordance with policy OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities is acceptable in principle, and the supporting statements submitted with this application demonstrate that the increased usage on site would not have a detrimental impact on the site or the surrounding area, and the development would accord with the rest of the relevant local plan policies.

Conclusions

- 5.7 This Planning Statement Addendum has been prepared to support and inform the full planning application for the redevelopment of the Scouts and Guides Headquarters to provide a fit for purpose building for the Scout and Guides and wider community.
- 5.8 The proposed development is as follows:
- 5.9 *“Demolition of the existing structure on site, and the erection of a two storey 500 sq.m (Use Class F2 (b)/(c) and E (d)/(f)) building with associated parking and landscaping.”*
- 5.10 It is considered that the proposed works will result in a high-quality community building, which is appropriate in its residential setting and will positively contribute towards the local community’s wellbeing.
- 5.11 Overall, it is considered the proposal fully complies with the policies contained in the Development Plan and National Planning Policy Framework. Based on all of the above and the accompanying plans submitted in support of this application, we request that RBC approve this full planning application.