

PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

APPLICATION 210612 FUL

Full application for continued use as a school for a temporary period of three years in continuation of Consent 190812 in relation to premises at

Units 1-4, The Quad, 14 Arkwright Road, Reading RG2 0LU

Prepared for Ealing Educational Resources Trust

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Consent 190812 granted temporary permission to use part of the existing premises at 14 Arkwright Road as a school for a period of no more than two academic years.
- 1.2 Condition 1 of that consent requires that the temporary use shall cease no later than 19/07/2021, and that the site be restored to its former condition and use.
- 1.3 At the time the application was submitted the Trust expected that permanent school buildings would have been permitted, constructed and fitted out for occupation within that timescale.
- 1.4 However, a range of unanticipated factors has combined to frustrate that expectation, and this application is to request that the change of use consent be extended from 19/07/2021 to 19/07/2024.
- 1.5 This is the only variation requested. In all other respects we anticipate that the conditions attached to consent 190812 will be reimposed.
- 1.6 By way of explanation, Ealing Educational Resources Trust's function is to provide premises and resources for the local OneSchool Global campus.

2. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 The principle of using the Quad as a school premises has been agreed already by consent 190812. The intensity of use of the site [no more than 86 pupils and 18 staff] and the considerations set out in the Officer's Report have not changed.
- 2.2 Although the site lies within the Basingstoke Road employment area, the use for employment had already been potentially lost by the grant of prior approval of conversion to residential use [consent 180654 which is still extant].
- 2.3 Moreover the present application is for continuation of the temporary change of use to a school, and we anticipate that a condition similar to condition 3 of consent 190812 will require that it be restored to its previous employment use by the end of the further temporary period requested.
- 2.4 Also, although the building has over the years proved difficult to let, the school use consent does not cover the whole building, and part will remain available for letting if a tenant can be found.
- 2.5 Impact on neighbouring properties could be a relevant factor. However, the school management has been assiduous in ensuring considerate regard for its neighbours.
- 2.6 The school is a campus of OneSchool Global and as part of its due diligence procedures it has recently enquired of businesses in Arkwright Road to establish whether the school operations cause any issues for its neighbours. As the Appendix shows, the school thankfully reports no issues, but on the contrary appreciation of the school.

3 REASON FOR THE APPLICATION

3.1 At the time application 190812 was submitted [May 2019], approval was expected to be granted imminently by Wycombe District Council in relation to an application to convert a former equestrian centre owned by the Trust into a school. Construction works were anticipated to take a full 12 months, and, to allow for possible delays, application 190812 was for 2 years' temporary use of the Quad.

3.2 Unfortunately, however, a strong orchestrated groundswell of local opposition resulted in a refusal by the planning committee on various subjective grounds. Following this, the Trustees, taken aback, felt the need to obtain high level advice on how to proceed, which understandably took a number of months.

3.3 Since then a range of factors has caused extensive delays:-

- Our planning consultant spent several months in positive discussions with the Wycombe District case officer who had handled the refused application, only for her to be moved off to other duties.
- The planning functions of Wycombe District Council have been transferred to Bucks County Council, which has caused very extensive delays to applications generally.
- It was several months before BCC allocated which case officer would be dealing with the area of the Trust's site.
- As a result of COVID-19, very extensive delay has arisen, with some staff self-isolating and those remaining being unable to cope.

- The BCC case officer is so pressed that he has refused to accept a request for pre-app advice.
- The revision of the Use Classes Order has necessitated a rethink of the Trust's proposals, fortunately strengthening the Trust's case, and a clear path to consent is now in view.

3.4 In result, therefore, the Trust has completely lost the last two years, and is currently in a position much further from its sought-for objective than when application 190812 was submitted.

3.5 As a pre-app is not an option at the ex-equestrian site, the Trust is advised to submit several successive applications to achieve its objective by steps. A first application was submitted early in March 2021. The Trust therefore anticipates that it could take longer than a year to get full consent, followed by at least a year for construction works. Hence, to give a margin for the unexpected, the present application is for 3 years to 19/07/2024.

3.6 The Trust has a 5-year lease on the Quad which comes to an end on 31/08/2024. As a precaution, the Trustees are also scouring the market and following up alternative sites.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 This application comprises in addition to this supporting statement:

- Application form
- Certificate of ownership
- Fee of £462, of which £234 has already been paid
- Location plan
- Block Plan
- Plan showing split of office use / school use
- CIL additional information form

4.2 The under-signed will be happy to provide any further information which will help in determination of this application.

4.3 It is hoped that this simple application can be readily approved.

David Parsons

Agent for EERT

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of David Parsons.

Date: May 2021

APPENDIX

NEIGHBOUR SURVEY RESPONSES

All the businesses close to The Quad 14 Arkwright Road have responded

All responses received have been positive.

11. Sapphire Balconies Ltd

12. Paragon Design Joinery Ltd

9. Unoccupied

10. Zest Trading Ltd

7. Frasers Stationery Ltd

8. 360 Engineering Ltd

5. No response

2,4,6. No response

3, 1. SNS Building Supplies Ltd