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Planning Supporting Statement

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

Prepared for: Ealing Educational Resources Trust.

MAY 2019

PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Proposed Temporary School Use (Use Class D1) for 2 years.

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

Prepared for – Ealing Educational Resources Trust (David Parsons).

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Reference: ABP/0066



CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
2. Site Description and Location	2
3. Planning History	3
4. Planning Policy	4
5. Proposal	7
6. Key Issues	7
7. Conclusions	9



1. INTRODUCTION

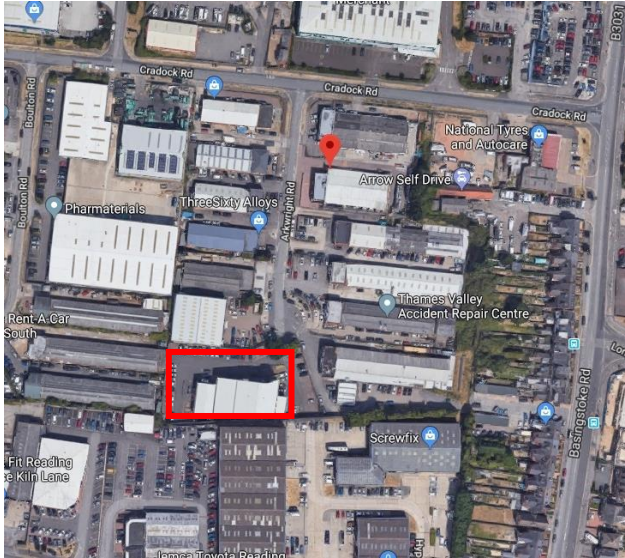
- 1.1 This planning supporting statement is to accompany a planning application on behalf of Ealing Educational Resources Trust for a temporary change of use from office to school (D1)
- 1.2 The school is needed to replace a school closure at Stokes Poges whilst alternative permanent new facilities go through the planning process.
- 1.3 It will be needed for the academic year 2019/2020, for 86 pupils and 18 staff but with a future proof period for a second year if required for 78 pupils.
- 1.4 The application is to be determined alongside
 - Application forms and certificate
 - Letter from site owners
 - Transport Statement
 - Site Location Plan (Land Registry 1:1250)
 - Existing Site Layout Plan G-05B
 - Proposed Site Layout Plan G-05B
 - Proposed use of building zones (floor areas)

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

- 2.1 The site is a flexible modern office space with good access to the A33 linking to the M4.
- 2.2 The Quad comprises four adjoining buildings in a courtyard. There are two three-storey and two two-storey buildings with car parking provision of 67 spaces. The total floor space of the site is 1,666m² of office floor space.
- 2.3 The site is an edge of city centre site within a general commercial / retail urban environment, close to the M4 and Reading Stadium.



- 2.4 The site is in a commercial area, but with residential housing along Basingstoke Road



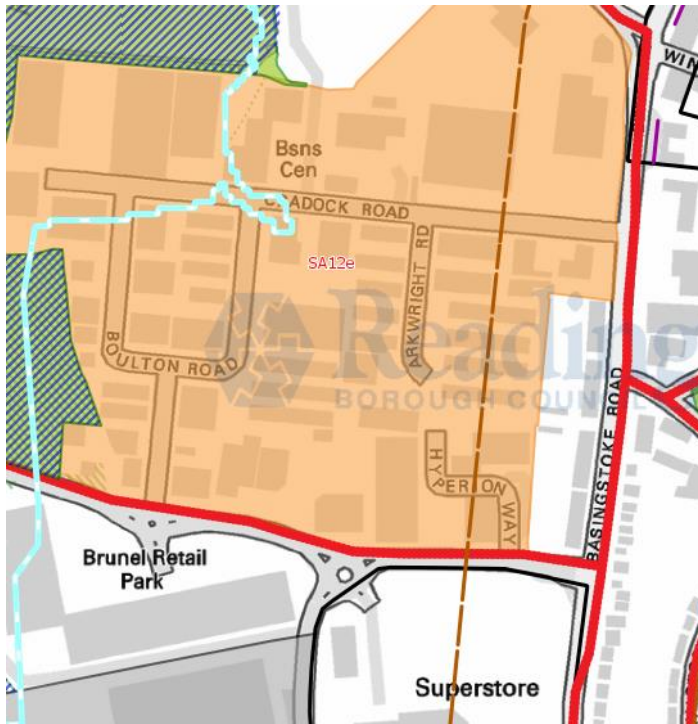
- 2.5 The site has been vacant and not let for approximately 10 years and is owned by an adjoining business at 11 Arkwright Road.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 A planning history search identifies the following internet history of interest.
- 3.2 In 2002 application 020226 was refused for "Change of use from B1 (business) to mixed use as theatrical training and gymnasium training centres (D2)." the web
- 3.3 No. 14 the Quad (then known as Duran Centre) was first permitted in 1998. In 2011 application 110824 Permitted use of units 1-4 as use class B1 with no restrictions, the original consent had conditions re use within categories of B1, which comprise light industrial, offices, and research & development.
- 3.4 On 13th June 2018 a Prior Approval was granted for change of use of office to 37 dwelling houses (Use Class C3) under Class O Part 3 Schedule 2 of TCP GPDO 2016

4.0 POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 The site is located within Reading Borough Council.
- 4.2 The current adopted Proposals Map is dated October 2012.



- 4.3 The site is allocated as a Core Employment Area (**Policies CS10, CS11, SA12**)
- 4.4 An air quality management area extends around Basingstoke Road but not extending to cover the units on the east side of Arkwright Road.

CS10: Location of Employment Development

Major office development will take place in the centre of Reading and along the A33 corridor. Office development will also take place in the other centres in the network set out in Policy CS 26, but should be of an appropriate scale to those centres.

Other major employment uses, including industrial and storage and distribution will be located in the A33 corridor or in the Core Employment Areas.

The site of the former Reading stadium and waste facilities at Southside is suitable for employment development which builds on the improvements in accessibility planned for this corridor. This should contribute to the range of employment facilities available in Reading and the environmental improvement of the A33 corridor. Development should be of an amount and type which does not have a detrimental impact on the regeneration and development of the centre of Reading.

4.5 This policy reflects the designation of the site and hence the permission for the 4 offices at The Quad for unrestricted B1 use.

4.6 The key policy in relation to assessing the prospects for a school use is CS11

CS11: Use of Employment Land for Alternative Uses

Within the Core Employment Areas, the overall level of employment land should be maintained. Proposals that would result in a loss of such land will not be permitted.

In other areas, the following criteria will be considered when assessing proposals which would result in a loss of employment land:

- (i) Is access by a choice of means of transport, including access to the strategic road network, poor, and likely to remain poor?
- (ii) Is the continued use of the site for employment, including the potential for redevelopment for employment uses, viable?
- (iii) Is there a surplus of a similar size and type of accommodation in Reading?
- (iv) Would continued employment use of the site detrimentally affect the amenity and character of a residential area?
- (v) Is the need for alternative uses stronger than the need for the retention of employment land?
- (vi) Would the proposal result in a piecemeal loss of employment land where there is potential for a more comprehensive scheme?

4.7 The site is within SA12e Core Employment Area

4.8 The new Local Plan is currently only at Draft Stage (May 2017), but Core Employment Areas are maintained and covered by policy EM2.

4.10 The site is retained in a Core Employment Area EM2e



4.11 New policy EM3 deals with loss of Employment and whilst maintaining the general protection of Core Employment Areas, does introduce a new element of flexibility.

EM3: LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT LAND

Within the Core Employment Areas, the overall level of employment land should be maintained. Proposals that would result in a loss of such land will not be permitted.

Where, in exceptional circumstances, it can be demonstrated that a site in a Core Employment Area has no long-term (i.e. over five years) prospect of employment use, a related alternative commercial use may be considered that would employ a similar number of people.

In other areas, the following criteria will be considered when assessing proposals which would result in a loss of employment land: -

- (i) Is access by a choice of means of transport, including access to the strategic road network, poor, and likely to remain poor?*
- (ii) Is the continued use of the site for employment, including the potential for redevelopment for employment uses, viable?*
- (iii) Is there a surplus of a similar size and type of accommodation in Reading?*
- (iv) Would continued employment use of the site detrimentally affect the amenity and character of a residential area?*
- (v) Is the need for alternative uses stronger than the need for the retention of employment land?*
- (vi) Would the proposal result in a piecemeal loss of employment land where there is potential for a more comprehensive scheme?*

4.12 Loss in a Core Area would be allowable in exceptional circumstances.

5.0 PROPOSAL

- 5.1 The proposal is to use 1,289m² of space for D1 school use for a period of two years from September 2019.
- 5.2 All of the site will be used for the school apart from the ground floor areas of units 1 & 2 which will be retained, marketed to let for B1 office use. This area is 377m².
- 5.3 Parking will be reduced from 67 to 40 spaces and an external area to the west fenced off (2 metre green weld mesh) to provide an external play and break area for pupils.
- 5.4 There will be no proposed external alterations to the buildings

6.0 KEY ISSUES

Loss of Employment

- 6.1 The site is within a designated employment area, which in traditional planning terms covers B1, B2 and B8 uses.
- 6.2 The site has lawful permission for B1 office use compliant with policy.
- 6.3 The school would be a D1 use and thus in planning terms would constitute a loss of employment.
- 6.4 The proposal would therefore be contrary to adopted policy CS11.
- 6.5 However, Section 54(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) as amended by Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

"if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be in accordance with the plan, **unless material considerations indicate otherwise.**"

6.6 However, there are "other material considerations" to this proposal

1. The site has a valid Prior Approval permission for 37 dwellings under Class O and thus the employment floor space has already technically been lost.
2. The units have been 'unlet' for most of the time since they were built, being unattractively situated at the end of a road of [mainly] dated units. The chances of all four units being let within the next two years are close to zero.
3. The proposed use as a school is only temporary and thus would not result in the permanent loss of the B1 use. It will not compromise future office use.
4. The school use would continue to deliver jobs – teachers, admin, etc. 18 in total for the school.
5. The school use would contribute to economic activity with supplies and deliveries etc.
6. The proposal will continue to provide for 377m² of B1 use. A neighbouring employment use is expressing interest in expanding into the site, and thus it will aid permanent full use in two years' time. (see owners letter)
7. The owners have consulted adjoining business in Arkwright Road and contacted 6 which have given full support. (see owners letter)

6.7 The overall material considerations would thus not justify a refusal on the basis of policy CS11.

Transport

- 6.8 The site is a sustainable location within the urban settlement boundary.
- 6.9 The school will utilise a sustainable fleet of minibuses for pupil travel to the site. 7 minibuses will be used for 86 pupils, and travel trips will be reduced for those pupils around Reading and the Wallingford area currently travelling to Stoke Poges.
- 6.10 7 minibuses and teachers cars (car sharing will be encouraged) will create reduced traffic generation compared to full B1 use of the site and not adversely impact on the highway network.
- 6.11 The school will primarily generate traffic only 8.15 to 8.45 and 15.00 to 15.30 and not have journeys throughout the day, which offices may generate with visitors.
- 6.12 Parking will be reduced to 40 spaces which will be more than adequate for the use and continued office element and will not result in any need for on-street parking.

Amenity

- 6.13 Internal facilities for the school will be highly suitable as modern teacher spaces are similar to office environments and the building is well insulated.
- 6.14 A safe segregated external play area is to be temporarily created at the western end of the site, with no conflict for pupils with vehicles.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The use of the property has already been lost to employment by application 180654 for 37 dwellings which is extant.



- 7.2 The school use is temporary for 2 years and will deliver 18 jobs and also continue to market 377m² for office use, so thus is generate significant economic benefit over the two years to set alongside CS11 and the flexibility being introduced into emerging policy EM3.
- 6.3 There are no adverse transport impacts and car parking is retained at an acceptable level. Sustainable travel will be used by the school and a play area can be accommodated without any conflict with vehicles.