

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Katesgrove Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0695 Full planning permission

Address: 14 ARKWRIGHT ROAD, READING, RG2 0LS

Proposal: Continued change of use from E(g)(i) offices to F1(a) school for 1289 square metres for a further temporary period of three years, to accommodate up to 125 pupils.

Applicant: One School Global UK

Received date: 26/05/2026

Target Decision date: 31st July 2026 (Ext)

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

1. SITE DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

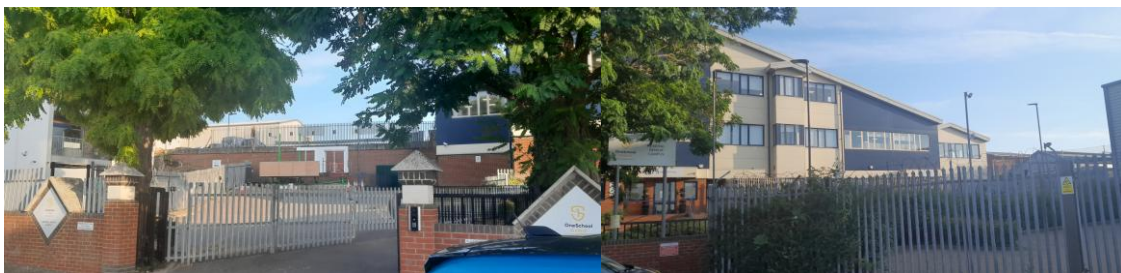
The application site is on the western side of Basingstoke Road along a road which branches off the southern side of Cradock Road. The application site consists of one part two and part three storey building located at the south-western corner of Arkwright Road.

The site is within the Core Employment area EM2e (North of Basingstoke Road).

It is identified as an area of potential contamination and it is within an Article 4 Direction area, which came into force 15/11/2022 and was modified on 10/10/2023, which restricts a number of permitted development rights including, but not limited to, the change of use from E use class to residential.

This commercial office building is currently in use as a school, with a small element of office space, originally granted a temporary two-year permission under ref: PL/19/0812, further extended for three years under ref: PL/21/073. The temporary permission has lapsed, although the school use is ongoing.

The site has an existing parking area for 40 no. cars, a turning area and a fenced outside amenity/ play space for the pupils.



Site Visit Photos 7th July 2026

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

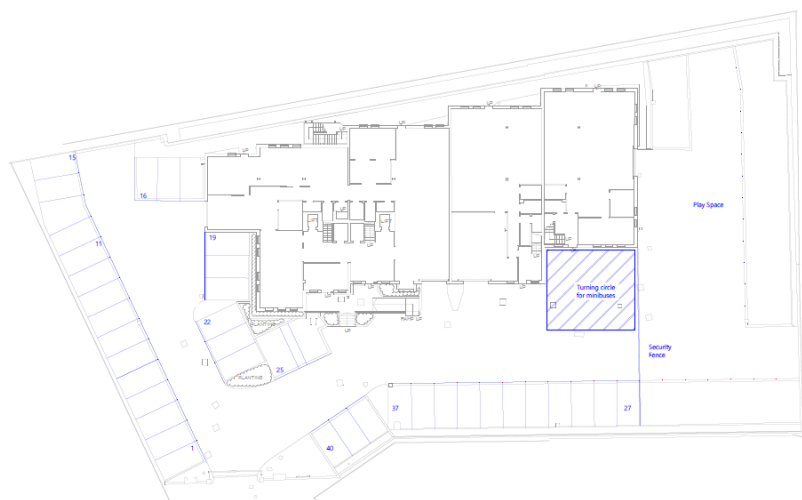
The application seeks permission to continue using the building as a school for a further temporary period of three years. This is for the ongoing temporary change of use from E(g)(i) offices to F1(a) school. The area is 1289 m² and it would be to accommodate up to 125 pupils, compared to the previous permission when the pupil numbers were 86, and for 28 members of staff, compared to the previous 18.

As was the position when the 2021 application was considered, the submitted Planning Statement details the unanticipated factors which have delayed a permanent school building being granted planning permission, constructed and fitted out for occupation within the timescale required.

The original proposed school site within Buckinghamshire was refused permission in 2024, which led to a further site search. As the applicant requires internal and external sports facilities an edge of urban site was sought and a suitable site meeting their needs found in Cold Ash, West Berkshire. The applicant is

still in the process of obtaining the relevant permissions to facilitate the delivery of a purpose-built school. Pre-application meetings were held with West Berkshire Council in 2023 and 2024 to discuss the principle of redeveloping the site and the applicant advises that there was no objection to the principle of development at this point. A planning application was submitted in August 2025 (ref. 25/01899/FULMAJ) for 120 primary and secondary pupils and ca 28 members of staff. However, at present, the applicant states that the case officer has concluded that the benefits of the scheme do not outweigh the identified harm and has recommended the application for refusal. If the application is refused the applicant has advised that they would appeal.

Existing/ Proposed Site Plan



The following documents were submitted as received 26th May 2026:

- Drawing no: G05 Rev B, dated 16/5/19 - Site Plan with Car Park Split
- Drawing no: G04 Rev A, dated 16/5/19 - All Floor Plans
- Planning Statement, dated May 2026, prepared by Bell Cornwell

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

97/00970/FUL (New Ref: PL/97/0329) - Three B1 (a/b) business units and B1 (c) business units with associated parking. Approved 4/6/1998

11/01699/FUL (New Ref: PL/11/0824) - Use of units 1- 4 as use class B1 (no restrictions) – Approved 23/11/2011

PL/18/0654/OPA - Change of use of office building from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 37 dwelling units. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 – Approved 13/6/2018

PL/19/0812/FUL - Change of use from B1 offices to D1 school for 1289 square meters for a temporary period of two years – Approved 19/7/2019

PL/19/1364/NMA - Minor amendment to permission granted by 190812 to allow changes to fences - Agreed 3/10/2019

PL/21/0736/FUL - Continued change of use from B1 offices to D1 school for 1289 square metres for a further temporary period of three years – Approved 1/9/2021

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal

Environmental Protection – No objection. Recommend an informative regarding that the site is on potentially contaminated land and care needs to be taken with any ground works or other close contact with the soil.

Enforcement – No comments at time of writing.

Transport Development Control – No objection.

Neighbour consultation

The following addresses were consulted by letter:

- Unit 1, Hyperion Way
- Units 1, 1a, 2, 3, 4, 17 Boulton Road

A site notice was also displayed to the front of the site on 7th July 2026.



No letters of representation have been received.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application.

Section 72 1 (b) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables local planning authorities to grant planning permission for a specified temporary period.

National Planning Policy Guidance

Use of Planning Conditions (23/7/2019) states(Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 21a-014-20140306) that:

“Circumstances where a temporary permission may be appropriate include where a trial run is needed in order to assess the effect of the development on the area or where it is expected that the planning circumstances will change in a particular way at the end of that period.

A temporary planning permission may also be appropriate to enable the temporary use of vacant land or buildings prior to any longer-term proposals coming forward (a ‘meanwhile use’).

It will rarely be justifiable to grant a second temporary permission (except in cases where changing circumstances provide a clear rationale, such as temporary classrooms and other school facilities). Further

permissions can normally be granted permanently or refused if there is clear justification for doing so. There is no presumption that a temporary grant of planning permission will then be granted permanently.”

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024)

Section 11 – Making Effective Use of Land

Adopted Reading Borough Local Plan – November 2019

Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

Policy EM2: Location of New Employment Development

Policy EM3: Loss of Employment Development

Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Policy OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

Local Plan Partial Update

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A pre-submission draft was submitted to the Secretary of State on the 9th of May 2025. The Examination was held in February 2026.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the appraisal below and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

6. APPRAISAL

The main matters are:

- a) Principle of Development
- b) Parking/ Highway Safety
- c) Other

a) Principle of Development

The site remains within a defined Core Employment Area and Policy EM3 states that proposals that would result in a loss of employment land will not be permitted. However, temporary planning permission was previously granted for the proposed use as a school and there are no material matters, since the last approval (under ref: PL21/0736), which would lead to a different conclusion as to the acceptability of the change of use on a temporary basis.

The key matter to consider is, as this is a second request to extend the temporary permission, whether there is a clear rationale for doing so as set out within the NPPG:

"It will rarely be justifiable to grant a second temporary permission (except in cases where changing circumstances provide a clear rationale, such as temporary classrooms and other school facilities)."

The submitted planning Statement identifies the reasons why a temporary permission is sought and the extenuating circumstances, as set out above, which mean that there is no suitable alternative site with planning permission yet. Hence, the existing students of the school still require the existing school places at the application site. It is considered that there are exceptional circumstances as to why a further temporary planning permission would be acceptable in this instance.

There is no current evidence that the ongoing use for a school would have such a significant detrimental effect on the supply of B1 offices within this part of Reading such that it would warrant refusal nor that there are any harmful effects from its ongoing use.

Its temporary retention in school use would accord with national policy; Paragraph 100 of the NPPF states *"It is important that a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should: a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications;..."*. Paragraph 128 states that *"Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs. In particular, they should support proposals to: and b) make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools"*

At the local Level Policy OU1 supports provision for schools and accepts that such a use would be acceptable in sites identified for other development where it meets a clear need.

A condition will be imposed that requires the building to be reverted back to its existing use at the end of this period. As such there is no objection to the principle of a further temporary period of three years.

However, it would be very unlikely that a further temporary permission beyond this existing permission would be granted. Notwithstanding the issues that have been faced with securing the permission of an alternative and permanent school site, it is considered that the overall period of 10 years from the granting of the first temporary permission to the end the period now proposed, should be more than sufficient to find and deliver a suitable final location for the school. The applicant would need to establish a suitable alternative fallback position in the scenario that permission is not granted for the current chosen proposed school location.

b) Parking/ Highway Safety

There are 40 car parking spaces available for 28 members of staff, which exceeds Council's minimum requirement. The site is also accessible by public transport and car sharing opportunities are available.

Although the number of pupils has increased from 86 to 125 pupils are transported to and from school by mini-bus. A turning area is provided within the site so that minibuses can turn around safely and leave in a forward direction. Parking restrictions on nearby roads also help prevent unsafe parking.

It is not considered that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on traffic or road safety. Therefore, no objection is raised on highway grounds to the temporary permission.

7. CONCLUSION

The use as a school for a further temporary period of three years is considered acceptable as it would enable the ongoing provision of an educational facility in accordance with national and local policy.

8. RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE with Conditions

Recommended Conditions:

1. Temporary permission time limit
2. Approved Plans

Recommended Informatives:

1. Terms and Conditions
2. Potentially Contaminated Land
3. Positive and Proactive