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Our ref: CWA/CMW/pl/1359

Date: 20th March 2025

Wokingham Borough Council
Development Management
P.O. Box 157
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WR.

VIA THE PLANNING PORTAL ONLY

Dear Sir or Madam,

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (GPDO) 2015 (AS AMENDED)
SITE AT READING BLUE COAT SCHOOL, SONNING LANE, READING RG4 6SU
LAWFUL DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATE APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED WORKS
PLANNING PORTAL REF: PP-13862952

We refer to the application for a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) in respect of the *'proposed erection of school buildings comprising a Performing Arts Studio, Music Classroom, Practice Rooms and Staff Offices to provide alternative temporary accommodation during the implementation of planning permission 232925'* at Reading Blue Coat School ("the School"). The LDC is sought on the basis that the proposed works comprise permitted development under Class M of Part 7 to Schedule 2 of the 2015 GPDO (as amended).

In addition to the application form and this covering letter, the following documentation is submitted:-

- Site location plan (drawing no. 7119-GBS-XX-XX-A-DR-110-P01) showing the full extent of the School site outlined in red;
- Proposed block plan (drawing no. 7119-GBS-XX-XX-A-DR-111-P01) showing the proposed buildings (hatched red) in context;
- Proposed site plan (drawing no. 7119-GBS-XX-XX-A-DR-116-P01) showing the layout of the proposed buildings;
- Proposed plans & elevations of Performing Arts Studio (drawing no. 7119-GBS-XX-XX-A-DR-112-P01);
- Proposed plans & elevations of Music Studio (drawing no. 7119-GBS-XX-XX-A-DR-113-P01);
- Proposed plans & elevations of Practice Rooms (drawing no. 7119-GBS-XX-XX-A-DR-114-P01);
- Proposed plans & elevations of Staff offices (drawing no. 7119-GBS-XX-XX-A-DR-115-P01); and
- The CIL Information form.

In assessing this application, the LPA is requested to note the following:-

The Site

The School is located in open countryside on the west side of Sonning Lane, a short distance to the south-west of Sonning Village. The School forms part of Sonning Conservation Area but is not subject to an Article IV direction.

The main School building group comprises an extensive but relatively closely-spaced cluster of academic, sporting, administrative and incidental educational facilities. The oldest building is a large nineteenth century house known as School House (previously Holme Park) which is not listed. The School has been subject to various phases of development during the post-war period, and comprises a very wide range of building styles and types which are faced in a variety of external materials.

The land on which the proposed buildings, the subject of this LDC application, would be situated comprises an area of car parking within the former Grounds & Maintenance compound in the vicinity of the south-western boundary of the School's curtilage.

Relevant Planning History

The School site has an extensive planning history since its establishment at the site in 1947. Two LDC applications have been made since 21st April 2021 in respect of the following proposed Class M permitted development:-

- An LDC (ref: 212301) was issued on 2nd September 2021 in respect of the '*proposed erection of a single storey temporary building for educational use*'; and
- An LDC (ref: 230127) was issued on 1st February 2023 in respect of the '*proposed single storey, detached toilet block*'.

Both of the above developments have been implemented.

The Proposal

The applicants propose the construction of four pre-fabricated, single storey buildings which would be closely-spaced on land which previously formed part of the School's Grounds and Maintenance compound. The buildings would have flat roofs and would be faced in Plastisol 'goosewing grey' steel cladding and contrasting 'anthracite' grey fascia panels. Window frames and doors would be in aluminium and finished in 'anthracite grey'. The roofs of each building would be covered by a Firestone EPDM Roof Blanket. Each building would have a rectangular footprint, and would be served by an external access ramp.

The proposed buildings, which would have an overall total footprint of 540 square metres and a height of approximately 3.5 metres, are required during the period of implementation of planning permission ref. 232925 which comprises, among other matters, the substantial demolition of Way Hall, and the construction of a replacement building to provide new educational facilities. The existing uses displaced by these approved works would be provided in the proposed buildings, the subject of this LDC application, on a temporary basis. It is anticipated that the proposed buildings would be required for a period of approximately 80 weeks

Compliance with Class M of Part 7 to Schedule 2 of the 2015 GPDO (as amended)

Under Class M, the erection of a school building is permitted development subject to compliance with the limitations and conditions set out under paragraphs M.1 and M.2.

Under **paragraph M.1**, the construction of the proposed building would not conflict with relevant limitations in sub-paragraphs (a), (ba), (c), (d), (da), (f) and (g) because:-

M.1(a)

Together with the other buildings erected, extended or altered at the School under Class M since 21st April 2021, the proposed development would not result in the footprint of the School exceeding 25% of its footprint as it was on 21st April 2021.

The total footprint of existing Class M development at the School since 21st April 2021 is 220 square metres comprising the 190 square metre building constructed pursuant to LDC ref: 212301, and the 30 square metre building constructed pursuant to LDC ref: 230127.

The proposed buildings, the subject of this LDC application, would have a footprint of 540 square metres, resulting a total footprint of Class M development (since 21st April 2021) of 760 square metres. Self-evidently, this figure is substantially below 25% of the cumulative total footprint of the School, as existing on 21st April 2021. The submitted site location plan identifies the substantial footprint of existing campus buildings, and all of these buildings, with the exception of those numbered 12 (existing Class M development) and 17 (the current Class M proposal) on the location plan, were in place on 21st April 2021.

M.1(ba)

There would appear to be some C Class development to the south-west of the School site. However, no part of the proposed buildings would be situated within 5 metres of the curtilage of such development. The submitted block and site plans show that the proposed development would be situated at least 15 metres from the closest part of the School's curtilage boundary.

M.1(c)

The land on which the proposed building would be sited has at no time within the last 5 years been used as a playing field. The land, which comprises an area of car park hardstanding, was previously used as part of a Grounds and Maintenance compound.

M.1(d)

The proposed buildings would be located more than 10 metres from the boundary of the School's curtilage, and the height of each single storey building would be less than 6 metres.

M.1(da)

The proposed buildings would not include any rooftop structure.

M.1(f)

The proposed buildings would not be sited within the curtilage of a listed building.

M.1(g)

In respect of applicable sub-paragraph (i), the predominant use of the existing buildings at the site is for the provision of education.

Under **paragraph M.2**, the proposed buildings would comply with the conditions set out in relevant paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (e) as follows:-

M.2(a)

The proposed development would be located within the curtilage of a school.

M.2(b)

The proposed buildings would be used as part of, and for a purpose incidental to the existing School, specifically for the practice, performance and teaching of the arts, and for incidental staff office purposes.

M.2(c)

The site is situated on Article 2(3) land. Under this paragraph, any new building must be constructed using materials which have a similar appearance to those used for the original school buildings.

It should be noted that Part M defines the term “original school building” to mean an original building which is a school building other than any building erected under Class M. The GPDO defines “original”, in relation to a building, to mean a building as existing on 1st July 1948, and a building, where built on or after 1st July 1948, as so built.

The proposed buildings would be constructed using materials which have a similar appearance to those used for a number of the original school buildings, and would have the same appearance as the recently constructed Class M buildings, the subject of LDCs 212301 and 230127. The facing materials would be (i) ‘goosewing grey’ plastisol steel panels to the main walls, (ii) ‘anthracite’ plastisol steel panelling to the roof fascia, external doors and windows, and (iii) a ‘Firestone FR EPDM black roof membrane’.

The original school buildings comprise multiple discrete and inter-connected buildings including, for example, a single storey changing room block (see photograph below) which was granted planning consent under reference F/2014/2116. The approved drawings and Design & Access Statement for that application state that the proposed materials are *‘Goosewing Grey plastisol coated steel to main body of building; Merlin Grey plastisol coated steel to fascia and double doors; and Merlin Grey UPVC windows; and a roof covered in a ‘Firestone FR EPDM black membrane’*. These are essentially the same materials that would be used on the proposed buildings, the subject of this LDC application.



Existing Changing Room Block (F/2014/2116)

There are a number of other buildings on the site which employ similar grey panelling to all or part of the elevations, as shown in the photographs below.



Drama Studio



DT block

M.2(e)

The proposed buildings are required to provide, on a temporary basis, replacement arts performance, practice and teaching accommodation pending the construction of the approved new replacement building and other works under planning permission ref. 232925. The proposed development will not result in an increase in the School's published admission number.

For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed buildings constitute permitted development under Class M to Part 7 to Schedule 2 of the 2015 GPDO (as amended). We therefore look forward to the early and favourable determination of this LDC application. In the meantime, if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,



CHRISTOPHER WICKHAM ASSOCIATES

c.c. Ms Alexandra West (Bursar), Reading Blue Coat School