

Supporting Statement for an Application for a Certificate of Lawfulness

Property

29–31 The Street, Cobham, Kent

Proposed Use

This statement accompanies an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness in respect of the proposed use of the garden of residential property at 29–31 The Street, Cobham, Kent, for a small-scale outdoor education group.

The proposal is to provide part-time, outdoor educational sessions for local primary school children using the existing domestic garden as a base. The activity is intended to encourage children to develop a stronger understanding of their local environment through nature-based learning within and alongside the local community, with frequent fieldtrips to local woodlands, parks and other open spaces.

The sessions are designed to operate on a very limited scale and in a manner that preserves the residential character of the property.

Scale of the Activity

The proposed operation comprises:

- ☐ A maximum of five children, together with the applicant's own child.
- ☐ Two sessions per week, each lasting approximately two hours.
- ☐ Occasional additional sessions during school holidays.
- ☐ Sessions finishing no later than 5.30 pm.
- ☐ Supervision solely by the applicant, with no additional employees or assistants.
- ☐ The activity is intentionally limited in both frequency and scale.

Access and Facilities

Children will access the garden via the existing side alleyway and will not enter the main dwelling.

Should toilet facilities be required, children may use the existing annex, or alternatively a portable toilet facility will be provided within the garden. This means that use of the principal dwelling itself is minimal, or may not be required at all, and remains wholly residential with no material change to its established residential function.

Residential Character

The principal use of the property will remain as a private dwellinghouse. The educational activity is clearly ancillary and incidental to the residential occupation of the property. No rooms within the house will be used as classrooms or teaching areas, and there will be no loss of residential accommodation.

The proposed use will occupy only a small part of the garden's overall use and will not alter its primary residential function.

Traffic and Parking

The children attending will predominantly be pupils at the local primary school opposite the property.

As a result:

- ❑ there is not expected to be any material increase in vehicle movements; with the proposal expected to reduce vehicle numbers during the peak school pick-up period.
- ❑ parents will park in the same locations they ordinarily use for school collection;
- ❑ children will walk from the school to the property; and
- ❑ traffic associated with the proposal is likely to be negligible.

Accordingly, the proposal is not expected to have any adverse effect on highway safety or local parking provision.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

The proposed activity has been designed to minimise any potential impact on neighbouring properties.

In particular:

- ❑ sessions are limited to daytime hours;
- ❑ all activities cease by 5.30 pm;
- ❑ no amplified music or public address equipment will be used;
- ❑ no machinery or noisy equipment is required;
- ❑ noise will be limited to normal children's voices associated with outdoor play and learning;
- ❑ no floodlighting or any significant new external lighting.
- ❑ the main teaching area will be positioned approximately halfway down the unusually long rear garden, increasing separation from neighbouring dwellings.

Given the modest scale and limited hours of operation, it is considered that the proposal will not give rise to unacceptable noise or disturbance. Furthermore, neighbouring allotment holders bordering the garden have expressed a positive

interest in contributing to the educational activities, demonstrating the potential for the proposal to strengthen existing community relationships and facilitate meaningful, locally based learning opportunities.

Heritage Considerations

The property is a Grade II listed building situated within the Cobham Conservation Area. No physical alterations are proposed to either the listed building or its curtilage. Specifically:

- ☐ no extensions are proposed;
- ☐ no new buildings or permanent structures will be erected;
- ☐ no external lighting is proposed;
- ☐ no engineering works are required;
- ☐ the existing garden layout will remain unchanged.

Consequently, the proposal preserves both the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The opportunity for children to engage directly with the local environment in a respectful and sustainable manner can foster an appreciation of the area's architectural, historic and cultural significance from an early age. Community-based learning in this context can help children understand the importance of conserving and caring for their local environment, thereby supporting longer-term stewardship of the Conservation Area.

Permission has been sought and obtained for the use of local areas, including Jeskyns and Ashenbank Wood.

Other Relevant Matters

The applicant has ensured that appropriate operational arrangements are in place, including:

- ☐ public liability insurance;
- ☐ approval from the mortgage provider;
- ☐ confirmation from the building insurer;
- ☐ current First Aid qualification; and
- ☐ an enhanced DBS certificate.

The applicant understands that, based on the nature and duration of the proposed sessions, the activity may fall within the exemptions from registration with Ofsted. Should registration ultimately be required, the applicant is willing to pursue this to ensure full compliance with all relevant legislation.

Conclusion

The proposal represents a very small-scale, low-intensity educational activity that remains clearly subordinate to the property's continued use as a private

dwellinghouse.

There are no physical alterations to the listed building or the site, no material increase in traffic, no significant impact upon neighbouring amenity, and no harm to the character or appearance of the Cobham Conservation Area.

For these reasons, it is respectfully considered that the proposed use does not amount to a material change of use from the existing lawful residential use of the property, and it is therefore requested that the Local Planning Authority confirms the lawfulness of the proposal by issuing the appropriate Certificate of Lawfulness.