

26 February 2024



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Dear Sir / Madam,

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)  
FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR INSTALLATION OF REPLACEMENT WINDOWS, WIDENED FIRE  
ESCAPE DOORS AND REPLACEMENT EXTERNAL ROOFTOP PLANT TO THE WELLS, 3-13 CHURCH  
STREET, EPSOM, SURREY, KT17 4PE**

I write on behalf of our client, University for the Creative Arts (UCA), to submit a full planning application for proposed external works at The Wells 3-13 Church Street, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 4PE.

A summary of the works considered to fall under permitted development rights have also been addressed in this letter.

An application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (ref: PP-12754732) and comprises the following information:

- This Cover Letter (Savills)
- Completed Application Form and Certificates (Savills)
- Community Infrastructure Levy form (Savills)
- Noise Impact Assessment (24 Acoustics)
- Drawings (Maris Interiors) as follows:

Drawing Number	Reference	Drawing Title	Scale	Author
01		Location Plan	1:1250	Savills Urban Design
02		Existing Site Plan	1:500	Savills Urban Design
03		Proposed Site Plan	1:500	Savills Urban Design
32291_01_00_ELEV1		Existing and Proposed Front Elevations	1:100	Maris Interiors
32291_01_00_ELEV2		Existing and Proposed Rear Elevations	1:100	Maris Interiors
32291_01_00_EX		Existing Ground Floor Plan	1:100	Maris Interiors
32291_01_00_SP		Proposed Ground Floor Plan	1:100	Maris Interiors
32291_01_01_EX		Existing First Floor Plan	1:100	Maris Interiors
32291_01_01_SP		Proposed First Floor	1:100	Maris Interiors
32291_01_02_EX		Existing Second Floor Plan	1:100	Maris Interiors
32291_01_02_SP		Proposed Second Floor Space Plan	1:100	Maris Interiors

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## Background

UCA has three UK campuses in Canterbury, Epsom and Farnham, plus a teaching hub at Maidstone Television Studios, and offers a range of programmes spanning the creative arts, business and technology. In 2021 it opened its first overseas campus in Xiamen, China. The Guardian ranked UCA as the second specialist creative university in the UK for 2023 and the Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide 2023 has ranked UCA in third place as a specialist creative university in the UK.

At Epsom, UCA is investing in new facilities to create an international centre for creative business, fashion and textiles. This will enhance the development of the Business School for the Creative Industries (BSCI) and expand the School of Fashion and Textiles (SoFT). The Wells has planning permission for the change of use from Office (Use Class (g)(i)) to Education (Use Class F1(a)) (ref: 23/00488/FUL, granted 24 July 2023) to facilitate UCA's occupation of the premises. The application was for a simple change of use with no external alterations proposed. UCA seek to undertake minor external works to The Wells to adapt and upgrade the building for its future occupation in conjunction with planning ref: 23/00488/FUL for the change of use of the site.

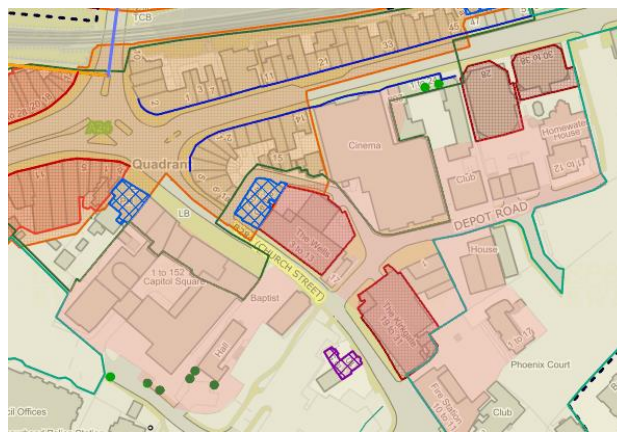
## Site Description

The existing site comprises a three-storey office building located on the northwest side of Church Street, which is currently vacant. The site has an underground car park which provides 44 car parking spaces at basement and ground level, accessed from Depot Road.

The surrounding area is mixed in character and appearance due to the sites location within Epsom Town Centre. The site falls with the Epsom Town Centre Boundary and just outside the Primary Shopping Area. The site does not contain a Listed Building and is not located within a Conservation Area, however part of the north boundary and the west boundary back onto the Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area. The site is adjacent to a Locally Listed Building (1 Church Street).



**Figure 1:** Application Site and Surroundings (Source: Google Maps, 2023)



**Figure 2:** Policies Map (Source: Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Interactive Policy Map, 2023)

## Relevant Planning History

Planning history for The Wells indicates that the building was granted planning permission in 1988 under planning reference 88/00628/FUL. The permission granted demolition of the existing premises and erection of a three-storey office development with basement and surface level car-parking. In 2021, permission was granted for the change of use of the Office Building to a Care Facility alongside the infilling part of the ground floor, conversion of the roof space including part alteration and extension of the rear and other associated external alterations (planning reference 21/00233/FUL). This permission was not implemented.

A change of use application from Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) to (Class F1(a)) was granted on the 24 July 2023 (ref: 23/00488/FUL) to facilitate UCA's occupation of the premises. The application was for a simple change of use and did not include any external alterations to the building. This application seeks to apply for planning permission for external alterations to adapt and upgrade the building for UCA's occupation.

### **The Proposed Development**

Planning permission is sought from Epsom & Ewell Borough Council ('The Council' 'EEBC') for the following description of development:

*'Installation of replacement windows, widened fire escape doors, replacement external rooftop plant and associated works'*

Replacement windows are proposed on the front elevation and to the three storey glazed wall to the rear elevation to upgrade the building fabric and improve the external appearance of the building. Fire escape doors on the rear elevation are proposed to be widened to ensure safe operation of the building for the intended occupancy levels of the building for UCA's purposes. Existing rooftop plant is proposed to be removed and replaced to upgrade the plant to better serve the building for its future use and improve the building's overall energy efficiency.

### **Permitted Development**

Permitted development rights for non-domestic alterations or extensions are set out within Schedule 2 Part 7 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (GPDO) for *'the extension or alteration of a commercial, business or service establishment'*. As the existing building is in office use (Class E(g)(i)), it is considered that the property benefits from Schedule 2 Part 7 Class A permitted development rights and proposed external alterations at ground floor level do not require planning permission.

The following external alterations are proposed at ground floor level:

- Ground floor window replacement on front elevation;
- Ground floor window replacement on rear elevation;
- Widened ground floor fire escape doors on rear elevation;
- Removal of entrance canopy and new entrance door on front elevation.

The abovementioned proposed external alterations will be undertaken at ground floor level and meet the conditions of Schedule 2 Part 7 Class A of the GPDO. It is therefore considered that, pursuant to the GPDO, planning permission is not needed for the proposed external alterations at ground floor level and these elements do not form part of this planning application.

The proposed alterations at ground floor level are shown on the submitted planning drawings to illustrate the intended final appearance of the building. Where the Local Planning Authority disagrees with our assessment that the proposed alterations at ground floor level do not require planning permission, we request for the proposed ground floor external alterations be included in the application and planning permission.

### **Planning Policy Context**

Planning law requires that where regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of and determination made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicates otherwise<sup>1</sup>.

In assessing and determining development proposals, the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 ('NPPF')

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<sup>1</sup> Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

states that local planning authorities should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Where the development proposals accord with up-to-date development plan policies they should be approved without delay or where the development plan is absent, silent or out-of-date, planning permission should be granted:

- Specific policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed.
- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, where assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

The Development Plan for the for Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is comprised of the Epsom & Ewell Core Strategy (2007), Plan E - An Area Action Plan for Epsom Town Centre (2011) and the Development Management Policies Document (2015).

The Council is in the process of a preparing a new local plan known as the Epsom and Ewell Local Plan 2022-2040 (Regulation 18). The Local Development Scheme, released November 2023, does not identify that Council will be undertaking another regulation 18 consultation, rather a regulation 19 consultation will begin in January 2025 with full adoption of the plan expected in April 2026.

The development plan policies considered to be relevant to this proposal are, as follows:

- Development Management Policies Document (2015)
- Policy DM8 Heritage Assets – development impacting heritage assets must establish the significance of the asset and minimise harm on that asset.
- Policy DM9 Townscape Character and Local Distinctiveness – enhancement of the townscape through new development, particularly areas where the character has been eroded or need improving.
- Policy DM 10 Design Requirements for New Developments - Developments proposals will be required to incorporate principles of good design and contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of a street or area
- Policy DM34 New Social Infrastructure - planning permission will be given for new or extensions to existing social infrastructure in circumstances including where it meets an identified needs, co-located

## **Planning Assessment**

Following a full analysis of EEBC's development plan and taking into consideration the nature and context of the Proposed Development, a number of planning policy themes have been identified. The principle of the Proposed Development is established as it is an operational requirement for the adaptation and upgrade of the building for modern day use. The application will support UCA's future occupation of the premises for education use (Use Class F1(a)) in conjunction with planning ref: 23/00488/FUL granted planning permission in July 2023. To this extent, the Proposed Development accords with Local Plan Policies E5 (An Area Action Plan for Epsom Town Centre) and DM34 (New Social Infrastructure).

The proposed development has been developed to accord with the statutory Development Plan and a high level assessment of the proposals against relevant policy is set out below.

## **Design**

Policy DM10 (Design Requirements for New Developments) states that development proposals will be required to incorporate principles of good design and that the most essential elements identified as contributing to the character and local distinctiveness of a street or area which should be respected, maintained or enhanced.

The proposed changes to the elevations are considered to maintain a high-quality design approach and is consistent with the existing design and materials of The Wells. Replacement windows on the front elevation seek to maintain the size of existing window openings and replacing existing windows with high-quality, grey aluminium framed, double glazed windows to improve the building's energy performance and external appearance. A three storey existing glazed wall to the rear is also sought to be replaced with grey aluminium framed, double glazed windows to create a cohesive appearance for replacement fenestrations. Existing fire escape doors to the rear of the property are proposed to be widened to 1050mm to ensure safe occupation of the premises for the intended occupation levels of the building for UCA. External rooftop plant is proposed to be removed and replaced with new rooftop plant to upgrade the mechanical systems supporting the buildings use.

It is considered that the replacement windows, widened fire escape doors and replacement rooftop plant would not be uncharacteristic of the site and is compliant with Policy DM10 (Design Requirements for New Developments).

### **Heritage**

Paragraph 195 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Policy DM8 of the EEBC Local Plan seeks to ensure that development respects and enhances the historic environment.

The site does not contain a listed building nor is located within a conservation area, however part of the north boundary and the west boundary back onto the Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area. The site is adjacent to a Locally Listed Building (1 Church Street). Therefore, the site falls part of the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

As the majority of the proposed works are located on the southern and northern elevations, only in partial view from nearby heritage assets, it is considered that the proposal would unlikely harm the character, appearance or significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets. It is considered that the existing building is tired in appearance and the proposed external alterations will improve its appearance and subsequently the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area. Therefore, the minor alterations would unlikely harm the character, significance or appearance of the conservation area or locally listed building.

### **Impact upon Neighbouring Residential Amenities**

The proposed development does not seek to extend the footprint of the building or introduce any new window openings. The proposed development will only change the visual appearance of the existing building, which is currently tired and not fit for purpose.

New rooftop plant is proposed at rooftop level in the same location of existing rooftop plant. A Noise Impact Assessment, prepared by 24Acoustics, accompanies this application and assesses the impact of the proposed replacement rooftop plant on neighbouring receptors. The Noise Impact Assessment concludes that the noise arising from the proposed plant will be acceptable at all times with the nearest sensitive noise receptors 45m from the premises.

Due to the above-mentioned reasons, it is not considered the proposed development will have any significant impact upon any neighbouring residential amenities and will improve the visual appearance of the site frontage.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

The Council has an adopted Community Infrastructure Levy (2014). As the proposed development will not result in any new floorspace, it is considered that the proposed development will not be eligible for Community Infrastructure Levy.

## Conclusion

UCA is a valued higher education provider and this application seeks to adapt and improve the existing building to facilitate UCA's future occupation of the premises. It is considered that the proposed external alterations are minor in the context of the wider building and will improve its appearance with use of high-quality materials, including such as grey aluminium framed windows. The proposed development will improve the appearance of a prominent town centre building and facilitate it's active occupation.

We look forward to receiving confirmation that the application has been registered and validated in due course. Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact my colleague Jacob Ashford ([jacob.ashford@savills.com](mailto:jacob.ashford@savills.com)) or myself.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B. Tattersall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B".

**Ben Tattersall MRTPI  
Planner**