

**Unit 4 Oldlands Way
Southern Cross Industrial Estate
Bognor Regis**

Planning Statement

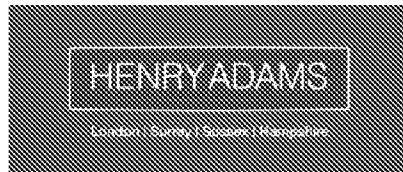
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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Site Description
3. Proposal
4. Planning Policy
5. Assessment
6. Conclusions



1.0 Introduction

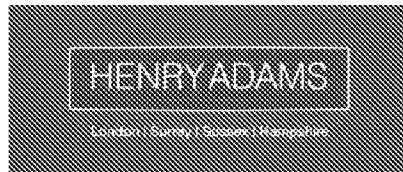
- 1.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of Mrs J Cooper to accompany a planning application for a change of use of Unit 4 Oldlands Way, Southern Cross Industrial Estate from B8 (Storage and Distribution) Use to an indoor skate park (D2 Use).
- 1.2 In addition to this statement, the application is accompanied by a Transport Statement and an Economic Development Statement.

2.0 Site Description

- 2.1 A vacant building, formerly occupied by John Wiley, has been identified as suitable for the proposed skate park use. This is a mid-terrace building on the Southern Cross Industrial Estate of 975m². The building is a steel frame construction with brick and profiled sheet cladding under a profiled sheet covered roof.
- 2.2 Internally the building provides an open area, former warehouse (786m²) and ground and first floor offices (total 190m²). There is a substantial hard standing to the front (east) of the building providing car parking for exclusive use of this property.
- 2.3 Southern Cross Industrial Estate is located to the north of Bognor Regis adjacent to the A29 and approximately 1.5 miles from the railway station. A cycleway provides a link for most of the route between the railway station and the application site.
- 2.4 The application site was previously occupied by John Wiley, who occupied the whole terrace from Unit 1-7 until June 2012. John Wiley used the buildings as a warehouse and distribution depot for its publishing house. It is believed that the former use of the application site fell within the B8 Use Class.

3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 This application seeks a change of use of Unit 4 to an indoor skate park. No external alterations are required to the building. Internally ramps, a café and a shop will be provided within the existing floor layout.
- 3.2 The idea for this proposal was the brainchild of local parents who were desperate to offer their children somewhere safe to skate when the weather was inclement. They

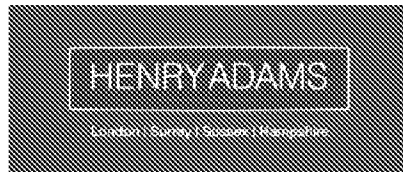


wanted somewhere where parents could join them and enjoy a coffee or lunch while waiting.

- 3.3 Unit 4 Oldlands Ways was identified as a suitable size for its size and location within easy skating/cycling distance of the train station with a cycleway linking the two for much of the way. There are currently two large offices that could easily convert into reception/locker area and a café.

Background

- 3.4 Market research was undertaken at local outdoor skate parks between Bognor Regis and Hayling Island to find out what riders and skaters would like to see and if they would support an indoor park in Bognor. This research highlighted how far teenagers travel to ride and skate – as far as Poole and Corby.
- 3.5 Support has also been sought elsewhere. The applicant has secured the support of ESP, a BMX shop in South Street, Chichester. Positive feedback has also been received from the Mayor, Paul Wells and the Town Council who were presented with the idea in November 2013.
- 3.6 Recognising the lack of youth facilities in the area and associated problems, meetings have also taken place with Sussex Police, including the local PCSOs, the Antisocial Behaviour Co-ordinators from Chichester and Arun District Councils and a member of the Community Safety Partnership from Arun District Council. All were extremely supportive.
- 3.7 Local support has been overwhelming. Russell Hastings, a former British Skateboard Champion, and Carlo Griggs, a former BMX champion, both local Bognor boys, have offered to help with the promotion of this venture through their PR company.
- 3.8 This venture will be set up as a Community Interest Company (CIC), a type of limited company that carries out social activities. It is not a charity and must generate surpluses to support its activities, maintain its assets, make a contribution to the company to allow continuing investment and in some cases make a limited (capped) return to its investors. CICs are not non-profit making, the profits they are generating are for their community purpose (or other local community purposes) even if the



company should be wound up. Given the community focus of the venture this was considered the most appropriate arrangement to allow the local community to develop a sense of ownership and a facility to be proud of, and to bring about positive change in the local community.

- 3.9 The primary idea is to encourage young people to meet in a safe environment, to test their endurance, sharpen their senses and develop their creativity, develop new skills, make friends, respect each other and, most of all, to have fun. It would also provide a recreational opportunity to young people to help them develop healthy and active lifestyles.
- 3.10 In the future there is also an opportunity to offer the facility to the community arts programme, encouraging youngsters to come and be creative with graffiti and street art, which would give them a central place to focus their skills. Disability groups, cubs, scouts and guides, free running groups, schools, local disadvantaged groups and community arts projects are also target audiences.

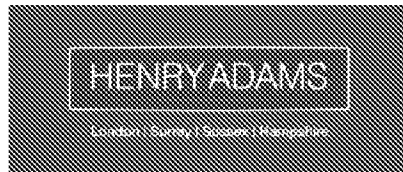
Employment

- 3.11 The skate park will provide employment opportunities for a number of people. There will be a general manager and 3 further members of staff who will supervise the skate park, undertake administration and supervise the cafe. Other employees will be volunteers who will have an opportunity to develop their skills if they wish through formal qualifications.

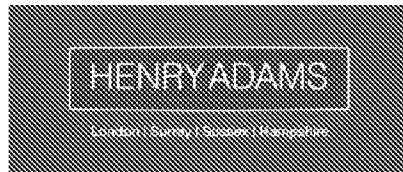
Hours

- 3.12 Given the location of the application site it is envisaged that the skate park will be open to the public 10am to 9pm Sunday to Thursday and 10am to 10pm on Fridays and Saturdays. During school hours it is expected that the park will be filled by older skaters and will appeal to those who want the park to be quieter. This is also an ideal time for disability groups, pre-school groups, etc, to attend for sessions. The usage of the park would rise during out of school hours (Monday to Friday 3-9pm and school holidays 10am to 10pm).

4.0 Planning Policy



- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking (Paragraph 14). For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay and, where the development plan is absent, silent, or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this framework taken as a whole or specific policies in the framework indicate development should be restricted.
- 4.2 Paragraph 7 details the three dimensions to achieving sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.
- 4.3 Paragraph 15 states that policies in Local Plans should follow the approach of the presumption in favour of sustainable development so that it is clear that development which is sustainable can be approved without delay.
- 4.4 Paragraph 70 encourages positive planning for *the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.*
- 4.5 Paragraph 73 recognises the important contribution opportunities for sport make to the health and well-being of communities.
- 4.6 Paragraph 22 requires that planning policies avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. It states that *where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.*
- 4.7 The statutory development plan for the area is the Arun District Local Plan 2003-2011. Current applications are assessed against the relevant saved policies therein.



- 4.8 The application site is situated in the built-up area boundary and is not subject to any other policy allocations. As such the relevant saved policies are as follows:

GEN2 Built-Up Area Boundary – This policy permits development or redevelopment within the built-up area boundaries, subject to the other policies in the plan.

- 4.9 The Local Plan does not contain any policies relevant to proposals for change of use from business use to leisure facilities or the provision of new leisure facilities.

5.0 Assessment

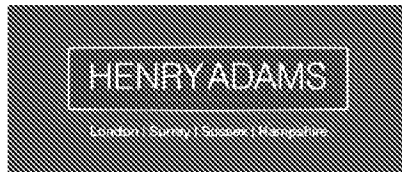
- 5.1 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF confirms that the planning system is plan-led. It notes that planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, Arun Local Plan 2003 in this case. However, the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

- 5.2 Being located within the built-up area boundary the principle of this proposal is acceptable under the provisions of Local Plan policy GEN2. There are no other policies in the Local Plan directly relevant to the assessment of the principle of the proposed change of use.

- 5.3 A pre-application meeting with the Planning Department at Arun District Council raised the possibility that there may be concerns in respect to the loss of a business use and employment opportunities. This concern perhaps arises from the misconception that the previous use of the building was for B2 (General Industrial). However, having researched the previous use of the building it has been established that the lawful use is for Storage and Distribution (B8) and there will be no loss of a general industrial use.

- 5.4 The Facilities Manager for Wileys has confirmed that Unit 4 was used for warehousing and distribution purposes, with a small office element, during their occupation of the premises from July 1995 until 31st August 2012.

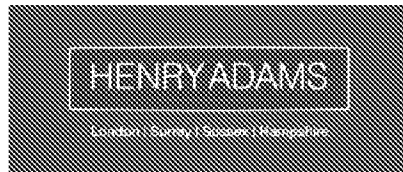
- 5.5 The number of job opportunities associated with the proposed skate park use is likely to be similar to that associated with this unit in its former warehouse use.



- 5.6 In light of the marketing which has been undertaken of these premises, it would appear that there is little interest in the use of this building for business purposes (B2 or B8 Uses). This application is accompanied by a marketing report to demonstrate the extent of work that has been undertaken to try and find an occupier of the building. In summary, marketing of this group of buildings commenced in February/March 2011 in anticipation of the John Wiley lease coming to an end in June 2012. Despite the refurbishment of the building, Unit 4 has remained vacant. There has been no real interest in this building by traditional industrial park uses.
- 5.7 The proposed change of use scores highly in sustainability terms. It is located within the built-up area boundary in close proximity to a variety of transport options. Specifically, it is within 1.5 miles of the railway station and there is a safe a convenient cycleway linking most of the route between the station and the application site. Although the majority of customers will travel to the site by train, foot, cycle, etc., there is sufficient parking to accommodate those who chose to travel by car.
- 5.8 Not only is the site in a sustainable location but the proposed use will also make a valuable contribute to the leisure facilities available to the local community and hopefully become a valuable community asset, especially for 8-18 year olds. The application site is located half a mile from a densely populated area where it is recognised that there is a shortage of youth facilities. Recognising this shortfall the applicant has had meetings with the Antisocial Behaviour Co-ordinators from Arun and Chichester Districts and a member of the Community Safety Partnership from Arun District Council. All of whom were very supportive of these proposals.
- 5.9 The applicant has also been in contact with Chief Inspector Justin Burtenshaw who had the following comments to make on these proposals:

One of the key priorities within the PCC Plan is around prevention and early intervention. This is particularly important with young people. It is essential to be able to interact with young people in an environment that they feel comfortable and make contact with the police a part of a young person's everyday life rather than just when they are in trouble.

The Skate park will not only offer a diversion for young people as an alternative to hanging around on the streets, but an exciting opportunity for police to engage with young people within the centre. This approach has been very successful at the Level Skate park in Brighton where a police hub was set up in the park. This has been well



received by the people using the park and enabled positive relationships to be formed between the police and young people. I have no doubt that this will be replicated here.

A new project like this within a Think Family Neighbourhood will give a much needed boost to the area and divert people into a positive sport. Projects like this will not only be beneficial for individuals, but will raise the profile of the whole neighbourhood.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The Local Plan does not contain any policies that are directly relevant to this unusual use. However, the application has sought to demonstrate how the use will offer a similar number of employment opportunities to the former warehouse use and make good and sustainable use of a building which has proven of little interest to traditional industrial park users despite being recently refurbished.
- 6.2 The nature of the use is such that the location is in fact a benefit. There is good access available to the site by a variety of sustainable transport modes and there are no residential properties within close proximity that might object to the opening hours and level of activity that might be associated with the park, particularly during school holidays.
- 6.3 This application offers Arun District a valuable community use to serve an area where youth facilities are somewhat limited without compromising the amenities of nearby properties or being located in an unsustainable location.