

CASE STUDY

THE SKINNERS' SCHOOL FIRE COMPLIANCE IMPROVEMENTS



Client: Skinners' Academy Trust

Location: Royal Tunbridge Wells

Contract Value: £570,000 (to date)

THE BRIEF / CHALLENGE

Following the launch of the Skinners' Academies Trust in 2023, The Skinners' School began strengthening estate management processes and developing a more structured, strategic approach in line with Good Estate Management (GEM) principles and Trust-wide asset planning objectives.

Ashley Consultants were subsequently appointed to undertake a fully costed condition survey, with a particular focus on life safety and statutory compliance, to support effective prioritisation of limited School Condition Allocation (SCA) funding across the site.

The survey identified a significant volume of high-priority works, particularly in relation to fire safety systems and compartmentation. However, the scale and cost of the required improvements exceeded the school's annual SCA allocation and could not be delivered within a single year without causing disruption to teaching and learning.

A phased, risk-based capital strategy was therefore required to improve compliance, manage estate risk and maximise the impact of available funding while maintaining normal school operations.



"A structured five-year plan has enabled the Trust to address critical life safety risks while maximising the impact of annual SCA funding."



SOLUTION PROVIDED

Ashley Consultants worked with the Trust and school to develop a five-year compliance and capital investment plan, prioritising according to risk, statutory requirements and deliverability.

The programme focused on high-risk buildings and critical areas including science facilities, boiler rooms and catering spaces. Key priorities included:

- Upgrading non-compliant fire alarm and detection systems
- Installation and improvement of emergency lighting
- Replacement of non-compliant fire doors
- Critical fire compartmentation works
- Improvements to means of escape and evacuation safety

To ensure best value and compliance with School Financial Regulations, Ashley Consultants prepared defined works packages, managed tender processes and provided full contract administration and project management.

Works were programmed primarily during holiday periods to minimise disruption and maintain safety throughout.



WORKS DELIVERED TO DATE:

Phase 1 (2023-2024)

- Fire alarm and emergency lighting upgrades to high-risk buildings and priority areas.

Phase 2 (2023-2024)

- Fire door replacement, compartmentation improvements, egress works and catering area upgrades.

Phase 3 (2025)

- Further fire alarm and emergency lighting works to rationalise and standardise systems across the site.

Future Phases

- In line with the five-year strategy, these include additional fire compartmentation and building fabric improvements such as window replacement, masonry repairs and roof works.



THE RESULT

Ashley Consultants' early involvement has enabled the school and Trust to move from reactive maintenance to a structured, strategic approach to estate investment.

Key outcomes include:

- A comprehensive, risk-based assessment of estate condition
- A prioritised five-year capital programme aligned with SCA funding
- Efficient procurement and contract delivery in line with financial regulations
- Maximised use of annual SCA allocations and reduced reactive expenditure
- Successful delivery of multiple phases with minimal disruption to teaching and learning.



“The phased programme is improving life safety and compliance across the site while providing a sustainable framework for ongoing estate management and future investment.”