

Planning Design & Access Statement relating to the erection of two storey ancillary office/maintenance/washing & preparation bays at Rabbits Vehicle Hire 14 Wolsey Road Reading RG4 8BY and change of use of recently demolished building from B2 to Sui Generis.

Project Ref- 9227-23

Date. May 23

1.0.0. Planning History

App Ref. 940523

Use for car hire garaging, ancillary offices & routine vehicle maintenance for a temporary period. APPROVED & IMPLIMENTED.

App Ref. 950396

Renewal of temporary permission (94/0819) for change of use from vehicle repair garage, paint and body shop to car hire, garaging and ancillary offices, routine vehicle maintenance and insert new vehicular access and entrance door & extend. APPROVED & IMPLIMENTED

App Ref. 970777

Installation of roller door. APPROVED

App Ref. 980325

Renewal of temporary planning consent for vehicle hire, garaging and ancillary offices for a two year period. APPROVED & IMPLIMENTED

App Ref. 992092

REMOVAL OF CONDITION 1 FROM PERMISSION 98/0592 TO ALLOW CONTINUED USE OF PREMISES FOR VEHICLE HIRE, GARAGING AND ANCILLARY OFFICES. APPROVED & IMPLIMENTED

App Ref. 191639

Demolition of existing buildings to be replaced with one temporary building and palisade fencing. Retrospective consent sought. APPROVED & IMPLIMENTED

App Ref. 220971

Application for prior notification of proposed demolition. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B. APPROVED & IMPLIMENTED

The planning history shows that all applications submitted on behalf of Rabbits Vehicle Hire have been successful.

The most relevant applications are 191639 where by the temporary building approved has to be removed by 14 November 2027

Rabbits Vehicle Hire have recently been able to acquire the adjacent building, namely The Carpet & Flooring Co buildings



The two buildings underlined have been acquired by Rabbits Vehicle Hire.

Application Ref. 220971 sought prior approval for their demolition which was approved.
The buildings have now been demolished.

Rabbits Vehicle Hire are well established on this site & have been trading very successfully since 1992 without any planning or safety issues.

The 191639 consent allowed the Company more parking space for their operation together with a more pleasant office environment.

There were aware the office building was for a limited period, ie until 2027 & when the adjacent building became available it was an obvious acquisition to allow them sufficient space to provide a permanent sustainable office & maintenance/washing & preparation bays.

At present the washing & preparation is carried on outside which is not ideal in inclement weather. The Company wants to provide better facilities for its staff & allow more organized off street parking when the vehicles are returned.

2.0.0. The Proposal

The proposal is to reconstruct a commercial building in a similar location to where the buildings have recently been demolished providing 210 sqm of ancillary office space & 260.9 sqm of maintenance/washing & preparation of the hire vehicles.

The use of the buildings demolished are considered to be Class B2 General industrial under the Town & Country Planning Use (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020.

The planning use of Rabbits Vehicle Hire is primarily Sui Generis with element of B2 owing to the vehicle maintenance & Class E for the washing.

We believe Reading Borough Council is content with the use on this site & its extension in the past to adjacent parts, therefore we do not envisage that this application should be viewed any differently.

As Reading Borough Council is aware, Rabbits Vehicle Hire is a successful Local business which employs local labor, trades within the planning granted & has caused no concerns for local residents & the school to the rear.



Proposed front elevation adjacent to existing commercial buildings in Wolsey Street.

Rabbits Directors Kevin Rapson & Steve Dore would like to make the following statement in support of their proposals;

Rabbits Vehicle Hire Ltd are a family-run, Reading based self drive vehicle company who have operated in Reading since we first opened for business in 1989. We have been located here in Wolsey Road, Caversham since 1992 and currently employ 30 people, all of whom live in Reading and the immediate surrounding areas.

The reason we require a workshop unit (approximately 10m deep by 8m wide) is to allow us to carry out light servicing/repairs and legislation compliance on site, significantly reducing movements of vehicles to and from dealers and third party garages. Since we opened for business, vehicle compliance and general health & safety requirements have increased no end, particularly the requirement for servicing and PMI truck checks to be carried out indoors and in safe, purpose built surroundings.

Over the years, parking in the local vicinity has become non-existent due to permit only parking, single yellows etc therefore

we do need to bring vehicles straight into our yard/workshop wherever possible. Currently however, we have no option but to park momentarily outside while numerous vehicles are moved around in the yard to make space. This causes us safety concerns for the general public, in particular school children from nearby Thameside. We understand there are 400 pupils at the school now and have noticed a marked increase in road traffic backing up to our premises now that Harley Road closes at drop off and pick up times. By installing a workshop on our premises we will vastly reduce the vehicle movements in and out for servicing/repairs which will reduce risk to parents/children and the general public.

The reason we require additional office space is to accommodate the extra staff needed to administer these additional legislation requirements. The extra space will allow us to employ an additional 8 local people, something that will help keep unemployment levels low.

3.0.0. Use & Amount

The use is to improve & facilitate the business of Rabbits Vehicle Hire

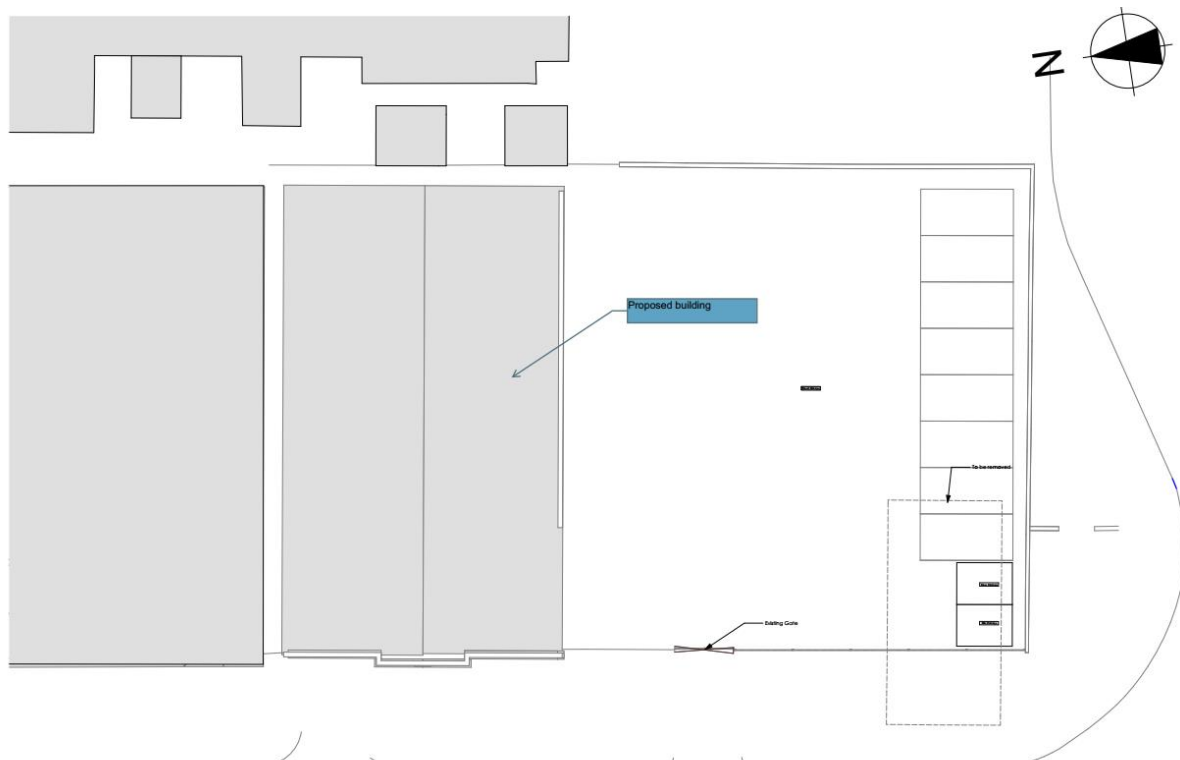
The amount proposed subsequent to the demolition of the outdated commercial buildings is to provide permanent office accommodation/ maintenance & preparation facilities within a purpose built structure to provide to maintain & improve a long standing local successful business.

3.1.0. Layout, scale & massing

The layout is quite logical in that the office accommodation is sited at the front to greet & deal with customers with the workshop & prep areas to the rear accessed from the existing yard where vehicles are parked.

The scale is in keeping with the adjacent commercial buildings in relation to its ridge height, two storeys offices are proposed on the frontage.

The massing is appropriate within this location adjacent to the existing commercial buildings. The school is located behind the proposed building.



4.0.0. Landscaping

There is little or no room for meaningful soft landscaping within this proposal.

5.0.0. Appearance

Rabbits Vehicle Hire is wishing to provide a aesthetically pleasing building on the road frontage, to this end the frontage will be constructed in red face brickwork with blue brick detailing & blue plinth.

The structure of the building will be formed incorporating a steel frame with metal cladding to the sides & rear elevation.

The cladding colour is proposed as Green with black flashings/doors & guttering to match their corporate colours.

6.0.0. Access & parking & transport comments

Access onto the site will be via the existing dropped kerb.

A technical note has been prepared by Chris Saunders of Motion which shows that the proposal does not have any material highway implications on the adjacent highway network.

Vehicles will be parked in an orderly manner as they are now depending on the size of the vehicles returned & being attended to.

7.0.0. Policy assessment

This proposal is maintaining & consolidating the employment of staff at Rabbits Vehicle Hire for the long term with this investment of a purpose built sustainable building.

This is consistent with the general policies on Employment
Within the Local Plan adopted November 2019.

8.0.0. Flooding

The site is located within Flood Zone 2 & therefore a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken by Oakshire Environmental which is enclosed within this application.

It proposes that the office part is raised to 38.68 OD which is approximately 400mm above the existing ground level.

Therefore a ramp is proposed the gain access from the existing ground level with steps incorporated.

The workshop will be located at the existing ground level.

Proposed Flood Mitigation Measures

Based on the identified flood risk, flood mitigation measures are recommended. The finished floor level of the proposed building should be set no lower than 38.68mAOD to provide a 300mm freeboard above the modelled 1% AEP fluvial flood level including an allowance for climate change. The site is situated within the Environment Agency's 'River Thames at Reading and Caversham' Flood Warning Area, so it is advised that the site owner and site users sign-up to receive these warnings

9.0.0. CIL

A Cil form is enclosed.

Conclusion

We believe this is a well-thought-out proposal which allows this local business to continue to prosper & hope Reading Borough Council will support it.

Chris Keen MRICS MCABE

