

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

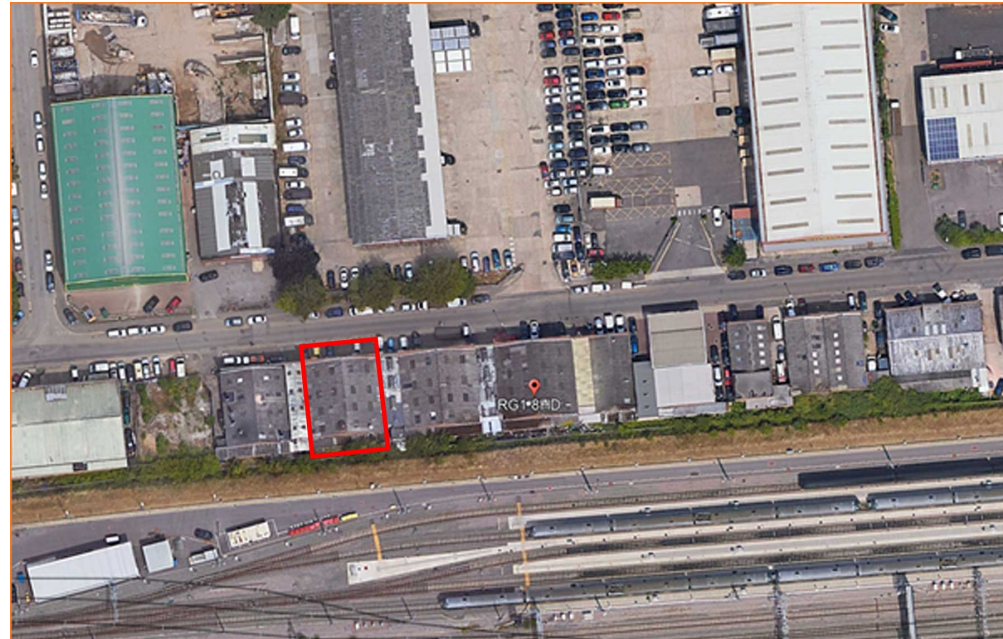
IN SUPPORT OF A PLANNING APPLICATION TO CHANGE THE USE OF THE PREMISES

at

**181-183 CARDIFF ROAD
READING
RG1 8HD**

for

THE CHANGE OF USE OF THE PREMISES TO PROVIDE A WORKSHOP FOR THE MECHANICAL REPAIR AND SERVICING OF CARS AND LIGHT COMMERCIAL GOODS VEHICLES AND THE INSTALLATION OF A DVSA APPROVED MOT TESTING FACILITY FOR CLASS 4 (CARS AND VANS) AND CLASS 7 (LIGHT COMMERCIAL GOODS) VEHICLES



Prepared by: Charlie Mills
On behalf of: MOT Centre Reading Limited

March 2022

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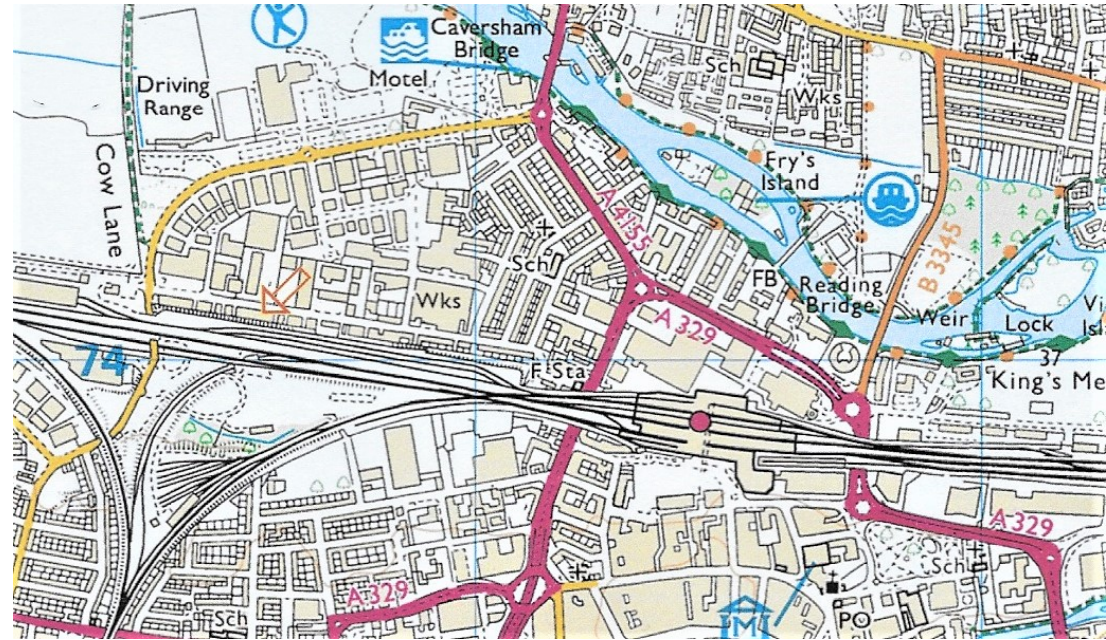
1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Until recently the premises were occupied by Reading Car Finance as a vehicle preparation workshop for their car leasing/car finance/car sales business. Investigations have revealed that prior to the above the premises were in use as a factory providing specialist services that included stove enamelling, powder coating and anodising as well as precision metal work.
- 1.2 The applicants, the newly formed MOT Centre Reading Limited, are seeking consent to change the use of the premises to enable the mechanical repair and servicing of cars, vans and light goods vehicles to be undertaken and to facilitate the installation of a Driver Vehicle Services Agency (DVSA) MOT testing station for Class 4 (cars and small vans) and Class 7 (light goods vehicles).
- 1.3 The applicants have secured a contract to service and MOT the vehicles owned and operated by Green Metro Cars.
- 1.4 Green Metro Cars is possibly Reading's largest taxi and contract transportation operator with a fleet of over 100 vehicles a large proportion of which are hybrid models. As part of its operations the company undertakes some 100 school runs per day and 200 patient transport journeys for the South Central Ambulance Service per week.
- 1.5 With such a large fleet of vehicles it is important that Green Metro Cars have 'privileged' access to a maintenance/repair and MOT facility. This will allow a level of control/scheduling that can ensure the continued efficient and safe operation of its vehicles and business without the need and expense of having to bring these services 'in house'.
- 1.6 All the facilities provided by the proposed development will also be available to members of the public. Whilst there are other Class 4 MOT Testing Stations within a short radius none offer Class 7 MOT tests. The applicants feel this service will be of benefit to a number of the commercial occupiers of the Richfield Avenue Industrial Estate.

2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is located on the south side of Cardiff Road some 170 metres from the junction with Cow Lane to the west and is approximately 1km from the town centre and Reading railway station. The Parking Standards and Design SPD confirms that Cardiff Road lies within the Zone 2, Primary Core Area. Cardiff Road is confirmed as a recognised cycle route under the Borough's Cycling Strategy (2014).
- 2.2 The site lies within the Richfield Avenue Industrial Estate, a designated Core Employment Area (EM2g).
- 2.3 The application site is a single building constructed a number of decades ago and has been in industrial/ commercial use since construction.

2.4 Site location indicated by orange arrow.



2.5 Image of the façade of the property showing parking.
(Image courtesy of Google Street View)



3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 See addendum. Information supplied by the LPA

4. CURRENT USE

4.1 Vacant.

5. POLICY ASSESSMENT

5.1 In preparing this statement the objectives within the NPPF have been taken into account particularly the 'Golden Thread' running through the centre of guidance, that being the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

5.2 The following policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted November 2019) have been considered as being relevant to this application:

CC1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CC5: Waste minimisation and storage

CC6: Accessibility and the intensity of development

CC8: Safeguarding amenity

EN15: Air quality

EN18: Flooding and drainage

EM2: Location of new employment development

EM3: Loss of employment land

EM4: Maintain a variety of premises

TR3: Access, traffic and highway related matters

TR5: Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging

5.3 The Borough's Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011) have also been considered as a material consideration.

6. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

6.1 Planning permission is being sought to establish:

i) a change of use of the premises to a workshop for the mechanical repair of cars, vans and light goods vehicles

ii) as a Driver Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) approved MOT Testing facility for cars and light vans (Class 4) and light goods vehicles (Class 7)

6.2 Subject to planning permission being granted the applicants will be required to install the very latest technology that will enable them to:

i) undertake MOT tests on electric vehicles

ii) comply with the very latest DVSA connectivity requirement of communicating live results of all brake and emissions tests directly to the Agency.

6.3 New signage can be dealt with by condition.

6.4 All MOT's will be by appointment only. Repair works and servicing will be pre-booked wherever possible.

6.5 Proposed hours of operation: 09.00 – 18.00 Monday to Friday, 09.00 – 13.00 on Saturday, Closed Sunday and Bank Holidays.

7. CONTEXT

7.1 The workshop is currently vacant and there is no extant permission for the proposed use/uses.

7.2 In order to obtain the authorisation from the DVSA the applicant must have a planning approval for the premises. The DVSA's MOT Testing Guide September 2021 'Requirements for Authorisation D', at point c), states:

'Planning permission (or an exemption), or written confirmation from the Local Authority or from a solicitor that the existing approval covers MOT testing or garage services and vehicle repair.'

7.3 Accordingly planning permission is being sought, through this application, to enable the applicants to establish their new business on the site.

8. AMOUNT

8.1 There will be no increase in the size of the footprint of the site. GIFA of the proposals is 425m². The amount of internal space available is appropriate for the uses proposed.

9. IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS UPON THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA

9.1 The proposals relate to the use of the site.

9.2 There are no proposed changes to the external appearance of or extensions to the buildings.

9.3 The Richfield Avenue Industrial Estate is designated under the Borough's Employment Area Analysis for 'mixed employment'.

9.4 Accordingly the proposals will have no effect upon the character or appearance of the Richfield Avenue Core Employment Area.

10. IMPACT UPON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

10.1 The site lies within a designated industrial area. There are no residential properties close by the site that could be affected by the development.

10.2 Accordingly there will be no loss of amenity for any residents.

11. ACCESS

11.1 The application site is located some 170 metres from the junction with Cow Lane to the west and is approximately 1km from the town centre and Reading railway station. The Parking Standards and Design SPD confirms that Cardiff Road lies within the Zone 2, Primary Core Area.

- 11.2 The site is highly sustainable in transport terms with excellent access to the town centre and railway station via public transport, cycling, walking or other means. The wider area is easily accessed via the A33 corridor.

12. CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

- 12.1 Policy TR5 states: *"Development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport."*

- 12.2 The application site is located on the south side of Cardiff Road some 170 metres from the junction with Cow Lane to the west and is approximately 1km from the town centre and Reading railway station. The Parking Standards and Design SPD confirms that Cardiff Road lies within the Zone 2, Primary Core Area and is therefore well served by public transport.

12.3 Car Parking:

Whilst the use proposed is sui generis and the Borough's Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011) do not provide specific parking standards for the proposed use, the maximum parking standards for use classes B2 or E of 1 space per 125m² have been adopted by the applicant for the purposes of this application. Accordingly with a GIFA of 425m² the overall car parking requirement will be 3.4 spaces.

- 12.3.1 The proposals allow for 6 controlled car parking spaces at the front of the property that already exist with a further 2 proposed within the workshop area should they be required.

- 12.3.2 In order to ensure that the proposals do not impact upon any potential for congestion on Cardiff Road or upon highway safety in the locality or the wider area the applicants have formally negotiated an access agreement with the owners of a site immediately opposite on the Richfield Avenue Industrial Estate. This agreement provides sole use access to the applicants, their staff and customers during operating hours to a number of currently under used designated parking spaces should they be required.

- 12.3.3 Disabled parking. There are no disabled parking spaces currently on site. The proposals will create 1 designated disabled parking space to the front of the building. The space will be signed accordingly.

12.4 Cycle Parking:

There is currently no cycle parking provision on site. The proposals will provide 3 internal cycle parking spaces in compliance with the minimum requirement of the Borough's Parking Standards and Design SPD of 1 cycle space for every 250m².

12.5 Electric Vehicle Charging:

Currently, there are no electric vehicle charging points on site. The proposals will provide a charging point for electric vehicles in one of the parking spaces to the front of the premises. The space will be signed accordingly.

13. WASTE MANAGEMENT

13.1 Waste generated:

- 13.1.1 Used car tyres, used lubricating oils, metal (used vehicle parts), minimal volumes of cardboard and plastics.

13.2 Waste disposal:

- 13.2.1 Used car tyres, metals (used vehicle parts) and used lubricating oils will be collected weekly for recycling. General waste and other recycling will be collected weekly. It is proposed that waste bins and used tyres are stored within the site until collection. Waste transfer certificates will be issued by the registered contractor.

14. FLOOD RISK

- 14.1 The Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning shows the site lying within Flood Zone 2, "an area with a medium probability of flooding", that is land having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river flooding. Accordingly a Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared and is submitted in support of this application.

15. AIR QUALITY

- 15.1 The applicants are very mindful of the overall need to reduce pollution particularly that created by motor vehicle emissions. The investment being made by the applicants in the latest MOT testing connectivity technology will allow for live streaming of the results of emissions tests to be relayed in real time directly to the DVSA. This technology enables the DVSA to monitor the most polluting vehicles and to take the necessary action to ensure that the vehicle is swiftly repaired to achieve an acceptable level of emissions or the vehicle is removed from the road.
- 15.2 The applicant's main servicing and MOT contracts will be with Green Metro Cars. Their fleet has in excess of 45 hybrid vehicles.
- 15.3 The site lies within Zone 2, Primary Core Area. Accordingly the site is well served by public transport and cycling links to the benefit of employees and customers.
- 15.4 Strict control of bookings for MOT tests and repair works will be maintained at all times to try and ensure that no unnecessary journeys to and from the site are undertaken.

16. EMPLOYMENT

- 16.1 It is proposed that 6 new positions will be created by the development.

17. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 16.1 This statement demonstrates that the proposed development is i) sustainable and ii) acceptable in principle.
- 16.2 Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed as is evidenced in this statement. The proposed development will enable a new enterprise to invest in the Borough, bringing new skills with it, without any adverse effect upon the character and amenity of the locality or the wider area.
- 16.3 It is considered that the proposed development complies with the relevant Local Plan policies and is further supported by National Guidance. Therefore it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.