

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: 220356/FUL

Address: 181-183 Cardiff Road

Proposal: Change of use from a workshop (Class E use) to provide a DVSA approved MOT testing facility for Class 4 (cars and vans) and Class 7 (light commercial goods) vehicles (Sui Generis use) (amended description)

Extended Target Decision date: 24/06/22

Case officer: Connie Davis

1. Site description and Surrounding Area

The site is a currently vacant workshop/ warehouse unit with forecourt parking. The site is on the south side of Cardiff Road opposite the junction with Trafford Road and relates to a central unit within a terrace of 3 contained within a single storey flat roof brick building with large loading door and full height windows fronting Cardiff Road.

The site is located within the Richfield Avenue Core Employment Area (EM2g), on a main cycle route and within Flood Zone 2. The surrounding area comprises of industrial buildings.

An area of biodiversity interest runs behind the site.

2. The Proposal

The application proposes the change of use from a workshop to to an MOT testing station for Class 4 (cars and small vans) and Class 7 (light goods vehicles). The site will have 2 service bays. No external works are proposed. 3 members of staff will be employed.

3. Consultation

Internal Consultees

Transport - No objection

Ecology - No objection

Environmental Health - No objection

External Consultation

The following addresses were formally consulted via letter on 13/04/22:

179-181 Cardiff Road

183-185 Cardiff Road

In addition, a site notice was displayed.

No representations have been received.

4. Plans and Documents Considered

P2135/PL02 Rev P2 - M.O.T Testing Facility - Proposed Plans, Car Parking & M.O.T Bay Layout

Received 7th June 2022

Sustainability Statement dated April 2022

Received 12th April 2022

P2135/PL01 Rev P6 - Location, Block Plans/ Existing Layout
Application Form
CIL Form
Planning History
Design and Access Statement
Photographs
Flood Risk Assessment dated February 2022

Received 15th March 2022

5. Relevant Planning History

None related to this specific application.

6. Discussion with applicant/ agent

The agent was contacted to advise that ownership Certificate B was required to be signed as the kerb is not under the applicant's ownership. Rather, it is owned by the Highways Authority.

During the course of the application, the proposal was amended so that the building would only be used to carry out MOTs. Originally, the proposed use was for the mechanical repair and servicing of cars, vans and light goods vehicles, as well as MOTs. However, in light of Transport concerns over parking provision, the scheme was amended so that the only service provided to members of the public would be MOTs.

7. Relevant Planning Guidance

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

The '*National Planning Policy framework*' ('NPPF') 2021 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Reading Borough Local Plan, 2019) according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given). Accordingly, the 'NPPF' and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

8. Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework;

National Planning Policy Guidance;

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy

TR3 Traffic, Access and Highway-Related Matters

EM2 Location of New Employment Development

EN12 Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN18 Flooding and Drainage

10. Appraisal

a) Principle of Development

Until recently the premises was occupied by Reading Car Finance as a vehicle preparation workshop for their car leasing/car finance/car sales business. 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.

The applicants, the newly formed MOT Centre Reading Limited, are seeking consent to change the use of the premises to enable MOT testing for Class 4 (cars and small vans) and Class 7 (light goods vehicles).

The premises has an established commercial use within a Core Employment Area. The proposal would see the continuation of a use relating to automobiles and so is considered appropriate in relation to Policy EM2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Impact of the proposal on the surrounding area

The proposal will not result in any external alterations to the building. It is not considered that the new commercial premises will result in a substantially harmful impact on the surrounding area when compared to the existing situation. Because the proposal does not involve external works, there would also not be adverse impact on the biodiversity area located at the rear of the site, as confirmed by the council's Ecologist. As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to Policies CC7 and EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

b) Impact on neighbouring amenity

Policy CC8 states that development should not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking;

- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- Harm to outlook;
- Noise and disturbance;
- Artificial lighting;
- Vibration;
- Dust and fumes;
- Smell;
- Crime and safety; or
- Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.

The site is located within an Industrial area. It is not considered that the proposed works would cause adverse impact to these surrounding commercial uses. No residential units are located in the vicinity. However, a condition controlling opening hours of the use will be attached to control unrestricted commercial activity. As outlined on the application form, these would be from 09:00 - 18:00 (Mon - Fri) and 09:00 - 13:00 (Sat). It will be closed on Sunday and Bank Holidays.

As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

c) Transport Matters

The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core Area and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. Typically this zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone.

In accordance with the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD (Vehicle Servicing) the development should be provided with 1 parking space per 2 full time employed staff and 3 parking spaces per service bay.

It has been confirmed that 3 members of staff are to be employed, equating to 1.5 parking spaces. 2 parking spaces have been provided at the front of the site, one of which will be equipped with an electric charging point, and one designated as disabled parking. The spaces do not encroach highway land. 6 parking spaces are provided internally (3 per service bay) which has also been deemed acceptable by Transport officers.

The proposal is therefore deemed acceptable in relation to policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, subject to a condition securing the indicated parking spaces.

d) Flooding

The site is located within Flood Zone 2 and therefore has a medium risk of flooding. A Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted which confirms that due to the proposal being a change of use with no increase in vulnerability. However, it does recommend several course of action such as flood proofing the unit. A condition will be applied to ensure the recommendations/ mitigation as outlined in the submitted flood risk assessment are complied with.

As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to Policy EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

e) Sustainability

This sustainability statement has reviewed the possible opportunities for the proposed change of use in building class to improve the sustainability of the site, even though the proposed works are minor. As the proposed usage of a vehicle workshop, the building heating and hot water demands will be low whereas energy usage for lighting will be more. Therefore, improvements made to lighting will have a disproportionately higher effect on the building's overall energy and CO₂ emissions.

Therefore, the majority of carbon saving will be in the usage of LED lighting throughout the site, also the consideration of ASHP for the small reception area will offer renewable energy whilst operating in heating mode.

11. Recommendation

GRANT planning permission, subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. Time Limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Vehicle Access as specified
4. Compliance with flood risk assessment
5. Hours of operation

Informatives

1. Terms
2. Highways
3. You are advised that the development lies on a potentially contaminated site. Due to the nature of the historic land use there is the potential of contaminated land being present. The developers must be aware that any ground or enabling works may bring receptors into contact with the aforementioned contaminants. You may wish to satisfy yourself that the details of the construction proposals take the necessary account of the possibility of contaminants from that source.
4. Positive and Proactive