

Delegated Application Report

Target Date: 22/11/18

Address: 9 Greyfriars Road, Reading

Application No: 181701

Proposal: Certificate of lawfulness for proposed use of Class B1 office as Registered Company Office for Internet based taxi hire company.

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

Introduction and Proposal

The applicant proposes to use the office space identified on the submitted plans (one cubicle) as the UK headquarters for 'Ola UK Private Ltd (Ola)', an internet based cab and car share company. The use is proposed to operate from the office building located at 9 Greyfriars Road, Reading, which is owned and operated by McKay Securities as lettable office spaces, currently lawfully operated as a B1 office use.

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 specifies, under 3(6) that "no class specified in the schedule includes use (f) for a taxi business of business for the hire of motor vehicles". The Use Classes Order goes on to specify a B1. Business use includes "(a) as an office other than a use within class A2 (financial and professional services), being a use which can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit".

The applicant has detailed that the proposed Ola headquarters will be used for administrative purposes to ensure compliance with the operating licence, and will not be used for booking rides or providing facilities for drivers whilst they are working. Additionally, no operational taxis will be based at the office. The principal use of the office will be to perform: marketing and strategy development, remote passenger and driver support, operations management and planning, and record keeping and administration including licencing and driver vetting. Employees will be required to visit a licenced office premises on initial recruitment and would only be permitted during normal business hours (i.e. 8:30am - 6:00pm).

Plans Submitted

The agent supplied the following, received on 28 September 2018:

Drawing No: 180SGF00/05c/01 - Site Location Plan

Drawing No: 1825W - Space plan: first floor

Supporting letter by Cushman & Wakefield, Ref Reading clouid, dated 26/09/18

Relevant Planning History

140123 - Extension and refurbishment of existing office building, including additional office accommodation at third floor level with a roof terrace area relocated above, creation of extended entrance and reception at ground floor

level with replacement glazing up to third floor level, replacement of glazing and external doors to all elevations, addition of glazed canopy to rear entrance, creation of covered cycle store, provision for shower facilities and replacement of an existing chiller unit at plant level.

Summary of Consultations

No consultations were undertaken as it is not required for an application of this type.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

National Planning Practice Guidance

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (England) Order 1987

Assessment

The proposed use, although operating a car hire and taxi booking service, it is generally consistent with that of a B1 use. On the basis that the business proposed does not operate as a traditional taxi business whereby having vehicles parked at the site, or including driver facilities. As such, it is considered that a B1 use classification is considered appropriate.

Recommendation

Sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that a Certificate of Lawfulness should be granted for the proposed use of Class B1 office as Registered Company Office for Internet based taxi hire company.

The proposal has been assessed against the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (England) Order 1987. It can be confirmed that the proposed operation would be lawful for planning purposes on the basis of the drawings received on 28 September 2018:

Drawing No: 180SGF00/05c/01 - Site Location Plan

Drawing No: 1825W - Space plan: first floor

And based on information within the supporting letter by Cushman & Wakefield, Ref Reading clouud, dated 26/09/18

Therefore the Local Planning Authority can issue the applicant with a Certificate of Lawfulness for the proposed development.

Informatives

IF1 - Positive and proactive working

IF5 - Terms