

June 27, 2018

STATEMENT ACCOMPANYING A PLANNING APPLICATION TO EXTEND THE TIME  
LIMITATION FOR A HAND CAR WASH FACILITY FROM LAND ADJACENT TO HILL'S MEADOW  
CARPARK, GEORGE STREET, READING, RG4 8DH



## Introduction

This statement accompanies a variation of condition planning application to allow for the continuation of a hand car washing operation, sought for a further period of 10 years, including associated temporary buildings and facilities, as submitted on behalf of Anthony Herbert T/A Hills Meadow Car Wash Ltd.

A lease agreement with Reading Borough Council is in place relating to the land for an initial period of 3 years, and for a further period of 7 years, subject to review. This lease agreement is based upon development and use of the site in accordance with the current planning permission, with the 3 year 'break clause' included to allow for the review and cessation of the lease in the event that the development proves problematic.

Following the trouble free operation of this development, both Marcus Herman, Business Development Manager (Parks) and Luke Lloyd (Estates) of Reading Borough Council are in support of the continuation of the car wash facility, with the lease carrying forward under the original terms.

It is understood that the Council is considering the longer term use of this site which forms a wider area appropriate to a variety of uses.

## Site Context

The site forms a dis-used part of the Hill's Meadow car park, situated adjacent to the recycling bank, and the skate park ramp. Beyond, to the north are the hillocks to the BMX bike track.

The wider area is designated as a 'Major Landscape Feature' as the open environs towards the Thames. However, with the exception of being visible from the car park, the site is particularly well screened by existing structures and landscape features, rendering the proposed development invisible from the Thames footpath.

## Use

Following the grant of temporary planning permission, expiring after a 3 year period, a hand car wash and valet business operates from land adjacent to Hills Meadow car park.

The building is formed from shipping containers placed upon blockwork pads, being capable of being dismantled and removed, and as such is considered to be a temporary structure.

The development includes a refreshment servery, waiting area, and toilet facilities as well as CCTV surveillance of the wider area, in association with the car wash facility, and being open to the public during operating hours.

## Amount

Hours of operation are 6am to 9pm Monday to Friday, (coinciding with the car park operating hours) 7am to 7pm on Saturday, and 8am to 6pm on Sunday.

5-6 part time staff are employed at the site, as well as two Managing Directors, with a manager always present during opening hours.

The layout allows for up to 5 vehicles to queue for the car wash, with 2 parking bays within the compound itself, and a further 4 bays for washing and cleaning operations.

An average of 25 and maximum of 40 vehicles are cleaned per day.

Associated facilities include an office, storage room, internal waiting area, refreshments servery, a public single unisex W.C, and a wheelchair accessible disabled W.C.

Valeting is carried out below an open sided canopy attached to the proposed building.

### Appearance

The building and canopy are clad in brown stained timber boards, with a shallow pitched dark green finished sheet roof over. Signage is white writing upon a black background and non-illuminated, while the site is secured by dark green finished palisade fencing to the perimeter. Generally, it is considered that the development is of an appropriate scale and appearance, blending in well with the immediate surroundings, resulting in an improved appearance of the site.

### Access

The existing gated access point from George Street, adjacent to the main access to the car park, is utilized. This access point is used occasionally by emergency vehicles and collection vehicles to the recycling bank, as well as by fairground operators. The access drive is surfaced with bitmac. Traffic regulation markings are in place requiring that no waiting be allowed, with supporting signage, to ensure that the access point is not blocked by vehicles waiting to enter the car wash. The site layout allows for up to 5 vehicles to queue for the car wash, with 2 parking bays within the compound itself, and a further 4 bays for cleaning operations.

### Highway Impact

There have been no issues in terms of congestion or hindering access to and from the highway as a result of the development.

### Noise

The site is remote from any adjacent buildings, being situated adjacent to the carpark, skate park, recycling bank, and BMX park. No complaints have been raised throughout the 3 years of operation.

### Flood Risk

The site lies within 'flood zone 2', with the access point to the car park being partially within 'flood zone 3a'. A non-return valve is installed to the foul water drainage, with the shipping container structure raised 300mm above ground level. The building itself allows for water ingress via holes within the floor of the structure, coupled with sacrificial wall finishes and a water resistant flooring. A flood management plan is in place, generally ensuring that any chemicals stored on site remain above the water level, and that the site shall be secured and remain closed until the risk has subsided.

### Pollution

Water run-off from the washing bays enters the foul water sewer network via silt traps, in accordance with the provisions of a Thames Water to trade effluent agreement.

### Security

The building is locked outside of operating hours. CCTV cameras are in operation, capable of monitoring the site, vehicle access to the car park, and the wider car park area, with recordable monitoring equipment sited within the office. In contrast to the previously vacant site, fly tipping and anti-social behaviour are no longer an issue.

#### Conclusion

The carwash facility has been well managed and operated without any negative impacts. The continued operation would result in the same benefits to the public and the local environment, as well as providing a source of employment.

#### Photographs





Nicholas Bundy  
Woolhampton Design Centre