

**PLANNING STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF
THE CHANGE OF USE FROM RETAIL TO
CLASS B8 STORAGE & ASSOCIATED
WORKS (NON MATERIAL AMENDMENT)**

AT

**UNIT 7 BRIDGEWATER CLOSE, READING
RG30 1JT**

MLP REF: BC/17/188

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Contents

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Planning history
- 3.0. Relevant planning policy
- 4.0. The application of planning policy & other material planning considerations
 - The principle and nature of the land use.
 - The planning conditions
 - The effect on residential amenity.
 - The proposed management arrangements
 - Enterprise and competition.
- 5.0. The planning balance

1.0. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This statement addresses the matters raised in relevant planning policy and other development management matters. On this basis, the following conclusions are reached:
 - 1. Planning permission has been granted for the change of use from Class a1 to Class B8 storage and distribution. This specifically refers to the use as “self storage” and the applicant specialises in this type of facility.
 - 2. Condition 4 of the permission has the effect of controlling the use so that the amenities of nearby residents are safeguarded. It satisfies the tests set out in national policy and guidance and this is not disputed. Indeed the applicant set out the times of operation and this element was erroneous.
 - 3. It is demonstrated how an alternative solution may properly be applied so that the condition may be removed as part of the NMA permission and allow the required 24/7 operation of the building.
 - 4. This process was invited so as to offer a management solution in terms of use. In this way it is ensured that parking and vehicular movement will not result in disturbance. The detailed management measures and the propensity of customers to park close to the entrance/reception will act as a proper safeguard.
- 1.2. For these reasons, the development proposal is wholly in accordance with national and local planning policies. It remains as sustainable development and permission should be granted.

2.0 PLANNING HISTORY & NATURE OF THE LAWFUL OPERATIONS

- 2.1. The site comprises land and buildings which fall within Class A. This was granted in 1997 under reference 97/00044/CLE and has remained in this use prior to and since this time.
- 2.4. In December 2017 under reference 171681 permission was granted for the change of use from Class A1 retail to Class B8 storage and distribution. It is made clear in the application that the development was for a self storage use within Class B8.

3.0. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1. The relevant planning policies, against which the application falls to be determined, are as follows:
- The Core Strategy policies (2008)
 - The Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012)
 - The SPD Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
- 3.2. The Core Strategy policies are:
- CS7 - Design
 - CS10 Location of employment development
 - CS11 The use of employment land for alternative uses
 - CS12 Maintaining a variety of premises
 - CS24 Car parking/cycle standards
 - CS34 Pollution and water resources.
- 3.3. The Sites and detailed policies are:
- DM4 Safeguarding amenity
 - DM12 Traffic and related highway matters
 - SA12 Core employment areas
- 3.4. National planning policy is set out in the NPPF and PPG documents and in the context of this application we draw on the following:
- The balance between environmental, social and economic dimension in considering sustainable development and their mutual dependency (7).
 - The presumption in favour of sustainable development (11-16).
 - Working with business to understand their needs and requirements (160)
 - The correct use of planning conditions to satisfy the required tests (204)

- 3.5. These policies applied in the following section to the revised development proposal, along with all other material planning considerations.

4.0 THE APPLICATION OF PLANNING POLICY & OTHER MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. In respect of planning policy and all other material planning considerations, we set out the following:

- (1) The principle and nature of the land use.
- (2) The planning conditions
- (3) The effect on residential amenity.
- (4) The proposed management arrangements
- (5) Enterprise and competition.
- (6) The planning balance and sustainable development.

The principle of development and the nature of the proposed use

- 4.2. In the consideration of application 171681 the Officer's report clarifies that the site falls within an identified employment area where the local authority seeks to retain economic use and resist alternative land uses.
- 4.3. The use of the premises for Class A1 retail is a factor of time and not one which meets with the objectives of the adopted planning policies. For this reason the Class B8 use wholly in compliance with relevant planning policy and the land use are acceptable.
- 4.4. The land use described in the application is for a self storage facility. The applicant is experienced in such matters with other such facilities in Leatherhead, Surrey. In broad terms the facility allows for business and/or personal storage where those renting space retain the keys to their secure storage within the warehouse building. This could be long or short term and the facility is manned on a 24/7 basis so that those wishing to access their storage may do so at any time and without appointment.
- 4.5. It is useful to have a comparable to show the general visitor patterns and the table at the end of this Statement shows this for the facility at Leatherhead.
- 4.6. It can be seen that the key matters are as follows:
- Most use is on Monday to Friday - 92 per cent of total visits
 - Use after 19.00 and up to 23.29 is around 20 per cent of total visits
 - There are few later night visits after 19.00
 - The use is spread throughout the 24 hour period with few obvious peaks

The planning condition

4.7. The respective planning condition(s) are required to pass the tests set out in the Framework and Planning Policy Guidance. These are:

- necessary;
- relevant to planning and;
to the development to be permitted;
- enforceable;
- precise and;
- reasonable in all other respects

4.8. In pre-application discussions it was set out that condition 4 was imposed to safeguard amenity and as it was suggested on the planning application forms. It was further suggested that this condition could be removed (and perhaps replaced) provided the applicant could demonstrate that customer visits would not result in a loss of amenity or undue disturbance to adjoining residents.

4.9. The applicant agrees that in the absence of this information and given the pattern of use the condition satisfies the tests of necessity and reasonableness as well as plainly being relevant to the development to be permitted.

The effect on residential amenity

4.10. The use of a typical self storage facility by this applicant is shown above and in the table at the end of the Statement. It is clear that most activity takes place in the working day and on Monday-Friday. Nevertheless, there are visits at night and beyond 19.00 which could result in cars or LGV's being parked at the side of the building and closer to the rear gardens and houses on Dorset Street.

4.11. Whilst there are bollards specifically designed to stop access from the commercial estate through the residential areas, if they were to park with at the side of the building this could result in disturbance to residents by way of engine noise, car lights and slamming of doors. The use of the roller shuttered doors at the side/rear of the building could similarly result in disturbance if not controlled.

4.12. This said, the propensity of visitors would be to park by the reception which is at the front of the building and where there are 7 parking spaces and cycle racks. The figures in the table show that this would be ample to accommodate visitors at weekends and at unsociable hours after 19.00.

4.13. Notwithstanding this there needs to be a management scheme to prevent deliveries to the rear of the building at these times and to prevent customer parking at the side of the building.

The proposed management arrangements

4.14. It is proposed to have a straightforward management solution to prevent customer parking at the side of the building and limit deliveries to the roller shuttered area at the side/rear of the facility.

4.15. This encompasses a series of the removable bollards at the side of the building as per MLP/01 and related conditions as follows:

Collapsible bollards shall be placed in the position shown on drawing MLP/01 between the hours of 18.00 and 08.00 on each day and no parking shall take place within these areas unless otherwise agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority.

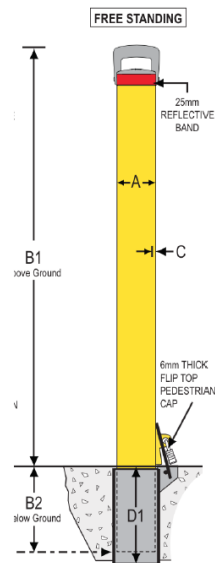
Reason: In order to protect local residents from unreasonable disturbance arising from the use in accordance with Policy DM4 and CS34.

No deliveries shall take place within the entrance marked on drawing MLP/01 between the hours of 18.00 and 08.00 on each unless otherwise agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority.

Reason: In order to protect local residents from unreasonable disturbance arising from the use in accordance with Policy DM4 and CS34.

4.16. The type of bollards as are as shown below and can be removed and replaced in a straightforward manner. The roller shuttered entrance at the rear of the building will be secured with palisade fencing as detailed on the original application and it is perfectly possible to prevent deliveries in this area within the stated hours of operation.

4.17. As with most planning conditions the enforceability relies on local residents and other users who may notify the local authority if there is disturbance in breach of the relevant planning condition. These are enforceable through breach of conditions notices.



- 4.18. The critical matter is one of practical application in terms of the ease of inserting the bollards and the propensity of visitors to make use of parking close to the reception entrance. Indeed it is noted from inspection that the area alongside the building has bollard and chain protection and is reserved for staff parking. This supports the assertion made by the applicant.
- 4.19. In this way condition 4 of the 7th December permission may be replaced with the alternative means of control as described above and this would have the effect of safeguarding the amenity of local residents.

Enterprise and competition

- 4.20. National planning policy and that relating to the use of planning conditions is to the effect that open completion should not be hindered by unreasonable restrictions on effective use.
- 4.21. In this case there is a direct competitor - Access & Self Storage - situated on Portman Road about 0.25kms from the application site. This is open on a 24/7 basis aside from Saturday nights where it closes at 17.30.
- 4.22. The applicant seeks a comparable position based on experience with controlled 24/7 operation to allow effective competition.

5.0 THE PLANNING BALANCE & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1. Having regard to the foregoing, the following points are made by way assessing the planning balance:

1. It is clear that the existing condition (4) has a planning purpose and satisfies the test of national planning policy.

2. In short it has a planning purpose - to safeguard residential amenity - and is both reasonable and necessary.
3. Given the applicant's desire and need to compete on a 24/7 basis and given their experience elsewhere, it is shown that there is a manner in which controls can be exercised to allow this whilst affording a means of reasonable competitive parity with a nearby facility.
4. The management regime is achievable and practical. Along with the propensity to park close to the reception entrance, the availability of parking in this location and the experienced level of activity at unsociable times, the proposal reflects an acceptable planning solution.
5. In terms of planning policy this is a balance between economic - competitiveness - social and environmental factors (residential amenity) which allows for a sustainable planning balance.
6. For these reasons, the development proposal is wholly in accordance with national and local planning policies. It is sustainable development and permission should be granted with the revised planning conditions.