



PLANNING STATEMENT

1 Arkwright Road, Reading. RG2 0LU.

PROPOSED DEMOLITION AND REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING INDUSTRIAL UNIT WITH ASSOCIATED PARKING & LANDSCAPING.

Prepared on behalf of: **Studland Property Investments Ltd.**

JUNE 2024

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Prepared on behalf of Studland Property Investments Limited.

Prepared by: Andrew Beard

Date: 18th June 2024

Reference: ABP/0503



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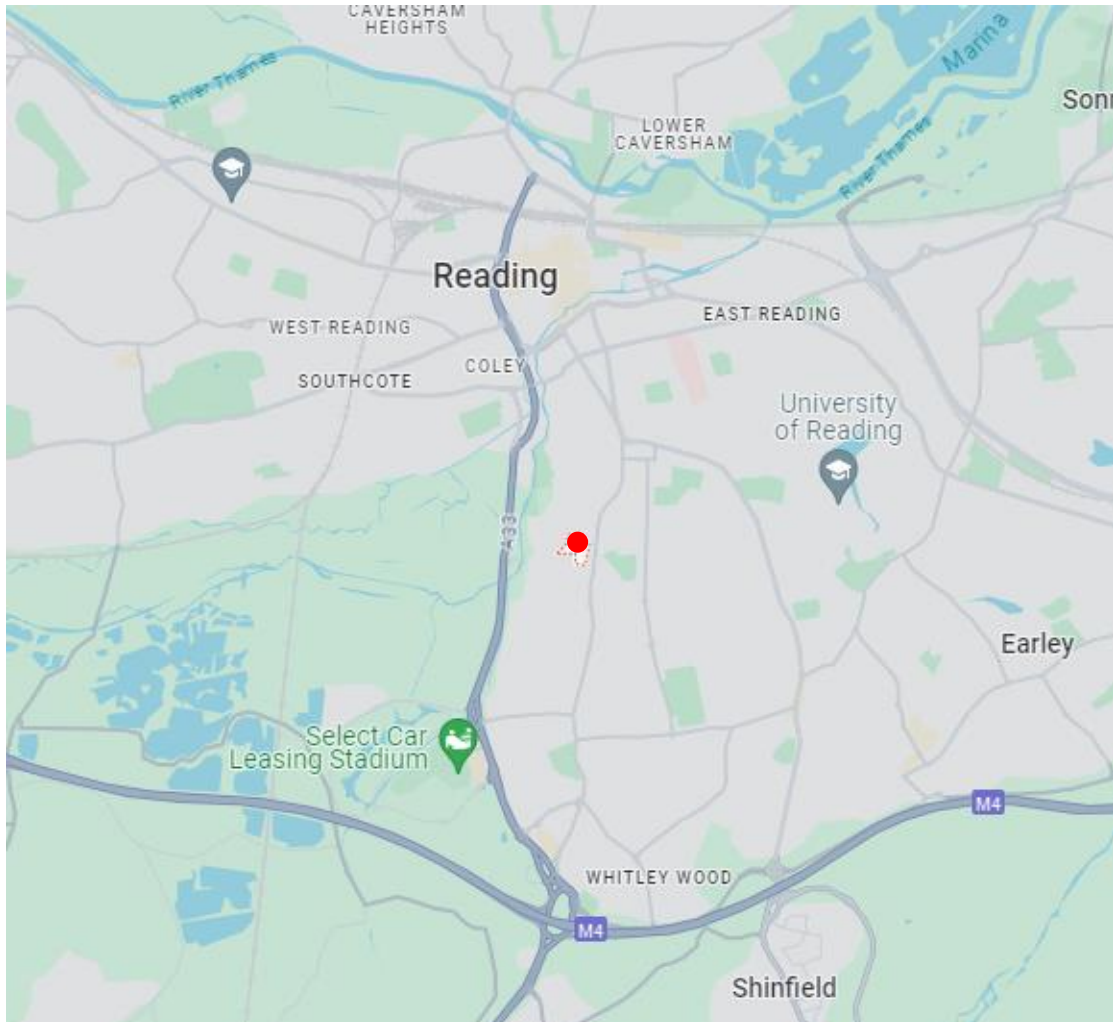
1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning statement report has been prepared for Studland Property Investments Limited who are proposing an industrial unit regeneration scheme to demolish and replace a vacant unit to increase floorspace and height in line with other estate gentrification to aid economic prosperity and production in a strategic employment area for Reading.
- 1.2 The application site is part of the established industrial area.
- 1.6 The full planning application is submitted by Planning Portal **PP-13093429** and comprises –
- Application form and certificates (Portal)
 - CIL Form 1
 - Planning Statement (ABP)
 - Ecology PEA
 - BNG assessment and mitigation report (The ecology partnership)
- 1.7 The following full plans are submitted (Paul Reeves) –
- Portal Location Plan
 - B 3187 01 Existing GF and site plan
 - B 3187 02 Existing FF and Elevations
 - B 3187 10A Proposed GF and site plan
 - B 3187 11A Proposed Elevations
- 1.8 The planning application fee is based on a total floorspace of 1,499m² at £12,550.
- 1.9 The application red line site is set out below –



2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The site is located midway between the city centre and the M4 to the south.



2.2 The site is located within an established industrial bounded by the A33 to the west and the B3031 to the east. The site is located on the junction of Cradock Road with Arkwright Road.



- 2.3 There are no immediate residential neighbours to the site, it is surrounded by other commercial premises. The nearest properties are on Basingstoke Road.



- 2.4 The area around the site is generally older 1960's buildings in a wide variety of styles, scale, form but with some new very high larger modern buildings being gradually inserted and upgraded.



View along Craddock Road to site.



View down Arkwright Road.



View up Arkwright Road.



Existing site view.

- 2.5 The building comprises an existing two storey front office building in grey steel cladding with a rear lower warehouse area, with an asbestos roof in poor condition.
- 2.6 The site has an existing direct crossover area off Arkwright Road for frontage parking from the pavement and side access from Cradock Road for parking.

- 2.7 **The context of the site** is that some nearby properties have been increased with significant scale and height increases with new buildings. For example –



Cradock Road

Site 1



Grahams directly opposite and higher (see Page 6)

Site 2a



Further high modern buildings on Craddock Road within 500m

Site 2



Arkwright Road.

Site 3



The Quad, Arkwright Road, within 500m of site (major height)

Boulton Road

Site 4



7-9 Boulton Rd.

Site 5



15 Boulton Road



Ongoing commercial improvement and increased scale within trading estate.

Site 6



Site 7



8 Boulton Rd.

2.8 The immediate adjacent unit is a more modern clad building.



3 Arkwright Road.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 There are 2 website records of previous applications at the site.
- 3.2 It is assumed given history that before 1990, only the rear warehouse was in place.

900503

Erection of office building for expansion of existing business.
Approved 13/12/1990.

011096

Widen access to Arkwright Road entrance. Increase hard standing and establish access to Cradock Road.
Withdrawn 03/05/2001.

- 3.3 Given the age of the applications there are no details viewable on web record.
- 3.4 The existing site has a lawful use as primarily storage and distribution (Use Class B8) along with offices (Use Class E[g]), toilets, kitchen, reception.

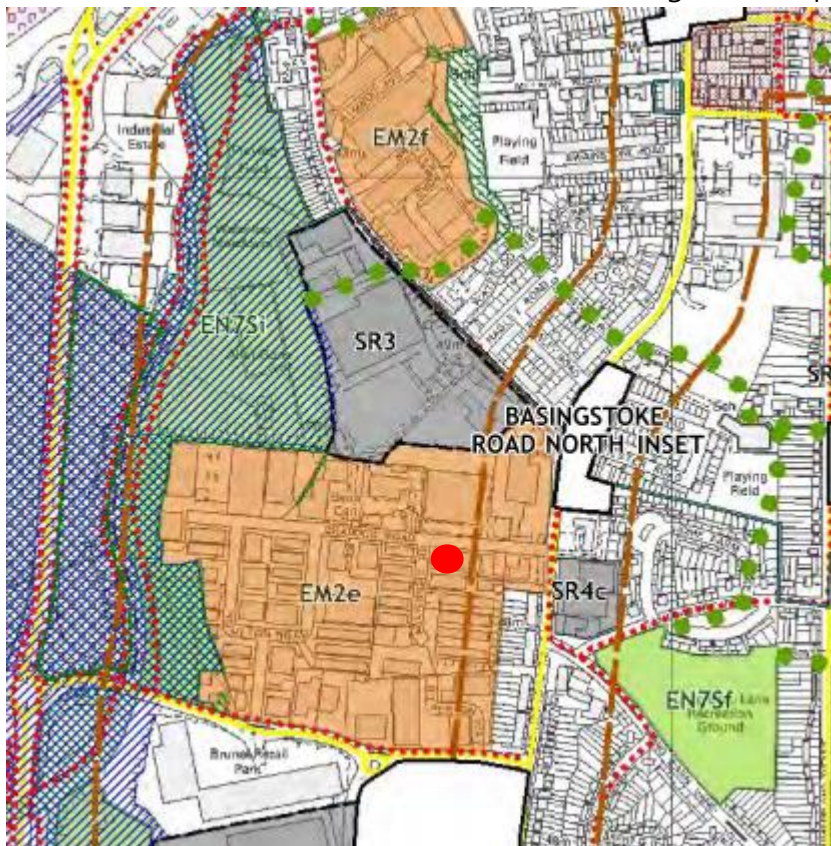
4.0 PLANNING POLICY

4.1 The site is located within Reading Borough Council administrative area.

4.2 The adopted Development Plan comprises:

- Local Plan (adopted Nov 2019)
- Proposals Map (adopted Nov 2019)

4.3 The site is shown in the policies map as below as “Core Employment Area policy EM2” it is within settlement, outside air quality management area, and a sustainable location close to district centres with good transport links.



4.4 The new Local Plan to 2036 is not yet adopted so cannot be afforded any significant weight, but no changes are likely to the employment zone given the established commercial area, with ever increasing larger buildings being approved.

EM2: LOCATION OF NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

Major office development will take place in the centre of Reading and along the A33 corridor. Office development will also take place in the other centres in the network set out in Policy RL1, but should be of an appropriate scale to those centres.

Other major employment uses, including industrial and storage and distribution will be located in the A33 corridor or in the Core Employment Areas. Non-employment uses that would support the area's economic function may be located in the Core Employment Areas where they do not result in a loss of employment land.

The Core Employment Areas are shown on the Proposals Map and set out below:

- *EM2a: Green Park*
- *EM2b: North of the M4*
- *EM2c: South of Basingstoke Road*
- *EM2d: Bennet Road*
- *EM2e: North of Basingstoke Road*
- *EM2f: Elgar Road*
- *EM2g: Richfield Avenue*
- *EM2h: Portman Road*
- *EM2i: Wigmore Lane*
- *EM2j: Bridgewater Close*
- *EM2k: Sterling Way*
- *EM2l: Marcus Close*
- *EM2m: Paddock Road*

EM4: MAINTAINING A VARIETY OF PREMISES

A range of types and sizes of units should be present in the Borough, and proposals should maintain or enhance this range. In particular, the overall level of start-up and grow-on space should be maintained and, where possible, increased, and any loss of small units should be offset by new provision. Proposals should maintain the overall level of storage and distribution uses in the South of Basingstoke Road (EM2c).

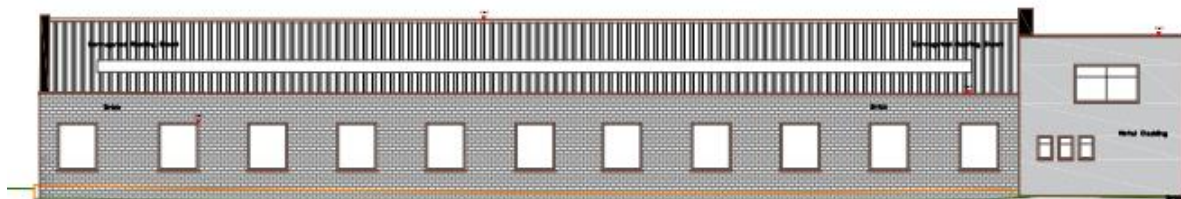
Subject to these considerations, proposals for redevelopment of older industrial units for more flexible employment premises will be acceptable.

- 4.5 Policy EM2 allows employment development and growth on the site.
- 4.6 Policy EM3 seeks to avoid employment land losses.
- 4.7 Policy EM4 specifically support redevelopment of older industrial units. Paragraph 4.3.17 of the Local Plan reasoned justification text gives further guidance.

In order to ensure a healthy and balanced local economy, we need to make sure that a variety of sizes and types of employment premises are available. This variety of premises should be widened, including seeking more modern and flexible employment space in the designated industrial areas, as well as flexible office buildings in the centre and elsewhere that can easily be subdivided to provide spaces for small and growing businesses. Development should not therefore reduce the range of sites and space available, and this applies in all locations, not merely the Core Employment Areas. In particular, the South of Basingstoke Road, as defined in policy EM2, is an important location for storage and distribution uses, with good access to the major road network, and is a major contributor to the local economy. There should not be a net loss of B8 use in this location.

5.0 PROPOSED SCHEME

- 5.1 The existing building is an older property with asbestos roofs and in poor condition. It is not fit for modern employment which requires higher warehouses and enlarged associated offices with safe parking. The existing site building is shown below -

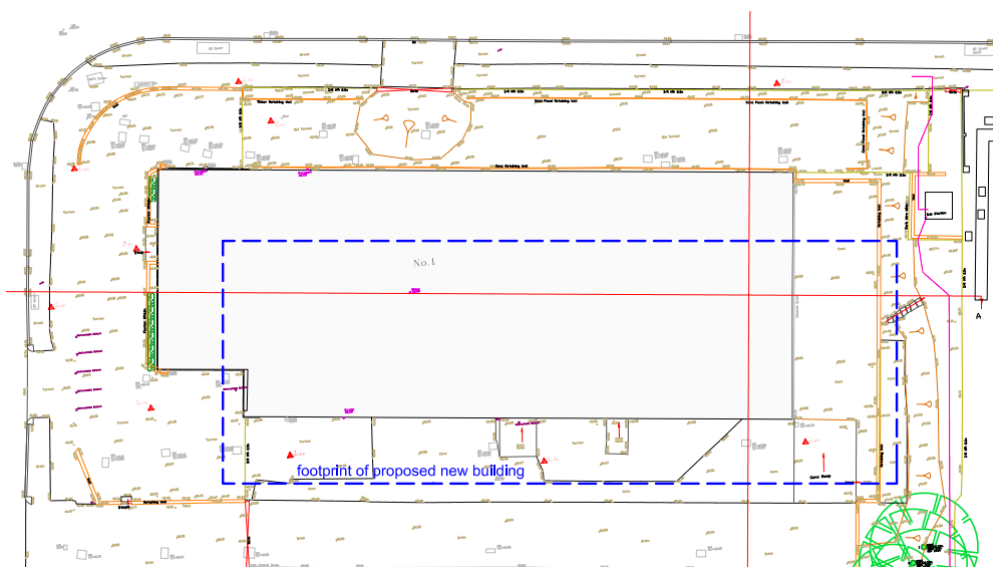


North Elevation

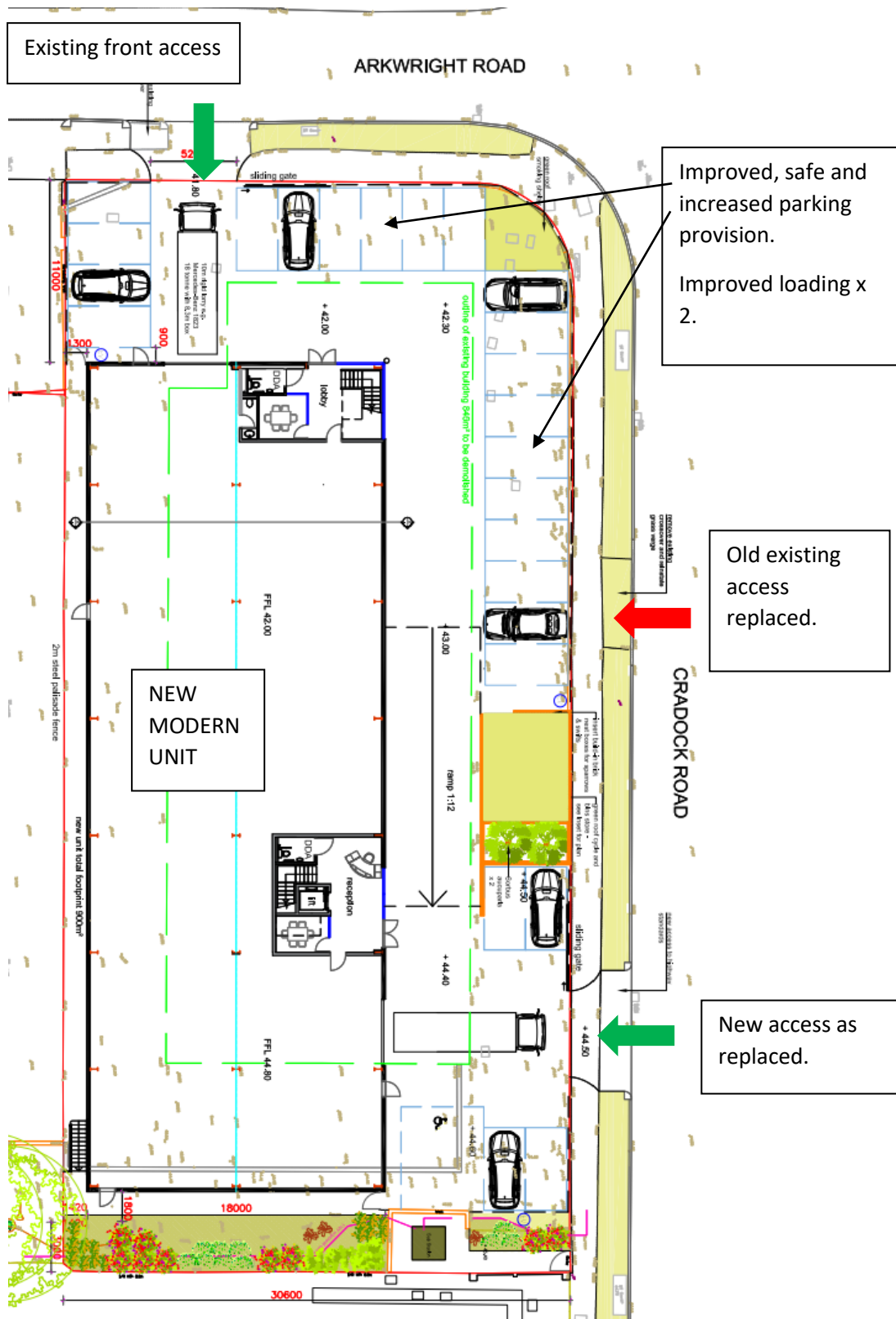


West Elevation

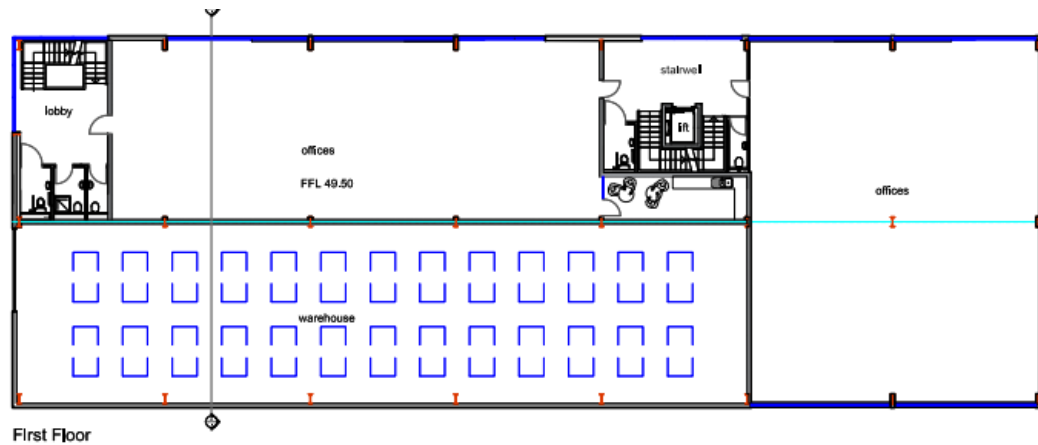
- 5.2 The new building will be sited away from the Cradock Road boundary to maximise site access, parking and circulation.



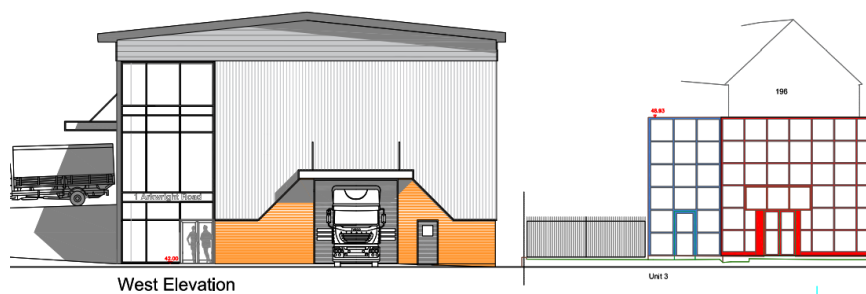
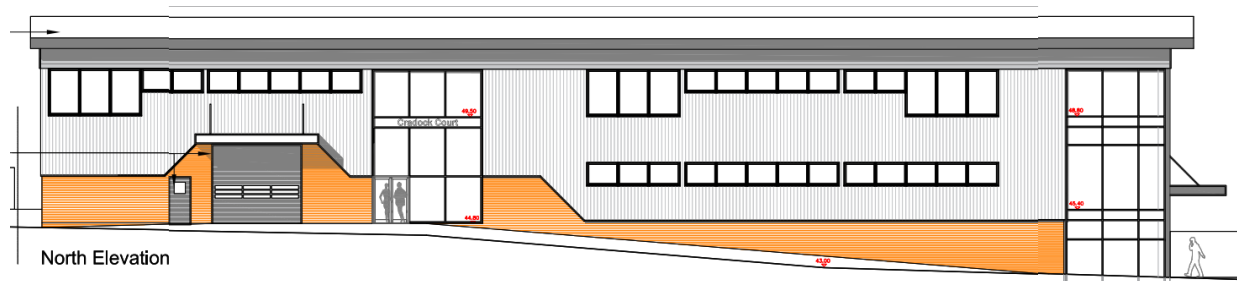
5.3 The proposed site plan is set out below.

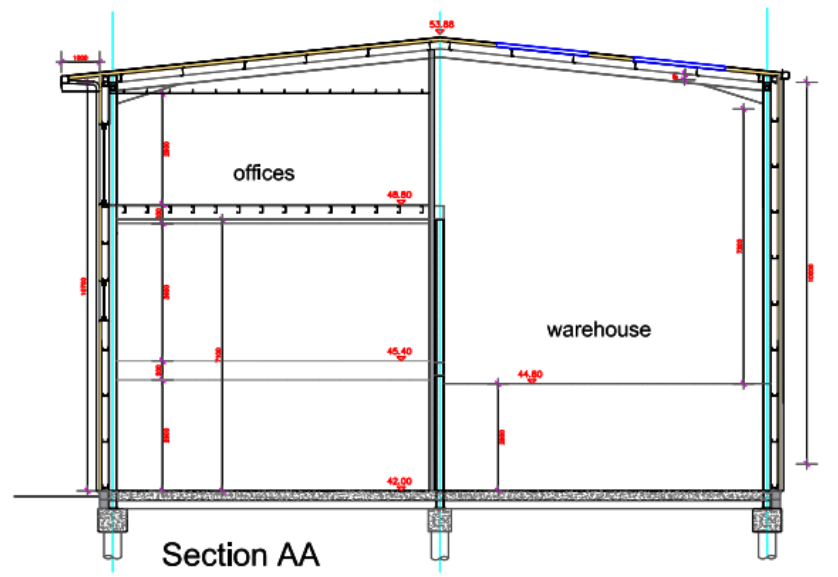


- 5.4 The proposed ground floor maximises storage capacity with minor lobbies, receptions and a mezzanine level that creates office space.



- 5.5 The new building will be set within the slope of the existing Cradock Road topography and deliver a split access to the site, which also allows flexibility of use of building for commercial operations. Increasing efficiency and productivity.





5.6 The site layout also includes –

- Use of 2 accesses, off Arkwright Road, and Cradock Road.
- 25 marked parking bays.
- Dedicated cycle parking and bin store (4 bikes)
- Biodiversity planting enhancements.

5.7 The existing unit is 886m² made up of 86m² offices and 800m² warehouse. The existing footprint is 839.5m².

5.8 The new unit is a footprint of 900m² and with an upper mezzanine a total of **1499m²**.

5.9 The existing ridge height is 8m with **11.88m** proposed matching recent and context heights.

5.10 The scheme will maximise employment growth and productivity with a larger building reflecting existing nearby schemes of increased density.

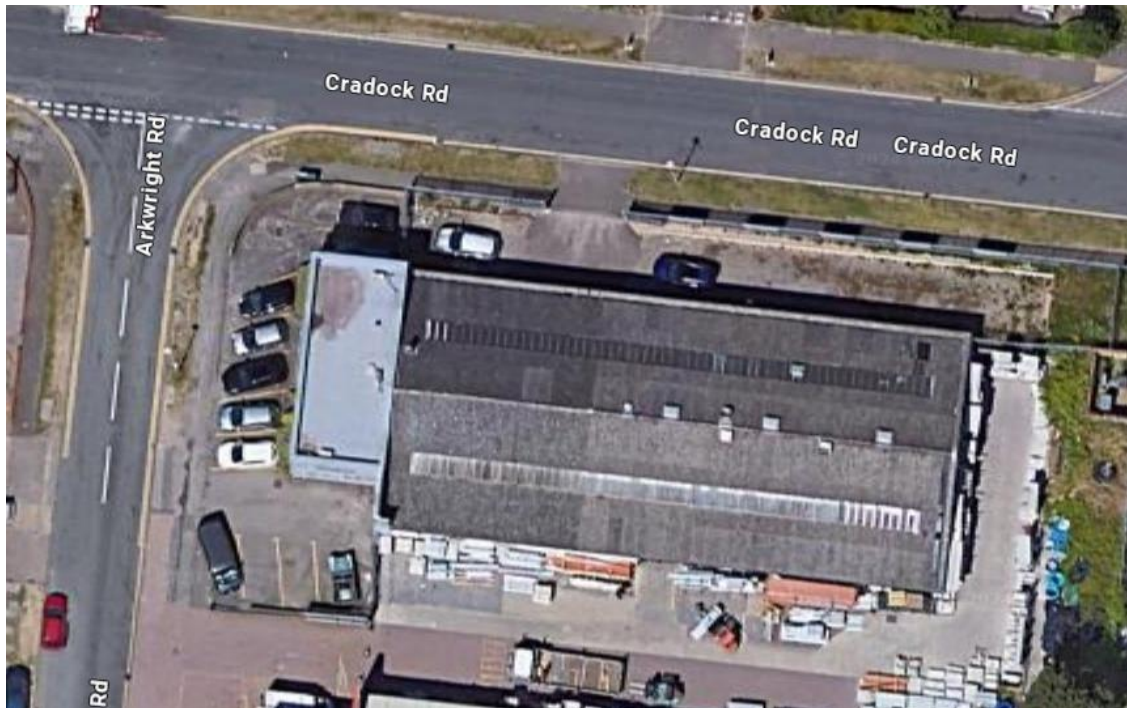
6.0 KEY ISSUES

Principle of development

- 6.1 The site is within a safeguarded employment area and the scheme is to enhance the warehouse and office capacity and efficiency for the existing employment stock and maximise employment value by increased density and improved visual appearance. .
- 6.2 It aids economic development and prosperity and meets the aims of the Local Plan.
- 6.3 It is an existing previously developed site which is being put to full and efficient use meeting NPPF objectives.
- 6.4 The proposal will result in an increase in warehouse floor space and height, with enhanced ancillary office and admin areas.
- 6.5 The proposal is fully in accordance with policies EM1, EM2, EM3, and EM4.
- 6.6 The proposal will improve modern employment floor space provision improving an older industrial site in line with policy EM4.
- 6.7 The proposed will improve parking and servicing for the employment use.
- 6.8 The proposals will significantly improve the value of the site within the employment stock for the area.
- 6.9 The overall conclusion is that the principle of development for employment provision is acceptable.

Transport

- 6.10 The existing site layout is inefficient as parking and servicing is in conflict and does not meet modern standards as can be seen from google street view images.



- 6.11 There is inadequate parking overall and turning space is deficient. There is also conflict with access to some parking via the crossover on Arkwright Road.



6.12 The proposed new building will not significantly increase trip generation or activity and the existing lawful B1/B2/B8 can deliver varying amounts of traffic dependant on each individual business.

6.13 However, the scheme allows significant improvements and highways benefits to be delivered on site by virtue of

- Deliver 25 formal car parking spaces at 2.5 x 5m with full turning and remove the conflict with Arkwright Road pavement.
- Provide EV charging points.
- Improve servicing to loading doors unimpeded by parking spaces.
- Introduce on-site cycle parking.

6.14 The site already has two existing accesses, and one will be relocated to improve site layout. There is no change to the existing arrangement of lorries reversing into site, as with many other sites in the industrial estate and permissions granted (see applications 230250/FUL, 231242/FUL, 200135/FUL).

6.15 As an improved employment layout there are no adverse transport impacts but significant benefits to the operation and safety of the site within the local highway network.

Design

6.16 The proposed new scheme will enhance the scale of the building on the corner frontage which will benefit and uplift the appearance of the industrial estate. It will

create a larger more modern palette of materials that will enhance the impact within the street scene.

- 6.17 The increased scale delivers a distinctive modern sense of prosperity which will enhance the location for other businesses. The new building will remove the older appearance and deliver a warehouse with heights that operate efficiently to modern standards.



Visualisation - view from Arkwright Road.



Visualisation – view from Cradock Road.



Visualisation – bird's eye view.



Visualisation – view to corner from Cradock Road.

6.18 The materials will introduce a base brick plinth with cladding above reflective of context buildings.

6.19 Changes in heights between buildings are common place on existing sites, as buildings are redeveloped and there is no uniform scale or typology in the area. Additional scale and bulk have no adverse impact but uplifts the street scene and

gives an impression of a successful employment area rather than an old, tired stock.

6.20 The side and front elevations and street scenes will be significantly improved.

6.21 The enhanced works will match the enhancement already taking place in the wider industrial area. Examples of new cladding and scale in area below and in section 2 context.





All within 500m of site and on same road.

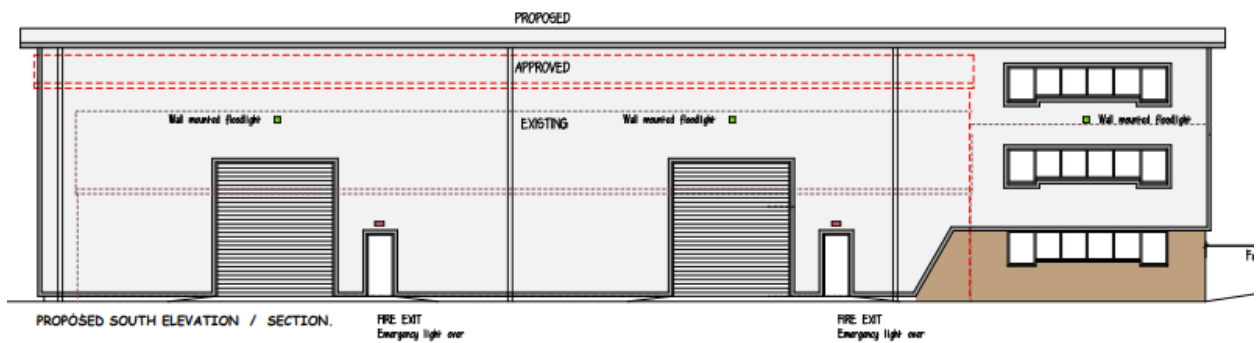
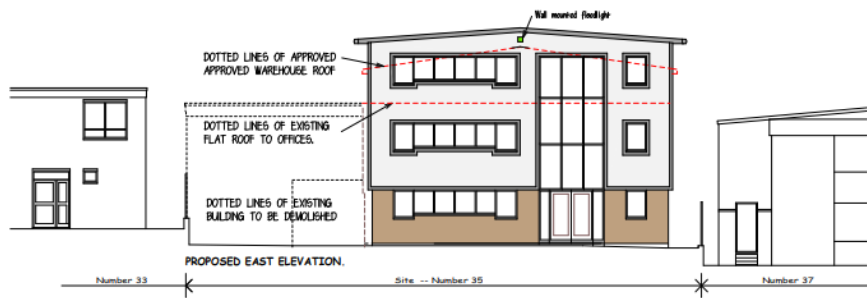


6.22 The scheme is wholly appropriate modern employment scale, layout and materials within the employment area. The 900m² footprint within a 0.2 ha site gives a plot ratio of 41% which is wholly adequate to ensure the site operates without off site impacts.

6.23 Recently, as an example of the increased employment generation that is progressing, an approval was issued at 35 Boulton Road to increase height and density as shown below –

Application No: 231242

Proposed part demolition of front and rear with erection of new rear warehouse and upper front second floor, with parking and access alterations as an increase from approved application 221231



Ecology

6.24 The existing site has very low ecology value, with just scrub grass on margins.

6.25 A full PEA has been prepared with the following conclusions –

The site does not lie within or adjacent to any designated sites. A number of statutory and non-statutory sites are located within the surrounding area; however, no residual negative impacts are anticipated due to the nature of the development, the distances between the site and all designated sites, and the lack of any related habitat to be lost.

The site was comprised of a commercial building with large areas of hardstanding, artificial unsealed surface with ruderal vegetation, and a section of mixed scrub. The habitats on site are common and widespread throughout the local area and the UK as a whole.

The building on site was considered to have ‘negligible’ potential to support roosting bats. As such, no further surveys for roosting bats are required on site.

The majority of the site was considered unsuitable for nesting birds due to the lack of suitable habitat.

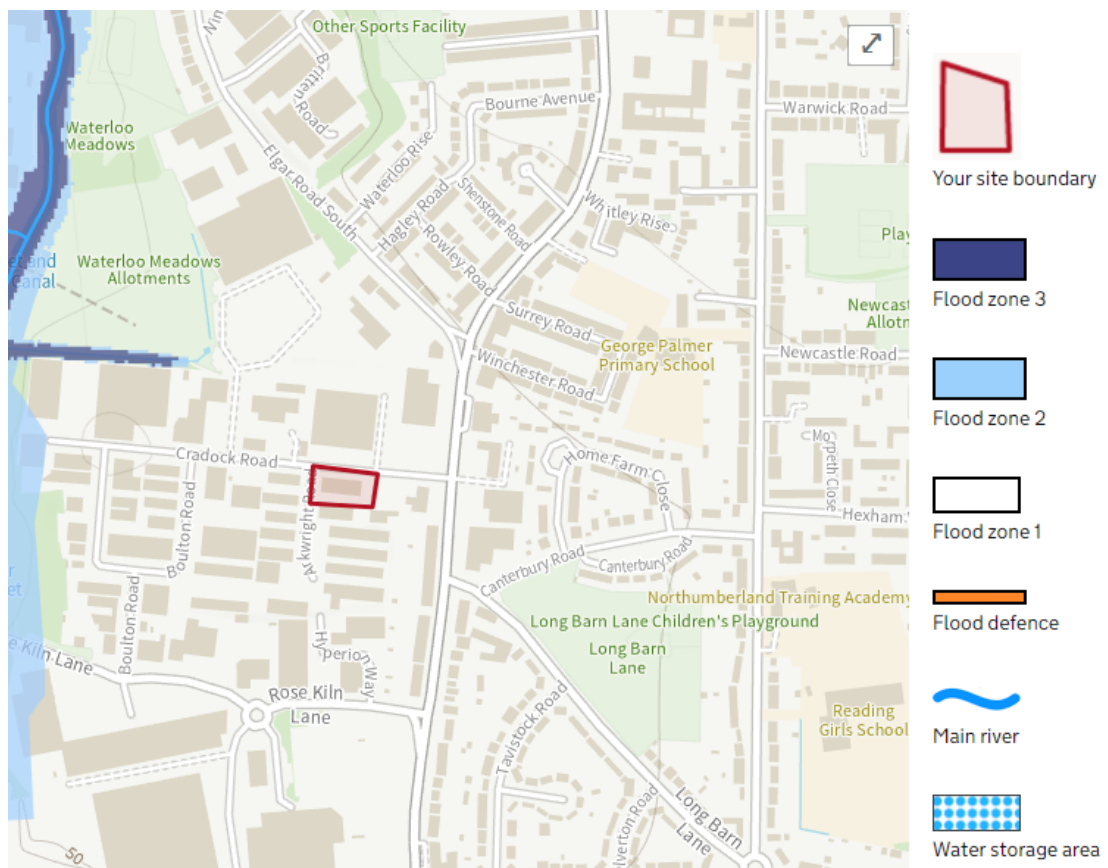
No suitable habitats for reptiles, GCNs, badgers, dormice, otters or water voles were identified on site. As such, no further surveys for these species are required.

Recommendations for enhancements have been made within this report, aimed at improving the ecological value of the site post-development.

- 6.26 The baseline on site value is 0.09 but with planting, green roofs and mitigation and enhancement a proposed metric delivers a net on site increase of +15.54%. The existing site is dominated by urban habitats, and the green habitats present are considered to be of limited ecological value at a site levels only. Their loss has been adequately compensated for within the proposed scheme with the creation of new mixed native scrub habitats, tree planting, and biodiverse green roof installation.

Drainage

- 6.27 The site is within flood zone 1 so there is low risk. The existing site is fully built upon or hard surfaced and the new building will be linked into existing services for the current unit.



Amenity

- 6.28 There will be no adverse amenity impacts to adjoining neighbours as they are all commercial uses, and the site is not close to any residential properties.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The site is a highly sustainable location within the existing urban settlement area.
- 7.2 The site is within an existing safeguarded area for economic development.
- 7.3 The increased scale of the employment building will significantly improve employment stock.
- 7.4 The proposals maximise and make effective use of the site to support and enhance existing business on the site with an uplift in context of other nearby buildings which have been enlarged.
- 7.5 The new building additional height will have no adverse impact on the street scene or neighbours and reflects the context of the industrial area.
- 7.6 The works will deliver a significantly improved and upgraded front elevation with new brick plinth, fenestration, cladding and appearance of a modern unit, as compared to its current old tatty old appearance.
- 7.7 The proposal complies fully to the raft of policies in the Local Plan and there are no reasons against a presumption in favour of development.
- 7.8 The proposal specifically complies with policies EM1, EM2, EM3, and EM4.