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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support an application for planning permission and advertisement consent for the erection of a two storey side extension to the northern side of the existing building, with the installation of illuminated signage to the front elevation, and the relocation of existing (non-illuminated) signage on the existing northern elevation to the new northern elevation.
- 1.2 This planning statement will cover the background to the application and provide the necessary information to enable its determination by officers at the Council. It will consider the proposal in light of relevant planning policies and other material considerations. The conclusion reached is that key material considerations and the wider objectives of National and Local planning policy support the grant of permission.
- 1.3 In addition to this planning statement, the application is accompanied by the appropriate planning application forms and ownership certificate, duly signed and completed, and the following documents prepared by Hives Architects:
- 2660-012-P8 'Site Location Plan And Block Plan'
 - 2660-014-P8 'Existing and Proposed Elevations'
 - 2660-061-P4 'Existing and Proposed Floor Plans'

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site comprises a 0.1 hectare site under light industrial use, with a two storey building accommodating approximately 866 sqm floorspace (measured externally) in size. The site currently operates as part of Kingdom Coffee, and contains ancillary office, staff, trade counter and storage facilities in addition to the primary use.
- 2.2 The site takes access from Bridgewater Close to the front (west), and is sited at the northern end of a row of four attached buildings, all under commercial use and similar in appearance and massing. Ground levels are flat across the site.
- 2.3 To the front of the building lies a parking and turning area for staff vehicles and deliveries. To the northern side of the building lies a hardsurfaced area that is unused excluding for occasional vehicle parking. Further to the north, outside of the application site, lies a raised soft landscaped area.
- 2.4 The site forms part a wider commercial and industrial corridor, which is predominately focused on the northern side of Portman Road to the north of the application site. However it does also expand further south along Bridgewater Close beyond the site (as acknowledged by the employment area designation – see paragraph 5.9 below). Residential properties border the site to the rear (east).

3. Planning History

- 3.1 Summarised below are previous application submissions made in respect of operations related to the industrial unit. These demonstrate that such this industrial unit has operated on site for a significant amount of time, with increasing demand for on-site facilities.
- 3.2 Advertisement Consent application reference 160306 for 'One large fascia sign, partially backlit PVC tensile fabric, to the north façade (replace existing PVC sign) Two Fascia signs at high level, both backlit to the North and West facades on areas with new cladding to the ancillary office and trade-counter space. One fascia sign over the entrance doors and on the canopy. One large freestanding sign on the forecourt of the building'. Approved, 19 April 2016.
- 3.3 Planning Application reference 160305 for 'Re-cladding of part of the building with new windows, doors and signage'. Approved, 19 April 2016.
- 3.4 Application reference 050763 for 'Alterations to front of industrial unit to widen doorway and provide pedestrian ramp'. Approved, 13 December 2005.
- 3.5 In addition to the above, the following application is noted to have been submitted for land to the immediate north of the site.
- 3.6 Application reference 221776 for 'Application for replacement of existing rooftop telecommunications equipment with telecommunications installation'. Refused, 20 January 2023. Appeal Allowed, 8 September 2023.

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1 The National Design Guide (2019) identifies that “well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable. They provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support the health and well-being of their users and all who experience them. They meet the needs of a diverse range of users, taking into account factors such as the ageing population and cultural differences. They are adequate in size, fit for purpose and are adaptable to the changing needs of their occupants over time” (para 120-121).
- 4.2 Regarding the requirements of NPPG Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 14-029-20140306 in respect of Design and Access Statements, the proposal is described as follows:
- 4.3 **Use, Amount & Layout:** The proposal includes the erection of a two storey extension to the northern side of the building. This building would be set back by 6.2 metres from the front elevation of the building.
- 4.4 The extension would be used for purposes in connection with the main use of the site as a light industrial use, with a ramped access to the front. This would be provided in addition to the existing internal vehicle bay provided on the south of the unit.
- 4.5 No change of use of land is proposed, as the storage buildings would be ancillary to the light industrial use of the site.
- 4.6 Regarding advertisements, it is proposed for an illuminated advertisement to be installed spelling the word ‘Coffee’ vertically to the first floor level of the front elevation. It is proposed for this to be illuminated to a level of 200 cd/m.

- 4.7 Additionally, it is proposed for the existing signage on the northern side elevation of the building, displaying the Kingdom Coffee company logo, to be relocated to the northern side of the new extension as shown by the image below.



- 4.8 Part of the 2.4 metre high retaining wall on the northern side of the property is proposed to be expanded northwards to align with the northern boundary of the site.
- 4.9 **Scale & Appearance:** The proposed extension would measure 20.3 metres in depth. It would have a tapered appearance, with the width of the front section being 4.6 metres, increasing to 6.7 metres on the rear section.
- 4.10 The roof form of the extension would be partly flat, and partly inversely pitched. The flat roof section would measure 7.7 metres in height, with the ridge of the pitched section being 8.1 metres. For context, the ridge height of the existing building is 8.4 metres. The

extension would provide approximately 248 square metres of additional floorspace (measured externally).

- 4.11 The material palette of the proposals, including the advertisements, would reflect those of the existing building – namely various shades of grey.
- 4.12 **Landscaping:** The proposed extension would be sited on the location of existing gravel hardstanding. Additional planting is proposed to the northwestern corner of the site, with an existing tree lying within the northeastern corner of the site to be retained.
- 4.13 **Access & Parking:** No changes to existing access or parking arrangements are proposed as part of this application, excluding the provision of a new ramp access to the proposed extension.

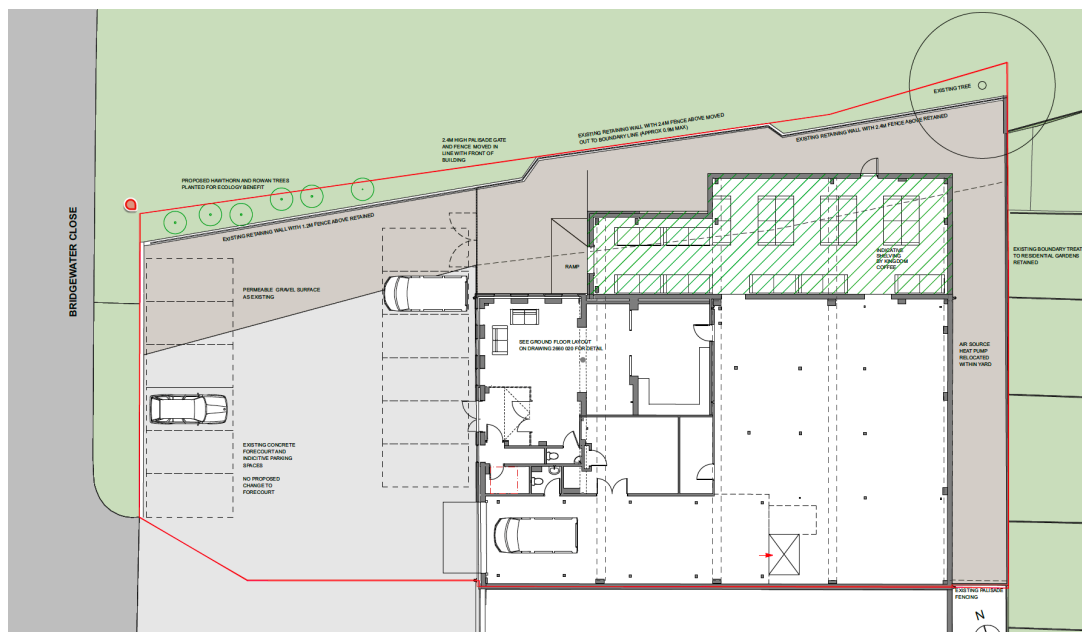


Figure 1: Proposed Site Plan

5. Policy Assessment

- 5.1 **National Guidance:** The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') is a relevant material consideration to the application.
- 5.2 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.3 Paragraph 38 of the NPPF states that "Local planning authorities should approach decision on proposed development in a positive and creative way" and "at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible". Paragraph 123 of the NPPF comments that planning should "make effective use of land" in "meeting the need for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions".
- 5.4 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies the three objectives of sustainable development, as economic, environmental and social.
- 5.5 Paragraph 131 identifies that "Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities".
- 5.6 The National Design Guide builds on the above, and sets out that "New development reinforces existing places by enhancing local transport, facilities and community services, and maximising their potential use" (para 109).

- 5.7 **Principle of Development:** Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.8 Reading Borough Council's Development Plan relevant to the proposal comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) ('LP') alongside the associated Policies Map.
- 5.9 The site is located within the defined settlement of Reading. Additionally, it lies within a 'Core Employment Area' as identified on LP Policy EM2 and the Policies Map.
- 5.10 LP Policy CC1 establishes that a positive approach will be taken to considering development proposals, in accordance with the remainder of the Development Plan and national policy (the NPPF).
- 5.11 LP Policy EM3 states that within Core Employment Areas, the overall level of employment land shall be maintained, and that proposals which would result in the loss of such land will typically be resisted.
- 5.12 Paragraph 85 of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should encourage the conditions to enable businesses (of all types) to invest, expand and adapt. It goes on to state that significant weight is to be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, both for local businesses and wider development opportunities.
- 5.13 The proposal would provide additional floorspace for the existing unit, as the current level of floorspace provided is now insufficient for the users' needs regarding their day-to-day operations and requirements. As such, at both ground and first floor levels, the proposal will result in a proposed GIA of 527m², compared to the

existing GIA of 415m². This will result in a total GIA of 1054m², compared to the existing 830m² GIA as shown below.

	Existing	Proposed
Site GEA	1,162m ²	No change
L00 GIA	415m ²	527m ²
L01 GIA	415m ²	527m ²
	Total: 830m ²	Total: 1054m ²

5.14 The current land to the north of the building where the proposal is to be sited is currently redundant hardsurfacing which comprises a poorly maintained area with overgrown brambles and hedges. As such, the proposal seeks to make an efficient use of land whilst also enhancing the safety of the area and tidying up the site in accordance with LP Policy H10. LP Policy H10 seeks to ensure that the design of outdoor areas respects the size and character, clearly identifying whether they are private or communal spaces and enhance safety and the perception of safety for the general public.

5.15 Additionally, the proposed advertisements would seek to maintain the known presence of the company. The property forms the headquarters of Kingdom Coffee, and so the advertisements seek to promote this fact.

5.16 By providing additional secure floorspace and advertisements the proposal would support the continuing operation and productivity of the premises, as well as contributing towards the long-term economic sustainability of the business. It would also enable this property to continue to form the headquarters of the company, in turn retaining the company's presence within Reading Borough.

5.17 In doing so, the above demonstrates that the proposal would provide a contribution towards the ongoing employment of staff within the site. The proposal would therefore fully comply with LP Policy EM3.

- 5.18 In view of the proposal meeting employment and economic objectives, combined with the siting of the proposal and site within an established industrial area, the proposal is presented to be comprehensively acceptable in principle. Therefore, remaining matters for review relate to impact upon the character of the area, and amenities of neighbouring occupants, etc. These are reviewed below.
- 5.19 **Character and Appearance of the Area:** LP Policy CC7 states that all development must be of high design quality, which maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The policy goes on to state that this is in regard to a number of measures, including layout, density, scale and architectural detail.
- 5.20 The site frontage is characterised by a dense, industrial pattern of development and style of building design, as is typical for such a land use. A soft landscaped corridor is present on the southern side of Portman Road which runs along the northern boundary of the site.
- 5.21 However, in contrast to this, residential properties neighbour the site to the rear, giving the site itself somewhat of a transitional character.
- 5.22 The proposals therefore focus on the visual relationship to the existing building as well as to the connecting row of essentially identical buildings to the south.
- 5.23 The proposed extension would be set back from the front elevation of the building, therefore avoiding resulting in any visual dominance of the building frontage. The immediately adjoining flat roof section of the extension again seeks to promote a subordinate appearance, with the inverse pitched roof section mirroring the roof relationship to the adjoining building on the opposite southern side. As per paragraph 4.10 above, the proposed materials would closely match those of the existing building.

5.24 Also of importance is the design of the proposal in the context of its position being visible from both Portman Road and Bridgewater Close. The proposal subsequently seeks a modern-style extension that provides a high level of design interest to the surroundings.

5.25 As demonstrated in Figure 2 below, the tapered widths of the extension serve to provide visual breakages to the extension, thereby avoiding an extension that would have the appearance of being unduly bulky or uniform.



Figure 2: CGI imagery of the proposed development

5.26 The proposed design of the advertisements is consistent with those already present both to the existing building and to the surroundings. They would not result in an excessive level of detail and would be appropriate to this employment area. Again, the material palette would match that of the existing building.

5.27 In achieving the above, the proposal would therefore maintain the appearance of the character of the area, and provide a modern and sympathetic appearance and scale of development to complement the site. The proposal would therefore accord with both LP Policy CC7 and the NPPF's policies on achieving high quality design.

- 5.28 **Trees and Landscaping:** The proposed extension would be sited on existing hardsurfacing. An existing tree to the northeastern corner of the site is proposed to be retained.
- 5.29 A section of existing soft landscaping would be lost through the alterations to the retaining wall, which is required for structural purposes. However, additional planting is proposed to the northwestern corner of the site. This would provide additional visual softening in the context of the visibility of the proposal from the two street scenes. This planting would also enable the proposal to retain an effective transition between the industrial area and the landscape corridor to the north.
- 5.30 **Amenities of Surrounding Occupants:** Residential properties within Westbrook road are located to the rear (east). Whilst the proposal would be visible to the rear of the northernmost of these properties, the existing separation distance between the buildings would be sufficient to prevent any loss of light or overbearing impacts. This is evidenced by the existing relationship found between the industrial and residential buildings immediately to the south.
- 5.31 Furthermore, no rear-facing windows are proposed to the first floor of the extension and therefore there would be no loss of privacy implications.
- 5.32 In terms of noise generation, no changes to the existing operating hours of the property are proposed. It is not therefore considered that the proposal would result in a material increase in noise generation.
- 5.33 Turning to the proposed advertisements, the proposed illuminated advert would be illuminated to a level of 200 cd/m, which is well within tolerances for a commercial area. This advertisement would face onto other commercial properties, and not residential.

- 5.34 **Transport and Parking:** LP Policy TR3 states that proposals will only be permitted where they would not have a detrimental impact upon the functioning of the transport network. LP Policy TR5 sets out that development should provide appropriate car and cycle parking, taking into account the accessibility of locations.
- 5.35 The proposals would not have any impact upon existing parking and access arrangements, excluding the provision of a new ramped access to the extension.
- 5.36 The existing site is located in an established highly sustainable location in the context of transport connectivity – given the access from Portman Road which is a major highway connecting to other arterial roads within the Borough.
- 5.37 LP Policy TR5 and the Council's Parking Standards seek one parking space per 100 sqm of floorspace for a light industrial use within Zone 3 of the Borough (where the site is located).
- 5.38 Whilst the proposal does not involve the provision of additional parking, this is because the existing parking on site provides for 12 spaces, which is in excess of the Council's standards for the combined resulting floorspace.
- 5.39 Refuse collection arrangements would remain unaltered.
- 5.40 Furthermore it is considered that any increase in traffic movements brought about by the increased floorspace/capacity of the site could be accommodated within the existing transport network, given its sustainable location, which includes its siting within a defined employment area.
- 5.41 Therefore in summary the proposal would not give rise to any highway safety impacts.

- 5.42 **Drainage and SuDS:** The proposed extension would lie within Flood Zone 2.
- 5.43 The proposal would be sited on areas of existing hardstanding, and it is not considered that any additional Drainage measures are required to be demonstrated.
- 5.44 **Ecology:** The site has limited ecological value, given it is separated from the landscape corridor to the north by an existing 2.4 metre high impermeable wall. No demolition works are proposed as part of this application.
- 5.45 The requirement for a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment is not triggered as it would meet the exception of impacting less than 25 sqm of on-site habitat or 5 metres of on-site linear habitat (as the revision to the retaining wall location involves under 25 sqm of land).
- 5.46 **Environmental Health/Contamination:** No toxic materials would be stored within the proposed buildings. Furthermore, the proposal would accommodate storage of materials already present on site, and would be subject to the established maintenance and management plans.
- 5.47 **Building Sustainability and Energy:** The design and materials used for the proposed extension would be proportionate and appropriate to its nature and scale.
- 5.48 **Archaeology:** The site is not located in area of known Archaeological significance.
- 5.49 **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** The proposal would result in an increase in floorspace. However, the Council's CIL Charging Schedule confirms that the proposal's use class (light industrial) is not CIL Liable.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and makes an efficient use of land, within an established industrial and employment area. The proposal would serve to assist in securing both the current and long-term economic sustainability of the site, which is operated by Kingdom Coffee as their company headquarters, thereby fully complying with both Development Plan and National Policy objectives.
- 6.2 Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed, as evidenced in section 5 of this statement and the supporting plans and documents. It is considered the proposed development would maintain the appearance of the character of the area, while offering a modern and sympathetic design and scale to the site. The proposal would not have any impact upon existing traffic movements or parking requirements, nor would it result in any harmful impacts to the amenities of residents to the east.
- 6.3 Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

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