

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COVERED
STORAGE UNIT AT**

Elis UK Ltd, 72 George Street, Reading, RG4 8DW

DESIGN AND ACCESS/SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement supports a planning application for the development of a covered storage area for Elis UK Ltd, a commercial laundry operation, leasing and laundering work wear and linens especially for the health and hospitality sectors. They are an important local service and employment provider dealing with clients all over the south- east of England. The linens are delivered by truck and left in trolleys in the yard south of the main building affectively as open storage and open to all the elements. The purpose of this application is to achieve consent for a covered storage area which will provide shelter for the incoming trolleys. The delivery and pick up operations by HGVs using the southern access onto George Road, will remain the same, there will be no intensification of use.
- 1.2 The document describes the application proposals including its benefits and sets out in detail why the proposed development is acceptable having regard to the policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and national planning policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2. Site description and review of planning history

- 2.1 The application site is located on the north side of Reading town centre, on the western side of the B3345. The site has been used as a commercial laundry since 1935. Its broadly consists of a large building and a range of surrounding smaller buildings which have been developed over the years, reflecting the operational needs of the business.
- 2.2 The site is broadly rectangular in shape, an area of some 5351 sq m. It is bounded by George Street in the east; Christchurch Meadows, a popular public space, to the south and the west. The short northern boundary is with a residential area. The site is screened by tall Poplar trees growing in Christchurch Meadows to the west and the south. Beyond the Poplar trees is a redundant sports building which faces away from the site. There are no windows overlooking the application site. A brick wall demarks the northern and parts of the eastern boundaries of the site. The site is dominated by the main laundry building which faces directly onto George Street. There is access onto George Street both to the northern and southern parts of the site. Employee car parking for some 20 cars is in the northern sector of the site. The southern part of the site has an unkempt look, used mainly for open storage, including some 70 or so trolleys of soiled linen deposited and picked up by delivery trucks.
- 2.3 A summary of the planning history for the site is provided in table 1 below, the result of an online search of the Council's planning application data base. The established use of the site as laundry and storage facilities is clear.

Reference	Development description	Decision	Date
880183	Rebuilding laundry following substantial destruction by fire	Permitted	18/1/1989
041083	Demolition existing buildings and erection 3 separate residential blocks varying i height from 2-5 stories to provide 1,2 and 3 bedroom flats	Refused	11/3/2005
060250	Demolition of existing building and erection of a 76 unit residential development composed in 4 separate blocks from 3-5 stories incorporating 8x 4 bed dwellings , 56 x 2 bed flats and 12 x 1 bed flats	Refused Appeal dismissed due to discordant scale and negative impact on visual quality of the area.	17/8/2006

Reference	Development description	Decision	Date
120294	Erection of steel framed warehouse to rear of building	Permitted	25/7/2012
130684	Replacement detached warehouse and new single story side extension (475 sq m.) following demolition of chimney and existing attached and detached buildings, improved boundary treatment to the western and southern boundaries with Christchurch Meadows and to the eastern boundary with George st. And provision of solar panels to the existing laundry roof.	Permitted	5/11/2013
	Variation of condition 2 (approved plan) and condition 4 (Flood risk assessment)	Permitted	5/3/2015
140285	Discharge of conditions 3,6,7,9,10,14,15,26,19 & 24 of planning permission 130684	Discharged	26/2/2014
152066	Application for a non-material amendment following grant of planning permission (140285)	Agreed	29/1/2016
161137	Non-material amendment to planning permission 130684 to include alterations in height /materials of fencing on south and west boundaries alterations to skylights and installation of 16 further skylights to extended buildings and alterations to doors	Agreed	13/7/2016

Table 1 Planning History Elis Uk Ltd, 72 George Street, Reading.

3. Description of development proposed

- 3.1 This planning application proposes adding a covered storage area to the site which will shelter the trolleys of soiled linens etc having just been unloaded from incoming trucks. It will be sited on the western side of the application site south of the main building, 2 metres from the boundary. This is the existing trolley “parking” area for soiled linen.



- 3.2 The siting is shown on the accompanying block plan, PL-02 C. The new building is a steel framed structure with single sheet steel walls on three sides. The front is completely open to allow easy access for the trucks depositing and picking up the linen. There is a shutter door and a pedestrian door. The dimensions of the unit are 20 x 10 m, 4.2 m to eaves and a ridge height of 6.7 m. The walls and roof will be grey in colour. There will be no services. Elevational details are provided in drawings PL 03 B.

4. Summary of relevant planning policies

- 4.1 When considering the merits of development that requires a planning application the Council, in its function as the local planning authority, has a requirement to determine that application in accordance with the policies of its Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise ¹. Therefore, in preparing this planning statement consideration has been made to relevant policies of the Reading Borough Plan 2019 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

- 4.2 Local policies are to be found in the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. The application site has an established use as a commercial laundry. It is an employment use which is protected by local employment policies EM1-4. Additionally, in line with Government Policy, the Plan is supportive of local employment uses outside of the Core Employment Areas in the interests of a balanced economy (Para 4.3.7). Their expansion will depend on considerations including the amenity of local residents and the suitability of transport connections (para 4.3.10). As described there will be no intensification of the existing use.
- 4.3 The planning application site lies adjacent to Christ Church Meadows which is an important local open space (Policy EN7) and within the Thames Valley Major Landscape Feature (Policy EN13). EN7 makes it clear that insensitive adjacent development which could erode the enjoyment of the use of the open space will not be tolerated. EN13 similarly protects the space from any development which may detract from the landscape feature. Whilst the proposed outbuilding is relatively close the site boundary, the result will be to tidy up this area and ameliorate it. Views from the public open space will in any event be limited by the boundary Poplar trees and hedging plus the screening effect of the redundant sports building which is located directly behind the new covered storage area.
- 4.4 The application site is categorized as Fluvial Flood Zone 3. Policy EN18 is relevant.

¹ Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, section 38(6).

- 4.5 A flood risk assessment has been commissioned by the applicant. The report is included as part of the planning application. The ameliorative recommendations will be satisfied as part of the development.

EN18: FLOODING AND SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

Development will be directed to areas at lowest risk of flooding in the first instance, following the Sequential and Exceptions Test set out in the NPPF, and taking into account the effects of climate change. It will consider flooding from all sources, including fluvial, surface water, groundwater and sewer flooding. Where development in areas at risk of flooding is necessary, it will not reduce the capacity of the flood plain to store floodwater, impede the flow of floodwater or in any way increase the risks to life and property arising from flooding. Wherever possible, development should be designed to reduce flood risk, both on- and off-site.

All major developments⁶³ must incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) as appropriate and in line with the Government's Technical Standards⁶⁴. Smaller schemes are encouraged to incorporate SuDS, where possible. Runoff rates should aim to reflect greenfield conditions and, in any case, must be no greater than the existing conditions of the site. Schemes should ensure that the movement of water through vertical infiltration as well as horizontal run-off does not worsen contamination effects. Wherever possible, SuDS provision should maximise ecological benefits, link into the existing Green Network, incorporate tree planting and landscaping and avoid damage to existing significant trees, including through changes to the site hydrology. All new developments in areas of flood risk should give priority to SuDS.

- 4.6 Regarding access and highways matters, George Street is a classified national highway, the B 3345. There will be no change to the existing access nor any intensification of use, so there should be no objections to the proposed development on highways grounds.

National Planning Policy

- 4.7 The Government's national planning policies are set out in the 'National Planning Policy Framework' (NPPF). The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. The application proposals are entirely in accord with these policies and the objective of a sustainable, strong, responsive and competitive economy" (paras 7 and 8). Paragraph 85 is particularly relevant, requiring planning authorities to support business growth and adaption by taking into account business needs, such as the application proposals, which will most certainly make the operations more effective and efficient.

85. Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation [44](#) , and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.

5. Acceptability of development proposed

5.1 Having regard to the Council's planning policies, the main planning considerations in relation to this proposed development relate to the:

- Principle of the development
- Impact on the character of the area
- Flooding
- Parking and access

5.2 An assessment of these issues in the light of the Council's planning policies, in addition to national planning policy, is as follows:

Principle of the development

5.3 The application proposes the development of a further storage building. The current well-established use is compatible with local and national planning policies. No intensification of use is proposed. Elis (Reading) Ltd is an important local employer whose operations are supported by local employment policies as well as national planning policy, in particular paragraph 85 of the NPPF 2024.

Impact on the character of the area

5.4 The proposed development will have a positive impact on the character of the local area. The covered shelter will be sited adjacent to the existing warehouse building and built from the same grey materials as the existing buildings and therefore will be almost indistinguishable, appearing as an extension to the existing building. The building will serve to ameliorate current views of the open storage of dirty lines from adjacent public spaces. Views of the new building will in any event be partially protected by the adjacent redundant sports building the Poplar trees and boundary hedging. There will be no intensification of operations or any effect on the local residential area.

Flooding

- 5.5 In view of the site's flooding status, a flood risk assessment has been undertaken, by the consultancy Geosmart. This is included as part of the application. The new development does not increase the site's vulnerability to flooding, both existing and proposed being classified as according to Annex 3 of the NPPF (2022) as "Less Vulnerable". The risk remains EA fluvial flood zone 3 i.e. a 1:20 year risk. Remediation design recommendations will be taken on board as part of the development.

Parking and access

- 5.6 The proposals are for a storage building will not generate further employment nor further traffic. Further parking provision or access rearrangements are not required.

6. Conclusions

6.1 This statement has highlighted that the proposed development, subject to this application for planning permission, is in accordance with the Council's planning policies and the National Planning Policy Framework. This is due to the fact, that the proposed development would:

- be supported by local and national employment policies;
- not have a detrimental impact on the character of the area through its siting and design, rather its effect will be ameliorative in terms of the current impact on adjacent open spaces;
- remedial building measures can be included to limit any potential flooding issues
- would be acceptable in terms of access and parking.

6.2 The proposals support the adaption and limited built development expansion of a successful local enterprise and will contribute to the economic sustainability of the area, whilst also serving to ameliorate it in landscape character terms. Therefore, in the absence of any other material considerations to justify otherwise, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted for this proposed development.