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Planning Statement

Magenta Self Storage Reading, 2-4 Darwin Close,
Reading, RG2 0RB

Iceni Projects Limited on behalf of
Magenta Storage Limited Ltd

December 2025

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ON BEHALF OF MAGENTA
STORAGE LIMITED LTD

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Planning Statement
MAGENTA SELF STORAGE READING, 2-4 DARWIN
CLOSE, READING, RG2 0RB

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Icen Projects Ltd on behalf of Magenta Storage Limited ('the Applicant') in support of a full planning application for change of use of the existing 5-storey tower block on site to Class B8 (self-storage) at Magenta Self Storage Reading, 2-4 Darwin Close, Reading, RG2 0RB ('the Site').

1.2 The application seeks planning permission for the following development.

"Change of use of existing 5-storey tower building from Class E (office) to B8 (self-storage)".

1.3 This application is submitted to Reading Borough Council ('the Council') as the determining planning authority under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

1.4 The proposed development for which full planning permission is sought is for the change of use of the office accommodation within the existing 5-storey office space at Site to Class B8 Use (storage & distribution).

1.5 The proposed development will increase the operating capacity of the existing self-storage facility operating on the remainder of the Site. Magenta Self Storage, who operate the existing facilities, is seeking additional space to expand its operations in response to demand. Magenta Self Storage operates from a number of locations in the south of England, in addition to the subject Site, including Banbury, Oxford, St Albans and Acton (London).

1.6 The application concerns the change of use only, with no alterations proposed to the external fabric of the building.

1.7 In addition to this Planning Statement and Application Form prepared by Icen Projects as part of the planning application, the following documents and drawings have been prepared and submitted in support of this planning application.

Document Title	Author
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – Form 1	Icen Projects

Site Location Plan	Iceni Projects
Transport Statement	Iceni Projects
Travel Plan	Iceni Projects

2. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The Site measures 185.8sqm in size and comprises an existing self-storage facility occupied by Magenta Self Storage Reading. The facility has been in operation as an internal and container self-storage facility for the past 2 years. The five-storey tower to the north-east of the site is connected to the self-storage facility. The tower was previously owned by Reading Borough Council and was in use as an office, with this use ceasing in 2022.
- 2.2 The Site is accessed from two driveways off Darwin Close and has at-grade vehicle parking to the front, side, and rear of the self-storage building. The Site is approximately 3 miles south of Reading town centre. Junction 11 of the M4 is 1.5 miles south of the property and is accessed via the A33 Reading Relief Road.
- 2.3 The surrounding context is characterised as a commercial / industrial area with an industrial equipment supplier to the east and another self-storage facility called Standby Self Storage to the southeast. A furniture showroom is located to the south and a large hardstand car park is directly to the west, which is used by the commercial printing company, VGL. There are low density residential dwellings located to the north, on the opposite side of Commercial Road.
- 2.4 The Site is designated as a Core Employment Area in the Reading Local Plan and is located within Flood Zone 1, therefore having a low probability of flooding from rivers or the sea.
- 2.5 There are no heritage assets within the application boundary, nor the immediate vicinity, and the Site is not located in a conservation area. The Site is accessible via public transport, with the nearest bus stops located a 10-minute walk to the east on Basingstoke Road, or a 10-minute walk to the northwest on the A33. Reading Train Station is located a 12-minute cycle from the facility.

Planning History

- 2.6 A review of Reading Council's on-line planning register has identified the following planning applications for the Site, dating from 2000 onwards (see Table 2.1). These are minor in nature and do not relate to the use of the tower block, which is the subject of this application. For clarity, the applications below relate to the operation of the wider Magenta Reading site, unless specified.

Table 2.1 Summary of Site Planning History

Application ref.	Description	Status
PL/00/0679 [Tower Building]	Installation of three sector panel antennas, two dish link antennas, equipment cabin and ancillary thereto, on the roof of the six storey building.	Approved 17/01/2001
PL/02/0979	Erect 3 BT Airwave antenna and an equipment cabin and antenna on rooftop of building.	Approved 22/04/2002
PL/03/0337	Erection of 3 no. modular buildings for relocation of SSE Reading Depot.	Withdrawn 11/11/2008
PL/05/0005	Erection/replacement of boundary fencing and gates (Resubmission of 05/00744/REG3).	Approved 15/09/2005
PL/05/0517	Erection/replacement of boundary fencing and gates.	Withdrawn 02/08/2005
PL/21/2063	External alterations, new canopy, provision of a photovoltaic array and the raising of site levels to form new concrete yard. [Submitted by Magenta Self Storage]	Approved 06/04/2022

- 2.7 Following a request to the Council for additional planning records, a layout plan was provided from application ref. 82-TP-1025, dating from 1982 (see Figure 2.1). As shown on the plans below, the adjoining tower block (i.e., the subject Site) is identified as 'office', however, it remains unclear from the information from the historic planning records of the application site whether the office use was as a standalone function or one which was ancillary to the principal warehouse function of the Site.

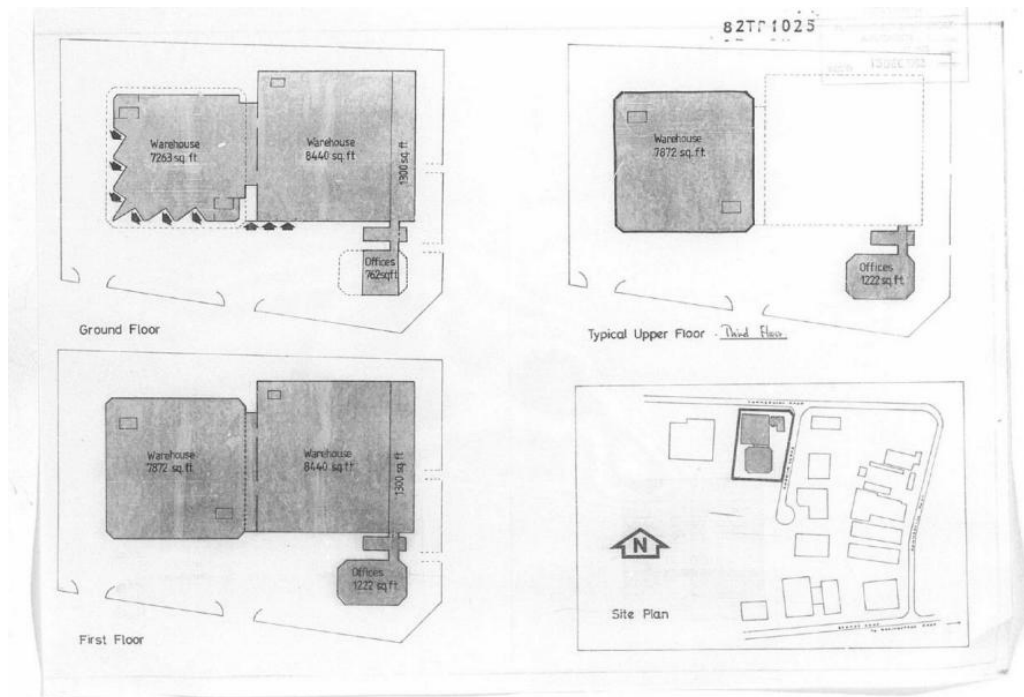


Figure 2.1: Site Layout Plan (application ref. 82-TP-1025)

- 2.8 For the purposes of this application, to provide clarity, it is assumed that the tower element of the site is / was a stand alone function and thus comprises an independent planning unit, and thus planning permission for change is being applied for.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 This planning application seeks full planning permission for the following development.

“Change of use of existing 5-storey tower building from Class E (office) to B8 (self-storage)”.

Change of Use

- 3.2 The proposal relates to the existing 5-storey office building only, which is attached to the main warehouse buildings via a short access corridor at ground floor to 2nd floor levels. The office space is to be converted into a secure, accessible self-storage facility operated by Magenta Self Storage.
- 3.3 Self-storage is an ever-growing sector in the United Kingdom and is in high demand from local residents and small businesses alike. The adaptive reuse of existing commercial buildings in employment locations for self-storage offers a sustainable solution to storage problems for households and local businesses alike.
- 3.4 All levels of the existing office space will be converted to self-storage (Class B8) use. The proposal will deliver 5,600 sqft (approx. 520 sqm) of additional Class B8 space. The remainder of the Site, including existing self-storage facility, parking, and access arrangements, will continue to operate as per the existing arrangements. No external alterations are proposed as part of the application for change of use at the Site.
- 3.5 The facility will be operated by Magenta Self Storage, as an extension to their existing facilities in Reading. Magenta Self Storage operates a number of sites across the southeast of England – further details can be found here: <https://magentastorage.co.uk/>

Operational Details

- 3.6 Self-storage is an ever-growing sector in the United Kingdom and is in high demand from local residents and small businesses alike. The reuse of existing commercial buildings in employment areas for self-storage offers a sustainable solution to storage problems for households and local small businesses.
- 3.7 The proposed change of use of the tower block is an extension of the existing Magenta Self Storage facility that is currently operating successfully and therefore the operation will be in line with the existing facility on site, as follows:

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- Staffed hours from 09:00-17:00 Monday-Saturday, and on Sunday by appointment only.
 - 24/7 access to the self-storage facility for returning customers.
 - Facilities for personal and business storage, as well as student-specific storage facilities.
 - Site monitored by 24/7 CCTV surveillance, with access to the building via PIN access control systems, ensuring only authorised customers and staff can access the building. All Magenta Storage facilities are also by multi-zone alarms and fire systems.
 - A small number of flexible office spaces for local businesses, with access to a communal kitchen, toilets and Wi-Fi.
 - Vehicular access restrictions to the Site to ensure no vehicle larger than 'transit' type van can access the facilities. One-way system in operation to control vehicle flow around the Site.
 - Small ancillary sales area within reception, for sale of goods to assist with storage and removals, such as boxes, bubble wrap and packing protection.
 - The operation of other associated services from the Site, such as van hire and paper shredding.

4. PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 This section of the Planning Statement defines the Development Plan and sets out the relevant adopted and emerging planning policy and guidance at national, regional and local levels.

The Development Plan

- 4.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and Paragraph 5 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) require planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This section identifies the principle planning policy considerations which have informed the development proposals, and which provide the context for the consideration of this planning application, as well as other material considerations.
- 4.3 In this instance, the relevant Development Plan for the Site consists of the following documents:
- The Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)
 - The Central and Eastern Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan (2023)
- 4.4 Reading Council is also at an advanced stage of the preparation of its Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU), with the LPPU having been submitted to the Secretary of State on 9th May 2025 for examination in public. Although carrying limited weight in decision making, the draft policies in the emerging Partial Update document have been reviewed.
- 4.5 In addition to the Development Plan documents, other material considerations in the assessment of planning applications include:
- National Planning Policy Framework (2024)
 - National Planning Practice Guidance (2021)
 - Reading Borough Council also has a number of supplementary planning documents (SPDs) which form material considerations for this application.

National Planning Policy

- 4.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the planning policies for England and how these should be applied. This section provides an overview of the Government's national planning policy and guidance that is relevant to the proposed development.
- 4.7 The updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2024 and sets out the Government's economic, environmental, and social planning policies.

Sustainable Development

- 4.8 The NPPF outlines a presumption in favour of sustainable development as being at the heart of the planning system. Section 11 of the NPPF encourages the use of previously developed (brownfield) land for new developments.
- 4.9 The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is at the heart of national planning policy. In accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF, development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out three overarching objectives for sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. The economic objective requires the planning system to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land is available in the right locations and at the right time to support growth and productivity.
- 4.10 Paragraph 86(c) of the NPPF requires decision-makers to pay particular regard to facilitating development that meets the needs of a modern economy. This includes identifying suitable locations for uses such as digital infrastructure, logistics and other operational facilities that support economic function. In this context, the proposed change of use to a secure self-storage facility (Class B8) supports the economic growth objective by introducing a flexible and modern employment-generating use within a sustainable, employment-generating location.

The Reading Local Plan (2019)

- 4.11 The adopted Reading Local Plan sets out the Council's planning policies for development in the borough up to 2036, and is the main consideration in deciding planning applications. The policies in Table 4.1 are relevant to the proposal.

Table 4.1 Relevant Local Plan Policies

Policy Number	Policy Synopsis
CC1	A positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. The Council will work proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean proposals can be approved wherever possible.
CC2	Requires new development, including existing stock, to use resources appropriately and efficiently, and to take account of the effects of climate change
CC3	Requires all developments to demonstrate how they have incorporated measures to adapt to climate change.
CC8	Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residents.
EM2	Other [non-office] major employment uses, including industrial and storage and distribution, will be located in the A33 corridor or in Core Employment Areas.
TR3	In determining proposals involving the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment.

- 4.12 The Site is located within a designated Core Employment Area (Policy EM2) within the accompanying Policy Map.

Reading Local Plan Partial Update

- 4.13 Reading Borough Council is currently at an advanced stage in the development of the Local Plan Partial Update, with this having been submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in May 2025.

Upon review of the adopted Local Plan in 2023, it was concluded that there was a need to update 45 of the 90 policies within the Plan. As such, the Council decided to proceed with a Partial Update of the Local Plan, covering those identified policies only, together with associated parts of the plan such as the spatial strategy and infrastructure delivery plan. A Call for Sites exercise was also undertaken as part of the Local Plan Partial Review. At the time of writing, the Local Plan Partial Review is undergoing formal examination, with Stage 1 hearing sessions scheduled for 11th and 12th November.

- 4.14 Among the key policies of the Emerging Local Plan, Policy EM2 (Core Employment Areas) is to be recategorized as a Strategic Policy. However, the overarching message and aims of the policy

remain unchanged. The Site also remains within the allocated Core Employment Area (EM2d – Bennet Road).

- 4.15 The proposed development at the Site involves a change of use and minor internal alterations only, and does not entail demolition or intensification of use. As such, the principle of additional storage and distribution space at this location should remain acceptable in principle, as set out below, and subject to an assessment of other considerations.

5. PLANNING ANALYSIS

- 5.1 This section reviews the key planning considerations arising from the proposed development. It provides a reasoned justification for the proposed development in the context of relevant policy and the specifics of the Site and its surroundings.

Principle of Development

- 5.2 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF defines the parameters for considering new development, for which sustainability is the driving force. The key considerations in relation to addressing these parameters include the following objectives:

- **An economic objective** – the proposal is an employment-generating land use within a designated Core Employment Area. The proposal will deliver ongoing jobs as part of the expansion of the existing self-storage facility.
- **A social objective** – the development provides a range of self-storage facilities to cater to local residents and small businesses. The change of use will not result in any physical works that will impact the amenity of neighbours once completed.
- **An environmental objective** – the proposal seeks to utilise an existing employment site and does not involve any physical works that may harm the natural or built environment.

- 5.3 The assessment above shows that the proposed development would meet the objectives of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

- 5.4 The Site is located within a Core Employment Area (EM2d – Bennet Road) where major employment-generating uses, such as storage and distribution, are supported under the provisions of Local Plan Policy EM2. The Local Plan identifies that there is some scope for intensification of employment sites within Core Employment Areas, such as through development on surplus parking or servicing space, which will be acceptable subject to other material considerations.

- 5.5 The proposed development will see the change of use from office space to Class B8 Use (storage and distribution). This use is considered a sustainable use that responds to local and regional need for flexible commercial floorspace, including self-storage. The proposal will function as a logical extension to the existing self-storage facilities on site and will bring currently disused office space back into viable employment use.

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- 5.6 Self-storage facilities support a broad range of users including individuals, SMEs and creative industries. The development will deliver approximately 631 sqm of additional self-storage space, providing secure and accessible storage that can be used to support home-based businesses, e-commerce, and the needs of individuals in the local area.
- 5.7 The proposal will bring vacant commercial space back into long-term viable use, securing an employment use that remains compatible with the wider context of both the existing self-storage facility and the wider Core Employment Area. The scheme aligns with the thrust of the NPPF (Paragraph 84) and the overarching vision for Reading in the Local Plan, which seeks to encourage the most efficient use of Reading's limited land – particularly previously developed land.
- 5.8 The proposed development will secure the long-term economic resilience of the self-storage use on the Site, allowing for an expansion of the existing business to meet rising customer demand. The proposal will bring vacant office space back into long-term viable commercial use, within a Core Employment Area where continued employment use should be supportable in principle.

Transport and Parking

- 5.9 The proposed development is accompanied by a Transport Statement and Travel Plan prepared by Icen Projects (October 2025), which confirm that the scheme is acceptable in highways, parking and servicing terms, and is fully compliant with relevant policies of the Reading Local Plan (2019).
- 5.10 While the proposal increases the overall quantum of self-storage floorspace across the Site, the overall number of operational parking spaces shall remain the same as existing. Customers will continue to access the Site via the vehicular entrance on Darwin Close, with vehicle size restricted to no larger than a 'Transit Van' or equivalent servicing vehicle.
- 5.11 Icen's Transport Statement demonstrates that trip generation associated with the self-storage use will be modest and materially lower than the historic baseline for the office use. Forecasts suggest that the storage use is likely to generate one arrival per hour during peak operation periods, with customer activity staggered across daytime and early evening periods. This low level of activity will not have any adverse impact on the local highway network and is consistent with the requirements of Local Plan Policy TR3.
- 5.12 Servicing and waste collection requirements for the facility are minimal and will be accommodated wholly within the Site's internal circulation areas, accessed from Darwin Close. No external loading, off-site waiting, or pavement-based activity will occur. The proposals will not obstruct pedestrian movement or compromise highway safety on Darwin Close.

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- 5.13 The Site is located within a short walking distance of residential areas within the south of Reading, and is also accessible by bike via a mixed-use cycle and pedestrian path along the A33, with cycle-friendly routes to Reading town centre along Basingstoke Road. Public transport is provided via bus routes along Basingstoke Road and the A33, with semi-frequent services to local destinations.
- 5.14 Overall, the development will not present any unacceptable highways impacts and will deliver a net benefit in terms of responsible land use and operational efficiency, fully aligning with the transport objectives of national and local policy.

Amenity Impacts

- 5.15 The proposal would utilise and retrofit an existing tower block to operate a self-storage facility and therefore will not impact the existing character of the area, nor will it result in any amenity or built form impacts to nearby receivers that would've likely been caused by a new build.
- 5.16 The nearest noise sensitive receptors are the residential properties located at 23 and 25 Commercial Road, approximately 40m from the Site boundary. The proposed change of use is not anticipated to have any impact on residential amenity, given that no external works or operations are included as part of the application, and the existing use of the wider site as self-storage space. In addition, the parking and loading facilities are largely screened from view of the residential properties, owing to the topography of the Site and their positioning to the rear of the tower building.
- 5.17 Given the existing function of the Site as a self-storage facility, there are not anticipated to be any impacts on amenity as a result of traffic movements. Customers will continue to access the Site via the primary route from Commercial Road (via Bennett Road), with minimal use of routes adjacent to residential properties. Given the small-scale nature of the uplift in commercial floorspace, additional
- 5.18 The proposal should be considered as an addition to an existing facility, rather than an application for new build development. As such, impacts on residential and neighbour amenity are expected to be minimal given the nature of the Site as an extension to an existing operation.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Magenta Storage Limited ('the Applicant') in support of a full planning application for the change of use of the existing 5-storey tower block on site to Class B8 (self-storage) at Magenta Self Storage Reading, 2-4 Darwin Close, Reading, RG2 0RB ('the Site').
- 6.2 The proposal will see the sustainable reuse of vacant commercial land for employment-generating use, maintaining the function of the Core Employment Area and providing additional space for the growth of a local employer.
- 6.3 It has been highlighted that the proposed change of use of the existing office space will not cause any harm in the context of traffic or residential amenity impacts to surrounding properties. There is therefore no reason for the proposals not to be approved by the LPA in accordance with Paragraph 125 (c) of the NPPF. The Proposed Development will provide numerous positive economic, social and environmental benefits, as follows:

Economic	• The additional Class B8 Use will provide self-storage facilities to small businesses in Reading and Berkshire. • The proposal will facilitate the reuse of vacant employment-generating space within a Core Employment Area. • The proposal will deliver job opportunities during the ongoing operation of the self-storage facility, with more jobs provided on Site than at present, given the vacant nature of the Site. • The proposal will support the wider function of the designated employment area, bringing existing vacant space back into viable commercial use.
Social	• The proposal will provide an enlargement to an existing self-storage business, which provides a range of self-storage options to cater for local residents and businesses.
Environmental	• The proposal will see a reduction in peak time vehicle movements compared with the existing office use.

	• The adaptive reuse of an existing building will substantially reduce the environmental impacts of construction associated with new build development, with minor internal alterations required only. • The proposed change of use will not result in any substantial amenity impacts to neighbouring sites and the local community.
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6.4 The scheme accords with both local and national policy, whilst providing numerous economic, social and environmental benefits that weigh in support of the scheme being granted planning permission. Therefore, the proposals should be approved without delay in accordance with Paragraph 11(c) of the NPPF.