

Planning Statement

Project:	8 Commercial Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG2 0QZ
Client:	Rokstone Estates Limited
Job No:	26.01
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Revision:	Summary of Changes:	Date:

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for external alterations to the existing building at 8 Commercial Road, Reading.
- 1.2 The application seeks planning permission for the following:

“Building alterations, including changes to the position and size of existing window and door openings, the creation of new window and door openings, installation of a recessed electric vehicle charging point, installation of profiled cladding to the elevations, installation of roof-mounted photovoltaic solar panels, and construction of a new service yard canopy to the rear.”
- 1.3 The proposed works seek to improve the appearance, energy efficiency and functionality of the existing commercial premises, whilst retaining its established use and existing access arrangements.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted planning drawings, which provide full details of the proposed works.

2.0 Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is located at 8 Commercial Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG2 0QZ.
- 2.2 The site is broadly rectangular in shape and measures approximately 67 metres in depth and 24 metres in width, with a total area of approximately 0.15 hectares.
- 2.3 The site contains an established single-storey commercial building which is currently in active light industrial/storage use. The existing use will remain unchanged.
- 2.4 The existing building measures approximately 55 metres in depth and 15 metres in width and is constructed using a concrete portal frame. The front elevation is rendered, with weatherboard cladding to the gable. The side and rear elevations are constructed in Fletton brickwork. Window and door openings are distributed across all elevations, with a number incorporating exposed concrete lintels. The building has also been subject to a number of alterations over time.
- 2.5 The roof is finished with trapezoidal profiled metal sheet cladding.
- 2.6 The building is centrally positioned within the site and occupies a substantial proportion of the site area. A forecourt is located to the front of the building, with a service yard extending along the southern side and rear. These areas are predominantly finished in concrete paving.
- 2.7 The eastern boundary of the site adjoins Commercial Road. Access to the premises is provided via an existing flush kerb extending across the site frontage. The existing access arrangements will remain unchanged.
- 2.8 In the wider context, 8 Commercial Road is located within a major employment area formed by Commercial Road, Bennet Road and Acre Road. The area is characterised

predominantly by commercial premises comprising buildings associated with light industrial, storage and other employment uses.

3.0 Planning History

- 3.1 There is no relevant planning history associated with the application site.

4.0 Proposed Development

- 4.1 This planning application seeks planning permission for a range of external alterations to the existing building. The proposed works are described below.

Alterations to window and door openings

- 4.2 The position and size of a number of existing window and door openings will be altered, together with the creation of new window and door openings. The works seek to rationalise the arrangement of openings across the elevations, improving the appearance and functionality of the building and better reflecting the operational requirements of the premises.

Electric vehicle charging point

- 4.3 A recessed electric vehicle charging point is proposed within the footprint of the existing building. The recessed arrangement has been adopted to minimise any impact on vehicle manoeuvring space within the service yard. The provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure will support the use of electric vehicles associated with the premises and contribute towards the sustainable operation of the building.

External cladding

- 4.4 Trapezoidal profiled metal sheet cladding is proposed to the south, east and west elevations of the building. The cladding will be installed over the existing Fletton brickwork and will provide a consistent and contemporary finish to these elevations. The existing Fletton brickwork to the north elevation, which is the least visually prominent façade, will be painted to complement the proposed cladding.

Photovoltaic solar panels

- 4.5 Roof-mounted photovoltaic solar panels are proposed to provide on-site renewable energy generation. The installation will contribute towards meeting the energy requirements of the building and will also provide electricity for the proposed electric vehicle charging point.

Service yard canopy

- 4.6 A new canopy is proposed within the service yard to the rear of the building. The canopy will comprise a steel frame with a lean-to roof finished with trapezoidal profiled metal sheet cladding to complement the existing building. The canopy will provide a covered area adjacent to the rear roller shutter door, improving the

functionality of the service yard and providing shelter for activities associated with the operation of the premises.

5.0 Relevant Planning Policy

- 5.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning decisions should be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan

- 5.2 The Development Plan policy context for the site and surrounding area is provided by the Reading Borough Local Plan 2013–2036 and Policies Map, adopted in November 2019.

- 5.3 The policies of relevance to the proposed development are:

- Policy CC1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy CC3 - Adaption to Climate Change
- Policy CC7 - Design and the Public Realm

- 5.4 Policy CC1 sets out the Council's positive approach to considering development proposals, reflecting the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The policy states that, where appropriate, the Council will work proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible.

- 5.5 Policy CC3 requires proposals involving both new and existing buildings to demonstrate how they have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change.

- 5.6 Policy CC7 requires all development to be of high design quality and to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), revised in August 2026, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and is a material consideration in the determination of this planning application.

- 5.8 The NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It identifies three overarching objectives for achieving sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These objectives are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

a) Economic – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) Social – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of

present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible community facilities, public service infrastructure and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) Environmental – to support efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy; and to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, and minimising waste and pollution.

6.0 Planning Considerations

6.1 The main considerations relevant to these proposal are:

- Principle of Development & Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Adaption to Climate Change
- Design and the Public Realm

Principle of Development & Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

6.2 The site is an established commercial premises in an existing employment area and is currently used for light industrial/storage purposes. The proposed development does not involve a change of use and seeks to retain and improve the existing employment premises through a series of external alterations. The principle of retaining and enhancing employment development within established employment areas is supported by the Development Plan. The proposal therefore accords with the general objectives of Policy CC1 and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Adaptation to Climate Change

6.3 The proposed alterations have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change insofar as this relates to the specific elements of the development.

6.4 Clerestory windows along the southern side of the building will be retained, allowing natural daylight to penetrate the building and reducing the need for artificial lighting during daylight hours.

6.5 The proposed replacement and new windows and doors, together with the proposed external cladding, will improve the thermal resistance and airtightness of the building fabric, helping to reduce heat loss and energy demand where the building is heated.

6.6 Roof-mounted photovoltaic solar panels will provide on-site renewable energy generation, contributing towards the electricity requirements of the building and providing a source of electricity for the proposed electric vehicle charging point.

6.7 The provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure will support the use of electric vehicles associated with the premises and contribute towards the wider sustainability objectives of the development.

6.8 The proposed alterations will improve the environmental performance and resilience of the existing building and will maximise resistance and resilience to climate change

insofar as this relates to the scope of the proposed works. The proposal therefore accords with the objectives of Policy CC3.

Design and the Public Realm

- 6.9 The proposed alterations will enhance the external appearance of the existing building and provide a more consistent and contemporary architectural treatment. The proposed cladding, rationalisation of the window and door openings and associated alterations will improve the visual appearance of the building while retaining its established commercial and industrial character.
- 6.10 The proposed alterations respond positively to the existing character of the site and surrounding commercial area. The scale, form and materials of the proposed works are appropriate to the existing building and will enhance its appearance and functionality without resulting in an unacceptable impact on the character or appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal therefore accords with the objectives of Policy CC7.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposed development comprises a range of external alterations to an established commercial building within an existing employment area. The works will improve the appearance and functionality of the building, while retaining its existing use and supporting the continued operation of the premises.
- 7.2 The proposed development accords with the relevant policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2013–2036, including Policies CC1, CC3 and CC7. The proposal will retain an established employment use, incorporate measures to improve the environmental performance of the building and enhance its external appearance.
- 7.3 The proposal is also consistent with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The proposed photovoltaic solar panels and electric vehicle charging infrastructure will contribute towards the sustainable operation of the premises, while the proposed external alterations will enhance the appearance and functionality of the existing building.
- 7.4 The proposal would not result in any unacceptable impact on the character or appearance of the surrounding area and would retain the established commercial character and use of the site. There are no identified adverse impacts or other material considerations that would outweigh the benefits of the proposal.
- 7.5 The proposed development therefore represents sustainable development that accords with the Development Plan when considered as a whole. In accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF, planning permission should accordingly be granted.