

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

RIDEWORX

PLANNING STATEMENT

**UNIT 1
125 READING ROAD
WOKINGHAM
RG41 1HD**

**Erection of two storey front extension to provide additional
retail floor space for the sale of motorcycles**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a planning application by Rideworx for the erection of a two-storey front extension onto the existing retail motorcycle shop.
- 1.2 The additional space is required to provide a greater amount of retail floorspace to display motorbikes; accessories, including motorcycle clothing; storage; and larger changing rooms. The current use has proved to be highly successful in this location and the proposed extension and expansion of the business is a reflection of this.
- 1.3 The application follows the recent refusal of an application (LPA Ref. 240383) on the site for the erection of a two-storey front extension to provide retail space. This application was refused as the Council considered that it would be an incongruous addition to the host building which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the surrounding area (See Planning History). This decision was reached on the basis of its design, height and relationship to the retained western part of the building. This application seeks to address the previous reason for refusal by redesigning the extension so that it has a more uniform approach and therefore a more harmonious relationship. There is in addition more glazing to break up the extent of steel cladding. The design and layout has been the subject of extensive pre-application discussions and the proposal lodged reflects the discussions that have taken place.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement will demonstrate that the application is compliant with national policy (National Planning Policy Framework 2023) and the Development Plan (Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan).
- 1.5 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment provided by Lanmor (October 2024).
- 1.6 The statement is divided into the following sections:
- Site and Surrounding Area

- Planning History and Pre-Application Discussions
- Planning Policy Context
- The Application Proposal
- Summary and Conclusions

2 THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site comprises of a large motorcycle retail unit which currently fronts onto the northern side of Reading Road a short distance to the north-west of the Woosehill roundabout. The building is situated within a run of similar motor vehicle related uses. To the north-west of the site is the Kwik Fit MOT, tyre and exhaust fitting centre. Separating the application site from Kwik Fit is the main access leading to the small industrial park comprising of units numbered 125-127 Reading Road. These include various small commercial units, some of which are also used for car repairs, MOT's etc. The building immediately to the rear is already of a two-storey height (Unit 2).
- 2.2 Beyond Kwik Fit on the northern side of Reading Road is a row of two-storey Victorian cottages (Nos.133-139), one of which houses the post office and general store. Beyond the post office is The Rifle Volunteer Public House. These properties are all located much closer to the road frontage than the commercial units lying to the south-east including the building which is the subject of this application (Rideworx).
- 2.3 Immediately to the south-east of the site is a large second-hand car sales use and a steel container storage area to the rear. The secondhand car sales use contains a large single storey showroom with a pitched roof. Further to the north is the main railway line serving Wokingham set high on an embankment. On the opposite side of Reading Road is a petrol filling station (with a convenience store) and a gym.
- 2.4 Whilst the site is not classified as being part of a defined employment area in the Local Plan Proposals Map, it clearly comprises of an established industrial estate of commercial units all serving small business uses and employing numerous skilled persons. The application site is accessible to shops and public transport modes with a bus stop being located immediately outside of the site entrance on Reading Road. The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and outside of the nearby Flood Zones 2 and 3 adjacent to the Emmbrook (see Flood Risk Assessment).

Aerial view of the application site

Application site



Existing street scene view



3 SITE HISTORY AND PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

3.1 The planning history of the site is relatively limited and is set out below:

07907 – Reconstruction of existing workshop (outline). Approved 04.04.1978.

08622 - Reconstruction of existing workshop (reserved matters). Approved 27.07.1978.

32512 – First floor extension and ground floor alterations to workshop to form MOT bay and associated reception. Approved 1989.

37285 – 1no. illuminated double sided board and 2no. internally illuminated signs. Approved 02.04.1991.

150047 – Certificate of lawfulness: Proposed use of the building for motorcycle MOT. Approved 20.10.2015.

193282 – Application for a certificate of lawfulness for a proposed use of the building for motorcycle repairs and MOTs. Refused 23.02.2020.

200987 – Full application for proposed change of use from A1 retail to B2 (General Industrial) for the use as a motorcycle repairs and MOT facility. Approved 22.06.2020.

232988 – Full application for the proposed erection of a two-storey front extension to provide retail space. Refused 25 January 2024 for the following reason:

‘The proposed two storey front extension, by virtue of its height, design, siting and materials would result in a visually dominant and incongruous addition to the host building which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This would be contrary to section 12 of the NPPF, Policies CP1 and CP3 of the adopted Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) and

Section 7 of the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2012)'.

240383 - Full application for the proposed erection of a two-storey front extension to provide retail space. Refused 05.04.2024 on the following grounds:

The proposed two storey front extension, by virtue of its design, form, proportions, siting and materials would result in an incongruous and prominent addition to the street scene that would fail to achieve a high quality of design and would negatively impact the character and appearance of the area. This would be contrary policies CP1 and CP3 of the adopted Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), the advice contained in the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2012) and section 12 of the NPPF.

3.2 Following the most recent decision to refuse permission solely on design grounds, the applicant undertook pre-application discussions with the Council to establish how the design could be amended to overcome the refusal reason (ref.241109).

3.3 In respect to the revised design, officers commented as follows:

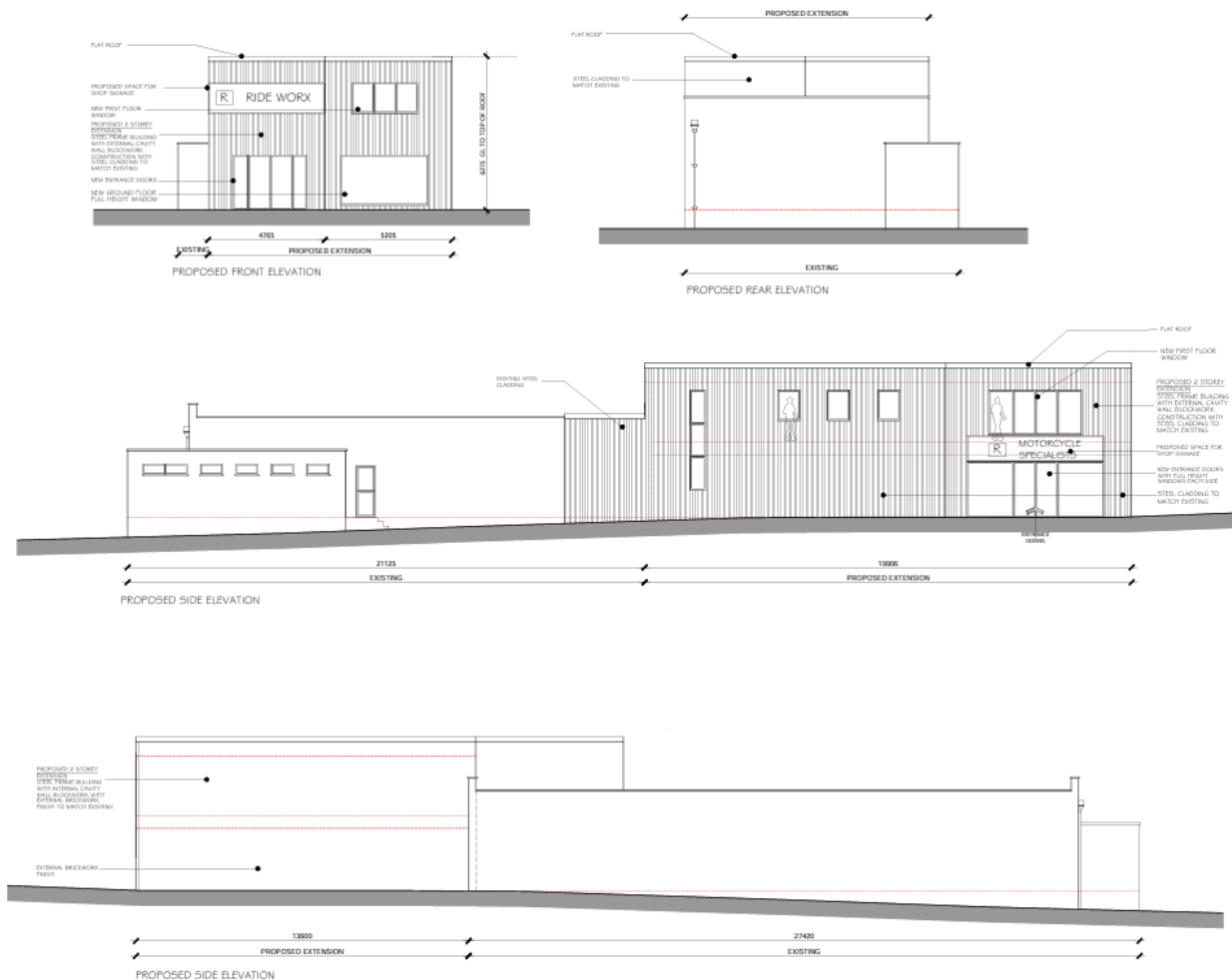
'The proposed extension would have a maximum height of approximately 6.3m, extending slightly above the adjacent buildings. Whilst the height difference would be apparent on approaches along Reading Road, it would not be to an extent that would appear incongruous within the immediate area. The extension would be set considerably back from the main highway and the use of a flat roof design would assist in reducing the perceived scale of the development.

The submitted plans show that the build materials and finishes would match the existing material palette across the building. Furthermore, the quantity, scale, and position of the proposed glazed openings across the building elevations would be acceptable and help visual relief from the cladding covering the bulk of the building envelope.

Overall, it is considered that the scale and design of the proposed extension would be appropriate and reflective of a commercial/retail development located in a suburban area, therefore, the scheme is likely to have an acceptable impact on the character of the area'.

- 3.4 It should be noted that the size, scale, height and external appearance including materials and fenestration detailing is identical to the pre-application submission which officers found to be completely acceptable. A copy of the pre-application submission elevations is set out below. No concerns were raised about neighbour amenity.

Pre-application submission elevations



- 3.5 In terms of access and parking provision, officers confirmed that the Council had not objected previously to the provision of 5 parking spaces on the basis that most customers would be arriving by motorbike. As the pre-app. reduced the overall level of parking to 4no. spaces, officers requested further information about how the level proposed would be adequate. This submission is accompanied by two letters from adjoining occupiers confirming that any overspill would be acceptable (see appendices 1 and 2). This is considered most likely at the weekends particularly on Saturdays as the shop is closed on Sundays.
- 3.6 A Flood Risk Assessment forms part of this submission and deals comprehensively with the Drainage Officer's comments expressed within the pre-application letter.

4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 Relevant planning policy guidance falls within the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 and the Development Plan which is comprised of the adopted Core Strategy and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.

i) **Government Guidance – National Planning Policy Framework (2023)**

- 4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states in paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (para 8). The economic objective promoted by the Framework is described as follows:

‘To help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type 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.’

- 4.3 Chapter 6 is concerned with building a strong, competitive economy. Paragraph 85 states that planning policies and decisions should support economic growth and productivity taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development whilst Paragraph 87 states that planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirement of different sectors.
- 4.4 Paragraphs 131 - 141 are concerned with achieving well-designed and beautiful places. Paragraph 131 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. 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.

4.5 Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increase densities);
- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
- Create safe and accessible environments which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

ii) The Development Plan

Wokingham Core Strategy (2014)

4.6 Relevant policies include: Policies CP1, CP3, CP6, CP9 and CP15.

4.7 Policy CP1 (Sustainable Development) requires that a number of criteria are met. These include maintaining or enhancing the high quality of the environment; providing attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes; demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel particularly by the car; and contribute towards reaching zero – carbon development as soon as possible.

- 4.8 Policy CP3 (General Principles for Development) requires, amongst other matters, that new development is of an appropriate scale, mass, activity, built form, height, materials, character and design quality. Proposals should not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring land uses or lead to a net loss of dwellings and other residential accommodation. It also states that proposals should have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscaping or geological features or water courses.
- 4.9 Policy CP6 (Managing Travel Demand) is concerned with managing travel demand. It states that proposals will be granted for schemes that:
- Provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice;
 - Are located where there is a choice of transport modes available;
 - Improve existing infrastructure;
 - Provide appropriate parking;
 - Mitigate any adverse effects upon the highway network;
 - Enhance road safety;
 - Do not cause highway problems.
- 4.10 Policy CP9 (Scale and Location of Development Proposals) - states that the scale of development proposals must reflect the existing or proposed levels of facilities and services at or in the location together with their accessibility. Development proposals (in addition to the Strategic Development Locations) within development limits will be acceptable.
- 4.11 Policy CP15 (Employment Development) confirms, amongst other things, that within development limits the redevelopment, refurbishment or minor extension of buildings in employment use will be acceptable in principle. Any proposed change of use from B1, B2 & B8 should not lead to an overall net loss of floorspace in B use within the Borough. Provision will be made for a range of sizes, types, quality and locations of

premises and sites in order to meet incubator / start up, move on, expansion and investment accommodation needs and having regard to the needs of specific sectors of the business community.

Wokingham Borough Managing 'Development Delivery Document (2014) (MDD Local Plan)

- 4.12 Relevant policies include Policies CC01 and CC02.
- 4.13 Policy CC01 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) states that there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning applications that accord with policies in the Development Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.14 Policy CC02 (Development Limits) confirms that the development limits are defined on the Policies Map.

iii) Wokingham Borough Design Guide (BDG) 2012

- 4.15 NR1 – States that non-residential development should be designed to respond to and exploit key features or characteristics of the site and the local context.
- 4.16 NR2 – Non-residential development should be designed to contribute towards improving the character and quality of the area.
- 4.17 NR3 – Developments must be arranged to create a positive impression on arrival for people arriving by all modes of transport.
- 4.18 NR5 – Requires that height, bulk and massing should respond to the local context and prevailing heights in the area.
- 4.19 NR8 – The approach to materials should generally be a simple one, focussing on high quality materials and components, with the appropriate level of intricacy and detail being guided by the nature of the viewer experience.

5 THE PLANNING APPLICATION

5.1 The planning application is for the erection of a two storey front extension to provide additional retail floorspace and ancillary facilities for the motorcycle shop.

5.2 The main considerations are as follows:

- i) Principle of development
- ii) Impact on the character of the area
- iii) Neighbour amenity
- iv) Highways and parking
- v) Flooding and Drainage

5.3 Each of these considerations are dealt with in turn below:

i) Principle of development

5.4 The existing building is current in retail use selling motorbikes and associated clothing and equipment. The existing building is set considerably further away from the Reading Road street frontage than both neighbouring buildings emphasizing the current lack of uniformity. The proposed extension to the front of the building will bring the building in line with adjoining buildings in a uniform manner. It will provide an additional 230sq.m (GIA) of floorspace. As the building is already in retail use, there are no policies within the Development Plan (MDD and CS) or the NPPF that resist such proposals and therefore the principle of providing additional retail space in this location must be considered to be acceptable. The Council have confirmed this point in the pre-application response letter.

5.5 Furthermore, whilst the previous application was refused on design grounds, no objection was raised to the principle of development for any of the previous

proposals. In this regard, the Council confirmed as follows although it should be noted that there is no loss of floorspace in B Use as a result of the proposals (see pre-application response letter and earlier officer reports):

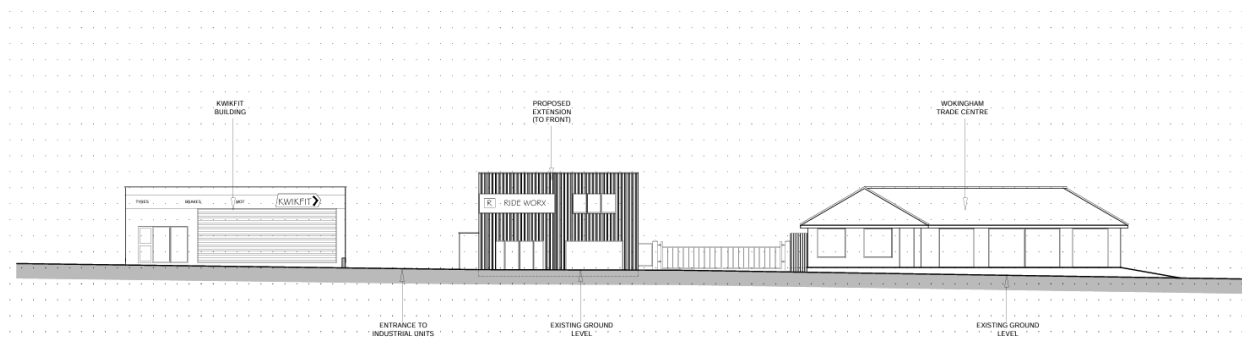
‘The site is not classified as being part of a defined employment area in the local plan proposals map, however, it is located in an industrial estate of commercial units. Policy CP15 of the Core Strategy allows for the redevelopment, refurbishment or minor extension of buildings in employment use where they are in the settlement limits and where there is no net loss of Class B floor space. The proposal includes a net increase of approximately 128sqm of Class E (a) floorspace and would result in a loss of floorspace in B use. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy CP15 in terms of providing additional employment floorspace in the Borough’.

ii) Impact on the character of the area

- 5.6 Consistent with the previous application, the proposed front extension will provide retail space over two floors, which will increase the overall height of the building when viewed from Reading Road. However, the proposal would now bring forward both parts of the building in a more uniform manner and at the same height reflecting the earlier comments made by the Council under the previous applications. This proposal is identical in all respects to the plans provided at pre-application level and which the Council considered to be acceptable in terms of scale and design.
- 5.7 The front of the proposed extension will in part be level with the adjacent buildings. It will only be marginally higher than the flat roofed ‘Kwik Fit’ building to the north-west and the pitched roof of the second hand car sales building to the south east (see Street Scene Drawing). Given the spacing between the buildings along this part of Reading Road and the context of a very mixed frontage which includes the commercial premises, the proposed extension will sit comfortably within the street scene. Officers did not object to the minor increase above the neighbouring buildings for these reasons.

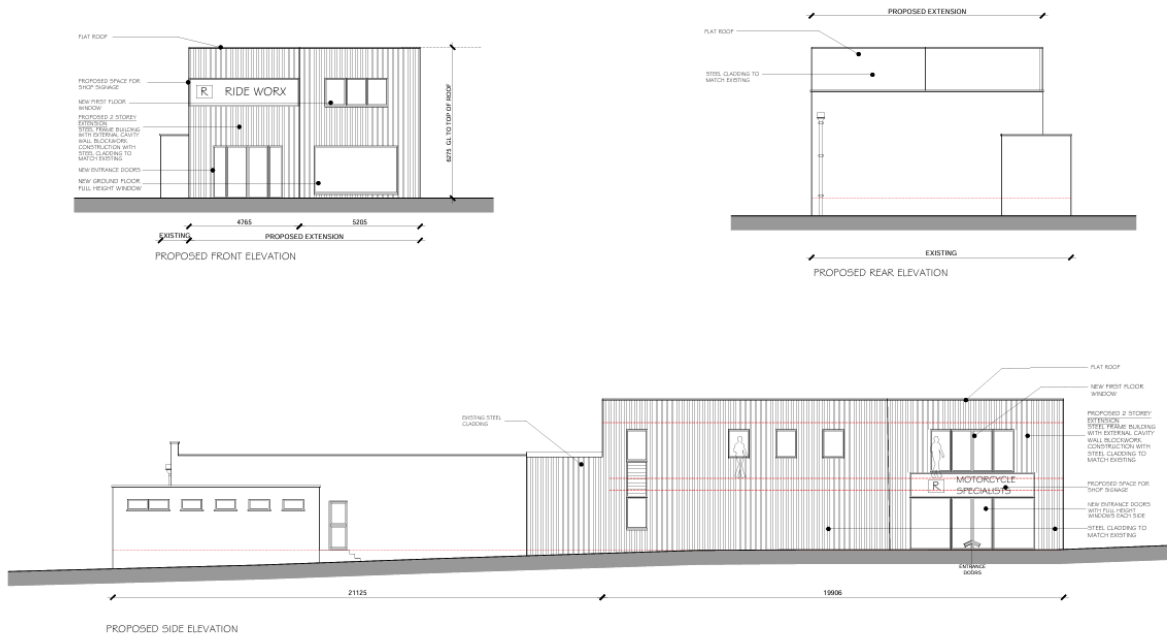
- 5.8 The proposed extension will be constructed in steel cladding with extensive fenestration to break this up thereby matching the appearance of the existing building. The extension will blend in the with existing street frontage and will visually improve a largely bland and functional run of commercial properties, open storage uses and high/stacked steel containers (which are of an overall height that far exceeds any neighbouring buildings including the proposed extension to Rideworx with all being visible from Reading Road). The Council confirmed at pre-app level that the approach now being taken to the proposed materials is appropriate in view of the extent of glazing proposed.

Proposed street scene

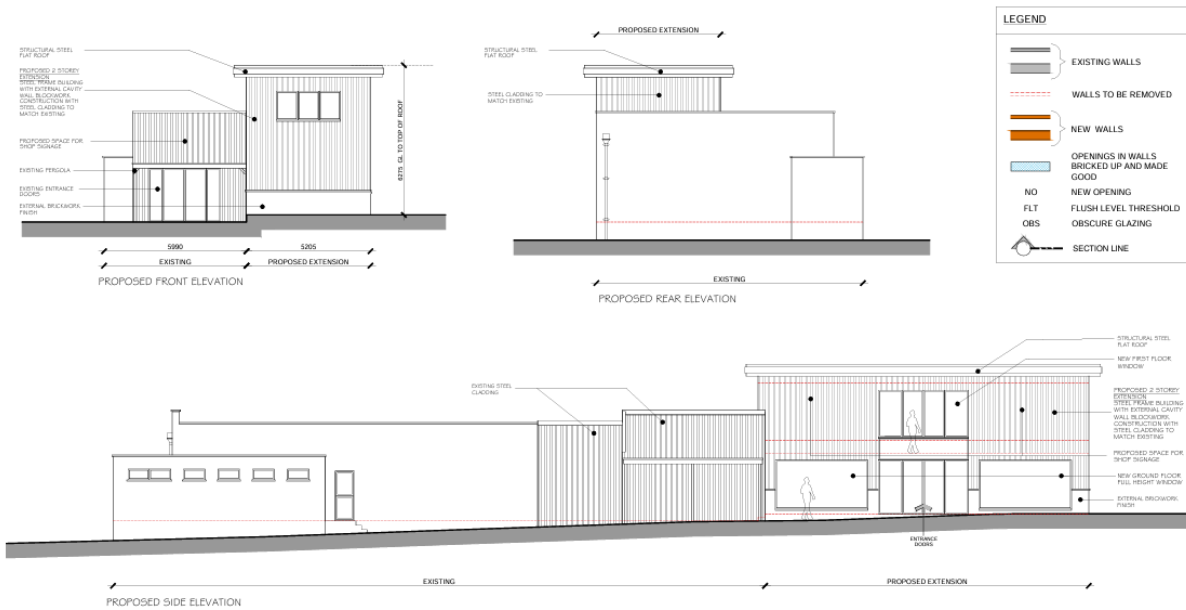


- 5.9 A comparison between the main elevations of the proposed extension and the refused application under application ref. 232988 is provided below:

Proposed side elevation



Previous side elevation (application no.240383)



- 5.10 In summary, the proposal complies with the objectives of CS Policies CP1 and CP3 in that it will enhance the quality of the environment which comprises of the existing street scene. It will not be unduly prominent and will not have a jarring relationship with the host building. This revised submission has overcome all previous design and street scene concerns.

iii) Neighbour amenity

- 5.11 The immediate area around Unit 1 is dominated by other commercial uses with a high proportion being related to cars and motorbikes (servicing and MOTs). The closest residential uses lie a considerable distance to the west (Nos.133-139 Reading Road) and to the north-west (Nos.7-13 Emmbrook Road) of the site. Given the distances involved and the nature and scope of the existing uses it is highly unlikely that the proposed extension would materially affect their amenity.
- 5.12 No objection was raised to the previous proposals on amenity grounds and this advice was followed through in the pre-app response letter. It therefore follows that the proposal is consistent with CS Policy CP3 which seeks to protect amenity.

iv) Highways and parking

- 5.13 No objections were raised to the previous application on highway grounds. This proposal is for additional floorspace in part to overcome the Council's earlier design concerns raised under the planning application and therefore there is an increase in floorspace and a small reduction in parking bays (1no. space).
- 5.14 The existing unit has a parking area in front of the unit allowing space to park motorbikes and cars. Access already exists to Reading Road and this serves all of the units to the rear including the related MOT and servicing uses. Consistent with the pre-application submission, the proposed site layout confirms that a total of 4no. car parking spaces and 3no. motorcycle spaces will be provided. Given that the unit is selling motorbikes and associated equipment, it is reasonable to assume that a high proportion of visitors will arrive on motorbikes and therefore provision for

spaces on a broadly equivalent level to car parking acceptable as it reflects the customer base.

- 5.15 The Council have acknowledged that the customer base is more likely to arrive by motorbike than by car and hence the split proposed is broadly consistent with this stance. In terms of overall provision, the proposal is again consistent with the layout provided for the pre-app. The Council have stated that the applicant will need to demonstrate that the extent of parking will be sufficient for the proposal. Attached to this statement at appendices 1 and 2 are letters from two adjoining owners confirming that they are happy for any overspill to be accommodated on their forecourts, particularly on Saturdays when their businesses are closed and Rideworx is at its busiest.

v) Flooding and drainage

- 5.16 The application submission is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment which was requirement following the pre-application submission. The FRA confirms the following:
- The information provided by the Environment Agency confirms that the site is within Flood Zone 1. The site is in commercial use which is considered a less vulnerable use;
 - As the site is in FZ1, the proposed development will not result in the loss of flood storage volumes across the site;
 - The site is indicated as having a low risk of surface water flooding;
 - The risk of flooding from sewers is considered to be low;
 - Flood mapping indicates that the route to the west of the site is free from flooding. The road to the east is within FZ's 2 and 3 but a safe dry access can be provided to and from the site from the west during a flood;

- As the site is located within a low flood risk area, the sequential test has been met and the exceptions test is not required;
- SuDS and ground water infiltration have been discounted for the disposal of run-off. The proposal is to discharge to the sewer running through the site. Permeable paving will be used to attenuate the runoff and to act as storage.

5.17 The conclusion of the FRA is that the proposed development will not have a negative impact on the flood plain, flow paths or flood storage volumes. A suitable drainage system can be provided.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The application should be supported for the following reasons:

- i) The application site sits in a run of commercial units fronting onto Reading Road. These units extend to the rear in the form of a small industrial park built in the 1980s that includes numerous units that are already engaged in vehicle repairs, tyre/exhaust fitting and MOT testing. The adjacent unit on Reading Road is engaged in car sales. The proposed extension of the existing retail sales building which is for motorbikes and associated equipment and clothing is not in conflict with any Development Plan policies or the NPPF. The Council have confirmed in previous applications and through the pre-application response letter that there is no conflict with CS Policy CP15.
- ii) The proposed extension to the front of the existing building will bring the entire building forward with the front element being broadly in line with adjacent buildings (it is currently heavily recessed and is further away than both neighbouring commercial buildings). This approach was presented to officers at pre-application level, and they have confirmed that the more uniform approach overcomes the earlier concerns. The more uniform approach also includes a more integrated roof design and the use of extensive glazing to break up the steel clad exterior. This will ensure that it will fully respect the existing character and appearance of the area. It will not appear as being unduly prominent or having a jarring relationship with the host building or neighbouring buildings. The proposal therefore meets CS Policies CP1 and CP3 and therefore the earlier refusal reason has been overcome.
- iii) Consistent with the earlier decisions, the proposal will not result in a loss of amenity to any residential dwellings which are all distant to the site.

- iv) The unit already has an area to the front to park motorbikes and cars. The extent of parking provided is consistent with the amount and number of visitors expected to visit a showroom type of use and as such there are a number of motorbike spaces provided. Officers have requested at pre-app. level further information on the suitability of parking provision, particularly for weekend use. The applicant has obtained two letters from adjoining properties confirming that their forecourts can be used as overspill on Saturdays when there is a greater chance of the spaces being at a capacity. There is also a bus stop immediately outside of the unit on Reading Road together with a dedicated cycle path.
- v) The site lies within Flood Zone 1. The applicant has provided a FRA confirming that the proposal is acceptable in flooding and drainage terms including safe access in a flood event.

APPENDIX 1

Crawford Temple Limited
1 Wrexham Road
Basildon
SS15 6PX

Neil Davis
Davis Planning Ltd
19 Woodlands Avenue
Winnersh
Wokingham
RG41 3HL

Dear Neil

I am writing to confirm as the owner of Unit 2, 125 Reading Road, Wokingham, RG41 1HD I can confirm that I have granted Rideworx Limited the use of 2 parking spaces outside of Unit 2 for staff parking.

This permission is granted for so long as the company remains the owner of the property.

I hope this assists in clarifying the parking position.

Regards



Crawford Temple
Managing Director

APPENDIX 2

Munich Motors Limited
Unit 3
125 Reading Road
Wokingham
RG41 1HD

Neil Davis
Davis Planning Ltd
19 Woodlands Avenue
Winnersh
Wokingham
RG41 3HL

Dear Mr Davis

We can confirm that as a business we operate Monday to Friday. We have an informal agreement with Rideworx that on Saturdays, their busiest time, we are happy for them to use the area around Unit 3 for additional parking. This would provide for 5 cars and a minimum of 6 motorcycles.

We hope this assists in confirming our agreement for parking.

Regards

Susan Sanchez

Director

