Justification Statement

For

Change of Use of First Floor Commercial Storage Space to Staff Accommodation

At

6 Stonebridge Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent

Introduction

This statement is submitted in support of the application for planning permission to change the use of the underutilised first-floor commercial storage space at 6 Stonebridge Road, Northfleet, into dedicated staff accommodation. The proposed change is a practical, sustainable, and necessary evolution of the building's use to better serve the operational needs of the established business operating from the premises.

Background and Context

The property is currently in a commercial shop on the ground floor and ancillary storage space above. However, the first-floor storage area is significantly underused.

Retaining the space as storage no longer reflects the operational needs of the business and represents an inefficient use of a valuable internal floor area. Repurposing this space will ensure it contributes meaningfully to the ongoing function and sustainability of the business.

Justification for the Proposed Use

The business operating from the premises is long-standing and requires the presence of staff outside standard business hours due to the nature of its operations. Ensuring consistent and timely staff availability is critical to the efficiency, continuity, and success of the business.

The conversion of the upper floor to staff accommodation will directly enhance business operations in the following ways:

- **Operational Efficiency**: On-site accommodation reduces staff commute times and enables immediate response to operational demands at any hour.
- **Staff Welfare and Retention**: Providing secure, well-located housing helps to support staff well-being, encourages long-term employment, and improves job satisfaction.
- **Flexible Staffing**: Housing staff on-site allows for greater flexibility in shift patterns, reducing dependency on external transport links or unpredictable travel conditions.

This accommodation is strictly for staff employed by the business and is not intended for general residential letting or private rental. The direct operational link between the accommodation and the business makes the proposal both necessary and proportionate.

Planning and Sustainability Considerations

The proposed change of use aligns with the principles of sustainable development by:

- Making more efficient use of an underutilised space;
- Supporting the viability of an existing local business;
- Avoiding unnecessary new development elsewhere by repurposing existing floorspace;
- Maintaining the character and use of the building within its mixed-use context.

Importantly, the proposal will not cause any adverse impacts on the surrounding area, neighbouring amenity, or the functionality of the building. The change is internal, with no external alterations required, preserving the visual and physical integrity of the site and its setting.

Conclusion

This proposal represents a thoughtful and justified adaptation of the premises, responding to real operational needs while making sustainable use of existing space. It supports business continuity, enhances staff welfare, and contributes positively to the local economy—all without any negative impact on neighbouring properties or the character of the area.

The application is a clear example of how modest, well-considered changes to existing buildings can deliver significant functional and social benefits. Planning permission is therefore respectfully sought for this change of use.