

The logo consists of a red rounded rectangle with the text "BeforeBricks" in white, bold, sans-serif font.

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GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Planning Statement

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Applicant: Mathurjan Bathmanathan

Proposal: Temporary storage unit situated behind a shop.

Location: Rear of Livingstone Road Stores, Livingstone Road, Gravesend, DA12 5DZ

Planning Statement

1. Introduction

The following Planning Statement prepared by BeforeBricks has been provided in support of a planning application for a development at the rear of Livingstone Road Stores, Livingstone Road, Gravesend, DA12 5DZ on behalf of the applicant Mathurjan Bathmanathan. The application description of development is “Temporary storage unit situated behind a shop.”

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the drawings and additional supporting documentation and it seeks to ensure that the Local Planning Authority, Gravesham Borough Council, has a proper understanding of the proposal.

2. Location and Context



Site Location Map (Site Boundary in Red)

The application site is located at the rear of Livingstone Road Stores, Livingstone Road, as seen in the above map. The property doesn't lie within any conservation area.

3. Existing Property

The majority of the application site is currently occupied by a white van belonging to the applicant, parked at the rear of Living Road Stores. The van is used solely for storage purposes. Due to insufficient storage options within the applicant's ground-floor store, an alternative solution was sought by storing additional items related to store operations inside the van. A garage that was previously used as storage for the shop was demolished to make space for new residential development. Some items, for which there is no space left in the van, are stored next to the van and in front of the rear wall of the shop. The van is shielded from the recently built residential development by a timber fence.

The van's lack of a self-closing mechanism leads to noise when doors are shut, and its lift platform operates loudly. Additionally, using the van for storage has introduced safety hazards, particularly during wet and frosty conditions, leading to staff injuries from slips and falls. This is one of the valid reasons for an alternative storage option.



View of the applicant's van, currently used for storage purposes, and additional items stored adjacent to it.



View of the shop's rear wall with additional items stored in front of it.

4. Proposal

A timber-clad temporary storage unit is proposed at the rear of Living Road Stores to tackle the storage insufficiency of the applicant's shop. The perimeter walls' timber cladding, which is of similar texture and colour and of the same vertical orientation as the nearby timber fencing shielding it from the residential development, ensures the unit is in keeping with the surrounding area. Timber cladding is also used for an outbuilding located on the other side of the fence, which further justifies the material's use.

The proposed storage unit will provide enough storage space, meaning the area at the rear of the shop will be cleaned up, and no additional items will overflow into the parking area.

To decrease the noise and disturbance related to the use of the storage unit, a self-closing mechanism will be used for the door to ensure it closes quietly, and its internal walls and ceiling will be insulated with 150 mm thick Rockwool insulation to significantly reduce any noises from the inside of the unit. Additionally, there will be no refrigerating device located inside the unit, that would be a source of noise. On top of that, the unit will not be used before 8 am or after 6 pm from Monday to Saturday and before 9 am or after 5 pm on Sunday.



View of the proposed temporary storage unit featuring timber cladding.

5. Material

The surface of the proposed unit's perimeter walls will be clad in timber, the same material used for the outbuilding on the other side of the fence. Its shade is very similar to the nearby timber fencing, and it is vertically oriented like the fencing boards.

The door and windows of the unit are constructed from dark grey steel.

6. Impact of the Proposed Temporary Storage Unit

The previous application for a similar storage unit was refused due to its size, location, unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance, and obstruction of the parking area.

Design, Character, and Appearance

The storage unit is proposed only for a temporary period while the premises are being run by the applicant. The van, currently used for storage purposes, occupies a similar area to the proposed unit. The van is predominantly parked there and almost never leaves its location. It is longer and higher than the proposed storage unit and lacks a mechanical self-closing mechanism to reduce door-closing noise. Due to its height, which is significantly greater than the fencing shielding it from the nearby development, it is very visible from the development, and its dominant rear part with a white background and a company logo presents a visual distraction for the nearby residential development. The proposed unit is not much higher than the existing fencing, and the timber cladding used for its perimeter walls will blend with the fencing, making the unit much less apparent than the existing van. Therefore, the proposed unit will have no additional detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the area compared to the van that is already there. On the contrary, it will be more in keeping with the surrounding area and represent an aesthetic improvement over the parked van.

Neighbouring Amenity

Unlike the existing van, the storage size of the proposed unit, even slightly larger than the previously proposed unit, is optimised to provide sufficient space for all items that need to be stored, meaning the surrounding area will be cleaned up of any additional items, and everything will be stored inside the unit. This will also lead to a reduction in traffic movements around the site due to more efficient storage solutions.

Using 150 mm thick internal noise insulation, a self-closing mechanism for the unit's door, and strictly set times when the unit will be used, will ensure no additional detrimental impact on the levels of noise and disturbance compared to the van that is already there. On the contrary, these measures will ensure that the levels of noise and disturbance are reduced.

Highways and Parking

The parking space occupied by the parked van, which rarely leaves the parking space, will be taken by the storage unit, located closer to the fence, offering a bit more parking space compared to the van. Therefore, it will have no additional detrimental impact on the parking arrangements compared to the van that is already there. The unit will not obstruct any delivery or refuse vehicles entering and exiting the surrounding area more than any van or a car parked on site. The proposed parking plan includes a swept path analysis for a delivery van, showing it will be unobstructed by the new unit.

Additional Considerations

Insufficient storage capacity hampers the shop's competitiveness compared to nearby businesses, necessitating more frequent trips by the shopkeeper to acquire goods. This limitation on bulk purchasing elevates the cost of inventory. Implementing a storage container solution would enable the shopkeeper to acquire merchandise in larger quantities at reduced prices, minimising the frequency of supplier visits. This approach aligns with Core Strategy Policy CS08, focusing on Retail, Leisure, and the Hierarchy of Centers, by optimising logistical efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

To enhance security and safety, the new proposed unit will be equipped with CCTV, an extended post office intruder alarm system, and a smart smoke/fire alarm. These measures ensure not only the protection of the stored goods but also align with modern safety standards, providing peace of mind for both the shopkeeper and the surrounding community.

To address any unforeseen issues, the applicant will monitor the situation post-installation and will work with neighbours and the council.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed installation of a timber-clad temporary storage unit at the rear of Living Road Stores presents a thoughtful and necessary solution to the current storage limitations faced by the applicant. Addressing both practical needs for additional storage and the surrounding environment, the unit's design and operational plans aim to minimise impact on the local community. Enhancements like 150 mm thick Rockwool insulation for noise reduction and a self-closing mechanism on the door, along with the careful material selection, underscore a commitment to the area's visual and residential quality.

Replacing the inefficiently used van with a structure designed to integrate seamlessly into the environment demonstrates the applicant's dedication to site improvement. The proposal further promises a more organised space, reducing traffic and disturbances, thereby responding proactively to the reasons behind the previous application's refusal.

This proposal not only seeks to address the reasons for the refusal of the previous application but goes above and beyond to ensure that the new storage unit will be a positive addition to the area. With the implementation of this storage unit, we anticipate a tidier, more organised rear area of Living Road Stores, leading to a reduction in traffic movements and a decrease in potential disturbances to the neighbouring residential development.

Given the thorough consideration of the council's concerns, the proactive steps taken to consult with the council through pre-application advice, and the careful planning and design of the proposed unit, we respectfully request that the council approve this application.

Approval will not only facilitate the more efficient operation of the applicant's business but also contribute positively to the local environment and community relations.

This application represents an opportunity to support local business while ensuring that development is in keeping with the character and needs of the area. We are committed to ongoing engagement with the council and the community to address any further concerns and to ensure that the installation and use of the storage unit proceed in the most considerate and beneficial manner possible.