Property & Facilities Solutions

Design & Access Statement

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the erection of two marquee structures within the operational yard of the Royal Mail Southampton Mail Centre, Mitchell Way, Eastleigh SO18 2XX.

The proposals comprise:

- One temporary marquee measuring 15m x 20m.
- One permanent marquee measuring 10m x 15m.

The marquees are required to provide additional operational capacity during Royal Mail's annual peak Christmas period, when parcel and mail volumes increase significantly. The structures will support mail sorting, storage and associated operational activities within the existing Mail Centre. The applicant seeks consent for the recurring temporary use of these structures during the annual peak period to avoid the need for repeated planning applications for substantially identical development.

2. Site and Surroundings

The application site is located within the Royal Mail Southampton Mail Centre on Mitchell Way, Eastleigh, adjacent to Southampton Airport. The site extends to approximately 25,680 square metres and comprises a substantial operational mail sorting and distribution facility with associated service yards, vehicle circulation routes, loading areas and ancillary operational infrastructure.
The proposed marquees are located within an existing hardstanding service yard to the north-east of the main Mail Centre building. The area is already used for vehicle movements, deliveries and operational activities associated with the Mail Centre.

The surrounding area is characterised by commercial, industrial and transport-related development, including Southampton Airport. Consequently, the site has a strongly operational and employment-focused character where temporary ancillary structures are commonplace and compatible with the existing land use.

3. Planning Context and Need

Royal Mail experiences a substantial increase in mail and parcel volumes during the Christmas period each year. The proposed marquees provide essential additional covered accommodation to facilitate the efficient handling and sorting of mail during this seasonal demand.

Historically, similar temporary structures have been required annually for approximately 14 weeks between October and January. The proposal therefore represents a recurring operational requirement rather than an expansion of the established use of the site.

The development ensures Royal Mail can continue to meet service obligations during periods of peak demand while maintaining operational efficiency at the Southampton Mail Centre.

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4. Design

Amount

The proposal consists of two temporary structures:

Structure	Dimensions
Marquee A	15m x 20m
Marquee B	10m x 15m

These dimensions have been carefully selected to provide the operational space required while remaining proportionate to the scale of the existing site and buildings.

Layout

The marquees are positioned within existing hardstanding areas of the operational yard adjacent to the main sorting facility. Their locations have been selected to:

- Maximise operational efficiency.
- Utilise existing developed land.
- Maintain servicing and manoeuvring space.
- Retain existing circulation routes.
- Avoid impact on landscaping and vegetation.
- Minimise any visual prominence beyond the site boundary.

The development does not require any alterations to the established site layout or highway access arrangements.

Scale

The principal marquee has dimensions of approximately:

- Length: 20m
- Width: 15m
- Ridge Height: 5.4m
- Eaves Height: 3.0m

Both structures remain significantly smaller than the existing Royal Mail buildings and are clearly subordinate to the wider development. Owing to their temporary nature and location within a large operational yard, the marquees are considered appropriate in scale and proportion.

Appearance

The structures will comprise:

- Aluminium A-frame construction.
- White insulated composite wall panels.
- White insulated composite roof panels.
- White roller shutter doors.
- Insulated personnel access doors.

- Internal lighting and heating systems. The simple, functional appearance reflects the operational nature of the site and is consistent with other temporary logistics and storage facilities commonly found within industrial and distribution environments.

Construction and Safety
The marquees will be securely fixed to the existing concrete hardstanding using expanding anchor bolts. The structures will also be equipped with:

- Internal lighting.
- Heating systems.
- Wind speed monitoring alarms.

These measures ensure the marquees operate safely and effectively throughout the temporary installation period.

5. Access Statement

Vehicular Access

No changes are proposed to the existing vehicular access arrangements.
The Mail Centre is served by established access points from Mitchell Way and has an internal road network designed to accommodate commercial vehicles, service vehicles and Royal Mail fleet operations. Existing access arrangements are considered more than adequate to accommodate the temporary development.

Pedestrian Access

No changes are proposed to pedestrian access arrangements.
Existing pedestrian routes and crossings within the site will remain available and unobstructed. Staff access to the marquees will be achieved via the existing operational areas and internal circulation routes.

Inclusive Access

The marquees will be erected on level existing hardstanding and will be accessible from existing site circulation routes. Operational access arrangements will be managed in accordance with Royal Mail's health and safety procedures.

Servicing

All servicing requirements will be accommodated within the existing operational yard.
The proposal will not generate additional parking demand, nor will it require changes to loading, unloading or vehicle management arrangements currently in place at the Mail Centre.

6. Environmental Considerations

The proposal utilises existing hardstanding and does not involve:

- New permanent buildings.

- Loss of landscaping.
- Removal of trees or hedgerows.
- Alterations to drainage arrangements.
- Significant excavation or ground disturbance.

The temporary nature of the development minimises environmental impacts and allows the site to be returned to its normal operational layout following dismantling each year. No welfare facilities are proposed within the marquees, with existing facilities within the Royal Mail building continuing to be used.

7. Conclusion

The proposed temporary marquees at the Royal Mail Southampton Mail Centre represent a practical and proportionate response to the operational demands associated with Royal Mail's annual Christmas peak period.

The development:

- Supports the continued operation of an established strategic employment site.
- Utilises existing hardstanding land within the operational yard.
- Maintains existing vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements.
- Has no significant impact on the character of the area.
- Is appropriately designed for its temporary purpose.
- Will not adversely affect neighbouring land uses or airport operations.
- Provides essential additional capacity to support Royal Mail's seasonal operations.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to be an appropriate form of temporary development and planning permission is sought.

Royal Mail
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