



Fire Strategy Review – Warehouse at 5 Swallowfield Way, Hayes Uxbridge

Project Name: – Warehouse Alterations

Project address: 5 Swallowfield Way, Hayes UB3 1DQ

Document Reference Number: 260505

Revision 1 – 30th April 2026

Authors: Jaimin Mehta MSc | Beng (Hons) & William Flint

FIIRSM, MCIOB, MIFireE, MIFSM, CMaPS, CertIOSH, DipOSH, DipFD, RIPHH

Technical Note

Background

The existing warehouse at 5 Swallowfield Way is a single-storey portal-frame building used for storage/distribution. It currently has dock-level loading bays along the northern elevation and a raised car-park/platform abutting the western façade. The site is bounded by service roads and other industrial units. The applicant proposes to:

- remove the raised car-park area and regrade it to form a concrete service yard;
- install two tall level-access loading doors (cutting back part of the canopy); and
- remove two existing lorry ramps.

These external alterations do not change the building's use, internal layout or occupancy. The review below considers whether the proposals affect the fire strategy and refers to the relevant sections of Approved Document B (ADB) volume 2 (Buildings other than dwellings).

Assessment of Fire Safety Elements

1 Means of escape (Requirement B1)

The internal means of escape from the warehouse are unaffected by the proposals. The new loading doors are at ground level; they provide additional egress points for staff working in the yard but do not form part of primary escape routes from occupied areas. No changes are proposed to internal travel distances, exits, escape stairways, fire-resisting compartmentation or evacuation strategy. Therefore, the existing escape arrangements remain valid.

2 Internal fire spread (Requirements B2 and B3)

The works are external and do not alter linings, structural elements or compartment boundaries. The building remains a single storey portal frame warehouse. ADB notes that for portal-frame industrial buildings, structural fire protection is primarily required when an external wall is near a relevant boundary. The proposed service yard maintains the existing separation distances to site boundaries; no part of the building will be moved closer to the boundary, and the new doors will be installed within the existing external wall line. Consequently, the fire-resistance provisions to restrict internal and external fire spread remain appropriate.

3 External fire spread (Requirement B4)

ADB aims to restrict fire spread over external walls and to adjoining property. The removal of the raised car park and introduction of a concrete yard do not reduce the distance to any relevant boundary. The additional loading doors create unprotected openings in the external wall; however, ADB permits unprotected areas where the distance to the relevant boundary is sufficient. Table 13.1 of ADB allows unlimited unprotected area where the boundary is ≥ 6 m from the side of an industrial or storage building. The service yard width and separation from neighbouring buildings exceed this distance, so the increased number of openings does not compromise compliance. ADB also clarifies that projections such as loading platforms or

canopies can be ignored when measuring separation distance; therefore, cutting back the canopy to accommodate the new doors does not affect boundary calculations.

4 Access and facilities for the fire service (Requirement B5)

Requirement B5 requires satisfactory access for fire appliances and facilities for firefighters. The proposed removal of the raised carpark and formation of a concrete yard improves fire appliance access to the western elevation. The yard will support the weight of a pumping appliance and will provide a level hardstanding close to the loading doors, allowing hose access to the building within 45 m. No fire mains or hydrants are affected. The removal of two lorry ramps reduces potential obstruction for fire-fighting vehicles. Fire-service vehicle routes and hardstanding's should be designed in accordance with the dimensional criteria in ADB Section 15 (minimum width of 3.7 m, minimum clear height of 4 m, design loadings etc.). These criteria will be addressed during detailed design; the current concept provides sufficient space for an appliance to approach and reverse in the yard. The internal fire-fighting stairs and shafts are unchanged, so no further facilities are required.

5 Other considerations

- **Surface materials:** the service yard will be concrete and therefore non-combustible, reducing external fire load compared with the existing timber-decked car park.
- **Management and maintenance:** ADB emphasises that fire safety depends on appropriate management. The yard should be kept clear of combustibles and vehicles should not obstruct exits or appliance access routes.

Conclusion

The proposals, removal of the raised carpark, creation of a concrete service yard, installation of two new level-access loading doors and removal of two lorry ramps, do not materially affect the existing fire strategy for the warehouse. The works are external, do not change occupancy or means of escape, maintain or improve separation distances to boundaries and appliance access, and comply with the guidance in Approved Document B volume 2. The additional loading door openings are acceptable because the separation distances to boundaries remain sufficient, and projections such as loading platforms or canopies can be disregarded when measuring distance. Fire-fighting access to the building is maintained or improved, satisfying Requirement B5. On this basis, the proposed alterations have no adverse effect on the fire strategy. A simple confirmation letter to this effect can be submitted with the planning application.