Planning Statement

Units 3A and 3D Churnet Park Leek

9th July 2018

Introduction

Jonathan V Davies Chartered Surveyors have been instructed by Carl Lambert of Transformation HQ to submit a planning application for change of use from B use class to D2 use class at Units 3a and 3d Churnet Park, Leek.

Location and Context

Units 3a (37sqm) and 3d (65sqm) Churnet Park are of steel frame construction with a concrete floor and are located on Churnet Park Industrial Estate situated on the out skirts of Leek, Staffordshire. The units have been unoccupied since they were constructed in 2012. Surrounding units are occupied by use class B1, B2 and B8 tenants.

Aerial Photograph Showing Location of Units



Proposed Use

The proposed development seeks to change the use of a vacant building from light industrial B class use to an exclusive fitness suite (use class D2) for private members only. Two other branches of Transformation HQ are successfully operating in Buxton and Whaley Bridge in Derbyshire. Scheduled classes lasting 45 minutes will be held at the premises for private members throughout the day between the hours of 6.00am and 9.15pm, necessary to accommodate those working full time. Due to the exclusive nature of the service provided by Transformation HQ there will be a maximum of 10 clients on site at any one time plus 2-3 trainers.

Site Suitability

Section 1 of the National Planning Policy Framework 'Building a Strong Competitive Economy' confirms the government's commitment to ensuring the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. To achieve this local authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and ensure they are not overburdened with the combined requirements of planning policy expectations. It also states that there is a need to avoid the long term protection of employment sites where there is no realistic prospect of the site being used for that purpose. Applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.

Units 3a and 3d have remained vacant since their construction in 2012. According to agents Harris Lamb surrounding units have proven popular and are fully occupied by use class B1, B2 and B8 occupiers however despite active marketing there has been a clear lack of demand for units 3a and 3d from traditional industrial/warehouse use class occupiers due to the awkward layout, smaller size and lack of roller shutter loading doors -see letter from agent Andrew Groves of Harris Lamb.

Extract from Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy Plan:

''7.7 The mixed-use regeneration of key opportunity sites at the Churnet Works and Cornhill will be major drivers for urban renaissance and change. Development in these opportunity areas will be mixed use, but they will contain major commercial elements including employment, retail, tourism and leisure developments that will serve the needs of the area, as appropriate.''

The site is well suited to the nature of the fitness classes which require open space, high ceilings and a solid floor. The smaller unit size has proven inadequate for industrial use yet will be ample for the small and controlled number of clients attending the classes at any one time.

The site is accessible from the A523 and there is ample, shared off street parking onsite.

Extract from Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy Plan:

''7.52 Maintaining a quality environment is also about reducing our wider impact on the environment, adapting to climate change and making best use of resources. All local development has a global impact and therefore requires an integrated approach to new development which promotes a sustainable economy that delivers high levels of employment, and a just society that promotes social inclusion in ways that protect and enhance the physical environment and optimise

resource and energy use. In practice this means giving priority to the reuse of previously developed land and existing buildings. Proposals will be assessed against the sequential approach to development.''

The proposal is environmentally sustainable as the site is already existing and no material alterations are necessary.

The out of town location is well suited the proposed use as the residents of Leek will not be disturbed by any noise generated during classes.

The proposed use will not affect the nature of surface water runoff as there will be no material changes/alterations made to the external structure or landscape and all infrastructure required for dealing with surface water runoff was put in place when the site was developed originally in 2012. Foul drainage is already in place at the premises with W/C and wash hand basins present. Water consumption should not increase significantly; consumption will mainly be for drinking, hand sanitation and light cleaning of the premises.

There are no other suitable properties in Leek which meet the requirements for the proposed use. Those in the town centre do not have the required floor space or parking provisions. Properties in the town centre would require substantial alterations to make them fit for purpose which would be contrary to conservation policy and detract from the historical character of the area. In addition the unsociable operating hours and the noise generated have the potential to disturb nearby local residents. Many gyms/fitness suites now operate on out of town industrial parks for these reasons.

Conclusion

The proposal will have very few negative social, economic or environmental impacts on the town and will be a positive move for the Churnet Park Development and Leek as a whole encouraging social inclusion, health and wellbeing while at the same time making use of an existing premises which has never been occupied since its construction in 2012 and has no realistic prospect of ever being so.