Former Ambulance Station, Princess Avenue, Clitheroe. BB7 2AL

Proposed change of use from commercial laundry (class B1) to fitness centre/gym (class D2).

Planning Statement JDTP0259
STATEDMENT IN SUPPORT OF A PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE FROM COMMERCIAL LAUNDRY CLASS B1 TO HEALTH AND FITNESS CENTRE/GYM CLASS D2 AT THE FORMER AMBULANCE STATION PRINCESS AVENUE CLITHEROE.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This planning statement has been prepared by Judith Douglas Town Planning Ltd in support of full planning application for the change of use of the building from a commercial laundry to a health and fitness centre/gym. Planning permission is required because a condition was attached to the planning permission for the current use which prevents a change to any other use without first obtaining planning permission.

1.2 This statement provides a description of the site and the proposed development, its compliance with the development plan and an assessment of other material considerations. It should be read in conjunction with the accompanying information:

- 2020/19/1 Existing and proposed floor plan 1:100 and 1:50
- 2020/19/2 Location plan 1:1250 and site plan 1:50
- Flood Risk Assessment

2.0 THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The site is an unallocated site within the settlement boundary Clitheroe a principle settlement as defined in the adopted Ribble Valley Core Strategy. It is situated 250m from the defined town centre boundary (marked pale blue) and outside the conservation area (marked red), it is within an area prone to flooding flood risk 2 (pale blue hatching) as marked on the adopted Housing and Economic Development, Development Plan Document Proposals Map Sheet 4 Inset 23. See figure 1 below.

2.2 The building is positioned behind the former fire station now a veterinary practice. Between the buildings is a tarmacked yard area which is used for parking and manouevring. Vehicle access is via the joint access with the veterinary practice off Princess Avenue. The site is within a predominately residential area with Pendle Primary school on the north side of Princess Avenue. There are no dwellings in very close proximity to the site all are separate from it by garden areas or by garden areas and vehicle accesses. Immediately to the south west of the site is a lock-up garage colony with access off the back street of Chatburn Road.
2.3 Well Terrace has one of the town centre main bus stops. It is less than 300m walking distance from the site via the footway along Chatburn Road and Princess Avenue which have street lighting. The services from the Well Terrace stop are M2 Burnley, 3 Clitheroe-Sawley, 22 Clitheroe-Shadsworth Blackburn, 280 Preston-Skipton.

2.4 The former ambulance station is a single storey brick building, with a flat roof. The front elevation has three roller shutter access doors. The rear elevation has windows which face towards the garden area of Well Court a block of ‘sheltered’ apartments. The north west and...
south east elevations have no openings. In front of the building is a car parking area with car parking spaces for at least 7 cars as well as sufficient space for motorcycles and cycles. The floor area of the unit is 1,813sq ft (168sqm).

3.0 SITE HISTORY

3.1 The recent planning applications relating to the site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>App No.</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/2015/0645</td>
<td>Former Ambulance Station off Princess Avenue Clitheroe BB7 2AL</td>
<td>Change of use of former ambulance station to a theatre lighting hire business including the storage, servicing and hiring out of lighting equipment</td>
<td>APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS Date: 08/10/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/2019/0847</td>
<td>The Old Ambulance Station Princess Avenue Clitheroe BB7 2AL</td>
<td>Change of use from theatre lighting hire business (B1) to a commercial laundry (B1) including the installation of ventilation ducting to rear elevation.</td>
<td>APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS Date: 04/10/2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The proposal is to use the building as a specialist health and fitness studio/gym. The studio will provide accommodation for two instructors to provide one to one session each with one client or a couple (two clients). The business model for the studio is to provide bespoke health and fitness sessions for individuals or couples aiming to lose weight and gain fitness. It is aimed at people who would find a large class or gym intimidating or off-putting and people who prefer working with a personal fitness instructor. In addition to two instructors there will occasionally be a member of staff carrying out administration. It is also envisaged that the instructor may carry out individual classes on-line over the internet. The staff room will be used for this purpose.

4.2 This former ambulance station is ideally suited to the proposed use. The building was built with men’s and women’s changing facilities. The former ambulance garaging area provides a flexible space for fitness equipment and the ability to subdivide the interior with screens or curtains to provide privacy. The sessions will focus on the individual. Any music will be background music intended to create a positive atmosphere over which the Instructor can give instructions without needing to raise or amplify the voice.
5 DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

5.1 The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (adopted 2014) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018).

Core Strategy (2014)

5.2 The following policies are of relevance to the proposal:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development, when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach which reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Wherever possible, it will aim to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Key Statement EC1: Business and employment development-employment development will be directed towards the main settlements of Clitheroe Longridge and Whalley as preferred locations to accommodate employment growth together with land at the Barrow Enterprise Site, the Lancashire Enterprise Zone at Samlesbury and locations well related to the A59 corridor.

Policy DMG1: General Considerations – sets out various criteria to be considered in assessing planning applications, including the proposed development being sympathetic to existing land uses, highway safety and not adversely affecting the amenities of the area.

Policy DMG2: Strategic considerations-development should be in accordance with the Core Strategy development strategy and should support the spatial vision.

Policy DMG3: Transport and mobility-the availability of public transport, the relationship of the site to the primary road network, the provision for access by pedestrian and cyclists.

Policy DMB1: Supporting business growth and the local economy- proposals that are intended to support business growth and the local economy will be supported in principle.
5.3 Section 6: Building a Strong Competitive Economy States that planning policies and decision should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all type of business in rural areas, both through the conversion of existing building and well-designed new buildings.

Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities state planning decisions should enable and support healthy lifestyles through the provision of amongst others of sports facilities

6 EVALUATION

6.1 The main issues to be considered in this application are the principle of the development, the effect on the amenities of the neighbouring residents and the neighbouring business, accessibility, flood risk and vehicle parking. The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020 No.757), which were made on 20 July will take effect on 1 September 2020. The new Use Class E will include both what is now light industrial use B1 and indoor sport and recreation currently Class D2. Planning permission will not be required to move between these uses after the 1st September. Condition 3 of the planning permission 3/2019/0847 prevents any change of use of the building without a further planning permission, so this site cannot benefit from the changes to the use classes order. However, this does suggest that unless there are very compelling reasons not to grant planning permission the proposed development should be allowed to go ahead.

Principle of the Development

6.2 Core Strategy Key Statement EC1 directs business and employment to the main settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge, Whalley, Barrow Enterprise Site, Lancashire Enterprise Zone and locations well related to the A59 corridor. The site is within the settlement boundary of Clitheroe a principle settlement. Development which expands economic development and supports job creation and the rural economy is encouraged in these the locations. The proposed development fits into this category. Policy DMB1 in principle supports development which supports business growth and the local economy. The site is in a sustainable location as required by Key Statement DS2. The proposal will facilitate the creation of a new business, generating additional employment that will add value to the local economy it accords with Key Statement EC1 and Policy DMB1.
Sequential Test

6.3 Paragraph 86 of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

“Local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. Main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.”

6.4 The proposed health and fitness studio/gym has a specific business model which provides for customers who would be put off attending fitness classes or using a gym with strangers. The proposed studio provides private classes where people receive individual attention. The ideal premises would provide two studio areas, men’s and women’s changing facilities, reception staff room and kitchen. The ideal size of premises would be about 1,800 sqm. Nothing in the town centre of Clitheroe is currently available or suitable.

6.5 As nothing is available in the town centre we are required to look at edge of centre sites. The NPPF defines the ‘edge of centre’ as:

**Edge of centre**: For retail purposes, a location that is well connected to, and up to 300 metres from, the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.”

6.6 The site is an edge of centre location being 250m from the defined town centre boundary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Unit location</th>
<th>Suitability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clitheroe town centre</td>
<td>Ethos Gallery 4 York Street</td>
<td>A current planning application is under consideration on this property which casts doubt on its availability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clitheroe town centre</td>
<td>Unit B, The Old Post House King Street</td>
<td>We understand that a lease is about to be taken on this property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edge of Centre</td>
<td>Holmes Mill</td>
<td>Office accommodation not sequentially preferable to chosen site and less suitable for the proposed business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Searches were carried out on the 24.07.2020 on commercial letting website Zoopla, Prime Location and Rightmove, searching for commercial units with a range of size 1,500 sqft. to 2,000 sqft. in the BB7 postcode of Clitheroe. The above sites were identified. The only potential site in the town centre appears to be 4 York Street. However, the current planning application at this site suggests that the unit is not likely to be available and it is less suitable for the proposed use than the chosen site requiring significant adaptations to accommodate the proposed use.

The assessment above has demonstrated that there are no sequentially preferable sites within the centre of Clitheroe. The premises in edge of centre locations are not sequentially preferable to the former ambulance station, and do not fit the applicant’s business model. It is concluded that there are no more suitably and more centrally located sites of the size required by the development and the requirements of paragraph 86 of the NPPF is satisfied.

Residential amenity

The proposed site is within a predominately residential area. It is important that the nearby residents do not suffer a loss of amenity due to the activities proposed at the site. The use within the building is low key and any music played will be background music such that the activities within the building are unlikely to be audible outside of the site. The number of people using the building is low and the amount of traffic attracted to the site is unlikely to cause any loss of amenity to nearby residents. The current use of the site was said in the previous application to have employment for the equivalent of 5 full-time staff. The nature of the commercial laundry business means that there is likely to be deliveries through the working day. The level of traffic attracted to the site in connection with the proposed use is likely to be similar.
Parking forecourt towards Chatburn Road, with lock up garages between the site and the terraced houses.

6.10 The current use has extractor fans on the rear of the building from the commercial dryers. These will be removed if the new used is permitted. The garage colony between the site and the houses on Chatburn Road provide a buffer between the site and the rear of the houses and provide a baffle to noise and activity at the site. Given the separation between the proposed business and the surrounding land uses it is unlikely that the development will have any greater impact on the amenities of nearby residents and the veterinary practice than the current use of the building.

6.11 The number of people in the building at any one time is likely to be 2 instructors, 2 clients and 1 administration. If the instructor is teaching a couple is it likely that they would arrive together in the same vehicle.

6.12 The current planning permission to use the site as a commercial laundry has operating hours conditions of 08:00 hrs to 19:00hrs Monday to Friday and 08:00 hrs to 13:00 hrs Saturday. The veterinary practice has opening hours of 08:30 to 18:00 The applicants are proposing operating hours of 6am to 9pm every day. The level of activity that this is likely to create is unlikely to cause a loss of amenity.
6.13 The site is within the settlement boundary of Clitheroe. It is in walking distance of the town centre and large areas of housing. The site is in cycling distance of all areas of Clitheroe. Clients will be encouraged to walk or cycle to the site to improve general levels of fitness. The site is also very well served by public transport being within walking distance of a bus stops which has a high number of services. The site is also level and would provide suitable access for people with mobility impairment.

Figure 3 Extract from Flood map for planning GOV.UK

Flood risk

6.14 The site is within flood zone 2 on the GOV.UK. The site is shown to be within flood zone 2 on the GOV.UK flood map for planning website. See figure 3. Buildings use for general industry, storage and distribution and non-residential institutions are categorised as ‘less vulnerable’ in the Planning Policy Guidance¹. See second bullet point of list of ‘less vulnerable’ uses below. The proposed use as a health and fitness/gym is similar to the uses listed and this group. The change of use does not therefore involve an increase in the vulnerability classification. The proposal does not include any significant alterations to exterior of the building and will not affect the existing rate of run off from the property. An updated flood risk assessment provided with the previous application is submitted with the current application for completeness.

¹ [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change#Table-2-Flood-Risk-Vulnerability-Classification](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change#Table-2-Flood-Risk-Vulnerability-Classification)
### Less vulnerable

- Police, ambulance and fire stations which are not required to be operational during flooding.
- Buildings used for shops; financial, professional and other services; restaurants, cafes and hot food takeaways; offices; general industry, storage and distribution; non-residential institutions not included in the ‘more vulnerable’ class; and assembly and leisure.
- Land and buildings used for agriculture and forestry.
- Waste treatment (except landfill and hazardous waste facilities).
- Minerals working and processing (except for sand and gravel working).
- Water treatment works which do not need to remain operational during times of flood.
- Sewage treatment works, if adequate measures to control pollution and manage sewage during flooding events are in place.

### Vehicle Parking

6.15 The site currently provides car parking for 7 cars including a disable parking space and space for motorcycles and cycles. There is ample space for vehicles to turn. As the proposed use does not require the use of the roller shutter doors, additional parking could be provided required. However, the anticipated levels of the staff and client suggests that the maximum number of people in the building will be 7 and so the parking arrangement are satisfactory.

### CONCLUSION

7.1 The proposed change of use from commercial laundry to health and fitness/gym will ensure that the building continues to provide employment and contribute positively to the local economy. The proposed use will help to support healthy lifestyles. The proposed site is on the edge of the main town centre boundary of Clitheroe and is in a highly accessible location which can be easily accessed on foot, by cycle or by public transport all year round.

7.2 The proposed use is low key and is unlikely to create any greater noise or activity that the existing use of the site. The low-level nature of the use means that generous operating hours can be accommodated without harm to the residential amenity of the neighbouring residential properties. The proposal fully accords with the policies of the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.