

Planning, design and access statement

Unit 12, Redbrook Business Park, Wilthorpe Road, Barnsley, S75 1JN

Proposed Change of Use from Class B2 (General Industrial) to Class E(d) (Indoor Sport and Recreation)

Introduction

This statement supports a planning application for the change of use of an existing industrial unit from Class B2 (General Industrial) to Class E(d) (indoor sport and recreation), to facilitate its use as a local cheerleading club. The club operates as a not-for-profit Community Interest Company (CIC), with the aim of providing sporting and recreational opportunities for the local community.

Design and Layout

The proposal involves no external alterations, extensions or changes to the building's appearance. The existing unit will be adapted internally to accommodate cheerleading activities, including training and practice space. The building's existing footprint, scale, materials and relationship with neighbouring properties will remain entirely unchanged.

The proposal therefore makes effective use of an existing vacant building without requiring new construction or altering the character of the surrounding area.

Site Context and Justification

The proposal will bring a vacant industrial unit back into productive use, providing a dedicated indoor sporting facility that benefits the local community.

There are currently 11 vacant B2 industrial units of comparable size within the Barnsley area, ranging from approximately 1,500 to 5,400 square feet. This demonstrates the availability of alternative industrial premises and indicates that there is a supply of vacant units within this size range. The proposed change of use would therefore allow an existing building to meet a local recreational need while making use of existing built infrastructure.

As a not-for-profit CIC, the club will provide a community-focused facility, supporting physical activity, participation in sport, teamwork and social inclusion.

Access, Parking and Movement

The proposal will utilise the existing access arrangements to the industrial estate and the building, with no alterations to the site access, external circulation or highway arrangements proposed.

The site benefits from six dedicated parking spaces. The nature of the proposed use means that parents/carers will drop off and collect participating athletes rather than remain at the premises during training sessions. There is therefore no requirement for dedicated parking provision for parents or carers to remain on site.

In addition to the six dedicated spaces, there is further 112 car parking available elsewhere within the industrial estate, within a short and convenient walking distance of the unit. These spaces are not allocated to individual businesses and are available for use by anyone visiting the estate. This provides additional flexibility for occasional visitors and those who may need to park for a short period during drop-off and collection.

The proposed use will therefore make use of the existing parking and access infrastructure without requiring any physical alterations to the site or surrounding highway network.

Access for members, participants and visitors will be via the existing entrance. The internal layout will be arranged to provide a safe and practical environment for sporting activities, with appropriate consideration given to accessibility and the needs of users.

Hours of Operation

The application identifies proposed opening hours of 12pm to 9pm to provide sufficient flexibility for the operation of the facility, including during school holidays and for occasional events or other activities.

However, the normal operational hours during school term time will be significantly more limited, with the club operating between approximately 4.30pm and 9pm, Monday to Friday. There is currently no regular weekend opening during term time but the aspiration for the club is to be open 9am to 2pm on Saturdays and Sundays subject to obtaining planning approval for this unit. The wider hours applied for therefore represent the maximum potential operating period rather than the anticipated day-to-day pattern of use.

The nature and scale of the proposed use are consequently expected to result in a relatively limited level of activity outside normal daytime industrial operating hours, with the principal use occurring during weekday early evenings.

Planning Policy Compliance

The proposal is considered to accord with the relevant provisions of the Barnsley Local Plan (2019) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

In particular, Local Plan Policy E4 – Protecting Existing Employment Land – seeks to retain employment premises but allows non-employment development where there would not be a significant loss of existing jobs or employment potential, there remains an adequate supply of employment land or premises in the locality, and the premises cannot satisfactorily support continued employment use. In this case, the unit is currently vacant and there are a significant number of comparable vacant B2 units available within the Barnsley area, with 11 identified premises ranging from approximately 1,500 to 5,400 sq ft. The proposal would therefore not result in any loss of existing employment, whilst allowing an under-utilised premises to be brought back into beneficial use.

The proposal also accords with the wider objectives of the Local Plan, including Policy SD1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development), Policy GD1 (General Development), Policy D1 (High Quality Design and Place Making) and relevant transport policies, as there are no external alterations and no significant changes to the existing access or site arrangements proposed.

At national level, the proposal supports the NPPF's objectives of making effective use of existing land and buildings and promoting healthy, inclusive communities. The current NPPF encourages the effective use of land and the reuse of under-utilised buildings, while its policies on healthy

communities recognise the importance of providing opportunities for sport, recreation, physical activity and social interaction.

The proposed cheerleading facility will provide a dedicated local sporting and recreational use operated by a not-for-profit CIC, delivering clear health, wellbeing and community benefits without requiring any physical expansion of the existing building.

Overall, the proposal represents an appropriate and sustainable reuse of a vacant employment premises. It provides a beneficial community use whilst retaining the existing building and site, avoiding new development and making use of existing infrastructure. The availability of alternative vacant industrial premises within the local area, together with the community, health and recreational benefits of the proposed use, weighs in favour of the change of use.

Conclusion

The proposed change of use represents a sustainable and beneficial reuse of an existing vacant industrial unit. It will provide a local community sporting facility operated by a not-for-profit CIC, while retaining the building's external appearance and avoiding additional built development.

Given the absence of external alterations, the reuse of existing infrastructure, the identified availability of comparable vacant industrial units and the community benefits of the proposed use, the proposal is considered appropriate in principle, subject to the assessment of any relevant planning considerations associated with its operation.

The Local Planning Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant planning permission for the proposed change of use.