

# **Supporting Planning Statement - Change of use of part of 'Body Carnegie' building (Carnegie House), Station Road, Bolton on Dearne from former public library to a public house.**

## **1. Introduction**

This Statement and the associated supporting documents will give an overview of our proposal to convert part of the Body Carnegie building into a public house, the remainder of which to continue as the gymnasium. It will cover the material aspects of the proposal and how our proposal in particular will affect the local community and the benefits it will bring to the locality. Our aim is for the building to become a valued and enhanced community asset providing a facility for a wide and diverse clientele, not to mention the many visitors and members of Body Carnegie itself. By providing a well-run and friendly establishment, on a relative small-scale basis to the wider gymnasium operations, we have the knowledge and experience to create a sanctuary for many who would perhaps not use a 'regular pub'.

## **2. The Applicant**

The Carnegie building, part of the subject application site for the change of use to a public house, on Station Road, Bolton on Dearne is owned by Mr Kevin Stables. Its main function at the moment is a boxing gym and fitness centre, under the name of 'Body Carnegie', used by the local community and indeed people from further afield. It also hosts fitness / boxing sessions for autistic children from within the Borough.

Body Carnegie is a not for profit registered charity organisation. Over a number of years it has raised tens of thousands of pounds for local charities ranging from brain injury charities to mental health organisations. In an effort to be able to raise even more funds for deserving local charities, its Mr Stables intention to utilise part of the building, currently unused, as a public bar. Mr Stables has already gone to some lengths using his own time, skills and expense to equip the wider subject building with disabled toilets, CCTV, fire exits and an external disabled ramp access.

## **3. Local Considerations and Planning**

The intention would be to sell alcohol and soft drinks during licensed hours, not only to visitors to the gymnasium but also to serve as a public house to the local community on three days of the week. The proposed venture will, by virtue of its scale and nature be a low-key community facility offering an alternative leisure venue for the wider community. Social isolation is a common occurrence in modern society and can in part be attributed to the decline in traditional meeting places such as the village pub. It can be said that a weekly or even daily visit to the pub was more common in the past than it is today, there may be many reasons for this.

Whilst the Council may normally expect public houses to be situated in the main town, district, and local centres, it is of paramount importance to note that the local centre for Bolton upon Dearne (St Andrew's Square) is a small area and no opportunities exist to find a unit available in this area. Under

Policy TC1 'Town Centres', it confirms Bolton upon Dearne as a local centre, wherein it acknowledges that these 'Local Centres' serve smaller catchments and that development here will be expected to meet the needs of the local area and not adversely impact on the vitality or viability of other nearby centres. Turning to Policy TC3 'Thresholds for Impact Assessments', and whilst not wholly a leisure use, the proposed public house is below the floorspace threshold of 500 square metres gross.

A public house in this part of the village is something which is greatly lacking since the regrettable demise of three village public houses within a few hundred yards of each other in recent years, the Collingwood, The Angel and the Cross Daggers respectively. Having regard to this significant loss of three key public houses in the village, it is presented that there is a significant community benefit to the opening of the proposed bar to compensate for these identified losses. Furthermore, and bearing in mind the close proximity of the lost public houses to the application site, it is argued that introducing one public house with restricted opening hours wouldn't impact on the viability and vitality of the existing centre of Bolton on Dearne or for that matter other nearby centres.

#### **4. Residential Amenity**

The proposal, bearing in mind its size and proposed operating hours, should be considered on its individual merits and design and not as a 'one size fits all' as with 'normal' public houses. Opening hours are reduced in order to have a limited impact on the local area, albeit the applicant has already gained community support for the proposal from a number of local residents. The applicant is also content to accept planning conditions that prevent amplified music. No smoking rules will apply on and off the premises. No cooking is to take place and no external chiller units are proposed.

#### **5. Parking, Servicing and Accessibility**

The Body Carnegie facility has dedicated parking spaces to the rear which would provide acceptable parking provision for any visitors and staff, with a disabled bay to be marked out. Given the scale and nature of the proposal it is unlikely to generate more additional traffic or demand for extra parking than that of the operating gymnasium. The nature of this part of the 'Body Carnegie' venture would dictate that most customers would be local to the premises or use public transport, taxis or walk/cycle. Bus services run frequently to local areas, with bus stops adjacent the premises. Moreover, the train station is also only a two-minute walkaway from the subject site, ensuring that other modes of transport are available to the motor car. Servicing will occur between 8am and 11:30am only, the public house to be stocked from the rear yard area. There will therefore be segregation between customers, including gym users, and the delivery of goods.

In terms of accessibility, there is an existing ramped facility from the main entrance of the proposed public house to the public highway in Station Road, and internally the floors will be flat and even to allow easy access and furniture will be spaced accordingly to allow free and easy access to those less mobile. The front entrance and rear fire exit will facilitate the alternative means of escape provision as required under Approved Document B of the Building Regulations.

#### **6. Appearance**

There are no proposed changes to the external elevations, windows and doors remaining in their current form. Internally, the interior will be furnished to a high standard.

## **7. Conclusion**

It is considered that the proposed use of part of Carnegie House (Body Carnegie premises) to a public house is wholly appropriate in this location. Whilst, the building is not within the identified local centre, it wouldn't impact on the viability and vitality of the existing centre or nearby centres. Furthermore, the proposed change of use will not harm the amenity of any residential properties and provides adequate customer parking in the rear yard. In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework the premises are situated in a highly sustainable location, being within the heart of the village and in very close proximity to local bus stops/services and the village train station. The building also provides appropriate servicing and access arrangements and the change of use would have no adverse impacts on the free and safe flow of traffic in Station Road.

Moreover, having regard to the loss of three public houses in this part of the village in recent years, it is presented that there is a significant community benefit to the opening of the proposed bar to compensate for these losses.

The application is submitted to the Council for approval, subject to reasonable and relevant conditions.