

Application Number 07/2023/01012/FUL

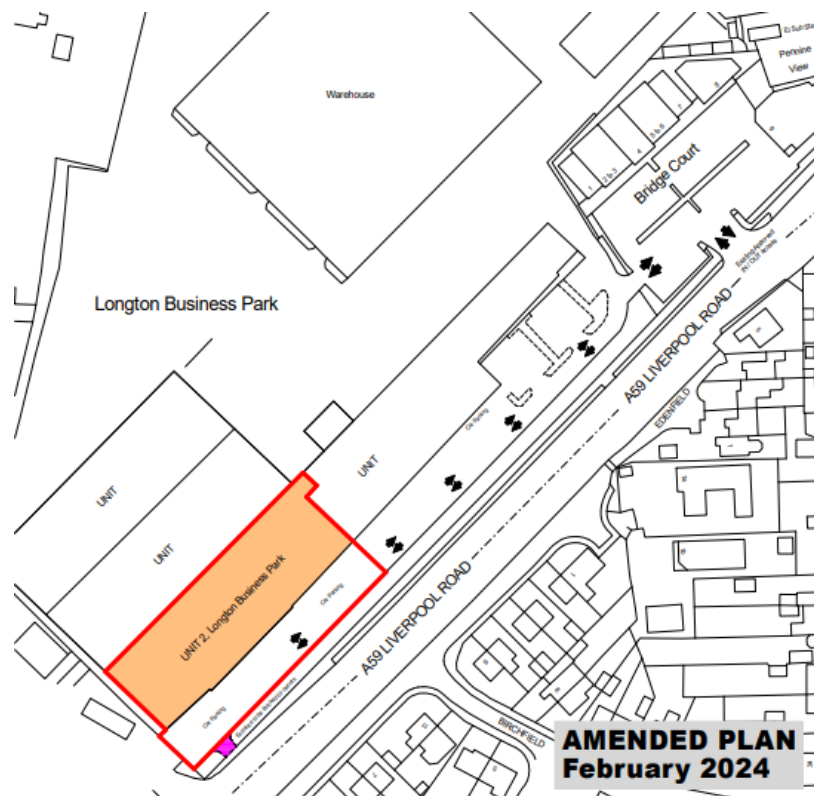
Address Unit 2
Longton Business Park
Station Road
Little Hoole
Preston
Lancashire
PR4 5LE

Applicant CITY OF PRESTON GYMNASTICS LTD

Development CHANGE OF USE FROM GENERAL INDUSTRIAL (CLASS B2)/STORAGE/DISTRIBUTION (CLASS B8) TO GYMNASTICS CENTRE (CLASS E) TOGETHER WITH ALTERATIONS TO THE FRONT ELEVATION (SOUTH EASTERN FACING) TO CREATE A NEW GLAZED ENTRANCE AND A NEW ROLLER SHUTTER OPENING. NEW FIRE DOORS ARE PROPOSED IN THE SOUTH EASTERN AND SOUTH WESTERN ELEVATIONS.

Officer Recommendation **Approval with Conditions**
Officer Name **Mr Chris Sowerby**

Date application valid 21.12.2023
Target Determination Date 25.03.2024
Extension of Time 25.03.2024



1. REPORT SUMMARY

1.1 The application relates to a 2000sq m unit, with parking to the front, within the Longton Business Park site which fronts Liverpool Road (A59). The general industrial (B2 Class) / storage and distribution (B8 Class) unit is currently vacant, having most recently been occupied by a pet food company.

1.2 The application site is within the Existing Built-Up Area as defined under Policy B1 of the South Ribble Local Plan.

1.3 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the unit from general industrial (Class B2) / storage and distribution (Class B8) to a gymnastics centre (Class E) together with the formation of building entrance on the eastern elevation and the installation of a roller shutter door and fire doors.

1.4 The proposed changes to the external appearance of the building will not detract from the existing building and would have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the area by breaking up what is currently a large bland elevation in a prominent location.

1.5 A minimum distance of 50m would be present to the nearest residential property which, subject to the imposition of a condition to require the submission of a Noise Management Plan, is considered sufficient to safeguard the amenities of residents.

1.6 The existing vehicular access onto Liverpool Road in front of the building is to be gated to be only used for emergencies only, with access to be achieved from the existing accesses from Bridge Court or the main access to the business park from Station Road. The existing area of hardstanding to the front of the building is proposed to be re-surfaced and marked out to provide 42 car parking spaces. County Highways have raised no objections to the proposal.

1.7 The proposal is considered to bring significant social, as well as economic, benefits. A currently vacant unit would be brought back into use, with the business anticipating to employ 8 full-time members of staff and 14 part-time member of staff. The proposed use also offers more jobs per sq ft of floor space than the current lawful use of the unit (16 jobs per 10,000 sq ft proposed versus 4 jobs per 10,000 sq ft existing).

1.8 The Council's Economic Development Department is supportive of the application as well as the Council's Active Health Team who have noted the significant demand for such a facility in the area and the opportunities such a facility would bring for the Active Health Team to host gymnastics competitions for local schools as well as targeted provision for children and adults who wouldn't normally be able to access gymnastic provision.

1.9 The proposed development is deemed to be in accordance with Policies 1, 10 and 24 of the Core Strategy together with Policies B1, F1 and G17 of the South Ribble Local Plan. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to the imposition of conditions.

2. APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The application relates to a 2000sq m unit, with parking to the front, within the Longton Business Park site which fronts Liverpool Road (A59).

2.2 The general industrial (B2 Class) / storage and distribution (B8 Class) unit is currently vacant, having most recently been occupied by a pet food company.

2.3 Neighbouring units within the Business Park includes a gym, plant hire, a glazing retailer and a trailer dealer.

2.4 To the east, on the opposite side of Liverpool Road and beyond a hedge screen, are residential properties.

2.5 The application site is within the Existing Built-Up Area as defined under Policy B1 of the South Ribble Local Plan.

3. SITE HISTORY

3.1 The site has a long planning history relating to its commercial usage dating back to the 1970s.

3.2 The most recent application was in 2016 (07/2016/0240/FUL) and was for an extension to an existing vehicle repair building. This application was approved.

4. PROPOSAL

4.1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the unit from general industrial (Class B2) / storage and distribution (Class B8) to a gymnastics centre (Class E) together with the formation of building entrance on the eastern elevation and the installation of a roller shutter door and fire doors.

4.2 It is anticipated that the business would employ 8 full-time members of staff and 14 part-time members of staff. The gymnastics centre is proposed to be operational 6am to 10pm.

4.3 On the front (eastern) elevation a glazed pedestrian entrance to the building, 4 fire doors and a 4.1m (wide) x 5m (high) roller shutter door is proposed. On the southern (side) elevation a fire door is also proposed.

4.4 The existing vehicular access onto Liverpool Road in front of the building is to be gated to be used for emergencies only, with access to be achieved from the existing accesses from Bridge Court or the main access to the business park from Station Road. The existing area of hardstanding to the front of the building is proposed to be re-surfaced and marked out to provide 42 car parking spaces.

4.5 Supporting information provided by the applicant confirms the proposed gymnastics centre is to accommodate a second site for their expanding business which has been operating for 17 years, with the current site on Campbell Street in Preston to remain open. It is stated that whilst they currently have 850 members (of which 515 commute from South Ribble) there are currently more than 520 children on the waiting list to join, of which 70% are from South Ribble.

4.6 The applicant states they intend to run multiple classes and activities per week, including PlayGym drop in play sessions, structured gymnastics classes and community activities.

4.7 The proposal has been amended, including the gating off of the existing direct access onto Liverpool Road, in response to comments received from County Highways.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 No letters of representation have been received in relation to the proposal.

6. CONSULTATION REPLIES

County Highways have raised no objections to the proposal as amended, stating *“that the classes are to be staggered with longer opening hours, as such I have no objections to the proposed level of parking for the site”*. Conditions have been recommended relating to gating off of the existing access, marking out of parking area, external lighting and provision of cycle parking.

Environmental Health have raised no objections to the proposal subject to the imposition of a condition for the agreement of a Noise Management Plan.

The **Lead Local Flood Authority (LCC)** have raised no objections to the proposal.

The Council's **Economic Development Department** are supportive of the application, stating:

"The current site usage delivers 4 jobs per 10,000 SQ ft. The proposal would deliver 32 jobs per 20,000 SQ ft over the next 3 years, which equates to 16 jobs per 10,000 SQ ft compared with the current job density of 4 jobs per 10,000 SQ ft. [...] As this is an acceptable job density compared with the existing use, the new jobs arising from the proposed change of use would be welcome."

In their response it is also noted the Council's Active Health Team comment:

"The proposed gymnastics facility would be a great addition to the South Ribble Borough, there is a huge demand for gymnastics in the area with a waiting list at most clubs in the area. The facility offers opportunities for the Active Health Team to host gymnastics competitions for local schools, as well as use the facility to provide targeted provision for children and adults who wouldn't ordinarily be able to access gymnastics provision. British Gymnastics have a number of programmes and initiatives which work with all age groups and this facility would be a good home for the programmes to provide support to many South Ribble Residents. The facility would see many families travel into the area to access the specialised provision. This would be a good boost to the area in many ways."

7. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Policy Considerations

7.1 i) NPPF

7.1.1 The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and supports sustainable economic development, stating *"Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business need and wider opportunities for development."* (para. 85)

7.1.2 In regards to sport and recreation the NPPF states *"Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change"*.

7.2 ii) Core Strategy Policy Considerations

7.2.1 Policy 1 of the Core Strategy is entitled 'Locating Growth' and encourages the focussing of growth and investment in the Key Service Centres of Chorley and Leyland and the other main urban areas in South Ribble.

7.2.2 Policy 10 of the Core Strategy is entitled 'Employment Premises and Sites' and highlights the need to protect sites last used and allocated for employment for future employment use.

7.2.3 Policy 24 of the Core Strategy is entitled 'Sport and Recreation' and seeks to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access good sport, physical activity and recreation facilities.

7.3 iii) South Ribble Local Plan

7.3.1 The site is covered by Policy B1: Existing Built-Up Area.

7.3.2 Policy B1 permits the re-use and redevelopment of land and buildings provided that:

- i) the development complies with the requirements for access parking and services, as set out elsewhere in the Plan;
- ii) is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area; and
- iii) will not adversely affect the amenities of nearby residents.

7.3.3 This will be assessed in the following sections of this report.

7.4 Character / Appearance

7.4.1 Policy G17 of the Local Plan, amongst other things, requires new development to be well related to neighbouring buildings and the locality in terms of its size, scale and intensity (plot coverage).

7.4.2 The proposed changes to the external appearance of the building will not detract from the existing building and would have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the area by breaking up what is currently a large bland elevation in a prominent location.

7.4.3 The proposed development would be in keeping with the character of the local area and accords with the requirements of Policy G17 of the South Ribble Local Plan.

7.5 Relationship To Neighbours

7.5.1 A distance of 50m would be present to the nearest residential property to the east, with Liverpool Road (A59) and Thornfield intervening together with a hedge screen.

7.5.2 A distance of 70m is present from the western side elevation of the unit to the rear elevation of Barnfield on Brook Lane.

7.5.3 The proposed changes to the building entrance, installation of a roller shutter door and fire doors are not considered to have a detrimental impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties given these spatial separation distances.

7.6 Highway Issues

7.6.1 The existing vehicular access onto Liverpool Road in front of the building is to be gated to be only used for emergencies only, with access to be achieved from the existing accesses from Bridge Court or the main access to the business park from Station Road. The existing area of hardstanding to the front of the building is proposed to be re-surfaced and marked out to provide 42 car parking spaces.

7.6.2 County Highways have raised no objections to the proposal as amended, stating *“that the classes are to be staggered with longer opening hours, as such I have no objections to the proposed level of parking for the site”*.

7.7 Noise and Disturbance

7.7.1 The noise that would be generated from the use of the proposed gymnastics centre is not considered to be dissimilar to noise that could be generated through the current lawful use of unit for general industrial / storage and distribution purposes. Environmental Health have raised no objections to the proposal subject to the imposition of a condition for the agreement of a Noise Management Plan.

7.7.2 Given the spatial separation distances to residential properties the recommended condition for the agreement of a Noise Management Plan is considered sufficient to safeguard the amenities of residents.

7.8 Economic and Social Matters

7.8.1 The proposal would allow for a currently vacant unit to be brought back into use, with the business anticipating to employ 8 full-time members of staff and 14 part-time member of staff.

7.8.2 The applicant currently operates a successful gymnastics centre in Preston and, with more than 520 children on the waiting list, is looking to open a second site to serve an identified gap in the market. Of the 850 existing members of the gymnastics club 515 travel to the site in Preston from South Ribble addresses, with 70% of children on the waiting list also being from South Ribble.

7.8.3 The Council's Economic Development Department is supportive of the application as well as the Council's Active Health Team who have noted the significant demand for such a facility in the area and the opportunities such a facility would bring for the Active Health Team to host gymnastics competitions for local schools as well as targeted provision for children and adults who wouldn't normally be able to access gymnastic provision.

7.8.4 The benefits of regular physical activity on health and well-being of the participating individuals are widely documented and align with the NPPF and Policy 24 of the Core Strategy which both encourage the provision of opportunities for sport and physical activity with the health and well-being of communities in mind.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The proposal accords with the requirements of Policy B1 and is considered to be acceptable. The proposed development is not considered to be out of character with the area and, with the imposition of a condition for the agreement of a Noise Management Plan, will not have a detrimental impact on residential properties. County Highways have raised no objections to the proposal.

8.2 The proposed development is deemed to be in accordance with Policies 1, 10 and 24 of the Core Strategy together with Policies B1, F1 and G17 of the South Ribble Local Plan. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to the imposition of conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval with Conditions.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

1. That the development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

REASON: Required to be imposed pursuant to section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development, hereby permitted, shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted approved plans 'Location Plan (February 2024)', 'Proposed Plan (February 2024)' and 'Proposed Plan/Elevations'.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policy 17 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and Policy G17 of the South Ribble Local Plan.

3. Prior to first use of the gymnastics centre, the access onto Liverpool Road shall be gated and locked to prevent vehicular use and shall remain gated and locked to be utilised for emergency vehicles only.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety to reduce access and conflict points to the highway in accordance with Policy G17 of the South Ribble Local Plan.

4. Prior to first use of the gymnastics centre the car parking area shall be surfaced or paved and the car parking spaces and manoeuvring areas marked out in accordance with the approved plan. The car parking area shall thereafter be always kept free of obstruction and be available for the parking cars.

Reason: To allow for the effective use of the parking areas in the interest of highway safety to accord with Policy G17 of the South Ribble Local Plan.

5. Prior to the commencement of development, details of all external lighting equipment shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include:
 - a. the location and height of the lighting columns;
 - b. the details of the light fittings;
 - c. the colour of the lights;
 - d. the lux levels;
 - e. horizontal Glare;
 - f. impact on adjacent sites;
 - g. the upward light ratio;
 - h. details of current lighting levels in the area (environmental zone; and
 - i. the details of louvers on the light fittings.

The lighting shall be erected, directed and shielded so as to avoid nuisance to residential accommodation in close proximity and to screen the lighting from drivers and pedestrians on Liverpool Road. No other lighting equipment may then be used within the development other than that approved by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed measures shall be installed prior to occupation of the development and shall be thereafter retained and maintained for the duration of the approved use.

REASON: To safeguard the amenity and character of the area and to safeguard the living conditions of nearby residents and in the interest of highway safety to accord with Policy G17 of the South Ribble Local Plan.

6. Prior to the first use of the development hereby approved, cycling parking facilities shall be provided in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and the cycling facilities shall be permanently maintained thereafter.

REASON: To ensure the provision and retention of adequate on-site parking facilities and to accord with Policy F1 and Policy G17 in the South Ribble Local Plan 2012-2026

7. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a Noise Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Measures may include, but not be limited to:

 - o Operational days/times
 - o Limiting music to inaudible outside the building
 - o Restricting audience numbers and/or event numbers.
 - o Responsible employee to check outside the building when events/training are in operation.
 - o Keeping any openings closed except for access/egress.

The agreed Noise Management Plan shall be adhered to at all times whilst the gymnastics centre is operational.

REASON: In the interests of the amenity of nearby residents in accordance with Policy 17 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy.

8. The use of the premises hereby approved shall be restricted to the hours of 6.00am to 10.00pm on any day.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of adjoining residents and to accord with Policy 17 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy

9. Notwithstanding the provision of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 2020 or any provision equivalent to this in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting this Order, the use of the premises shall be restricted to the use applied for unless the prior consent of the Local Planning Authority is obtained.

REASON: To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control over the impact of the development on residential amenity and/or highway safety in accordance with Policy 17 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and Policy G17 in the South Ribble Local Plan 2012-2026

RELEVANT POLICY

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

1 Locating Growth (Core Strategy Policy)

10 Employment Premises and Sites (Core Strategy Policy)

24 Sport and Recreation

POLB1 Existing Built-Up Areas

POLF1 Car Parking

POLG17 Design Criteria for New Development

Note:
