

Planning, Design and Access Statement

**The Aston Rooms, 16 Aston Road, Waterlooville,
Hampshire, PO7 7XG**

**Change of Use of Ground Floor Class D2 Function Room to
a Class B8 Warehouse with Trade Counter; Insertion of
Roller Shutter Door to North East Elevation**



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1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 The application site comprises a two storey, flat roofed building and car park located at the south-east end of Aston Road, Waterlooville. The existing building was originally part of the former Waterlooville Football Club. However, following the merger of the Havant Town and Waterlooville Football Clubs in 1998 the playing pitch was redeveloped for housing. The former football club building has continued to operate as a bar/function room on the ground floor and snooker club on the first floor since this time.

1.2 Several factors have combined in recent years bringing about a significant decline in the use of the bar and function room. Firstly, the loss of the football club, which was part of the local community, and which has resulted in a significant loss of functions previously associated with the football club. Secondly, poor access to the site. It is only possible to gain access to the site through the Aston Road Industrial Estate. The bar, therefore, does not attract any passing trade – it is well and truly off the beaten track. Finally, the location of the club / function room does not sit comfortably immediately next to the recent housing development to the east located in Coronation Road. Any intensification of the use of the function room would be likely to be in direct conflict with the residential amenities of the occupiers of the housing in Coronation Road.

1.3 Given the decline of the use of the function rooms in recent years the sites owners, Tradeamp Limited, have considered the future options for the use of the building. It is their view that a change of the use of the ground floor of the building to a commercial use, similar to others in the industrial estate, would be more appropriate use of the building. Planning permission is sought, therefore, for the change of use of the ground floor of the existing two storey building from a Class D2 (i.e. Assembly and Leisure) Function Room to a Class B8 Warehouse with Trade Counter. It is the applicants intention to retain the first floor snooker club which would ensure the retention of an existing 'community use' on-site.

1.4 This statement describes our Client's proposal and places it in context with relevant national and development plan policy, guidance and advice. It will be concluded that our Client's application proposal should receive support and be granted planning permission.

2.0 The Application Site and Surroundings

2.1 The application site comprises the ground floor of a two storey, flat roofed building located at the eastern end of the Aston Road Industrial Estate cul-de-sac. The ground floor currently accommodates a bar together with a large function room. The first floor of the building, which is not within the application site, is in use as a snooker club. To the north of the building is a car park which is for the use of the staff and customers of the application building. This parking area, which is unmarked, provides car parking for around 35 vehicles.

2.2 Adjoining the application building to the south is another two storey building which was also previously associated with Waterlooville Football Club. This building is now in commercial use, forming part of the Jubilee business centre. Immediately to the east of the application site are two storey terraces of houses together with three storey blocks of flats located within Coronation Road. Beyond the carpark to the north are small industrial/commercial units. To the west of the site, either side of Aston Road are numerous medium sized industrial and business units.

2.3 The photographs over page show the site in context with the surrounding area.



Above: North-East Elevation of Existing Building



Above: Housing to the East of the Application Site in Coronation Road



Above: Aston Road Industrial Estate to the West of the Application Site



Above: View of Application Building from Parking Court serving Houses/Flats in Coronation Road

2.4 The existing building is of brick construction which has been clad in white and blue coloured horizontal boarding. Internally the building comprises a bar area together with associated toilets, cellar, storage room and offices. Doors lead from the bar through to a large function room with stage and an additional bar area. On the north side of the building are some more recent single storey additions which accommodate a kitchen and ancillary club room. Access to the first floor snooker club is possible via three separate entrances on the buildings north-west and south-east elevations.

2.5 The site is 350m and 550m respectively from bus services which stop on Hambledon Road to the south-west and Milton Road to the north-west. The site is within walking distance from the Wellington Retail Park and the shops and services within Waterlooville Town Centre.

3.0 Proposed Development

3.1 This application seeks a grant of planning permission for the change of use of the ground floor of the existing building from use as a Class D2 (Assembly and Leisure) comprising a bar and function room to a Class B8 storage use with Trade Counter.

3.2 The proposal would result in some minor external alterations involving the provision of a roller shutter door to the buildings north-east elevation and the blocking up of a fire door on the buildings south-west elevation. In effect the existing bar, cellar storage areas, function room and ancillary club room would be combined to form a single B8 storage space of around 611 sq.m. A small trade counter of approximately 36 sq.m. would be located just off the buildings main lobby area being accessible from Aston Road.

4.0 Planning History

4.1 Planning permission was granted on 10th February 2004, under 03/51664/020, for the change of use of the ground floor function rooms to a motor car showroom.

4.2 In 2008 the applicant sought to renew this planning permission for the change of use of the ground floor to motor showroom, however, the Local planning Authority refused the application LPA Ref: 08/51664/21) for the following reason:

“It has not been demonstrated that there are other accessible facilities locally for community use and as a result it is not considered acceptable to lose an existing community facility...”

4.3 The applicant also submitted application no. 03/51664/022 to run concurrently with 08/51664/21 which sought to discharge conditions pertaining to the permission granted under 03/51664/020. Conditions 3 and 7 of the original permission (03/51664/022) were subsequently discharged. This grant of planning permission was not implemented and has, therefore, lapsed.

5.0 Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Government on 27th March 2012. The NPPF cancels and replaces all earlier Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Statements.

5.2 Paragraph 13 of the Framework sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Government states that ‘At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework

is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking...’ The document promotes planning principles which include making effective use of land, promoting mixed use developments that create more vibrant places, and encouraging multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas. Furthermore, the document requires Local Planning Authorities to approach development management decisions positively (i.e. to look for solutions rather than problems so that applications can be approved wherever it is practical to do so).

5.3 The NPPF states (at para.7) that there are ‘... three dimensions to sustainable development: **economic**, social and environmental.’ The economic dimension of sustainable development is described in the NPPF as ‘...contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure.’

Local Plan Policy Context

Havant Borough Local Development Framework

5.4 The **Havant Borough Core Strategy** was formerly adopted on 1st March 2011. It is the principal document in the Council's Development Plan and sets out the spatial planning strategy for the area up to 2026. The relevant policies are as follows:-

“CS1 Health and Wellbeing

Planning permission will be granted for development which:...

10. Protects and contributes to the availability of community facilities through refurbishment or new provision which can be justified by needs which are evident in the local district.”

5.5 Paragraph 2.39 of the CS outlines the importance of “Community Facilities”. This states: -

“Community facilities, such as crèches, churches and community centres are significant local resources for local people. Where essential and effective these facilities need to be safeguarded through partnership initiatives. Where there is a need for space to provide community events or to refurbish a rundown or outmoded building there is the possibility of funding resulting from the development of residential sites. However, the priority is to use what we have better. The Development Management Policy DM2 provides further detail on the protection of community facilities.”

Proposed development in relation to this policy:-

5.6 Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy relates to “Health and Wellbeing”. This describes a raft of general overarching requirements concerning; the enhancement of parks and green spaces; provision of sports facilities; provision, maintenance and improvement of footpaths and cycleways; provision of a cinema, theatre concert hall “for the Public Service Village”, as well as others relating to allotments, waterfront areas, cultural assets and young adults education.

5.7 Paragraph 10 of this policy relates specifically to “community facilities” which covers a wide range of uses. Paragraph 10.08, which supports policy DM2, states that a community facility is one that typically falls within Class D1 (i.e. Clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non residential education and training centres).

- 5.8 Whilst it is recognised that the application building falls within a the broad Class D2 'Assembly and Leisure' use class (which includes cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not night clubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations) it is considered that it can no longer function as a high quality or well supported leisure facility due to it being located within an industrial estate and with access (both pedestrian and vehicular) only being possible through the estate.
- 5.9 As has been stated the existing building once served the now disbanded Waterlooville Football Club. Following its merger with Havant Town Football Club in 1998 the playing pitch was redeveloped for housing. In the past the football club was an important part of the local community reaching the 1st Round of the FA Cup on four occasions (most recently 1988-89 season) and attracting crowds of up to 4,500.
- 5.10 The bar and function rooms are those that served the club when it was a thriving semi-professional football club. Since the merger of the club with Havant Town Football Club the use of the bar and function room has reduced significantly. As part of the residential development in Coronation Road (what was previously the football pitch) a brick wall was erected between the application building and the residential development to the south. The wall has effectively cut off any means of access to the site except from through the busy industrial estate.
- 5.11 It is a fact, therefore, that the existing building is in a very poor location within an industrial estate that is not considered to be an attractive venue for community functions. Over the past several years the continued use of the building as a D2 use has incurred significant losses. Modernisation and refurbishment of the existing, now extremely tired building, has not been possible due to a lack of funds. In a scenario where the building was modernised and used as a concert venue, a late night dance hall or for wedding receptions and parties etc it is very likely that it would be the subject of noise complaints by the residents of Coronation Road.
- 5.12 The applicant has given much thought to the future use of the ground floor of this building. It is apparent that the buildings current use as a bar/function room is no longer financially viable. It is of note, however, that the first floor snooker club remains as a viable "community use" that is to be retained.
- 5.13 Given the buildings location within an industrial estate, its existing internal layout and interior volume, facilitated by a significant area of vehicle parking, it is considered that a change of use to a Class B8 Warehouse with Trade Counter would be represent an appropriate change of use. Whilst it is accepted that this application would result in the loss of an existing ground floor D2 use, which the LPA may consider to be a "community facility" of sorts, it should be recognised that the proposals would also ensure the retention of the first floor snooker club which is a well-used and valuable leisure facility.
- 5.14 The applicant is also of the view that the existing use of the building does not "neatly" fall into to the definition of a "community facility" as provided at paragraph 10.08 of the Core Strategy.
- 5.15 In conclusion the provision of a financially viable commercial use of the ground floor, which would create employment opportunity is considered, on balance, to be a more appropriate use of the building which would be compliant with policy CS1 of the Core Strategy.

CS2 Employment

"The council will to seek to accommodate flexibly a net total of 162,000 square metres of new employment floorspace between 2006 and 2026 as follows:

- ...41,500 square metres of B8 warehousing.

Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that:

1. Prioritise the use of previously developed land for the provision of new employment floorspace.
5. Safeguard existing employment sites and allocations that are fit for purpose from development proposals for non-employment uses.
6. Provide jobs, generate wealth or produce an economic output on existing employment sites that are not fit for current purpose....”

Proposed development in relation to this policy:-

- 5.16 Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy relates to “Employment”. The proposed development would result in the provision of additional Class B8 warehouse floorspace on an area of previously developed land within an existing industrial estate. The proposal would also generate employment opportunity. Given the foregoing it is considered that the proposal is compliant with policy CS2 of the Core Strategy.

CS6 Regeneration of the Borough

“...Planning permission will be granted for development which positively contributes by type of use and design and by its comprehensive approach to the social, economic and/or physical regeneration of the whole borough...

Proposed development in relation to this policy:-

- 5.17 The proposal would result in the provision of a new Class B8 warehouse with trade counter. The proposals would integrate well with surrounding uses in the Aston Road Industrial Estate. The proposal respects policy CS6 ensuring the regeneration of this part of Waterlooville with the delivery of a high quality warehouse development.

CS16 High Quality Design

“Planning permission will be granted for development that is designed to a high standard, which helps to create places where people want to live, work and relax.”

Proposed development in relation to this policy:-

- 5.18 It is considered that the proposed development would result in a viable commercial use of the building. Any external changes would be limited to the provision of a roller shutter door to the buildings north-west elevation and the blocking up of a fire escape on the buildings south-east elevation. Any other external changes would be ‘cosmetic’ just involving repainting and decoration of the building as necessary. It is considered, therefore, that the proposed development is compliant with policy CS16.

CS17 Concentration and Distribution of Development within the Urban Areas

“Development will be permitted that makes the most effective use of land in the borough by granting planning permission that:

1. Concentrates new ...employment... within the five urban areas of ...Waterlooville...
2. Prioritises development on previously developed land, including redundant, derelict or underused land and buildings within the urban area.
3. Broadly distributes the new housing and employment development in the five areas of the borough...”

Proposed development in relation to this policy:-

- 5.19 The proposals would result in a more appropriate use of the ground floor of the existing building in a manner which is consistent with policy CS17. This proposal will, therefore, facilitate the concentration and distribution of employment across Waterlooville and the borough and is, as such, considered to be compliant with policy CS17.

CS20 Transport and Access Strategy

This policy states that development will be permitted that "...is consistent with and contributes to the implementation of the 'Reduce, Manage and Invest' strategy... does not increase congestion and promotes better use of existing transport networks..."

Proposed development in relation to this policy:-

- 5.20 The proposed development would result in the retention of the existing vehicle parking and service area to the north of the building for use by the proposed Class B8 use. The site is 350m and 550m respectively to bus stops within Hambledon Road and Milton Road. The frequent and regular services from these stops would provide future employees with an accessible and realistic alternative means of transport to the private motor car. The applicant would be happy to provide cycle parking facilities within the site as may be necessary for employees and customers. Given the foregoing the proposed development is considered to be compliant with policy CS20 of the Core Strategy.

DM2 Protection of Existing Community Facilities and Shops

Development proposing the change of use or loss of any premises or land currently or last used as community services and facilities, including local shops, will only be permitted where both the following criteria can be met:

1. It has been demonstrated, through an active marketing process that the premises or land are no longer viable for their authorised use or any other use which would provide a beneficial facility to the local community.
 2. The facility is no longer required for a community use or that there is an easily accessible existing or new facility for the community it is intended to serve.
- 5.21 Paragraph 10.08 supports this policy. These states: -
- "...Policy DM2 also relates to community facilities including health and education facilities, places of worship, community halls and public houses. These uses typically fall within D1 of the Use Classes Order. It is recognised that there can be potential social, environmental and economic benefits from changing the use of land and buildings. The dynamic nature of our society will change how, when and where it accesses different uses. It is therefore important that existing uses are controlled so that community and leisure uses are not lost in locations that the community can easily access, just because another use is more profitable in the short term. Such changes can be damaging to the community and the environment in the longer term and therefore need to be considered in detail. When proposing the change of use or loss of any premises or land currently or last used as community services and facilities, applicants will need to demonstrate that the premises are no longer required for the current or previous use and that it is not suitable for any alternative community use..."

Proposed development in relation to this policy:-

- 5.22 The applicant is not clear as to whether the current use of the building falls under the broad umbrella of a "community facility". The meaning of the term "community facility" is defined by paragraph 10.08 as typically falling within Class D1 (i.e. Clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums,

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- libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non residential education and training centres).
- 5.23 The applicant has not, therefore, undertaken the extensive marketing as is required by this policy. The applicant wants to retain the building (i.e. not sell it or rent it out) and utilise it for a more appropriate commercial use that would fit in better with other uses within the industrial estate.
- 5.24 This statement has explained at paragraphs 5.6 to 5.15 the demise of the use of the building as a Class D2 function room. Whilst the applicant has not marketed the site they are able to provide the trading accounts for the existing bar/function room. These demonstrate year on year losses. It is considered that the combination of factors (history, location, adjacent residential development) and trading losses, should sufficiently demonstrate to the LPA that the existing building is wholly inadequate for use as a community facility. As such, it is considered that the application proposal is compliant with policy DM2 of the Core Strategy.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 This application proposes the change of use of the function room to a Class B8 Warehouse with Trade Counter. The proposals would improve, significantly, the way in which the building would be used and relate better to the other uses in the surrounding industrial estate.

6.2 It is concluded that, in terms of current planning policy, the proposed development would be an example of 'sustainable development' and would, as such, be compliant with both the NPPF and the Havant Borough Core Strategy. It is respectfully requested, therefore, that both Officers and member of the Borough Council look favourably on this application.