

Planning Statement

Healthy Koi Limited

**Unit 21, The WREN Centre, Westbourne Road, Emsworth,
Hants., PO107SU**

Application Ref: APP/15/00286

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1 Introduction

Healthy koi Limited is a leading Koi Health consultants, undertaking pond-side visits to diagnose and successfully treat sick koi and to advise on Koi health matters in the UK and Overseas.

The company has a wealth of experience in disease diagnostics (blood sampling & bacterial/ viral testing), water quality management and treating both hobbyist and commercial environments. In addition to the health work, they provide pond infrastructure design, on-site equipment installation, pond condition reports, pond cleaning and maintenance. They hold a government license for transporting fish.

They also offer, through internet & phone sales and visits to the premises, a full range of Koi related dry goods, including specialist Koi health products, which they use in the field.

2 Business Operations

Healthy Koi operate in a niche market targeting specifically the Koi Carp sector of the aquatics market. The Koi keeping sector is seasonal by nature, with the peak of the season being May to August. Due to the specialist requirements involved to keep Koi Carp, specialist equipment and knowledge is required that is not available at general aquatic outlets and shops. There are a small number of companies who offer these specialist services and products and as a result Koi hobbyists either purchase goods over the phone or internet or sometimes travel large distances to visit these companies.

Because of the amount and range of off-site works and limited visitors to the premises from both a local and a country wide catchment area, the location of the company is most suited to a rural enterprise estate and not a town centre venue. In the latter case, travelling and access can be difficult and would be detrimental to environmental and sustainability aspects. Based at the WREN Centre, the transport links are good with easy access to the country's motorway and principal road networks.

The Planning Application is to extend the use of the premises from its current B1/ B8 designation to A1/ B1/ B8 in order to regularise its current use for limited retail sales. We are looking for 33% retail space. The current B class use will be retained in compliance with HBC core strategy DM3 'Protection of Existing Employment' allowing the premises to be used again for B class use only employment, should it be required in the future.

In addition, these proposals will not undermine any future development proposals for adjacent sites (HBC Core Strategy DM6)

2.1. The Premises (Unit 21)

The application premises are situated at the rear of the WREN Centre which is on the north west side of Westbourne Road, immediately to the

west of the River Ems. It is reached via a concrete surfaced access road which also serves other units. The building is a former poultry house and is large in size with low eaves. It has been sub-divided into several units and has been refurbished. The building is in good interior and exterior condition.

Unit 21 comprises 151 sq.m in size and the internal layout is sub-divided into four working zones. These are shown on Plan No. RAI/01/15 and comprise:

Zone A:

Internet/ phone sales packing area

Storeroom

Off-site Service equipment storage

Office

Zone B:

Client meeting area

Retail products

Internet sales products

Offsite installation & services

Fish health site treatments

Office

Zone C:

Tank room for the treatment of Clients unwell fish

Zone D:

Retail sales area

On-site service repairs (ie pumps, sterilizers, filters etc)

Because of the wide ranging nature of the business, there are no distinct work areas within the premises and joint activities are carried out in all the Zones.

2.2 Elevations

There will be no material changes to the external elevations of the premises and they will not alter in appearance. A small advertising name board will be attached on the side of the building under permitted development which will not be visible from Westbourne Road .

2.3 Hours of Operation

The hours of operation of the premises will be:

Monday to Friday 9.30am to 5.30pm

Saturday 9.30am to 1.00pm

Sunday and Bank Holidays – Closed

There will be no additional comings or goings from the site beyond the existing opening hours of the WREN Centre so as to protect the amenity of adjacent residents.

2.4 Employment

At the present time, Healthy Koi employs 1 full time staff member and two part-time staff members giving a total of two full time equivalent staff. As the work is seasonal, the emphasis in resourcing is during the spring, summer and autumn months. During the winter, less staff is required.

With the regularisation of our business and organic growth in the sales and pond-side service work, Healthy Koi foresees an increase in the staffing level to two full time and two part time staff, giving a total of three full time equivalent staff, within the next 12 months.

In order to support the community, Healthy Koi also offers two weeks Work Placement positions for Year 10 students from local schools. This is undertaken early in July and gives the students an insight to the work environment and the importance and responsibility of team working, both in the office and on-site. References are provided to higher educational establishments and full time employers.

2.5 Site Visitors

Visitors to our premises are limited due to our service works. Attendance is also seasonal. At the current time, we have about 3-4 visitors a day and on some days, the attendance is zero.

Looking at the growth in our trading areas, we suggest that a maximum of 5-6 visitors a day is a reasonable allowance.

In view of the nature of the business, customers over the years have visited the premises by private car or light commercial vehicle (van). There have been no cyclists or pedestrian callers.

There is a concrete ramp at the main entrance to allow full access and all doors are of sufficient width to accommodate wheelchairs, if needed.

Although Policy DM11 seeks to integrate sustainable transport modes and there is an infrequent bus service with a bus stop outside the site, the use of a linked transport mode is most unsuitable for our business activities with some customers returning heavy pond equipment for repair or the purchase of a sack of food. However, internet or telephone orders are stacked in the premises to ensure only a single van collection from the courier.

Healthy Koi is an environmental business and supports key local, regional and national sustainability strategies which incorporates UN Action Plan

Agenda 21. By having our business located in the WREN Centre, it may not facilitate linked transport modes but it will reduce the carbon footprint and assist sustainability by our visitors not travelling through congested areas and displacing others through parking in town centers.

2.6 Parking Spaces

Looking at the current highway parking requirements:

Class A1 Retail – Staff & Operational parking

1 space per 50 square metres (min. 2 spaces)

Class B1 Office

1 space per 25 square metres (min. 2 spaces)

Class B8 Storage

1 space per 100 square metres.

The unit currently requires 6 parking spaces for B1 use or 2 spaces for B8 use. This is achievable at present as we have 1 Van, 3 staff cars with at least a few spare spaces remaining for visitors.

The planned new use will change the floor area distribution to: 50sq.m Class A1, 25 sq.m Class B1 and 76sq.m Class B8. The number of spaces required for the change of use will be 5 spaces. The change of use will require one fewer space and remains within the capacity already available.

Having said this, there is considerable car parking close to our premises and this is shown on plan no. RAI/02/15.

The parking proposals comply with policy DM14 with sufficient parking provided and appropriately located close to the premises in accordance with the relevant standards.

2.7 General Transport Matters

The mitigation of the impacts of travel, safeguarding transport infrastructure and the generation of any significant freight or goods movement as outlined in the Havant Borough Council Core Strategy Policies DM12, DM15 and DM15 are not appropriate with regards to this 'change of use' application.

3 Environmental Aspects

3a Conservation and Protection (Policy DM8)

As the proposal involves a 'change to the use classes' and there are no external works being undertaken outside the curtilage of the building, the

application does not affect any natural features of nature conservation or the amenity importance of the site.

Any trees, hedgerows, soils, the River Ems, the river corridor, springs, wildlife habitat, ditches etc will not be affected and there will be no deterioration in quality.

The reduction in floor area from B8 to A1 categories will reduce the space available for storage and distribution reducing the possible vehicle movements on site.

3b Pollution

The proposal will not cause any pollution of water, air or soil or pollution through noise, smell, smoke, fumes, gases, steam, dust, vibration, light, heat or electromagnetic radiation in accordance with core policy DM10

3c Waste Disposal

The disposal of waste from the business operations will not change and the landlords facility will continue to be used. In following with our 'green policy', the type of waste will continue to be sorted and appropriate materials recycled.

3d Surface & Waste Water disposal

The proposal does not increase the size of the building or any surface water discharge. Surface water storage areas or attenuation is not affected or reduced and remedial measures are not necessary

The Landlords current arrangements remain unchanged.

3e Noise

The business operations will not generate any perceptible noise levels above 'general conversation' expected normally to be found within an office environment. As such, the noise level INSIDE the building is unlikely to exceed 60 dB(A). There will be no playing of music, videos or entertainment systems permitted by staff.

3f Risk from Floods

A full examination of the risk to the premises from flooding together with the effects on the entry and exit route has been looked at in detail in the "Flood Risk Assessment in Support of Application APP/15/00286". A summary of its findings are outlined below:

The premises and access route are not considered to be at risk from groundwater flooding, surface water flooding, tidal flooding or Pluvial flooding.

However, the premises and access route are within approximately 50 meters from the inland waterway, the River Ems. This area is designated 'at risk' from fluvial flooding on the Environment Agency flood maps.

The main risk of flooding will come from a fluvial source

From undertaking a detailed existing ground levels and a 100 years storm flood contour analysis and preparing access road vertical profiles:-

1. The finished floor level of the premises has been constructed 425mm above the 100 years storm flood level and will not endanger staff or customers visiting the building should a 100 years flood occur.
2. The parking area immediately outside the building is marginally above (15mm) the 100 years storm flood level, and has not been covered by floodwater in the past. Visitors and staff will be able to enter and leave the building from their vehicle in safety during such an event.
3. Visitors and staff will be able to gain access to the public highway in safety using the current access road in 100 years flood conditions provided they drive slowly, carefully and use the suggested western path at the bellmouth. This route will ensure that the depth of water is kept to a minimum acceptable level. There are no construction works required here.
