

STATEMENT PROVIDED IN SUPPORT OF AN APPLICATION FOR GRANTING OF A CHANGE OF USE OF LAND USED TO PROVIDE THREE EXISTING CAR PARKING SPACES OUTSIDE OF UNIT 4, DUNSBURY BUSINESS PARK

Introduction

This statement is provided in support of the Application made by Larchwood MoT Service Centre Ltd for a change of use of three existing car parking spaces to the front of Unit 4, Dunsbury Business Park, Fulflood Road, Havant, Hampshire PO9 5AX to create a fast foods provider outlet (the Fast Food Cafe) for the local business and residential community, with security for the premises and customers enhanced by the provision of a CCTV camera system.

Background to Application

As a result of temporarily locating a mobile fast food van outside Unit 4 Dunsbury Business, to provide refreshments for the local business community, it was very quickly discovered that the service being offered also held great appeal to customers of the businesses on the business park, delivery drivers entering the business park, and many members of the general community living and working in the vicinity of the business park. At this time, it could clearly be seen that there was a potentially very effective marketing tool now based at the front of my Unit 4 premises.

The mobile fast food van at this time occupied approximately one of the existing car parking spaces outside of Unit 4, closely adjacent to the access road through the business park.

As such it was decided to extend the trial run of the fast food business, and then to provide a covered seating area. The covered seating area as provided occupied approximately two more of the existing car parking spaces outside of Unit 4, between the mobile fast food van and the working premises of Unit 4. The total area occupied by the fast food facility is just three car parking spaces adjacent to each other.

The popularity of the fast food facility has continued to grow into what is now a thriving local community cafe, known as the Fast Food Café, and its marketing benefits have been seen to grow and impact on the Dunsbury Business Park trading units accordingly.

Impact of the Fast Food Facility

On the positive side, the Fast Food Cafe has not only very clearly helped to improve trading for Larchwood MoT Service Centre Ltd, but it has also become an important marketing tool beneficial to the whole of the Dunsbury Business Park, and of course, through the extra footfall brought into the business park area, has also been of marketing, and hence trading, help to the general Leigh Park area.

The Fast Food Cafe, by growing into a thriving local community cafe, has also helped bring a greater sense of community to the neighbourhood by giving it a gathering point for the local retired pensioners and family members of the church, with a consequential

Car parking is available, depending on the time of day/day of week, either in the designated eight space car park just across the business park access road running alongside Unit 4, or immediately outside the Fast Food Cafe itself. This includes provision for disabled vehicle user access.

Finally, it is noted that the waste disposal facilities of Unit 4 are more than adequately capable of safely storing and handling waste from both Unit 4 and the Fast Food Facility.

A CCTV camera system is installed on the Fast Food Cafe structure, enabling the structure, its contents, and most importantly its customers, to enjoy an enhanced security environment.

Operation of the Fast Food Cafe

The Fast Food Café is operated under my (Lea Waters') direct control, with present staffing comprising one full time employee, ably supported by a part time employee. This is shortly expected to increase by one full time employee.

The Fast Food Cafe has scheduled operating (opening) hours of 8 am to 9 pm on Monday to Friday, and 8 am to 5 pm on Saturday and Sunday. These hours extend slightly beyond the opening hours of the main business of Larchwood MoT Service Centre Ltd in Unit 4, so to ensure the comfort and convenience of customers, access to the toileting facility within Unit 4 is available upon request to the staff in attendance at the Fast Food Cafe at any 'out of hours' time when the Fast Food Cafe is open. It should be noted that allowing this access to my Unit 4 premises reflects the high level of trust I have in the Fast Food Cafe staff that have been employed.

The recordings taken by the CCTV camera system are not only available for review by myself in the event of any incident which might arise relating to the safety and security of users of the Fast Food Cafe, but also by the Police in the event of any criminal activities occurring in its vicinity.

Benefits of allowing the Fast Food Cafe to continue trading

The primary benefit of the Fast Food Cafe is perceived as being that of providing quality fast food at an affordable price, seven days a week, to the businesses, delivery services and customers of the immediately adjacent business units, in an area previously lacking such an amenity. A secondary benefit is that the same amenity is open to all members of the local community in and around Fulflood Road.

In addition, the Fast Food Cafe can be seen to be creating greater awareness of the business services available in the Dunsbury Business Park, and thereby drawing in new business from customers who would otherwise have been more likely to have taken their custom out of the Leigh Park area altogether, such as to Waterlooville, or Portsmouth. This process can not only be seen as being of overall benefit in terms of helping to ensure that existing businesses can continue to survive in the Leigh Park area, but also to be of help in ensuring that the area contributes as fully as possible to the community through maximising the flow of business rates from a thriving business community.

knock-on effect teaching younger people the morals of right and wrong. This is helping consign Leigh Park's old reputation to the dustbin.

Also on the positive side, the Fast Food Cafe has become a major deterrent to crime and anti-social behaviour in the local area, through use of its CCTV camera - the recordings of which have already enabled the Police to apprehend thieves stealing motor vehicles, and burglars breaking into local business properties.

Against this, the one negative aspect of the development of the Fast Food Cafe has to be seen as the loss of three existing car parking spaces relating to Unit 4. Yet even this has a positive aspect in that it has resulted in the creation of an additional eight car parking spaces in the business park, just yards away from Unit 4 and the Fast Food Cafe. This gives the business park an overall net gain of five car parking spaces for the use of Unit 4 and Fast Food Cafe customers.

As such, it is believed that the overall impact of the presence of the Fast Food Cafe has been positive in every respect.

Facilities of the Fast Food Café

These now comprise an al fresco take-away bar to one side of the original mobile fast food van, and a fully enclosed sit-down area to the immediate rear of, and abutting with, the original mobile fast food van. The take-away bar caters for those customers who simply want a take-away snack, or hot or cold non-alcoholic drink, whilst the enclosed sit-down area caters for those who wish to partake of a wider range of sit-down food and drink, in a warm and dry environment. The internal structure of the Fast Food Cafe now reflects the aspect of an open plan cafeteria, where customers can either approach a service counter (on the side of the fast food van opposite the open aspect take-away bar, or at less busy times, simply sit down and call out their orders to the operating staff. The size of the premises is such that only an ordinary conversational voice is needed to request an order from the staff serving/preparing food and drinks behind the service counter.

Egress from the premises for staff and customers in the event of an emergency is either via the double entry/exit door, or the rear window of the sit-down area. In practical terms, the small size of the enclosed premises means that it is only a few metres at most from any seat, or the food preparation area, to an exit. It should be noted that as this application was being prepared, discussions also took place with Fire Service Safety Officers to ensure that all appropriate fire regulations were being complied with both inside and outside the Fast Food Cafe premises.

Adjacent to the Fast Food Cafe, just inside the Unit 4 premises, a toilet (including disabled facilities) and washroom are readily available for customers, even when the garage facility of Unit 4 is closed.

Also, upon request whenever it is needed, is a portable/movable ramp to allow easy access to the enclosed cafe area for wheelchair users or other disabled persons. With regard to this, staff selection has been meticulous in respect of selecting personnel to work in the Fast Food Cafe who will always be willing to help those who are less able gain access to its premises.

With reference to helping the local community, both business and residential, by providing a sheltered gathering place for small groups of local residents, and members of the church, a greater sense of community spirit can be seen to be being engendered, as referenced in the comments under 'Impact' given above.

Also, as referenced above, the reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour within the business park, and the immediately surrounding area of Leigh Park, has helped to bring a greater sense of ease and security to the nearby residents. This can be seen as a consequence of those residents not needing to be visited by the Police so frequently when crime investigations are under way locally. A good example of this is when the CCTV camera provided the Police with visual evidence of the movements and activities of a car thief from the Portsmouth area, thus enabling his very rapid identification and subsequent arrest.

Supporting Evidence

Enclosed are copies of a number of sample letters corroborating the statements given above.

1. A Police letter requesting the attendance of an appropriate staff member of the Fast Food Cafe as a prosecution witness in relation to the film recording taken by the CCTV camera.
2. A testimonial letter from La Espanola Ltd, in neighbouring Unit 3.
3. A testimonial letter from Six-O Transport, of the Dunsbury Business Park.
4. A testimonial letter from the Bethel Evangelical Church, at 441 Dunsbury Way.

These letters very clearly reflect the great value of the Fast Food Cafe as seen by its many and varied customers, as well as the Police and Criminal Prosecution Service.

Mr Lea Waters
Larchwood MoT Service Centre Ltd