

Design and Access Statement And Planning Statement

Proposed Change of Use of existing A1 retail unit to D2.

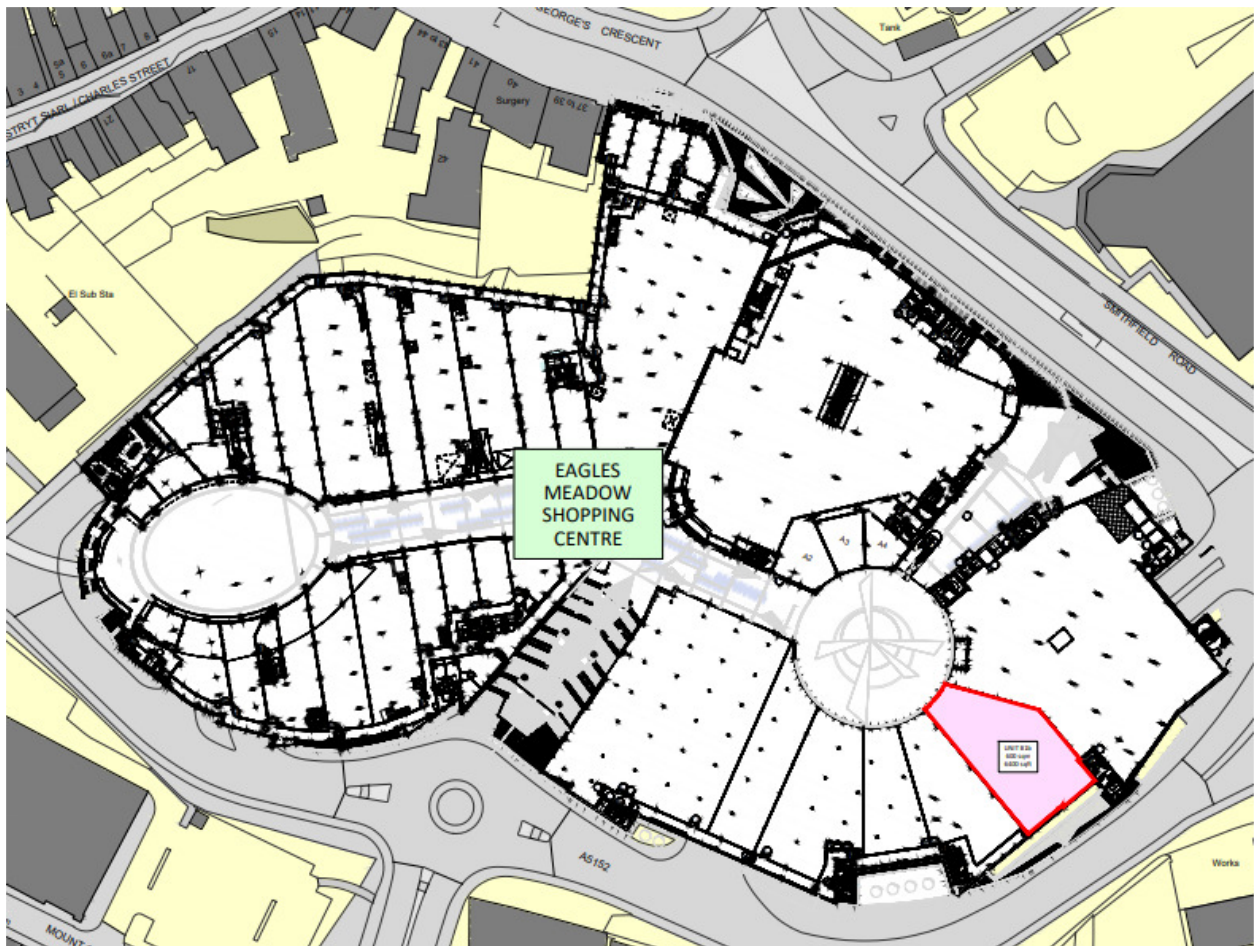
Unit B1b
Eagles Meadow Shopping Centre, Wrexham.



February 2023

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1.0 Introduction

Covell Matthews Architects has been instructed by Wrexham Shopping Mall Ltd. (the Applicant) to provide architectural and town planning advice regarding the proposed change of use of the retail Unit B1b (formally Sports Direct) at the Eagles Meadow Shopping Centre within Wrexham city centre from A1 shop to open D2 use (Gym).

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for Change of Use which has been submitted to the Wrexham County Borough Council.

2.0 Background and Reason for Application

In terms of Wrexham County Borough Council Planning Policy, Eagles Meadow Shopping Centre is regarded as a primary shopping street.

Unit B1b, was occupied by Sports Direct until 2020 when they acquired a site in the city centre and moved there.

The unit represents approximately 2.5% of the retail floor space of Eagles Meadow. However, since the B1b unit became vacant in 2020 it has remained empty. The empty unit has been actively marketed for retail use by international real estate company Savills and more recently by BA Commercial more but this has generated no interest from retail tenants. Over the years other major retail names such as M&S, Top Shop, Carphone Warehouse and H&M have all left Wrexham city centre. Over this period footfall has declined by 40%.

With recent negative impacts of “bricks and mortar” retailing a new emphasis has been placed on attracting recreation and leisure tenants with some progress being made. This type of use is complementary to other retail uses as it is a good footfall driver providing an alternate reason to visit a shopping centre, or high street, and thereby offering opportunities to visit other retailers. The most recent tenant interest in this unit is from a gym operator. The new use will create new employment and will be complimentary to the other leisure units at the centre.

Eagles Meadow already has leisure uses (Odeon, Tenpin bowling, Nando's) The vacant Debenhams store is also planned to become D2 use, with confirmed interest in part of it to become a children's trampoline centre. So the proposed gym use will sit well with the existing leisure tenants within Eagles Meadow.

We are therefore seeking a change of use to use class D2 for Unit B1b.

The aim is for the unit to become a site that will not only compliment the main retail function of the centre, but also boost and reinforcing this end of Eagles Meadows as a destination leisure zone.

3.0 Existing Site Photograph



Photo 1

4.0 Amount of Development

No additional floor area is proposed.

The proposal is for a change of use from Retail to Leisure use (D2). This project promotes sustainability by reusing existing building and infrastructure, aligning with Wrexham's urban regeneration and decarbonisation goals.

5.0 Layout

The proposed gym will take place within part of the retail space formerly occupied by Sports Direct. The unit is located at a part of the centre that already has a large quantity of leisure uses.

6.0 Appearance

The units will remain largely unchanged. Existing Signage zones are to be retained and reused by the future tenant.

Any Advertisement Consents to be the subject of separate applications.

7.0 Highways Statement, Servicing and Accessibility

Car Parking

The leisure units are to be served by the existing centre car park.

Servicing, Recycling and Refuse

The leisure units are to be served by the existing centre servicing and recycling arrangements.

Public Transport Links

Being situated in the town centre the site is served extremely well by Public Transport.

- By Train, Eagles Meadow is only a 10 minute walk from Wrexham General and Wrexham Central train stations.
- By Bus, buses stop at Smithfield Road and Salop Road, right next to Eagles Meadow.
- By Car, Eagles Meadow provides 970 safe and secure covered parking spaces.
- By Foot, Eagles Meadow is a short 5 minute walk from Wrexham High Street; the main pedestrian entrance is on Yorke Street.

8.0 Conclusion

The project represents an excellent opportunity to introduce a complementary leisure use within Eagles Meadow Shopping Centre where there are already leisure operators, which we hope will help to generate greater footfall and thereby sustain the shopping and leisure environment within the centre and the city centre as a whole.

We consider the development does achieve urban regeneration, adapting the shopping centre to changing retail conditions. The use will also support new employment in the city.

The use has respect for the setting, is highly sustainable, reusing an existing building and infrastructure.

Positive pre-application discussions have been held regarding these proposals with Wrexham County Borough Council Planning Department.

We therefore submit this application with confidence that it meets all relevant requirements and respectfully ask that you support this application.

END