Planning Statement

Full planning application for Change of use of Unit 26 from (Use Class B1) light industrial use to (Use Class D2) a gymnasium.

at

Unit 26, Penley Business Park,
Penley,
Wrexham, Wales
LL13 0LQ

SWORDERS
Agricultural Commercial Residential

Sworders
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Sworders has been instructed by the owner of the site, hereinafter referred to as 'The Applicant,' to prepare a full planning application for the change of use of Unit 26, Penley Business Park, Wrexham, from light industrial use (Use Class B1) to a gymnasium (Use Class D2).

1.2 The application site extends to approximately 295 m^2 (3,175 ft^2)

1.3 The proposal represents the sustainable re-use of an existing vacant unit within Penley Business Park, previously occupied and used for light industrial purposes, into a small-scale gymnasium. The development makes effective use of the existing building and its established setting within the business park.

1.4 No external changes or alterations are proposed to the building to facilitate the change of use.

2.0 SITE LOCATION

2.1 The application site, Unit 26, is located within the established business park at Penley, Wrexham, LL13 0LQ. The business park includes a range of commercial units that support a variety of businesses and employment in the area. The site benefits from existing vehicular access and parking from the business park.

2.2 The site is situated within the village of Penley and can be accessed directly from the A539, to the south of the site, providing good connectivity to local settlements and onward links to Wrexham. The site is therefore well located in terms of accessibility.

2.3 Penley itself includes Madras Aided primary school, Maelor secondary school, the Rainbow Centre and Penley shop, which is located on the business park. Also on the business park is Mother Goose children's nursery. Therefore, the site has plenty of activity within the area already.

2.4 The site is in an area of very low flood risk, and the radon potential is less than 1, indicating that there are no considerable environmental constraints to the proposed development site.

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 The proposal seeks full planning permission for the change of use of Unit 26 from light industrial use (Use Class B1) to a gymnasium (Use Class D2) as shown on the attached Location Plan, outlined in red.

3.2 The development site extends to approximately 295 m^2 (3,175 ft^2) and will provide a small-scale gym for local residents and employees within the business park to utilise.

3.3 The proposal includes twenty car parking spaces and three cycle spaces in accordance with relevant standards under Local Plan Guidance Note 16. The users of the gym will be able to securely park their vehicles or bicycles in the spaces on site and use the gym space. The existing use required 10 parking spaces, the proposed change requires a further 10 parking spaces. The site is capable of accommodating these additional vehicles within the hardstanding area around the unit.

3.4 No external changes or alterations are proposed to the existing building.

4.0 DEMAND AND LOCAL CONTEXT

4.1 The proposed gym will provide a valuable leisure facility for the local community, benefitting the health and wellbeing of local residents and employees from the business park.

4.2 An assessment of local gym and leisure facilities indicates a low number of facilities in the surrounding area. Local leisure facilities can be found in Ellesmere (approximately 3.5 miles), Whitchurch (7.7 miles) and Chirk (8 miles), therefore requiring local residents to travel outside of the village to access these services. The local community would benefit from the convenient, sustainable location within the business park making it accessible for both employees and residents.

4.3 Population within the Wrexham local authority (2018) showed as estimated population of between 125,0001–150,000 residents. Additional new gym facilities would help support the large population within the district and ensure residents have access to gym facilities. The Parish Council is supportive of the proposal.

5.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY WALES

5.1 The proposal for the change of use from light industrial (Use Class B1) to a gym (Use Class D2), is well supported by the Planning Policy Wales (PPW), which sets out the Welsh Government's national planning policies. It promotes sustainable development and encourages the improvement of economic, social, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of Wales, in accordance with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

5.2 The PPW emphasises that the planning system should create sustainable places which are "attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy and friendly." The introduction of a new gym and leisure facility within the local area contributes to these objectives by providing a social and accessible space that promotes community activity and healthier lifestyles.

5.3 National Policy also states that "Planning authorities should develop and maintain places that support healthy, active lifestyles across all age and socio-economic groups." The proposed development will directly contribute to providing a facility that will support the needs of residents.

5.4 The PPW promotes the facilitation of accessible and healthy environments which will support physical and mental health and wellbeing. The development of a gym will help facilitate this by encouraging regular activity and providing a healthy environment, in line with the Welsh Government's "Healthier Wales" goal. The introduction of a gym at Penley will provide a readily accessible facility for both local residents and employees, reducing the need for travel and producing a sustainable facility that supports physical and mental health and wellbeing.

5.5 The proposal also aligns with the 'making best use of resources' principle. It involves the reuse of an existing vacant building for a change of use to a gym, which promotes sustainable development and the provision of resources. It minimises the need for new construction and makes efficient use of an established site within the business park. The site already has excellent access and transport links, which would remain unchanged by this proposal.

5.6 Overall, the development aligns with the key objectives of the National Planning Policy by supporting sustainable development and prioritising health and mental wellbeing.

6.0 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

6.1 Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011, adopted 2005 remains the current planning policy. There are no specific policies for the proposed change of use however, paragraph 7.10 relating to Employment states "…*consideration will be given to other employment proposals on unannotated land within settlements. Such development contributes to the economic use of land, avoids pressure on the countryside…"* The proposed site is within the settlement boundary of Penley and would continue to support employment uses.

6.2 Paragraph 7.11 goes on to state *"…there is a need to provide employment, prevent the loss of services, and maintain a viable and balanced community. Small businesses, often start-ups, which are financially constrained, can operate from low cost accommodation thereby providing employment opportunities for local rural communities. The re-use and adaptation of existing vacant or underused buildings in the countryside can provide such opportunities providing proposals do not conflict with the interests of local residents, the quality of the local environment, and providing satisfactory access and parking can be provided."* The proposal is therefore, consistent with this text, reusing an existing building to support the local community and provide employment, with parking available on site.

6.3 The chapter on Community and Leisure Facilities and Tourism states in paragraph 9.3 that "*There have been local demands for community centres at…Penley…but at present no new sites have been identified."* Whilst this is not a community centre, it is a facility that would be used by the local community and would promote wellbeing.

6.4 The Wrexham Local Development Plan (2013-2028) has now been withdrawn but due to the date of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011, the emerging LDP remains relevant. It supports the proposed change of use development at Unit 26, Penley.

6.5 Relevant Strategic Policies within the Wrexham Local Development Plan include:

SP2: Location of Development

SP8: Economic Growth, Employment and Enterprise

SP11: Transport and Accessibility

SP12: Design Principles & Master Planning Framework

SP13: Health and Wellbeing

6.6 Policy SP2 (Location of Development) ensures developments are within sustainable locations, including settlements or existing employment areas. Penley is identified as a Tier 3, Local Service Centre, and the application site, Unit 26 Penley Business Park is recognised as an employment area. The effective reuse of the existing vacant unit represents a sustainable development, therefore aligning with the location requirements of SP2.

6.7 Policy SP8 supports developments that contribute to delivering a diverse local economy, and the delivery of new jobs that enable new and existing businesses to grow. The gym is a service-based commercial business that will contribute to the local economy and provide employment opportunities. The development will also contribute to the improvement and vitality of the business park bringing a vacant unit back into use and allowing a new business to establish. The development is therefore in line with the objectives of SP8.

6.8 Policy SP11 requires that developments be accessible and do not have adverse impacts on highway safety and sustainability of travel. The business park already benefits from established access from the A539 with excellent sight lines, which allows accessibility for a range of different transport methods, including cars, pedestrians via the pavements on the A539, cyclists, and from the two bus stops located in Penley that are within walking distance of the Business Park, providing sustainable access to the business park. The access is within the 20mph zone of Penley. The proposal will include parking and cycle spaces for those commuting to the gym, in existing hardstanding space around the business park. It is unlikely that there will be a material increase in the

volume of traffic in the local area because of the proposed gym, and highway safety will therefore not be compromised. As a result, the proposal is compliant with the requirements of SP11.

6.9 The proposal accords with Policy SP12 which requires developments to be of a high quality, sustainable design and positively contribute to the environment. The proposed development will effectively reuse the existing vacant unit and will involve no external alterations to the Unit. Therefore, the character and appearance of the area will be preserved, and it complies with SP12.

6.10 Policy SP13 states that developments should seek to reduce inequalities and provide opportunities for healthy lifestyles. The proposed development directly aligns with the policy through the conversion of the existing vacant unit into a gym and leisure facility. It will provide an opportunity for residents and employees of the business park to access a local facility that will allow them to engage in physical activities, contributing to physical and mental wellbeing within the area. As a result, the proposed development complies with SP13.

6.11 Relevant Policies within the Development Management Policies include:

DM1: Development Management Considerations

6.12 Policy DM1 ensures the development remains sustainable and contributes positively to the local area. The proposal will accord with the character, local distinctiveness, and appearance of the site as there will be no external change to the unit. There will be no effect on highway safety or pedestrian safety as it will utilise the existing access to the site and the parking spaces will be accessible around the site for vehicles and bicycles. There will be no increase to flood risk, noise, or air pollution because of the development. Therefore, the proposal complies with DM1.

6.13 Relevant Policies within the Retail and Leisure Policies include:

R6: Retail, Leisure, and Commercial Development (Edge and Out of Centre)

6.14 Policy R6 requires that development follows a sequential approach to planning to protect town centres. The development site is classified as an out-of-centre location.

The policy requires that leisure facilities in out-of-centre locations do not harm the vitality and viability of existing centres and are accessible by a range of transport modes. The proposed gym is a small-scale, local facility for local residents and employees of the business park to use. It makes use of a currently vacant unit within the business park and is not of a scale or nature it would be better suited to a town centre location. It is out of reach from any other gyms and benefits from established access by car, bicycle, foot, and via two bus stops located in the local vicinity. The development complies with the key requirements of the Policy and has no impact on town centres.

6.15 Overall, the proposed development aligns with the relevant policies of the Wrexham Local Development Plan. It supports a sustainable development within the established business park and should be supported.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 In conclusion, the proposed application for the change of use from a vacant industrial unit (Use Class B1) to a gymnasium and leisure facility (Use Class D2) represents a sustainable small-scale development that makes effective use of an existing building within the established business park. The proposal will deliver a valuable community facility that promotes health and wellbeing within the area and provides a facility for local residents and employees to utilise.

7.2 The development will not cause any adverse impacts on the nature and character of the business park. The external appearance of the building will remain unchanged. There will be no impacts on transport as the site already benefits from existing access, and sufficient parking spaces will be put around the facility to accommodate users of the gym.

7.3 When assessed against the adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan and emerging Wrexham Local Development Plan, the proposal represents a low impact, policy-compliant development that provides social and economic benefits to the business park. It promotes healthy lifestyles and wellbeing, preserves the character of the area, avoids impact to highways, and promotes economic growth and employment in a sustainable

location. The development therefore accords with the local development plan as a whole and should be granted planning permission.

7.4 The Applicant respectfully requests that the Local Planning Authority supports this sustainable, well considered redevelopment, and grants full planning permission.

Appendix One – Flood Risk Map



Appendix Two – Photographs







