



SEQUENTIAL TEST

Change of use from Class B2 Industrial unit to Class E(d) Indoor sport & recreation (cricket coaching facility).

at:

50-52 Herbert Brown House
Whiteley Street
Milnsbridge
Huddersfield
HD3 4LT

for:

Sixers Cricket Coaching Ltd
Unit 3
Phoenix Park
Eastgate
Honley
Holmfirth
HD9 6PA

date:

February 2024

Introduction

This Sequential Test (ST) has been provided to support a planning application for the change of use from Class B2 to ClassE(d), Indoor Sport & Recreation. The property address is; 50-52 Whiteley Street, Milnsbridge, Huddersfield, HD3 4LT.

50-52 Whiteley Street is a two-storey building; the applicant proposes to install 5 indoor cricket training lanes. The two ground floor lanes will be for individuals to practice & three lanes on the first floor for group training. The location is ideal for Huddersfield Cricket – average travel distance from every cricket club in Huddersfield is 14 minutes. The building is less than 10 minutes travel from Huddersfield Town Centre & located on a main bus route (buses every 5-10 minutes from Huddersfield-Milnsbridge).

Background

As the planning application is for a main town centre (leisure) use in an 'edge of centre' location (Milnsbridge District Centre), a ST in accordance with Local Plan policy LP 13 and paragraph 86 of the NPPF is required. Local Plan policy LP 13 states that "the scope and content of any sequential test shall be agreed with the Council and shall be reflective of the scale, role and function of the proposal". Whilst the applicant has submitted a sequential test, the scope and content has not been agreed prior to submission. Applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale.

Paragraph 9.12 of the Local Plan advises that "the scope of the Sequential Test should be agreed with the council being reflective of the scale, role and function of the proposal, and will be expected to provide evidence on; the business model for the development and appropriate catchment that the business would seek to serve in accordance with the Shopping Centre Hierarchy Table, and an appropriate audit trail of any sequentially preferable sites that have been discounted with a robust justification".

Flexibility

The applicant's business model has very specific requirements in terms of space vs cost. Rental costs between £30k-£40k per annum must have sufficient space (with very specific dimensional requirements) to accommodate a minimum of five lanes, to be commercially viable. The applicant has been seeking suitable premises over a period of four years, and the Town Centre premises the client has viewed have not met these criteria. The applicant's requirements also include; existing toilet facilities, space for reception & changing area, good levels of natural light exposure, sufficient height & width dimensions to meet England & Wales Cricket Board guidelines for indoor cricket nets, level floors, access for all & adequate parking facility.

The flexibility in terms of format and scale of premises is therefore quite limited, and it is the matters above that have dictated the following analysis of sequentially preferable sites slightly outside the Town Centre. The major reason being the space vs cost element.

Availability of suitable property within the catchment

An analysis of an on-line property agent was undertaken on 12th February 2024 (www.rightmove.co.uk) to look at all commercial rental property available, within a 3-mile radius of Huddersfield Town Centre.

From this analysis, it is evident that there are currently no properties available to rent in Huddersfield Town Centre that would meet the applicant's building criteria requirements, whilst at the same time being financially viable.

Other properties "edge of centre".

- The Ringway Centre, Beck Road, Huddersfield – none of the properties currently available are of the required space and physical dimensions to install any cricket training facility.
- Other available properties are office spaces that do not meet the space and dimensional requirements.

Applicant's previously viewed properties (edge of Centre)

Silver Street, Aspley, Huddersfield; The applicant viewed this property in November 2020. The rental cost per annum was £30,000. However, only 3 lanes could be accommodated, thus making it high risk for the applicant's business model. As previously stated for those costs, the applicant would need a minimum of 5 lanes.

Turnbridge Mills, Old Leeds Road, Huddersfield, HD1 1SG; The applicant viewed this property in August 2023. The rental cost per annum was £50,000. Only 4 lanes could be installed, as well as having no existing toilet facilities & space for other facilities & no natural light exposure.

During this viewing, the landlady showed the applicant another property on site. At the time the use was a gym. It only had enough space for 3-lanes, with an extremely low ceiling & no space for other facilities. The cost per annum was £30,000.

Hagg Wood Industrial Estate, Woodhead Road, Honley; The applicant viewed this property in November 2023. The cost per annum was £38,500, with only sufficient space for 2 lanes. This had no potential to fit into the business model.

Blackmoorfoot Road HD4 5AQ; The cost per annum for this property was £28,500 per annum. There was only sufficient space for 2 lanes & an issue with the ownership of the parking area.

Tanyard Road, Milnsbridge HD3 4NB; The cost per annum for this property was £90,000. The landlord offered to split the building into two. This would have given the applicant enough space for 5 lanes, with the cost being £45,000 pa. therefore high risk. The landlord later decided they wanted to rent out the property as one building.

Unit C, Bankwell, Milnsbridge; The cost per annum was £50,000. Whilst this building had the potential to house our requirements, there were issues with the general condition of the building. The roof was unsafe, the flooring was damaged and not level. The building was in the end deemed unsafe and unfunctional for the applicant's requirements.

Conclusion

It is evident that the applicant has been searching for suitable premises for a considerable time period.

Due to the requirements of the business to have a property that meets quite specific space requirements, to provide the facilities previously outlined and to meet England & Wales Cricket Board guidelines, together with commercially viable rental costs, no existing suitable properties have been identified in Huddersfield that would fulfil the operating requirements and business model of the applicant.

As such, it is concluded that there are no sequentially preferable properties to the property that is the subject of the current planning application and so the ST is passed.