

MR J FILER DOWLAS DEVELOPMENTS SOUTH WESTERN LTD

ERECTION OF FITNESS CENTRE WITH ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING AT WESTERN POWER DISTRIBUTION SITE, PRIORSWOOD ROAD, TAUNTON AS AMENDED BY LETTER AND PLANS DATED 15TH MAY, 2002 AND AS AMENDED BY PLANS NOS. 12320/02C, 03C, 04C, 05C, 06C RECEIVED 16TH JULY, 2002

23650/25700

FULL PERMISSION

PROPOSAL

The application is for the erection of a two storey fitness centre with associated car parking on the former SWEB Depot site at the junction of Obridge viaduct and Priorswood Road and adjoining the canal. The whole former depot site was subject to an outline application for mixed use redevelopment of site for uses including residential, restaurant (A3), hotel (C1); indoor sports facilities (D2) and non-residential institution which was approved by Committee in October 2001 subject to a legal agreement in respect of highways requirements, financial contribution to sports provision and social housing. The current scheme is for a building measuring approximately 26 m x 40 m, with eaves level 7.4 m and highest part of the curved roof being 8.6 m on an area alongside the viaduct. There is a frontage to the canal and vehicle access is from Priorswood Road using the existing point of access and a new road which will also serve the approved Travel Inn/Brewsters restaurant and the proposed housing developments. The materials proposed will be brick with grey coloured steel cladding sheets and grey coloured lightweight steel curved roof. The building would contain a 20 m long x 8 m wide swimming pool, sauna, steam room, bar/cafe, lounge with changing rooms on the ground floor; gymnasium, dance studio, treatment rooms and plant area on the upper floor. The plant room and refuse area would be sited facing Obridge Viaduct. Parking for 120 cars and a cycle stand are provided. A sewer crossing the site is shown as being redirected. Pedestrian access will be provided from the adjoining proposed residential area. A 2 m high boundary wall marks the boundary between the residential area and fitness centre and associated car park.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY views awaited. WESSEX WATER suggests soakaways for disposal of surface water, 3 m easement required on both sides of sewer and apparatus; notes for applicants. BRITISH WATERWAYS no objections.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER on original plan - the redirection of the sewer will restrict planting, boundary treatment to the housing is poor, landscaping in the car parking area requires to be increased. Comments on the revised plan - the amendments provide greater scope for landscape integration of building into the canal-side location subject to details. DRAINAGE OFFICER requires plan of proposed drainage. PROMOTION/TOURISM the Economic Development Review Panel indicated a

significant shortage of employment sites in the Borough with demand unable to be met, existing employment sites need to be retained. This site needs to be retained for employment purposes; it is well connected to the existing road network with ease of access to the motorway junction; is close to residential area with a ready supply of labour; this site would provide an ideal opportunity to provide small businesses. Strongly oppose the proposal.

2 LETTERS OF OBJECTION agree that brownfield sites should be developed, concerned about extra traffic generation from the fitness centre; hotel and houses when complete; it is difficult to drive out of Draycott Avenue at present, that situation will worsen when this site is developed; accidents will occur; sequential test needed; town centre site would be at risk.

POLICY CONTEXT

T24 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan applies specifically to this site. The site is allocated for mixed uses including approximately 25% for business or leisure uses compatible with the adjoining and proposed residential areas and in the case of leisure limited to small scale facilities with a local catchment; the frontage to the canal is designed to respect the character and environment of the canal and incorporating a linear public open space with a minimum depth of 20 m. The remainder of the policy relates to the other mixed uses for the site.

ASSESSMENT

The site was subject of the outline planning application and discussion at that stage in respect of the actual uses on the whole site. The use for fitness centre is considered appropriate, and the size is the minimum the developer considers viable. The developer has been asked to provide evidence of need in terms of the sequential test, however this has not been forthcoming to date. The site has been assessed for traffic generation at the outline stage and the County Highways Authority has not raised objections. The comments of the Policy section are noted but in this case it is considered that the proposal meets the leisure section of policy T24, and is considered acceptable. A Ministerial Statement (DETR) issued in February 1999 indicates that the test of need should not be required if the proposal accords with an up-to-date plan strategy. In this case the issue is whether or not the proposal is small in scale and with a local catchment. Evidence on sequential assessment/need awaited.

RECOMMENDATION

Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of materials, landscaping, parking laid out, details of wall and no additional windows, details of proposed drainage, levels, odours from cooking, sewer, no drainage to canal, no development within 20 m of canal. Notes re remediation strategy, British Waterways access, contact Drainage Officer, Wessex Water contact, food hygiene and food business, S.106.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

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NOTES: