

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Address: Gymfinity Kids, Gillette Way, Reading

Application No: 210690/FUL

Proposal: External alterations including new glazing, creation of children's play area, bin store and plant compound

Applicant: Gymfinity Kids Ltd

Agreed Target Decision date: 21/07/21

Case officer: Connie Davis

1. Site description and Surrounding Area

The application site is located to the east side of Gillette Way and forms part of the district centre at Whitley. Gymfinity Kids occupies the western part of a high-bay commercial unit that also accommodates BJ's Bingo Club. It has separate car parking which provides 49 spaces and is accessed from Gillette Way. Gymfinity Kids currently operates as a children's gymnasium with a range of gymnastics equipment, classes for children of all ages and soft play facilities.

The unit now occupied by Gymfinity Kids was previously occupied by ATOM as a trampoline centre. The trampoline centre was created by a subdivision of BJ's Bingo Hall.

2. The Proposal

The proposed development seeks planning permission for various external alterations.

Existing ventilation louvres to the western and southern elevations of the unit will be replaced with glazing to match the existing.

A new plant compound containing 4 no. air conditioning condensers will be positioned on the southern boundary of the site, adjacent a new bin store. These facilities will be enclosed by 1.8 metre close boarded fencing. They would measure just over 1.3m in height and almost a metre in width.

An external children's play space will also be created to the southern edge of the car park, resulting in the loss of seven parking spaces. This includes an accessible parking space which will be re-provided elsewhere within the car park. The play area will be surfaced in astro turf with existing landscaping retained to the southern and western boundaries. For safety and security, the play area will be enclosed by 1.8 metre close boarded fencing to its northern and eastern edges with the existing palisade fencing retained to its other boundaries.

The proposal does not incorporate the change of use of the building from a trampoline park to a gymnastics centre as this is considered to qualify as Permitted Development. As it will be noted in the planning history, the site got approval for an office use however it is understood this was not implemented. As such, the use of the building remained in D2 use (bingo hall), and then part was

later converted to a trampoline park (also class D2) under Permitted Development. Lastly, the building was converted once again under the D2 use to Gymfinity Kids via Permitted Development.

3. Consultation

Internal Consultees

Environmental Health - No comments received

Transport - No objections

External Consultation

The following addresses were consulted via letter on 11/05/21:

Bjs Bingo, Gillette Way

A site notice was displayed at the site between 23rd June - 14th July 2021.

No comments were received from members of the public.

4. Plans and Documents Considered

Drawing no:

01100-S2-P1 - Site Location Plan

01101-S2-P1 - Existing Site Plan

01102-S2-P1 - Proposed Site Plan

SK-2019-10-28-003 - Existing/ Proposed Elevations

Application Form

Supporting Letter dated 4th May 2021

Received 4th May 2021

01103-S2-P1 - Proposed External Plant Compound
Outlines and Dimensions

Received 15th July 2021

5. Relevant Planning History

161119/FUL - Extension to trampoline Park - Application Permitted but not implemented

151191/FUL - Alterations comprising the removal of doors on the south elevation and introduction of entrance doors on the west elevation - Application Permitted

130716/FUL - Change of use of part of bingo club to business use (classes B1, B2 and B8) - Application Permitted

6. Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

7. Discussion with applicant/ agent

The agent was contacted to obtain scaled drawings of the plant compound for completeness.

8. Relevant Planning Guidance

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Local Plan (2019).

The '*National Planning Policy framework*' ('NPPF') 2019 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given). Accordingly, the 'NPPF' and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

9. Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2019);
National Planning Policy Guidance;

Local Policy - Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction
CC7 Design and the Public Realm
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
EN16 Pollution and Water Resources
TR3 Traffic, Access and Highway-Related Matters
RL1 Network and Hierarchy of Centres

RL3 Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres

10. Appraisal

a) Principle of Development

The site is located within a Whitley District Centre. According to Policy RL1 '*The smaller centres which are expected to be the main focus for intensification, change and additional community facilities will be The Meadway and Whitley District Centres*'.

It then goes on to states '*It is appropriate to designate more district centres in order to encourage an increase in the range of facilities. This will mean that centres capable of acting as alternatives to the centre of Reading for some uses will be accessible to a greater number of people. This approach in the existing plan has seen a recent expansion of facilities in Whitley, for example.*'

The proposal will help facilitate a use in the district centre that is considered to provide variety of facilities in the district centre.

As such, the principle of development is considered acceptable in principle.

b) Impact of the proposal on the surrounding area

The proposal would be located well within the site and thus there would be considered minimal impact on views/character/street scene. The new glazing and fenced off play/ plant area would not be considered harmfully at odds with the commercial surrounding area.

As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

c) Impact on neighbouring amenity

The site is not located near residential development, with the surrounding area being commercial. As such, the new play area would not be considered to cause disturbance to neighbouring amenity, and a hours of operation condition is not warranted. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in relation to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

d) Environmental Health Matters

As noted earlier in the report, no response was received from the Environmental Health department on this application. As such, the case officer has referred to the Environmental Standing advice.

It states that 'Applications which include noise generating plant when there are nearby noise sensitive receptors should be accompanied by an acoustic assessment carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014 methodology'. This proposal does include a noise generating plant (air conditioning units), however due to the location of the site (in a commercial/ retail area) it is not considered to be in close range to nearby noise sensitive receptors (ie. residential dwellings). As such, it is not considered necessary to require the applicant to provide a noise assessment for the plant in this instance.

Without evidence to the contrary provided by the Environmental Health team, the proposal has been considered by Planning Officers as being compliant with Policy EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

e) Transport Matters

To facilitate the proposed outdoor play area the existing car park is to be reduced to 41 spaces. Upon consultation with Transport officers, this has been deemed acceptable given that greater reductions have been agreed as part of previous applications and that the site has the opportunity to utilise the wider site for parking which would have different parking peaks.

A condition to retain the parking as specified on the plans will be included in line with Policy TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Other Matters

Safety

As noted, the play area will be fenced off from the car park to enhance safety of the site which is considered acceptable. However it is the responsibility of the applicant to also ensure full safety measures (ie. adequate numbers of staff and monitoring) are in place for children using the facilities.

11. Recommendation

GRANT permission subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin within three years from the date of this planning permission.

REASON to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions, and in accordance with Section 91 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

01100-S2-P1 - Site Location Plan
01102-S2-P1 - Proposed Site Plan
SK-2019-10-28-003 - Existing/ Proposed Elevations

Received 4th May 2021

01103-S2-P1 - Proposed External Plant Compound

Received 15th July 2021

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

3. Materials as specified

4. Vehicle parking as specified

Informatives

1. Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this permission. Any development which is carried out but which differs materially from the approved plans and details, or does not comply with any condition(s) or planning obligation(s) attached to the permission may result in the Council taking action to remedy the breach of planning control. If you are in any doubt please contact the Council.

2. Your attention is drawn to the requirement for submission of a Building Regulations application for the proposed development. Please contact Building Control on 0118 937 2449 for advice.

3. Complaints are commonly received about noise and dust caused by construction and demolition works, particularly working outside reasonable hours and smoke from bonfires associated with the burning of waste on site. The developer is reminded that construction and demolition associated with the approved development will be subject to environmental health law.

4. Encroachment

5. The local planning authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to resolve relevant matters to allow permission to be granted within the agreed extended timescale for the decision to be issued.