

Daina McFarlane  
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Gordon  
TD3 6JT

27/01/2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is a letter to support the planning application for the change of use of Unit C, Whinstone Mill, Netherdale, TD13EY from a category Industrial Use 4,5,6 to a Fitness use 11.

Unfortunately, during the summer of 2020 when we were in full lockdown with the COVID-19 pandemic I lost my work and my only source of income. During a very difficult time I had to make a decision to set up on my own if I was to survive financially. When I took the lease of Unit C in November 2020 the Unit had been vacant for several months during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a very risky move to set up a business at this time of uncertainty however, there was nothing else I could do. At the time of taking the lease there was no mention of needing to change the use of the building. I was very upfront with the letting agent and landlords that I intended changing the unit to a fitness studio.

I set up the business with huge personal costs to myself and family. I also took a business start-up loan to convert the unit. The unit was very run down when I took it and I spent a considerable amount on making the unit suitable for use as a studio. Since opening I have kept to all restrictions within the studio enforced from Covid. I now have over 50 members and some pay as you go clients too. This is from word of mouth alone, I am hoping to advertise my services more fully once this is sorted out. I am one of the only mental health specialists in the Scottish borders and one of my primary aims is to set up a specific mental health exercise program. I feel now more than ever people need support with their physical and mental health after the difficulties of the past 2 years. I also provide support through exercise to those who have suffered from cancer and I do this completely free of charge. The positive effects of exercise are profound on those with different medical conditions.

As the business grows I will be taking on more instructors and a cleaner. Therefore, the change of use will provide more jobs in the region. I hope all this information is taken into consideration when deciding if the change of use is granted. If anything is missed or you need any more information please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Kind regards,  
Daina McFarlane  
(Owner of The Fitness Refinery)