

22/09/2022

PLANNING REFERENCE: 22/00127/FUL

Location: Unit C Whinstone Mill, Netherdale Industrial Unit, Galashiels, TD13EY (160SQM)

## **RESPONSE FROM APPLICANT DAINA MCFARLANE ON THE PLANNING OFFICER COMMENTS ON PLANNING APPEAL**

There are no available equivalent sized units – **Applicant Response:** The planning application for Unit C is in retrospect as the applicant was completely unaware that a change of use was needed in November 2020 when the lease was taken on. In 2020 there were other available equivalent sized units and over the past year other units have been available and since been let for example next door Unit B.

Potential harm caused by the loss of this allocated floorspace, loss of up to 4 full time jobs, the opportunity for a modern apprentice, loss of local income generation and spend –

**Applicant Response:** I understand that there is potential harm from loss of this space. However, there are no guarantees that a business using this unit for industrial use would have any more employees. If you were to refuse planning then it would make me unemployed with a family of 6 to provide for. Another self-employed instructor (Arlene Botha) also uses the studio for classes and Personal Training. If the studio were to close then it would also effect the livelihood of Arlene.

There is local income generation and spend as many members attending both Arlene's and my sessions are supporting two local women running small businesses. There is also potential for more employees in the future, a cleaner and other fitness professionals.

Demand and precedent: "Smaller industrial units of 100-200m2 are in 'high demand and short supply' and there appears to be a supply of health and fitness facilities in the immediate Netherdale area: TRIfitness and Braveheart

**Applicant Response:** I understand that this size of unit is in high demand and short supply however, I have been set up here for almost 2 years. At the time of taking the lease it was only TRIfitness in the netherdale area. Braveheart moved in a year after I did. I believe that there is room for all 3 facilities at Netherdale, I am a completely different Fitness Facility. I am not a conventional gym like Tri or a weightlifting facility like Braveheart. The studio is for holistic mental & physical wellbeing. I specifically support people with health conditions such as cancer and mental health conditions. I also run girl's only group sessions for TD1 Youth. Many of my client's would not have their needs met in either of the alternative facilities.

The further comment of "the fitness centres at Tweedbank and Innerleithen were reluctantly not objected to as: seen as 'one off'; no other gyms/fitness were available in the immediate area –

**Applicant response:** This may have been the case for the Innerleithen gym. However, in Tweedbank there was also the LIVEBORDERS facility at Tweedbank running track which has a gym. Therefore, there was another facility in the immediate area however RDAS Crossfit got their planning approved.

Missing information in the application and the appeal: Number of PAYE employees, number of members – **Applicant Response:** There is myself and Arlene Botha who are instructors at

the studio. I also have another instructor who covers holidays. In the future I hope to provide a job for a cleaner and other instructors however this has been put on hold until a decision has been made by the local review body.

I have 65 monthly paying members at the moment with good projections for the future. This is a mixture of class memberships and Personal training memberships. I also have approximately 15 pay as you go client's. Arlene has approximately 20 client's attending her classes and 7 personal training members.

Suggestion: there are a number of shop vacancies in Galashiels so a list of the available retail outlets and why they are not suitable could be helpful – **Applicant Response:** Below is a list of properties in the town centre and the reason why they are not suitable.

- 1) Douglas Bridge, Galashiels, 474sqm – too expensive for rent and rates. Too expensive to refurbish as a studio.
- 2) 15 Channel St, Galashiels 61.45sqm – too small, too expensive.
- 3) 38 Channel St, Galashiels 423.37sqm – not suitable access for my client's upstairs. Too expensive to refurbish.
- 4) 34 Channel St, Galashiels 220sqm – Too expensive for rent. Too expensive to convert to a studio.
- 5) 64 Channel St – NOW LET
- 6) 17 Market St – NOW LET
- 7) 17 Channel St – NOW LET
- 8) 81 High St – 77SQM too small
- 9) 20-32 Channel St – Too expensive to rent and convert to a studio.

None of the above have ample parking for busy class times.

As stated in my appeal and now here. I have invested a huge amount of personal finance and business finance in converting and setting up Unit C as a Fitness and Wellbeing studio. It would not be possible financially for the business to relocate at this time. Thank you for reading these comments.