



APPLICATION FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OF  
THE BUILDING TO INDOOR CHILDREN'S PLAY  
CENTRE (D2 USE CLASS ASSEMBLY AND LEISURE)

UNIT 16A WEAVER INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

BRUNSWICK STREET

LIVERPOOL L19 8JA

## PLANNING STATEMENT

on behalf of  
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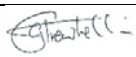
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### Document Control

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Signature 	Signature: 

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This planning statement is provided in support of a planning application for a material change of use of Unit 16a, Brunswick Street, Weaver Industrial Estate from B8 Use Class (Storage and Distribution) to D2 (Leisure and Assembly). The proposed use of the unit is for a children's indoor soft play centre. The statement sets out the relevant planning policy for the change of use proposal, and in turn, demonstrates that it is consistent with this policy.

## Planning History

- 1.2 The following planning applications taken from Liverpool City Council's portal are relevant to the site and the proposal:
- 16F/1810 - Change of use of the building to indoor trampoline park (D2 Use Class Assembly and Leisure). The site consists of a unit within the Compass East Industrial Estate with a B2/B8 use located in a primarily industrial area approximately 2 miles from the proposed application site. It was granted consent on 21/09/2016.
  - 10F/0719 – to use industrial unit as a children's indoor soft play centre. Located at Unit 2, Skypark International, 1-3 Blenheim Way, this site is also located within a primarily industrial area and had a B2/B8 use class prior to this application for D2 use being granted on 07/06/2010.
  - 09F/0881 – to change use of premises to a training centre (Class D1). Located at Unit 3, Skypark, 7 Blenheim Way, this site had a B1 use before being granted consent for a change of use to D1 on 04/06/2009.
- 1.3 The above permissions demonstrate that three previous applications to change the use of premises on nearby industrial estates to D1 and D2 uses have been supported.

## Planning Application Submission

- 1.4 The planning application package consists of the following:
- Application form, certificate and fee
  - Location plan with site edged red
  - Existing floor plan
  - Proposed floor plan
  - Proposed Site Plan
  - Front/entrance elevations
  - Planning statement
- 1.5 As it is a change of use planning application there is no requirement for the submission of Design & Access statement.

## 2. The site and its surroundings

- 2.1 The site is located on the edge of the Weaver Industrial Estate in Garston. Blackburne Street provides the main vehicular access to the Estate; however the application site has a dedicated access and parking on Brunswick Street.
- 2.2 There is a number of varying sized units throughout the Estate with use classes A2, B1, B2 and B8 all currently present.
- 2.3 To the north of the Estate is an extensive residential area, including new residential developments off King Street on the approach to the Estate. East of the site are allotments and the entrance to Liverpool Sailing Club, beyond which is the Estuary Commerce Park and Speke Hall Industrial Estate. To the south is the River Mersey and Garston Port operates to the west.
- 2.4 There are a number of bus routes nearby with regular services to Liverpool City Centre via the southern suburbs of Aigburth and Allerton. Bus stops are located on Blackburne Street, Windfield Road, Window Lane and Banks Road, all within a few minutes' walk from the site.
- 2.5 The building is a brick built warehouse building. It is c.21,000ft<sup>2</sup> (1,950m<sup>2</sup>) in floor area and is 6m to eaves and 11m to the ridge. It has existing toilet facilities and connections to mains services.
- 2.6 Externally, there are marked and unmarked parking areas to the side/rear of the building accessed through the Estate, and an unmarked parking area off Brunswick Street. The indicative site plan shows a capacity of at least 59 marked parking spaces, including 6 disabled bays. There are two existing access points. Vehicular access is available to both the rear (through the Estate) or from Brunswick Street via the existing unmarked car park.
- 2.7 Figure 2.1 provide photographs of the building.

## 3. The Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal involves the change of use of the building to an indoor children's play centre. The proposal also includes changes to the eastern elevation of the building to create a dedicated access off Brunswick Street.
- 3.2 It is the intention to establish an indoor soft play centre that also accommodates children with special requirements, creating a safe play environment for children living with autism, mobility impairments and other communication, social and learning difficulties.
- 3.3 There will be some minor alterations to the internal configurations of the building to facilitate the new use. The proposed internal layout plan shows the principal areas and uses within the building. There is a doorway on the southern elevation which leads to a loading bay and parking area which will be used for deliveries and staff. The new doorway to the front elevation and the existing rear/side access are at grade with the forecourt and provide appropriate access for mobility impaired and those with push chairs.
- 3.4 The rear/side forecourt and parking area will remain unchanged. To the front of the property, the existing parking area will be formalised with bay markings and appropriate footpaths created where none exist to ensure safe access for visitors with push chairs and wheelchairs.

- 3.5 Cycle storage facilities will be provided close to the front entrance to the building on Brunswick Street. In addition external waste and recycling storage will be provided at the side/rear entrance so there will be no need for refuse vehicles or deliveries to enter the customer parking area.
- 3.6 It is proposed to operate the indoor play centre from 10am to 8pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm on Saturday and 9am to 7pm on Sunday. An estimated 10 full time and 15 part time staff will be employed at the play centre.

## **4. Planning Policy Context**

- 4.1 The site is located on land designated as Primarily Industrial Area on the Liverpool UDP Proposals Map. Policies relating to industrial/business uses will be relevant. In addition, as the proposal is for a commercial leisure uses, policies relating to retail/leisure development will also be relevant
- 4.2 National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and relevant saved policies within the Liverpool UDP (November 2002) will apply to this proposal. There is no Neighbourhood Plan either in progress or 'made' for this area.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 4.3 Paragraph 19 states that the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Paragraph 22 states that planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for that purpose. Applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.
- 4.4 Economic development is defined, within the Glossary to the Framework, as development, including those within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and the main town centre uses (but excluding housing development). Leisure facilities are defined within the Glossary as a main town centre use.
- 4.5 Paragraph 24 states that local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up-to-date local plan. Impact assessments should also be undertaken if the development is over 2,500 Sq. m floor space.

### **Liverpool Unitary Development Plan**

- 4.6 According to the Framework the weight attached to policies within local plans adopted prior to 2004 will be determined by their degree of consistency with the NPPF. The closer the policies in the plan are to the policies in the Framework the greater the weight that may be given to them.

### **Policy E1: Primarily Industrial Area**

- 4.7 This policy seeks to allow permission for B1, B2 and B8 uses on land designated as primarily industrial Area. Planning permission for other uses will only be granted
- if it acts as a catalyst for comprehensive redevelopment for industrial/business uses;
  - would not prejudice the long term development of the area for industrial/business uses;
  - does not involve development of a warehouse in the City Centre over 2,500 sq. m;

- does not cause unacceptable traffic and highway congestion; and
- does not conflict with other policies in the plan.

4.8 This policy does not comply with the Framework. It does not include leisure development as economic development and it provides no criteria in relation to alternative developments should development for the existing industrial/business designation not be forthcoming. As such this policy should be afforded limited weight.

#### **Policy E9: Leisure Development**

4.9 Proposals for leisure development in locations outside the City and District Centres will be granted provided:

- i. There is a need for the proposal and that a sequential approach to the site selection has been adopted
- ii. The design and scale of the proposal is appropriate
- iii. Residential amenity is not affected
- iv. Highway, traffic and servicing is appropriate
- v. It does not undermine the vitality and viability of nearby Town or District Centres.
- vi. The site is accessible to non-car modes of transport
- vii. The proposal doesn't prejudice or undermine other plan policies or objectives

4.10 In relation to part (i) above the requirement to identify a 'need' for the proposal does not comply with the Framework and therefore no weight should be attached to this element of the policy.

#### **Policy T12: Car parking provisions in the new development**

4.11 This policy also relates to change of use proposals. Parking provision should meet the minimum operational needs of the development. Additional parking will be determined by:

- The nature and type of use;
- Whether off street car parking would result in a highway safety issue;
- Whether the locality is served by public car parking facilities;
- Whether off-site parking would result in demonstrable harm to residential amenity; and
- The relative accessibility of the site by public transport services

#### **Policy T13: Car Parking for the Disabled**

4.12 A minimum of 6% of spaces should be for disabled persons and parking bays should be wide enough to facilitate the easy transfer of a wheelchair into and out of the car. Disabled bays should be clearly marked.

#### **Policy HD19: Access for All**

4.13 All new non-residential development proposals should provide suitable provision for disabled persons and access/egress from existing buildings is improved as opportunities arise through changes of use and alterations.

- 4.14 The above policies on parking and access are supported by an SPD Ensuring a Choice of Travel and SPD Design for Access for All.

## **5. Consistency with Planning Policy**

### **Loss of Employment**

- 5.1 As stated in section 4 it is considered that policy E1 of the Liverpool UDP does not in its entirety comply with the Framework (particularly criteria 1) and therefore should be afforded limited weight. Nevertheless, it is argued that the change of use of this unit does not prejudice the long term development of the area for industrial/business use. In fact it is argued that the proposal relates to economic development as defined in the Framework and therefore delivers business development in the area. Furthermore, the proposal for a change of use to D2 with minimal interventions could be easily reversed back to B2/B8 use. The basic infrastructure will remain within the building and across its external areas.
- 5.2 Criteria 3 of policy E1 does not apply. Criteria 4 and 5 of policy E1 will be dealt with under separate policy headings.
- 5.3 It is clear from the Framework that land should not be protected in the long term for industrial uses where there is no reasonable prospect of that use coming forward. The premises have been used sporadically for short term storage and are currently used for storage by the owner's family. Therefore an alternative use such as that proposed which is considered economic development complies with this policy within the Framework.
- 5.4 It is considered that the proposal complies with the relevant guidance within the Framework and those relevant saved criteria within policy E1 of the UDP.

### **Town Centre uses**

- 5.5 Planning policy requires a sequential test to be undertaken to assess whether there are any suitable sites in or on the edge of nearby centres (defined as within 200-300 metres of the District Centre boundary in Paragraph 6.169 of the UDP). The nearest district centres in the application site are Garston and Speke.

### **Garston District Centre**

- 5.6 The Garston District Centre as designated in the UDP is shown at Figure 5.1. It includes the retail units along St. Mary's Road which are predominantly terraced properties with ground floor retail and other uses and the retail parade along Speke Road.
- 5.7 The boundary of the Garston District Centre within the Liverpool Draft Local Plan remains relatively unchanged.
- 5.8 There have been a number of recent developments within and adjacent to the District Centre including the South Liverpool NHS Treatment Centre, Dunelm, Enterprise South Liverpool Academy and the redevelopment of the former Garston Bus Depot into mixed use residential apartment blocks with ground floor commercial/retail units. A planning application to develop a supermarket on land currently occupied by the Alexandra pub, Fun Town and an area of grassland has been approved, but not yet implemented.
- 5.9 There are currently three vacant sites within Garston District Centre:

- Former Garston baths – 0.3 ha/ 0.74 acre vacant site located on Speke Road. The site has planning permission for retail development with service delivery and car parking. There is also a lapsed permission for 68 apartments and 5 ground floor retail units plus 69 car parking spaces. This site is not suitable due to its size and the prohibitive cost of having to redevelop the site and construct a bespoke building for use as an indoor children's play centre.
- Shop to rent on St Marys Road – 16,164sq.ft. The site forms part of a roadside shopping parade. This site is not suitable due to its size and ceiling height.
- The only other vacant location is also on St Marys Road and comprises an assortment of serviced offices ranging from 480-7,000sq.ft. As these are part of a larger complex, they would not be suitable for the proposed use, nor are they suitably sized for this type of use.

5.10 There is one property that could be considered 'on the edge' of the Garston District Centre on Lowbridge Crescent. This retail property comprises just 896sq.ft, has insufficient parking, access and ceiling height.

### **Speke District Centre**

5.11 The Speke District Centre as designated in the UDP (Figure 5.2) bears little relationship to the centre that exists within Speke today. Since the adoption of the UDP there has been significant development in the area with the core retail offer moving north towards the A561 Speke Boulevard. This includes a Morrison's Supermarket with a petrol filling station, Speke Retail Park and other non-food retail units. To the south is Parklands High School and Austin Rawlinson Leisure Centre along with associated outdoor playing pitches and facilities.

5.12 The proposed Speke District Centre in the Draft Liverpool Local Plan covers the extent of 'The Speke Centre'.

5.13 There are no buildings or sites currently for lease or sale in the Speke District Centre or within 300m of its boundary as shown in the current UDP or in the Draft Local Plan.

### **Conclusions on the Sequential Test Exercise**

5.14 The specific requirements of the proposed use include: a dedicated car park with space for the creation of extra disabled bays; separate access for deliveries; a large open space c.21,000sq.ft; within a residential catchment area for pedestrian access; within close proximity to public transport; ceiling height of at least 6 metres.

5.15 It can be concluded from the above analysis that there are no sequentially preferable sites that could achieve and deliver the proposed indoor children's soft play centre within the nearest district centres or within 300m of their boundaries. It is considered that the proposal will not harm the vitality or viability of these nearest centres and as such it complies with the relevant policies.

### **Access**

5.16 The unit has level access from the forecourt into the building and therefore is accessible for wheelchairs and pushchair users. It therefore complies with policies relating to access for all.

5.17 In addition, there are two vehicular access points to the site, one for staff/deliveries to the side/rear of the property and one dedicated access on Brunswick Street for customers which will allow access without the need to travel through the Weaver Industrial Estate.

## Parking

- 5.18 The proposal includes provisions for 59 no. car parking spaces. Although this is less than the car parking standards within the SPD Ensuring a Choice of Travel it is considered acceptable for the following reasons:
- There are multiple bus stops within a few minutes' walk of the application site and regular services within the South Liverpool area to the city centre.
  - The site is located within walking distance of a large residential catchment area within Garston and Speke including the new housing estates at King Street/Banks Road and Imagine Park on Speke Hall Avenue.
- 5.19 Secure cycle parking provision is proposed and will be located close to the front entrance to the building. This will provide an alternative means for staff and visitors to travel to the premises.
- 5.20 Six car parking spaces are proposed for disabled use and will be marked accordingly. These are located adjacent to the pavement thus allowing easier access for mobility impaired drivers or their passengers. These spaces represent 14% of the total spaces. This exceeds the recommended standards but is needed because of the ambition to provide a facility for mobility impaired children.
- 5.21 The vehicular and cycle provision is considered to be acceptable in the context of the site's location and the close proximity of regular public transport services.

## 6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposed development seeks a material change of use of the premises from B2/B8 use class to D2 use class. The building is proposed to be used as an indoor children's soft play centre with associated amenity facilities.
- 6.2 The Statement has analysed relevant planning policies, specifically in relation to the loss of employment land, a town centre use located outside a town centre and parking and access. It has found that the proposal is consistent with relevant national and local planning policies. As such the proposal is a form of sustainable development that should be granted planning permission without delay.
- 6.3 There are specific requirements for the use proposed, including a large, uninterrupted activity space and easy accessibility by public transport and private cars. The latter is important if the needs of mobility impaired children are to be served. These requirements cannot be met through the available building stock in nearby district centres (or within 300m of their boundaries). The application premises is ideally located and the new use will provide an amenity for the local community which complements other uses in this business area while bringing economic benefits in its own right.

Figure 2.1

Photographs of Unit 16a

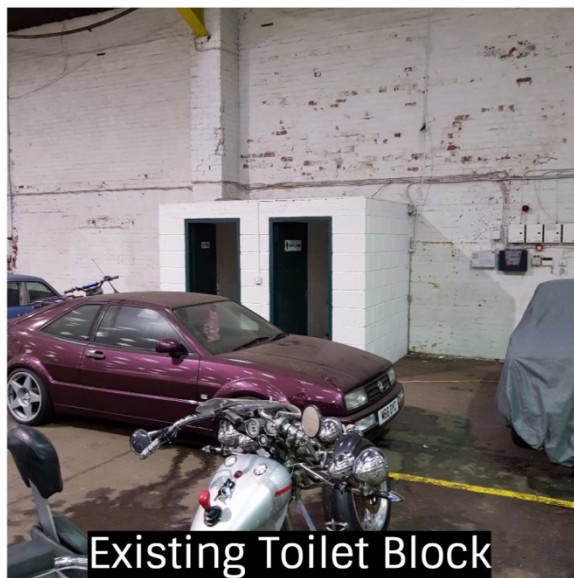
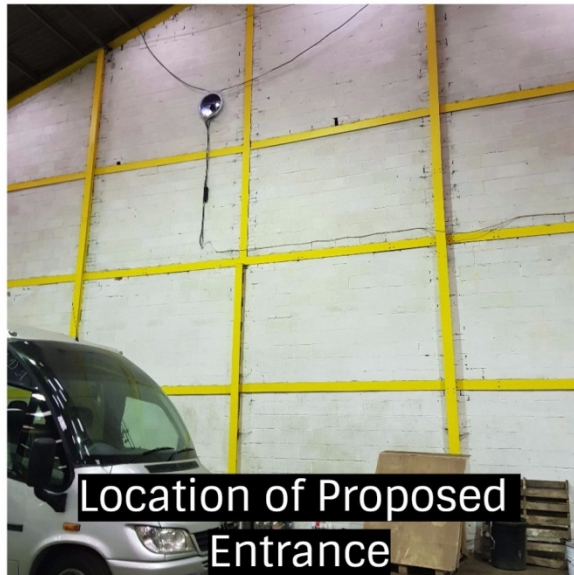


Figure 5.1

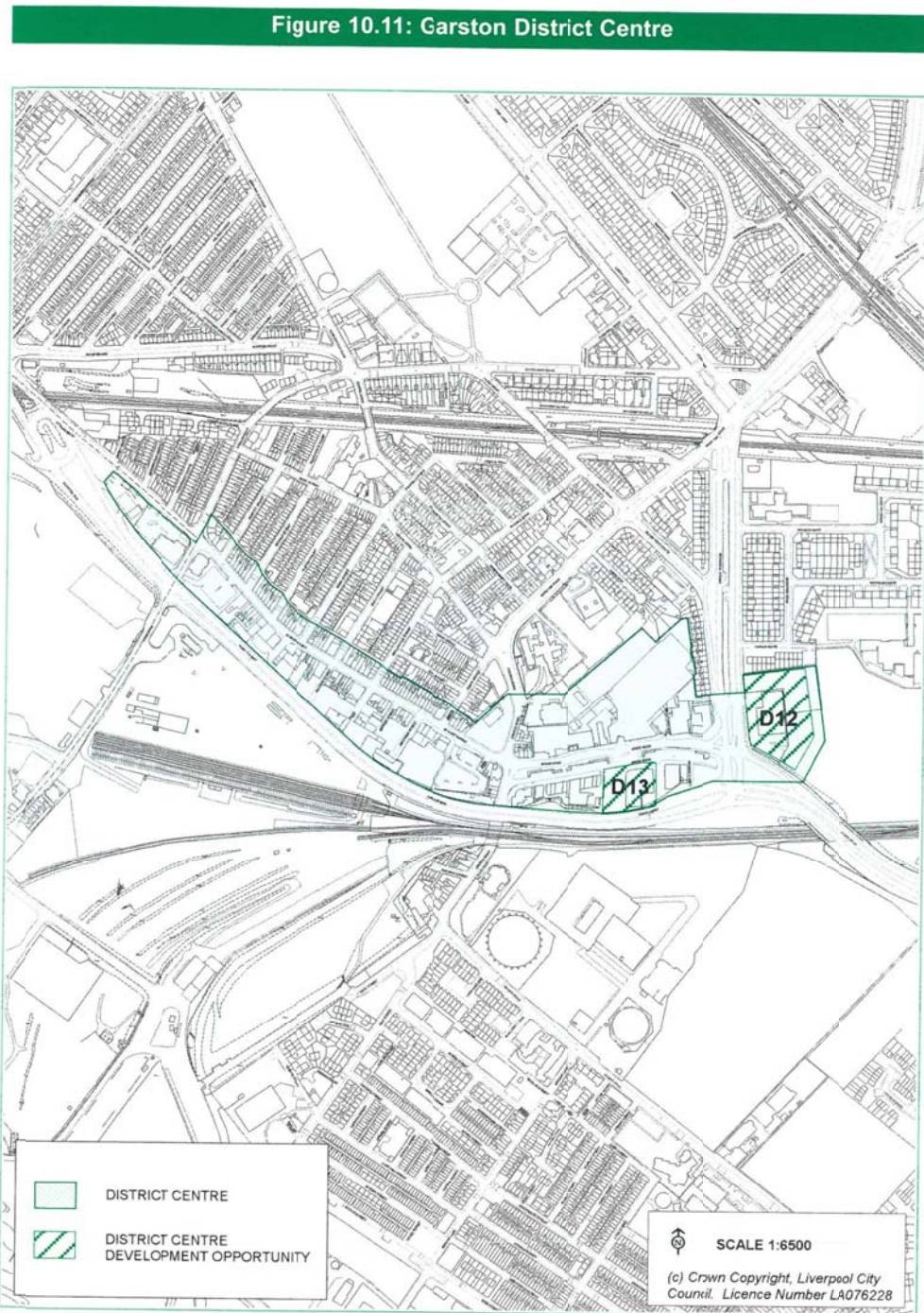


Figure 5.2

