

## **The Proposal**

**Proposed change of use from warehouse to gymnasium**

**Unit 9, Durban Road Business Centre, Durban Road, Bognor Regis, PO22 9FE**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Unit 9 is a vacant warehouse/industrial unit at Durban Road Business Centre. It forms part of a group of 9 units owned by Petchey Holdings PLC. There are 67 parking spaces available for use by the occupiers and visitors to the 9 units.

## **2.0 The Proposal**

- 2.1 Fitness First which had premises in Bognor Regis has closed. It had about 3500 members and the applicant has identified a need for replacement gymnasium facilities to cater for those who have either joined sub-standard gyms in the area or have so far not found an alternative gym. The applicant and his partners have a combined experience of over a century in gym usage between them; they know what works and what is needed. They have carried out field interviews to gauge the demand in the area. They know that existing gymnasiums in the area are unable to cope with current demand and are having to place restrictions on their members.
- 2.2 It is proposed to change the use of the vacant unit 9 to a gymnasium (Class D2). No changes are proposed to the external elevations of the building except for changes to the existing signage. The existing roller shutter door would remain. Internally no structural changes are proposed. The existing floor space would be used as a training area. It would not be subdivided or partitioned. 12mm thick rubber flooring would be laid across the entire training area. An existing toilet at the back of the premises would be refurbished and an existing office at the front of the premises would be converted into a small reception area. A small bench would be provided in the disabled toilet so that members would be able to use the toilet to get changed. Lockers would be provided for members to store clothing and valuables. A cycle rack for 10 bicycles is proposed adjacent to the entrance to the premises.

## **3.0 Capacity of the premises**

- 3.1 The maximum number of people the proposed gymnasium would be able to accommodate at any one time is 30 but the applicant considers that this would be achieved on very few occasions.

## **4.0 Catering for people with a disability**

- 4.1 There is level access into the building and it has a toilet specifically designed to meet the needs of people with a disability. The applicant would welcome membership applications from people with a disability.

## **5.0 Proposed hours of opening**

- 5.1 The applicant proposes to offer a 7 day a week service between the hours of 6am and 10pm. However, this would be reviewed after the gymnasium has opened and the applicant has a better understanding of the level of demand from members. To be clear, the hours of opening would not increase and may be less than is initially proposed.

- 5.2 From the research undertaken by the applicant the peak times are expected to be early morning (from 6am to 8.30am) and early evening (from 5.30pm to 9pm). Between 8.30am and 5.30pm it is expected there will be a few people using the facilities and between 9pm and 10pm there will be some late night trainers.

## **6.0 Noise**

- 6.1 The 12mm thick rubber flooring which is to be laid throughout the entire training area is very hard wearing, impact reducing and sound absorbing. It is used in commercial gyms worldwide. A 'no banging or dropping the weights' policy would be enforced. The reception area would also act as a shield, reducing the amount of noise generated by the activities inside the gymnasium that would be heard outside. The premises have no windows through which noise could escape.
- 6.2 A music service would be offered via a multi-speaker setup inside the gymnasium. The volume would not be any louder than the noise generated by the activities being carried out inside the surrounding business premises.

## **7.0 Catchment area**

- 7.1 People who were members of Fitness First live in Bognor Regis, Littlehampton, Barnham, Walbuton, Chichester and places in between. The applicant proposes to distribute leaflets and mailshots to residents in these places as well as carrying out face to face recruitment in the town centres. The applicant would also seek to attract university students and staff who would be able to use the gym on a discount basis and NHS workers and members of the armed forces who would be able to use the gym free of charge. The gymnasium is located close to the homes of many people in Bognor Regis and there many places of work nearby. The applicant therefore expects many members would choose to walk or cycle to the gymnasium from their homes or places of work.

## **8.0 Cycle Parking**

- 8.1 The applicant proposes to promote travel to the gymnasium by cycling and would provide a cycle rack for 10 bicycles. An example of the type of cycle rack that is proposed is submitted with this application and this would be located in the place shown shaded green on the submitted 1:500 plan.

## **9.0 Vehicular Traffic and Car Parking**

- 9.1 It is estimated that there would be no more than 10 vehicles per hour going to and from unit 9 at the busiest times. At other times it is estimated there would be 3 or 4 vehicles per hour going to and from unit 9. There are 67 parking spaces associated with the 9 units. The majority of visitors to the gymnasium would be arriving at times when the other businesses are not operating and so the existing car parking provision would be more than sufficient to serve members who travel to the gymnasium by car. Whilst there are no marked disabled parking spaces any members who have a disability and travel by car would have no problem finding a parking space because there would be a surplus of spaces.

