

Planning Committee

11 March 2010

Reference:
APP/09/06553

Area Team:
South Team

Case Officer:
Miss A McDougall

Ward:
Bromborough

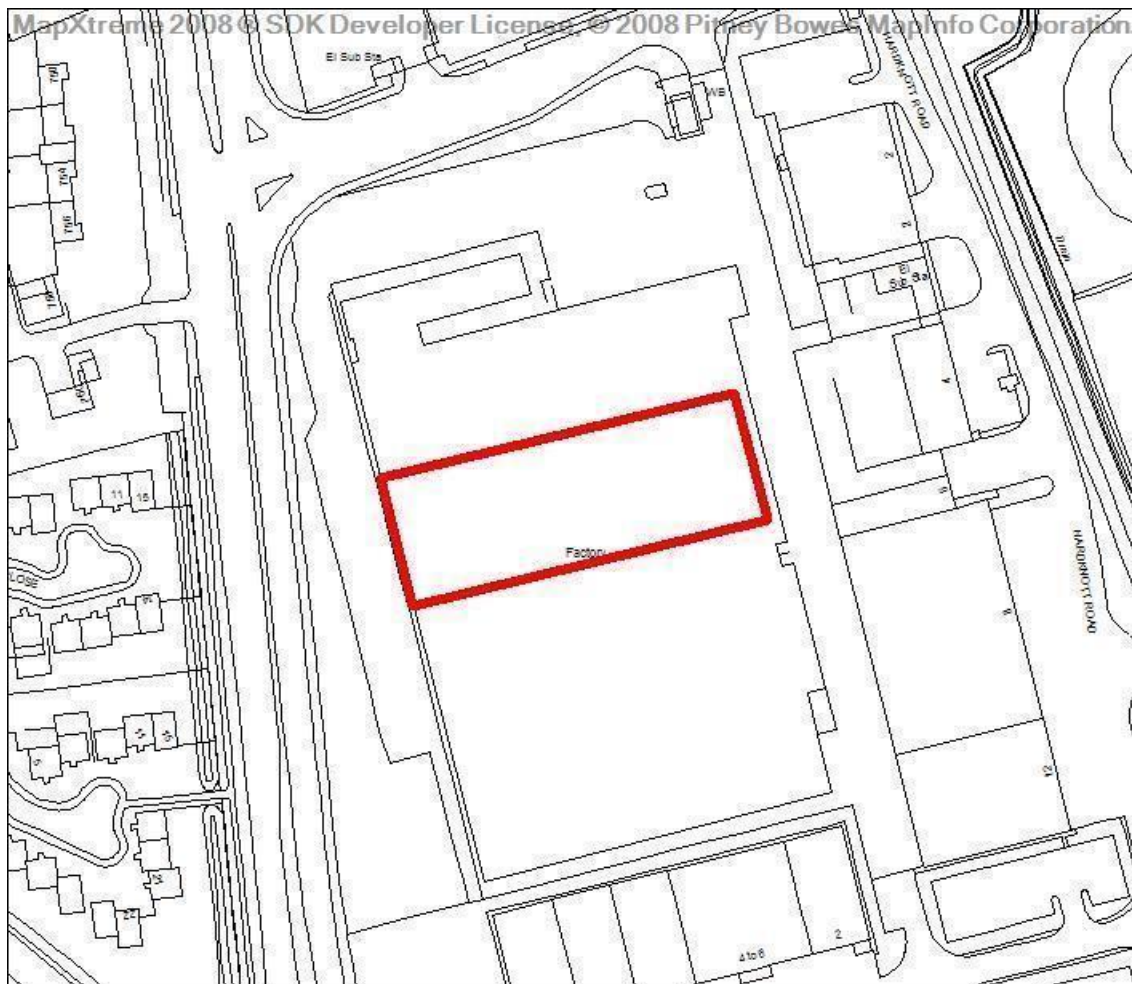
Location:
Proposal:

Candy Park 1, NEW CHESTER ROAD, BROMBOROUGH
Change of use of vacant warehouse to create an Indoor Cricket Centre dedicated predominantly to the sport of Indoor Cricket (with associated practice / training facilities). The facility also to offer/incorporate (at various times) indoor sports courts to accommodate the playing of indoor hockey, bowls, volleyball and football, together a viewing / cafe zone, toilets, changing / showering facilities, and reception / office area

Applicant:
Agent :

eight4sport
Gee Squared Ltd

Site Plan:



Development Plan allocation and policies:

Primarily Industrial Area

Planning History:

There are no similar applications on this site at this location, previous permissions have been for signage.

Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:

REPRESENTATIONS

A site notice was displayed. Letters of notification have been sent to properties in the area. At the time of writing this report no objections have been received.

33 Letters of support have been submitted listing the following grounds;

- community benefit
- vital addition to leisure facilities
- promotion of active lifestyles
- introduction into sports
- access to sports/fitness
- all year provision of sports

Letters of support were included within the Eight 4 Sport Statement of Demand from Indoor Cricket England and local sports clubs

CONSULTATIONS

Director of Regeneration: Housing & Environmental Protection Division: No objection

Northwest Regional Development Agency: Concerns regarding the compatibility of the leisure use within the International Business Park and would be concerned if the use reduced available provision for B1, B2 and B8 uses.

Director's Comments:

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

Councillor Niblock is in support of this application and requests the application be taken out of delegation for the following reasons;

- the proposal would be unique to Wirral, there being only 2 other such facilities in the country
- the premise has not been used for some time despite being marketed
- other sites have been checked and discounted
- when in operation it would provide employment and training opportunities

INTRODUCTION

The proposal is for a change of use of an existing vacant industrial unit into a multi sports centre, with the inclusion of a viewing/cafe zone, toilets, changing facilities and a reception area.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The proposal is for a leisure use located within a Primarily Industrial Area, the proposal is therefore unacceptable in principle.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The building is an existing industrial unit that forms part of a large brick and metal unit, there is a tile warehouse to the side, car parking to the front and rear. The unit is accessed via Old Hall Road and forms part of the industrial park, there are residential properties to the west of the site facing the unit from New Chester Road.

POLICY CONTEXT

The unit is located within a Primarily Industrial Area in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and is within the Wirral International Business Park which is identified by the NWDA as a Strategic Regional Site.

The application is contrary to UDP Proposal EM8, which only makes provision for B1, B2 and B8 uses subject to UDP Policies EM6, 7 and 9. Safeguarding the long term supply of employment land is one of the main purposes of the development plan. RSS Policy W2 indicates that sites for regionally significant economic development should not be used for development that could be accommodated elsewhere and they should not be developed piecemeal.

UDP Policies REC1 and RE1 do make provision for sport and recreation facilities in urban areas that are easily accessible by public transport. However, these need to be considered alongside more recent regional and national planning policy. RSS Policy L1 sets the regional approach to health, sport, recreation, cultural and education services. This indicates that an assessment of demographic needs should be carried out and that accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling should be a central consideration. The applicant indicates that there will be demand from local clubs and customers within the wider sub region because there are no similar facilities in the region. While National Policy in PPS4 encourages a positive approach to economic development in general, Policy EC17 requires applications of this type to be assessed against the sequential test that puts town centres first, and number of impact tests. The sequential approach is also supported by National Planning Policy in PPG17. The applicant has provided an assessment under the old PPS6 requirements, but this does not include information on alternative sites in more central locations with reasons for discounting them.

It is claimed that the site has been marketed for 3 years, and the applicant has indicated a willingness to accept a temporary permission for a period of 5 years. While this can be taken into account, the Council resolved on 2 November 2009 that the Employment Land & Premises Study will be material in the determination of planning applications (minute 49 refers). This shows a shortage in the long term supply of employment land for the Borough and indicates there will be a need to replace the Wirral International Business Park in the medium to long term. The study recommends that employment land in this area should be retained for employment (B1, B2, B8) uses. Council records show that there were 388 enquires from businesses seeking accommodation in Wirral 2008-2010 for which 211 were for industrial uses excluding offices.

It should be noted that planning permission for a sports academy was granted at Planning Committee in October 2009, reference APP/09/05686. This was a stand alone building and is not considered to be a reason for overriding the development plan in this particular case. Even if it can be shown that there are no town centre sites available for the proposed use, it is contended that the proposal in the centre of a larger building would be out of character with surrounding uses. The NWDA have expressed these concerns in their response to consultation on the application.

APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES

The proposal is to be located within an existing industrial unit, the main changes to the unit would be internal. The proposal however is unacceptable by reason of the proposed use, the site is identified as an industrial area and as such there is insufficient evidence to show the loss of an existing industrial unit in place for a leisure use.

SEPARATION DISTANCES

Separation distances do not apply in this instance, as no residential properties will be affected by the proposed development.

HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS

There are no Highway Implications relating to this proposal.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

There are no Environmental/Sustainability issues relating to these proposals.

CONCLUSION

The proposal is unacceptable by reason of the proposed use within an industrial area, there is insufficient evidence to warrant overriding the current policies.

Summary of Decision:

Having regards to the individual merits of this application the decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regards to the relevant Policies and Proposals in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2000) and all relevant material considerations including national and regional policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following:-

The proposal is unacceptable by reason of the proposed use within an industrial area, there is insufficient evidence to warrant overriding the current policies.

Recommended Decision: Refuse

Recommended Conditions and Reasons:

1. The site is within the Wirral International Business Park, which is identified by the NWDA as a Strategic Regional Site and is designated as a Primarily Industrial Area in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The application is contrary to UDP Policy EM8, which only makes provision for development within Use Classes B1, B2 or B8 of the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and Policy W2 in the Regional Spatial Strategy, which indicates that site should not be used for development that can be accommodated elsewhere and should not be developed in a piecemeal manner. No material considerations have been identified sufficient to warrant overriding this designation.
2. Insufficient information has been provided to show that the requirements of National Planning Policies PPS 4 "Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth" & PPG17 "Planning for New Open Space and Sports and Recreational Facilities" can be met.

Last Comments By: 23/02/2010 10:04:22

Expiry Date: 19/03/2010