

PLANNING STATEMENT

**IN SUPPORT OF PLANNING APPLICATION AT
TAYLOR MADE TRAINING STUDIOS
OWL'S VIEW
SHIPTON ROAD
MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD
OX7 6JT**

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CONTENTS	Page No.
1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
2.0 THE PROPOSAL	1
3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY	2
4.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK AND MAIN PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS	4
5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	9

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been produced in order to support a planning application at an existing commercial site on Shipton Road, in Milton-under-Wychwood, that concerns itself with the now proposed extension of that commercial use on the site.
- 1.2 Taylor Made Training is a private gym facility that run a one-to-one personal fitness training business. It is not a commercial gym in the conventional sense, as each training session is provided on a personal basis, with exclusive use of an individual studio and with a personal trainer. The existing training facility comprises of 2no. personal training studios, contained within a detached, single storey building on the site.
- 1.3 The site, as a whole, also contains other existing buildings within it – the applicant’s family home, livery stables, stores, a menage, some fields, plus areas of hardstanding for car parking and general vehicle manoeuvring, all accessed off a track entrance from Shipton Road.
- 1.4 The proposal at hand essentially now involves the expansion of the personal gym business on site by the creation of 4no. new training studios within a new building. This Statement should be read in conjunction with a Design & Access Statement produced by AJP Design and which sets out in further detail the main design related considerations that stand behind and in support of this proposal too.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal seeks permission for the erection of a new, detached building, to house 4no. training studios (with ancillary changing rooms and waiting/reception facilities) and provision of an additional area of on-site car parking to accommodate 3no. extra cars. There is also additional Informal capacity within the site for further parking if the need were to ever arise.

- 2.2 The new training studio building is set to be located within the site, behind the existing studio building and stables, alongside an existing shed building on the adjacent site, and to the rear of the menage.
- 2.3 The new building has a traditional, pitched roof form akin to a typical, agricultural barn-like appearance. It is proposed to be constructed with timber clad facing set under a corrugated metal roof. In terms of its overall height, it is proposed to be very similar to the existing adjacent shed building (not taller than it) and to sit proportionately in form and scale with it, given the relative change in levels.
- 2.4 The 3no. additional formally arranged car parking spaces are set to be created out of a slight rearrangement of the existing yard area provision, along with a small area of field, between the track access and the menage being used too.
- 2.5 The 4no. new training studios will create 6-8no. additional new jobs in terms of additional fitness trainers and support staff, the majority of which will be recruited from the local area.
- 2.6 The proposed expanded business is set to operate on a daily basis in terms of its hours of operation, Mondays to Fridays 7:00am to 9:00pm and at reduced hours 7:00am to 1:00pm on Saturdays/Sundays/Bank Holidays. These are slightly increased hours of use from the existing (in the early morning and evening periods) and are included now to look to make the facility accessible for local users for fitness training before and after normal working hours.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 This proposal has recently been subject to a formal pre-application enquiry, application reference 20/03506/PREAPP.
- 3.2 The short sum of the pre-application advice feedback received from the Council was that planning policy support exists for the principle of new development in Milton-under-Wychwood, particularly that which helps to

maintain the vitality of the community (as the proposal plainly would), but that the size and location of the new studio building proposed at the time of the pre-application submission was basically too large and in the wrong location on site.

- 3.3 Accordingly, in coming forward now with this full planning application, the proposal essentially sees both the size and siting of the new studio building changed: (i) its footprint form is made smaller (by nearly 20%) and its size reduced too (by almost 40% in volume. A combined, significant reduction in size overall therefore. And (ii) the siting of the new studio building is relocated, away from the more prominent, open eastern part of the site as seen from the road, to a rear set position tucked away and set amongst the cluster of existing buildings both within the site itself and upon the adjacent plot too. Again, a significant and now more discrete and appropriate position for a new building on the site, compared to the previously identified position.
- 3.4 This re-positioning, away from the existing site frontage area, also now acknowledges the findings of an appeal decision for 2no. dwellings on land beyond, further to the eastern edge of the site from 2016 (application reference 15/03356/FUL) wherein, in dismissing an appeal, the planning inspector came to the basic view that in potentially developing that land, it would come to harm an “undeveloped gap ... at the entrance to Milton-under-Wychwood when approaching from the south-east”, and so “erode the open character and quality of the countryside by extending development further along Shipton Road in an undesirable fashion.” So now, in this full planning application, re-locating the position of the new studio building back into and fully within the site, and alongside existing other buildings, this avoids both any concerns of the possible coalescence of adjoining settlements as expressed by the Inspector in the cited appeal, and in addition deals too with comments made by the Council at the positioning of the building then shown at the pre-application stage. All such linked concerns, both in relation the appeal scheme and the pre-application scheme, now entirely overcome therefore.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK AND MAIN PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires planning applications and planning appeals to be determined in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise.

4.2 The relevant overall Development Plan for the area currently comprises those policies contained in the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031. Reference to the policies of the Local Plan deemed relevant to the consideration of this application is made in the latter section of this Statement. Before that, reference is made to the relevant national level planning policies.

Government Planning Guidance

4.3 Government guidance as a material consideration relevant to the consideration of this application can be found in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) February 2019.

National Planning Policy Framework

4.4 At paragraph 1 the NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied.

Achieving Sustainable Development

4.5 The NPPF at paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 continues on to state that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, and that these overarching objectives are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

- **An economic objective** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land

of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

- **A social objective** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of the present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect the community's current and future needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **An environmental objective** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land; helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

4.6 It is clear that if the proposal is looked at across those 3 fronts that it complies with its salient tests. It will make a positive contribution to the local economy, both in the initial construction phase on a temporary basis in terms of job and work creation, and then permanently through the lifetime of its use as a gym, bringing additional people into the local area to use the gym and to work in it and who will help to cross support local services and businesses within Milton-under-Wychwood itself and those in neighbouring villages too, with linked trip local purchases. In a related vein it will perform a social role too by assisting to sustain the life of the village with new job creation as stated and with the spin-off benefits that brings through the introduction of an expanded commercial facility within the village, which will assist with its general vitality and vibrancy. In environmental terms, the site and the use is in the right place inasmuch that it is set within an existing, developed commercial site, alongside existing buildings and located within the established village settlement pattern.

The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

4.7 The NPPF establishes at paragraph 10 a presumption in favour of sustainable development and recognises at paragraph 11 that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and for decision-taking this means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

4.8 It is submitted (below) that the proposal is in accord with the relevant policy provisions of an up-to-date development plan, i.e. the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, and that therefore the presumption in favour of the development applies and that this proposal for the site should be approved on this basis alone.

Building a Strong, Competitive Economy

4.9 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF makes clear that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt and that *significant weight* [my emphasis] should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. This clear Government direction could not be more germane to the proper consideration of this application.

Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy

4.10 Mindful that the site stands in a rural area, paragraph 83 of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions in such areas should enable, inter alia, the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas. The proposal for an expanded gym use, within an established and existing commercial site, plainly meets this criterion too of the Government's support for new rural business enterprise.

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (WOLP)

- 4.11 Policy OS1 of the WOLP sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and follows the tests of the relevant NPPF advice set out above in this matter. In that regard, it has already been set out in full that the proposal represents a clearly defined sustainable form of development and is therefore fully compliant with the terms of this policy.
- 4.12 Policy OS2 sets out a settlement hierarchy for the District and which looks to 'locate development in the right places'. Milton-under-Wychwood finds itself categorised as a 'Village' where new development which helps to maintain the vitality of these communities can properly be considered and accommodated within the existing built area of such settlements. It recognises that such villages are suitable for some limited development as that helps to maintain the vibrancy and the rural life of those communities. The proposal meets squarely the locational aims of this policy in those regards and is plainly then 'in the right place' as such.
- 4.13 Policy OS3 of the WOLP looks to the prudent use of natural resources in all new development proposals, including the incorporation of sustainable design, construction techniques and principles in their production and for the use of the development over its lifetime too. The Design & Access Statement details in full the sustainability credentials of the proposal at hand and where their incorporation into the overall scheme has been factored in as an integral part of the process, from the very outset of the design process. On a wider but related consideration too, Milton-under-Wychwood of course is identified by the Council itself as one of the District's more sustainable settlements and where new development such as this is to be directed. This all goes to the thrust of the terms of this policy.
- 4.14 Policy OS4 seeks a high quality of design in all new developments, and which should relate well to the character and appearance of an area and its context. In this case, the proposal site comprises part of a plot of existing developed land, within this part of the village, surrounded on site by existing development to the same depth immediately adjoining it to the west and with the countryside running out beyond it further to the north and east beyond. It

would come to form a natural and logical addition to this cluster of buildings at this part of the site and at the edge of this part of the settlement boundary. It would not extend the built pattern of development out to the countryside beyond. In these terms, the location of the proposed new studio building is an entirely characterful and appropriate form of development. In design-built terms, it would come to follow a typical agricultural barn type building, which would complement well the form and style of the existing, surrounding development on the site and in the wider area. A full discussion of the design principles and consideration of related matters is included within the Design & Access Statement and the reader is referred to that document for completeness here.

- 4.15 Policy E5 of the WOLP concerns itself with local services and community services throughout the District and generally looks to protect and promote these facilities, particularly where these facilities assist social well-being and healthy communities. The existing gym facility would be reasonably considered as a local service under the terms of this policy, especially in so far it directly relates to the aims of promoting social well-being and healthy communities. It is submitted here that the proposal goes directly to the aims and spirit of this policy.
- 4.16 Policy T1 sets out that priority for any new development in the District will be given to locations which are deemed suitable in transport terms. Milton-under-Wychwood is identified as a village location in the WOLP, where due to the relatively convenient access it enjoys to a good range of services and facilities, including to public transport, new development therein can be supported. The application site, being within Milton-under-Wychwood, straightforwardly meets this policy test therefore.
- 4.17 Policy T4 seeks to ensure that adequate car parking is provided within all new developments. In this case, with a combination of existing car parking and some new provision too, amounting to a total of 18+ formally arranged spaces (plus informal areas for overspill parking should the need ever arise), then it is considered that there is more than adequate provision of car parking within the site as proposed, to cater for all potential customers, staff of the extended commercial facility, and the existing residents on site too.

- 4.18 Policy EH1 of the WOLP deals with all new development within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The site stands within the AONB. The policy looks to the conservation and enhancement of the area's natural beauty and its countryside landscape setting. The policy also looks to support the economy and social well-being of those communities located with the AONB. In this case, in terms of new building, the proposal takes the form of a typical, barn-like structure, in both overall agricultural form and finish, and looks to place it within the site, amongst and alongside the cluster of existing buildings within and adjacent the site. As such, it would simply come to read as just another agricultural style building, set within an existing, developed site and not extending out new built form into the wider countryside beyond. At the same time, being no taller than the neighbouring buildings, neither would it come to stand out in any prominent sense, in terms of views into the site from the countryside outside. In all of these circumstances, it is considered that the proposal would cause no harm to the landscape setting of this part of the AONB or its wider scenic beauty.
- 4.19 In addition, as stated, Policy EH1 also expressly sets out support for the economic and social well-being of communities located in the AONB. Given the proposal seeks to extend an existing business within Milton-under-Wychwood, creating local employment opportunities in doing so, and in an industry concerned with improving the social well-being of its users, then the proposal could not be better suited to this element of the stated aims of this policy.

5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The proposal at hand is supported by a raft of national, district-wide and local village based focused policies.
- 5.2 It represents the opportunity to provide an expanded local business use into the village, the like of which can only be reasonably judged to be to the positive benefit of rural communities like Milton-under-Wychwood, in terms of its economic prosperity and general vibrancy and vitality effects.

- 5.3 In building terms, it would deliver a new development of an appropriate and proportionate scale, typical in its agricultural form and appearance, and with no untoward outward effect to the appearance of the site or the surrounding, wider countryside area.
- 5.4 The scheme is a defined form of sustainable development, delivering an enhanced rural business opportunity into a rural community and within an established commercial site. It is hoped in these terms certainly the proposal would be viewed and considered in the positive fashion in which it is brought forward.
- 5.5 Government advice requires local planning authorities to apply its policies in the determination of planning applications, in a flexible way, in order to encourage development, particularly so in rural areas. This proposal is just the sort of development this up-to-date advice contemplates.
- 5.6 In light of all of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the Council grant the planning permission herein applied for.