

Sequential Assessment

Address: Wynn House, Industrial Road, Hertburn, Washington, NE37 2SF.

Date: Apr 2024

Ref: THD24-029 SA1 revP1



1.0 Sequential Assessment in support of Change of Use application for Wynn House, Washington.

1.1 Background

Washington Gymnastics was formed in 2022 by Sheryl Fada to provide children within the age group 3-18, with gymnastic training They have a range of inclusive classes for children of all abilities ranging from Gym Tots all the way up to advanced classes.

1.2 Property Requirements

In order to provide an appropriate gymnasium area for their classes, the company were looking for premises of 200-250m², ideally all on one level to ensure level access throughout, with sufficient car-parking during busy class cross-over periods, and situated close to the owners and potential customer base in Washington.

The principle locational drivers behind this proposal are the availability of a suitably large space and close to current client catchment area. The guidance contained within the NPPF is fully acknowledged with regards to the importance of town and city centres however, finding suitably sized premises close to their customer has proven extremely difficult, more so given the size and disparate nature of existing centres in the South Tyne / Washington / Wearside areas.

The premises identified at Industrial Road offer an accessible and convenient location for potential membership and would reduce the need for excessive travel by being in close proximity to key employment and residential areas.

1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The search sequence identified in paragraph 87 of the NPPF is that town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if 'suitable' sites are not 'available' should out of centre sites be considered. The NPPF (paragraph 88) also states that when considering edge of centre or out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites that are 'well connected to the town centre'. Finally, paragraph 88 of the NPPF highlights that 'applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale'.

As per national and local planning policy, we have undertaken an assessment of sequentially preferable sites. The availability of sequentially suitable sites should be looked at in terms of the availability and suitability of these sites as the policy states the "applicant and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are fully explored".

1.4 The Subject Site and sequential test

The subject building is situated on Industrial Road in Washington which is located 7.5 miles from Sunderland City Centre, 5.9 miles from Gateshead Town Centre, 8.3 miles from South Shields and 1.7 miles from Washington Village Centre. For the purposes of the NPPF and the sequential test, the site is considered out of town.

The sequential test has been applied to premises within the appropriate size range within the Washington town centre area as well as surrounding town and city centres to ensure a balanced and detailed approach is presented to the Council. This will include all property types and the property data from a national database of available property.

Each site which is identified will be assessed in accordance with paragraph 24 of the NPFF, adopting a reasonable degree of flexibility in terms of the scale and format of the buildings identified.

1.5 Sequential Search

A search for sequentially preferable town centre, edge of centre and out of centre sites has been undertaken. It is not economic to build a new facility as the finance model will not support such expenditure, therefore only existing properties have been considered.

Although there were 6 buildings that fitted some, or all, of the criteria, whether being within or outside the town centre, none of these premises were appropriate for the companies proposed ambitions, and no other property fulfilled the requirements identified above.

1. Blackfell Village Centre, Washington



- Guide Price
 - £99,000
- Key features
 - Detached Drinking Establishment c/w two bars and private function room.
- Description
 - This large detached public house and function venue benefits from; Function room (250) with dance floor, raised stage, changing room, bar servery and first floor seating balcony (currently unused). Lounge bar (65) and public bar (50) with pool table and dart throw. First floor comprises of an extensive ancillary storage areas with ground floor beer cellar.

2. Emmerson Terrace, Sunderland



- Price
 - £40,000
- Description
 - The property is located within Washington village, situated within a densely populated residential area, with John F Kennedy Primary School just a moments walk away.
 - The property comprises of a ground floor, open plan retail space, which comprises of a café/restaurant, kitchen, WC and enclosed rear yard.
 - The approximate gross internal floor area is 105.2m² (1,132sq ft).

3. Durham Road, Birtley



- Guide Price
 - £170,000 via online unconditional auction.
- Description
 - A commercial unit complete with two, tenanted flats above which are currently rented, generating an income of £9000 per annum.
 - The accommodation is split over two floors, with the full ground floor currently a vacant retail unit approximately 157m², previously being used as a carpet shop. The first floor comprises two flats

4. Arndale House, Birtley



- Guide Price
 - £75,000 via online auction.
- Description
 - This commercial unit is located within a shopping parade in Birtley with main road frontage to Durham Road.
 - Total floor area of 77m² (835 sq ft).

5. West Lea, New Herrington, Houghton Le Spring



- Guide Price
 - £85,000
- Description
 - 2-storey mixed use end terraced property, prominently located on the corner of West Lea and Fenton Terrace, just behind Herrington Country Park. The property comprises a ground floor retail unit with flat above. Both units are tenanted, generating a total annual income of £11,100.
 - Total floor space 100m² (1,076sq ft).

6. Derwent Street, Sunderland



- Guide Price
 - £260,000
- Description
 - The property is conveniently located within Sunderland's city centre and within a short walk to the bus station, train station, University and hospital.
 - Total floor space 341m² (3,675sq ft).

1.6 Summary

A detailed search has been carried out of available properties across the Town Centres in and around Washington and whilst there is a limited supply of opportunities, none of these match all of the requirements which is essential to the commercial viability of the business. There are no sequentially preferable sites in the town centre or edge of centre which are suitable for the proposed investment.

The application site benefits from excellent bus infrastructure and is within close proximity to a large resident and employment populations.