

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR

The change of use from in indoor virtual reality recreational fitness centre shop to a hot food takeaway at ORB Virtual Reality 1 - 2 Darnley Road Gravesend Kent DA11 7BY

Introduction

This planning application is for the change of use from indoor virtual reality recreational fitness centre shop to a hot food takeaway. This planning statement is to be read in conjunction with the planning drawings as listed in the application.

The Site

The application site is situated within Gravesend Town Centre, towards the west, and north of Gravesend railway station. The site fronts Darnley Road, a Primary Distributor road of the highway network, and forms part of the Primary Shopping Area and Secondary Shopping Frontage within the town centre. The application site is part of the wider Opportunity Areas and further south lies the Darnley Road Conservation Area. Next to the site is the Wheatsheaf Public House which sits on the junction of both Darnley Road and New Road. On the opposite side of Darnley Road, to the west lies an office building and an Adult College.

The site has been previously used as a virtual reality centre but due to the economic situation with people with less disposal income it has proven that the current usage is not viable any more as a business.

The building comprises of two levels at the ground floor with a basement with service yard to the rear of the premises.

The site is served by good frequent bus services nearby with Gravesend main line railway station a few minutes walk away.

The proposed change of the use to the fastfood outlet is not considered to create an adverse impact on parking or the adjacent highway network.

3. The Proposal

The shop was subject to a change of use (see planning application ref 20210317 by its current owners who opened it as a virtual reality centre they then looked around to see what type of retail business was lacking within the town and saw that there was a lack of virtual reality centres. So they then decided to run the shop as this usage unfortunately after trying for a number of years this has failed to run as a viable business.

Looking at the retail usage within this part of the town centre there are a number of cafés/restaurants which has made this a “foodie” area. The applicant is now looking to try running the retail unit as a restaurant takeaway business and not be

in competition serving the same kind of food with the existing cafés/restaurants they have decided to be an authentic Pakistani restaurant which is something that isn't available in Gravesend so it would compliment the existing restaurants etc.

The shop conversion is a very simple process the internal wall layout is to remain the same with the cooking and preparation area at the rear and a serving counter to the rear of the shop area and a small seating area to the frontage of the restaurant. The basement area can be used as a party area for clients celebrating birthdays etc. The front shop screen will not change.

There are two loading bays around the immediate area, which can be used for the take away aspect along with use of the back yard.

The restaurant will be open from 11 am till 11pm Monday till Thursday and on Bank holidays and 11am till 12am Friday and Saturday. 11 am till 10pm on Sunday.

It will employ 2 full time and 2 part time staff.

Conclusion

Overall the development of this site would meet the relevant planning policies as identified in the current Local Plan as well as providing an acceptable alteration to this building that will have no negative impact on the local community.

Mr T. Angeletta

December 2024