



Bringing life back to the High Street – re-using a vacant shop unit as a lively entertainment centre for all ages

When FunBox were seeking to occupy the vacant New Look retail unit at Broad Street Mall they approached Planning Potential to guide them through the planning system. The proposal was for a 15,000sq ft family entertainment centre called Urban Fun, providing interactive amusements and games space for all ages with a capacity of 400 people.

The space will be occupied by a variety of interactive games and amusements, such as virtual reality, duck-pin bowling, air hockey, driving games, and carnival skills games, providing an all-round family entertainment space under one roof. During the daytime and early evening, the main customer base will be young families, with children's parties popular at weekends. The predominant customer base after 9pm will change to adults, mostly groups of friends, couples and students. The space incorporates ancillary food and beverage.

In this particular instance, based on a matter of fact and degree we concluded that the use was Sui Generis, and needed planning permission. We worked closely with officers and councillors at Reading Council to explain the nature of the proposals, and demonstrated that the proposal would enliven the shopping frontage, with a new glazed entrance and outside seating. We submitted an operational management plan, noise report and information on security measures to demonstrate the use would have no adverse impact on residents. This reassured the councillors who had strong objections and concerns before we met with them.

The application secured unanimous approval at Planning Committee.

Summary of Achievements

- Determining the use in terms of the Use Classes Order
- Working with officers and councillors to explain the nature and benefits of the proposals
- Preparing a summary of proposals for Planning Committee

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