



Professional Planning and Development
Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute



Planning Statement

Change of use of building contractors to Class E d (indoor sports and recreation)

Unit 6, Abbey Works, King Street, Whalley,
BB7 9SP

On behalf of: Mr Phil Moss (PLM Fitness)
and Ella Shaw (Academy of Arts)

May 2026

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Fitzgerald Planning and Design on behalf of Mr Phil Moss and Ella Shaw. The statement has been provided in support of a part retrospective change of use application for Class E (d) uses.

2. The Application Site and Surrounding Uses

- 2.1 The site is located off King Street Whalley, on a small mixed use trading estate. The unit has an approximate site area of 0.08 ha and is attached to another unit of equal size. The site also has a taxi booking office at 1st floor level which does not form part of this application.

As part of a planning approval in 2017 (3/2017/0164) the ground floor of No. 7 (attached building) has been successfully operating as gym for over 8 years.

Access is direct from King Street, via Back King Street which makes the site a 30 second walk from Whalley and all its shops, amenities and services. The site is located within the defined Conservation boundary of Whalley (as discussed later in the statement) and also within Flood Zone 2 as designed on the latest Environment Agency flood maps.

Aerial Image showing outline of the building source: www.googlemaps.com



Images of the site



Photograph 1: internal shot of the studio space which has not been complete or put into use



Photograph 2: internal shot of the



Photograph 3: gable elevation of the studio



Photograph 4: main entrance to the studio, the gym entrance will be as existing (next door)



Photograph 5: adjacent parking area

3. Planning History

Planning History

3/2025/0179 - Retrospective application: use of mezzanine floor as cafe/bar. Approved 30/5/25

3/2024/0667 - Regularisation of unauthorised change of use to bar and music venue Refused 17/10/24 Appeal lodged but then withdrawn. The use ceased and vacated. Ground floor Unit 5b Abbey Works King Street Whalley BB7 9SP

3/2023/0771 – Change of use from booking office to taxi office at first floor level. Access to first floor reception/sitting area via entrance hall and staircase on ground floor - Refused. First Floor Unit 6A Abbey Works Back King Street Whalley Lancashire BB7 9SP

3/2020/0030 – Confirmation of lawful change of use of first floor office (previously used by Building Contractor) to use as taxi booking office, manager's office, prayer room and drivers' rest room since 16 November 2009 - Approved.

First Floor Unit 6A Abbey Works Back King Street Whalley Lancashire BB7 9SP

3/2017/0430 - Discharge of condition 5 (external air conditioning vents or any other external plant equipment) from planning permission 3/2017/0164

Discharged 22/6/17

3/2017/0416 - One illuminated fascia Approved 23/6/17

3/2017/0164 - Change of use from B1 business use to D2 (gymnasium) including external alterations – Approved with conditions 21/4/17 Unit 8 Abbot Works (AKA Unit 8 Abbey Works) King Street Whalley BB7 9SP

2012/0824 – Proposed change of use from booking office to walk in booking office. Change of parking to add more additional parking spaces - Refused.

2009/0127 – Change of use of ground floor office (previously used by Building Contractor's secretary) to use as taxi booking office - Approved.

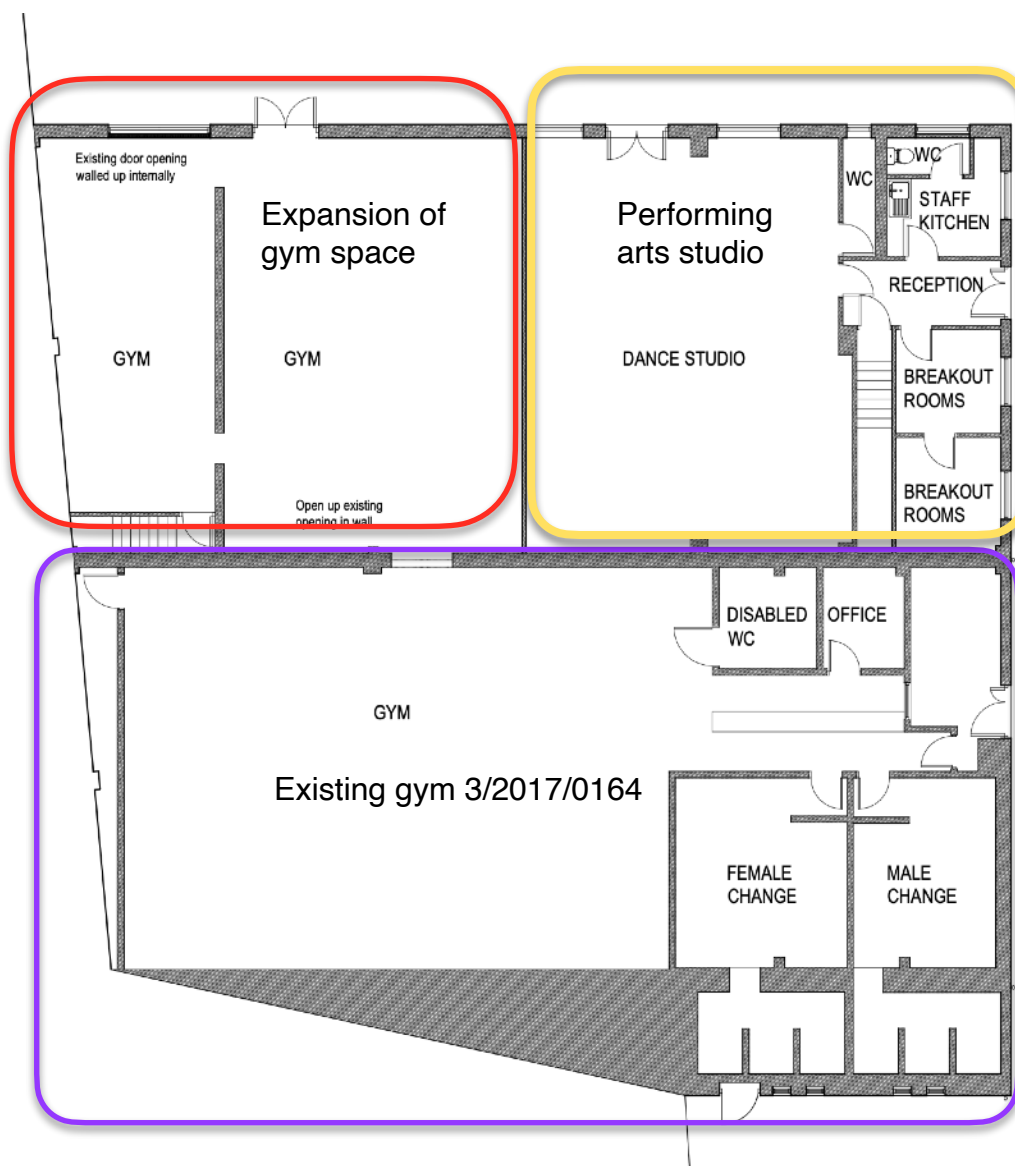
4. The Proposed Scheme

4.1 The floor plan below shows the different elements of the two buildings. This application relates to the red edged and yellow edged areas. The gym expansion covers approximately 351 sqm and the studio approximately 119sqm.

4.2 There is an internal connection between the existing gym and the extended area. Access to the gym will continue from the existing entrance which has a pin code entry system. Access to the studio will be from the front elevation of No. 6 'reception' area.

PLM Fitness - background

4.3 The owner/operator is Phil Moss who has been a fitness coach in Whalley since 2007 who opened PLM Fitness in 2013. PLM Fitness has achieved numerous awards including The National Fitness Awards 2018, and the Ribble Valley Business Awards every year since 2018. Phil is serious about his business and the image it presents locally being the promotion of health, fitness and wellbeing. The opportunity to create some additional space for the business came available when the former 'Salvage Yard' failed to gain the planning permission. The expansion is a natural move into the adjoining unit. Membership, hours of operation (24 hour pin code access) and staffing will all remain the same.



Ella Shaw's Academy of Arts

- 4.4 Ella Shaw's Academy was established in 2019 running performing arts classes at The Grand Venue Clitheroe. It has since become the 'Health and Well-being business of the year' in the Ribble Valley in 2025 and now supports close to 200 children a week in Clitheroe. The academy continues to remain in demand with constant growing waiting lists and a need for expansion. The vision for the additional studio is to be able to expand the academy's timetable and this space in Whalley offers the perfect opportunity.
- 4.5 The studio will have no more than 2 members of staff at the site when classes area on. On an average day there would be approx 2-3 classes with an average of 15 attendees. Open hours: Week days, evenings and Saturday Mornings no later than 8pm on an average evening.

4.6 Design and Appearance

The proposal is for the change of use of the building, therefore no major physical alterations apart from the creation of a secondary doorway (fire escape on the gable elevation).

4.7 Access and Parking

Access to the units is gained from King Street, along Back King Street. There are a range of uses and small businesses on Back King Street which each have their own parking spaces.

The site is within a highly accessible location, just a 30 second walk from the main high street through Whalley. The bus station is only a 2 minute walk with a wide range of bus services to the wider area and Whalley train station is located a short walk away off Station Road.

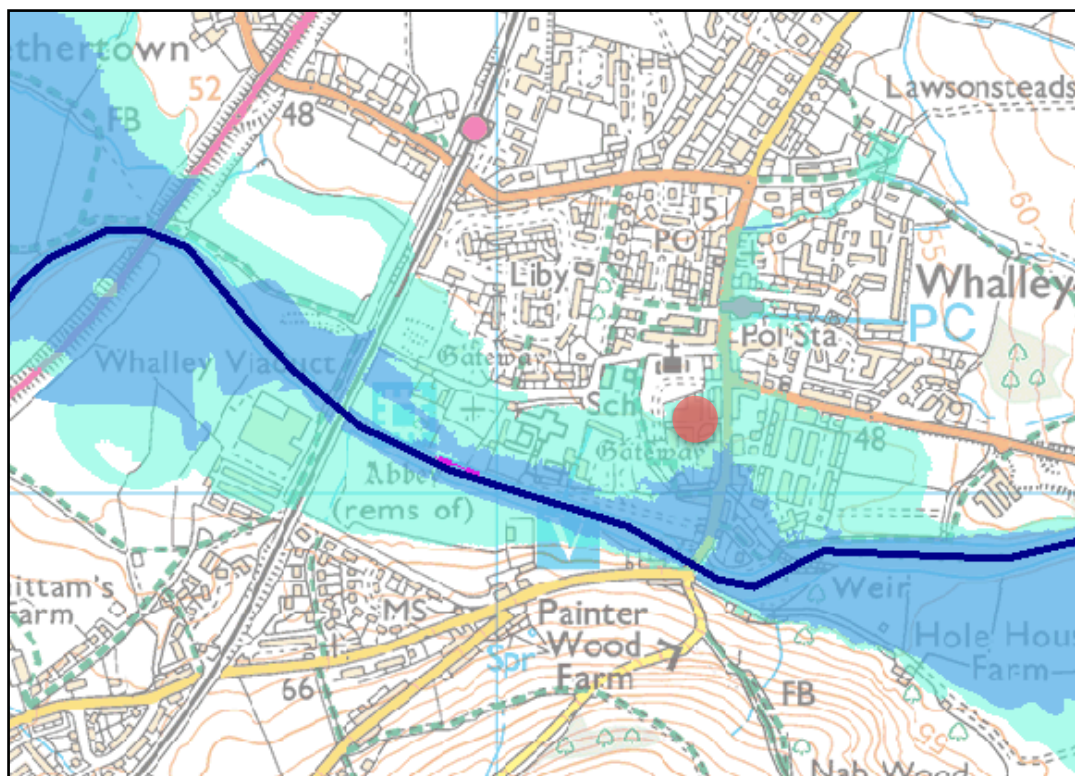
There will be 2 dedicated staff parking spaces (refer to site plan). Whilst the site doesn't have its own allocated parking spaces for the clients, there are a range of parking choices within Whalley including 2 pay and display car parks and on street parking. A more recent private parking area has been created next to the unit which is pay and display (see photo 5).

Low level sensitive lighting has already been installed as part of the gym application in 2017. This gives security within the small courtyard area as well as CCTV which has also been installed which the owner can monitor remotely.

4.8 Flood Risk

The site is located within Flood zone 2. The classification of the proposed use is classed as 'less vulnerable' as shown in the EA Flood risk vulnerability classification¹, see extract below and bullet point two 'assembly and leisure'.

¹<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change#Table-2-Flood-Risk-Vulnerability-Classification>



Map extract taken from the Environment Agency

Less vulnerable

- Police, ambulance and fire stations which are not required to be operational during flooding.
- Buildings used for shops; financial, professional and other services; restaurants, cafes and hot food takeaways; offices; general industry, storage and distribution; non-residential institutions not included in the 'more vulnerable' class; and assembly and leisure.
- Land and buildings used for agriculture and forestry.
- Waste treatment (except landfill* and hazardous waste facilities).
- Minerals working and processing (except for sand and gravel working).
- Water treatment works which do not need to remain operational during times of flood.
- Sewage treatment works, if adequate measures to control pollution and manage sewage during flooding events are in place.

The applicant has invested a great deal in updating the building as part of the gym permission in 2017, which included increasing the current finished floor level by at least 300mm which is in line with the guidance in the EA standing advice. It is not considered that this latest application will have any impact on flood risk.

4.9 Heritage Issues

Whilst the site is located within the Whalley Conservation Area, there are no external alterations to the unit.

'It is therefore not considered that there would be any undue adverse impact on the adjacent Listed Buildings as a result of this use. ' (officer report 3/2024/0454)

5. National and Local Planning Policy Context

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the following:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024
- National Planning Practice Guidance
- Ribble Valley Core Strategy
- Whalley Conservation Area 2005

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. (Para 85).
- Requiring Local Planning Authorities to approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development (para 39)
- Para 135 of the NPPF) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁵¹; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience
- Para 96 c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- Para 124 - d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings,

5.3 Core Strategy 2008 - 2028 Ribble Valley Borough Council

The Development Plan for Pendle Borough Council comprises the following documents:

- Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2014
- Housing and Economic Development DPD

5.4 Ribble Valley Council Core Strategy

Most relevant to this site are the following:

EC1 - Business and Employment Development

Employment development will be directed towards the main settlement of Clitheroe, Whalley and Longridge as the preferred locations to accommodate employment growth.

EC2 - Development of retail, shops and community facilities

Development that supports and enhances the vibrancy, consumer choice and vitality and unique character of the area's important retail and service centres of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley will be supported in principle. Proposals that have an adverse impact on existing community facilities would only be permitted as an exception where the proposed development would bring defined and demonstrable benefits.

DMB1 Supporting Business Growth

Proposals that are intended to support business growth and the local economy will be supported in principle.

Key Statement EN5 - Heritage Assets

There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings. The Historic Environment and its Heritage Assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance for their heritage value.

DMG1 - General Considerations

In determining planning applications, all development must consider the following key considerations; design, amenity, environment, access and infrastructure.

DMG3 - Transport and Mobility

Of particular relevance;

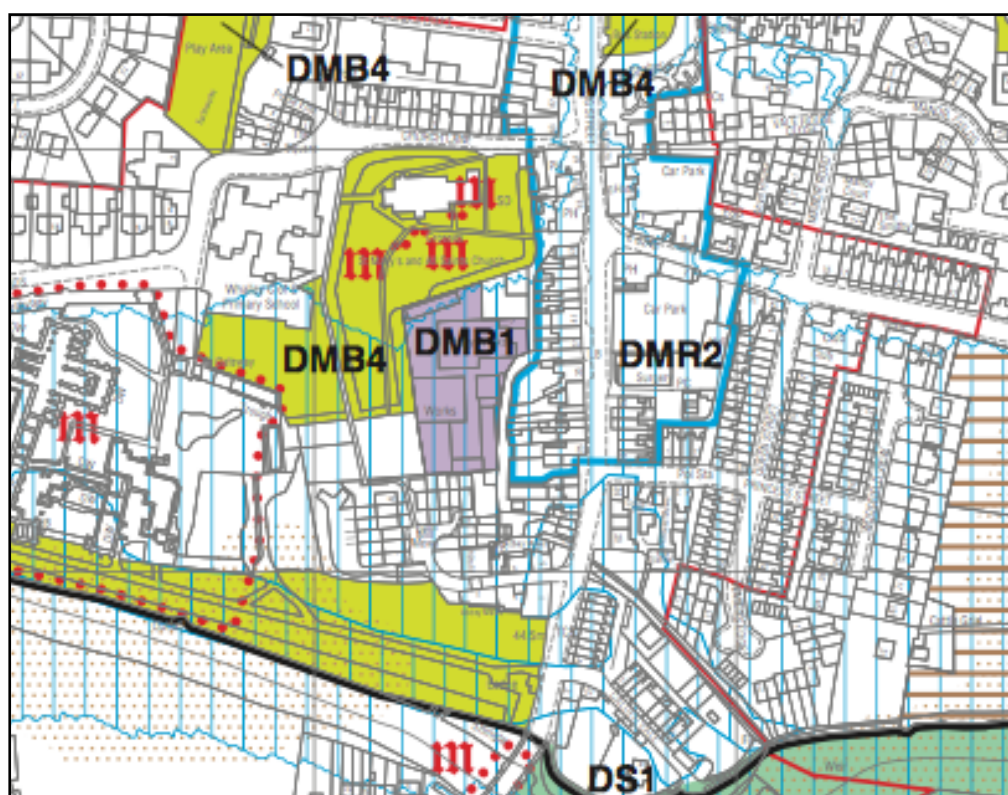
point 5. Proposals which strengthen existing town and village centres which offer a range of everyday community shopping and employment opportunities by protecting and enhancing their vitality and viability.

point 6. proposals which locate development in area which maintain and improve choice for people to walk, cycle or catch public transport rather than drive between homes and facilities which they need to visit regularly

5.5 Housing and Economic Development DPD

Following the adoption of the Core Strategy in December 2014 the Council prepared a Housing and Economic Development Development Plan Document (HED DPD). Adopted in October 2019, this sets out more detailed policy coverage for matters relating to housing and economy to fully implement the policies of the Core Strategy.

The following extract is taken from the Proposals map. Whalley has a Town Centre Boundary (in blue) and the purple shading represents an 'Existing Employment Area', which the site within.



Proposals Map as part of the Housing and Economic Development DPD

6.0 Planning Appraisal

The principle of development

- 6.1 The site is located within the settlement of Whalley. Policy EC1 of the adopted Core Strategy states that Whalley is an important location for employment.

The proposed use is complimentary to many services and amenities which can be found within Whalley. The application site is located on the edge of the town

centre. 'Health and fitness centres' fall within the definition of NPPF's Main town centre uses as well as bar.

It is felt that the proposal meets the following policy in the Core Strategy, DMB1 - supporting business growth and the local economy;

'proposals which are intended to support business growth and the local economy will be supported in principle'

Policy EC2 is also relevant and is discussed in the recent officer report; *'whilst the use is acceptable in principle this is subject to other material planning considerations.'*

Furthermore, the proposals helps to compliment an existing business with a small element of diversification of the existing. The site is within 100 metres walk of the centre of Whalley which will add to the vitality and viability of the centre.

6.2 Design and Appearance including Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

Section 16 of the NPPF, in particular para 207, which states; *'in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected.'*

The site is located within the Whalley Conservation Area (view extract map in Appendix 1) and benefits from an Area Appraisal and Management Guidance. The site has no statutory listing but is within the the immediate setting of a number of listed buildings [Church of St Mary and All Saints (Grade I), Sundial East of Church of St Mary and All Saints (Grade II), Whalley Abbey (Grade I) and 33 and 35 King Street (Grade II), Whalley Arms (Grade II)] and scheduled monuments (Whalley Abbey, Three high crosses in St Mary's churchyard). The site falls within the character zone 'The Sands, Whalley Abbey and Church Lane' which is characterised by:

'This character area lies between King Street and the railway viaduct to the west of Whalley. It is in very mixed uses, with residential properties, a school, the Abbey and the parish church. page 18

The site is mentioned in the 'negative features' of the Conservation Area:

'Industrial area between the churchyard and rear boundaries of the buildings facing King Street, with large modern sheds and poor quality roads'

The site is also mentioned in the Management Guidance as an opportunity:

The commercial sheds/workshops to the west of nos. 25- 53 King Street

With this in mind, the applicants proposals are mainly one of re-use, to allow a redundant space to be brought back into a viable and compatible town centre use.

The general repair and maintenance of the building will be sensitively carried out using materials which are appropriate to the building and its immediate surroundings and will enhance and make a positive contribution to the townscape.

The proposed change of use will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of Whalley Conservation Area and will not have any significant impact on the surrounding listed buildings. It does not involve any external alterations to the existing building. It is therefore considered that the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the building or upon the Whalley Conservation Area.

The previous application commented as follows:

'It is therefore not considered that there would be any undue adverse impact on the adjacent Listed Buildings as a result of this use.' (officer report 3/2024/0454)

6.3 Residential Amenity

The site is close to residential properties, the closest being Cornmill Mews to the south and various flats above commercial premises on King Street.

The application does not involve any proposed live music, and the gym is already covered by a noise level condition which the applicant would be happy to attach to a new consent.

Previous comments in officer report 3/2025/0179;

'Subject to appropriate conditions restricting the use then potential nuisance from the use can be adequately controlled and would therefore accord with Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy in terms of noise nuisance to neighbouring properties.'

6.4 Highways and access

The business has operated for 8 years and that no incidents have occurred in terms of pedestrian safety. Note that LCC did not object to the 2017 application stating;

'LCC raised no objections stating that being within the town centre of Whalley the application site is considered to be a sustainable location with access to existing car parks. In addition, it is considered that the proposed use would have no greater impact on the highways network/car parking than the existing industrial use of the unit and the surrounding network is considered capable of serving the proposed use.'

It is not considered that the potential footfall to the site would have a significant detriment on the pedestrian safety. The gym has operated without any designated parking for 8 years and no pedestrian accidents have been reported. Users of the gym and studio will be encouraged to walk to the site from the village centre and take advantage of the surrounding parking opportunities.

As part of application 3/2025/0179, the Council stated; *'Limiting the operating hours to 7am - 9pm would also help to improve pedestrian safety, by limiting additional movements during evening hours of darkness for people using the bar.'*

The applicants would be happy to consider a similar worded condition to contain 2 of 3/2025/0179 to satisfy any possible highways concerns;

2. The use of the premises hereby approved shall be restricted to the hours between 0700 to 2100 on weekdays, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason: The use of the premises outside these hours could prove injurious to the character of the area and in particular to pedestrian safety due to the lack of footways and external lighting on the back street location.

7. Conclusion

This Planning Statement has set out the merits and acceptability of the use of the gym expansion and studio.

The Statement demonstrates that the site is within a sustainable location, within a short walk to the local shops, services and amenities and that the proposal will offer a small complimentary use the existing gym.

Whilst the site is within close proximity to many listed buildings and significant heritage assets, the proposals will not have a detrimental impact to the Conservation Area.

The proposed change of use will bring back into use an under utilised space (para 124 d) of the NPPF) creating a community based use which can be enjoyed by the residents of Whalley.

Appendix 1 - extract from Whalley Conservation Area

