



A Quod project sheet

Southside Shopping Centre, Wandsworth

Role

Acting on behalf of Landsec, Quod has secured planning permission for the change of use of a former department store at Southside Shopping Centre, Wandsworth to a variety of leisure uses (Class E and sui generis), despite this being contrary to adopted policy.

Quod provides planning advice on the asset management of Southside Shopping Centre, which Landsec manage on behalf of a joint venture with Invesco. Shopping centres and town centres more generally face serious challenges that pre-date covid-19. One of these is the decline of the department store which for many years have been the anchor tenant around which shopping centres and town centres have been built. In January 2020 Southside's anchoring department store, Debenhams, closed its doors, leaving significant empty space and diminished footfall.

The answer, as in many town centres, lies in diversification of uses. In this case there was an opportunity to introduce Gravity – a leisure hub concept that would offer electric karting, bowling, a family entertainment centre, crazy golf, basketball and extensive food and beverage, all under one roof. This offered the chance to bring something unique to Wandsworth town centre that could revitalise the shopping centre.

However, planning policy lags behind modern thinking on this subject and restricts non-retail uses in the town centre. This policy conflict needed to be overcome if Landsec's strategy of diversification was to succeed. Quod's approach was to take the conflict head on; to acknowledge it and to present compelling evidence as to why it should be set aside. Our case started with the statutory provisions that allow decisions to be made other than

Description

Town centres and leisure

Client

Landsec

Planning Authority

London Borough of Wandsworth

Expertise

Planning	✓
CIL	
Environmental Planning	
Development Economics	
Socio-economic	
Infrastructure	
Strategic Land Promotion	
Regeneration	
CPO	

Project Type

Infrastructure	
Major Mixed Use	
Residential	
Retail & Commercial	✓



in accordance with the development plan, if material considerations justify this. We then set out evidence on a series of such material considerations: the need for diversification, the lack of existing leisure provision, and the lack of a retail alternative that might support the underlying purpose of policy – to support the vitality and viability of the town centre. Officers welcomed the honest approach and supported our case which was later unanimously supported by Wandsworth’s planning committee.