

Planning Applications Committee

8 January, 2009

Section B

Agenda Number:	B1
Section/Area:	Inner
Ward:	Thorpe Hamlet
Officer:	Sarah Platt
Valid Date:	14 October 2008
Application Number:	08/00812/F
Site Address	6A Albion Way Riverside Retail Park Norwich NR1 1WR
Proposal:	Creation of 3,779 sq.m. of additional retail floor space at mezzanine level.
Applicant:	Henderson Global Investors
Agent:	Savills

THE SITE

The site is located to the South East of the City Centre, adjacent to the Inner Ring Road and in the Primary Retail area of Riverside. At present the application site is occupied by Woolworths and occupies 5,975sqm of retail floor space. To the South of the site are residential flats; to the North West is the rear of the Odeon cinema complex and various other leisure activity units. The application site unit is based on the end of a line of 4 retail units.

The whole Riverside Retail Park site comprises a food superstore and various retail outlets over 3 zones. The food superstore and petrol filling station operate on one side of the retail park with their own car park. On the second side of the retail park are approximately 8 retail outlets with another car parking zone. The

third section has 4 outlets with 2 further zones of parking. The retail parks primary transport access road, Albion Way leads to a roundabout off which the 4 car parking zones can be reached. There is a secondary entrance and exit which is primarily for the use of delivery vehicles, residents and users of the Riverside Swimming Pool car park on Wherry Road. Free car parking is provided throughout the site for customers within the 4 parking zones.

The site is not within a Conservation Area.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4/1996/0583 - Redevelopment of site to provide retail units, offices, catering outlets, leisure uses, petrol filling station, swimming pool, light industrial units, residential units and a site for a tyre depot together with associated roads, footpaths/cycleways, car parking and public transport interchange - (Revised Boundary) – **Approved 04.06.1997**

04/01092/F - External alterations to building to facilitate subdivision into two retail units – **Approved 12.01.2005.**

04/01336/F - External alterations to the shop front and creation of rear service entrance – **Approved 11.01.2005**

07/01268/CLP - Certificate of Lawfulness for unrestricted use within use class A1 retail for Units 6, 6A and 6B Albion Way, Riverside Retail Park – **Approved 28.01.2008**

THE PROPOSAL

The creation of 3,779 sq.m. of additional retail floor space at mezzanine level.

CONSULTATIONS

Advertised on site, in the press and adjoining retail units notified.

No letters of objection have been received.

The East of England Regional Assembly – no objections.

Norfolk County Council – Concerns raised over the content of the Transport Assessment and Travel Plan in terms of parking control measures for the site and the mitigation of the impact of this proposal.

Environment Agency – Advised that the site is within Flood Zone 2, classified as a medium probability flood risk. A Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted and after review there are no objections. However, it has been recommended

that the provision of an emergency flood evacuation plan be conditioned on an approval should it be granted.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant National Policies:

PPS6: Town Centres
PPG13: Transportation

Relevant Regional Policies:

T2: Changing Travel behaviour
T14: Parking
NR1: Norwich Key Centre for Development and Change

Relevant Local Plan Policies:

SHO1 – Limit on major non-food shopping development
SHO3 – Locational conditions for new retail development – sequential test
SHO7 – Smaller scale expansion of existing retail units
EMP2 – Expansion of existing businesses
TRA10 – Contribution by developers to works required for access to the site
TRA11 – Contributions for transport improvements in wider area
TRA12 – Travel plans for employers and organisations in the City

Introduction:

In 2006 the Government introduced new legislation (Circular 01/2006) which required that internal alterations to increase floor space including mezzanine floors beyond the permitted development right of 200sqm would now require planning permission.

Principle of development:

The site is within the Primary Retail Area as defined in the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (Adopted Version November 2004), and therefore policy SHO7 applies. It states that new development of up to 500sqm. net retail floor space in the central retail area will be accepted, but that development in excess of this threshold will need to be considered against policy SHO1 which seeks to direct development towards sites already allocated for shopping.

However, Government guidance in Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres, which was adopted in March 2005, supercedes the provision of the Replacement Local Plan. This states that it is not necessary for developers to demonstrate a need for retail proposals within designated Primary Retail Areas.

The principle of the proposed additional retail floor space is therefore considered to be in line with national policy and consistent with the objectives of PPS1 and PPS6.

Flood Issues:

The application site is within Flood Zone 2 which is classified as medium probability flood risk. The Environment Agency have indicated that they would have no objection to this proposal subject to a condition requiring the submission and prior approval of an emergency flood evacuation plan.

Transportation Issues:

There are existing significant traffic problems associated with the Riverside Retail Park site and therefore this proposal causes us to have significant concerns over the transportation impact of this development.

Both Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council have serious concerns about the limited parking management at the site and the consequent traffic movements and congestion that regularly occur in the area, causing further road blockages on the main road network which at this point functions as the main Inner and Outer Ring Roads.

Whilst the principle of the retail development is considered acceptable any resultant increased demand for parking and increased traffic movements would need to address the increased traffic movements and parking problems. Further, it should provide mitigation measures to address the existing local problem which is substantially greater than that associated with other car parks in the city. The submitted Transport Assessment and Travel Plan have not identified or addressed sufficient traffic management measures which would mitigate the transport impact of this development.

PPG13 advises that reducing the amount of parking in new development (and in the expansion of existing development) is essential. The East of England Plan (May 2008) policy T14 states that the level of parking supply and charges should be used to promote change in travel behaviour. The level of parking provision is substantially higher in the Riverside area than in any other part of the city (with around three times the availability). There is no Variable Message Signing for this area and whilst the free short stay parking does deter commuter parking, the lack of a charging regime encourages car journeys to the site in a location which is potentially accessible by a range of transport modes.

The future management of the car park has to be addressed as a fundamental pre-requisite if the level of floor space at Riverside is to increase at all as any additional traffic movement will only exacerbate the currently unsatisfactory situation. A suitable strategy for car parking would be needed as part of this proposal to ensure that the site begins to operate satisfactorily, given the

substantial scale of the proposed increase in floor space and the potential scope for further additional floor space increases and intensification.

As this development involves a significant amount of additional floor space it is considered that it will attract additional customers and therefore needs to contribute to general transport improvements in the wider area as required by policy TRA11 of the Replacement Local Plan. £68,400 has been agreed between the City Council transportation department and Norfolk County Council based on the expected numbers of shoppers and staff generated by the new mezzanine floorspace to an existing store. The applicant requested a 20% reduction on this figure (£53,200.00) stating that the Travel Plan would show how a reduction in transport movements could be achieved. At the time of this request the Travel Plan had not been submitted and so the further 20% reduction to the transport contribution was not considered acceptable.

The Travel Plan was received on 19th December 2008. The applicant states that the Travel Plan budget for promotion of sustainable modes of transport for staff and customers is £60,000.00 and as such the transport contribution should be waived to allow this money to be spent on the Travel Plan instead. This is contrary to policies TRA10 and TRA11 of the Replacement Local Plan and is therefore considered unacceptable.

The Travel Plan's main aim is to "develop a set of mechanisms, initiatives and targets that will allow end users to reduce the impact of their travel on the environment as well as to reduce private car mileage in favour of more sustainable modes of travel". This is suggested to be achieved through the following: increasing staff and customer awareness of the advantages of and potential for travel by sustainable modes of transport; introducing various measures to facilitate travel by non-car modes of transport; and effective monitoring and review systems. There will be a Travel Plan board in staff areas of the application site and an information board for customers to the premises which outline non-car modes of transport available. There will be a marketing campaign to promote Riverside Retail Park as a sustainable travel destination in liaison with bus service providers, and leafleting on customer notice boards.

Whilst the Travel Plan aims to reduce staff car trips by 20% which is considered acceptable, customer car trips will be reduced by only 1.6% which is considered unacceptable.

It is not considered that the Travel Plan sufficiently addresses the parking control measures required to mitigate the impact this development would have. Nor does it address the behavioural shift in customers travelling to the site which is needed to reduce transport movements in this area. Whilst parking continues to be free of charge at this site the behavioural change in visitors and staff to the site will be limited.

Therefore the Travel Plan overall is considered unacceptable and contrary to policy TRA12 of the Replacement Local Plan.

Conclusions:

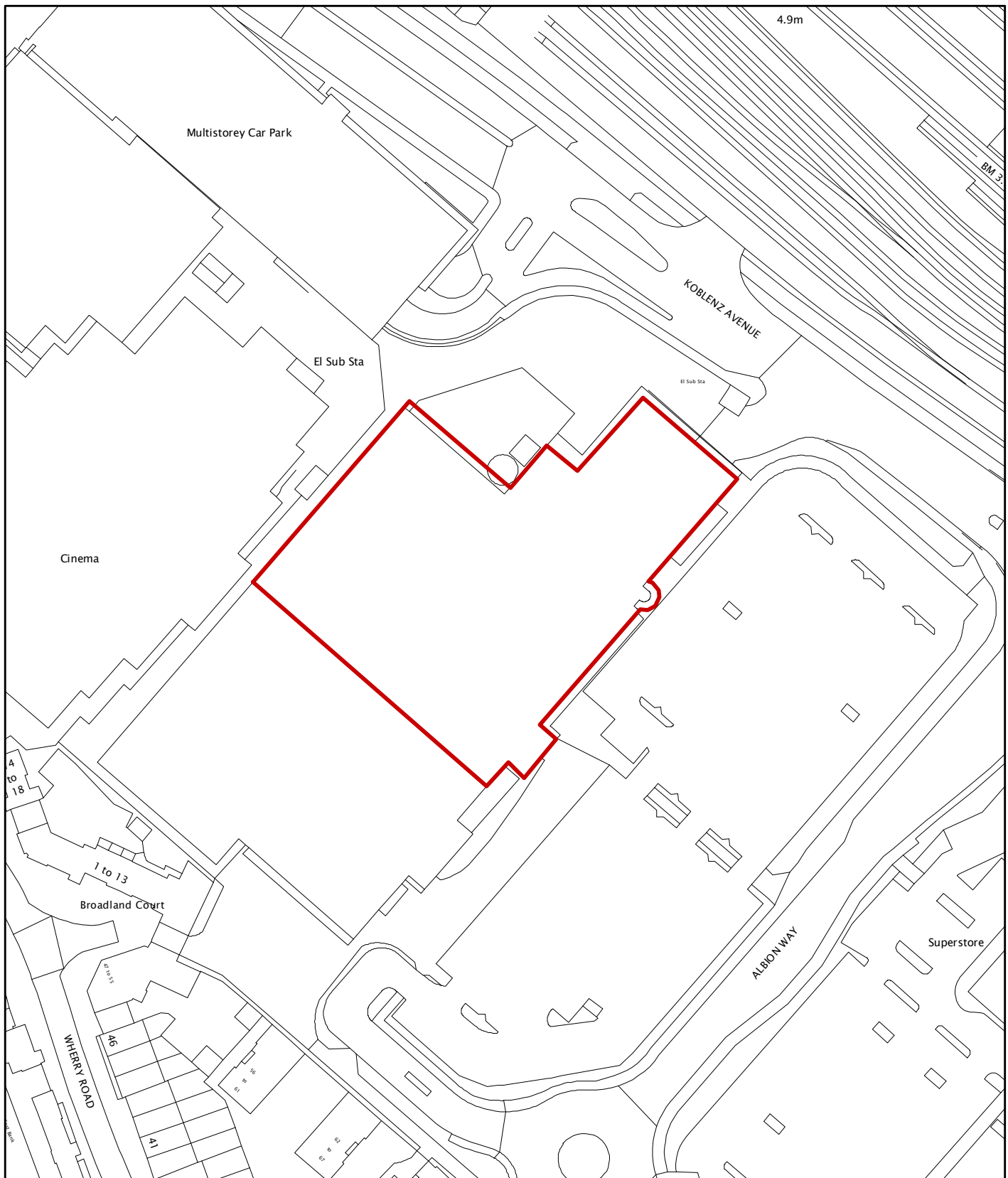
It is considered that whilst the principle of the retail development is considered acceptable, the transport implications of this development and future potential for intensification raise serious concerns over the acceptability of this proposal. The Travel Plan does not adequately address the mitigation measures needed to reduce the impact on traffic that this proposal would have. Specifically. The reduced level of customer car trips will not be sufficient to alleviate the resultant congestion on strategic highway and may lead to detrimental impact on the city centre.

The application is considered to be contrary to the objectives of PPG13, policy T14 of the East of England Plan (May 2008) and saved policies TRA10, TRA11 and TRA12 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (Adopted Version November 2004).

RECOMMENDATIONS

REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION for the following reasons:

- 1) The decision to refuse planning permission has been taken having regard to PPG13, policies T2 and T14 of the East of England Plan (May 2008) and saved policies TRA10, TRA11 and TRA12 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (Adopted Version November 2004).
- 2) The travel plan does not meet the objectives of PPG13 as it doesn't adequately reduce the amount of free parking provision, promote sustainable methods of transport or address the mitigation measures required in order to alleviate the detrimental transport impact this proposal would have on the site and strategic highway.
- 3) In the absence of a transport contribution the proposal submitted is not considered to be in accordance with saved policy TRA10 and TRA11 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (Adopted Version November 2004) which state that contributions should be paid for transport improvements required directly as a consequence of proposals both on site and in the wider area.



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Site Address - 6A Albion Road, Riverside Retail Park

Scale - 1:1250



NORWICH
City Council

DIRECTORATE OF REGENERATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

