

Here are some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

The proposal will act as a retailing destination for motor car users

This stance demonstrates a lack of understanding relating to the transport merits or scale of the proposed small Local Centre. The size, shape and extent of the retail spaces proposed to be formed within the new small Local Centre have been arrived at having regard to the need to create an attractive and appropriate mix of appropriate occupiers at a scale appropriate to meet the needs of a walk-in catchment population resident with an 800m radius of the application site.

The size and mix of unit sizes proposed has also been arrived at having regard to the type of potential occupiers for the new Local Centre as advised in my letter dated 3rd October 2007, as follows:

- Greengrocers;
- Butchers;
- Bakers;
- Hairdressers;
- Laundrette;
- Post Office;
- Pharmacy;
- Bank or Building Society;
- Dry Cleaners;
- Funeral Directors;
- Off-license;
- Video Store;
- Gymnasium;
- Estate Agents;
- Accountants;
- Bookmakers;
- Doctors or Dentists Surgery;
- Café;
- Travel Agency;
- Sandwich Bar; or
- Offices.

The applicant is prepared to accept a restrictive condition that only enables occupation of individual units proposed by the above listed types of retailers or services.

There is no doubt that an appropriate mix of the above end users will reduce motor car dependency amongst residents living within an 800m radius of the application site.

The proposal will increase road congestion resulting from additional motor car usage about the local road network

Readers will note from the content of important supportive information contained within the Transport Statement prepared by SLR that accompanies this application that the

proposal is designed to remove unnecessary motor car trips from the local road network.

There is no doubt that if local residents are not able to meet their convenience requirements in the Beehive PH or the One-Stop store that the majority drive by motor car to existing allocated Centres or Tesco at Harford Bridge. This situation is clearly unsustainable and does little to reduce congestion and improve air quality within the City.

The servicing of the commercial units proposed will cause adverse residential impacts

It is accepted by the applicant that the units will be required to be serviced by motor vehicles to deliver stock and remove refuse.

It is however the applicants considered view that the movement of service traffic along Leopold Road and Melrose Road will cause less congestion than that which results from current levels of unnecessary private motor car usage to access convenience and top-up shopping needs.

Readers should note that the size of individual units proposed will ensure that all servicing is done either on foot, by motor car or by light van.

Readers should also note that the local area is already required to be serviced by commercial waste contractors visiting the One-Stop and Beehive PH and as such the proposal will result in no additional refuse service movements.

Please also note that the bin stores serving the convenience units are easily accessible from Melrose Road and as such servicing will be quick, quite and congestion free.

The proposal will result in further closures of existing retail stores within the town centre

This stated view confirms a basic misunderstanding of the type of retail provision proposed in this instance, the type and extent of anticipated retail impact resulting from the proposal and the misapplication of current retail policy.

Some residents stated that it was their view that if the proposal were allowed that there would be adverse retail impact within the less commercially attractive areas of the City centre.

I must state in response that this view is completely wrong.

It is our considered opinion that there are two reasons why there are unoccupied retail units in the less commercially attractive areas of Norwich such as Magdalen Street, St Benedicts, St Augustines and King Street.

The first reason why unoccupied retail units exist is that the foot fall, i.e. the shoppers with money in their pockets, that used to be attracted to these streets are now more attracted to other newer cleaner, heavily marketed, visually appealing, climate controlled and better car accessible shopping areas within the City, such as Castle Mall and Chapelfield.

The second reason why vacant retail space exists in these locations is that your Council for political and financial gain has granted too many planning permissions for too much speciality and comparison retail floor space within the City centre.

The bottom-line is that the current new Local Centre proposal is not a Mall nor is it designed to adversely impact upon the One-Stop or the Beehive PH. The current scheme is designed to make walking to meet day-to-day shopping and service requirements more attractive to the local population.

There is adequate existing provision locally and the small Local Centre proposed is not needed

Some 20 years ago, there was a more diverse mix of convenience retail and service about the junctions of Melrose Road, Leopold Road and Waldeck Road.

This then increased mix of convenience provision has been eroded over the last 15 years. This, we would suggest, results largely from the major Tesco store being developed within a short drive time at Harford Bridge and an increase in motor car ownership locally.

We do not agree that there is not a need for a facility of this type and we would suggest that this is demonstrated by the extent of car ownership and usage locally.

This stance is further not in accordance with PPS6 that requires your Council to develop a network of Local Centres to prevent car reliance.

The mix of uses proposed is too great

Again this view is naive and fails to have regard to the need to create a diverse mix of use in this location to ensure that the convenience and service offer is sufficiently attractive to a walk-in population to take them out of their motor cars.

The mix of uses proposed under the current application allows for the development of small scale gym, a small crèche, a dentist, a small doctors surgery, a chemist, a butcher, a green grocer, a small bank, an accountants, etc uses.

The mix applied for also seeks to ensure that the spaces are lettable into the future to manage the commercial risk of the applicant as developer and operator of the Local Centre.

The office use element is include in the mix to allow the occupancy of the unit on a short term interim basis if no other tenant can be found at any specific point in time.

The application site is within a residential area and retail and service uses are therefore inappropriate

This stance is again wrong and naïve and demonstrates that the point of the proposal has been missed by the Reader.

The objective is simple and it is to site an attractive mix of convenience and service uses within a residential area to reduce the need to travel locally. It is our view that this point does not need making again, however what is alarming is that this approach is a key thrust of current Government guidance.

The applicants propose to include comparison retail with the proposed small Local Centre

This is not the case. There is no comparison retail proposed as part of this application and we accept conditions to reflect this position.

There is no need to include service uses within the proposed small Local Centre

This is part of reducing the need to travel. The key design consideration is to ensure that any service use included within the scheme is at a sufficiently small scale to not be attractive to anyone living outside the walk-in catchment population.

Why provide an additional small Local Centre when people can travel by car or bus a short distance if they don't have a bike to an existing allocated Local Centre

This stance assumes that everyone resident within the community is fit and healthy and does not suffer from any mental, physical or other impairment that would prevent them from riding a bicycle or getting on and off a bus.

The whole point of the proposal is to seek to develop an inclusive community focus that goes some way to fostering social inclusion.

The scheme is badly designed and does not fit with the street scene

The scheme is designed by our company and Owen Bond Partnership having regard to our company's experience working with Atelier Pro an established architectural practice from Den Haag that specialises in the design of Local Centre forms of development. The images attached to this letter are of a scheme designed by Atelier Pro and approved by Ipswich Borough Council last year.

The submitted scheme is designed as a modern building that is visually interesting to try to develop a distinct sense of place locally. The materials proposed to be used in the construction of the building have been chosen as brick at the ground floor to be durable and to fit with the street scene and at the upper floor to be light, maintenance free, attractive and sustainable.

The Zinc roof sheet and metal windows are proposed to be included within the scheme at significant cost to add visual interest within the street scene. The upper floor level is also designed to over sail part of the pavement to increase natural surveillance along adjoining streets and over users of the new Local Centre at all times.

From previous work with Pro, we understand that you need to design any new Centre to be legible within the street scene. The ability to view the Centre building from along adjoining streets enables orientation and develops a sense of place locally. This has

been achieved by designing a building that is visually interesting when viewed from all directions within the street scene and by pulling the building forward of the existing building line along Melrose Road and Leopold Road.

This aim to create a sense of place is further developed by picking up details from the Beehive PH within the final scheme design, including using honey comb shaped pavers as a surface treatment at the back of the existing pavement.

There is no recreational space proposed for the residential units contained within the scheme

The residential units have 25 sq. m of sitting out space each within a communal roof deck that will be landscaped to a high standard to foster social inclusion and enable retreat. The extent of space proposed for sitting out and informal recreation is considered acceptable to serve a 2 bed flatted dwelling unit.

The external space has been designed to ensure than no view is permissible from the roof deck across any external space serving adjoining residential units.

The scheme represents over development of the site

The one and two storey scheme accords with the Inspectors comments outlined in the previous appeal decision relating to the application site.

It is important that the greatest mix of convenience and service uses possible is achieved within the site to maximise the attractiveness of the new Local Centre to the walk-in catchment population to reduce car reliance.

It cannot be argued that the scheme constitutes over development.