



Proposed Retail Floorspace Provision

Assessment of Provision within
Existing Local Centres

Land at East Hill

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On behalf of F D Attwood and Partners

Introduction

This brief assessment provides an overview of the existing Local Shopping Centres (identified within the adopted 2003 Local Plan) within proximity to the application site. These are as follows and identified at Appendix A.

The Links

Luton High Street

Watling Street

Hempstead Road

Admirals Walk

Kestral Road

Walderslade Village Centre

Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre, as a Larger Destination Shopping Centre, has also been identified as a point of reference.

The above represent the nearest identified Local Shopping Centres to the application site.

Assessment of Existing Local Centres

The Links, Chatham

'The Links' retail parade is the closest of the 8 identified Local Shopping Centres to the proposed application site. It serves the local population of the Luton and Wayfield Ward. The parade comprises a terrace of 6 two-storey units (with retail at ground floor and accommodation above), currently arranged as 5 separate premises. An Indian takeaway; hair and beauty salon; newsagents; health and fitness centre and what appears to be an office use currently occupy the units. The units do not appear to be marketed for rent or sale either on site or online.

Taken from the centre of the upper portion of the proposed application site the parade lies well outside of the 400m ped-shed zone and just outside of the 800m ped-shed zone, which are recognised as accepted distances for encouraging access by non car modes for local services, such as those at The Links.

Public Right of Way RC23 extends across the northern portion of the application site and continues towards Downsview leading to The Links but is currently separated by North Dane Way.

Luton High Street

Luton High Street lies to the north of the proposed application site. It serves the local population of the Luton and Wayfield Ward. The parade comprises a number of traditional properties with retail uses at ground floor and accommodation above, arranged as terraces and interspersed with traditional dwelling houses. A number of hair and beauty salon; a convenience store; post office; off-licence; public house; takeaway; Chinese restaurant; printers; and car-repair/garage currently occupy the premises. No units appear to be on the market for rent or sale either on site or online.

From the centre of the upper portion of the proposed application site, the Local Shopping Centre lies well outside of the 400m ped-shed zone and outside of the 800m ped-shed zone.

There are currently no Public Rights of Way providing a connection to the High Street from the application site, or continuous foot/cycle paths providing a safe pedestrian or cycle route.

Watling Street

Watling Street comprises a main shopping parade with a number of retail premises providing a wide variety of local services. It serves the Chatham South and Watling Ward.

The parade is however significantly beyond both the 400m and 800m ped-shed zones, with no Public Rights of Way, direct or continuous footpath/cycle connections. Trips would be most likely reliant upon public or private transport connections to these services.

Hempstead Road

Hempstead Road parade comprises 5 retail units and a public house, including a medical centre; pharmacy; estate agents; restaurant and convenience store. It serves the local population of the Hempstead & Wigmore ward. No units appear to be on the market for rent or sale either on site or online.

The parade lies significantly outside both the 400m and 800m ped-shed zones.

Admirals Walk, Kestral Road and Walderslade Village Centre

Kestral Road, Admiral's Walk and the Walderslade Village Centre serve the local populations of the Lordswood & Walderslade and Walderslade wards.

The Kestral Road retail parade comprises a selection of small retail-based uses, including two small convenience stores; a number of takeaways; cafes; hair/beauty; a pharmacy; small library and a post-office. All seemed to be occupied.

The Admiral's Walk (Gould Road) retail parade comprises a small convenience store; café; takeaways; hair/beauty; dental practice; post office and DIY/miscellaneous shops.

The Walderslade Village Centre (formed of three Local Shopping Centres in close proximity) comprises a variety of smaller and larger retail outfits, with a high level of takeaways; cafes; a supermarket (Co-Op); convenience stores; hair and beauty; florists; a number of estate agents; library; church and betting shop.

Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre

The Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre is between 1.4 and 1.8 miles to the south-east of the application site (direct line) and currently between 3 and 4 miles by car or public transport.

As a Larger Destination Shopping Centre, it provides a wide variety of local services and retail provision in larger quantities than the Local Shopping Centres for existing and prospective residents of the proposed development to utilise, including a number of supermarkets and eateries. Given its location in relation to the application site however, it is likely to be accessed from the application site predominantly by car or other modes of vehicular transport, as opposed to on foot.

Conclusion

The seven Local Shopping Centres identified provide a variety of uses to serve the existing populations within their local areas. When measured from the centre of the upper, middle and lower portions of the proposed application site, however, none of the centres lie within 400m or 800m walking distance. Connectivity to the centres by Public Rights of Way and cycle routes from the application site is also limited.

When considering accepted principles of 'walkability' therefore, it is submitted that the existing local centres are not so easily accessible from the application site so as to encourage their visitation via foot instead of private transport.

Upon review of the sites, it appears that the majority if not all of the retail units were occupied at the time of visitation and review of online marketing.

It is also relevant that the proposed retail floorspace would equate approximately two units of c.75sqm, and the small scale of this retail provision would therefore serve to meet local demand from the site itself. The retail units are also proposed to be located nearby the proposed GP surgery and pockets of public open space to form a 'core' to the development and reinforce its function as a meeting place.

For these reasons, and those identified above, it is considered that there are no sequentially preferable sites for the proposed 150sqm of retail use in comparison to that proposed.

Appendix A

Existing Local Shopping Centres