

Development Management
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9th March 2011

Dear Sir,

**Planning Application Number 11/00204/FUL
Area Housing Office, Youth Centre and Car Park Site, Parkville Road, Swaythling,
Southampton
Retail Impact Report**

I object to the above planning application on the grounds that the Retail Impact Report undertaken for the above Application contains deficiencies and is insufficient for use as part of the planning application.

The report included in the application, dated February 2011 and prepared by Planning Potential, amends a report prepared by Lloyd Northover for planning application 08/1489, considered at planning Committee in December 2008.

Para 1.4 states "*It was previously accepted that the proposed retail units would not have any adverse impact on Swaythling Local Centre*". This was based on a completely different proposal for the residential part of the development – namely there has been a change from residential to student accommodation. These changes mean that the current proposal is different from the previous one for a re-assessment is required.

Para 2.6 acknowledges that 14% of the existing units are vacant, which demonstrates that there is already overcapacity in retail space within the surrounding area. Introducing more retail space will lead to a further increase in vacant units in the surrounding area, reducing the viability and attractiveness of the area further.

It is acknowledged that one of the existing convenience retailers only opens after 5pm. The addition of additional convenience retail space would make it more difficult for the

existing stores to remain viable and could easily lead to a further decline in the number of open units in the surrounding area.

I disagree with Para 2.6 that the new retail units will not have any harmful effect on the retail centre. The plan is for the existing pharmacy to move to the development which would leave a vacant property in Market Buildings. The new convenience store would be in direct competition for most goods with the existing stores rather than complimenting them. The resultant decline in retail units outside the development would harm Swaythling centre.

The report takes no account of the loss of existing parking provision within the Parkville Road car park. The development provides no replacement parking for this loss and no other parking exists at the northern end of High Road. Existing parking at Market Buildings is near capacity.

I undertook a very brief survey of the Market Buildings and Parkville Road car parks at 1pm on Thursday 24th February. There were only 4 spare parking spaces at Market Buildings. Parkville Road car park was occupied with 10 vehicles. This is evidenced with the attached photographs.

There are a number of businesses both in Market Buildings and High Road – Swaythling Car Spares, Raquet Centre, The Glass Works as examples which rely on customers being able to arrive by car and park conveniently. The development would result in a significant proportion of these customers going elsewhere if they were unable to park – which they will be unable to do due to the loss of Parkville Road car park, no spare capacity in the development and inadequate spare capacity at Market Buildings.

I obtained evidence of the habits of existing retail customers in the area when I stopped the first person to leave their car at Parkville Road during my survey on 24th February 2011. I asked the driver, a mature woman, if she knew of the proposed development. She replied that she did not. I then asked what she would have done had Parkville Road car park been closed. Her response was that she would have continued driving into Southampton and gone somewhere else where parking was convenient.

I have commented separately on the Transport Assessment, but there is ample evidence to show that the development would result in overspill parking. Therefore the situation of loss of existing parking would be compounded due to the overspill that will result from the development.

The loss of parking would inevitably lead to the diversity of retail shopping in the area being lost. If the units lost because of this were replaced it is likely that they would serve only those without ready access to a car – namely those on low incomes, which would greatly devalue Swaythling as a local centre, which is the opposite of what the retail report concludes.

Yours faithfully,

D.W.J Hopgood

B.Eng (Hons), C.Eng, MICE, Chartered Highways and Infrastructure Engineer

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Comments D Hopgood – Retail Assessment - Photographs of Market Buildings and Parkville Road Car Parks



Market Building Parking use, 1pm 24th February 2011



Parkville Road Parking Use, 1pm, 24th February 2011