

EXTRACT FROM CBRE RETAIL PLANNING REPORT

Volume 1

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 CB Richard Ellis have been instructed by Shirley Advance to provide retail planning advice in terms of their proposals for mixed use development on land fronting and to the west of Stratford Road, Shirley. The specific instruction was to provide an independent opinion in terms of the status and performance of Shirley as a retail destination, its strengths and weaknesses, and the measures necessary, in retail terms, to ensure the future health and prosperity of the centre. Our analysis has been prepared in two stages. The first stage, reported here, seeks to analyse the status of Shirley and prospects for its improvement at a strategic level. The second stage, reported in a separate volume, assesses the Shirley Advance proposals in more detail.

POLICY REVIEW

6.2 Our review of retail policy at the national level identifies a number of important principles of relevance to the Shirley Advance proposals. These include sustainability, accessibility, choice and social inclusion. Equally, we have highlighted the policy support for positive planning for the growth and development of centres, and for encouraging development that enables people's needs to be met at the local level. At the regional level, emphasis is placed on supporting an urban renaissance and creating a balanced network of centres, whilst creating opportunities for accessible development.

6.3 These themes are translated through to emerging policy at the local level. This recognises the growing threat to Shirley from expanding out of centre provision, and seeks to counter this by enhancing the role of the town. UDP proposals include provision for the development of a new food store to support Shirley, and also to encourage the redevelopment and modernisation of premises within the centre.

CENTRE REVIEW

6.4 Significant progress has been made in Shirley in recent years in terms of improving the pedestrian and vehicular environments. However, this has not been matched by similar improvements in the form of built development. By way of contrast, a number of the centres that compete with Shirley have benefited from recent developments that have enhanced their attraction. Equally, the longstanding trend towards the expansion of out of centre development in the A34 is set to continue, with pipeline schemes in both the convenience and comparison sectors.

6.5 Our SWOT analysis, informed by a historic review of the centre, the PowerGen inquiry, and an assessment of key performance indicators, highlights this continued development in competing centres, in out of centre locations, and in the wider catchment, as a threat to the future health of Shirley. Equally, it identifies a series of longstanding weaknesses in the centre, including the poor main food shopping provision, the inadequate supply of suitable units to expand the range of comparison shopping, the lack of an identifiable core or focal point, the sprawling configuration, and the absence of an anchor attraction to capitalise on passing trade. We recognise the opportunity presented by the emerging UDP for the centre to grow and enhance its retail provision as important in countering these threats and addressing these weaknesses.

CHANGING MARKET DYNAMICS

6.6 Our initial analysis suggests that the trading implications for Shirley of the Shirley Advance proposals would be positive, as the development enhances the role and profile of the town and increases the number of people using it. The foodstore element would principally divert trade from out of centre superstores and supermarkets in the A34 corridor, whilst the unit shops would provide an opportunity for retailers to gain representation in the town that has hitherto been lacking. This would enable Shirley to meet a wider range of the shopping needs of local people.

6.7 Moreover, the Shirley Advance scheme would address directly the functional weaknesses in the town. Whilst Shirley has a strong service sector offer, the comparison goods offer is below average, and the fashion offer is particularly lacking. The town centre also performs poorly in terms of its ability to meet the main food shopping requirements of local people. The proposals provide the opportunity to make good these shortcomings.

6.8 Importantly, the subject site of the Shirley Advance proposals is well placed to ensure that it generates linkages and spin-off trade for the rest of Shirley. The propensity for new development to create such benefits is determined by its function and the extent to which it is integrated with the rest of the centre. As discussed, the proposed scheme sits well with the rest of Shirley in functional terms. Moreover, it keys directly into Shirley's primary retail frontage, in the heart of the town's shopping area. As such, it can be expected to play a positive role in supporting the centre as a whole.

PROPOSAL REVIEW

6.9 The Shirley Advance scheme is consistent with key themes of national policy, as an example of positive planning for growth within a town centre. It would represent sustainable and accessible development, promote choice and social inclusion, and help to create a more balanced pattern of development, enabling people to meet their every day needs locally. It is also in line with policy aspirations at the regional level, in terms of promoting vital and vibrant town centres, enhancing their role, and creating opportunities for accessible development.

6.10 Moreover, the proposals are also consistent with the key retailing and centres policies set out in the emerging UDP in terms of strengthening the function of the town, and bringing forward development in line with plan proposals. In so doing, the scheme would address key weaknesses in the town, enhancing its competitiveness, improving the food and non-food shopping provision, and creating a focal point for the centre.

6.11 Finally, the proposals are consistent with enabling Shirley to perform its function as an important town centre, providing a wide range of convenience and comparison goods, employment, leisure and other services. Shirley currently functions poorly in terms of its ability to meet the main food shopping requirements of local people, and the foodstore element of the scheme is of a scale that will enable the centre to perform this role and compete effectively with out of centre provision. Equally, the comparison retail offer in the centre is currently limited, particularly in the fashion sector. The scheme will enable Shirley to meet a wider range of these needs, whilst maintaining the centre's status within the local retail hierarchy.

EXTRACT FROM CBRE RETAIL PLANNING REPORT

Volume 2

5. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

5.1 CB Richard Ellis (CBRE) have been instructed by Shirley Advance to provide retail planning advice in connection with their proposals for retail and residential led mixed use development on land fronting and to the west of Stratford Road, Shirley. We have conducted our analysis in two stages. The first stage, reported separately, sought to analyse the status of Shirley and prospects for its improvements at a strategic level, and provided the overall framework within which the Shirley Advance proposals can be understood. It identified that a more detailed level of analysis is required in assessing proposals of this type, focusing on the specific detail of the scheme, its relationship with key policy tests, and detailed economic analysis. This further work forms the basis of our second stage of analysis, reported here.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

5.2 Our quantitative analysis has been informed by the CBRE National Survey of Local Shopping Patterns, and concentrates on a core catchment for Shirley, split into seven zones, from within which we anticipate the Shirley Advance proposals would draw the considerable majority of their trade. Between 2006 and 2011, spending on convenience goods within this area is forecast to grow by some £11.3 million, whilst spending on comparison goods is forecast to grow by more than £117 million.

5.3 Some 30% of the convenience goods sales space within the catchment is associated with out-of-centre stores operated by the leading national multiple grocers, which account for over two fifths of all convenience goods sales generated within this area. Almost one-third of comparison goods sales space within the catchment is associated with out of centre provision.

5.4 The out of centre supermarkets and superstores occupy a dominant position in the local convenience retail market, attracting between 50% and 62% of trade in the catchment zones covering and immediately surrounding Shirley. Out of centre comparison retail provision also attracts a high level of market share in this area.

NEED

5.5 There is no policy requirement to demonstrate the need for the Shirley Advance proposals, as they are located within the primary shopping area of Shirley. This notwithstanding, we have undertaken a need analysis as this speaks to the question of appropriateness of scale. We have identified convenience goods capacity of up to £35.1 million at 2011, compared with estimated convenience goods sales generated by the Shirley Advance scheme of £31.9 million. We have identified comparison goods capacity of up to £94 million at 2011, compared with an estimated comparison goods turnover for the Shirley Advance proposals of £38 million. On this basis there is, therefore, a clear quantitative need for both the convenience and comparison retail elements of the scheme.

5.6 Equally, there is a strong qualitative need for the Shirley Advance proposals. The scheme would:

- Improve the distribution of shopping locations available to local people, bringing a full range food superstore and comparison goods shopping into the heart of Shirley,

thereby improving accessibility for the whole community and addressing weaknesses in Shirley's retail provision.

- Bring forward a type of retail development that is currently lacking within Shirley town centre, providing local people with choice and promoting social inclusion.
- Reduce over trading in stores in out of centre locations.

APPROPRIATENESS OF SCALE

5.7 We consider that the proposal is of an appropriate scale in terms of:

- The quantum of floor space to be provided – we have demonstrated that there is capacity in economic terms for the scheme.
- The role of Shirley within the local retail hierarchy – Shirley is, and would continue to be with the Shirley Advance scheme in place, a town centre, operating at a level markedly beneath that of Solihull.
- The function of Shirley town centre – Shirley is currently lacking in terms of its ability to provide a wide range of convenience and comparison goods shopping, and the Shirley Advance proposals would address this.

TRADING IMPLICATIONS

5.8 The Shirley Advance proposals would be located within the defined centre, extremely well connected to the existing provision and offer benefits through the generation of linked trip spending. They would result in Shirley retaining more of the expenditure that is currently lost to out of centre provision, promoting more sustainable patterns of shopping and encouraging local people to meet their shopping needs within the town centre.

5.9 In terms of the key PPS 6 criteria:

- The development is entirely consistent with the strategy for Shirley, and would not alter its role in the hierarchy of centres.
- The scheme would represent a very substantial investment in the centre, and a proactive competitive response to the ongoing and increasing threat from development in competing locations.
- Our analysis shows that the levels of trade diversion associated with the Shirley Advance proposals should not give rise to concern in terms of the future vitality and viability of Shirley or Solihull.
- The proposals would result in an increase in the range of retail services available within Shirley, and generate a significant level of spin off expenditure to the benefit of other operators in the centre.
- The scheme would compliment the existing provision within the centre, attract additional shoppers and generate spin off benefits, and we do not anticipate that there would be an increase in the number of vacant properties within the primary shopping area resulting from it.
- The scheme would significantly enhance the quality, attractiveness, physical condition and character of Shirley, and enable it to play a more complete role in meeting the needs of the local community.

SEQUENTIAL TEST

5.10 The Shirley Advance proposal is entirely consistent with the provisions of the sequential test. It is located within the primary shopping area of Shirley, and would form part of, and extend back from, the primary shopping frontage. Very considerable flexibility and creativity has been demonstrated in terms of the format of development proposed, to enable a comprehensive, mixed use treatment of the site. There are no alternative sites within Shirley that might be considered preferable to the application site in sequential terms.

CONCLUSION

5.11 The retail element of the Shirley Advance proposals is consistent with the development plan strategy and all aspects of retail planning policy, including the key tests of need, appropriateness of scale, the sequential approach to site selection, and trading implications. It would bring significant benefits to Shirley by enabling local people to meet a wider range of their shopping needs in an accessible, socially inclusive town centre location, rather than travelling to more distant and out of centre trading locations. It would be fully integrated with the existing provision, and generate considerable benefits through linked trip spending. It represents the opportunity for Shirley to secure its long term health in the face of increasing competition elsewhere, and therefore has much to recommend it.