English Historic Towns Forum

FOCUS ON RETAIL

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Foreword

Retail business is a key feature of all historic towns and cities and has a critical influence on the environment and the quality of life these places offer – for many people living in or visiting our towns and cities shopping is both a leisure activity and a necessity. Retailing is also a very dynamic area of activity subject to continually evolving consumer demands, financial pressures and policy frameworks.

The purpose of this *Focus on Retail* is to provide both theoretical and practical background and advice to promote good practice in retail planning and development that will enhance historic places. It is aimed principally at the local authority members of the Forum, both members and officers. It is intended to be relevant to the needs of land use and transport planners, conservation officers and town centre managers. It can assist in setting the evidence base for development plan policies and support negotiations with developers. It must help to give local authorities the confidence to make difficult decisions in the face of internal and external pressures. The Forum hopes that the guidance will be relevant also to the needs of developers, retailers, architects and urban designers.

In a departure from other EHTF *Focus on* documents, *Focus on Retail* comprises a collection of articles written by specialists and experts in the field – the views expressed are their own. This may mean there will be some repitition but we hope that this will give it added weight and interest. The Forum is deeply appreciative of the contributions that have been made in writing the articles and bringing together the material into the final document.

Taken together the contributions that follow aim to set out a vision for retailing in historic towns and represent an integrated approach to reconciling the sometimes competing demands that manifest themselves in our town centres and on our high streets. The key principles for retail development, which the EHTF supports, can be found on page 24. The Forum hopes that this *Focus* will help to ensure that retailing develops in an increasingly sustainable way for the benefit of all.

Brian Human
Chair, EHTF
2008

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Bath

Burlington Arcade, London

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Introduction

Where would historic towns be without shopping? Nowhere, in an historical sense, because most of them originated as market towns, centres of trade and the venues for great seasonal fairs. Many retain street names that embody this commercial history – Cornmarket, Mercers Row, Market Street, Hatter's Street, Skinner Street and so on – trade in very different goods from today certainly, but still shopping by another name. Over hundreds of years it is trade that has shaped the architectural, economic and social character of town centres, epitomised so often by the cluster of activities around the market place.

Today the importance of retailing cannot be over estimated. Nationally it is of huge importance to the economy, total sales in 2006 representing an estimated 21% of GDP.[1] The success of trading on the high street is seen as a barometer of the health of the whole economy and the Christmas retail figures are scrutinised minutely by analysists and their conclusions stimulate or depress the stock market. The financial imperatives driving competition help to make retailing one of the most dynamic sectors of the economy.

Locally shopping, as we know it, is the lifeblood of prosperous town centres and is critical in maintaining overall investment in them. It has a fundamental impact on the physical character and distinctiveness of centres; and innovative approaches to retail help to find viable uses for historic buildings. It is important to the quality of life of the users; and successful centres offer services accessible by more sustainable means of transport.

The national dynamism of the sector is reflected in how this sector shapes our historic towns, the sector is so fast moving that planners and conservationists find it hard to keep up. There are complex interactions between several pressures, including:

- a move away from the traditional high street;
- the demand for bigger (higher and deeper) shop units;
- the rise of the multiples and the decline of independent traders;
- vehicle access for shoppers and servicing;
- the demand for greater control and security;
- the ambition for more and more places to become sub-regional centres; and
- the imperative to respond to climate change issues.

In addition to these pressures historic towns also have to learn how to accommodate many retail typologies:

- town centres and district centres
- malls and covered centres
- markets
- retail parks and retail warehouses
- independent traders, multiples
- unit shops and department stores
- supermarkets and superstores.

Within these typologies it is important for local authorities to understand what retailers need and see how those needs may be met.

The combination of the importance of retailing and the pressures for change means that those responsible for historic towns have to face four key challenges in a world where convenience and quality drive providers and consumers alike:

- Protecting the overall character of historic town centres
- Ensuring that town centres are places where people of all ages and conditions want to be
- Creating new buildings that enhance both the character and experience of the place
- Providing new retailing profitably and successfully.

There are no off the peg answers to these challenges, rather a bespoke package has to be designed to suit the needs of each place. The starting point must be clarity of vision and positive encouragement to investment. A number of tools must then be used to develop the appropriate package, including:

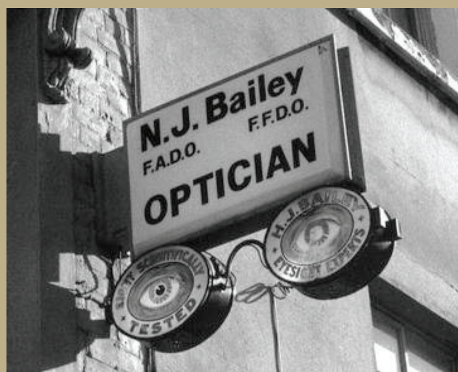
- durable, sensitive and consistent national, regional and local policies;
- appropriate new development based on site selection, building design and mix of uses; and
- complementary actions, such as Town Centre Management, to maintain quality and distinctiveness.

Historic towns offer retailers a unique combination of an attractive location of character and quality – a unique selling proposition, indeed – and the opportunity for a special combined leisure/shopping/tourism experience. In short, shopping and place making go hand in hand. And it is not just the EHTF's view. In its report *Shopping Places for People*, the British Council of Shopping Centres concludes that "Place-making must be an overarching objective, involving identity and community building through the creation of vital and highly differentiated spaces." Clear, well thought through planning policies can also help to maintain identity, local distinctiveness and sense of place for our historic towns.

[1] *Future of Retail Property, British Council of Shopping Centres, 2007*

- *"The financial imperatives driving competition help to make retailing one of the most dynamic sectors of the economy"*

"... the lifeblood of prosperous town centres"



"clarity of vision"

- *"The starting point must be clarity of vision and positive encouragement to investment"*

- *"In short, shopping and place making go hand in hand"*

Retail Trends

Steve Wehrle - Development Manager, Land Securities and Property Director, Bristol Alliance.[2]

Bristol - the retail and leisure mix

• *"we have to ensure that our city and town centres are vibrant and continue to be at the very heart of our communities"*

This article seeks to provide a view on the future for development in towns and cities in light of the challenges faced by the development industry and the changing market that will affect the deliverability of future schemes.

The case for development

The first question that needs to be addressed is: should major retail schemes be delivered in our town and city centres? The answer from the developer's point of view is a resounding 'yes'.

The beauty and fascination of Britain's architectural heritage stems in large part from the juxtaposition of buildings of different eras. If towns are to continue to be relevant to their populations, we have to ensure that our city and town centres are vibrant and continue to be at the very heart of our communities, but to do so they need to reflect changing trends and demands of consumers. Towns and cities - historic or not - are not helped by simply preserving the past. Every building in the land was a new development at some time and a key responsibility of the development industry is to ensure that schemes are the best they can be.

There are two important caveats to the plea for future development:

- firstly, not to steamroller over the past – ancient contributions to our architectural history should be preserved. Once lost, they can never be replaced. In this sense, development in town and city centres becomes more and more difficult, depending on how historic the existing town is;
- secondly, to ensure that the more precious the existing environment, the greater the imperative upon us to produce a design of at least an equivalent quality.

The Blue Boy, Princesshay, Exeter

Despite the complexities associated with developing in existing – and complex – built environments that typify many of our towns and cities, many observers believe that the delivery of schemes is easy, for which developers enjoy excessive returns.

Thirty years' experience in local authorities, and as both an advisor and developer, says that this is certainly not the case. Town centre schemes take, on average, seven years from inception to reality. Returns are spread over that entire period (which can be far longer than seven years). Importantly, no profit is made until the last few units are let. It is certainly not a game for speculators who are after the fast buck! The process is far from easy, full of many potential pitfalls.

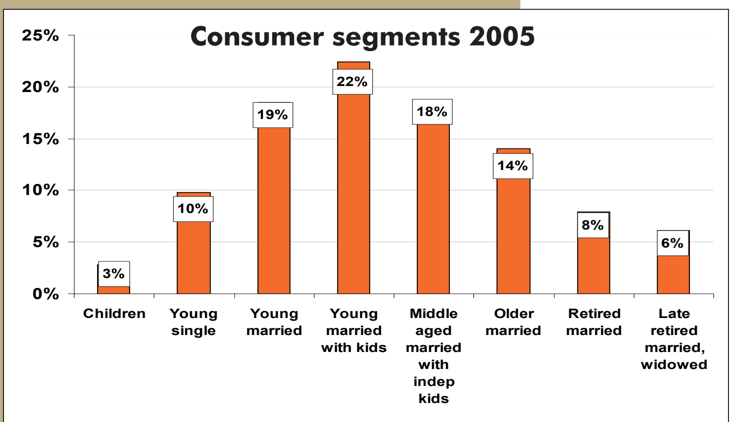
• *"developers are increasingly focusing on the design of the public spaces, as much as the commercial spaces around them"*

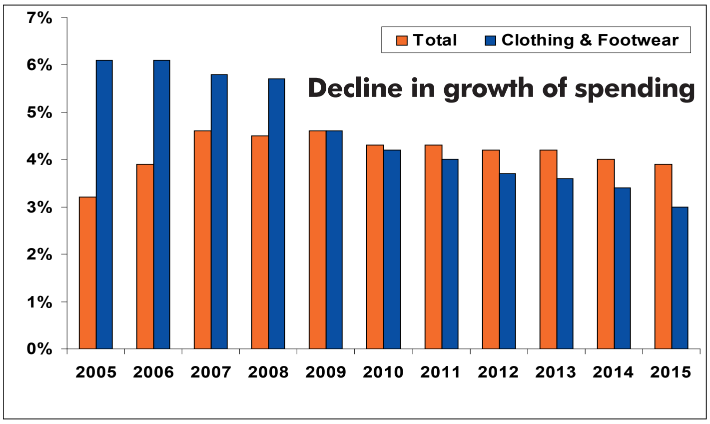
The new agenda and design solutions

The style of retail developments has seen something of a watershed recently, in that developers are increasingly focusing on the design of the public spaces, as much as the commercial spaces around them. This is forming the 'new agenda' for retail development. This may not immediately rule out American-style, covered malls in our town centres, and such developments will continue to be appropriate in certain locations.

However, design is not only influenced by the style and size of the development that developers, architects and planners regard as appropriate for the site. The biggest "hidden" influence on the design solution is site ownership and the process through which the development is facilitated.

Most central schemes emerge through the promotion of a site by the local authority to developers through a competitive process, based on design and financial bid.





[2] *Steve Wehrle has worked in the retail development industry for over thirty years, split broadly evenly between local authority, private sector development consultancy and development. This varied history, he considers, has given him a broad perspective of the opportunities for, and the challenges of, retail development in our towns and cities.*

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The Local Government Act requiring councils to seek the best financial deal for the site means that whilst design is important to developers, they always seek to maximise their bid, otherwise the financial analysis will probably leave their efforts in vain.

Inevitably, this sequence leads the developer's team to seek a design that maximises the financial performance of the scheme particularly during that initial design process, when developers will not penalise their bid in favour of design improvements.

In recent times, the most critically acclaimed schemes have been Land Securities schemes at Canterbury and Exeter. It is not coincidence that Land Securities owned the sites for these schemes, and there was, therefore, no developer competition. In both cases, the Local Authority and Land Securities collaborated to produce the best design solution. The financial equation became a product of the design, rather than the financial matters leading the way.

Unfortunately, the constraints of the Local Government legislation do not allow an easy resolution to this issue. Local authorities are tied into the process of seeking best value and, therefore, so are developers.

So, set with a "new agenda", retail and retail-led development is moving into the future. But that future is now set in more challenging conditions in both the property investment and credit markets. Development will not be immune from this and neither will the retail market.

Easing the development process

So is there any way that authorities can ease the development process within this challenging economic climate? An opportunity exists in the area of research. There needs to be recognition by authorities that the initial interest shown by a developer tends to be at best "top level". The key to a profitable development business is not so much finding the good proposals to say 'yes' to, it is more a case of saying 'no' to the wrong things, as quickly as possible. In this process of elimination, keeping expenditure to a minimum is essential as it is far from certain that a scheme will go ahead. And this situation is exacerbated in a Local Authority competition. Every developer investing in that competitive phase is aware that all his hard work may be wasted because another developer wins the competition.

The more information that an authority can provide - catchment information and analysis, footfall in the existing centre, car parking usage, etc - the more likely it will be that developers will confirm their interest. Always provided that the information supports the case for the scheme, of course!

A question often asked is whether the situation is better or worse in smaller towns. The issues remain the same, although their effect can often be magnified in the smaller towns - economies of scale are not available; contingencies are smaller, giving less flexibility; the room to be able to fund over spend in one budget from under spend in another are less available. Small schemes can take as long and involve all the same processes as larger schemes and yet the profit incentive is much less. Authorities have to recognise these difficulties and be prepared to help where they can to bring forward developments that are important to their town.

Overall, it is clear that we face greater challenges in the future, but whether this future lasts for months or years is uncertain. What is certain, however, is that local authorities and their selected development partners will have to be more innovative to overcome the issues.

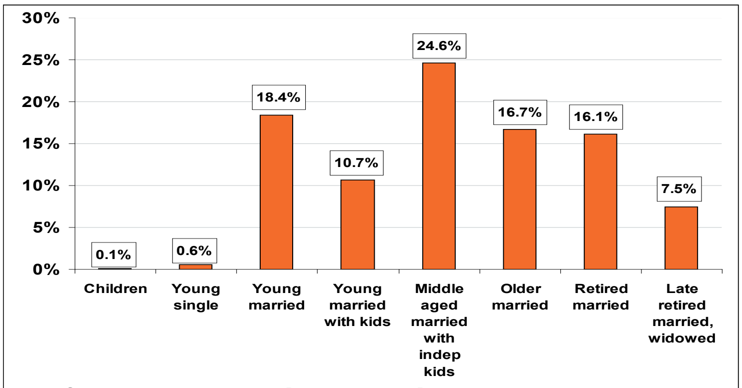
On an optimistic note, it is the people in the development industry who have the skills, and importantly the passion, to find ways of overcoming problems. They will find solutions that allow future schemes, be it new agenda or not, to provide developments, places and spaces that enhance the very heart of Britain's towns and cities.

Exeter - the High Street retains its vitality

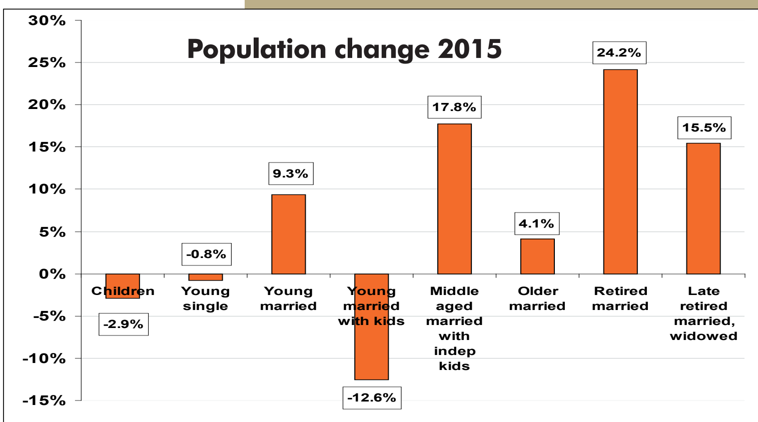
- *"The financial equation became a product of the design, rather than the financial matters leading the way"*

Canterbury, Whitefriars

- *"What is certain, however, is that local authorities and their selected development partners will have to be more innovative to overcome the issues"*



% of consumer spending growth at 2015



Cabot Circus, Bristol

Bristol Case Study: Cabot Circus

Steve Wehrle and Richard Matthews, Bristol Alliance
(presented to the EHTF conference in Bristol 2007)

Broadmead was the focus for growth and improvement of city centre shopping and leisure; it would provide a new focus and encourage major investment from retailers and developers.

The problem
- Existing 1950s shopping centre
- Pedestrianisation afterthought
- Smaller unit sizes, few larger units
- Poor connections to adjoining area
- Tired and jaded buildings and spaces
- 1998 Cribbs Causeway, loss of John Lewis department store
- UK comparison: 1995: 9th, 1998:19th, 2003: 23rd.

Planning Strategy
The Broadmead Shopping Area: Expansion and Development Strategy 2001
- Identify the general location of major expansion
- Identify other complementary development initiatives
- Emphasise need to improve pedestrian connections to adjoining areas
- Role of market testing: working with developers to influence strategy.

The role of partnerships
- Bristol City Council Corporate objectives - cross party political support - Broad mead Members Advisory Group
- Planning policy in place but key role of BCC as major landowner
- BCC Planning and Property working together to identify development partner - the Bristol Alliance
- Joint working with developer on consultation; site master planning and land assembly, including Compulsory Purchase.
- BCC land and planning powers in combination with developer's expertise and financial resources.

Bristol retail offer

Planning approval process and land development agreement
- Masterplanning for a 15ha site is approved by BCC; evolves with parameters set by Masterplan principles and conditions on 2 planning permissions
- Outline planning permission site east of Penn Street
- Full planning permission historically sensitive site west of Penn Street, around Quakers Friars
- A Planning Agreement to cover obligations on air quality, affordable housing etc.
- BCC development agreement and lease with Bristol Alliance controls and influences the development process.

The scheme: retail-led mixed use development
- 100,000 sq m of retail and leisure floorspace including:
  - 15,000 sq m department store
  - 15 major stores and 100 other shops
  - 13 screen cinema, bars and restaurants
  - New cycle routes, street level crossings, bus and coach stops
  - 2,600 car park spaces, new shopmobility facility
- 240 new apartments, 24 affordable family houses, student accommodation
- 30,000 sq m new office/hotel space
- New public spaces: central covered space; new square around Quakers Friars; community open space adjoining St. Judes community.

Fact Box

Market segment characteristics
- Children 0-14 years "Innocence to Corruption"
- Young Single 15-24 years "Identity Forming"
- Young Married 25-34 years "Mass Acquisition"
- Young Married with kids 35-44 years "Split Priorities"
- Middle Aged married with independent kids 45-54 years "Upgrading and Renewal"
- Older Married 55-64 years "Wanting it all"
- Late retired married, widowed 75+ years "Mend and make do".

Key themes into the future
- The older consumer is becoming more important
- The old are getting younger, more savvy, discerning and fashion conscious
- The young are getting older sooner
- Retail spend now has to compete with other attractions
- "Fashion" extends beyond clothing and footwear
- Value is critical but standards are high.

Case Study: Whitefriars, Canterbury

Kim Bennett, Head of Development Services, Canterbury City Council
(presented to the EHTF conference in Bristol 2007)

In the 1990s the time was right for redevelopment and this was helped by limited ownership of site. The process was a long one:

- 1996 : Planning Brief
- 1997 : Architectural competition
- January 1999 : Planning consent
- June 1999 : CPO confirmed
- August 1999 : Start of Enabling Works
- February 2003 : Fenwick relocation complete
- September 2004 : Gravel Walk open
- January 2005 : Whitefriars Square open
- September 2005 : Whitefriars Street fully trading

- a six year programme

It was a mixed use scheme including:
- A department store and 3 large stores
- 44 additional shops
- 37 residential units
- New public square and streets
- Cycling facility
- 530 space car park

The keys to success were identified as:

Partnership to deliver
- Need for proactive approach
- Public/private project groups
- Member involvement
- Resources

Community Involvement
- Development Brief
- Architectural competition
- Involving community groups
- Limited opposition to planning application
- Recognition of differing public/private objectives

Managing the Change
- Information Centre
- Whitefriars Watch
- Hoardings
- Job Centre

What would we have done differently?
- Strategy for impact on retail areas post completion
- Too safe an architectural style?
- Know who your partners REALLY are!

Practical issues
- Design and build contracts
- Communication channels
- Changing personnel over long project

Listen to community feedback
- Lack of soft landscaping
- Clone town – subsidy for small units?
- Variation on retail house styles?
- Public art........!

Whitefriars, Canterbury

Whitefriars, Canterbury


Whitefriars, Canterbury

Town Centres Development – Where Now?

Graeme Tulley, National Head of Planning, DTZ

- *"For the last ten years there has been a consistent policy basis with Government adopting and reinforcing a "town centres first" approach"*

The vitality of the town centre - Shrewsbury

- *"Securing traditional anchor stores and the unit shopping to fund them, will continue to be vital for retail led regeneration models"*

The vitality of the town centre - Chester

Now is a particularly good time to reflect on where we have been and where are we going with our town centres. What trends can we foresee for the future and how might policy and market forces change over the coming years?

For the last ten years there has been a relatively consistent policy basis with Government adopting and reinforcing a "town centres first" approach. PPS6 sets out national policy and encourages local authorities and their partners to adopt a positive and proactive approach to developing town centres. This reflects the 2004 Planning Act's aim of going beyond traditional land use planning, the importance attached to community strategies and more recently embracing the "place shaping" agenda.

Development trends

This policy platform has benefited greatly from a generally healthy property market over recent years. This has led to major private sector investment in a number of our towns and cities. To name but a few Manchester, Birmingham, Belfast, Liverpool, Bristol and Leicester are all seeing major new town centre schemes. These are retail led, but increasingly mixed use regeneration projects, delivering the urban renaissance demanded by Lord Rogers' Task Force.

In terms of the town centre development pipeline, 2008 is a very significant year for new openings, many taking place in historic centres. These include the Paradise Street scheme in Liverpool (known as Liverpool One), Victoria Square in Belfast, the Highcross Quarter in Leicester and Cabot Circus in Bristol.

Looking forward, there are more uncertain market times. However, it is essential to bear in mind that town centre development takes a long time from initial feasibility to completion. Viability testing, planning, development agreements, land assembly and in most cases the use or very real threat of compulsory purchase, means that most schemes take many years to come to fruition. By way of example, work began on the Victoria Square scheme in Belfast's historic core in 1999 with its grand opening in March 2008.

Given the long lead in times involved, new town centre schemes are expected to continue to be promoted and planned. Certainly this is borne out by long standing development consultancy work for local authorities, where there has been little slow up in authorities looking to assess and promote new town centre schemes.

In respect of existing schemes which are not yet fully committed, some of these may be reassessed and remodelled to meet changing market circumstances. Securing traditional anchor stores and the unit shopping to fund them, will continue to be vital for retail led regeneration models. However, there is also an acceleration of trends for a greater mix of uses. For example, more residential uses, civic, educational, heath, leisure, cultural, and food retail are also becoming important components emphasising the mixed use approach.

There are also new forms of partnering arrangements emerging between public and private sectors. For example, at DTZ we are helping structure innovative partnerships that go beyond the traditional one site - one scheme approach, to those that cover a number of sites and schemes across local authority districts.

Planning policy gaps

Turning to planning, the general thrust of town centre policy has been consistent since 1996 when PPG6 was published. Few commentators see any major departure from the national "town centres first" approach. However, important policy gaps have opened up at the local level and these are causing problems, especially in constructing the robust policy base that is essential when promoting a town centre scheme through planning and compulsory purchase.

The new Local Development Framework (LDF) approach was brought in 2004 with the best intentions to streamline the development planning process. However, there is now widespread belief that it has failed to deliver a speedier and more flexible system. Only a small proportion of the development plan documents envisaged by Government to be in place by 2007 have been prepared. Of those submitted many have been found to be "unsound" and have been sent back to the drawing board. The level of resources consumed in preparing these documents has been immense and places ever more pressure on overworked local authority planning departments. At the time of writing the Planning Bill is passing through Parliament with welcome proposals to streamline the various stages currently involved in plan preparation.

The result on the ground is that many authorities and developers wishing to promote town centre schemes are stuck between two policy stools. On the one hand an adopted local plan which maybe out of date or not support the new proposed new scheme, particularly if it is extending the designated primary shopping area. On the other hand, new DPDs which are largely "work in progress" and therefore have limited weight in determining applications or confirming compulsory purchase orders, particularly if they are introducing new policy.

This situation, which will last a little while yet, is creating a climate of uncertainty. The advice from DTZ to public and private sectors clients is to look for more proactive solutions to bridge the policy gap rather than waiting for DPDs to fall into place. Answers may lie in finding "hooks" in the RSS, sub regional strategies and "saved" local plan policies. Community strategies which express the wider objectives of the local authority and its partners can be useful and material considerations where related to land use matters. The preparation of master plans or briefs is also to be considered, particularly where they have a sound consultation and evidence base and can be fed back into existing or emerging development plan policy.

Also, at the time of writing, the outcome of the Government consultation on a new PPS6 test is awaited. Government considers the "needs" test has sometimes been a blunt instrument. In advance of what the new test is proposed to contain, it is difficult to comment. Arguably there are situations where need has been a factor in preventing otherwise acceptable mixed use regeneration schemes going ahead. However, the flip side is that the assessment of need is required in order to address the impact of proposals on existing centres. For now the key issue is for Government to quickly move forward with the consultation so we can all get onto more certain ground.

Conclusion
Planning policy and market forces have achieved much in breathing new life into our towns and cities. There is no reason why this should not continue to be the case. Our town and local centres are at the heart of sustainable development principles and their continued renaissance is to be whole heartedly supported.

Fact Box

(from presentation by Graeme Tulley at EHTF Bristol conference 2007)

Development phases
- 1950s – planned precincts and centres
- 1960/70s – enclosed shopping centres/malls
- 1970/80s – decentralisation of food and non-food
- 1980s – regional shopping centres
- 1990s – slowing decentralisation
- 2000s – town centre first, in town retail led mixed use - major centres

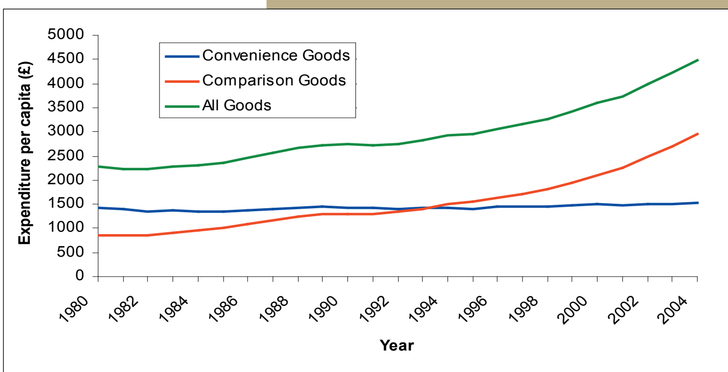
Development pipeline
- Significant pipeline of town centre retail led mixed use schemes to 2012
- Pressure for development not a new phenomenon in itself, but:
- Polarisation – by retail unit sizes and market penetration
- Focused to date on higher order towns and cities, smaller centres becoming more attractive to developers

- *"Community strategies which express the wider objectives of the local authority and its partners can be useful and material considerations where related to land use matters"*

- *"Our town and local centres are at the heart of sustainable development principles and their continued renaissance is to be whole heartedly supported"*

Bury St Edmunds - local character must be retained

Victoria Square regeneration scheme - Belfast



We like to shop

Planning and Retail Policy

Brian Human, Chair, EHTF [3]

• *"the retail sector needs positive, clear, realistic and consistent policies"*

Nationally retailing is of huge economic importance and locally it has major implications for land use, transport and the environment. These factors combine to make retailing one of the most hotly contested areas of planning. Recent decades have seen significant changes in planning policy, principally hinging on the publication of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 6: Town Centres and Retail Developments* (PPG6) in 1996. Prior to that, policy allowed a major expansion of out of town and edge of town shopping; PPG6 established the principle of town centre first for retail development. It is now widely recognised that the retail sector needs positive, clear, realistic and consistent policies that provide a stable platform for decision making for investment over the longer term.

National Policy

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1

Overall national policy for planning is set out in *Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development*. Planning is expected to facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of development by making suitable land available, contributing to sustainable economic development, protecting and enhancing the environment, ensuring high quality development and supporting liveable, mixed communities. Key principles of particular relevance to retail planning are:

- Encouraging patterns of development that reduce energy use and reduce emission
- Putting spatial planning at the heart of planning for sustainable development
- Promoting high quality inclusive design that is integrated into the existing urban form and taking a long term view
- Promoting accessibility

Places where walls and floors merge

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 4 / Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4

Planning for retail as an important part of the economy is recognised in national policy guidance. *Planning Policy Guidance 4: Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms* (PPG4) (1992) notes: that retailing should be covered in development plans; the dependence of retailing on good locations for efficient distribution systems; and the value of making the most effective use of commercial premises, including mixed uses with retailing.

This is reinforced by the consultation draft of *Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development* (PPS4) (2007), which considers retail in both town centres and elsewhere as part of economic development. Although there is no specific mention of retail, PPS4 calls on the planning system to: recognise the needs of business; make effective and efficient use of land (including finding new uses for historic buildings and preserving historic assets); and secure a high quality and sustainable environment (including respecting the historic environment and improving quality of place).

Places where trading occurs

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 6

Current national retail policy is set out in Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres (PPS6) (2005). The guidance is based on the twin objectives of:

- Planning for growth and development of existing centres; and
- Promoting and enhancing existing centres, by focusing development in such centres and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.

It is appropriate to remind readers of the main components of the *Statement*:

- Positive planning for town centres: a plan-led approach
  - Promoting growth and managing change in town centres
  - Networks and hierarchies of centres
  - A proactive, plan-led system
- Development control
  - Assessing development proposals
- Monitoring and review
  - Measuring vitality and viability: health checker
- Typologies
  - Types of centres and their main characteristics
  - Types of location
  - Descriptions of types of development.

• *"The EHTF supports strongly the objectives underpinning PPS6"*

The EHTF supports strongly the objectives underpinning PPS6 because it reinforces the need to conserve and plan positively for prosperous centres in historic towns.

A key aspect of PPS6 was challenged in 2007 as part of the Barker Review of the planning system. The review questioned the case for retaining the needs test, which underpins the primacy of town centre development over that on the edge of town or out of town, a key part of the overall policy framework. An impact test was suggested as an alternative. The EHTF believes that the needs test should be retained, a view shared by much of the development and retail industry.

Development Plan Policy

Regional Policy

Planning Policy Statement 11: Regional Spatial Strategies (PPS 11) (2004) sets out how

[3] *Head of Policy and Projects, Cambridge City Council*

regional strategies should be approached. They are intended to provide a broad strategy for development in the region with some issues addressed at the sub regional level to reflect natural catchments and variations across the region. The RSS will cover retailing. Attention is drawn to the importance of working within the framework set by PPS6, especially:

- Consideration of the network of centres, their relationship in the hierarchy and any need to redress imbalances and ensure that local needs are met.
- The proactive role for Regional Plans, including:
  - Developing a strategic framework
  - Making strategic choices about where investment should be encouraged, including both town centre and out of town development
  - Assessing overall need for major additional floorspace
  - Monitoring the strategy.

Currently there are moves to bring regional spatial strategies and regional economic strategies together, including consultation on streamlining the regional tier and introducing single regional strategies with the Regional Development Associations designated as the regional planning bodies. This looks likely to strengthen the economic component of the spatial strategy and as a consequence the importance attached to the effective planning of retail development. Many of the historic towns that the Forum represents are regional or sub regional centres and others are important as market towns meeting an intermediate retail need. It is therefore important for local authorities to engage proactively with the regional planning process and influence its outcomes. In order to do this they should:

- establish a clear understanding of the position their town has in the retail hierarchy;
- assess the likely future development required to meet future demand or to encourage regeneration or both;
- come to a realistic view about the future position in the hierarchy, recognizing that there is a limit to the level of demand and consequently supportable retail investment and it is important to focus this in the areas of greatest need;
- seek to ensure that changes to the hierarchy are achieved through the development plan process and not be driven through planning applications.

• *"establish a clear understanding of the position their town has in the retail hierarchy"*

Not every historic town can become a thriving sub regional centre and it may be better to be a prosperous market town than a struggling larger centre with under used capacity.

Where in the retail hierarchy?

Local Development Frameworks

Local retail planning policies are spelt out in Local Development Frameworks, guidance for which is set out in *Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks* (PPS12) (2004). Within the portfolio of documents that comprise the Framework aspects of retail policy may be set out in the Core Strategy, Site Specific Allocations, generic Development Control Policies, Area Action Plans, the Proposals Map and Supplementary Planning Documents. This allows retail policy to span the range from locally strategic policy to detailed site specific proposals. All components of the Framework must be evidence based and will be tested for soundness.

PPS12 requires the Core Strategy to consider the hierarchy of centres, thus setting out a spatial vision and strategy that fits in with the longer term planning of the whole town. In preparing Frameworks local authorities should aim to steer retail development by:

- assessing the need for new retail floorspace
- identifying centres/locations where the development will be focused
- defining the primary shopping centre
- reviewing and allocating sites for development
- specifying where mixed use is required
- developing policies to encourage investment in deprived areas
- setting out criteria based policies for assessing development proposals.

Retail policies should be refined to address different retail sectors and typologies, including town centres, edge of centre and out of centre development, retail parks, retail warehousing, convenience and durable shopping and local centres.

• *"Retail policies should be refined to address different retail sectors and typologies"*

Matters of detail

Design quality is a major policy concern and is now expected to guide decision making. That said, there may often be conflicts between the operational needs of retailers and urban design aspirations. Within historic towns the policies on the broader spatial and quantitative aspects of retail planning must be supported by policy guidance on matters of detail that address matters of character and design. These may be addressed through:

- Development briefs covering planning and design for individual sites
- Urban design codes setting out the broad parameters for development
- Design Guides covering shop fronts, details, materials and access (DDA requirements)
- Conservation Area appraisals, guidance and management plans

Places where people meet, talk and are entertained

Careful attention to detail in the planning process and creative negotiations with developers and retailers can assist in ameliorating some of the worst excesses of the 'clone town' syndrome.

Development briefs and design guides may be formally adopted statutory Supplementary Planning Documents where the strongest policy steer is required.

Policy soundness – commissioning consultants

A crucial requirement for planning policy is that it is sound and evidence based. This may be tested at the examination of the Local Development Framework or through an enquiry into the refusal of a planning application. Few local authorities have the in house expertise to carry out robust retail assessments in their area and these will usually be commissioned from consultants. Issues to be covered include: existing provision; future retail demand; floorspace projections by location, size and type.

Case Study: Regional Strategy Retail Policy

Policy E5 Regional Structure of Town Centres
The Cities and towns of strategic importance for retail and other town centre purposes are:
- Regional centres: e.g. Basildon, Cambridge
- Major Town centres: e.g. Bedford, Bury St Edmunds

Major new retail development and complementary town centre uses should primarily be located in the above centres and be consistent in scale with the size and character of the centre and its role in the regional structure. Local development documents should only propose higher order provision where need is clearly established and the development would:
- result in a more sustainable pattern of development and movement, including a reduction in the need to travel; and
- have no significant harmful impact on other centres or the transport network.

Any new regional centres are subject to similar considerations and should only be brought forward through a review of this RSS.

Below the level of the centres of regional strategic importance, local development documents will identify a network of more local town centres, district centres, neighbourhood centres and village centres

East of England Plan, SoS proposed changes October 2007

Bury St Edmunds - markets are more than just 'shopping'

Case Study: Planning process – Christ's Lane, Cambridge

Renewal of Bradwell's Court, a retail scheme dating from 1960-62, was proposed in the Cambridge Local Plan (1996), which identified an opportunity for development including shopping, arts/entertainment, residential accommodation and possibly A2 and A3 uses on a 0.36 ha site.

In 2002 the City Council prepared a planning and design brief for the site, which was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Guidance. This set out:
- a vision for the site
- planning policy requirement, e.g. mixed use
- a context analysis
- general design principles, including built form and building lines
- servicing and car and cycle parking
- requirements for inclusion in the planning application
- the requirement for Conservation Area Consent
- and key items for draft heads of terms in a S106 agreement

Consent was given for the development including 9 shop units and 15 flats. The developers were Land Securities and the architects were Panter Hudspith. Construction was completed in spring 2008.

Benefits from S106 agreements include contributions to: open space, community development, education, transport, the public realm, community safety and public art. Excluding public art the value of the contributions was £435,000.

Christ's Lane, Cambridge

Case Study: Lincoln Town Centre Masterplan and regeneration

As part of a joint project involving a range of agencies the Prince's Foundation led a complex Enquiry by Design (EbD) workshop in November 2005 to develop a long term vision to guide the development of Lincoln City Centre. The centre was not considered in isolation from its wider urban context – the structure of the City overall was scrutinised and links between neighbourhoods were analysed to develop an overall strategy. The design team looked at how the centre related to the overall structure and tackled issues such as movement patterns, retail hierarchy and cultural identity. Development briefs were elaborated and a phasing and delivery strategy was outlined. The EbD proposals were the subject of public consultation and received positive feedback.

Brayford Pool, Lincoln - part of a 'whole city' strategy

Town Centre Planning

Charles Wagner, Head of Planning & Regeneration Policy, English Heritage

Introduction
Shopping and retail are the lifeblood of many historic areas, providing vitality, vibrancy and an essential economic base. But the encouragement of more retail space will not necessarily bring about successful regeneration or economic growth. Success has come to those who find the "unique selling point" that brings people to the town to do something other than shop for everyday needs even if it is additional specialist shopping. Those towns that have been more successful have combined their retail strategies with other attractions or reasons to visit.

The DCMS Taking Part survey, found that 70% of all adults had been to a historic environment site in 2005/6 and that a 'city or town of historic character' was by far the most common type of attraction visited. Once there, the leisure visitor is likely to spend money and an historic dimension to a town or city centre clearly adds to its attractiveness as a leisure shopping destination.

What contemporary strategies are needed to support effective retail development in historic centres?
With so many towns and cities trying to appeal beyond their own residents to visitors, local authorities should be considering a holistic approach, bringing together strategies for the public realm and town centre management with the authority's tourism and economic development strategies. In doing so, cooperation from across the range of council services is essential if the basic building blocks for a successful town centre are to be delivered. That is:-

- an attractive, safe and clean environment
- variety in the retailing offer
- differences from adjacent retailing areas
- well repaired and maintained buildings
- well-managed parking and traffic
- facilities for people of all ages
- ideally, other cultural attractions such as historic buildings, museums, theatres, sports centres or other facilities that give an inducement to visit the town beyond the retail offer.

A Public Realm Strategy is much more than just a bid to repave a town centre to a high standard; the design should respond to the use of spaces and evaluate what brings the area alive. Improving the physical state of the spaces between the buildings is the end goal but it must not be considered in isolation. It should be a working document that can evolve over time as work is carried out, funds come available, especially from S106 and as priorities change. The forthcoming *EHTF Manual for Historic Streets* will give further guidance.

The Public Realm Strategy could form part of an over-arching Town Centre Management Strategy. The latter will include elements on the management of spaces and the control of land uses, as well as refuse collection and cleaning. The key link between the two is that the value of expensive capital investment in public realm is maintained by the cleaning and maintenance regime for the area.

The Town Centre Management Strategy should also consider what can be added to the "visitor experience", and learn lessons from the attractions that compete for leisure time and spending, such as IKEA with its play areas and cafés. Provision for each part of the visitor's trip, transport, access, refreshment, activities for those not shopping etc, is essential. Business support, marketing and branding are also areas to be considered.

Under the new planning system post 2004 Act, the Local Development Framework with its Local Development Documents (LDDs), authorities have been encouraged to have LDDs for town centres. For towns undergoing significant change, this may be in the form of an Area Action Plan, based on master-planning, for other towns the LDD for the town centre could be an enhanced management document for the town, bringing in the strands of economic development, tourism, town centre management and public realm. These documents require a sound evidence base that could include a variety of studies such as economic and retail or a proper understanding of urban character (based on historic landscape characterisation).

What role do Business Improvements Districts (BIDs) have to play?
Though businesses will undoubtedly have a role in commenting on the above strategies, BIDs are useful tools for bringing more investment into, and ownership of, the town centre area. The most high profile BIDs are in London such as the New West End Company. It is now in its second term, has uniformed staff patrolling and their own cleaning vehicles, and has carried out public realm improvement projects. A good number of historic towns have successful BIDs, such as Keswick, which claims to be the country's first rural BID. In these smaller settlements the BID partnership can consist entirely of local retailers, not needing a major national operator or property company/landlord.

How does the management of retail centres impact on historic centres?
A contentious issue over the last 20 years has been the "privatisation of public spaces", and yet in some places the "privately managed public realm" is far better managed and appears a more attractive environment for visitors. But when the gates close after shopping hours, areas of the town or city centre are out of bounds to the public. A reasonable compromise has been struck in the Whitefriars Centre in Canterbury, where the 'streets' in the Centre appear to be a part of the City Centre streets until late at night. There are still issues around activities in privatised space that are allowed in public places - photography, busking, picnicking, spontaneous art, street trading etc.[4] Long term considerations are maintaining the quality of the area and its retail offer and responding to market conditions.

[4] *See EHTF document 'Manual for Historic Streets' published May 1 2008*

• *"Those towns that have been more successful have combined their retail strategies with other strategies"*

"the design should respond to the use of spaces and evaluate what brings the area alive "

• *"TCM strategy should consider what can be added to the "visitor experience""*

• *"BIDs are useful tools for bringing more investment in and ownership of the town centre area"*

"shopping and retail are the lifeblood of many historic areas."

FOCUS ON RETAIL

How do covered and uncovered developments impact on historic centres?
Arcades were popular in towns developed in the C19, therefore there are some historic centres where to introduce another covered development would seem to carry on this tradition. There are other towns, particularly those of tight historic grain or on hill tops, where topography is important, where a large covered shopping street would appear an alien form. In Chesterfield, where the town centre around the Market Place was redeveloped from the 1980s, on the sites lower down the slope, covered shopping has been created, but higher up the slope and around the famous parish church, new open streets have been created. Covered spaces can add to retail diversity.

Retail and mixed-use place-making
Retail-led regeneration is about successful "place-making", which must go beyond simple physical improvements to include crowds, bustle, atmosphere and intangible "sense of place". Part of place-making must be to retain local distinctiveness and local traders, so emphasis has to be given to retaining small, local retailers on high streets and secondary shopping streets. This has been the approach taken in and around the Princesshay development in Exeter. Frontage and change of use policies may offer some protection and business support initiatives can be critical.

The other part of place-making is introducing a mix of uses. Feltham was the weakest town centre in Hounslow, west London but the 1960s town centre has been redeveloped with an anchor superstore but also 800 new residential units, 115 bed hotel, new library and state-of-the-art medical centre for the community. If somewhere without the appeal of an historic core and with much competition can turn itself round, then it should be possible for an historic town in a rural location with an attractive town centre with a wealth of historic buildings to sensitively blend in new development that fits its context.

Case Study: Princesshay, Exeter

The Princesshay development in Exeter covers an area of the City Centre badly damaged by bombing during the Second World War and subsequently redeveloped in the 1950s. The post-war re-development had not been successful in responding to its City Centre location and its proximity to the cathedral and City walls, creating an uncomfortable mix of pedestrians and traffic and with a large number of architecturally poor buildings. Proposals were brought forward in the mid 90s for comprehensive re-development which gained the approval of Exeter City Council but were subsequently called in.

The City Council and Land Securities went back to the drawing board in 2000 and reviewed the site constraints and opportunities from scratch. Three separate architectural practices were appointed to develop the design concept and introduce a greater mix of styles, diversity and vitality to the project. Together with an emphasis on appraising and evaluating the area's historic character, this approach led to a scheme that incorporated a sound understanding of surrounding character and context with a series of component building blocks each integrating well with the existing historic urban fabric.

The archaeological excavation undertaken as part of the project was the largest ever seen in the South West region and posed major challenges for the construction programme but these were integrated with considerable skill. Innovative public art in the shape of freestanding arched doors made of glass for the 15th century Almshouses showcase some of the finds. Three other public art commissions bring great interest to different parts of the scheme.

Princesshay, as developed, is a mixed use scheme comprising 49,000 sq.m. of floor space of which almost three quarters is for retailing and the remainder for 123 residential apartments. The concept was conventional in designing a 12,000 sq.m. department store to anchor the development, with the remainder of the scheme comprising six major space users providing units ranging from 500-4,000 sq.m. and space for some 60 other retailers.

The scheme was being discussed in detail in 2001 when concern was increasing about the potential impact on the small trader in Exeter with the focus of the scheme itself purely on national multiples. The City Council worked alongside Land Securities to design in a series of small kiosk units for independent and specialist retailers with units in the range of 200-500 sq. ft. Land Securities embraced the Council's vision recognising the benefits of a scheme which provides a mixed use offer with a full mix of retail operators.

The City Council has also been concerned about providing active frontages on each elevation of the scheme compared with Princesshay's predecessor, a 1950s scheme which had a series of dead frontages. Stemming from initial ideas of a handful of such units, after various design iterations, Land Securities were able to deliver a total of 17 units which would be made available to small, niche independent retailers.

These units were marketed across the South West, attracting interest from 400 potential operators. The units have been let on 10 year leases with Security of Tenure which provides for renewal rights on lease expiry. The cost of fitting out the units was off set by a combination of rent free and capital contribution which has assisted the independent retailers to establish their business within Princesshay. The end result has been an eclectic mix of fashion outlets, a delicatessen, jewellers, health products and a lifestyle retailer, to give the scheme a distinctive edge to help tackle the perception that major re-developments simply focus on drawing in large, national multiples.

The completed scheme has successfully integrated the new development with the surrounding historic City Centre, has significantly improved the area's permeability and pedestrian movement and has created a number of new civic spaces and high quality public realm. There are signs that the new residential buildings are beginning to engender a sense of local community, while the evening economy has also received a major boost.

Burlington Arcade, London

Tescos, Ludlow - responding to the topography

Princesshay, Exeter

Princesshay, Exeter

Princesshay, Exeter

Planning Policy – Meeting Local Needs

John Rigby, Director Economy & Development, Exeter City Council

The Policy Framework set out by PPS6 and its predecessors has focused the minds of elected Members on the somewhat dry and evidential approach of assessing retail need and applying the sequential test. In practice, though, Members tend to focus on trying to stem inexorable market forces which result in major operators seeking to increase market share and targeting the smallest of historic towns. In some cases, that targeting might be welcomed by the local authority, providing an anchor around which retail regeneration can help lead wider regeneration of a town and reduce spending leakage to nearby higher order retail centres. But, in almost all cases where major operators wish to expand, small traders and individual residents see this as the beginning of the end for the traditional way of shopping, resulting in campaigns which are often vociferous in opposing these major operators.

The experiences of St Albans and Gerrards Cross illustrate the tenacity of both the operators and indeed their opponents seeking to extend supermarket penetration in the teeth of opposition from the local community.

Whilst many authorities wish to help the small trader and existing centres against the competitive threat of national multiples, the powers that are available to local authorities are very limited. Some success has been achieved through planning controls on the sale of types of goods:

- Conditions have been imposed on retail warehouses to limit the range of products to bulky goods, thereby protecting retailers of smaller, high value and fashion goods in existing town centres;
- Supermarkets have been restricted from selling certain goods, typically pharmacy and Post Office services in order to protect existing small shops in local centres.

Many authorities have adopted policies which protect core retail streets by setting minimum percentages for frontages in A1 retail uses in primary or secondary shopping streets. This was particularly helpful in the 1980s and 1990s in controlling the expansion of A2 uses when banks and building societies were in danger of dominating key frontages and thus detracting from the vitality of shopping streets.

In some instances, authorities have been comfortable with the principle of additional supermarket representation but, understandably, baulked at the expansion of existing operators in their town rather than having new representation. The Competition Commission has been grappling with these issues for some 18 months and, their provisional decision is to recommend to Government that a competitive assessment should be implemented within the planning system, with the Office of Fair Trading acting as statutory consultee. The result would be that the development control system would need to consider market shares within a fixed drive time and especially if a particular operator was not already present in the isochrone, an application by them would be acceptable under the competition assessment. This does have the potential to result in the displacement of the 'needs' test, thus weakening the Planning system. The Competition Commission should perhaps be concentrating on more creative means of reducing retail concentration amongst a small number of operators.

Recognising that the current system does not deliver, organisations like the New Economics Foundation have proposed an array of measures to reduce the stranglehold of the national multiples. Their methodology in analysing the cloning of British town centres is debatable but their prescriptions of the future are worthy of consideration. Some of the measures they propose include:

- limitations on market share
- moratorium on retail takeovers for the biggest companies
- more effective control of mezzanine floor additions
- introduction of a local competition policy
- caps on supermarket sizes, as in Ireland.

Many of these measures are really for central Government to consider as local authorities have little powers of discretion in these areas. A creative package can, however, be put together successfully as the case study illustrates.

Case Study: Sales of goods restrictions on retail warehousing

Edge of centre retail warehousing can be a valuable complement to central area shopping, especially in historic towns where space and access restrictions can hamper the trade in bulky goods. However, retail warehouses can completely undermine the viability of high street shops. In Cambridge controls over the range of goods that can be sold from retail warehouses have been imposed through planning conditions. These have limited the sales to items such as DIY goods, garden products, furniture and carpets, electrical goods, motoring accessories and office equipment. Over time changing retail models have led this range to be extended to include office supplies, textiles, bicycles and catalogue showrooms offering goods with 70% of turnover in the permitted categories. The approach has supported both a viable town centre and retail park.

Princesshay, Exeter 1960

- *"many authorities wish to help the small trader"*

- *"the powers that are available to local authorities are very limited"*

Princesshay, Exeter 2008

- *"Many authorities have adopted policies which protect core retail streets"*

Cambridge retail park

Design Issues

Andrew Ogg, Managing Director, Leslie Jones

- "Scheme examples ... now show the main-stream approach to mixed uses, the incor-poration of public space and a commitment to achieving high quality architecture and public realm within retail projects."

Uxbridge, High Street

Refurbished Listed buildings and reconstructed heritage incorporated into a larger masterplan focusing the evening economy in Uxbridge West London

Client: Capital Shopping Centres plc
Architects: Leslie Jones

- *"In fact it is the historic towns that present the best opportunities for placemaking and differ-entiation"*

Queensgate, Huddersfield

Vision for Queensgate, Huddersfield which incorporates a 20th century listed market hall and library and a number of both listed and unlisted 19th century buildings which contribute character to the proposed mixed use regeneration.

Client: Kirklees Borough Council
Architects: Leslie Jones

Design sympathetic to the historic environment and operational needs

There is now a new and integrated approach to the design of retail in our towns. Scheme examples in the pipeline such as Grosvenor Developments Liverpool One and Quintains Wembley Regeneration, now show the mainstream approach to mixed uses, the incorporation of public space and a commitment to achieving high quality architecture and public realm within retail projects.

The desire for schemes to be unique and reflect individual places has been a strong reaction to a consolidating number of major national retailers, and while special efforts have been placed on promoting independent traders and attracting a mix of new and international retailers to projects, the real pressure and opportunity for placemaking and differentiation lies with the design and the designers.

In regenerating our historic towns we are talking about a new type of retail project – one that has greater respect for historic grain and context:

- Which develops a vocabulary of streets and squares – not malls and atriums
- Which thinks in terms of retail quarters – not shopping centres
- Which delivers a mix of uses – in particular residential components
- And which delivers a range of values – rather than seeking to deliver 100% prime pitch across the piece.

Friars Walk, Newport

Vision for Upper Dock Street incorporating residential apartments, restaurants and independent traders into an active frontage screening a cinema box and large retail units.

Client: Modus Corovest Ltd
Architects: Leslie Jones

Retailer's requirements and pressures need to be understood and accommodated, rather than resisted, if we are to maintain viable and vital economies in our historic towns. It is the satisfaction of these design requirements efficiently and effectively that generates the values which are required to deliver the quality of design demanded. It is important to understand what retailers need too – efficient space - faced with price deflation (goods) and cost inflation (cost of occupancy) and faced with substandard new space they will simply go to other locations. Integrating other uses has helped solve the urban design issues of providing larger footplates in smaller locations. Careful planning of single aspect housing, independent retailers, small business uses or restaurants for example, can give activity and articulation on frontages to return streets, masking the blank facades required by retailers to the side and rear of larger units.

In fact it is the historic towns that present the best opportunities for placemaking and differentiation through a respect and a positive approach to the retention and repair of the fabric and heritage of our towns.

All projects should start with a clear analysis of the buildings which contribute positively to townscape. This should include new buildings as well as old. Proposals for Kirklees, Huddersfield Queensgate incorporate 20th century buildings as well as older Victorian buildings of character.

The masterplan however must be retail led – delivering a retail circuit with well positioned anchor stores but promoting footflows through the whole town. In this regard it may be beneficial to consider multiple sites for development to ensure integration with the existing retail offer.

Transport planning is a key area in historic towns where the application of current standards can adversely affect the character of new additions to the town. Some degree of flexibility is required to be sympathetic to older street patterns and innovative in planning service routes, storage and vehicle access points. In smaller market towns the provision of good quality car parking remains essential to the economic sustainability of retail centres so the preferred urban design solutions are underground, linked surface courts or decked structures screened, as described above in relation to large retail spaces, with other uses avoiding bringing the elevations onto street frontages.

Increasing dependence on roof mounted plant for efficiency of floorspace also needs to be considered at the outset to ensure that rooflines have sufficient attention to detail ahead of Planning Application stage. A good example of the issues that can arise is at the Grand Arcade, Cambridge.

FOCUS ON RETAIL

Integrating Mixed Uses into town centre developments

The overall acceptance by funding institutions that mixed use is the only way forward has also enabled us to deliver true pieces of townscape and appropriate urban scale with new additions, contrary to the single use developments of the past.

Mixed use also provides a major design opportunity to wrap larger uses and footprints as described above, to satisfy the operational constraints in urban settings. The positioning of access places and cores to residential and other uses, while not suggesting these should be in secondary locations by any means, should be considered not to compromise retail frontages and value.

The opportunity of mixed use now also means extending the economies of our towns into the evening and changing the social nature of towns by increasing the resident population.

One of the key skills of the retail property industry is management, and the application of private sector management on a town wide basis is something that needs to be better considered in the future.

We may need, particularly at local authority level to accept more the private management of public space so that we can increase the standard of public realm for the long term. This may mean streets remaining in private ownership with responsibility for maintenance, management, security and marketing under a service charge or Business Improvement District, but with maintained 24 hour public access.[5]

Raising the quality of edge of centre schemes

One beneficiary of Planning Policy Statement PPS6 has been the value of edge of centre sites. Limited new opportunities for sites satisfying the sequential test has meant in-town specialist developers bringing their skills to edge of centre sites.

Sites that previously were considered 'shed' projects are being considered as more urban projects, looking at how better land values can be created through the addition of residential units, leisure, restaurant and community facilities such as medical and dental practices. These uses are bringing better urban scale and enclosure to these projects and are incorporating design features which deliver much more of a sense of place, which ultimately is reflected in higher values.

The increased quality of public realm is again important in achieving this and the reuse where possible of existing buildings and fabric can greatly improve the character and differentiation of the project. Good examples are Marshalls Yard, Gainsborough and Weavers Wharf, Kidderminster, and for mix of uses, The Centre Feltham.

These centres should be considered a community heart for the long term.

Case Study: Gravesend

The regeneration of Gravesend riverside will revitalise the town's heritage through the delivery of a sustainable masterplan of linked public spaces and mixed uses. It will:

- Expand the hub of the town through mixed use development
- Create pedestrian friendly routes and new public realm
- Re-focus the town on the unique river frontage
- Provide a range of uses to encourage both residents and visitors to experience the heritage of Gravesend
- Enhance the character areas and provide a suitable setting for the town icons
- Provide new community uses and spaces

The Development Objectives:

- 100,000 sq. ft new retail
- 600+ housing units (up to 30% affordable)
- 30,000 sq. ft leisure/ A3
- 10,000 sq. ft offices
- 3* hotel 40 – 60 beds
- 1300 new car parking spaces
- New community facilities
- Creation of substantial new public realm
- Catalyst to deliver the Heritage Riverside Strategy
- Integration of mixed uses
- Creating a destination for visitors and residents
- A pattern of streets and squares recreating traditional alleys and yards

[5] *See EHTF 'Manual for Historic Streets' published on 1 May 2008*

- *"overall acceptance by funding institutions that mixed use is the only way forward"*

Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough

A new edge of centre retail park incorporating listed 19th century buildings into a retail park layout with restaurant, small shops and office uses in addition. The site was formerly an iron works building steam engines and agricultural machinery.

Client: Prospect Estates and Dransfield Properties
Architect: WCEC Architects

- *"Sites that previously were considered 'shed' projects are being considered as more urban projects"*

Weavers Wharf, Kidderminster

A new edge of centre retail park with a canal frontage and regenerating listed former mill buildings delivering retail park style units and parking but integrated into the town in a way which supports existing trade.

Client: Centros Miller Ltd
Architects: Lyons Sleeman & Hoare

The Centre Feltham

Replacing decay and dereliction with a thriving mixed use development of major retail units and residential apartments alongside a health centre, library and Learning Centre

Client: Thornfield Properties Morley Fund Management
Architects: Reid Architecture Stanford Eatwell Associates

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Access and Design

Ian Awcock, Senior Technical Director, WSP

" patterns of vehicular movement... are also challenging."

"What is the right type of access?"

- *"the designer needs to work harder to ensure compatibility between modern space require-ments and design forms"*

Case Study: Princesshay

- Temporary closure of a key cross town route (Paris St) during construction was achieved without traffic chaos and so became permanent.
- Car parking considered on a cross City Centre basis resulted in an understanding that only 296 additional parking spaces were required for a major City Centre retail regeneration
- The closure to through traffic of a main rat run through a key commercial area of the City gave the opportunity to access car parking in a new way and remove around 5000 vehicles per day from City Centre streets.
- Controlled servicing to retail units in the historic core removed around 300 delivery vehicles per day.

- *"streets that were never designed for the cars should not have it im-posed upon them now in an unconstrained way."*

Introduction

The design of retail developments in historic towns and cities brings particular challenges to the urban designer and architect. The issues of catering for the patterns of vehicular movement demanded by present day servicing and the travelling public within the confines of a historic street pattern are also challenging. This article seeks to provide some suggestions, bedded in practical experience and case studies, of approaches that can be taken to some of the key (and typical) design issues which are faced when designing for retail development in historic towns and cities.

The contextual issues will be considered in answering the question:

> *"How do we reconcile design sympathetic to the historic environment and the operational needs of viable modern retailing?"*

The key issues to be addressed are:

- Size – locating large space into places with a small grain
- Retaining historic fabric
- Obtaining mixed use
- Access, parking
- Corporate branding
- Cost pressures

As pressure rises on regenerating edge of centre schemes, how we address and raise the quality of those edge of centre schemes becomes increasingly important in historic towns and cities.

There is no doubt that the needs of modern retailers are at odds with the demands of our forbears when historic towns and cities were being developed. This does not mean that the needs of modern retailers cannot be accommodated, rather that the designer needs to work harder to ensure compatibility between modern space requirements and design forms, the historic context in which development and regeneration is required.

Key to this can be the urban design discipline of Conservation Area Study or contextual analysis. Undertaking historical analysis and research of how a town or city grew to become what it is invariably leads to an understanding of how modern development blocks can be stitched into the surrounding historic areas.

This analysis should include but not be limited to:

- Historical map and archive searches
- Desktop archaeological analysis
- Historical streetscape analysis
- Historical movement patterns

Once this initial analysis is complete the block form of a development area can be de-termined based broadly upon historic street patterns to ensure that modern development does not dwarf the historic grain of towns and cities. So how can modern Major Space Users (msu) be accommodated into the small grain of historic towns and cities?

Size – locating large space into places with a small grain

Modern retailers understand the needs of the shopper within the walls of their empire – the department store or msu. Once through the doors the retailer can be relied upon to try to make the experience as rewarding for the shopper (and themselves) as possible. But what about the outside of that large block?

Clearly large historic buildings were NOT monolithic blocks of façade, but broken up by a myriad of intricate detailing. One modern way to try to replicate that is to permit smaller kiosk units (less than 2000sq ft) to occupy some of the shop window areas of an msu. Gaining value from these otherwise limited value areas also then drives interest and variety and breaks up the size of the façade.

Of equal importance is the need to try to ensure that large msu blocks have a 360° design with walkways around all sides. This would typically replicate a traditional street pattern and allow the large msu to fit into the surrounding street pattern rather than impose upon it.

Retaining historic fabric

Key to this is reflecting historical street patterns and thence permitting existing historic buildings to coexist alongside modern counterparts. Fundamental to that is the hierarchy of modes and an acceptance that streets that were never designed for the cars should not have it imposed upon them now in an unconstrained way.

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The key to reflecting historical street patterns is therefore a movement strategy through a development area that reflects the needs of shoppers, residents and visitors which takes them to where they want to go along their desire lines. Reflecting this in the hierarchy of modes and providing for vehicular access only where it is absolutely required through historic areas will permit the quality design of development areas, with the bonus of retaining the historic fabric.

Challenging traditional highway cross sections and standards can reap benefits in historic centres with designers encouraged to use design guidance such as '*Manual for Streets*' in which reductions in visibility and highway space are encouraged.

Mixed use
Providing mixed use within predominantly retail developments is now an accepted and encouraged practice amongst all major developers. It provides round the clock usage of facilities and can help to reduce some of the impacts of large development in smaller places by breaking down the uses and development block sizes.

The concept of shared trips also assists in reducing the impact whereby car parking for example can be used by shoppers by day or leisure visitors by night. Locating residential development in the centre of towns and cities is now the norm and brings sustainable travel benefits through the local availability of facilities and the high likelihood of increased public transport accessibility. Low or nil parking provision with such residential elements should not be precluded.

For all these reasons (and more) the most successful recent retail led schemes have been mixed use and that trend looks set to continue in smaller historic towns and cities in the future.

Access and parking
In recent years there has been a drive towards supporting the urban design concept of placemaking as applied to the creation of streets, most recently through the publication of the '*Manual for Streets*'. This design guidance document replaces *Places Streets and Movement* and *DB32* as the design document for residential roads but also has applicability in low speed or low traffic areas and is very likely to be applicable in historic towns and cities and in support of retail led regeneration.

The key principle is to allow the creation of access and streetscapes led by the design of the place rather than the requirement for access by car.

In terms of retail development this can lead to a number of key questions that should be asked of the accessibility requirement of any scheme:

- What is the right type of access?
- How many and what size of vehicle should the design include?
- Can accessibility into the centre be limited to that which really is absolutely necessary?
- How can permeability be ensured for pedestrians and cyclists?
- How can adequate linkages be ensured for public transport provision?
- Are there benefits from modelling parking needs for the town based on sensible mode split assumptions rather than just looking at the proposed development?
- Can new parking be located appropriately for both town/city needs and retailers?
- Can some of the value be returned into the parking by mixing uses e.g. value uses beneath parking.

These questions are best answered at the initial masterplanning stage and considered on town/city centre wide basis. One example considers the "fried egg approach" with the development under consideration as the yoke in the centre but the influences of that scheme extending all around into the white of the egg.

Such a wider town planning approach can lead to conflict between the traffic requirements identified by the highway authority and the urban design and town planning aspirations of developers and council planning officers. These issues can be overcome by good communication and a desire to improve the locality for all, but may require some joint political pressure to be brought to bear.

In some cases radical questions of traffic and highway engineers may need to be asked – "is that section of road really needed or can we close it?". There are examples of locations where such bold steps have been taken and traffic chaos has NOT ensued. Traffic in some cases has simply disappeared from the network with commensurate environmental benefit.

Servicing
The issue of servicing of development in town and city centres should be carefully considered. Increasingly retailers are finding that compromises between timing of deliveries and the environment of historic centres is being reached with input of hours servicing becoming more prevalent. In some cases traffic orders are being applied to control access to certain roads for certain sizes of vehicle at certain times.

In other locations freight consolidation is making the best use of resources and reducing the impact of service vehicles in historic cores.

Raising the quality of edge of centre schemes
Improvements in townscape through development in edge of centre locations can be achieved by the use of highways and buildings to create a sense of arrival. The sense that roads are subservient to the place and built form can be established on the outskirts of a city or town with further chances to emphasize that through development on sites approaching a city centre.

- *"The key is therefore a movement strategy through a development area that reflects the needs of shoppers, residents and visitors "*

"mixed use within predominately retail developments"

"Mixed use...provides round the clock usage of facilities"

- "How can permeability be ensured for pedestrians and cyclists?"

- *"In some cases radical questions of traffic and highway engineers may need to be asked"*

" adequate linkages...for public transport"

Sustainability

Tessa O'Neill, Director of Urbanism, BDP

Public art and lighting can work in harmony

Sustainability Esperanto

What do we think of when we talk of sustainable development? - Brundtland, Kyoto, EPBD (Energy Performance of Buildings Directive), Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 22, carbon footprints, carbon trading, carbon offsets, carbon neutral, WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive), Breeam, thermal mass, embodied energy, ESCo, MUSCo, CHP (Combined Heat and Power), absorption cooling, biomass boilers, rainwater harvesting, SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems), heat exchangers, green roofs, renewables, BMS (Building Management Systems), PV's (Photovoltaic's), ground sourced heatpumps, CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), 'Triple Bottom Line' and so on. Answer: All of it and some of it and this short article will attempt to cover some of it.

- *"Design solutions including the rise of mixed-use developments already signify a move towards greater sustainability"*

Growing importance of sustainability

Over the last decade, the importance of the environmental agenda has grown dramatically and society is ever more environmentally and ethically aware; at the same time, the goal to achieve sustainable development has produced more onerous policy and legislative requirements. A more ethically aware and educated consumer and investor means that the search for social responsibility is a major and growing force for future change within towns and cities. Design solutions including the rise of mixed-use developments already signify a move towards greater sustainability. The combination of legislative stick and ethical awareness will ensure a significant rise in sustainable retailing and in-store design everywhere.

- *"64% of the energy consumption in retail comes from heating and lighting alone"*

However, despite the dramatic increase of sustainability in the minds of the public, the retail industry has been far slower to react than other industries. The services sector accounts for 13% of all energy consumed in the UK of which 30% is attributable to the retail sector, presenting a significant opportunity to contribute to the overall reduction of energy consumption. The Carbon Trust – the government organisation - demonstrated in 2004 that 64% of the energy consumption in retail comes from heating and lighting alone. With 50% of the UK's energy consumption coming from buildings, the built environment and indeed shopping places is at the forefront of the carbon problem. (*BCSC Future of Retail Property 2007*.)

Legislation

The term Sustainable Development was first defined by the UN in the Brundtland Report of 1987, calling on the world's governments to ensure that development "Meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (WCED, 1987). Following that report, the sustainability agenda for development has evolved around a dedication to the 'triple bottom line', emphasising the environmental, economic and social sustainability of development proposals. Emphasis has historically only been placed on the environmental agenda, the social and economic elements however are just as important.

Access for everyone

The Kyoto agreement officially came into force in 2006 and is aimed at reducing the world's emissions of greenhouse gases. One of the European Union's responses to Kyoto is the EPBD with its target of 12.5% reduction in carbon emissions by 2012. The UK has introduced part L of the Building Regulations in line with that legislation. Government guidance in PPS22 requires all new developments and refurbishments over 1000 m2 to reduce carbon emissions by 10% from on-site renewable energy and in some parts of the UK that percentage amount is even higher, for example in Greater London it is 20% as laid down by The London Plan (2008) and Kirklees Council has set it as high as 30%.

- *"the future must also see the increased use of sustainable construction techniques and design features"*

Sustainable places

However, the future must also see the increased use of sustainable construction techniques and design features for both new and redeveloped shopping places. The use of such technologies and features will be incremental, as developers and retailers test for practicality and financial impacts as they move from the 'business as usual' attitude to shell and core fit outs that comply with sustainability and environmental expectations.

In general, future sustainable shopping places could therefore include some or all of the following initiatives although this list is not conclusive:

- A greater focus on development in existing town centres which promotes sustainability through the use of existing built fabric and ease of accessibility; for example the Paradise Street development in Liverpool by Grosvenor.
- A mix of uses is obviously the most sustainable urban solution, an urban form that enables a more efficient sharing of the most critical limited resource - land, which also brings the potential for energy recycling between uses, for example Princesshay shopping centre in Exeter.
- Decentralised Energy Service Companies (ESCo's) and Multi Utility Service Companies (MUSCos) are offering to fund, build, operate and maintain sustainable energy and information infrastructure on and off site.
- Incorporating lighting strategies for retail units, shopping centres and towns; this could be as simple as time switching, having a controlled management regime by town centre and shopping centre managers.
- Minimising the use of energy by management and operating regimes in shopping centres and retail stores, for example, by not keeping shop doors open

Climate change - "business as usual"?

for long periods with air curtains above them allowing heat to escape.

- Promoting greater use of public transport, walking and cycling by shopping places would also further reduce carbon dioxide emissions.
- Eco place branding showing the consumer that the environment is a key business driver for that place.
- Strategies and action plans to deal with packaging and delivery.

Sustainable operation and design techniques
With regards to the more specific energy and design solutions of retail units and shopping centres, we are likely to see a greater use of natural ventilation and lighting with increased energy insulation. Already operators are cooling shopping centres closer to the outside temperature, which creates a more comfortable experience for the shoppers. In future we can expect to go shopping in our coats as our parents did!

Equally there will be greater efforts made to retain heat when it is generated. At the moment 66% of heat in store is lost through the building fabric, while the rest is lost through air filtration and ventilation. Buildings will become better insulated and air-tight although it is recognised this is more difficult to achieve in historic and listed buildings.[6] By reducing inefficient artificial lighting levels and introducing thermal mass, retailers could also achieve a reduction in energy output related to cooling, the thermal mass of materials used will therefore become increasingly important.

Lighting is the other big drain on energy resources; shops and shopping centres become brighter as retailers aim to show their brands in the best light. However, sophisticated lighting controls would minimise wasteful use of light, examples include time switching to vary the levels at different times of the day; localised switching that reduces light levels during periods of restocking and cleaning and daylight sensors. Town centre and shopping centre managers have an important role to play in controlling exterior lighting in cities, towns and shopping centres. Looking further ahead switching to LED and fibre optic technology could cut lighting bills although obviously designing centres to make maximum use of natural light will deliver the biggest benefits. This constitutes a major design objective for shopping places.

Recently retailers have looked at design and operation of their store or building to improve energy efficiency but increasingly one needs to look at types of construction, the embodied energy of materials used, the sustainability of the whole supply chain and methods of transportation for the complete carbon picture.

Building Design
Building design clearly represents a huge investment and the upfront financial implications are likely to be born by the developer. However, it is widely recognised that investment in design can represent enormous economic value not only by attracting greater footfall but also by helping to lower occupancy and maintenance costs over the lifetime of the building. However many of these costs are increasingly being passed to the retailer via rising service charges such as ‘sustainable premium’. It is of course important to include renewable energy generation, but it is vital that this is not to the detriment of the character of the shopping place and especially the quality of the heritage environment in our historic towns and cities.

Although there is scant evidence that poor environmental performance is impacting on investment values today, by 2009 the EPBD will have the force of law in the UK and all buildings will have to display an energy rating certificate. None of these physical changes are cost-free but if costs are delivered over the lifetime of a building, higher up front costs are more than counterbalanced by lower running costs.

It is much better however, that sustainable design techniques such as orientation and use of materials with greater thermal mass are employed as early on in the design process as possible. This is obviously more difficult when retrofitting an existing building and some listed buildings may not be adaptable to some of these energy solutions. In this instance developers and retailers should probably consider carbon off setting off site although this is not a favoured approach in policy.

The use of such energy technologies therefore must be considered on a site by site basis taking on board planning policy considerations, including impact on heritage buildings and conservation areas. Although energy generation and sustainability is clearly important the final solution must not detract from the heritage value of any building, town or city and therefore the type of energy technologies employed in these areas might be limited.

However, the biggest green challenge to shopping centres, towns and cities is the car and the pressure is likely to grow on car access to shopping places. There could be restrictions on the number of parking spaces or even raised car parking prices which will impact on small towns and local centres’ attractiveness to the consumer. There is the continued tension between the accessibility of a town and the ability to park especially in some of our smaller rural market towns and government guidance is trying to reduce the length of car trips. (See page 16 on Access and Design).

Waste
Waste management is becoming more important to shopping centre owners and retailers as they face more expensive land fill charges which require them to work closely together on recycling regimes.

In January 2003, the European Union introduced a directive on Waste of Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE). The directive makes producers responsible for the recycling of the products that they put on the market. Producers will increasingly have to meet recycling and recovery targets. The Government has agreed to allow a flexible approach where retailers can either have an in-store operation or join the British Retail Consortium’s Distributors Take-Back Scheme (DTS), which will contribute to the costs of local authority civic

[6] *See EHTF website for sources of information on energy efficiency in historic buildings www.ehtf.org.uk*

Bath - the quality of the heritage environment must be preserved

- *“LED and fibre optic technology could cut lighting bills although obviously designing centres to make maximum use of natural light will deliver the biggest benefits”*

- *“investment in design can represent enormous economic value... by helping to lower occupancy and maintenance costs over the lifetime of the building”*

Newcastle - lighting should be part of the design strategy

- *“the biggest green challenge to shopping centres, towns and cities is the car and the pressure is likely to grow ”*

• "Take Back can be achieved in-store and this will have implications for the design of shopping places"

Midland Hotel, Morecambe - re-use of existing buildings can be more sustainable than new build, whilst retaining local identity

• "Local authorities need to weigh up the advantages of sustainability measures against the impact on the historic built environment"

• "Consumers are increasingly looking to shop and use businesses that have a lower carbon footprint"

The Mall, Bristol

• "Marks and Spencer is forging ahead with their Plan A achieving zero carbon emissions in all UK and Ireland stores by 2012"

• "The future's bright, the future's green"

amenities sites designated collection facilities for WEEE. The DTS will offer retailers a 'one stop shop' as an alternative to accepting in-store take back of WEEE from householders or businesses on a like for like basis free of charge when a like item is sold. For those who do not wish to join the scheme, Take Back can be achieved in-store and this will have implications for the design of shopping places where waste collection areas must be incorporated. In towns and cities with space and heritage constraints this could be particularly onerous.

Conservation and design

In some situations sustainability and energy solutions may not be compatible with the built environment. Many of our town centres are historic and have a high design quality and the introduction of some of these sustainability measures could have a detrimental impact on their unique character.

Shopping places in the future could well be festooned with wind turbines and solar panels, and less visibly, other sustainable features such as biomass boilers, underground heat sources, CHP (Combined Heat and Power), SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) green roofs and rainwater harvesting.

The use of such technologies does not sit comfortably in all locations and some of the more visual markers such as wind turbines and Photo Voltaics would be wholly inappropriate in historic town centre locations. The tension between providing energy efficient buildings with potential roof plant or other visible markers provides a greater problem and issue on design and townscape implications in heritage settings.

Local authorities need to weigh up the advantages of sustainability measures against the impact on the historic built environment. The EPBD energy labelling system will show the energy efficiency of all retail units, those located in conservation areas and which are within listed buildings may well produce a lower rating than modern retail units and allowance will need to be made in such circumstances.

The consumer

The consumer, aided by media campaigns, has become much more educated and ethically and environmentally aware. It is of increased importance to them where they shop and the environmental credentials of the retailer or retail place. At the same time retailers and developers are concerned about how they are perceived and on the sustainability of the retail premises they lease. Consumers are increasingly looking to shop and use businesses that have a lower carbon footprint. Shopping places are at risk of losing the market share if sustainability and ethical retailing is not addressed.

In seeking to engage with consumer desires, a greater degree of retail focus will include high quality and speciality or niche retailing which is likely to be more evident in local centres and historic market towns. They will provide a niche market focus for which the location is renowned which may include local markets and farmers markets where the consumer can get good quality produce without the recognised cost in carbon of transporting produce from further afield. Local sourcing and supplies will become more important to an ever more discerning consumer.

Corporate Social Responsibility

With the rise in importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), it is likely that sustainable design will increasingly be evident in towns, cities, shopping centres and retail outlets.

Developers and retailers are increasingly taking CSR seriously; Land Securities advocates a four-pronged approach to energy management, which involves reducing overall energy consumption; delivering energy in a more efficient way and using renewable energy sources before resorting to offsetting. British Land has aims to become carbon-neutral by the middle of 2008. To achieve this, it is putting much greater emphasis on carbon offsetting, at least in the first instance.

Marks and Spencer is forging ahead with their Plan A achieving zero carbon emissions in all UK and Ireland stores by 2012. Supermarket retailers are also beginning to take CSR seriously in their company targets; for example Tesco claims to have reduced energy usage by 15%, waste consumption by 8% and carried out an ethical assessment of 100% of its high risk own brand suppliers. (*BCSC Future of Retail Property 2007.*)

Conclusion

Sustainability and the environmental agenda cannot be ignored and will only increase in importance; despite its current domination by energy conservation issues social and economic sustainability will also gather momentum. Although they have not yet grabbed the headlines, they are still vital in providing sustainable places to live, shop and work.

Significant changes to the regulatory framework are inevitable, and there will undoubtedly be both winners and losers. There will be a predicted shift from the emphasis upon operational to whole life carbon footprints with a rise in concern for embodied energy and a focus upon recycled materials and carbon offsetting.

Those who do not adapt their business models now will lose out in the future, especially if the regulatory frameworks step up as predicted. A proactive approach in all towns and shopping places is therefore essential to ensure the future of towns, cities, business and the planet. The future's bright, the future's green.

Case Study: Energy and shops: Close the Door Campaign, Cambridge

Many stores and restaurants are wasting energy by keeping doors open at all times. An action group in Cambridge says 'Close the Door', and this energy waste is ended immediately. It asks businesses to take the same steps as individuals to keep their CO_2 output as low as possible. By joining the Close the Door campaign Cambridge retailers can make a significant contribution to reducing the overall environmental footprint of the City while lowering their own business costs.

What the campaign does:
- Shops are invited to join the campaign
- Information and stickers for doors or windows are available
- Customers are asked to support shops displaying the logo
- Retailers who join the campaign will be listed on this website
- Shops and restaurants in Cambridge are monitored throughout the year.

It asks the consumer:
- To support shops and restaurants displaying the Close the Door logo
- Close doors wherever they find them open, and speak to the sales people or contact the manager
- If a shop will not close the door shop elsewhere
- Download a poster and display it themselves
- Help monitor shops and contact Close the Door.

It asks the retailer to:
- Close the door and spread the word
- Join the Close the Door campaign
- Heat the Store and Nothing More in winter
- Cool the Store, and Nothing More in summer.

130 retailers have joined the scheme.

Case Study: Paradise Street, Liverpool

The Paradise Project is a major mixed-use regeneration development of over 42 acres, with more than 30 individually designed buildings, six distinct districts and over 1.6 million square feet of shopping which has created one of the largest retail-led development projects in Europe. It opens to coincide with European Capital of Culture (phased opening from spring 2008) and when open will become known as Liverpool One.

Tescos, Ludlow, use of daylight maximised

The market is part of the history of Wells

Newcastle - improvements to the public realm enhance the retail experience

Checklist for Successful Retail Development in Historic Towns

This checklist develops that which was included in *'Retail Development in Historic Areas' (2005),* (English Heritage and EHTF)

Theme	Example	Actions	Details
C1 - Achieve early and continuous consultation	• Cabot Circus, Bristol • Whitefriars, Canterbury • Town Centre Master Plan, Lincoln • Chapelfields, Norwich	C1a - Identify stakeholders and conservation groups at the outset C1b - Prepare a consultation strategy and budget C1c - Build in time for design review, revisions and additional consultation C1d - Ensure engagement through the preparation of Local Development Frameworks	• Work with the local authority Statement of Community Involvement • Use of open competitions • Use of Enquiry By Design techniques
C2 - Appreciate and respond to the context	• Grand Arcade, Cambridge • Whitefriars, Canterbury • South Street, Romford • High Street, Uxbridge	C2a - Commission a characterisation study of the historic environment and exploit local history and identify including street names C2b - Look well beyond the boundaries of the site to ensure integration with the surrounding streets or the underlying pattern of the area C2c - Ensure that views of local land marks are protected	• Work with existing Conservation Area appraisals and management plans where they have been prepared • Prepare comprehensive context analysis
C3 - Promote economically and environmentally sustainable development and adaptable built form	• Cabot Circus, Bristol • Close Door Campaign, Cambridge • Duke of York Square, Chelsea • Princesshay, Exeter, • Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough • Paradise Street Project, Liverpool	C3a - Assess overall retail needs and ensure schemes are viable C3b - Assess whole life costs of the scheme and long term economic interests of the wider area C3c - Ensure the master plan is sufficiently flexible to allow for future changes C3d - Ensure environmental sustainability C3e - Provide scope for small, local and independent traders	• Evidence provided by the spatial planning policies backed up by firm evidence base • Commission consultancy studies • Consider use of planning conditions to restrict sales of goods and protect existing retail structure • Provide robust information to developers and seek to work with them • Develop retail energy strategy for scheme with developers • Encourage mixed use • Agree access strategy to promote sustainable modes of transport • Seek benefits through S106 agreements
C4 - Achieve architectural and urban design integrity in relation to historic townscape	• Queensgate, Huddersfield • Weavers Wharf, Kidderminster • Tesco, Ludlow	C4a - Prepare a design statement, including a three-dimensional masterplan C4b - Produce a three-dimensional model to test and develop the grain, massing and scale of the scheme C4c - Ensure the scheme respects the historic street pattern	• A design and access statement must be prepared to set out physical aspects of the scheme which have been developed • Consider other modelling tools allowing fly through visualisation, e.g. SketchUp • Are there opportunities to re-establish a historic street pattern?

FOCUS ON RETAIL

Theme	Example	Actions	Details
C5 - Balance traffic requirements and public transport accessibility	• Grainger Town, Newcastle	C5a - Prepare a comprehensive parking and transport strategy C5b - Work with public transport providers to ensure its delivery C5c - Make provision for the needs of people with disabilities and those with children	• A design and access statement must be prepared to set out the rationale for the vehicular and transport link • Explore support for this through Quality Bus Partnerships • A design and access statement must be prepared to set out the rationale for inclusive access • DDA requirements for shop front and transport • Reducing parking in schemes to minimise traffic and land take • Ensure adequate secure cycle parking
C6 - Acknowledge operational requirements including servicing arrangements	• Grand Arcade, Cambridge • Princesshay, Exeter • Lion and Lamb Yard, Farnham	C6a - Prepare a servicing strategy that balances operational efficiency with safe and easy access for shoppers C6b - Ensure that all pedestrian and vehicular routes are clearly signposted	• Manage servicing hours and types of servicing vehicles
C7 - Strive for high quality design	• Christ's Lane, Cambridge • N1 Centre, Islington	C7a - Prepare planning and design brief C7b - Commission an architect or hold a design competition for all sites C7c - Plan for the design input of present and future tenants, including guidelines for signs and fascias/shop fronts C7d - Invest in quality detailing and materials including landscape and public art	• Prepare briefs through consultation (C1) and signed off by key decision makers • Use of a number of architects on large schemes • Prepare guidelines for the development and/or work with existing planning and design guidance • Ensure landscaping integrates with the surrounding area • Engage artists from the early stage of development and design preparation • Consider role of public art
C8 - Encourage a mix of uses to sustain the vitality of the area	• Christ's Lane, Cambridge • The Centre, Feltham • Riverside, Gravesend • Bold Street, Liverpool • Friars Walk, Newport • County Hotel, Taunton	C8a - Design buildings and spaces to encourage a mix of uses C8b - Be flexible in the approach to historic buildings to encourage their re-use C8c - Retain internal staircases and separate entrances to allow independent use of upper floors C8d - Use Section 106 agreements to support a mix of tenancies C8e - Use other town centre strategies to promote the overall vitality of the area	• Specify mixed use through planning policies and development briefs • Consider preparation of a comprehensive conservation management plan for buildings • Develop flexible leasing arrangements to assist small traders, see C3 • Tourism strategies, CCM, BIDs

Key Principles

The preceding chapters of this *Focus on* ... present a wide range of views on the future of retail development in historic towns. This chapter draws out a series of key principles as a statement of the Forum's position.

General

1. Successful retailing is vital to the viability and vitality of historic towns.
2. Town centres should offer places where people of all ages and conditions want to be.
3. Each centre should try to establish its unique selling point and recognise its appropriate position in the retail hierarchy.
4. It is essential to invest in the renewal of historic town centres to meet changing needs and demands.
5. Retail strategies and development should be accompanied by tourism, economic, public realm and town centre management strategies.

Responding to the market

6. Retail developments have to be based on commercial realism and the needs of retailers understood.
7. Successful retail schemes take time to deliver and patience is required to achieve the best outcomes.
8. Effective retail planning and development requires at least cooperation, and where possible partnership, between developers and local authorities.

Uses

9. The most sustainable retail developments will include mixed uses and a mix of size of retail units.
10. Development should aim to meet a range of local needs, including providing opportunities for smaller and independent retailers.

Planning

11. Local and regional planning policies are critical in guiding and providing certainty and confidence for retail development.
12. Strategic land use planning must be complemented by masterplanning and detailed design guidance.
13. Accessibility for customers and operators is critical and the needs of vehicles and pedestrians must be planned in from the outset.
14. Retail development must contribute towards place making.
15. The main focus for retail development should be on existing centres with proposals for new development being subjected to the sequential and needs tests (or equally robust successors).

Design and sustainability

16. The design of new retail development must be of the highest quality and respect and add to the existing environment.
17. The design of retail schemes must embrace both new buildings and the spaces around them.
18. Design and construction techniques should seek to ensure that retail development is sustainable, especially in reducing energy use, promoting sustainable transport and managing waste.

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