

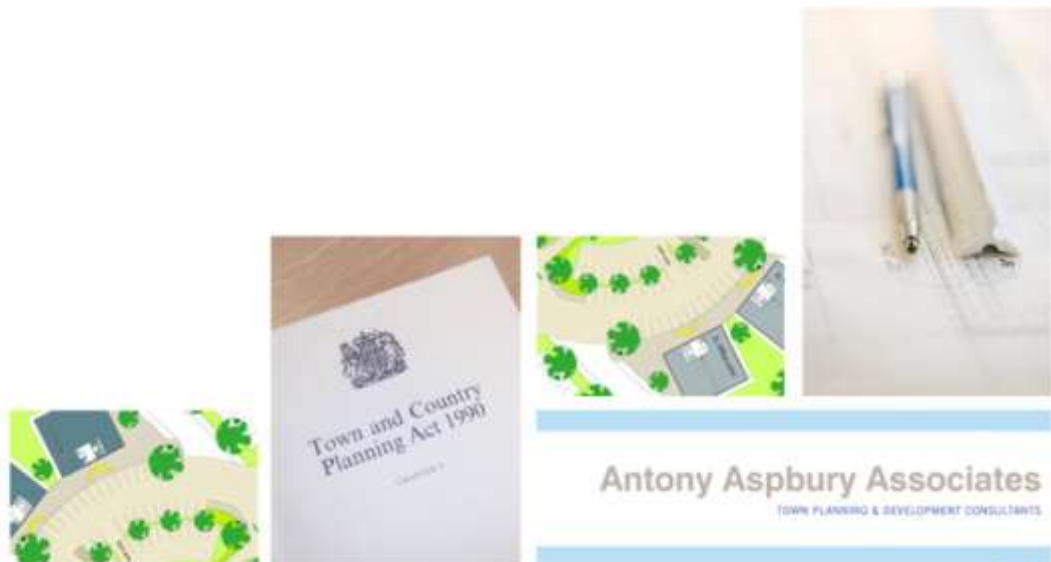


**NEWARK AND SHERWOOD SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT
MANAGEMENT DPD EXAMINATION**

MATTER 5 - SITE SPECIFIC ISSUES- NEWARK AREA

**REPRESENTOR NUMBER – 175
OMNIVALE LIMITED**

DECEMBER 2012



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TOWN PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS

MATTER 5 – SITE SPECIFIC ISSUES – NEWARK AREA

- 17 *The Plan relies on one site (NUA/MU/3) for most of its new retail floor space to be provided towards the latter part of the Plan period. What happens if it cannot be delivered - is the plan flexible enough to cope with this? Is this the best approach to deliver retail development in the area? Is the boundary of the site appropriate? Is there sufficient clarity in the wording of the policy to guide future development within the suggested timescale? Is there a better, more readily available site which would give greater certainty to the delivery of retail floor space?*

This response on behalf of Omnivale/Knightwood Developments reflects and updates that submitted to the Site Allocations and Development Consultation Options Consultation in November 2011.

Knightwood Developments Limited DO NOT object to the proposed allocation for additional retail provision for Newark contained with site NUA/MU/3, but consider that this proposed mixed –use site allocation cannot accommodate the range and extent of the retail floorspace requirement that has been established through the Council’s evidence base. They do not consider that the comparison goods retail floorspace requirement for the District through to 2026 can be achieved by adding in this single additional site within the Newark urban area, which is also intended to accommodate a rationalized NSK works, other employment opportunity and 150 dwellings as well as accommodating a bulky goods retail offer. Knightwood would confirm that they have no objection in principle to retail floorspace being incorporated within this mixed use designation, but consider that the site is not suitable in terms of scale or location to accommodate any significant bulky goods outlets, which provision is deficient within Newark and Sherwood.

The detailed retail study completed for the Council in March 2010 by GVA Grimley – Newark and Sherwood Retail and Town Centres Study¹ highlighted a rising need for additional comparison goods floorspace within the District through the Core Strategy period to 2026. Factoring in the implications of Newark’s Growth Point status, -paragraph 7.82 of the GVA Grimley study advised that

7.82 For comparison goods we forecast that the additional expenditure generated by the Growth Point population growth will see capacity increase to 4,911 sq m net by 2019, 15,040 sq m net by 2024 and 18,459 sq m net by 2026, across the District.

The study recognised that there are few suitable, available and viable sites within and adjoining Newark Town Centre to accommodate the additional retail floorspace. In terms of out of centre retail provision, paragraphs 7.56-7.58 of the Grimley report describe the physical constraints impacting upon the current

¹ Core document EB18 - Newark and Sherwood Retail and Town Centre Study- GVA Grimley March 2010

sites including the Beacon Hill Retail Park (which abuts the NSK site) and the implications of these constraints which is a significant movement out of Newark to retail parks on the outskirts of Lincoln, Nottingham and Mansfield to meet their DIY, home and bulky goods requirements.

7.56 The main concentration of out-of-centre retail warehouse provision in the District is located on the outskirts of Newark town centre comprising the Northgate Retail Park, Beacon Hill Retail Park and stand alone units at Ossington Way. Despite the proximity of these areas to Newark town centre, connections are constrained for both cars and pedestrians because of the physical barrier presented by the River Trent. Nevertheless, we consider that the Council should explore all options to enhance linkages in the future.

7.57 Despite the presence of Homebase and Focus DIY, a significant proportion of Newark and Sherwood's residents are travelling to retail parks on the outskirts of Nottingham, Lincoln and Mansfield to undertake bulky DIY, furniture and homeware shopping trips. This is consistent with Newark's demographic profile which suggests that there is a high proportion of older more affluent residents in Newark's catchment area who have time and money to spend on home goods but who are travelling to centres outside of the District to undertake these trips.

7.58 It would appear pertinent for the Council to look at this sector in more detail to explore the options to improve the existing provision of home, furnishing, gardening and other bulky goods in Newark. In the first instance and in line with Government policy, we recommend that the Council should consider whether there are any opportunities to enhance retailing for these types of goods in Newark town centre, however, given the constraints of the historic environment it may be appropriate to look at edge and or out-of-centre sites.

The extent of out-travelling to Lincoln and Nottingham is considered to be significant as table 4.1 of the Grimley study demonstrates. In a 'do-nothing' approach within Newark area, the situation is likely to worsen with further pipeline supply in Lincoln in particular likely to draw further comparison goods expenditure away from Newark.

Knightwood Developments are of the view that whilst the NSK site may be able to deliver some additional comparison floorspace as part of a rationalization and redevelopment scheme, it will not be sufficient to deliver the projected needs for the District (which should be concentrated primarily at Newark) of nearly 18,500m² net floorspace by 2026. The NSK site as identified within the SHLAA extends to 8.85 hectares. The draft DPD proposals for the site include plans to retain and rationalize the current NSK operation, provide for other employment uses on site, and accommodate 150 dwellings (with appropriate open space) alongside the proposed bulky goods units with their car parking requirements. With the land take up for these other requirement and the need to provide adequate buffers between industrial / retail and residential development Knightwood consider that there would

not be sufficient residual land available to establish a viable and marketable out of centre Retail Park to compete with Mansfield, Lincoln and Nottingham.

In addition to the limited retail capacity of this site, there are legitimate concerns about whether the NSK site is in the right location to satisfy bulky goods demand in particular, which is currently met by out of town parks in Mansfield, Lincoln and Nottingham. These retailers tend to have large unit requirements, generous car parking and store servicing provision, and good road accessibility to a wide catchment area. The Grimley study at paragraph 5.64, concluded that from their own survey research, that '*the residents of Newark and Sherwood are using retail parks in neighbouring authorities* and indicated that just 1.2% of respondents to their survey chose to shop in the existing DIY and decorating goods stores at Beacon Hill Park, abutting the NSK site.

It is noted that subsequent to the Grimley study, the District Council has commissioned additional advice from Alyn Nicholls & Associates², incorporating a Non- Food Retail Analysis assessment from Cheetham and Mortimer. This update downgrades per capita expenditure assumptions from the Grimley study by around 15% and is sceptical about the scope in commercial terms for the NSK site and the North Gate to be developed for bulky goods retailing in the foreseeable future (para 7). Paragraph 16 of the commentary advises that by using a lower sales density to reflect the general performance of bulky goods retailers, this has the effect of increasing the floorspace requirement arising from available expenditure, whilst paragraph 17 notes that the floorspace requirement identified by GVA Grimley was in net terms and that a further 15-25% should be added to determine the gross floorspace requirement.

The supplementary analysis from Cheetham and Mortimer does portray a more pessimistic picture for bulky goods retailing and questions the degree of spending in this sector that is being lost to other centres assumed by GVA Grimley. However, the analysis does acknowledge the potential for a more comprehensive bulky goods/non food retail offer to enable Newark to more readily compete with Nottingham and Lincoln although this is qualified to specific market operators with specific site requirements, Regrettably the Cheetham and Mortimer advice did not consider the specific potential offered by the respondents Fernwood landholding. Instead the advice considers only the NSK site and the application/ appeal proposals for the Northgate site as the available options. As indicated at the outset of this representation, the 'Fernwood option' has previously been advanced in representations to the Council and raised in informal discussions, yet the Representor has not received any encouragement and opted not to aggressively pursue via planning application at this time.

Having due regard to the acknowledged position that there is very limited expansion space within and adjoining Newark town centre, Omnivale/ Knightwood consider that the Council's DPD should be

² Core document EB19-

identifying an additional out of centre location that has the capacity, accessibility and marketability as an out of centre location to satisfy the demand for comparison floorspace and particularly for the large store /bulky goods market that is arguably being lost to other major centres outside of the District (depending upon which retail study is accepted – EB18 /EB19). In this regard Knightwood promote that part of their newly expanded Fernwood Employment area within the Fernwood Strategic Site (allocated by the Core Strategy) could accommodate up to 8,000m² of out of town comparison goods floorspace, targeted primarily at large bulky goods retailers and/or one off national/international scale retailers requiring a large, accessible single unit adjoining to the strategic road network.

The newly expanded Fernwood Business Park allocation now extends to approximately 30 hectares of which barely 10% has been developed over the last 10 years since the site was initially consented. The site owners have supported the expansion of the site and have a long term commitment to developing high quality B1 accommodation on the site. They have consistently maintained however that the site area is far in excess of that which is necessary to support a high quality Business Park even allowing for the growth point status and that the enhanced accessibility that the Southern Link Road will eventually bring linking the A46 to the A1. They consider that establishing an out of town retail facility in this highly accessible location would help stem the outflow of consumers from the District to other centres and could provide a stimulus to the adjoining Business Park. This location perfectly fits the model for high end retailers as referenced in paragraph 2.3 of the C&M report. Moreover as paragraph 4.4 of the same report advises, neither the NSK site nor the North Gate site could accommodate this size of requirement.

In support of this proposal we attach an indicative preliminary sketch which illustrates how up to 8,000m² could be accommodated in up to 7 units of 1000m² - 2000m² at Fernwood within the context of the Business Park and the Greater Fernwood urban extension. The gross site indicated on the plan is in the order of 5 hectares yet this includes the provision of local centre retail and community facilities (Units 1 and 2) which would service the residential and employment areas. The adopted core strategy indicates the siting of a new local centre for Fernwood in this broad location close to the Great North Road and Claypole Lane and incorporating this into a wider retail offer is likely to improve the range of local shopping facilities that can be attracted to this location. Knightwood offer this schematic proposal as a starting point for discussion as a viable and indeed deliverable high end bulky goods opportunity which can attract occupiers with requirements that complement but cannot be accommodated within Newark Town centre.