



**Supplementary Planning Guidance :
Assessment of Food and Drink Uses (July 1997)**

**Clifton Village, Whiteladies
Road/Cotham Hill
Park Street, The Triangle/Queens Road**

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Towards the end of 1996, Residents Associations and others raise serious concerns about the rapid growth of large pubs and café-bars and their environmental impact in the wider Clifton area. These concerns were expressed not only by local residents but local businesses as well. Local residents and businesses felt that the noise and disturbance associated with the high levels of activity that the uses had created were damaging the amenity of the area. In response, the City Council undertook a review and assessment of the situation and public consultation. This guidance has been produced to provide a detailed planning policy framework in which future decisions on individual planning applications can be made.
- 1.2 This guidance was adopted by the Council's Planning, Transport and Development (Central) Area Sub Committee on 2 July 1997 following amendments to a draft version which was subject to widespread consultation with local groups, businesses, local individuals, national organisations and others.

2.0 Land Use Survey

- 2.1 One of the products of the assessment has been a survey of ground floor and upper floor uses in specific parades of local centres within the study areas and an assessment of the land use characteristics of the hinterland to these local centres. This in itself will assist the consideration of further proposals within these areas. The survey areas were restricted to the shopping centres defined by the Bristol Local Plan. In assessing individual proposals, other uses including residential accommodation and food and drink premises, outside but near to the shopping areas may be relevant to an assessment of the context. For example the Avon Gorge Hotel is not in the Clifton Village study area but it clearly affects the character of the vicinity. Similarly the pub within the former Clifton Down Railway Station impacts on the Whiteladies Road shopping area. The information has also assisted in the writing of individual character assessments (see below) by identifying, for example, the range and nature of existing food and drink uses and other similar uses such as night clubs and their relationship with residential accommodation within, and adjacent to, these main shopping areas.

3.0 Overall Approach to Policy

- 3.1 Policy S8 of the Bristol Local Plan (Proposed Modifications, March 1997) sets out particular criteria by which individual proposals for food and drink uses will be assessed. Other policies in the Plan are also relevant. This assessment has given rise to the introduction of additional criteria which stress the need to take into account the number, distribution and proximity of similar uses (existing or with planning permission) when new proposals are considered. This enables any potential harmful cumulative effects to be taken into account. Whilst the policy identifies a range of possible locations where new food and drink uses might be acceptable in principle, the supporting text to the policy stresses the City Council's desire to direct major

night clubs and larger scale food and drink establishments to the city centre, in locations where, amongst other things, there is less likely to be a harmful impact upon residential communities and there is better access to public transport, and car parking.

- 3.2 It has always been recognised that this policy would benefit from back-up guidance to assist in the interpretation of the criteria and to alert potential applicants to the issues that will be considered when planning applications are submitted and to recommend good practice. Therefore the existing Policy Advice Note “Food and Drink Uses” approved by the Planning and Traffic Committee on 21 March 1990, will continue to provide important supplementary guidance in considering individual proposals.
- 3.3 The Policy Advice Note (March 1990) is applicable to all proposals throughout the city, but the issues arising particularly in Clifton and Whiteladies Road have brought into focus the need to provide further area specific guidance, where intense pressure is being experienced for new food and drink uses and harm to the residential environment may occur. It is for this reason that a series of character assessments has been produced for each of these areas. These will be used to assist the consideration of any future proposals.
- 3.4 It should be noted that other policies, including the frontage policies which seek to protect the retail function of shopping centres, will also be relevant in the consideration of applications involving food and drink uses in such areas.
- 3.5 The assessment has focused on those uses which relate to the consumption of food and drink within the premises.

4.0 **Restrictions of Activities within the Use Class A3**

- 4.1 The range of activities and their environmental impact within the food and drink use class (Class A3) is very broad. For example, the impact of a tea-shop or restaurant is likely to be significantly different to that of a public house. However, as such uses are all within the same use class, changes between them cannot be controlled unless they are subject to specific restrictive conditions. Although statutory guidance generally discourages imposing such conditions, the justification for this is becoming increasingly strong. Bristol is working with other local authorities to promote changes in legislation. Therefore, the Council will consider imposing conditions which would prevent a change in the use within the specific use class or character of the premises after planning permission has been granted to limit the potential impact on the character or amenity of an area.
- 4.2 The character assessments in some cases draw a distinction between “large” and “small” premises. Defining these terms is largely to do with context but the following criteria will be used in making this distinction.
 - (i) the range and size of premises within the respective shopping centre, including the range and size of food and drink premises within the respective shopping centre.
 - (ii) the width of frontage, size and shape of the premises in question and how this fits into the spectrum for the range and size of premises within the respective shopping centre. The proposed capacity of the food and drink use and how

that compares to the range of capacities to be found in the particular shopping centre.

- (iii) small scale would relate to those proposals which occupied those premises in the lower order of the spectrum or had capacities comparable with the lower order of the spectrum. As a rule of thumb, proposals which exceed the ground floor area of a typical single traditional shop unit of a typical traditional Victorian parade in these centres would not be considered small scale.

4.3 In view of the distinctions drawn between “large” and “small” premises the Council will consider attaching conditions to any planning permission to prevent adjoining property in the same food and drink or similar use being linked to prevent larger premises being created from an amalgamation of smaller premises.

4.4 Applicants are required to submit supporting information which clearly illustrates how the premises will be used.

5.0 **Status of Guidance**

5.1 This Supplementary Planning Guidance is a ‘material consideration’ which the planning authority will take into account in making decisions on individual planning applications.

6.0 **Character Assessments**

6.1 A list of character assessments have been formulated for each study area. For two of the centres, this has involved their division into sub-areas.

6.2 **Clifton Village Shopping Centre**

6.3 Clifton Village is an attractive, high-quality shopping environment in a densely developed, historic area. It is part of the Clifton Conservation Area designated in 1972. It has a substantial residential population. Many ground floor shops and commercial premises have people living on the upper floors. The surrounding area is predominantly residential. The shopping centre is generally busy during the day, and although levels of activity diminish in the evening and during night, it is still busier during this time than it would be if it were a purely residential environment. Levels of pedestrian and vehicular activity are consistent with a popular local shopping centre. Levels of on-street parking are high during the day in the evening and at night.

6.4 Apart from a handful of exceptions, the scale of ground floor units in the Village is not large. Food and drink uses are scattered throughout the shopping centre and do not predominate in any parade. Most of them are also modest in scale.

6.5 **Conclusion**

6.6 It is considered that given the context of a mixed use commercial and residential environment there is an appropriate balance of food and drink uses in the shopping centre.

6.7 Nevertheless, Clifton Village has a strong residential context and the introduction of further large bars or restaurant uses and similar activities, particularly in the light of unimplemented planning approvals, would give rise to levels of activity that would

harm the residential environment and lead to an over concentration of food and drink uses in the centre. Therefore, it is considered that the current balance should not be significantly exceeded and therefore large scale proposals should be resisted. However, limited opportunities may exist specifically for small-scale café or restaurant uses which may be acceptable, subject to other appropriate local plan policies and restrictions within the A3 use class.

6.8 **Whiteladies Road Shopping Centre**

- 6.9 Whiteladies Road is a busy, commercial shopping centre as well as a major radial road into the city centre. It has a mixture of uses but overall the predominant character is retail shopping. Whiteladies Road was designated a Conservation Area in 1974.
- 6.10 Its residential context varies. At its northern end many shop units have flats above them. However, this is much more limited at the southern end. The shopping centre is set within a predominantly residential hinterland. There is a mix of flats and single dwellinghouses.
- 6.11 The scale of individual premises varies considerably along the street, from traditional individual shop units to substantially larger premises. The location and distribution of food and drink uses and similar activities within the centre varies considerably. The busy commercial character of Whiteladies Road generates intense levels of activity at particular times. At morning and evening peak hours, and on Saturdays, pedestrian and vehicular activity is high. On Fridays and Saturdays high levels of activity, which includes a range of anti-social behaviour, continue into the evening and night. However, this reduces as one moves northwards up the street. On-street parking levels are high during the day and throughout the evening, and at weekends until the early hours.
- 6.12 Moving away from Whiteladies Road into the adjoining residential streets, there is a marked difference in levels of activity, both during the day and evening, although predictably this is higher than one would expect to find in a residential environment not in proximity to commercial uses. During the evenings, those streets which adjoin the southern part of Whiteladies Road continue to experience disruptive levels of vehicle movement and pedestrian activity. In some streets this is quite intense at the junction with Whiteladies Road.
- 6.13 In view of the varied characters of this shopping centre it is helpful to make additional observations about the sub areas.
- (a) **Belgrave Road to Imperial Road** - There is a high number of food and drink uses located between Belgrave Road and Imperial Road. They are mainly on the eastern side of Whiteladies Road and these are now dominated by a handful of large bars/public houses. Although there is much less living above ground floor units in this part of the street the residential character of adjoining streets is strong.
 - (b) **Cotham Hill** - Cotham Hill contains a mixture of uses. Food and drink uses are distributed evenly in the shopping part of the street and are not substantial in scale, except on the western side of the street towards the junction with Whiteladies Road where there is a large pub. The residential character of Cotham Hill is strong. Most premises have flats above and houses and flats adjoin the retail parade on the western side of this street.

Conclusion

There is a high concentration of food and drink uses (both large and small) in the southern part of Whiteladies Road on the eastern side of the street between Belgrave Road and Imperial Road, and in the northern part of Cotham Hill. Their existence contributes significantly to the high levels of vehicular and pedestrian activity in these areas which continue into the evening especially at weekends. Whilst this activity is mainly focused on Whiteladies Road, this creates higher levels of activity in adjacent streets than one would expect to find in residential areas not in proximity to a commercial area. It is considered that if present levels of activity were further raised, then the quality of the residential environment would be further harmed.

Therefore, in the southern part of Whiteladies Road (between Belgrave Road and Imperial Road) and in Cotham Hill, further Class A3 (food and drink) uses and similar activities shall be resisted.

- (c) **Imperial Road to Blackboy Hill** - Moving northwards up Whiteladies Road, the character changes significantly. A more traditional pattern and distribution of uses exists. Food and drink uses are more dispersed and except for one or two instances are not large in scale. There is a stronger residential context within this part of the street with more residential accommodation above ground floor units and the residential character of adjoining streets clearly expressing itself on the eastern side between Imperial Road and Redland Park.

Conclusion

It is not considered that there is a concentration of food and drink uses in the northern part of Whiteladies Road. They are more dispersed, generally smaller in scale, and patterns of activity are less. Given the stronger residential character in this part of the street, further large-scale food and drink uses and similar activities should be resisted. Limited opportunities may exist for small scale café or restaurant uses which may be acceptable, subject to other local plan policies and restrictions within the A3 use class.

6.14 **Park Street, Queens Road and The Triangle**

- 6.15 Park Street and Queens Road are elegant shopping streets in the centre of the city. The area is part of the Park Street and Brandon Hill Conservation Area which was designated in 1975. These streets, together with Triangle West and South, comprise a busy commercial area which experiences high levels of both pedestrian and vehicular activity during the day and into the evening, but particularly at peak hours and on Saturdays. For the purposes of the character assessment it is helpful to divide the area further.

- **Park Street** - Residential use within and around the shopping street is not substantial. Recently, several premises have changed to residential use on the upper floors and there are pockets of residential use within the hinterland of the street. The street contains a mixture of uses. The prevailing character is dominated by retail shops.

Within Park Street food and drink uses generally are evenly spread, although in one or two parades there is a particular concentration.

- **Queens Road and Park Row** - Residential use within and immediately adjacent to the street is not strong. A limited number of premises have flats on upper floors particularly in Park Row. Institutional and commercial uses prevail in the hinterland. The street itself contains a mixture of uses and again the prevailing character is retail shopping.

In Queens Road there are a number of premises of substantial floorspace and these include two large bar/restaurant uses. These are focused towards the south eastern end of the street. There are no food and drink uses located north westwards of the junction with Triangle South.

Conclusion

Whilst there are areas of this part of the shopping centre where a focus of food and drink uses is established, and that there are parts of this area which contain some large food and drink outlets, these uses do not dominate the character of the shopping centre, but in number are considered to be approaching the limits appropriate for an important city centre shopping centre.

Therefore, given the present levels of pedestrian and vehicular activity on these streets, and the weaker residential context, it is considered that in Park Street and Queens Road the location, distribution and scale of food and drink uses can be effectively managed by other local plan policies, particularly relating to the vitality and viability of the centre. These would not permit any significant new food and drink uses.

- **The Triangle** - Whilst there is little residential use within the Triangle, the hinterland has a much stronger residential context with flats and houses located in adjacent residential streets, prime examples being Park Place, Richmond Hill and Byron Place. On-street parking levels are high in the streets during the day and evening. The Triangle and adjoining streets contain a mixture of uses with pubs, clubs and bar/restaurant uses having a strong presence. The size of premises varies considerably from small units to ones of substantial floor space. Food and drink uses also vary in scale, with particularly large pub and bar/restaurant uses located on Triangle West.

Conclusion

Within Triangle West and South, it is considered that further large bar or restaurant uses would give rise to level of activity that would harm the residential environment. However, limited opportunities may exist for further small scale café or restaurant use, subject to other local plan policies.