



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

8 Harpsfield Broadway, Hatfield

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## 1- Introduction

1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the change of use of the property from a shop (Use Class A1) to a Caribbean takeaway (Use Class A5) and the erection of an extraction system onto the rear elevation of the property. Opening hours Monday to Saturday 12pm-11:30pm, Sunday's and Bank holidays 12pm -10pm.

1.2 The application site comprises one of the central units in a parade of seven units which front directly onto Harpsfield Broadway and Comet Way beyond it. It is a small unit with a very limited floorspace. The parade is a standalone building with a mix of uses at ground floor level and predominantly office and residential use above. On the opposite side of Comet Way is the Galleria Centre with a wide range of retail and other outlets, while to the rear of the parade is Parkhouse Court, a recently- built mixed use retail centre.

1.3 Back in 2018 no 8 Harpsfield was Granted permission to change from class A1 to A1/A3 use and become an ice cream parlour. Following this not materialising, the unit then was granted permission to become a tanning shop at the beginning of 2020.

The shop has now been vacant for approximately 3 years, the area is successful for takeaway units, the need for class A1 is not prevalent in this area. The applicant feels there is a high demand for the takeaway service of Caribbean food within this area.

1.8 The takeaway is predominantly open from midday, while vacant units do not attract any trade for the parade of units. There is very little passing trade for Harpsfield Broadway. This is born out by the fact that the application premises have remained vacant for a period of over two years (despite marketing).

## THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The proposed development is for the change of use of the unit at 8 Harpsfield Broadway from the currently vacant newsagents (Use Class A1) to a Caribbean takeaway (Use Class A5), together with the erection of an extraction unit to the rear of the premises. The extraction unit would measure approximately 7m tall and would

oversail the eaves by 1m approximately. All details surrounding the extraction unit can be found in the attached appendices and within the application drawings.

2.2 The internal layout provides a queuing area to the front of the property, a toilet and w/c facility for staff only and a store/kitchen for cooking purposes. There will be a servery/counter separating the private and public spaces.

2.3 The proposed development creates job opportunities and looks to employ 2 full time and 3 part time members of staff.

### 3. THE PLANNING CASE

3.1 The unit at 8 Harpsfield Broadway has now remained vacant for over 3 years and despite the limited interest shown in the unit, there is evidently little prospect of the premises being let out as a sustainable retail unit.

3.2 The centre is already significantly below the target of 50% in A1 retail use specified in the policies. The loss of one A1 unit would not be material, especially when the Galleria is taken into consideration – it is felt to be sufficiently close to Harpsfield Broadway and Parkhouse Court that it is material to the consideration of the application. Moreover, the size and floorspace of the application premises is small such that as a proportion of the overall retail floorspace in this part of Hatfield, it is very limited.

3.3 With regard to Neighbourhood Centres, the text to policy TCR25 of the District Plan states ‘Within these centres, there are fewer units and it is therefore essential that they provide a range of local functions and are not allowed to change to non-retail uses that would be more appropriately located in a larger centre and would encourage travel. Local functions include everyday convenience shopping and in some instances services related to a shopping trip such as banks and cafés’ However, with the possible exception of the estate agents, the existing uses in Harpsfield Broadway cannot be said to provide a range of local functions. A Carribean takeaway is far more likely to be a successful attractor to the parade of units than the current vacant A1 uses present there.

3.4 When looking at Harpsfield Broadway and Parkhouse Court the Galleria should be included in the assessment as it is in such close proximity to Harpsfield Broadway and Parkhouse Court and it must be considered to have a bearing on the success of the retail provision in the area as a whole. It is a matter of a few minutes’ walk from Harpsfield Broadway and Parkhouse Court.

3.5 Considering the total retail provision in Harpsfield Broadway, Parkhouse Court and The Galleria, the loss of one A1 unit to a A5 unit is negligible in terms of the overall retail provision in this part of Hatfield. The Galleria contains 80 individual outlets, of which over 80% are in A1 use. A number of these may be viewed as being anchor stores – the main attractors to the centre – or very popular lower end of the price range outlets. The floorspace of many of these units is large and they are popular retail outlets in terms of attracting custom. Moreover, the shop turnaround rate in the centre is very low – once an outlet has become established there, it tends to remain for a long period of time. Consequently, there is a low shop vacancy rate in The Galleria.

3.6 Furthermore, the entertainment provision within the centre ensures that it remains as a shopping destination able to attract many people, particularly families.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

4.1 As has been fully explained and discussed in this Design and Access Statement, the proposed change of use of 8 Harpsfield Broadway, Hatfield AL10 9TG would act as a positive attractor to the parade. The use of the premises as an A5 Caribbean takeaway would enhance the area as a retail destination through the removal of the vacant/ shuttered unit and its replacement with the proposed premises. The fact that the unit has remained vacant for over 3 years and attempts at marketing it have been unsuccessful in attracting a viable use for the premises is such that the change of use should be permitted. The new use would have a positive benefit for the premises itself, the Neighbourhood Centre and this part of Hatfield as a whole and should therefore be granted planning permission.

The signage will be different from the approved application but will be addressed under a new signage application.