

# Northenden District Centre

## Description

Northenden comprises a linear centre in south Manchester which runs from south-west to north-east along Palatine Road. The wider Northenden area is bounded (in a triangular fashion) by Princess Parkway to the west, the M60 to the north-west, and Sharston Industrial Estate to the south. Whilst this geography shapes the centre's potential catchment area, Northenden supports a good range of retail and service providers, including local independent leisure service operators. The centre includes traditional period properties, purpose-built retail accommodation (including the Co-op convenience store to the north of the centre and the Tesco Express convenience store to the south), and the mid-nineteenth century parade of shops which remains the core of the centre today.

The focus of the centre is Palatine Road, which is a busy arterial route connecting Northenden with Didsbury to the north and to Northern Moor to the west. There is limited on-street parking close to Palatine Road, which is supplemented by further spaces associated with individual operators (notably the Co-op store at Palatine Road) and the public car park at Northenden River Park. The centre is surrounded by residential streets and thus well-located in respect of supporting journeys on foot.

*Table 1 Northenden District Centre Floorspace Composition*

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2023 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2023 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2023 (%)
Comparison	2,290	16.4%	30.1%
Convenience	2,413	17.3%	15.5%
Financial	1,532	11.0%	6.6%
Leisure	4,324	30.9%	26.3%
Retail Service	2,607	18.7%	7.2%
Vacant	809	5.8%	13.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,975</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Source: Composition of District centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of February 2023; UK Average from Experian Goad Report February 2023.*

*Table 2 Northenden District Centre Unit Composition*

GOAD Category	Units at 2023	Units at 2023 (%)	Units UK Average at 2023 (%)
Comparison	14	14.3%	26.9%
Convenience	12	12.2%	9.3%
Financial	9	9.2%	8.7%
Leisure	33	33.7%	25.4%
Retail Service	22	22.4%	15.8%
Vacant	8	8.2%	13.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of February 2023; UK Average from Experian Goad Report February 2023.*

## Uses

Northenden accommodates 98 commercial units and, as such, is a medium-sized district centre. The centre supports a range of retail and service accommodation, albeit this is generally of a modest scale. The largest retail units include the Co-op convenience store in the northern part of the centre, the centrally located B&M Express unit, and the Tesco Express to the south of the centre.

The centre has an important role in meeting day-to-day local needs. As such, it has a higher than average proportion of convenience goods retailers and a lower than average proportion of comparison goods retailers. Only 16.4% of the centre's floorspace is used for comparison retailing, which equates to just over half the national average of 30.1%. Similarly, just 14.3% of Northenden's commercial units are occupied by comparison goods retailers, which compares to a UK national average figure of 26.9%.

Comparison goods retailers are generally clustered in two locations. The first of these relates to the retail terrace between 320 to 364 Palatine Road. This location accommodates B&M Express, Pound Express and Well Pharmacy. The second concentration relates to the additional retail terrace which runs from 414 to 446 Palatine Road. These units include Mill Carpets and One Stop Party Shop.

Northenden's convenience goods offer is slightly greater than would be expected with reference to the national average position. In terms of proportion of floorspace, Northenden's convenience retailers account for more floorspace and units than in a typical UK centre. The largest convenience store is the Tesco Express on Palatine Road, which Experian Goad identifies has a gross floorspace of 614 sq.m. Other national multiple food retailers within Northenden are Co-op and Go Local. The convenience goods offer also accommodates a number of independents including the Oasis International Foods grocery store, the Zloto Polskie convenience store, and the Quality Meats butchers shop.

Leisure is the most prevalent commercial use within the district centre, accounting for proportions of floorspace and units significantly above the corresponding national averages. Northenden's leisure service offer is focused around independent operators. There is a particularly good range of cafes (four in total), restaurants (seven) and takeaways (12) available, with most cuisines covered. The centre also accommodates the Northenden Players Theatre, which operates out of small premises on Church Road. National multiple leisure service operators include Betfred, Costa, Subway and William Hill.

Northenden also has a strong retail service offer, with the proportion of retail service floorspace also well above national average level. The proportion of retail service units is more in line with the rest of the UK, but still above the national average. Northenden provides a goods range of retail services, including barbers, hairdressers, opticians, vehicle repair garages, a post office, nail bar, and tanning salon.

Financial and business services provision is also above the national floorspace and unit averages. Four of the nine financial and business service operators are solicitors.

## Daytime/Evening Economy

Northenden is considered to have a balanced offer which is able to support a good level of activity during the day and into the evening. The central areas within Northenden support both retailers and service providers, and the offer is bookended by Co-op to the north and Tesco Express to the south. Both of these operators generate a good level of activity and both have on-site customer car parking.

Northenden benefits from a good level of evening activity focused around the takeaway and restaurant offer. Most of these operators trade from relatively small units and the evening economy is principally focused around meeting local neighbourhood needs. There are no public houses situated within the centre and only a limited number of bars. As such, there may be some limited potential to further expand the evening economy (albeit it is important to note that Northenden provides good access to West Didsbury which has a strong and well established leisure service sector).

## Vacancies

The vacancy rate in Northenden is low, equating to just 5.8% of floorspace and 8.2% of units. Both of these figures are significantly below the respective UK national average level.

The limited vacancies are scattered throughout the centre and do not unduly impact on its character. Vacant units are generally small in scale.

## Opportunity Sites

Given the high occupation rate and densely developed nature of Northenden, opportunities for further development are limited. Furthermore, some redevelopment opportunities have been brought forward in recent years, including two residential apartment schemes close to the junction of Palatine Road and Church Road.

A further site at 349-359 Palatine Road is currently being built out pursuant to planning permission reference 121828/FO/2018 which provides for the demolition of an existing retail terrace and its redevelopment as a four storey building with 16 residential apartments at upper floors and a single 226 sq.m commercial unit at ground floor.

Whilst further opportunities to improve Northenden's offer will arise, we are not currently aware of any additional available sites.

## Market Summary

With reference to CoStar data sourced in June 2023, the average annual market rent per sq.ft currently achieved in Northenden is £15.91, with this figure representing a 1.0% increase on the £15.75 per sq.ft average achieved in the previous 12-month period.

Additionally, the average market sale price per sq.ft has increased slightly over the past 12-month period, up 2.0% to £168 per sq.ft. CoStar currently predicts market rents will remain flat at just under £16.00 per sq.ft in the period to 2027.

In respect of yields, CoStar finds that the current market yield is 7.8%, with this figure decreasing slightly by 0.1 percentage points over the past 12 months. However, yields in Northenden are forecast to increase to around 8.5% over the period to 2027. This is perhaps reflective of the historic nature of most of the commercial accommodation which requires ongoing investment and maintenance.

Increases in rents and decreases in yields are generally considered positive signs in respect of investor confidence in a given location. In this instance, Northenden's yields are slightly higher than the average recorded across all centres in Manchester, which suggests that other areas are considered a safer investment.

Insufficient data is available to identify trends in respect of the leasing of vacant premises.

## Pedestrian Flows

The district centre is focused around the commercial offer on Palatine Road and there is a generally good level of activity throughout the centre. In this regard, we reiterate that the centre benefits from the Co-op and Tesco Express anchor units being situated at the northern and southern ends of the centre respectively. Furthermore, the middle stretch of the centre (units between 320 and 364 Palatine Road) is supported by on-street car parking, which helps support businesses and means this stretch accommodates a number of national multiple operators.

The mix of uses and their distribution throughout the centre encourages a good level of activity throughout the day and into the evening.

## Accessibility

Northenden benefits from a number of bus stops located on both sides of Palatine Road within the centre boundary. Further stops are located a short distance away on Church Road and Longley Lane. Frequent services run to Altrincham, Middleton, Sale, Stockport, Manchester Airport, and the city centre.

The nearest Metrolink stops are situated at Northern Moor and at East Didsbury and the centre is therefore not particularly well served by this mode of transport. However, the nature of the centre is that it principally meets localised day-to-day needs. In this regard, the centre is well located in respect of the surrounding Northenden catchment area. Furthermore, the good number of bus services and stops assist in making the centre accessible to those who live beyond an immediate walking catchment area (and to those who may not be able to walk more than a short distance).

In terms of the centre itself, Palatine Road bisects the centre and may create a barrier for some in terms of getting around on foot. Notwithstanding this, pelican crossings are provided close to the principal retail terrace of shops between 320 and 364 Palatine Road, and around the junction of Palatine Road and Kenworthy Lane/Church Road (close to Tesco Express). Footways are generally of a good width even where on-street parking is provided, albeit we note that the tendency for some operators to display goods on the pavements creates a limited number of 'pinch points' which may impact on accessibility for some visitors.

Whilst there are no cycle lanes passing through the centre, provision is made for cyclists at junctions and the centre contains a good number of Sheffield bike stands.

Northenden is a largely flat centre and accessibility is considered to be acceptable. Any issues relate to its general character, being a high street which is linear in nature and subject to a number of crossing points relating to secondary roads leading from Palatine Road.

## Perception of Safety

Northenden benefits from a very good level of activity relating to both passing vehicular traffic and from users of the centre itself. It is close to residential dwellings and at some parts is overlooked by domestic properties. Whilst there are a number of takeaway uses which may encourage some congregation in the evening, we do not believe that this is a particular issue.

As a consequence, we believe that Northenden generally benefits from a good sense of safety both during the day and into the evening.

## Environmental Quality

As set out above, the district centre takes the form of a traditional high street focused around Palatine Road. The highway is busy and, at times, care needs to be exercised in crossing the road. As a consequence of the linear nature of the centre and the limited space available, the environment is principally functional and there are not extensive opportunities to linger. Some outdoor seating is provided around the central retail terrace at 320-364 Palatine Road, with this area also benefiting from stone setts, planters, mature trees, Sheffield bike stands, and bins.

The retail terrace between 414 and 444 Palatine Road is an attractive art deco building albeit some of the character of the building has been eroded through the incorporation of modern and inconsistent shop fronts. However, this part of the centre (which is at the southern end) also benefits from mature soft landscaping which includes trees and a grassed area.

Elsewhere, Northenden is of a largely functional nature and whilst it is a generally pleasant and attractive area there is limited ability to gather and no real areas to sit out. This may impact on the potential for the leisure service sector to further expand.

## Conclusions

Northenden is a medium-sized district centre which is well located in respect of serving a localised catchment area (largely defined by Princess Parkway to the west, the M60 to the north-west, and Sharston Industrial Estate to the south). The centre is focused around Palatine Road, which is a busy arterial route linking Northenden with Didsbury to the north and Northern Moor to the west.

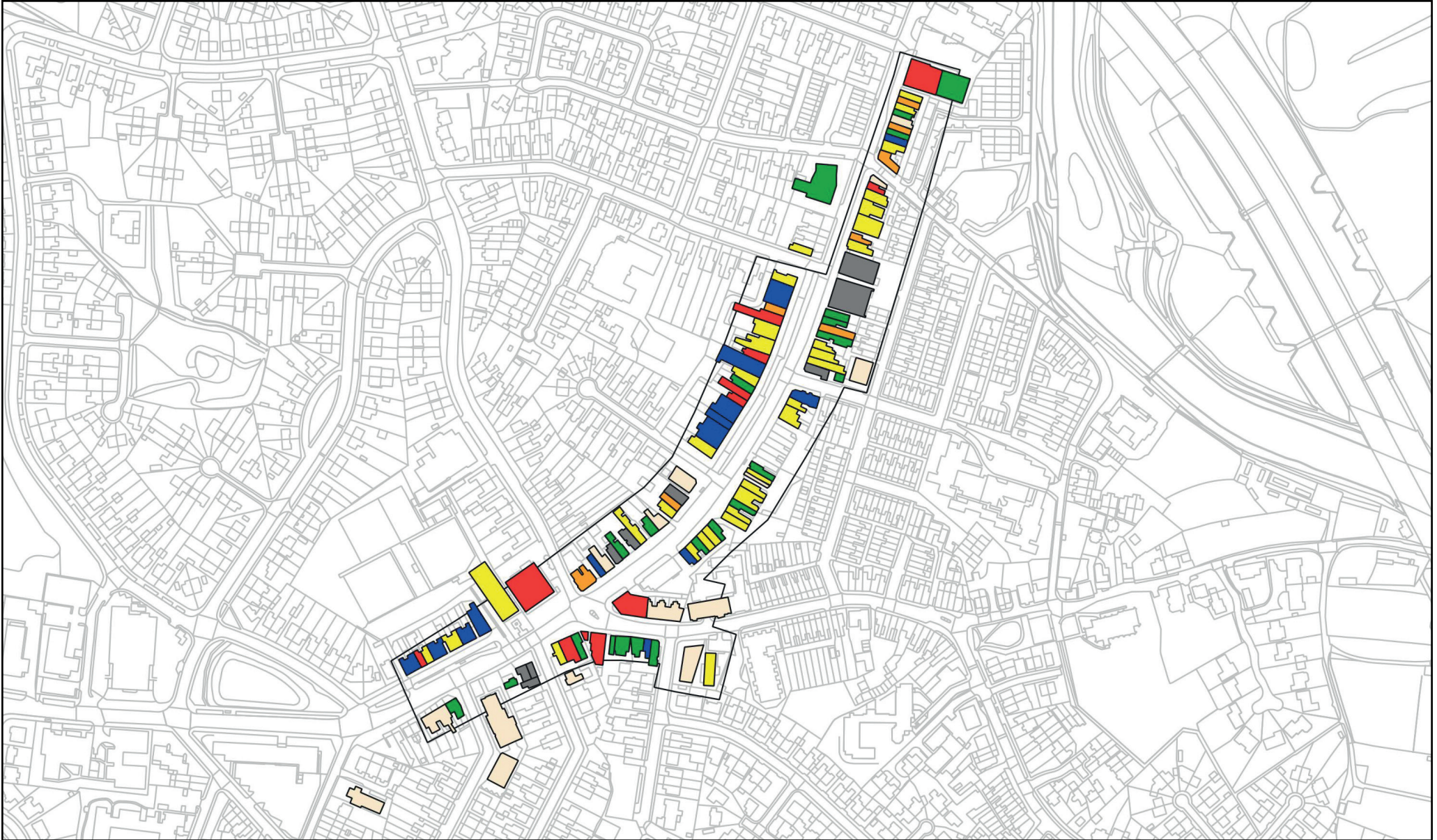
The centre is characterised by period commercial properties which front Palatine Road. The centre has a strong convenience goods function, which is underpinned by the Co-op convenience store in the northern part of the centre, the centrally located B&M Express unit, and the Tesco Express to the south of the centre. The centre's comparison goods offer is comparatively limited and it is evident that the centre principally meets day-to-day localised needs.

The centre also benefits from a particularly strong leisure service sector which is focused around food and drink (there are a good number of cafes, restaurants and takeaways present). National multiple leisure service operators include Betfred, Costa, Subway and William Hill. The offer is supplemented by the Northenden Players Theatre, which operates out of small premises on Church Road.

The local environment is shaped by Palatine Road which runs through the centre. Whilst this has a beneficial impact in respect of the centre's accessibility by bus and car, the highway is a principal arterial route and there is some congestion as a result. The linear nature of the centre along this highway also limits opportunities for visitors to gather and there are only a limited number of seats throughout the centre. Whilst the environment is largely functional, there are two retail terraces (320-364 Palatine Road and 414-444 Palatine Road) which benefit from landscaping features including mature trees.

Northenden is an important district centre meeting the day-to-day needs of a relatively localised catchment. It has a good range of shops and service and has few vacancies. It is considered to be a vital and viable centre.





**Key**

Comparison	Leisure Service
Convenience	Retail Service
Financial & Business Services	Vacant