

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 02 March 2015

Portfolio:	Planning and Development
Subject:	Parking Order - Closure of The Gillies Car Park, Fareham
Report of:	Director of Planning and Development
Strategy/Policy:	Fareham Town Centre Parking Strategy 2012-2017 Local Plan: Adopted Core Strategy (August 2011) & Submission Development Sites and Policies Plan (June 2014)
Corporate Objective:	Protect and Enhance the Environment Maintain and Extend Prosperity

Purpose:

To seek approval to confirm the Parking Order for enabling the closure of The Gillies Car Park, as one of a number of Outer Car Parks in Fareham Town Centre.

Executive summary:

The Fareham Town Centre Parking Strategy (2012-2017), which is designed to assist in supporting the Town Centre in terms of an efficient parking offer, identified the under-utilisation of The Gillies Car Park compared with other car parks in the Town Centre. As a consequence The Gillies does not represent good value for money for the Council in terms of operation and maintenance of the car park and the Strategy would not be undermined if the site were to be allocated to other uses.

There are a number of alternative car parks in close proximity to The Gillies including Holy Trinity Church Car Park which are within easy walking distance of West Street, whilst on-street parking spaces are also available on West Street.

A recommendation was therefore made to the Executive by the Director of Finance and Resources that, following an approach from Aldi Stores UK, the Council should proceed with the disposal of the site, and the Executive Decision to proceed with the sale of the car park to Aldi was taken at the Council Executive Meeting on 3 November 2014.

A Parking Order to formally close The Gillies as a public car park has been advertised and a number of objections received. Proposed Council responses to the objections are included in this Report to enable closure of the Car Park in due course.

Recommendation:

That the Executive:

- (a) confirms the (Off Street Parking Places) Order to enable the closure of The Gillies Car Park in due course; and
- (b) agrees the Council's response to objections to the Parking Order as set out in Appendix A.

Reason:

To enable the closure of the Car Park, since the car park is under-used and alternative parking spaces convenient to West Street are available elsewhere.

Cost of proposals:

Over each of the last 4 financial years there has been a shortfall of revenue from parking charges in The Gillies Car Park compared with identifiable operating costs of between £10,000 and £20,000. Therefore, this closure would result in a potential annual saving to the Council of between £10,000 and £20,000.

Appendices:

- A: Summary of Objections Received and Proposed Council Response**
- B: Large-Scale Car Park Plans**
- C: Photographs**

Background papers:

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Executive Briefing Paper

Date: 02 March 2015

Subject: Parking Order - Closure of The Gillies Car Park, Fareham

Briefing by: Director of Planning and Development

Portfolio: Planning and Development

INTRODUCTION

1. The Gillies Car Park is one of seven outer car parks serving Fareham Town Centre. The car park is accessible directly from West Street and is located a short distance from the A27 Station Roundabout and bounded to the south by Western Way.
2. The under-utilisation of The Gillies Car Park compared to other car parks in the Town Centre was highlighted in the Fareham Town Centre Parking Strategy (2012-2017), which also referred to the possibility of reallocating the site for other uses.
3. Following an approach from Aldi Stores UK, the decision was taken at the Council's Executive Meeting on 3 November 2014 to sell the car park to Aldi, who operate a retail store on a West Street site immediately to the east of The Gillies Car Park.
4. This sale is subject to the implementation of an order to close the car park and obtaining planning consent for a change of use. The access road linking the car park to West Street does not form part of the proposed sale of land to Aldi. To comply with a condition for the sale agreed, Aldi will be required to submit a planning application for a change of use from public car park to commercial parking and the revised access arrangement to support the Aldi retail use at 208-228 West Street.
5. This report seeks approval for implementing a parking order to formally close The Gillies as a public car park. The effect of the (Off Street Parking Places) (Amendment 6) Order 2014 will be to revoke all previous orders relating to the Car Park.
6. A summary of the objections received by Fareham Borough Council in response to the formal advertisement of the proposal in November 2014 and related officer comments is given in the Appendix A, together with large-scale plans (Appendix B) and photographs of The Gillies Car Park (Appendix C).

DESCRIPTION OF THE GILLIES AND ADJACENT CAR PARKS

7. The Gillies has 34 spaces and is designated as an Outer Car Park in accordance with the Fareham Town Centre Parking Strategy. Outer car parks have lower hourly tariffs than Inner car parks and are intended to encourage longer stays in the Town Centre.
8. A short access road provides connectivity with West Street close to the junction with Grove Road (see Appendix B, Plan 1 and Appendix C, Photograph 1).
9. There are 4 other car parks in close proximity to The Gillies that serve the western side of the Town Centre and are also designated as 'Outer' car parks with the same charging tariff structure applicable. These are Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Street, Osborn Road West/Youth Centre and Malthouse Lane, with a total capacity of 335 spaces.
10. Trinity Street Car Park the closest alternative to The Gillies in terms of driving distance (530m). Although further to drive from The Gillies, the closest in 'crow-fly' distance is Holy Trinity Church Car Park which provides a direct pedestrian link onto West Street (see Appendix C, Photograph 3). The locations of these car parks are shown in Plan 2 of Appendix B).
11. In addition, a number of on-street parking spaces are located in bays on West Street in the vicinity of the Aldi store. These are intended for short-term parking and are also available for use by Blue Badge holders (see Appendix C, Photograph 2).
12. Spaces are also available in car parks at Fareham Railway Station to the west of The Gillies. These are intended for both commuter rail parking and off-peak visits (see Appendix B, Plan 2).

FAREHAM TOWN CENTRE PARKING STRATEGY

13. The Fareham Town Centre Parking Strategy (2012-2017) identified the under-utilisation of The Gillies Car Park compared with other car parks in the Town Centre, and refers to the possibility of reallocating the site to other uses. Policy 1a of this document states that:

“The Gillies long stay car park is the least used and least accessible of the car parks and is consistently under-occupied. This is due to its poor network presence, poor quality environment and problematic access arrangements.

This car park is therefore not presenting good value for money in terms of enforcement, maintenance and payment machine collection costs. Therefore the strategy would not be undermined if this site were to be allocated to other uses, potentially in accordance with the proposals outlined in the Development Sites and Policies Plan.”

14. The Implementation Plan for the Strategy includes the following relating to Policy 1a: *“Enable the decommissioning and sale of the Gillies car park when the opportunity arises for disposal via Estates.”*
15. The recommendation that The Gillies public car park should be closed is therefore consistent with the policy statement set out in the Town Centre Parking Strategy.
16. The Parking Strategy is designed to support the Town Centre in terms of the parking offer by maintaining and enhancing the existing businesses and amenities.

ALTERNATIVE PARKING SPACES IN THE VICINITY OF WEST STREET

17. On- and off-street parking spaces are both available within relatively close proximity to The Gillies site to cater for any displaced parking, and provide a facility for local businesses. Data collected on occupancy levels to inform the preparation of the Town Centre Parking Strategy indicates that these car parks have sufficient space capacity to accommodate the additional demand transferring from The Gillies Car Park.
18. Although details of the alternative car parks are available on the Council's Website, there appears to be a general lack of awareness of the accessibility of these car parks to businesses and their customers in West Street. If car park closure proceeds upon sale of the site, Council will provide appropriate publicity material (including to the businesses most affected) to inform customers of alternatives.
19. As stated above, the 4 closest Town Centre public car parks have a combined capacity of 335 spaces, with the capacity of The Gillies Car Park (34 spaces) representing only 10% of the total capacity of these 4 car parks.
20. Aldi's current parking policy allows visits of up to 90 minutes in duration for their customers, which also allows for multiple shopping trips, particularly to businesses located at the western end of West Street. In this respect Aldi can be seen as anchoring the west end of West Street in a similar way to that of the larger department stores in Fareham Shopping Centre, bringing extra trade to retailers and service providers located in the surrounding area.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

21. Income and expenditure relating to The Gillies Car Park are set out in the table below for the last 4 financial years. Maintenance costs would typically be charged to the general maintenance account and not allocated to individual car parks, and hence the figures in the table only include costs directly charged to The Gillies.

THE GILLIES CAR PARK	FY	2010/11 (£)	2011/12 (£)	2012/13 (£)	2013/14 (£)
INCOME					
Revenues from Parking Charges		12,300	13,200	10,900	5,800
EXPENDITURE					
Business rates		1,900	1,900	2,000	2,000
Maintenance (directly charged to Gillies)		0	2,200	700	0
Other operational costs		20,800	22,200	27,300	23,300
Cost to taxpayer		-10,400	-13,100	-19,100	-19,500

22. It should be noted that reduction in income for 2013/14 compared to previous years is attributable to the effect of local road works restricting access to the Car Park. The figures for the earlier years are therefore considered to represent a more typical pattern

of annual revenues from parking charges.

23. Car park expenditure includes an item for business rates, representing the non-domestic rates that are payable by Fareham Borough Council. The table also includes operating costs for Off-Street parking services. This includes the costs for cash collection and monitoring of the car park, along with other operational expenditure.
24. It can be seen from the table above that over this reporting period there has been an annual deficit of between £10,000 and £20,000 on car park operations.

LOCAL PLAN SITE ALLOCATION

25. The site is part of a proposed allocation in the Submitted Local Plan Part 2 (LP2) (Development Sites & Policies Plan) for residential development. The allocation covers the former Fortnum Cars showroom and The Gillies Car Park, and was proposed for 20 residential units. This capacity was based on the delivery of town houses, but identifies that a flatted scheme could deliver a greater number of units.
26. The closure and subsequent sale of the Car Park would be likely to remove the car park from any future development scheme which would, in turn, reduce the overall capacity of the allocated site. Initial design work has shown that 13 townhouses can be located on the remaining allocation, with a higher figure for a flatted scheme. The number of flatted units would be in the region of 32 based on an unimplemented 2004 planning permission on the Fortnum Cars site only and subject to parking levels and the dwelling mix. This revised figure has been subjected to a viability assessment which demonstrates that the smaller site is deliverable.

RISK ASSESSMENT

27. There are no significant risks associated with this proposal.

CONCLUSIONS

28. The closure of The Gillies Car Park would be consistent with the Town Centre Parking Strategy which states that closure would not undermine the strategy. and a number of alternatives are available with capacity to absorb any displacement of parking that may result from the closure.
29. Evidence from the income data shows that this car park is the least used of the Town Centre car parks, and currently there is a shortfall of revenue from parking charges on identifiable operating costs of between £10k and £20k according to figures for the last 4 years. This excludes maintenance costs not directly charged to The Gillies, which are accounted for under a different budget.

Reference Papers: None

Appendix A – Table of Objections Received and Proposed Council Response

Ref. No.	Objection	Proposed Council Response
1	<p>I am contacting you regarding the proposed closure of the Gillies public car park. Although little known it is essential for local businesses so their customers have somewhere to park. I use many of the local businesses such as Hair Envy, Prails Opticians and also Cartridge World all of which require being able to park close for a decent amount of time.</p> <p>Please do not close this car park and kill this thriving community part of Fareham by forcing customers to go elsewhere as they can't park closer enough. Particularly customers who are less mobile and cannot physically park their car further away. Thank you for your time.</p>	<p>As stated in the Briefing Paper alternative parking is available within easy reach of West Street.</p>
2	<p>I would like to lodge my objection to the closure of the Gillies Public Car Park on behalf of our business.</p> <p>We are one of the oldest independent small family businesses left in Fareham. All the others are large corporate chains and franchises.</p> <p>We regularly use the car park for some of our staff, visiting consultants, trades carrying out servicing and repairs to business equipment and the property. This car park enables them to park all day when working in the practice without having to keep moving their vehicle to a new location.</p> <p>We have found it useful to be able to recommend this car park to all our patients including Disabled patients or carers who can use it whilst attending the practice. A visit to our practice for an eye examination, subsequent advice and care usually takes in excess of one hour and the street parking outside the business only allows for 40 minutes, whilst the two hour parking along the residential road opposite is usually full.</p> <p>Life for small businesses is difficult enough without the local authority taking away a much valued facility with no plan for the provision of an alternative. Besides this there has been no consultation with those affected.</p> <p>The poor provision of parking in this area of the town has an adverse effect on our ability to recruit staff and attract customers who are more often than not drawn to businesses that offer convenience.</p>	<p>Holy Trinity Church Car Park is a reasonably close alternative public car park providing easy access to West Street.</p>

	<p>Convenient car parking is a major reason for the success or failure of a business today and the provision of this is sadly lacking at our end of the town.</p> <p>Please consider our objection and I look forward to hearing from you.</p>	
3	<p>I would like to formally log an objection to the proposed closure of the Gillies Public Car Park under (amendment 6) Order 2014.</p>	<p>No reason is given for the objection</p>
4	<p>I have today read the notice at the entrance to the Gillies car park and the proposal to close it and I wish to register my protest.</p> <p>Although Aldi is close by, as you are probably aware, there is a time limit of one and a half hours.</p> <p>The shops at the top end of West Street are specialist shops and when visiting them it is not a case of 'in and out' - the hairdressers is a case in point.</p> <p>Even with the recently extended car park at Aldi, it is now very busy and it is not always possible to park there. If the Gillies is closed, car parking at the top end of Fareham will be difficult to find especially for Blue Badge holders.</p> <p>I hope these views will be taken into consideration before a final decision is made.</p>	<p>Alternative parking spaces are available within easy reach of West Street.</p> <p>Should the sale of the car park proceed, the congestion experienced in the existing Aldi car park will be alleviated with an equivalent increase in the extended car park to the current capacity of The Gillies.</p>
5	<p>My husband and I would like to object to the closure and sale of Gillies car park in West Street, Fareham.</p> <p>We contacted the Council in February (2014) to try to gain more awareness for the public of the cheap parking at that end of the street but since the road works took place the sign for the car park has been covered up.</p> <p>Most of the shops have signs, made by the shop keepers, to show where the parking is in the area. Lack of parking is a major issue for the speciality shopping area and again is another example of the smaller shops being disregarded.</p> <p>Please reconsider for the sake of independent business owners in the area.</p>	<p>The Fareham Town Centre Parking Strategy is designed to support the Town Centre in terms of the parking offer. With only finite resources the Council has to determine the most cost effective solutions without unreasonably dis-benefiting particular businesses.</p>
6	<p>I have just taken a 10 yr lease on premises in West Street Fareham and have found out you are selling the car park to Aldi. I understood the lease with the understanding that the car park would be available for my customers to use. Looking through the report I notice that it was not put up for sale in the open market. My new store would give me the same rights as Aldi as</p>	<p>The objection relates to the sale of the Car park to Aldi, which has already been confirmed by Executive Decision.</p>

	special purchasers position? Please could you inform me of what can be done.	
7	Closing this car park will be the death knell for that end of West Street. I use this car park when I go to Fareham to get my hair cut and shopping. I do not want to have a long walk from the car parks further up. This sounds like money before people.	The Council does not share this view – alternative car parks are available that are within easy reach of this section of West Street.
8	<p>I wish to submit an objection to the above mentioned public notice.</p> <p>I have looked at the attached Public Notice and reviewed it against the map of Fareham car parks (as is available via the Fareham Council website http://www.fareham.gov.uk/images/parking/last-car-park.jpg).</p> <p>As you will note from the car parks map there are no other public car parks available in the vicinity to service this area of West Street other than the Gillies car park, and therefore it is my belief that the closure of the Gillies car park will have a huge impact and detrimental effect on the businesses of West Street. It is not fair to the business owners or to the people who wish to visit the businesses in West Street that they will not be able to park close to their intended destination, especially unfair to those with impaired mobility due to disability or age.</p> <p>I urge the Fareham Borough Council to review this proposal and consider the wider impact of such a decision.</p>	<p>Alternative car parks are available, particularly Holy Trinity Church Car Park, with the equivalent level of access to West Street.</p> <p>The map referred to is not to scale and therefore somewhat misleading in not accurately representing true distances between the car parks and other destinations.</p> <p>The car park is under-used and it is not economic for the Council to continue to operate the facility for the current number of users.</p>
9	We object strongly to the closure of this car park. We feel that the car park has never been sign posted correctly or efficiently so the survey that it had which stated it was under used is wholly misleading. We feel that money was the sole reason it was insufficiently sign posted so it could be used as reason to sell ... Our businesses this end need a car park and the needs of Aldis should not be to the detriment of the other shops!	<p>A standard 'car park' direction sign is located at the entrance to the access road leading to The Gillies Car Park.</p> <p>The Car Park is also represented on the Fareham Town Centre car park map available of the Council's Website.</p>
10	<p>I am writing to you to make an objection to the closure of Gillies Public Car park.</p> <p>I use this car park on a daily basis, and I've purchased a pass for over a year to allow me park my car to enable me to go to work. I work at an address in West Street and by closing this car park would severely disadvantage me from getting to work, which in turn</p>	The pass should be transferable to the nearest equivalent car park (Holy Trinity Church Car Park).

	would impact on my business. I therefore strongly object to the closure of this car park.	
11	<p>I strongly object to the closure of the Gillies car park, it is vital for the life of businesses at the west end of West Street, Fareham. Businesses at this end of town don't have the footfall of customers that the precinct has, easy and accessible parking is essential for their survival. Shops frequently change hands this end of town, without easily available parking many more businesses with 'go to the wall'.</p> <p>I work for one of the businesses on West Street and much of our client base are elderly with health conditions who find walking a terrible struggle. We do not have on-site parking and recommend this car park to our customers, the Trinity Street Car Park is too far away. I have worked here and used this car park for 14 years. I have heavy bags to carry and it is important to be able to park as close as possible to my workplace.</p> <p>Sometimes the car park has empty spaces, this I feel is due to very poor signage. The car park is down an alley and the sign is so poorly visible that most people have not known of its existence - if the car park can remain, a more visible sign would clearly improve its usage.</p> <p>If Aldi is likely to purchase this car park, it seems that one business may benefit to the demise of others this end of town.</p> <p>To reiterate, the loss of this car park will be a major challenge to the businesses of the west end of West St.</p>	<p>Alternative parking spaces (both on- and off-street) are available which serve the west end of West Street.</p> <p>Holy Trinity Church Car Park is closer in walking distance than Trinity Street Car Park.</p> <p>There is a direction sign for The Gillies at the junction of West Street and the access road to the car park, and the car park is clearly depicted on the car park map available on the Fareham Borough Council website.</p> <p>Aldi are anchoring this area of the Town Centre, potentially bringing increased trade for other local businesses.</p>

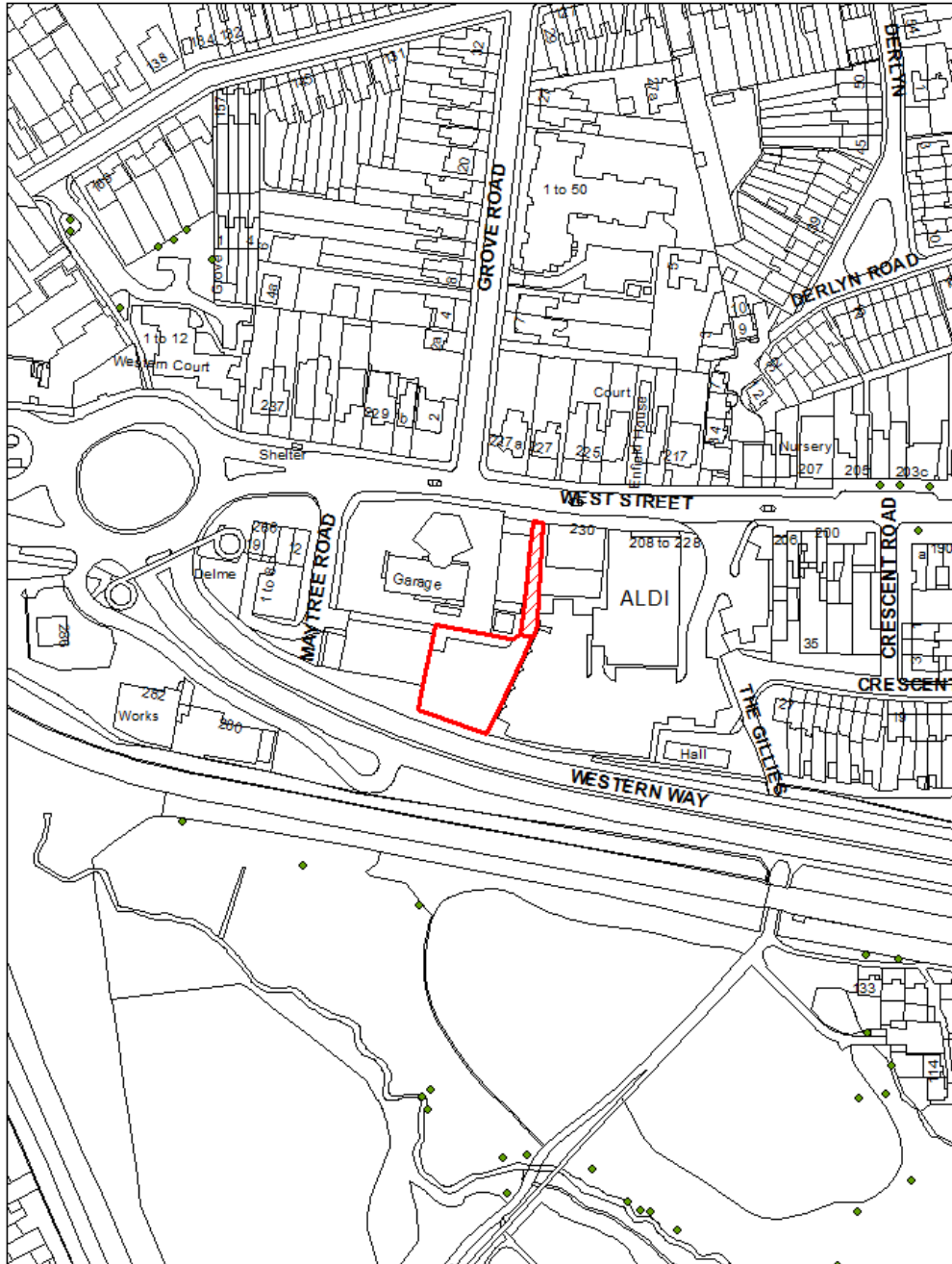
Objection received after the end of the Consultation Period

Ref No	Objection	Proposed Council Response
12	<p>I am writing to you to object to your proposed closure of the above.</p> <p>I note the date of the notice. However, the disposal of such a key public asset requires more effort on the part of the council to make all those which it affects aware of their plans.</p> <p>My employer purchased a property in summer 2014 on West Street. The offices have undergone extensive refurbishment and have been occupied since 2nd February 2015. Our management team carried out a</p>	<p>The proposal to close the car park was formally advertised in November 2014.</p> <p>Any increase in traffic congestion resulting from the closure of The Gillies and transfer to adjacent car</p>

<p>full feasibility study before acquiring the property. As part of that study the Gillies car park was identified as a key car parking facility for staff and visitors. As well as being extremely conveniently located close to our offices there were other factors, which we feel are highly pertinent in relation to the traffic management of West Street. West Street is a highly congested road in week day afternoons. The use of Gillies car park rather than Trinity street car park helps relieve that congestion. Trinity street is where I and our visitors shall have to park if the planned closure of the car park is to go ahead.</p> <p>Indeed, on the basis that I and my colleagues would use the car park. I have purchased an annual parking permit.</p> <p>It is unclear to me why the Council feel that Aldi will make better landlords of the Gillies car park. Perhaps the council could explain to me the detailed rationale for their reasoning on this matter. Aldi want the car park one presumes to provide parking for their shoppers. Therefore, that Aldi require such a car park indicates without any doubt there is a high demand for car parking at Gillies. Why else would they want more car parking? However, if they are not to use the Gillies of car parking it is very unclear why the council feel Fareham requires less not more car parking.</p>	<p>parks would depend upon the precise origin of trips and choice of route through the Town Centre.</p> <p>Alternatives to The Gillies include Holy Trinity Church Car Park with a short pedestrian link to West Street.</p> <p>Season tickets can be used to park in any Outer Car Park.</p> <p>The sale of the car park has already been agreed by Council Executive Decision.</p>
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Appendix B – Large-Scale Car Park Plans

FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

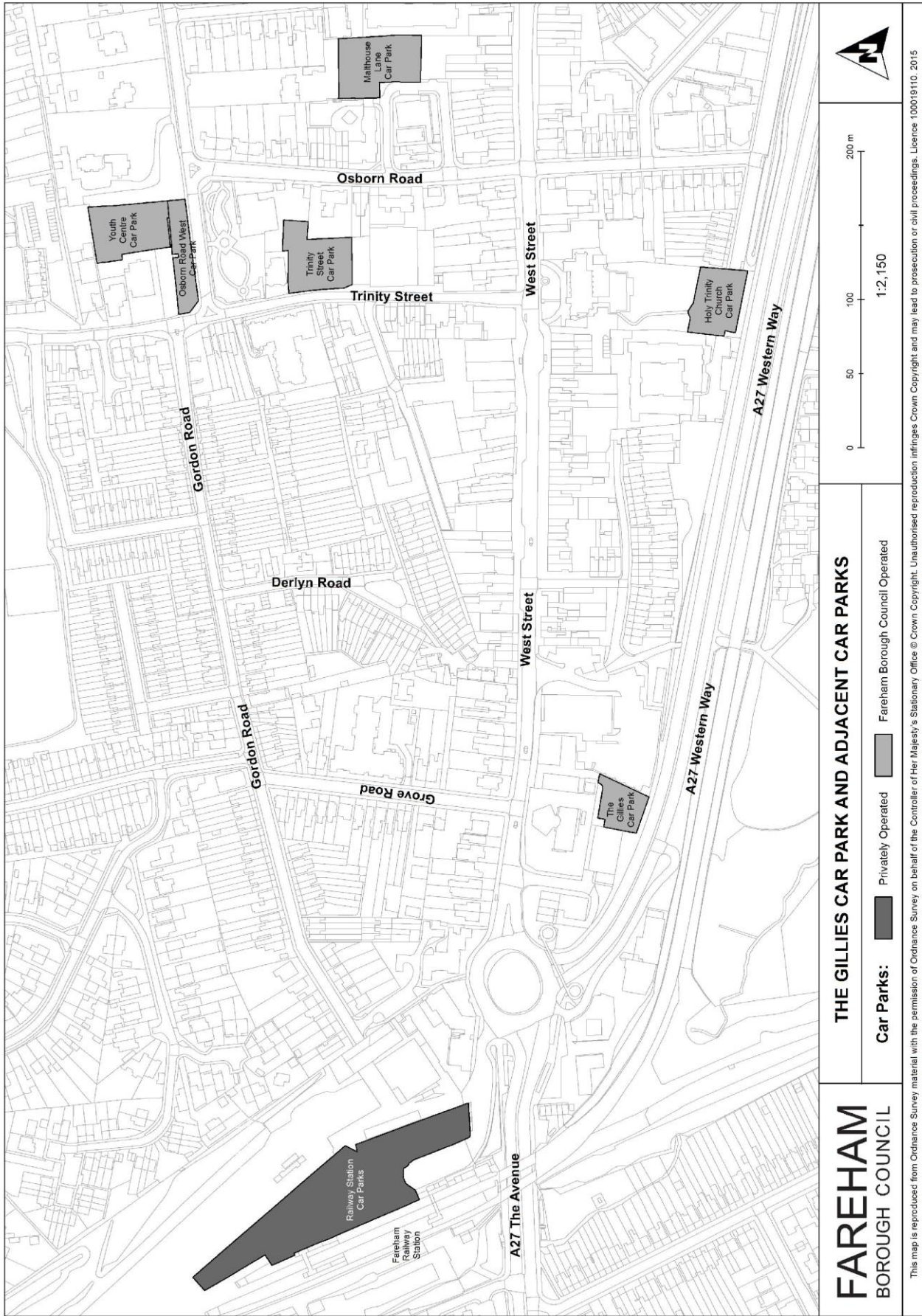


The Gillies car park
Scale 1:1250

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1. Plan of The Gillies Car Park showing the Site Boundary and Access Road

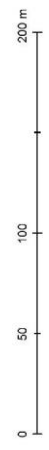


2. Location of The Gillies Car Park and adjacent car parks

FAREHAM
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THE GILLIES CAR PARK AND ADJACENT CAR PARKS

Car Parks: Privately Operated Fareham Borough Council Operated



1:2,150



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Appendix C – Photographs (taken 1300 hours, Monday 2 February 2015)

1. View of The Gillies Car Park from the access road



2. On-street parking spaces in West Street



3. Pedestrian access from West Street to Holy Trinity Church Car Park

