

LEISURE FACILITIES BOOST RETAIL PARKS

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Leisure operators are increasingly being sought by retail park developers across the UK to boost the appeal of their schemes according to *The Definitive Guide to Retail & Leisure Parks – Shopping Meets Leisure 2002* – a detailed analysis of the retail warehouse and leisure sector published by FPD Savills Commercial and TW Research Associates.

The review identifies a 15% increase since 2001 in the provision of leisure facilities such as cinemas, bowling alleys and health & fitness clubs at the UK's retail parks (above 30,000 sq ft / 2,787 sq m).

Trevor Wood, principal of TW Research Associates, says: "Developers are looking to create greater diversity at their schemes in order to drive revenue through increased footfall and dwell time. From a total of 806 retail parks trading or under construction 111 (or 14%) now include a leisure element, while 15 parks have three or more leisure units, including Middlebrook Retail & Leisure Park in Bolton, Edge Lane Retail Park in Liverpool and Greenbridge Retail & Leisure Park in Swindon.

"These figures are steadily on the increase and as both sectors remain strong this trend looks set to continue for the foreseeable future."

The review also highlights the growth in leisure parks over the past 5 years. Of 94 leisure parks trading or under construction, 51 have opened since 1997.

Star City in Birmingham is the largest Leisure Park in the UK, while there are now 50 parks with a floorspace in excess of 120,000 sq ft (11,148 sq m). The review also lists 15 hybrid schemes classified as Shopping and Leisure Centres with 11 having a floorspace in excess of 120,000 sq ft. These include The Great Northern in Manchester, Xscape in Milton Keynes and the N1 Centre in Islington.

Rank	Scheme	Location	GIA	Year Open
1	Star City	Birmingham – Nechells	392,993	2000
2	Dome Leisure Park	Doncaster	300,000	
3	Cross Point	Coventry	280,000	1989
4	Junction 10 Leisure Park	Walsall	275,000	1991
5	Parrswood Leisure Park	Manchester – Didsbury	241,786	2001
6	Fountain Park	Edinburgh	230,314	1999
7	Festival Leisure Park	Basildon	218,917	1998
8	Teesside Leisure Park (Phases 1 - 2)	Stockton-on-Tees – Thornaby	201,087	1996
9	Valley Centertainment	Sheffield	200,000	1998
10	Norwich Riverside	Norwich	197,638	1999

Andrew McGregor, leisure director of FPDSavills, comments: “Leisure and retail facilities at the same scheme can provide added value when both elements complement each other. The leading example of this is at Xscape in Milton Keynes, which was envisaged from the start to provide not only a new mix of retail and leisure operators, but a wholly integrated retail and leisure destination.”

The review also illustrates a growing trend towards the inclusion of night clubs within out-of-town retail and leisure schemes with 58 parks across the UK operating a late night music venue. A further 44 schemes accommodate a hotel, while The Embassy Centre in Skegness, The Lowry Designer Outlet in Salford and Tally Ho in Finchley, all include a theatre.

The review is available for £245.00 from TW Research Associates, retail@twresearch.co.uk, tel: 01494 715 846.

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Notes to Editors

In 2001, of 756 retail parks then trading or under construction 96 (or 13%) included a leisure element.

Cinemas added during the last year on existing parks include Warner Village at Two Rivers in Staines and Cineworld at Junction One Retail Park in Rugby and Central Park in Falkirk. Ster Century opened at The Brewery in Romford and Spean Bridge will be opening at Ocean Plaza in Southport.

Health & Fitness Centres opened during the last year on existing parks include Bannatyne Health Club at Central Park in Falkirk, Holmes Place at Two Rivers in Staines and Esporta at Junction One Retail Park in Rugby. Fitness First opened six clubs including Sovereign Harbour Retail Park in Eastbourne, Turner Rise Retail Park in Colchester, Wyrley Brook Retail Park in Cannock and Shore Road Retail Park in Newtownabbey. JJB Sports are opening Health Clubs at Ocean Plaza in Southport, Weavers Wharf Retail Park in Kidderminster and St Davids Retail Park in Bangor (Wales).

Leisure Parks opened in 2001 were Parrswood Leisure Park in Manchester, Middlesbrough Leisure Park and Larkswood Leisure Park in Chingford, while Yeo Vale Leisure Park opened in March 2002 at Yeovil.

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