

**West Way, Botley**

**Meeting with David Rothery, Major applications officer, Vale of White Horse District Council  
Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2012, 14.00, Abbey House, Abingdon**

**In attendance:**

David Rothery	Vale of White Horse DC (DR)
Alison Blyth	Vale of White Horse DC, Conservation and Design Officer (AB)
Grant Audley-Miller	Vale of White Horse DC, Conservation officer (GA)
George Reade	Vale of White Horse DC, Tree officer (GR)
Avril Williams	Vale of White Horse DC, Landscape officer (AW)
Mark Williams	Vale of White Horse DC, Team Leader Planning Policy (MW) [for part of meeting]
Julian Philcox	JP Planning Ltd (JP)
Andrew Rockett	Quay Associates (AR)
Ian Robinson	Mountford Pigott (IR)

**Main points to come from discussion:**

1. After introductions scheme 'C' was tabled and JP outlined the changes from that scheme to the present one. Elms Parade had been added to the site area; the larger A1 retail (non-food) units deleted and the food store enlarged. JP also explained what was presently on the site, and its component parts. He explained that the vehicular access to Arthray Rd was still proposed downgraded to pedestrian and cycle access only.
2. IR tabled a copy of the A3 brochure left with members of Cabinet recently and additional plans showing large scale views of the proposed development and plan view of proposed uses
3. JP explained that discussions continued with the Local Highway Authority (Oxfordshire County Council) and that we were liaising with the County re: library provision on site. RPS were also meeting with the Highways Agency (that afternoon).
4. IR explained the thinking behind the tabled layout, identifying the supermarket and cinema and their entrances at either end of the new plaza. The servicing arrangements were explained and how the student accommodation would work and be accessed. He identified the two quadrangles created and the strong frontage to West Way and Westminster Way. Parking was to be 'hidden' underground.
5. In terms of massing IR explained that regard was had to the properties in Arthray Road, and consequently the development was pulled away from them and stepped away further at upper floors.

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6. AR pointed out that Arthray Road was located to the south of the site, such that any potential impact on sun/daylight would be minimal but that we were mindful of that relationship.
7. Whilst talking through the planned community uses (library, hall, Baptist Church) AB commented that the Church would perhaps be better located more forward on the site. JP explained that in developing the scheme might well see the community uses located more closely and indeed the County had already intimated that the library would work well adjacent to the new hall.
8. AB thought the cinema a good complementary use and that it would likely be popular.
9. There was general consensus that the heights and massing seemed reasonable.
10. GA stated that this would have likely ventilation issues and IR confirmed that they had been assuming the use of mechanical ventilation from an early stage.
11. JP explained that having regard to the A34 we have always felt that the eastern end of the site was not appropriate for family or 'general' housing. People agreed. It was felt that student accommodation would work well and help alleviate student occupation of open market housing in the wider area. He explained that the local ward Member had mentioned that the residential area to the south of the site had a significant student population. The student accommodation (of 550 units) would wrap around the supermarket allowing greater articulation at upper floors and therefore avoiding large bland elevations, though accommodation would out of necessity be single aspect on certain floors. He also explained that across the site there would be no net loss of residential accommodation.
12. AB noted that the student accommodation could be controlled in terms of car use. JP confirmed that controls would be put in place to prevent car use/parking.
13. GA explained that there will likely be significant opposition to the loss of Elms Parade as a building. He confirmed that he had been asked to look at potential Listing in the recent past – but that he had not deemed it necessary to take it forward. He suggested that the submission include a short assessment of the building (a heritage statement in effect). JP thanked him for the advice and said that we were also mindful of the need to provide smaller 'local' shop opportunities within the scheme, and highlighted the frontage to West Way which wraps round into the site.
14. AB advised that accommodation close to the A34 might well be the subject of an AQM (air quality management) area
15. JP tabled the adopted Local Plan (LP) map extract of Botley and the Core Strategy Preferred Options (CS) Botley Comprehensive Development Area map (2009) and highlighted what was envisaged by the Council to this existing centre and retail area. He further explained that after discussions with DR and MW we intended to forward a Development Brief for the site to assist with

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on-going pre-application discussions but to potentially feed into the emerging Core Strategy process and the follow-on Development Management document which would be more site-specific.

16. AB saw merit in this but offered that the retail/student element was within the existing LP designation and therefore not contrary to policy and that the new community/leisure facilities (cinema, hall, library and church) would be well-located adjacent to an existing centre, again aligning well with policy.
17. JP stated that the Development Brief could also translate into an SPD for the site that would be subject of consultation and ideally be adopted by the Council as policy as part of the Local Development Framework. AB thought this a good idea and pointed to the SPDs for Harcourt Hill (Brookes) and Abingdon Charter Area.
18. GR explained that in the round he saw the potential for significant gain in his remit (trees). He said that there were a couple of notable specimens on the corner of West Way with Westminster Way but that the most notable specimen on site was the copper beech adjacent to the Baptist Church.
19. DR advised that given the scale and height of the proposals at the NE corner of the site he would expect to see shadow path analysis in respect of the properties opposite on West Way.
20. Regarding an EIA screening opinion JP reiterated that in both his and DR's opinion the proposals did not amount to EIA development nevertheless we would likely submit a screening opinion request well before any planned submission date of the planning application(s).
21. In terms of timescales JP stated that we were looking at a likely application summer 2013. He confirmed that in a previous Cabinet meeting the view of officers was that one should allow 6 months for the LPA to determine the application once submitted. No one disagreed with this assessment but DR stated that it would likely be any s106 agreement that could slow things up. JP confirmed that in dealing with the County now we would hopefully submit with Heads of Terms agreed and a likely draft agreement in place.
22. IR left 3no. hard copies of the brochure with DR, plus large scale views of the massing model and 'uses' drawing.
23. JP confirmed that he would follow-up with notes of meeting and further questions or points of clarification for DR. IR confirmed that he would forward digital copies of the brochure to DR.

Meeting closed 15.20.

**Circulation: DR, AR, IR, JP, clients**

**15.10.2012**

**Julian Philcox**