

## **Consultation Update**

### **Old River Lane, Bishop's Stortford**

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Further to the publication of the Officers report in respect of the above application, the following consultation responses have been received by the Council:-

The Environment Agency(EA) have provided further comments to the application and comment that they now withdraw their objection subject to planning conditions being attached with any grant of planning permission and a S106 agreement.

The EA comment that they are not entirely happy with the proposal and the surface water drainage is not considered to be sustainable and that by not de-culverting the Old River Stort, that an opportunity has been missed for the area.

The lack of open space incorporated into the design has resulted in a situation whereby the main option for storage of rainfall is in underground storage tanks which cannot be drained using gravitational forces and is therefore reliant on a pumped system, which will need to be maintained and operated for the lifetime of the development. Any failure of such a system could result in an increased risk of flooding.

The EA recommend planning conditions requiring that the development be carried out in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment, a design of the Flood Compensation Area (FCA) be submitted for approval together with a schedule of the long term management and maintenance of that area. The EA recommend landscape conditions and conditions relating to decontamination of the Flood Compensation Area.

With regards to S106 matters, the EA seek for the weir to the north of the FCA to be removed, to ensure that the development provides river restoration to compensate for not restoring the Old River Stort through the main development site. Removal of the weir will also reduce the risk of blockages at this structure and therefore removes a source of flood risk in the area.

Following the removal of the weir, additional works will need to be carried out on the river corridor including bank re-profiling and the restoration of wetland features such as ditches and scrapes within the two open spaces.

The EA also request a financial contribution of £25,000 for river enhancements at Grange Paddocks and Red, White and Blue public open spaces.

The Landscape Officer (LO) now recommends that planning permission be granted.

The LO comments that the space between building blocks C & D and Waitrose still appears awkward in plan geometry. This area is part of the

central core to the development, around which the hierarchy of open spaces pedestrian links and squares that contribute to the overall character of the development ought to hinge. This area of outdoor space needs to be redefined and a bolder and formal approach is justified here. The LO advises that there is potential to create another (and larger) square as part of the sequence of open spaces incorporated within the development.

The ring road and western perimeter to the site is improved by the more discrete underground car park entrance. It is still important however that sufficient space is allowed for the planting of large trees along the frontage to the road.

The open street containing the cinema has been slightly widened and realigned to create a more positive vista and visual link from or through the development to the motte and parkland to the west. However further widening of this link will more fully achieve this aspiration. The direct route and bridge to the motte is a good idea.

There is an existing grassed strip between Charrington house and the ring road. The proposal still seeks to widen the carriageway at the expense of this already fairly minimal grassed strip. An area of soft landscape along this frontage to the development, i.e. in front of the hotel would help considerably in assisting the development to assimilate into and with the surroundings – that being the Motte and surrounding parkland / woodland of The Meads. An extension / linear expansion of the grass verge at its widest point in front of Charrington House along this frontage as a minimum is still recommended. The LO considers that there are a number of outstanding / unresolved matters in relation to the development proposals, however these and other issues can be revisited under reserved matters stage.