

**Joint Planning Committee**  
**28<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

**Technical Briefing on Applications WA/2008/0279 and WA/2008/0280**  
**Land at East Street, Farnham**

**Summary of Members' Questions and Answers**

1. Would it have been prudent to test the Traffic Assessment by modelling a range of assumptions, in order to see the minimum impact (and it is assumed that that is what has been presented) and alternative outputs?  
(MG) In an ideal world different scenarios could have been tested, looking at the worst and best cases, but that would have had resource implications. In practice, it is considered that a robust case has been tested.  
It is recognised, and the developer has demonstrated, that there will be potentially a 14% increase in journey speed averages at a.m. peak and p.m. peak times; but also increased delays at certain points. Overall it is considered that the negatives are potentially out-weighed in transportation terms by the benefits, both in improvements to the junctions and other tangible works, and funding for further work as a catalyst for improving Farnham.
2. Is it possible to have an independent consultant's view of the Traffic Assessment?  
(MG) Surrey Highways consider themselves to be independent, as they have no particular agenda to see the development proceed or not. Their role is to give a clear statement of the implications, and they consider that they have recommended a package of measures that addresses the impact of the proposed development, as well as conditions to be attached to any grant of permission.
3. Is there a model which shows the likely maximum level of demand for parking at peak times?  
(MG) Surrey Highways are confident that taking into account the parking available at the Riverside site, other adjacent car parks, and the Park & Stride, there will be sufficient parking to meet demand at peak times.
4. With reference to the objections from Rushmoor and East Hants local authorities on the grounds of the impact on their centres, is there a retail impact study for existing commercial premises in Farnham, in particular the with regard to the number of restaurants we already have and the number we can expect in the new development?  
(IE) A formal Retail Impact Assessment is not required for retail development located within a defined town centre, which is the case with the East Street development. Therefore there has been no assessment of any potential impact on retail services elsewhere, e.g. Aldershot (Rushmoor) or Alton (East Hants).

Recognising the possible implications for Farnham, a retail impact statement has been produced by the developers to explain how the commercial element of the proposed development, particularly eating establishments, fits with the existing provision in Farnham.

5. With reference to potential for flooding, and issues of drainage design, what is the current state of discussions with the Environment Agency and Thames Water with regard to flooding and drainage?

(CT) We have been in discussion with the Environment Agency [EA] for many years. In 2006 the EA concluded that the flood level was 63.5m in the site area. More recently the EA have been looking again at their model for the River Wey. Only 2 days ago a revised assessment was received that re-set the flood level to 64m. Consultants are now working with the Environment Agency and Thames Water to address their concerns regarding safe access and egress of residents, flooding and drainage issues. Engineering and design solutions are being discussed, including amendments to the balancing pond and flood compensation scheme. Any amendments to the plans will be subject to further public consultation and the information will be made available once it has been agreed by the EA and submitted formally to the Council.

6. Do Surrey Highways have any comment regarding concerns expressed about vehicular access, both for private cars and delivery vehicles, and pedestrian safety?

(MG) Surrey Highways have reviewed the vehicular access arrangements and required the geometry of some junctions to be scaled down to favour pedestrians and other non-car traffic. Overall, it is felt that unaccompanied children will be safer within the East Street development area than in the surrounding streets, as in comparison it will be less-trafficked. A safety audit has shown that highway improvements will be safe and vulnerable road-users will be as safe as reasonably practical in a town centre situation.

7. What assurances can Crest Nicholson give that there will be no material changes to the plans during implementation, i.e. to what extent are the illustrative and technical drawings representative of what we will get?

(CN1) The application is for full planning permission, not outline permission. At the commencement of the re-design process many meetings were held with stakeholders and special interest groups. Whilst some compromises along the way have been inevitable, a reasonably favourable response has led to the submission of a detailed planning application. During the public consultation, exhibitions displayed examples of the materials and design features to be incorporated into the development, and an expanded range of visualisations of the development. There is no intention or expectation to depart from these plans in their execution. The only modification that might arise is in relation to the retail operators who have their own branding and styles, but broadly speaking these will be encouraged to fit in with the architectural style and elevational treatment as far as possible.

We are confident that what you see is what you will get, and that there will not be any creep. We have a scheme with a great deal of merit, and

are satisfied with what we have, and what we will be providing for Farnham.

8. Has the Theatres Trust undertaken any recent technical assessment of the former theatre building for soundness, both for its acoustic appropriateness for modern theatre given its age and advances in sound technology, and for the soundness of the building after 10 years of dis-use? If so, what cost does the Trust attribute to bring the building to modern standards and enhance its viability in accordance with policy PP6?
  - (RR) The Theatres Trust has not had access to the Redgrave Theatre building for the last 10 years, so it is difficult to give any assurances. However, we know from other buildings, where owners and local authorities don't rush in to spend money on their buildings, that theatres of the age of the Redgrave are certainly very active in their community.
9. Has the impact of the new developments on Farnham's E-W axis, between the Coxbridge and Six Bells roundabouts, i.e. proposed 60 dwellings at Bourne Mill, proposed 60 dwellings at Spooner's Yard, and 130 dwellings under construction at the Farnham hospital site, been taken into account in the modelling for the Traffic Assessment?
  - (MG) The impact of the development of the hospital site has been explicitly included; the Bourne Mill and Spooner's Yard developments have not been included specifically, because at the time of doing the Traffic Assessment the applications had not been submitted. The model does provide for overall background growth in traffic, including the impact of non-specific development. However, it is also considered unlikely that people living in these developments on the eastern fringes of Farnham will drive into town, for all the congestion and related issues mentioned previously, and will most likely use alternative modes of travel.
10. At a rough estimate, there could be around 98 children living on the development site, and a large percentage of them are likely to be left to play on the green open space. There is concern at the dangers posed by them playing in proximity to the balancing pond and it is hoped that appropriate safety measures will be considered.
  - (CN1) Safety measures were considered, but fencing or corralling around the balancing pond was not thought to be visually attractive. The river is located only a short distance away and is not fenced, and unfenced village ponds are not uncommon. As a result of on-going discussions with the EA over flood prevention measures, the design and/or location of the balancing pond might be amended, and safety issues can be reviewed if it is a significant concern.
11. What steps have been taken to 'future proof' the CHP facility, with regard to the delivery, storage of fuel and size of biomass boiler?
  - (CT) The energy centre has been sized to be sufficient to take an alternative, bio-mass boiler in due course, and will have sufficient room to accommodate the delivery and storage of biofuel. The Energy centre is located to the east of Block 8, adjacent to the principle vehicle access to the site, so we are satisfied that it has been adequately future-proofed.

12. Including the other residential developments in Farnham previously mentioned, there will be an estimated 80-90 secondary school and 120 primary school places required. Can it be confirmed that developers' s.106 contributions in respect of education provision will contribute to more school places?  
(MB) It is confirmed that it will be a condition on the s.106 contribution in respect of education provision that the funds are used for education in the Farnham area. However, the funds can only be used for capital/infrastructure spend (e.g. classrooms, equipment), not additional teachers; and no commitment can be given as to which schools will benefit.
13. Whilst the Redgrave Theatre was operating they had asked the Council for increasing amounts of funding, and there had been concerns at the type of productions put on and the size of the payroll. If the Redgrave Theatre was to be brought back into operation, could it be financially viable?  
(RR) The Theatres Trust is concerned only with theatre buildings; funding of theatres, particularly from grant aid is the remit of the Arts Councils. The point about future viability of is something for those who are running a theatre to decide. The point made by the Theatre Trust is that that Waverley has a purpose-built theatre which it is proposed to remove; once it's gone, it's gone forever. {Waverley] has to look at how it is going to provide a theatre facility, and then who it entrusts to run it, whether that is a commercial provider or a theatre trust.
14. Currently when standing in front of Brightwells House and looking towards the tennis courts, the United Reform Church spire is visible. This helps alleviate the feeling of being boxed-in. Where would you have to stand in the new development to still see the spire?  
(PH) No information to hand to answer this question.
15. Clarification is sought on the number of Category A trees that will be retained, noting that para. 3.21 of the report states that 4 of 7 Category A trees are to be retained, whilst the presenter stated that only one Category A tree would be removed.  
(PH) Of the 7 Category A trees identified in the original plans, 2 are in the Woolmead and are now outside the red line of the East St development following the re-design submitted in April. These 2 trees will be retained along with 4 of 5 Category A trees still within the red line i.e. only 1 Category A tree is proposed to be felled.
16. During the presentation it was stated that waste removal for both residential & commercial premises was the responsibility of the management company, but the report states that Veolia have concerns about refuse collections from building D1. Who will be responsible for collection?  
(PH) There is a refuse strategy principle for both residential and commercial [waste] stated within the development framework document, and there are also planning drawings that show the potential route for access to the bin stores, recycling centres, etc. Located in building D8, adjacent to

the public toilets and lifts, will be a management centre. A management team will be on site 7 days a week and they will monitor refuse for commercial and residential [areas]. They will also control and monitor the public realm and landscape, maintenance, security, CCTV, and other site-wide issues.

Veolia potentially might be a private/local authority contractor who will form part of the refuse strategy for the extraction of the refuse from the basement car parks and commercial elements, or it may well be a private contract.

17. Can CN confirm that during the construction phase there will be full compliance with health and safety legislation?

(CN1) Health and safety legislation is embodied in Acts of Parliament. There are construction and design principles. We comply with all of those. We have a health and safety team within the group; they monitor all our sites on a monthly basis and we have one of the highest scores for health and safety on sites. Notwithstanding that building continues to be a dangerous business and we don't shirk our responsibilities. We pay the utmost attention to health and safety at all times, and are required to do so, and will always comply with health and safety.

18. Can CN confirm that during construction no risks to wildlife will manifest?

(CN2) A construction and wildlife management plan will be put in place which will ensure all the necessary measures to protect both protected species and any other species are taken into account during every aspect of the construction phase. The Environment Statement produced has found no protected species at the moment, but we have to carry out further surveys as time goes on, on bats and other potential [protected] species. We will follow the recommendations of the Surrey Wildlife Trust, who in their response have asked for a Construction and Environment Management Plan, and the implementation of that document will ensure that all those measures are taken into account and acted upon.

19. What is the definition of a building 'storey'?

(JA) There is no simple definition of a 'storey' as the function of the premises dictates the floor-to-ceiling height, with commercial premises usually being higher than residential. Thus, 3-storey building with commercial use on the ground floor might be the same overall height as a 4-storey residential building. To focus on how many storeys a building has may be a red-herring – it is more important to consider the overall mass, scale and feel of buildings in relation to the spaces you experience them from. It is not really relevant if a building has 3 or 4 storeys if the height of both is 20m.

20. How does the proposed development impact on the commercial vitality of Farnham? Rev Tucker has stated that there are currently 20 empty shop premises in Farnham; while Mr Meyjes indicates that the Farnham Chamber of Commerce is broadly in favour, from a commercial point of view, of this going forward. What is the impact on the retail vitality with this amount of space coming into the town; how will this affect the retail

hierarchy within the region, and what impact will that have on the rest of Farnham outside the East St scheme?

- (JA) The retail impact statement accompanying the application addresses the point in the planning brief that this retail provision should be complementary to Farnham. We don't want to see the whole of the commercial centre of Farnham being dragged into this centre, with Downing Street or the other end of West Street becoming secondary zones.

What that assessment concludes is that there is a shortfall of particular units within Farnham. Most of the shopping units are in buildings based on the medieval street pattern. Here we have an opportunity to provide some larger units in the town and to satisfy some of the modern needs of retailers. In addition, officers have been doing work as part of the Core Strategy, looking at the current retail state in all the towns and Cranleigh village. That work is well advanced, and the draft outcome is confirming the position in the consultants' retail statement, and suggests that East St in itself will not satisfy all the latent demand potentially for Farnham in the future. So, from that point of view officers are relatively content with the impact and analysis of the retail situation.

Regarding the retail hierarchy, it is not believed that this will threaten Guildford, or undermine what is happening in Aldershot. As a point of information, because of the level of retail proposed here together with the amount of retail approved in nearby towns in the last 5yrs, the application will have to be referred to the Secretary of State under the Shopping Directive. The purpose of this is to look at the relationship between different retail centres. Officers are confident that this will not be an issue the Secretary of State is going to worry about when she sees the information.

21. Can we have a definitive statement regarding the number of car parking spaces available after the development is completed?

- (IE) Currently there are 215 public spaces at Dogflud Way and 224 at South Street car park (total 439). In addition there are 75 temporary spaces available on the old cinema/Iceland site, but these are not 'public' in that they are not controlled by the off-street parking regulations.

The Planning Brief has a requirement for the provision of 400 spaces. The proposed development has 426 spaces, comprising residents' parking of 240 spaces, 3 car club spaces, and 183 public spaces in replacement for those at Dogflud Way. There will be a number of spaces lost in the South Street car park to allow for widening the Brightwells Road. Overall there will be a reduction of 39 public spaces, plus the 75 spaces on the old cinema/Iceland site. However, there will be 198 new spaces at the Riverside site, and more spaces are available if you extend the sphere of influence.

22. Given the level of disruption to existing businesses during the construction phase, what arrangements will be made for consultation with the Chamber of Commerce before the start, to understand and deal with the problems of retailers?

(CN1) As developers we want to have a viable and vibrant scheme at the end, and it is not our objective to create mayhem and put half the town out of business. We comply with the Considerate Contractor protocols, and we would have a liaison office on site which would be open to all to come in and express their concerns, and we would seek wherever we can to ameliorate those concerns and accommodate peoples' problems. There are ongoing discussions with the Environment Agency about the best way to get construction traffic out onto the A31. We will do whatever we can to minimise the disruption in the town and we'll strive to reduce any impact on existing traders.

CN are currently developing a mixed-use scheme in Camberley with some similar components to [East St] and we have a regular consultation with the traders in the town and with the Chamber of Commerce. This has proved to be quite successful at mitigating problems as they have arisen, and it is something that we will do in [East St], and in all our projects of this nature.

23 What arrangements will there be for managing the CCTV facility, and interfacing with the police?

(JR) The Surrey Police s106 application suggests 5 cables from East Street into Guildford Police Station to accommodate vision from 20 cameras, to support the management. We would like to see very good communications with the management structure, both within 9-5 hours and particularly outside those hours when we may have problems in the traditional 11pm to 1pm slot, so that we can look at the problems as they arise and nip them in the bud, and deploy resources where they should be used. If, however, we don't have the communication with the management staff it will make life very difficult because they will have to use the normal telephone system. At this stage we are not sure what CN are proposing for out-of-hours service.

(CN1) We are refining our management strategy for the project and are budgeting for 24hr security surveillance management. We so on other schemes – Bristol Harbourside, Hemel Hempstead – in order to maintain the quality of the environment, quality of life for the residents and visitors and for the people trading there. We think it's important to have a very high level of comfort in terms of people they can turn to, good communications, knowing those people; and our site managers are tasked with getting to know all the people on site who might have any interface with any areas where there might be conflict or problems, and this management regime will be set in place at the Farnham scheme.

24. What is the height of the highest building in the East Street development compared to the height of the Woolmead Centre?

(CT) A lot of adjacent buildings have significant height, but only 3 storeys, e.g. in South Street and Woolmead. At its highest the Woolmead is 17m; the tallest building in the East Street proposals will be D8, which will be 16.9m to the ridge, and 13.3m to the parapet. Important to note that the Woolmead has a flat roof, so has a single mass and fall; East Street will have pitched roofs providing variety in the scale and height, and therefore there is a significant difference.

25. Is it essential for the scheme that the Redgrave Theatre be demolished? Is there any modification which would allow it to remain? If the Redgrave remains does the entire scheme fail?
- (JA) It will be up to the Committee to decide the importance of the Redgrave. One of the considerations is the arguments heard in support of the theatre and the Committee will have to decide what weight to give this against other factors.

Key to Responders

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