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27 February 2013

Dear Debbie Kirk

**Planning application reference: 11/00143/FUL**

**Site: Cofferridge Close, Stony Stratford**

**Proposal: Partial demolition of existing buildings at Cofferridge Close and replacement with A1 food retail store together with the reconfiguration of the car parking and external area and the construction of a new garage block.**

**Our ref: 13 02 15**

The Twentieth Century Society on the above application. The Society **strongly objects** to this application which causes substantial harm to the Stony Stratford Conservation Area and the setting of 7-23 Silver Street, Grade II listed buildings. We consider Cofferridge Close to be an important non-designated heritage asset.

Cofferridge Court was constructed between 1970 and 1976 by Milton Keynes Development Corporation as a mixed-use scheme linking the High Street with Silver Street behind. It was designed to blend into the existing townscape of Stony Stratford whilst referencing and incorporating design typifying the New Town architecture of Milton Keynes. The strong horizontal emphasis and colonnading exemplify this approach.

We consider the entire Cofferridge Close scheme to be of national significance. The shopping and office buildings are an integral part of the original scheme which includes the terrace of town houses and flats 7-23 Silver Street and the entrance archway into the Close, which were listed at Grade II by English Heritage in May 2012. The entire scheme was assessed for listing at the time, and the section which is now subject to this damaging application was only not designated due to recent alterations, the majority of which involve the High Street elevation. The listing record for 7-23 Silver Street specifically mentions the unity of the scheme in the reasons for designation:

“Historic interest: an integral part of Cofferridge Close, a commercial and residential development, set within a carefully-designed landscape that reflected the historic use of the site. It was the first phase of development by the well-known Milton Keynes Development Corporation, establishing it in the existing historic market town of Stony Stratford.”

English Heritage did comment that an extremely high level of intactness was required for the listing of buildings of this type otherwise the scheme would have been listed in its entirety. They comment:

‘Cofferridge Close does not therefore meet the exacting criteria of intactness that is required to merit statutory listing but is recognised for its strong local interest as an important development in post-war town-planning that integrated the new town of Milton Keynes with the existing market town of Stony Stratford.’

Currently, although altered, these alterations are minor in nature and the scheme as a whole remains legible. This application proposes the loss of considerable portion of Cofferridge Court. The loss of such a large proportion of the original scheme, and the addition of such an out of scale addition, will destroy all the remaining legibility. The design of the new building fails to adequately reference the architecture of the scheme and is of a completely overwhelming scale.

7-23 Silver Street is only the second building of modern Milton Keynes to be added to the statutory list, a fact that reinforces the importance of the scheme as a whole. Critical to the setting of this listed building, therefore, is the remainder of the originally executed scheme: its massing, design and the impact of the landscaping surrounding it. All these will be severely compromised by the proposed development, destroying the architectural context. The attention given to the landscape design is commented on by English Heritage in their designation report on Silver Street:

“Although the landscape at Cofferridge Close is not being specifically considered for designation... post-war landscapes are particularly vulnerable and sensitive to change and Cofferridge Close is no exception.”

The particular layout of this design, and the retention of a portion of the old orchard that previously filled the site, is an integral part of the design of the entire Cofferridge Court scheme, both the commercial and listed residential elements. The expansion of the car parking will destroy this carefully constructed space.

The Milton Keynes Core strategy states:

*Policy CS20: New developments should protect and enhance the character, diversity and cultural significance of the Borough’s historic assets, including important elements of the 20th Century New Town architecture.*

The proposed development fails to meet these policy requirements because the design fails to respect the setting, integrity and character of the adjacent Silver Street heritage asset, and fails to protect an important 20<sup>th</sup> Century New Town architectural contributor.

In summary, the Society believes that the applicant has completely misunderstood the architectural importance of Cofferridge Court and the impact that this development will have on a non-designated heritage asset and the setting of adjacent designated Heritage Assets. The proposed works that will

cause more than substantial harm to the historic environment of Stony Stratford. The Society would therefore urge Milton Keynes Council to refuse this damaging application.

I hope these comments are useful to you in your deliberations regarding this case, I would be extremely grateful if the Society could be informed of the Council's decision.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clare Price". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the left and then curves back under the name.

Clare Price

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**Remit:** The Twentieth Century Society was founded in 1979 and is the national amenity society concerned with the protection, appreciation, and study of post-1914 architecture, townscape and design. The Society is acknowledged in national planning guidance as the key organisation concerned with the modern period and is a constituent member of the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies. Under the procedures set out in *ODPM Circular 09/2005*, all English local planning authorities must inform the Twentieth Century Society when an application for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition is received, and they must notify us of the decisions taken on these applications.