
From: PEATS, Richard
Sent: 06/07/2012 17:36:20
To: 'Kim Morris'
CC: Peart, Simon; PEATS, Richard
Subject: RE: 17073. Coffridge Close, Stony Stratford.

Dear Kim

As promised attached are my thoughts on the proposals for Coffridge Close. The listing report is clear that, while not considered listable, Coffridge Close was a high quality building in its original form and that the decision not to list was mainly due to the extent of alteration. Despite the level of alteration the listing inspector was clear that the building is of local significance and should be considered to be an undesignated heritage asset.

Much of the significance of the site derives from the interplay between the building itself and the careful landscaping of the site which sympathetically incorporated the remains of an existing orchard. This has been compromised by later alterations, particularly the partial loss of the landscaped mound that originally stood to the south-east of the main rear arm of the building, but the area remains attractive and distinctive. Architecturally the most distinctive elements of the existing design is the High Street elevation and the long south-eastern elevation with its strong rhythm of repeated bays which is aligned on the vehicular opening in the listed 7-23 Silver Street and emphasised by the colonnade over the retail element of the development.

The proposed redevelopment would undoubtedly substantially harm the significance of Coffridge Close. At present there is a delicate and happy balance between landscape, car parking and building footprint. The replacement of much of the rear of the building with a much larger structure and the retention of the same number of car parking spaces inevitably increases the intensity of use on the site and upsets this balance, resulting in a much more intensive arrangement of car parking. While some trees are being retained and new ones replanted the proposals are basically for a fairly standard open car park with, as is also fairly standard these days, small trees planted between rows of cars.

The impact of this increase in intensity of development on the setting of the recently listed 7-23 Silver Street will also be unfortunate. Here the current landscaping consists of a few parking spaces among mature trees, a grassed area leading to the remains of the orchard and the end wall of the main building. It is quiet and despite the proximity of a car park there is a sense of intimacy and privacy around the rear of the listed houses. The proposals would replace this with a much more open area of car parking, the sense of intimacy would be lost and the setting of the listed buildings seriously compromised.

A key architectural quality of the existing retail/office building, the striking south-east elevation, which is particularly effective when viewed from the High Street entrance, would be severely truncated and the architectural effect largely lost. The proposal to step the new food store back runs completely contrary to the architectural grain of the surviving elements of the 1970s building and will always appear unsatisfactory. The relationship of this elevation and the listed houses is also important, as the portal to Silver Street is aligned directly on the elevation. The proposed new food store would therefore rob the listed buildings of much of their architectural context, much to the detriment of their setting.

Finally the permeability of the site would suffer. The T-shaped ground plan allows for easy and direct movement across the site. While the drawing back of the south end of the proposed building would preserve some sort of linkage across the site it would not be much more circuitous.

The key question is whether this harm amounts to substantial harm to the conservation area as a whole. There is no doubt that Coffridge Close makes a positive contribution to the conservation area, it is of high quality architecturally and of historical importance in that it tells the story of how the historic market town of Stony Stratford was incorporated into the new town of Milton Keynes. This is an important part of the story of Milton

Keynes as a whole and Coffridge Close is probably the most successfully example of a number of similar developments. Current guidance is that the demolition of a building making a positive contribution to a conservation area can be viewed as being either substantial or less than substantial harm depending on the circumstances. Given the historical aspect of Coffridge Close's significance I would be included to consider that the harm is substantial.

If it were possible to retain a substantial part the south-east elevation and the colonnade in its entirety, and to offer reconstruction of the damaged front elevation and the removal of the later glazed canopy and other damaging alterations as mitigation I think that enough of the original concept would survive for the harm to be considered less than substantial. However, this would still involve the loss of a large part of building that is of clear local significance and therefore still amount to harm which would have to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The Vitality and Viability report for the town centre submitted as an appendix to the Retail Statement concluded that it is a viable and vital centre. This raises the question as to whether there are real public benefits in providing a larger food store in the town.

Regards,

Richard

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From: Kim Morris [mailto:kim.morris@bartonwillmore.co.uk]
Sent: 05 July 2012 10:08
To: Peart, Simon; PEATS, Richard
Cc: 'Kirk, Debbie'; 'Ben.Senior@echarris.com'; Nick Collins; 'Simon Roper-Pressdee'
Subject: 17073. Coffridge Close, Stony Stratford.
Importance: High

Dear Simon and Richard

Further to our meeting on 25th June, I set out below our notes of that meeting in relation to the discussions that took place explaining the rationale behind the current planning application proposals which are before the Council.

We include as attachments:

The evaluation section of the Design and Access Statement;
Marked up plan of the scheme illustrating the points set out below;

In addition to the above information and marked up plan we have also attached an aerial view of the proposal that helps to visualise some of the design elements outlined above. We also attach three 3D perspective views that were prepared after the planning application was submitted and therefore have NOT been issued to the LPA at this stage. We feel that it is beneficial for these to be provided as they further illustrate the level of detail and quality provided within the scheme and confirm that rather than being a standard food store 'box', the proposals are a carefully considered design solution which respects its context.

We also attach, the consultation responses from MKCC Conservation officer and landscape officer in relation to the proposals which are currently before the Council. These indicate broad support for the proposals subject to some changes of detail which have, which were addressed through revised drawings which were submitted to the Council April 2011.

The consultation responses indicate that following a significant amount of work and consultation over 2 years, a scheme was arrived at which had the support of both officers, and raised 'no objections' from the Council's Conservation Officer in particular, who makes the following comment:

"The proposed plan, elevations, massing, bulk, scale and some of the materials respect the historic surroundings.."

In relation to the meeting which took place on 25th June 2012, the key focus was to discuss the scheme which is currently before the

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Council and to familiarise you both in relation to the rationale behind the design decisions that have been made. The points set out below can be cross referenced against the annotations on the drawing attached in pdf 'EH notes001.pdf':

Key factors affecting the parameters/floor plan and location of the building:

- A- Design and location of wall line to food store layout defined and constrained by the adjacent location of the TPO trees and root protection area.**
- B- Design and location of wall line to food store layout defined and constrained by boundary edge and requirement for minimised service/delivery area and turning circle access.**
- C- Design and location of wall line to food store layout defined by ongoing requirement for retention of parking and deliveries to High Street retail units.**
- D- Design and location of main elevation wall line to food store layout defined by requirement for three lanes of parking and two road lanes to provide required parking provision for council car park without the requirement for additional parking to be located around the retained orchard and service yard areas.**

General points:

- 1- It may be possible to retain both the existing parking spaces and adjacent trees in this location if the size and access into these restricted spaces is acceptable to the LA.**
- 2- It may be possible for a future phase of works to include the reinstatement of the missing front elements of the colonnade but will be subject to a separate discussion and planning application.**
- 3- Concern over increased area of parking adjacent to new listed residential units visually reduced by the creation of three lines of trees (both new and existing) which break up the lines of parking and reduce impact of food store elevation opposite the retained orchard.**
- 4- Area of parking to be retained (as existing).**
- 5- Area of parking adjacent to the retained orchard to be paved to become a pedestrian priority area. By locating the Blue badge holder spaces in this location the area will become a slower speed location and limit its possible impact to the surrounding areas.**
- 6- Proposed service yard area is a bespoke design and NOT a standard food store design. The proposed operator has had to compromise on this area given the requirement to restrict the size and operation of this service yard. Only half of the required turning circle will be located within the service yard area to restrict its size and also to allow a larger area of adjacent paved pathway around the perimeter of the site. At present there is no separation between service vehicles and pedestrian routes in this area which will be provided within our proposals.**
- 7- Existing primary routes across the site (as defined within the original design and building) are retained to allow efficient circulation across the site and links to the retained entrance points in line with the original Cofferridge Close concept design.**
- 8- The flank wall to the existing office building (to be removed as part of the proposals) has been used as a design element within the proposed food store with entrance 'projection' aligning with this previous office wall line and overall office depth.**
- 9- Given the requirement to step the new frontage back from the existing colonnade line (due to parking requirements from the LA) it may be possible to create a new area of 'transition' between these two elements with inclusion of local art etc to make this a deliberate step in the frontage design.**
- 10- It could be possible to move the current food store front canopy support columns forward so that they align with the front face of the retained retail units towards the high Street. This will provide a further visual connection between the new and retained elements of built form.**
- 11- The proposed entrance lobby is a bespoke design and has been the subject of extensive negotiation with the food store operator as they have a requirement for a much larger lobby size. The size has been reduced to allow the maximum pedestrian widths across the frontage of the food store and to minimise its appearance set against the new canopy design.**
- 12- Indication of the extent of the existing colonnade which terminates at the existing route through to the NW of the site and defines the retail area of the original building only.**
- 13- Indication of the extent of the existing elevation which is not covered by the colonnade. This serves to indicate the change of use from retail frontage to office use. This principal of a change in elevational treatment linked to the use etc is used when moving from the original building elevation to the proposed food store elevations as a way of defining the new and retained elements of the building.**
- 14- The retained trees within the orchard and enhanced with further new tree planting to create a linear arrangement across the elevation in this location. The trees also wrap either side of the projecting element of the new service yard area and help to minimise its visual appearance when viewed from the adjacent Silver street residential units.**

- 15- The projecting shape and selection of timber material for the proposed service yard enclosure has been carefully considered to sit between the existing and proposed tree planting in this location and also offer the least visual 'cross section' when viewed from the Silver Street residential units and approach to the site.**
- 16- A % for art will be a requirement of any S106 agreement. The retained area of orchard could potentially be the location of this contribution illustrating the history of the site and surrounding areas (subject to agreement).**
- 17- Existing trees retained.**
- 18- It is intended (subject to negotiation and agreement) that the existing dentist surgery on the site could be relocated in a unit on the retained High Street element of the existing building (TBC).**
- 19- The proposed food store SW projection (ATM locations etc) is designed to align with the width and frontage position of the original office element of the original building (to be demolished) acting as a visual 'stop end' to the new canopy frontage which is contained at the opposite end by the retained section of the original building.**

Further information relating to Heritage is also contained within the planning application documentation. This includes:

Heritage Assessment, Jan 2011 prepared by CgMs
 Impact Assessment, Jan 2011, prepared by CgMs
 Heritage Appraisal, 12/2010, prepared by Barton Willmore.

We trust that the above notes and attachments are of assistance in further explaining the rationale and history behind the existing proposals. If you would like any further information, or would like to discuss any of the above and attached in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

As agreed on site on 25th June 2012 we look forward to receiving your initial response on the principals of the planning application in light of the English Heritage report on Friday 6th July 2012. We are also available to meet with you to discuss your comments w/c 9th July 2012. Please let me know a time and date that suits you and I will arrange the meeting accordingly.

Regards

Kim Morris
 Director

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