

PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY BOURNEMOUTH PLANNING DEPARTMENT DURING JUNE 2011. A DIGEST FROM JOHN SOANE, BUILT ENVIRONMENT CONSULTANT TO BOURNEMOUTH CIVIC SOCIETY

Land adjacent to the Pavilion Theatre – between Bath and Westover Roads Ref. No. 7-2011-10308-G

This is a very large and significant project made up of a building on six levels – comprising basement car parking (three levels), several cinemas, restaurants, retail facilities and leisure uses. There will also be extensive, landscaped garden and roofed areas, a vehicular entrance and exit from Bath Road and through pedestrian access between Westover Road, Bath Road and the Pier Approach.

The Bournemouth Civic Society is of the opinion that this extremely important site, positioned right in the heart of the main entertainment and leisure sector of the tourist industry in central Bournemouth is deserving of an extensive and multipurpose building of high quality which could substantially enhance the visitor facilities of the resort.

In addition, we think that an integrated development of the entire site – as is proposed by the current application – would substantially revive a neglected and somewhat degraded central open space which at present consists of the isolated, easternmost section of the Lower Pleasure Gardens and a large, uninteresting surface car park. (Lower Bath Road West). In addition, extensive re-development on this site would enable the much altered and degraded east facade of the Pavilion to be fully restored. Finally we also feel that – quite apart from enhancing the continuing theatre function of the adjacent Pavilion, the achievement of the full potential of this vacant land would greatly revive retail activity in the eastern section of Westover Road and probably also attract a good developer for a final and ultimate rebuilding of the Imax site opposite.

The basic shape of the proposed structure consists of a series of parallel, concave, convex and circular shapes up to three stories in height and gradually narrowing into an illusionary curving swirl at the southern end of the building. There would be a sinuous, second story structure that would be mainly positioned towards the eastern edge of the Pavilion facade and forecourt. The roof of this structure would contain a roof garden and there would also be extensive soft and hard landscaping – including an amphitheatre for open air performances - between the main structure and Bath and Westover Roads. It is proposed that the cinemas would be contained in the northern half of the building with the entertainment, hospitality and leisure facilities accommodated in the southern section.

The Society note the extremely bold design and architectural style in which this project would be constructed. However after considerable thought we have concluded that what is proposed is feasible a) because of the impact of the universally reconciling, natural curved shapes of the main structure and b) because of the existing, eclectic character of large adjacent buildings (Palace Court Hotel 1930's Style Moderne; the Pavilion 1930's Art Deco/Classical Revival; the Imax late 20th century Neo-Modern). In addition we applaud the well thought balance between the relatively

moderate overall height and the ratio of built up to open space on the site. Especially in this regard, the Society likes the decision to create the extensive roof top garden in the vicinity of the Pavilion forecourt – so preserving as much as possible, the existing open character of the latter.

At the same time we think that for aesthetic reasons, the height of the elegant elliptical structure that would connect the proposed new building to the Pavilion, should be raised to correspond to the level of the entablature of the east facade of the Pavilion.

In addition – while the Society is very appreciative of the developer to preserve the “green” balance on both sides of the Pavilion forecourt by keeping a thick area of trees and shrubs on the north east corner of the site along Westover Road - we also think that other measures are needed to preserve the original symmetry of the forecourt. Firstly that the well designed, one story principal entrance to the cinema and entertainment complex from the Pavilion forecourt should follow the exact line between the original landscaping and the railings which still exists on the other side of the forecourt. Secondly that the yawning gap between the proposed new building and the Pavilion should be closed by a balustrade which replicates the existing one on the other side of the Pavilion. For it seems to us somewhat incongruous that the developers are prepared to go to considerable lengths to balance the natural landscape either side of the forecourt but not to make a similar effort to ensure that their built achievements as far as possible follow the same course. Besides which, when eventually the Pavilion forecourt and principal entrance facade are improved(finance permitting) the absence of the south eastern balustrade would make it impossible to restore the original balanced design of this important area of the site.

Under these circumstances the Society, having carefully considered this application has concluded that since it does not fully comply with all the Conservation Area Policies of the Bournemouth Local Plan it should be deferred for further consideration. (4.4 i, ii and iii)

8-10 Maderia Road

Ref. No. 7-2011-14107 – U

This is an application to build a large, five story block of 63 flats on the corner of Maderia and Trinity Roads.

The Society note that the proposed development would consist of a massive rectangular structure; the principal elevations of which would be made up of a relatively inelegant melange of white walling - interspersed and sometimes connected to narrow architectural filets – with the spaces in between filled with wall to wall metal framed windows of un- exceptional design. We further observe that the principal floor exhibit conventional, transparent balconies, rather banal timber boarding on the upper two floors and a continuous glass facade at penthouse level which is topped by a prominent overhang and flat roof.

It is the opinion of the Society that the proposed built foot print of this application would be far too densely developed in relation to the adjacent townscape. While it is certainly true that modern

administrative buildings and the new Bournemouth Police Station of similar height have recently been constructed opposite on the other side of Maderia Road, until now the side of Maderia Road where the development site is located has been characterized by relatively low rise structures in mainly traditional styles. We think that if this if this new block of flats is allowed, it would have an excessively overwhelming impact on the existing residential area and in particular on the group of houses that has been quite recently built on the opposite corner of Maderia and Trinity Roads.

There the Society has concluded that because this application does not fulfil the townscape conditions of the Bournemouth Local Plan, it should be rejected (4.19 i, ii and iii)

6-8 Durley Chine Road

Ref. No. 7-2011-9612-U

This is an application for a design amendment for the elevations of the two proposed flat blocks for which general planning permission has already been granted. As the Society has already made clear in a previous Digest, we are perfectly happy with the general design and architectural details of the original application. (two buildings in the form of Edwardian, Arts and Crafts, mansion blocks) The proposed extra full length bay windows and elegant front balconies do not create a substantial alteration to the original designs but actually enhance them. If these design amendments are incorporated in the completed design, the new properties should synthesize quite well with the surrounding older villas and hotels.

Consequently we feel able to recommend acceptance of these amended designs.

Royal Oak Public House, Wimbourne Road, Kinson

Ref. No. 7-2011-49415-Q

This is an application to build a large food store (supermarket) and five shop units in the general vicinity of the Royal Oak and on the site of a terrace of retail units that were built in the 1960's.

The Society sees this initiative as a major development to build an extensive supermarket (Tesco) on - with the exception of the Royal Oak – what is probably one of the ugliest and worst designed retail areas of Kinson. We realise that such buildings may not necessarily be considered great works of art but in this case it would be a distinct improvement over what is there at the moment.

The new structure would consist mainly of a large, square to rectangular, trading hall – quite low rise with an elegant concave roof; there would be a large car park to the north . The west and east elevations would consist of part lower wall with the upper third continuous windows. The north and south elevations would be mainly glass with very narrow divisions which on the principal facade would be set back by a distinctive colonnade. The Society think this is a very competently designed and elegant structure well adapted for functional use.

Between the trading hall and Wimbourne Road is a courtyard that would be fronted by five new shop units and one restored Victorian shop. We think that the way these units compliment the Victorian shop and at the same time shield the modern courtyard facade of the supermarket from the more conventional retail townscape of Kinson is admirable. However the Society feels that there is no overriding design reason why the smaller display windows in the shop units should be positioned in such a way as to be off centre below the three gables – nor that the two longer windows should end flush on at the respective corners of the two separate retail buildings. We think with a bit more care, a better balance between window and wall would enhance the appearance of the shops and set off the Victorian structure to greater advantage.

The Society has therefore come to the conclusion that although purely on technical/aesthetic grounds we feel that the present application does not quite fulfil the townscape conditions of the Bournemouth Local Plan and should therefore be deferred for further consideration (4.19 i, ii and iii); we have not seen for a long time such a generally competent application that at one stroke is likely to turn a very decrepit part of Bournemouth into a very desirable place to shop.