

Comments for Planning Application 19/00601/OUT

Application Summary

Application Number: 19/00601/OUT

Address: Land East Of Station Road Winchester Hampshire

Proposal: (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH ACCESS) Mixed Use development involving the erection of buildings up to 5 storeys from street level, a lower ground floor level and basement to provide up to 17,972 sqm of office (use classes B1), up to 1,896 sqm of mixed uses including potential retail, restaurant/cafe, bar and leisure uses (use class A1, A3, A4 and D2) and retention and refurbishment of the old registry office, associated car parking in basement (up to 135 spaces) and minimum of 156 cycle parking spaces and associated works.

Case Officer: Robert Green

Customer Details

Name: Mr Keith Leaman

Address: The City of Winchester Trust The Heritage Centre, 32 Upper Brook Street Winchester

Comment Details

Commenter Type: City of Winchester Trust

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: This is an outline proposal, which means that illustrations cannot be taken as indicative of what will actually be built on the site. The parameter drawings attached to the application are however definitive and do indicate the maximum amount of development that would be allowed on the site in terms of total floor area, car parking and building heights. There is also no guarantee that the actual developers will use the same architects as those that have produced the plans thus far.

The Trust welcomes the fact that the Old Registry Office building is to be preserved. It is also pleased to see that the need for active frontages is recognised (other than along Gladstone Street) along with the needs of pedestrians. It acknowledges that this scheme is an improvement over that which was previously proposed and that interesting architectural features are included. However, the fact remains that too much is being demanded of the site leaving the architects with the impossible task of trying to meet these demands while also producing buildings which will fit the context.

The Trust objections, itemised below, stem from this over-arching problem. We have seen no financial justification for the considerable increase in the number of square metres of office space planned over that which is set out in previous WCC development/ design briefs, some of which covered both this site and the Cattle Market site.

Problems have been identified with the follow aspects of the scheme proposed:

1. number of car parking spaces
2. scale of the buildings (height and mass) and their impact on the area
3. appropriateness/overall impression as an important gateway to Winchester
4. plans for pedestrian routes, cycle provision and public realm (including removal of trees)
5. management of traffic flow in the station forecourt and surrounding streets
6. Process

1. Given the exceptionally sustainable location next to the railway station with its parking as well as the proximity of the Tower Street and Cattle Market car parks, the Trust believes this is a great opportunity to provide minimal car parking rather than the small reduction proposed over the current capacity. A significant reduction would also help in addressing the traffic management problems around the station (see 5).

2. Our objection is not simply to the height of the buildings but to the footprint over which this height is to be permitted, especially on the frontage to Gladstone Street. The stepping down of the roofline toward Sussex Street is welcomed. As proposed the buildings would dwarf the station building, as well as the old Registry Office; even the Hampshire Records Office would look relatively small in comparison.

3. As the application acknowledges the Station is an important gateway to Winchester and development here needs to reflect the very special and historic nature of the City. As proposed the development is contrary to adopted policies such as the Local Plan Part 2 with its desire "to protect and enhance the special character of Winchester". WIN 6 in particular requires that any development respects the scale of the existing and adjacent residential properties as well as provides a fitting entrance to the town centre by enhancing and extending the public realm. It should also be noted that this site borders on the Conservation area and is visible from a variety of locations. We therefore do not agree that, as stated in the Visual Impact Assessment 'The proposed development will have a low magnitude of impact on the overall character of TCA3, resulting in a potentially minor/moderate beneficial effect as the proposal will enhance the southwestern gateway to the character area.' Or that 'Overall the magnitude of impact on the character of TCA4 is considered to be negligible and result in a negligible/neutral effect. '

4. The proposed pedestrian route via a passageway between 5 storey buildings to Sussex Street, across to Tower Road and Tower Street with the multi-storey car park alongside, would give the visitor a very poor introduction to Winchester, unless this can be alleviated in some way to overcome the 'canyon effect'. The loss of the trees is regrettable, however we consider that a reasonable compensation would be to specify trees of at least a similar or even greater number elsewhere in Winchester.

5. The Trust is not convinced that space for taxis, drop offs/pick ups, service and delivery vehicles and bus services has been adequately taken into account in the plans.

6. Since Winchester City Council has the double role of developer and planning regulator for this site, it is imperative in our view that past practice should be adhered to and that a major development such as this should receive independent Design Review. This is recommended in the National Policy Planning Framework where it says that the outcome will be a material consideration. Bodies such as CABI or the SE Regional Design Review Panel have been used in the past. It would be far more cost-effective to have the review done at this outline stage of the planning than to wait until a final planning proposal is submitted.

The Trust therefore OBJECTS to this application.