

City Development

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APPENDIX 1
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Paul Goffin
Director of Estates
University of Oxford
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4th March 2013

Dear Paul Goffin

**Subject: Student Accommodation at Castle Mill, Roger Dudman Way:
11/02881/FUL**

I am writing further to our meeting on 8th February 2013.

As you are aware I presented a report to the City Council's West Area Planning Committee on 7th February to review the current position of the planning permission for this student accommodation. This report had been called for by the Leader of the Council, following a petition to Council on 17th December 2012.

My report to the Committee confirmed that the correct planning procedures had been adopted by the City Council in reaching its decision to grant planning permission and that the Committee came to its decision in a rational fashion bearing in mind all the material circumstances. It also confirmed that there is no evidence that the development is being constructed other than in compliance with the planning permission, or that any other breach of planning control has taken place.

Nevertheless the Committee heard from a number of speakers who made the following points:

- The consultation process was not good enough; the process needs to be improved.
- Planting more trees is not effective mitigation for the height of the building, it will not bring back the skyline only removing the top two storeys of the development will save the skyline.
- Planting the wrong type of trees will damage wetlands. Council should suspend the planting scheme.
- The development is an act of vandalism, it has ruined tourism and the views of the city from Port Meadow
- We need to halt development to preserve Port Meadow for future generations.
- Although revoking permission could be very expensive, the chance of the



developer ordering costs is zero due to the embarrassment of the development

Having considered my report and heard from a number of speakers, the Committee decided to instruct me to negotiate with the University of Oxford in order to ameliorate the size and impact of the development given planning permission under 11/02881/FUL.

At our meeting on Friday 8th February we explored a number of potential approaches that the University might take, starting with a full and costed appraisal of a range of building modifications and mitigation options.

Our conversation evolved into the importance of a higher level discussion between our two organisations and the scope for further partnership building and the consequential consideration of organisational reputations.

I emphasised that I had to report back to the Committee on our discussions and on the wider work that might be undertaken as a result of their decisions by April at the latest.

The purpose of this letter is to seek a written response that I use to report back to the West Area Planning Committee on 17th April. I trust you or an appropriate representative from the University will be able to attend this meeting. If it would be helpful for us to meet again I would be happy to do so, and both David Edwards, the Executive Director for City Development, and Councillor Bob Price, the Leader of the Council would be willing to take part in any further discussions that we undertake.

Yours sincerely

M Crofton Briggs
Head of City Development

