

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Templars Square Cowley – Comments**

#### **Commenters:**

##### Support

- 34 Bailey Road, Oxford
- 203 Campbell Road, Oxford

##### Neither object nor support:

- 11 The Grates, Oxford
- 200 Headington Road, Oxford
- John Bunyan Baptist Church, Oxford

##### Object

- 53 Bulan Road
- 139 Church Cowley Road, Oxford
- 42 Church Cowley Road, Oxford
- 18 Church Hill Road, Oxford
- 16 Beauchamp Lane, Oxford
- 41 Beauchamp Place, Oxford
- 11 Hampden Road, Oxford
- 35 Florence Park Road, Oxford
- 5 Rymers Lane, Oxford
- Barnes Place
- 44 Beauchamp Place
- 44 Church Cowley Road
- 52 Church Cowley Road
- 11 Hockmore Street
- 13 Hockmore Street
- 9 Hockmore Street
- 10 Lewin Close
- 3 Lewin Close
- 3 Willow Way
- Ark T Centre
- 42 Beauchamp Place
- 13 Church Hill Road
- 22 Cornwallis Road
- 38 Crowell Road
- Oxford Preservation Trust
- 16 Pound House, Pound Way
- 4 Rymers Lane
- 39 The Grates
- 9 Wykeham Crescent
- 5 Coleridge Close
- 1A Beauchamp Lane

Overall there is a general support for the regeneration of the shopping centre however main concerns are:

- Dislike for the height and massing of the development
- Increase in traffic and congestion
- Detrimental impact on the conservation area

### **Comments:**

### **Transport:**

#### **Adverse Car Impact**

- Increase in car traffic
  - o Safety risk to pedestrians and cyclists
- Witney-Oxford-Cowley Rail Line
  - o Restoration of this line is critical to achieving traffic reductions in this area
- A Virtual Shopping Street of local businesses would reduce car traffic
- Figures supplied do not reflect the problems at peak times with long traffic queues in either direction

#### **Parking**

- Car parking charges should not be high as if they are it will force visitors to park on surrounding residential roads.
- Not enough parking for flats
  - o Shortfall of 48 parking spaces for residents in block of flats
- More car parking will be needed for shoppers if this development is successful
- New flats should be declared car free
- A CPZ will be necessary to prevent inappropriate on-street parking by those using the improved centre. It will also encourage the use of public transport
- Car parks will need to be open 24/7
- Potential abuse of Beauchamp Place private car park
- Popular car park is being demolished
- Reducing parking to Church and Ark T centre which is needed
  - o Ask for possible car parking specifically for the Church and Ark T centre below new flats
  - o Consideration is needed for those attending weddings and funerals
- An accessible park and ride site is needed nearby
- Little place for even current residents to park due to the narrow roads and closeness of the houses let alone the visitors to the flats and tradespeople

#### **Cycle Super Route**

- Question as to whether the development will include the creation of the Cycle Super Route on Between Towns Road as Cowley Centre is currently difficult to access by cycle.
- Should be achieved through a Section 278
- Advanced Stop Lines needed

#### **Cycling and Pedestrians**

- Cycling and pedestrian routes are currently inadequate in this area and a more detailed submission as to a range of measures to tackle this is needed.
- Looks as if no cycle parking is included

- Cowley cyclists prefer pavements so the narrowing of the roads to provide cycle paths would cause even more problems.

#### Suggested Road improvements

- Suggestion to make the mini roundabout two lanes and for turning on to Barnes Road and right to carry on over – in order to improve car traffic
- Hatched Box junction at Beauchamp Lane – Between Towns Road – Church Cowley Road – Rymers Lane to deter traffic from seeking to use this junction in rush hours
- Hatched box at junction Between Towns Road, Crowell Road and John Allen Way.
- Diagonal pedestrian route to be marked from the Rymers Lane side of John Allen Way to the south side Between Towns Road.
- Advanced stop lines are needed on Oxford Road at the junction with Between Towns Road. This would particularly help cyclists going to Templars Square Shopping Centre and out to East Oxford Business Park. Also on Garsington Road at the junction with Hollow Way.
- New bus turning circle is welcomed
- No mention of CIL money to improve pedestrian crossing at Between Towns Road/Crowell Road and John Allen Centre
- The road junction at Between Towns Road/Crowell Road should be widened to make an extra lane for traffic from Littlemore to Turn Right.

#### Sustainable Transport

- Should have allocation of car club parking spaces
- Provision of electric charging points for vehicles

### **Housing:**

#### Flats:

- Providing more housing in Cowley is an important contribution to the local area
- Need for family housing not flats
- Not enough green space for flats, density is too high
- No play area for children in apartments
- No public community facilities for the residents of the proposed accommodation locally, they desperately need improving
- Increase in population will put pressure on existing public services and infrastructure

#### Affordable Housing

- It is important to provide affordable housing in Cowley.
  - o Especially true for 'regeneration' projects like this so locals are not priced out of the area.
  - o Developers should meet the affordable housing target and planning committee should hold the applicants to this target.

#### Social and Keyworker Housing:

- Would support the housing in the new development being entirely social and keyworker shared ownership housing

- No private development at all
- 50% social 50% keyworker housing recommendation
- Social housing should be provided not a hotel

### **Environment:**

- Must be sustainable with passivhaus standards for all buildings
- More renewable energy, adequate insulation and improved drainage capacity

### Noise/Pollution

- Pollution levels are already high, congestion will increase this
- Noise from building work may disrupt the music recording studio Ark T use

### Trees

- Large trees are needed not the small ones on plan
- Further landscaping should be provided including more trees
- Large mature tree beside entrance to the car park and the church on Beauchamp Lane is around 50 years old. They strongly oppose felling the tree and hope it is maintained as is beneficial to the view.

### **Hotel:**

- Do not support hotel on site
  - o Housing for keyworkers (shared ownership) and social housing are both needed more
- No mention of provision for cycle hire or for covered cycle parking for hotel visitors
- High risk venture given the uncertain economic conditions resulting from Brexit
- Unable to detect a pressing case for an additional hotel in this location, travel lodge, four pillars, and premier inn nearby
- No parking for Hotel
- The Hotel should be relocated to the 7 storey area at castle street car park

### **Overlooking/Loss of Light:**

- The flats will overlook the rear garden of 42 Church Cowley Road
- Overlooking into neighbouring houses causing a reduction of light
- Morning sun will be blocked by height of development
- Overlooking concern from balconies and windows looking straight into windows of 3 Beauchamp Lane
- New flats could obstruct light and outlook to John Bunyan Baptist Church
- Concern that proposed walkway will affect the light and privacy of Hockmore Street residents
- Concern the height of the building will obstruct the light coming in to the Ark T art project room and café area which are two important spaces for community work
- Potential overshadowing concern for 4 Rymers Lane

### **Public House:**

- No need for a new public house, it would produce antisocial noise and disturbance late at night

### **Height, Scale, and Visual Appearance:**

#### Height

- Object to the proposed height of the redevelopment of Templar Square
- Site D 48 meters high and 15 storeys
  - o This would dwarf nearby Hockmore Tower a prominent 7 storey high rise
  - o Elsewhere in Oxford and around the country high rise projects are being abandoned
- OPT are concerned with the height and mass of the development. It dismisses the impact it will have within the views of and from Oxford.
  - o Templar Square is within the 360 degree of hills which surround the city and make it special and they do not share the view that it is outside or will not impact Oxford.
  - o Hockley Tower is viewable from St Mary's Tower and therefore an assessment on the character and enjoyment of this and other public views needs to be considered.

#### Scale/Conservation Area

- Scale is at odds with the smaller scale of buildings within the conservation area
- Development dominates the skyline dwarfing and overshadowing the small listed thatched cottage and semi-detached houses opposite
- Out of scale and character
- Beauchamp Lane is a conservation area and this should be considered
- Substantial increase in building mass, detrimental impact on the appearance of area and public transport
- In the Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026 (adopted in 2013) Oxford Local Plan, B2.32 specifically states 'the design of development should consider the special character of Beauchamp Lane Conservation Area'. This hasn't been adequately considered.
- Out of proportion with area in terms of density and height
- Site D and F are overpowering as well as site A despite the fact it is staggered.

#### Appearance

##### Positive

- Plans look good, will update a very out dated looking site.
- Improving the public space on Between Towns Road is an important contribution to the local area

##### Negative

- Is 'hideous' and will be detrimental to the aesthetic of the area.
- It is bulky, modern and tall
- Huge contrast to thatched cottage

- Plan does not show the distance from new boundary wall facing the church
- The design is bulky and will dominate the area in a manner the car park currently doesn't
- The development would be over-bearing and disproportionate to its surroundings
- The tower block would seriously impair the local environment, particularly historic Beauchamp Lane
- the neighbourhood is being railroaded at the expense of character, community cohesion, quality of life, health and basic sustainability
- There is an opportunity to create something special for Cowley and this is not putting Cowley on the map.
- The design is 'old-fashioned, ugly and ripe to rapidly become Oxford's new painful eyesore'.
- Will destroy the character of Oxford, not improve it.
- The flats would detract from the 'lovely ambience' of the small historic area of old Church Cowley

Comments on re-consultation received do not in general raise any new issues. The following additional comments are:

#### Regeneration

- The owners want to spend 60 million pounds on our shopping centre, to vastly improve the mix of what we have to offer at Templars Square, it will massively improve the look of the area at street level, and provide a nicer experience to those visiting. We must embrace this opportunity to provide East Oxford with a shopping area to be proud of. It will of course provide more jobs for local residents, and bring more money to the area, that has been one of the most deprived in Oxford, and probably Oxfordshire.
- Overall, more can be done to reduce reliance on the car in the area. The current planning application should be amended to take this fully into account and to demonstrate how it is seeking to prioritize walking, cycling and public transport.
- The wider Vision is not clear within the submitted information.

**CYCLOX** We strongly object to the amended application, because of its deficiencies in cycling provision. Proposals fall short of standards for a cycle Super Route, proposals indicate merely advisory lanes, not mandatory. The heavily trafficked roundabout Barns Road-B4495 as currently conceived will be wholly unsuitable for less confident and less experienced bike users. Lack of protection that will be afforded westbound to bike users turning right into Barns Road. No priority given to active travel modes. Nowhere in either the original or the amended application, nor in the County Highways responses, is there any reference to the likely impact of e-bikes. The quantity and quality of public cycle parking spaces at strong desire-locations are underspecified for the probable demand.

**Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT)** does not oppose the redevelopment of Templars Square and its regeneration with a mixed use scheme. However, in recent years the

approach to existing high buildings such as the Krebs's Building in the Science Area has been to demolish them. With new building, such as the Blavatnik School, developers were asked to be discreet in the view. The City Council is departing from this approach, so that rather than demolishing Hockley Tower, which might have been the approach, a higher neighbour is now envisaged. The impact of adding tall buildings within Oxford should not be done lightly and we are concerned to see a development coming forward of this considerable mass and great height in a way which somewhat dismisses the impact it will have within the views of, and from, Oxford. Indeed, in parts of the documentation there is the suggestion that this is a site outside Oxford. Templars Square is within the 360 degree of hills which surround the City and make it special and we do not share the view that it is outside and/or will not impact on Oxford. It is, of course, also immediately adjacent to the Beauchamp Lane Conservation Area.

What is proposed is a building/s which will be an addition to the skyline and are higher than Hockley Tower [sic], adding to the overall height and mass. Adding any tall buildings within Oxford must be handled with very great care.

We refer to the documentation TVIA and the Wessex Archaeology Heritage Assessment. We are very familiar with the various views of Oxford and note that there are a number of renders provided of buildings in the view, near and far. Sadly they too often present a dull, grey scene with the current Hockley Tower and the new development fading into the background and even hidden behind trees.

We have not been able to find mention of the City Council's own Assessment of the Oxford View Cones 2015 Report, carried out in partnership with Oxford Preservation Trust and Historic England, and it is certainly not used as the methodology for assessing these views and their character and how development will change these views and the perception and enjoyment of them. This is disappointing as this provides the best and accepted method of assessing views and changes to them, how they are used, seen and enjoyed by Oxford residents, their dynamic nature as people walk through them, how they change at different times of day and in different seasons, so much more than assessing what can be seen from a single point, perhaps hidden behind trees. The Oxford Views Study may concentrate on the ten protected view cones in the Oxford Local Plan but it provides the best method for understanding all views and it has been much used by others wishing to develop at Oxford in recent years, encouraged by the City planners.

The Hockley Tower it is highly visible St. Mary's Tower, and the new development will be more so. There needs to be an assessment of the effect on the character and enjoyment of this and other public views. Whilst the Heritage Assessment highlights the Beauchamp Lane Conservation Area and listed buildings, we are disappointed to see that the main concentration is on the archaeology in the area, the depth of which work is not mirrored in the work done in assessing the conservation area and the impact of this size and height and mass of development right up to the boundary of the adjacent Conservation Area. What is provided is too cursory and dismissive and gives insufficient reasoning for the conclusions. We note that there is recent case law which gives great weight to the duty to preserve if there is any harm, however small. The Beauchamp Lane Conservation Area is a rare historic surviving example in which existing stone walls, buildings and a landscape of leafy lanes survive. It is a

good example of a 'village within a town' which is a key characteristic of Oxford as in nearby Iffley Village, Old Marston and Old Headington. In the Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026 (adopted in 2013) Oxford Local Plan, B2.32 specifically states 'the design of development should consider the special character of Beauchamp Lane Conservation Area'.

Further comments of second reconsultation were that OPT continues to support the regeneration of this area however the changes to the plans do not alter our objections made in our previous letter.

OPTs objections relate to Site D. A building of this height within Oxford will have a harmful effect in public views from the City and surrounding hills. It is too tall and massive sitting up against the Beauchamp Lane Conservation area. In Raleigh Park there has been considerable efforts made to open up the views, and over the winter local people have worked to clear back the vegetation, with more work planned.

**Oxford Civic Society** welcomes the regeneration of Templars' Square in principle. The combination of residential and retail accommodation in close proximity should be encouraged. Additional affordable homes are badly needed in Oxford. It is very disappointing that the application fails to meet the City Council's target for affordable homes.

The creation of a new tower block, higher than both the Hockmore Tower (10 storeys) and Blackbird Leys Towers (14 storeys) is a cause for concern. There is ample evidence that local residents are alarmed at the impact of this development on the character of the area. The statement of community involvement lacks evidence that those who were consulted were persuaded that this proposed redevelopment will be proportionate. Oxford Civic Society would prefer to have seen a more integrated design which would have permitted the same number of homes to be provided without resorting to such a high rise solution.

Far too little regard has been paid to the impact of the application on the character of the adjacent Beauchamp Lane Conservation Area. It had been hoped that, after the Castle Mill fiasco, the Design Review Panel (DRP) process would prevent the repetition of serious harm done to Oxford's heritage but in the present instance, this seems not to be the case.

The Society is also concerned about the impact of the development on views across the city which we had thought was supposed to be an important part of the consideration of such large scale projects, using recognised view-analysis techniques as a safeguard against unintended intrusion into the skyline of the city.

As for the effects on traffic and parking, we are very concerned that the application has adopted an overly optimistic view of the likely actual impact on the streets in the area.

In its present form we believe that the application should be refused.