

## **Address to Full Council, April 23rd.**

I speak on behalf of the East Oxford Resident's Associations Forum (*EOARF*).

We urge the City council to reconsider the sale of St Clements car park, return the non-refundable deposit of £350 000 to the Watkin Jones Group and withdraw completely from this contractual agreement. We understand that the contract arrangements for the sale of the site are subject to planning permission for the development of least 128 student units.

After a successful campaign by St Clements and High Street Traders, EOARF, Oxford University and local amenity groups, councillors rightly refused permission for the proposed development last September because:

- 1) The design, massing, scale and height of the proposed student development for 140 self-contained units was out of context with both the St Clements and Iffley Road Conservation Area and the Central Conservation Area, and would have an adverse impact on the listed buildings there including the Grade II-listed Florey Building
- 2) The overbearing aspects of the development would have an unacceptable impact on the privacy and amenity of the residents living in adjacent properties
- 3) The proposed replacement car park at Harcourt House on Headington Hill was regarded as unacceptable due to its location and the inadequate number of parking spaces.

EOARF now understands that Watkin Jones is working with the City Council planning department on a new planning application which is based on a similar brief, namely for 140 self-contained student units and around 75 parking spaces, which, like the previous proposal, represents a reduction by a third of the current capacity. No suitable replacement car park has been proposed.

We are frustrated and angered that the City Council shows little regard for the views of the local community who are united against a massive student housing development on the St Clements car park site. We fear that the loss of parking places and the lack of adequate replacement parking will be a final blow to local businesses that are already struggling in this very difficult economic climate.

We urge you therefore to listen to the East Oxford community and terminate the contractual arrangements with the Watkin Jones Group and work with the community towards a sustainable, vibrant local economy; balanced, friendly neighbourhoods and the preservation of East Oxford's historic environment.

**On behalf of the EOARF**

