



Chairman: Geoff Lusher Vice Chairman: Paul Ledbury Treasurer: Dawn Hayward Secretary: Barbara Lusher

Reply to:
6 Colling Drive
Lichfield
WS13 8FJ

12th January 2016

Planning Development Manager
Lichfield District Council
District Council House
Frog Lane
Lichfield
WS13 6YZ

Dear Sir / Madam

Application number : 15/01365/FULM
Applicant: Development Securities (Lichfield) Ltd
Friarsgate – City Centre Lichfield

LARA represents the residents of Leomansley Ward, but considers that developments of the City Centre are of interest and concern to all residents of our City, and accordingly we submit this letter and request that the District Council gives full consideration to the views expressed.

In general, LARA welcomes the investment in the City Centre, and the resultant increase in footfall, retail turnover and in the overall attractiveness of Lichfield as a place to visit.

LARA is pleased that a number of comments made following the public exhibition by the developers have been taken on board in the latest plan, but asks that the following formal observations be taken into account and actioned, if practical, prior to approval being granted.

1) Residential Development

LARA believes that insufficient residential car parking spaces have been provided in the development on the corner of St. John Street and Birmingham Road. Allowance should be made for a number of visitor spaces.

The statement shown in the plans states the following :-

2.8.6 “There will be 68 car parking spaces to serve the apartments. This equates to a ratio of 83%. Whilst this will be below the Council’s emerging car parking standards as set out in the draft Sustainable Design SPD, supported by Policy ST2, the policy suggests that these standards should be applied flexibly in sustainable locations (such as the application site). Therefore it is considered that this level of car parking is appropriate given the accessibility to multi-modal transport facilities in the City Centre, such as those within the site and immediately adjacent to it”

The ratio is only against the number of car parking spaces to apartments. It does not take into consideration how many occupants each apartment may have and that most couples have a car each. There are also plans for 11 three bed townhouses which have an allocation of two off street car parking spaces each (22 spaces in total).

Lichfield is also losing car parking space that is currently available in the bus station. The plan states the number of car parking spaces as 505, currently the multi storey by Debenhams has 322 plus 12 small cars and 10 disabled a total of 344, the bus station car park has 66 spaces which gives a total of 410 spaces. Are an extra 95 spaces really going to be enough given the size of the development?

2) Design of buildings

It is stated ***“the proposed materials that will be used.....will be high quality and respect the city's historic feel”***.

With that in mind the use of powder coated standing seam metal cladding, vertically, throughout the development and in particular to the facade of the cinema does not appear to be in keeping with this statement. In LARA’s opinion the cinema area of the development would lend itself to a material such as “Trespa Meteon Naturals” or a similar material which brings facades to life. This material has far greater longevity as powder coated metal cladding will deteriorate over time.

If standing seam cladding is to be used, we request that the Planning Officer insists on the quality being similar to that used on the new Fire Station rather than that used on buildings such as the Premier Inn Hotel and the adjacent residential development where there is a marked difference in materials specified.

On the Residential Area that forms a part of this development proposal, the same requirement should apply regarding the use of metal cladding. It is pleasing to see traditional brickwork but in order to make the facades a little more pleasing to the eye perhaps some rendered panels could be introduced to provide some further relief. It should be noted that relief is provided on the “St John the Baptist Hospice” building by the incorporation of chimneys externally.

There is not a lot that can be said about the shop frontages as they will be dominated ,we hope, by window displays. However the street scene could be enhanced with the introduction of feature street furniture. Will there be some artwork (statue etc) or even a water feature?

3) Increased Traffic onto Birmingham Road from New underground Car Park

Birmingham Road appears to have been widened to allow for traffic travelling south to turn right into the Car Park. On this section there will therefore be three rapidly succeeding right-hand turn lanes for New car park, Bus station(buses only) and St. John Street. It would be preferable to widen Birmingham Street at the point of entry to the Bus Station so that entering buses do not get delayed by traffic turning right into St. John Street, where the current three lane layout works well.

Traffic lights to facilitate exit from both the new car park and the Bus Station will be advantageous, although it is appreciated that phasing these with the pedestrian crossing at the Railway Station will be problematic.

4) Provision of Public Conveniences

LARA observes that the new plans currently do not show any provision for public toilets which are currently situated within the Bus Station area. We understand that local councils are becoming increasingly reluctant to provide these, relying on retail outlets to provide such facilities. Clarification of the council's intentions in this respect will be welcomed.

5) Bus Station

- a)** LARA is pleased that the latest plan provides shelters for waiting passengers in response to our earlier comment. However, we are disappointed that the opportunity of the new development, together with the substantial grant from Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP, has not been taken to provide Lichfield with a bus station to the very latest design with fully enclosed waiting area and boarding gates at each bay. The District Council should examine the designs of recent bus stations elsewhere (eg Derby, Hanley, Wednesbury) and consider the provision of a station to be proud of.
- b)** The safety aspects of bus stations involving reversal are widely accepted, but the current design does not allow sufficient space for entering buses to wait within the station well clear whilst reversing buses complete their manoeuvre.
- c)** It is noted that the number of bays has been increased to nine, and LARA considers this to be insufficient, bearing in mind that the existing drive-through bays can be, and are, shared by two buses on occasions. Will the

District Council confirm that the three bus operators and National Express Coaches have been consulted on the adequacy of bay provision?

- d)** The current design has no apparent provision for buses on layover or for visiting tourist coaches. The former is an operational necessity, whilst the latter is considered to be vitally important in maintaining and boosting the City's income from tourism. Large numbers of visitors arrive in our city by coach each day, and their perception and convenience must be a priority.

LARA will welcome the Council's response on the matters we have raised in due course.

Yours faithfully

Geoff Lusher
Chairman
LARA