

## **Dorridge Sainsbury's – DDRA Notes on Issues Raised**

*For completeness, a reminder of a review we conducted last year before we were aware of the Sainsbury's activities and are intended as a benchmark against which we could test both this development and how the development might aid or impede a better Dorridge and suggestions might not be appropriate in the context of the proposed development.*

### **Background and Objectives to improving Dorridge - April 08**

The population of Dorridge is both large and varied enough to support a range of social and leisure activities, but there is little provision for this currently. The shopping facilities are failing badly and do not present enough of an attraction to draw local residents or outsiders into the village centre. Continued increases in population will necessitate the need for expansion and improvements of existing facilities, something that Dorridge has not succeeded with to date. Indeed ill-conceived and neglected developments have destroyed the identity and community of the village by providing inappropriate (both in a built sense and a practical sense) developments / environments within the village centre.

- The fundamental issue: The Village lacks a centre or focal point
- The redevelopment challenge: Develop the heart of the Village

### **Guiding principles for the redevelopment of Dorridge centre**

The shopping facilities must be redeveloped to encourage revitalisation. An appropriate mix of retailers and essential restaurants, cafes and bars should be encouraged to create a more "round the clock" use of the area.

It's important that the village community facilities are increased and improved to inject vitality into the village. Additional Health, Entertainment and cultural facilities (for all ages) are required together with informal meeting places.

The busy main road carries passing traffic straight through the heart of the village and needs to be diverted around the centre. Steps need to be taken to pedestrianise the existing village square (car park in front of Arden buildings) and links to Forest Court which will allow for open air activities e.g. markets and other street activities.

## Redevelopment Proposals

- Should provide a mixture of retail, commercial and leisure space
- Important to attract visitors through a variety of facilities during the day and evening
- Integrate the facilities in the Arden Buildings and Station Approach and improve links to station.
- Relocation of services and amenities e.g. public conveniences, doctor's surgery etc.

Resolve existing car parking limitations ease movement of traffic

- Increase parking to sustain growth in shopping area but make less visible and also safe i.e. multi level car park, possibly underground, on existing site.
- Calm traffic flow on Station Road and make more pedestrian friendly. Propose new direct pedestrian link from overspill car park to station
- Try to create designated, landscaped public spaces with facilities that generate activity

*The following represents a list of views, concerns and suggestions raised from a variety of sources. There has been no attempt to validate or weigh them. They do not represent a view of the DDRA.*

	Topic
1	Scale
a	Essential concern is the urbanisation of the village. Consistent request from residents is for DDRA to lobby for smaller development.
b	Catchment of Knowle, Bentley Heath, Lapworth, Hockley Heath represents reasonable inter-village communication.
c	Attracting usage from MUA is inappropriate. Very large store could be attractive to Monkspath and Widney Manor which have good provision from substantial superstores nearby. Would expect to see evidence of what the catchment area is and how inappropriate demand might be managed.
d	Tesco Knowle is clearly viable, so why do Sainsbury's claim to need a significantly larger store?
e	Big store avoids the need for travelling outside Dorridge.

f	Is the product range argument justified? Does the target group of villages need a full range of Sainsbury's product (c.f. Tesco Metro)?				
g	Appears to be one of the larger Sainsbury's stores: smaller store areas are described as superstores on Sainsbury's web site.				
h	Store	Floor space sq m	car park spaces	Ratio Sq m/space	No customers on a typical day
	Dorridge	2772 sq m	220 (total)	12.6	?
	Marshall Lake	5414 sq m	623	8.9	?
	Warwick	2465 sq m	340	7.25	4,750
	Kenilworth	1695 sq m	155	10.9	4,000
	Mell Square	1752 sq m	n/a		4,500
2	Size of building.				
a	Very dominant structure will define centre of Dorridge.				
b	Bulk of building can be hidden – is there a need to link the architecture of the shop fronts to a supermarket design, e.g. Touchwood does not impose on Solihull High Street. Suggests that the Sainsbury's comment that it needs to look like a supermarket need not carry significant weight.				
c	While no higher than existing building, current building only has small sections at the maximum height. New buildings bulk could be substantially more dominant. (Where might this be an issue?)				
d	Footprint of building – especially including additional shops - is much greater than existing building. Comparison of sq. footage might be useful (ground cover and also total square footage).				
e	Dominant building might work better if set back further from the road. Current building only briefly contacts the road and is not particularly high near the road. Outline design seems to be 3 storey near road.				
f	Unlikely to pass through Dorridge without passing the development site.				

3	"Dorridge will be Sainsbury's"
a	Concern that an overt Sainsbury's frontage will dominate Dorridge.
b	Is a dominant frontage necessary – how discoverable is Sainsbury's in terms of passing traffic anyhow? (i.e. given that most traffic is local, is there a functional requirement for a dominant frontage?).
c	Needs of the village centre and Dorridge as a whole – where is the architectural input in the scheme? The Design Statement should already be being developed and should demonstrate what the design inputs are.
d	Local people drowned with visitors ("swamp the village").
4	Ratio of Shops to Supermarket:
a	Could shops be ancillary Sainsbury's outlets (e.g. pharmacy)? Back door expansion of Sainsbury's to be larger (either additional ancillary outlets or expansion of departments there (c.f. Tesco Monkspath mezzanine which is on a separate level). <i>Sainsbury's response: pharmacy would be protected by statutory bodies controlling pharmacies.</i>
b	Compare Knowle (which appears to function ok) with Dorridge. Knowle has many more shops per supermarket sq. ft.
c	Does the addition of a few new units solve the Dorridge problem? Range of stores is dire, and clogged with service outlets rather than a sustainable mix of goods. Can a critical mass of shops be achieved?
5	Provision of supermarket goods
a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A full range means Dorridge is self-contained.</li> <li>● A full range may be too attractive – where is the compromise.</li> <li>● Range is a moveable feast – size required is arbitrary and good store management would resolve issues of insufficient floor area for food range.</li> </ul>
6	Store-holder Concerns
a	Part of the community. Want to keep continuity.
b	Concern that dependent on the good graces of Sainsbury's.
c	Lack of contact.
d	Continuity during development (extra relocation costs)
7	Development Timetable

a	Want to judge where we are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Are we still at a stage where local input will have an influence.</li> </ul>
b	Interested in understanding what Sainsbury's perception of feedback there is.
c	Lack of firm plans is putting concerned parties in a difficult position: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As they stand, plans are not satisfactory,</li> <li>● Believe that there may be some alterations,</li> <li>● Therefore too early to object</li> <li>● Do not want to spend effort researching issues that Sainsbury's may be resolving</li> </ul>
8	Design
a	Modern building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● out of character</li> <li>● Consensus is that even where people are interested in modern buildings, the presented design was not satisfactory.</li> <li>● "It is going to stick out... ..so make it interesting"</li> </ul>
b	Pastiche suggested to be "inappropriate" yet a significant number of residents have been asking for just that. Evesons cited as a good solution.
c	Given building is in behind, does frontage have to relate to a large supermarket? Note that Touchwood does not have any significant identifiable frontage aside from the entrances and does not read as a Mall from the High Street.
d	Impact on Dorridge – how does the scale relate to other buildings?
e	Relationship with Station Approach Conservation Area – Conservation Officer input necessary.
f	Dominance next to highway – tall building and relatively narrow pavement. Use of highway space to soften this – for example removing carriageway.
g	Emphasise village over town (urbanisation).
h	Stark rear aspect – means to soften this. Also the side on Forest Road appears to accept being a stark, unimportant feature, rather than an opportunity to improve and enhance that area.
i	Various planting suggestions have been made to soften bulk and fit in with perception of Dorridge green space
j	Does doctors need to be integrated? (suggestion was made to put in the corner Avenue Road/Forest Road) Does it really need to be redeveloped? What are the benefits over the existing space?

k	"Like Maypole development" (seen as a very bad thing) 600 car parking spaces there.
l	Landscaping ideas required for the frontage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● integration of the two sides of the road,</li> <li>● creation of welcoming public meeting space.</li> <li>● Encourage wide mix of users over daytime and evening.</li> </ul>
m	Worries about appearing to be a retail park
n	Green approach – good.
o	Use of natural light – good.
p	What was the feedback from MADE appraisal?
9	Traffic - Parking
a	Currently 50(?) spaces, often at capacity during the day.
b	No overflow on streets
c	Conflict with railway
d	Expanded shops in Dorridge can be assumed to require more parking. Given poor state, perhaps 100 spaces might be reasonable to support a thriving centre (cf. space count in Knowle).
e	Given above, might only be 120 spaces remaining for Sainsbury's.
f	Ratio of parking seems low compared with other stores.
g	Store size vs parking is worse if take into account the regeneration of Dorridge
h	Large amount of Dorridge centre is given over to low value parking (cars left all day for out of village commuters) while quality usage (e.g. St. Phillips, customers, local residents have to compete for space at Arden Buildings). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Could double up parking behind Total garage.</li> <li>● Park and Ride to reclaim village centre for village use.</li> <li>● Chiltern pick up policy identified as part of the issue for forcing intermediate stop passengers using Dorridge.</li> </ul>
i	Services in Dorridge (dentist, hairdressers etc.) need more than quick stop parking.
10	Traffic - Access
a	Can identify significant populations other than Dorridge that are in principle acceptable: Knowle, Hockley Heath, Lapworth.

b	Unacceptable attractions from MUA: Widney Manor, Monkspath. Essentially the danger is creating an out of town shopping centre, albeit a small one.
c	Dorridge Road. Poor standard, esp. visibility. No remedial possibilities. Access from Lapworth, and possibly Warwick Road.
d	Avenue Road. Potential fast route. Variable width and parked car confusion. Residential road therefore should remain quiet. Poor visibility. Strong alternative desire line from Knowle and access from Chadwick End and Temple Balsall.
e	Station Road. Narrow road with some issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No passing room if cars parked.</li> <li>● Poor pedestrian facilities: no safe crossing points between Dorridge centre and Arden School.</li> <li>● Excessive school children mean that the traffic speed is already a concern, and non-local traffic may not be as aware of the issues.</li> </ul>
f	Grange Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Poor junction at Manor Road</li> <li>● Conflict with Total</li> <li>● Tends to backlog even with low usage</li> </ul>
g	Station Approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Traffic conflicts – buses, unlawful stopping, chippie and cashpoint</li> <li>● Roundabout – poor visibility, alignment of station</li> <li>● Informal drop-off and collection point for station/bus in front of station (works quite well with co-operative drivers).</li> </ul>
h	Arden Buildings car park access is problematic now. Conflict with Tesco deliveries. Arden Buildings car park often saturated and poor road sense with people queuing to enter. Weak road design leads to unusual manoeuvres in and out.
i	Access to doctors' surgery. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conflict with busy times</li> <li>● Emergency access</li> <li>● Rapid drop-off/pick up</li> <li>● First floor access seen as unattractive and/or impractical.</li> <li>● Does difficult access have health implications for reluctant visitors?</li> </ul>
j	Physical restrictions to ensure proper HGV routing? Presumably if from Hams Hall, will route down Knowle High Street and Station Road.
k	Don't want local roads becoming main roads to avoid urbanisation.

l	<p>Patterns of usage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School traffic (car and pedestrian) 8:15am – 9:00am; 3:00pm – 4:30pm</li> <li>● Commuter traffic – 7:30am – 9:00am; 4:30pm – 6:00pm</li> <li>● Lunchtime – e.g. fish and chips; deli, quick shop.</li> </ul> <p>Traffic clogs up under bridge. High speeds during quiet times – evenings, day time.</p>
m	Concern raised that limited traffic survey will be used against development.
n	(Survey was conducted Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March (?)–9:30am then 4:00pm(?)–6:30pm Saturday, 9:00(?)–2:00pm) Poplar Road didn't seem to be observed according to some comments received.
o	<p>Sainsbury's suggest that if underestimate demand, then store will find natural level.</p> <p>a) Would suggest that a smaller store would have been viable (assuming Sainsbury's would not abandon ship)</p> <p>b) Impact on the rest of Dorridge not considered.</p> <p>c) Worst case is not oversubscribed, but continuously running at capacity, where there would be queuing and aggravation (e.g. Touchwood when people will wait a certain amount of time).</p>
p	Why need a local shop when Tesco Monkspath is within 10 minutes drive for whole of Dorridge, less for Four Ashes (must be similar journey time there)? Five minutes more to get to Sainsbury's if not a Tesco fan.
q	A34 is considered a "difficult" journey – Gate Lane, M42 J4, Marshall Lake roundabout. Sainsbury's/Tesco entrance itself.
11	<b>Traffic - Loading/Unloading</b>
a	Noise of lorries arriving and departing
b	Unloading noise
c	Position of loading bay by the most populated area
d	Position of loading bay minimises lorry movements past houses
e	Sound barriers – indoor loading bay suggested.
f	Unnecessary noise: talkers and squawkers on reversing lorries.

g	<p>Access to Dorridge by HGVs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Low bridge</li> <li>● Station Road/Grove Road roundabout</li> <li>● Avenue Road – low trees and poor access from Warwick Road, unsuitable for HGVs.</li> <li>● Very few HGVs come through Dorridge now, typically building materials.</li> </ul>
12	Community facilities
a	More meeting rooms
b	<p>Potential users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● DDRA</li> <li>● Police</li> <li>● SMBC neighbourhood office</li> <li>● U3A</li> <li>● Other voluntary groups</li> </ul>
c	<p>Ownership and maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Not keen on another committee</li> <li>● Sainsbury's have maintenance and potential shared use.</li> <li>● How would fair access be guaranteed?</li> <li>● Would Sainsbury's be prepared to run room booking. (<i>Sainsbury's response – absolutely not</i>).</li> </ul>
d	<p>How would community usage be guaranteed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unilateral undertaking</li> <li>● S106 agreement</li> <li>● Condition?</li> </ul>
e	<p>Can Sainsbury's be a “community shop”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes, meet people in supermarkets</li> <li>● Yes, means Dorridge people will shop locally rather than meet in e.g. Monkspath</li> <li>● No, “too big”</li> <li>● No, supermarkets are impersonal unlike small shops where you meet the same staff.</li> </ul>
f	<p>Youth – what provisions are we making for them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Making Dorridge more active in the evenings could reduce impact of bored youth.</li> <li>● Target coffee shop or similar for evening opening</li> <li>● Places to eat fish and chips etc. tidily in adequate surroundings (currently sit on steps).</li> </ul>

	Doctor's Surgery
a	People unaware of the size (2 storey I believe – i.e. a 3 storey building).
b	Shared access considered dubious by some (alternative shared access was at someone's request, not Sainsbury's).
c	Uninviting access arrangements considered an issue. (People are not clear what access there is either).
d	Ability to drop off patients, including less mobile, considered important. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parking on Station Road?</li> <li>● Getting through the car park considered challenging.</li> <li>● What if car park is full? (When is peak usage during the week? Suspect after work might be a conflict time).</li> </ul>
10	Environmental
a	Impact on trees, replacements? Especially trees along Station Road.
b	The green triangle near the doctors seems to have gone – works with opposite side of Forest Road to create a small green space.
c	Use of planting on building to soften bulk.
d	Travel plan for encouraging non-car usage?
e	Travel plan for discouraging usage from urban areas.
f	Recycling facilities on site?
g	Packaging policies.
h	Trolleys for pedestrian and cycle users to take home.
11	General Comments Received
a	<i>“SMBC will be in favour due to rates” (Comment: pointed out that rates go centrally then are returned locally so do not make a direct contribution to Solihull)</i>
b	Nursery application at Grange Road – would Forest Court be a better site?
c	<i>Have Sainsbury's been encouraged by SMBC or been given an indication that the development is acceptable? (Sainsbury's suggest that SMBC were making policy objections to supermarket placement. SMBC will not have made a determination on this issue prior to the application though Sainsbury's suggest that SMBC may have been persuaded on this issue).</i>

d	Post office
e	Product mix – conflict with local stores.
f	Jobs will not be from local community (what is the mix at Knowle Tescos?). <i>Sainsbury's response is that their experience is that there will be mainly local take up – travelling and parking may well influence this – no significant on site staff parking planned.</i>
g	Consultation was poor – overcrowded, no new information.
h	Undertaking for pharmacy requested
i	Clash between wanting thriving village and not wanting it to be busy.
j	Will they use off-site construction techniques – e.g. Frome apparently completed in 10 weeks compared with 26 weeks.
k	Impact on Knowle. a) Could damage the viability of Knowle shops. b) Might relieve Knowle and make it more viable
l	Impact on Bentley Heath a) Could damage the viability of Bentley Heath shops b) Not sure that same argument of relief from excessive demand is valid.