

## **Forest Court – Sainsbury's Development Notes**

**The DDRA Committee has discussed Sainsbury's proposals under the headings 1 – 8 below. Comments attached.**

### **1. Development in principle:**

- (a) Forest Court does need to be replaced. We do not believe that a refurbishment or remodelling of the existing structure would produce a useful result.
- (b) Given that, the disruption caused during redevelopment is a necessary evil.
- (c) The current state of Forest Court hinders the establishment a community feel that many desire.
- (d) Informal comments from a significant number of residents appear to welcome the idea of a supermarket.
- (e) We acknowledge severe short term impact on nearby residents due to development.
- (f) And long term impact (especially traffic) on nearby residents.
- (g) Highways issues are critical to the viability of the development.
- (h) Conflict between the desires of Sainsbury's for a substantial store and our ideal of a more modest offering is recognised.
- (i) We have no evidence that a "small shop" only development would be viable – 10 years of history backs this up. Current assumption is that some form of smaller anchor store is essential to make a redevelopment viable. DDRA has pursued this solution since 2002, without success. (Waitrose had a long interest in the site, but were unable to come to commercial terms).
- (j) We note the reliance of the current shopkeepers on the offer from Sainsbury's to aid the relocation of their businesses during and after redevelopment.

### **2. Scale – Points needing further consideration are :**

- (a) Size of development, shops, store, doctors (aesthetics)
  - i. Impact on residents of Forest Road
  - ii. Proximity to Station Road – height
  - iii. If successful, will create parking demand not just for store, but for Dorridge as a whole.
- (b) Product offering (demand)
  - i. The complete food offering, and the accessibility of the store is

what will drive demand to use the store, not the size of the development.

- ii. Is it a good thing that people might no longer need to travel further afield for their shopping?
- iii. Assume that good shops such as butchers would be mutually beneficial even if there is duplication.

### **3.Design**

(a) Modern approach vs. reflection of current architecture

- i. Position of store means that there are limited places where both Station Approach and the development will be seen simultaneously.
- ii. There is currently a strong existing "Arts and Crafts" feel – Station Approach, Evesons development.
- iii. Plans as presented are not sufficient to judge the design.

(b) Position

- i. Relationship to Station Road to create "High Street" feel.
- ii. Constraints of loading & access areas "as now" - is this the best solution?

(c) Front/rear/side treatments

- i. Not enough information as yet.
- ii. Concern over the dominant development so close to the road (oppressive?).
- iii. Suspect that the large development will block any trees on the horizon that might soften the outlook – especially from over Avenue Road.
- iv. Removal of doctor's surgery might brighten up Avenue Road views.

(d) Link to Station Approach

- i. Not enough information – does not yet appear to have been solved.

### **4.Highways**

(a) Are the access/exit points to the site in the appropriate place?

(b) Immediate vicinity.

- i. Difficult junctions on all corners of the block.
- ii. Station access and traffic speeds a significant issue at the

Station.

- iii. Station Approach onto Station Road is already a difficult junction when operating at capacity.

(c) One way road system

- i. Likely to offer significant benefits including more informal on street short term parking on Station Approach.
- ii. Would Station Road be two way still?

(d) Impact further afield – Manor Road, Grange Road, Widney Road/Station Rd, Avenue Road & jnct with Grove Road.

- i. Concern over rat-run approaches – Warwick Road via Avenue Road (difficult roundabout, poor driver discipline already).
- ii. Dorridge Road/Norton Green Lane.

(e) Capacity

- i. Poor quality of access roads – limited widths and junction designs.
- ii. Conflict with rail users – no obvious informal off-site overflow.
- iii. Need rail solution in harmony with this development (e.g. park and ride, expansion of current overflow car park) as there is limited on street parking.

(f) Link with Arden Buildings/Station Road issues

- i. Is dual carriageway appropriate?
- ii. Removal of one carriageway (if feasible) could create community space – e.g. market stalls
- iii. Removal of carriageway might make crossing feel easier and encourage movement between the two sides of the road.
- iv. Limited width of pavement in front of Sainsbury's might discourage exploration.
- v. Tesco loading needs a solution – current usage would conflict with road improvements.

(g) Speed restrictions.

- i. Should there be a 20mph section between the railway bridge and Forest Road?
- ii. Other devices to manage traffic – especially in view of expected significant increase?

## **5. Non-vehicular access.**

(a) Cycles – parking.

(b) Cycles – provision of trailers (“hods”) on loan to get a weekly shop home.

(c) Ensure ready pedestrian access from front and rear (and front to rear).

## **6.Shops**

(a) Parking access for non-Sainsbury's users.

(b) Do we accept that shop occupancy should be left to natural demand or are there constraints that are necessary (e.g. if the shops were to be a mixture of estate agents and betting shops then community aspirations would not be met).

## **7.Landscaping**

(a) Significant area of car parking.

(b) Seems that the green corner at Avenue Road/Forest Road is to be lost. Greenness of Avenue Road through trees and landscaping needed.

(c) Large building will block view of horizon from Avenue Road, with no backdrop of trees. Needs something to soften the impact – e.g. planting on the building itself in some form.

## **8.Entrance position**

(a) Loading Bay

- i. Close to the most populated part of the site.
- ii. Noise is not just lorries, but metal crates (esp. empties).
- iii. That it is the current location is not sufficient justification.
- iv. Note that loading bay is at 1<sup>st</sup> floor level and this might cause additional disturbance.

(b) Car entrance on Avenue Road

- i. Is this optimal?
- ii. Would a separate entrance and exit be better – e.g. entry from Station Road? (cross over of traffic entering from Avenue Road with vehicles exiting onto Avenue Road as it stands).
- iii. Potential to limit traffic along Forest Road.

(c) Drop off for surgery.

- i. Concern about getting “to the door” access for limited mobility patients.

- ii. Assume that doctors will be leading on emergency access, though we note the need for ambulance and their emergency needs.

## **9. Loading and unloading**

### **(a) Time**

- i. In view of position, enforceable controls are essential as the design may not insulate residents from disturbance.
- ii. Note the potential for lorries to leave trailers which are then available outside delivery times (loading & unloading is a noisy activity in its own right).

### **(b) Volume**

- i. Driven by the success of the store, not by restrictions.
- ii. Not comparable with Tesco Express approach – large lorries there drop off part loads. Assume Sainsbury's would be full loads.

### **(c) Shop servicing (note delivery area treatment).**

## **10. Extra Facilities**

### **(a) Doctors surgery**

- i. Noted. We have a surgery already, so although a refresh is welcomed, it is not something that influences whether or not we think the development is desirable.

### **(b) Post office**

- i. The desire for this is noted.
- ii. What is it that people really want at a Post Office? Is it a full service, or simply the need to deal with letters and parcels?

### **(c) Cafe/coffee shop.**

- i. Would want to see such facilities incorporated in order to encourage community.

### **(d) "Community facility"**

- i. A meeting room is desirable but needs to be of suitable dimensions and have more than an empty space – kitchen, storage room for chairs etc.
- ii. Should it be shared with Sainsbury's or be owned/run by community body?
- iii. Management issues of this – e.g. cleaning. access, security, electricity costs.