

GREYFRIARS PROPOSALS EXHIBITION FEEDBACK

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Development proposals for the Greyfriars site in Northampton town centre went on display to the public from 18 to 20 July 2016 in the Guildhall, St Giles Square. Visitors were able to see what the schemes could look like and understand how they link to the rest of the town centre, as well as leaving their comments, which will be fed back to the developers. The exhibition was promoted in the media, the council's website and social media and was launched by a press briefing.
- 1.2 Over **300** people attended over the course of the three days.
- 1.3 The Greyfriars' page on the website received over **1000** visits with **700** viewing further scheme details. Nearly **3000** Twitter impressions were made with over **2000** Facebook views during the period of the exhibition.
- 1.4 Around **100** feedback forms were returned

2. Comments

- 2.1 The feedback was largely supportive of the schemes. The potential cinema attracted a lot of debate. Some concerns were expressed in relation to the possible impact on existing provision. The access and integration with the Grosvenor Centre and Market Square as displayed in Scheme 1 received a large amount of positive comments. Coach facilities also attracted a lot of interest and people expressed a desire to ensure suitable shelter was available as well as toilet facilities. Many expressed a desire to relocate these facilities as close to the bus station as possible whilst ensuring facilities for taxis and for appropriate vehicular access. Some views in relation to the impact on traffic arising from the proposed changes were expressed.
- 2.2 A sample of the public and stakeholder comments received is provided below.

3. In general

- *Both schemes viable and would make attractive and interesting additions to the town centre*
- *Both schemes appear to be a good mix of uses*
- *They are both really strong schemes that would be great for the town*
- *Interesting range of options. Good to see the elderly catered for in both schemes. Is there scope for a local convenience store?*
- *I like the positive changes to the town, Even Justin Bieber hated the old bus station! Plans to add a cinema and student accommodation are great. Positive plans!*
- *Both schemes address lack of residential housing and student accommodation within the Town Centre*

- *My company strongly supports the proposals to redevelop the Northampton Greyfriars area and welcomes the planned new cinema/entertainment complex, the range of restaurants, wine bars and cafes, as well as the proposed private residential and student accommodation units, which will undoubtedly help boost the local economy.*
- *The plan shows coaches of 12 metres in length. Coaches can now be up to 15 metres in length, and an increasing number actually are. Therefore the layout and vehicle tracking for the site will have to take account of this.*
- *Moving coach services to a new facility would free up space for more buses to layover in Victoria St.*
- *Moving the toilet facilities to the site would help enhance the quality of the coach station.*
- *The Committee is concerned that the consultation makes no reference to the proximity of the site to the Sheep Street and All Saints Conservation Areas and the Grade I listed Church of Holy Sepulchre, and the potential impact development on this site will have on the setting of these heritage assets*
- *Propose that the development scheme should be assessed against a set of urban and building design principles and objectives.*
- *The chosen scheme should maximise pedestrian permeability*
- *In broad principle, we are supportive of well designed, integrated proposals to bring this strategic site back into occupation and believe that leisure is an appropriate and desirable use here given its proximity of Greyfriars to the core retail, leisure, restaurant and commercial locations within Northampton town centre.*
- *Optimising with the wider town, utilising the already established traditional links between the town centre, the Grosvenor Centre and the Greyfriars site, which sit on a well-worn pedestrian axis, will build on the town's strengths and position Northampton and its shoppers, retailers and workers well to benefit from this project.*
- *We are supportive of leisure uses in this location though it is important that the proposals include a strong cinema offer to maximise visitor numbers and footfall in Northampton, as well as to support the associated uses,*
- *Scheme 1 proposals deliver strong linkages to the Grosvenor Centre, coupled with a centrally located cinema and supporting leisure facilities, all of which will provide for a well-integrated and therefore more successful development. We also support this scheme's proposals to (a) remove subway linkages and (b) their proposals to pedestrianise Greyfriars and 'grade' the entrance at the central point.*

4. Cinemas and Leisure

- *Don't see the need for another cinema when we already have the Erroll Flynn. If we have to have another cinema would prefer the family offer*
- *Concerned about impact of cinemas on Sol Central*
- *Both schemes mention cinemas-already have provision which is underused*
- *I see no reason for another cinema. Why would people use this leisure hub when existing facilities such as Trilogy, Sixfields, Vue and others are available?*
- *No evidence was presented as to the viability of another cinema.*
- *Prefer family focus for cinema*

5. Transport /traffic

- *Good to have facilities for coaches.*
- *I don't believe that either scheme can be accommodated within existing transport/road infrastructure. I commend the eventual facilities for coach users. Let's hope planning will include toilets and indoor waiting area as well as travel advice centre.*
- *Traffic volume will increase. Concerned that proper consideration is given to this to avoid gridlock*
- *I am a bus/coach driver. People need to get off the bus and straight onto the coach bay (and viceversa)*
- *Good to see a coach station incorporated*
- *Would like to see cycle route as well as facilities for locking cycles when attending leisure places*
- *Would like taxi rank for coach passengers*
- *Consideration should be give to disables users and those that lack mobility. The current Shopmobility is hidden away in the Mayorhold carpark, it would be an ideal*

6. Students

- *Both schemes address lack of student accommodation within the Town Centre*
- *It is a good idea having student accommodation and residential apartments included-I hope this will increase footfall in the Town Centre*
- *Concerns over associated night trade noise/volume of public with retirement complex so near so many student apartments*
- *What travel/parking arrangements will be made for students living in student accommodation?*

7. Housing

- *Both schemes address lack of residential housing within the Town Centre*
- *Affordable housing must be included.*
- *I support the use of the site for student accommodation, affordable housing, retirement apartments and the development of "rat island". If the need for housing is at such a premium, should NBC not stipulate whole site needed for housing?*

8. Hotels

- *No evidence was presented as to the viability of another hotel.*
- *Unproven demand for a further hotel*
- *Existing hotels far from capacity.*

9. Restaurants etc

- *Open area for restaurants and cafes will be good s currently they are all on roads*
- *Nice to see more night life e.g. restaurants and café included in both schemes*
- *Too many restaurants*

10. Design

- *Both schemes are a bit generic-shops, cinema, flats, hotel. An opportunity missed for something more radical*
- *Concerns about potential building heights in both schemes*
- *Both schemes architecturally very dull*

11. Also

- *Would be good to see exhibitions at focal points*
- *An option for green areas would be a good idea, including outdoor community access*
- *Are there enough social facilities for such a lot of residents? E.g. surgery. Private development must not dictate all facilities*
- *Would like to see art and culture, open air performance space, link to libraries*
- *Surprised that neither scheme has a department store incorporated*
- *We need quality shops not same American offer as Sixfields.*
- *Both schemes lack links between the existing Town Centre, residential areas and the proposed University*

12. On Scheme 1

- *Presentation professional and cleaner for landscaping and improved access to the Grosvenor Centre and Market Square*
- *Scheme 1 seems more integrated. Like links to Market Square and Grosvenor Centre. Optional future phase for rat island is good*
- *Much prefer Scheme 1: Good visibility walking up from Market Square (don't like under passes) and views the cinema and restaurants plus the glass cladding on the Grosvenor Car Par, looks good, but there should be more public space/square, at the moment the walk throughs are narrow. Bigger space and people will stay longer, more of a place to go. Solution? Re-arrange student flats pushing them back away from the cinema creating a square to the east side of the cinema*
- *Like pedestrianised Greyfriars Lane which gives opportunity for further Grosvenor Centre development*
- *More pleasing to the eye, uses vacant land wisely, it encompasses all age groups and takes account of non-drivers*
- *Better mix, 6 coach spaces a bonus, better link to Grosvenor*
- *Scheme shows better consideration of existing surroundings and environment, exciting new restaurants but concerned at lack of diversity*
- *Very impressed with Scheme 1. Key benefits are: the placement of eateries around the area that is open; the modern usage of a hub type area; the name "Greyfriars Quarter"; the types of activities on offer and the shops/facilities. Scheme 1 has a much stronger image and the layout is well placed to meet the needs of the town and encourage retail growth. Very excited to see this develop*
- *Scheme 1 has great access routes which will encourage people to the town*
- *I prefer Scheme 1 but I think it would be improved if the area shown for the cinema allowed for a social open square that invites family time. It would also open the views through the existing residential areas beyond. I work with developers and both schemes show fantastic use of the space*
- *Scheme 1 more aesthetically pleasing. Walkthrough also better, bringing people into a vibrant open area*
- *Prefer scheme 1 because: pedestrianised areas will draw people in whereas keeping Greyfriars Road will isolate area; develop scrubland at the far end, it has been an eye sore for many years; scheme has open feel which the town centre is in need of.*
- *My company does have reservations about Option 1, as we do not believe that the central Northampton road system is resilient enough to accommodate the*

withdrawal of Greyfriars and its replacement with a pedestrian link between the new development and the town centre.

- *The quality of the design of the buildings shown in the consultation material is uninspiring.*
- *There are fewer open public areas, a higher density of built up areas and less permeability than in Scheme 2.*
- *There are fewer opportunities for pleasing viewpoints*
- *Not enough pedestrian linkages to the surrounding areas*

13. On Scheme 2

- *I prefer Scheme 2: the layout with the cinema at one end is attractive. The student blocks are well located*
- *This appears to have better designed public spaces, which will be more suitable for public events.*
- *Permeability is better than for Scheme 1.*
- *There are no references to local vernacular styles or materials*
- *Scheme 2 appears to have lots of bars, I don't really see the need for that many*
- *If I had to choose I would opt for Scheme 2*
- *Boutique cinema-we already have one, Errol Flynn Film House*
- *Looks similar to MK complex. However, I think it is appealing. Offers buyers apartments giving first time buyers an opportunity*
- *Rather than a boutique cinema how about an outdoor cinema. In the summer people can have picnics etc with family and friends. In the winter it can be used for Farmers Market/German Market etc.*
- *Narrow passageway access not attractive and limited-needs to be more open and integrated to the town*
- *Weak access to the scheme, scheme separated by road very negative*
- *My company strongly recommends that your Council selects Option 2, as it will help ensure that the central Northampton road system continues to work, as under this option both Greyfriars and Lady's Lane are retained.*

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