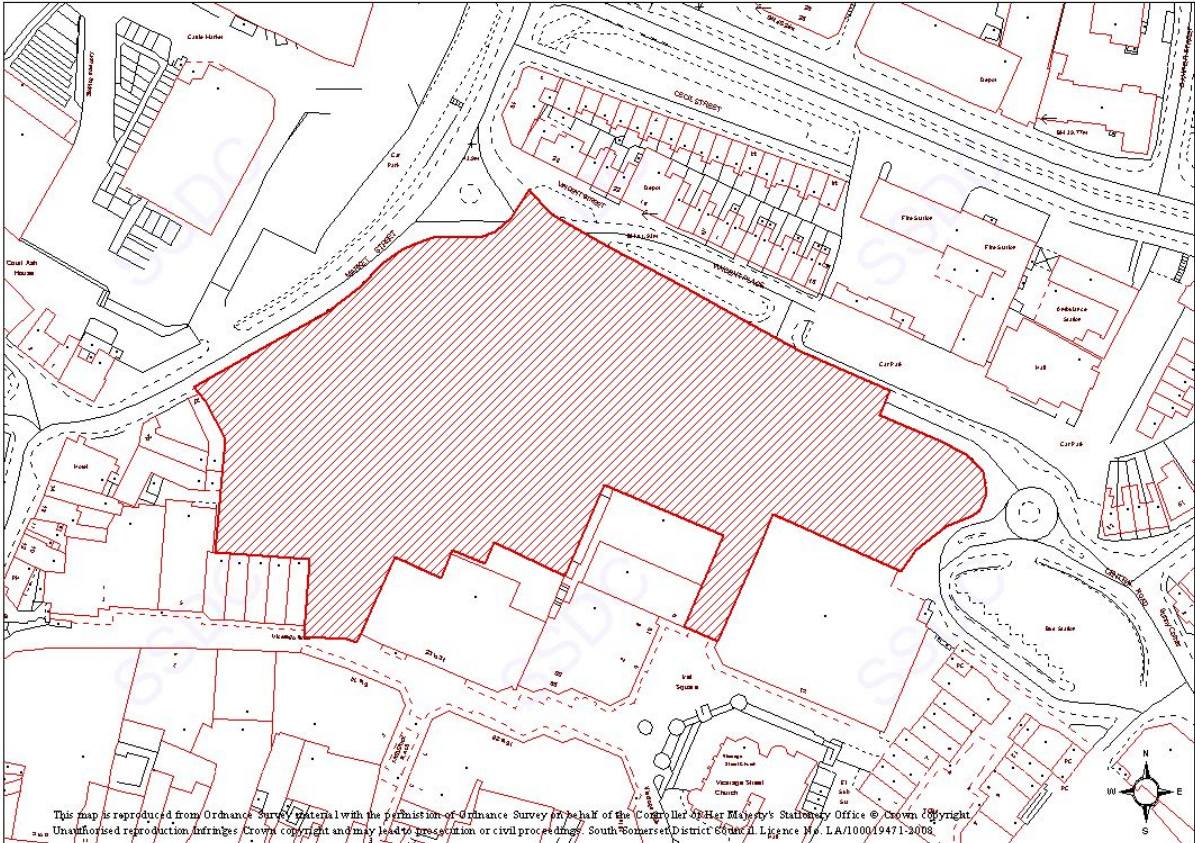


OFFICER: Dave Norris 01935 462382
APPL.NO: 07/03898/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE: Full Application
PARISH: Yeovil
WARD: Yeovil (Central)
DESCRIPTION: Redevelopment of the existing Vincents Garage site and Quedam Centre car park to provide an extension to Quedam Centre comprising two levels of basement car parking and servicing, three levels of retail floorspace above, (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5) and public toilets. (GR 355851/116020)
LOCATION: The Quedam Centre Vicarage Walk Yeovil Somerset BA20 1LD
APPLICANT: UBS Triton Fund
AGENT: Driver Jonas 85 King William Street London EC4N 7BL
DATE ACCEPTED: 20 August 2007

This application is before Committee at the discretion of the Head of Development and Building Control due to its strategic importance.

Site Description



The application site covers an area of approximately 1.6 ha and is located within the heart of the town and includes the existing Quedam shopping centre, the associated multi-storey car park and what is currently known as the 'Vincents' garage site. To the north and west of the site are Central Road and Market Street with the Bus Station/Glovers Walk and the existing shopping centre on the other boundaries.

The Vincents Garage is a well established commercial premises and comprises of car showrooms, display area and several workshop buildings.

The site is on the fringe of the Conservation Area that goes as far as the historic group of buildings surrounding the Pall Tavern and there are also several listed buildings within the vicinity.

Proposal

This application seeks to extend the existing Quedam shopping centre by demolishing the existing car park and redeveloping it in conjunction with the Vincents site.

The scheme proposes the creation of an additional shopping street that runs parallel to the existing Quedam. The development will be accessed by pedestrians, either through the new access on the corner of Market Street and Central Road, the bottom of the existing Quedam or through a new opening at the top of the existing Quedam. The levels of the site has made it possible to create a virtually flat shopping street from the Methodist church through to Market Street, however at the 'top' of the Quedam there will be escalators to take people down to the new level. It is also at this location, next to Market Street where the department store is located. This shop will be over 3 floors whereas the other units are predominantly 2 storey with some single storey kiosks.

The proposal will provide 23,000 sq m of gross retail floor space although it should be noted that it will be necessary to demolish just over 4000 sq m of existing retail space to achieve access. The floorspace will be configured to provide:

- 1 department store (with toilets)
- 5 large retail units
- 20 standard retail units
- 11 kiosks
- Public toilet facilities

The development will require the demolition of the vast majority existing multi-storey car park. The applicants have indicated that the existing facility has approximately 650 spaces and that the replacement facility will provide 615 spaces.

The applicant has submitted a great deal of supporting information in the form of a Design and Access Statement and a range of reports relating to the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Consultations

The district council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement required the applicants to carry out a certain level of pre-application consultation/publicity prior to the submission of the application. As a result of this the applicants held a public exhibition within a vacant unit in the Quedam over 2 days to publicise the development, inviting comments from interested parties. They have also made presentations to members of the Area South committee and members of the Town Council and Chamber of Trade and Commerce. It is important to emphasise that these presentations were for purely informative purposes with the applicants providing factual responses to questions. The merits of the scheme were not discussed.

As a result of the formal consultation process the following responses have been received:

Town Council:

Supportive of application but have requested that attention be paid to parking and access, especially during construction. Supportive of Section 106 requirements.

Highway Authority:

I refer to the above-mentioned planning application received on 22nd August 2007 and have the following observations on the highway aspects of this proposal:-

As the planning officer will be aware this application was the subject of detailed pre application discussions, at which time the Highway Authority expressed the view that any redevelopment of the Quedam Centre should address any issues resulting from any increase in traffic generation (i.e. resulting in nil detriment to the highway network), whilst including appropriate off site highway improvements and a Travel Plan, promoting sustainable modes of transport.

Since the application was received there has been a steady dialogue with the developer on highway related matters, primarily relating to traffic impact and the requirements for improvements to the A30 Reckleford Road / Market Street Junction - with matters relating to the effect of the development on the local SSDC car parks being dealt with by their technical team.

In this case, following agreement between the developer and ourselves over the level of additional traffic movements likely to result from the proposed redevelopment, the focus of the Highway Authority centred on the need to improve the A30 Reckleford Road / Market Street Junction. The case for such an improvement, being similar to that associated with the adjacent Cattle Market planning application, insofar as the Transport Assessment made an assumption that some form of improved junction would be provided at this point on the network to accommodate the additional movements generated by the development.

Consequently the improvement of this junction is considered to be a critical element of the overall redevelopment proposals, with any future junction design providing appropriate enhanced capacity together with improved pedestrian linkages as identified within the Transport Assessment itself. Whilst not forming part of the application proposals, such a design could in theory be based upon the indicative design options contained within the Yeovil Eastern Corridor study (YECS), which in themselves provide enhanced pedestrian facilities, linking the Goldcroft car park to the Quedam Centre.

The developer has now agreed to design, fund and construct these works, following approval by the Highway Authority and controlled by way of a suitable legal agreement (e.g. S106 or S278 Agreement), such works being also covered by a suitably worded negative planning condition, requiring the junction improvements to be completed prior to commencement of the redevelopment of the Quedam Centre. In the absence of any detailed design at this time, it will therefore be necessary for the applicant to prepare a suitable junction design as soon as practicable for inclusion within the S106 Agreement, although prior to the signing of any S106 Agreement, any such junction design will need to pass successfully through both a stage 1 safety and technical audit process.

With regard to the Travel Plan, the Highway Authority is currently considering a draft Travel Plan which has just been received from the applicants highway consultants and once agreement is reached on the content of the plan, it can be included with the aforementioned S106 Agreement to ensure compliance and enforcement issues do not arise in the future.

In light of the of above, whilst I have no highway objection in principle to the redevelopment proposals (subject to suitably worded planning conditions), from a detail viewpoint it is essential that a preliminary junction design for the A30 Reckleford / Market Street junction is prepared as a matter of urgency and submitted to the LPA in the normal way.

Planning Policy Manager:

Has indicated that this development generally accords with the aspirations of the Urban Development Framework and the more recently adopted Market Street Brief. Surveys have demonstrated that there is a clear demand for additional retail floorspace within the town and this is considered to be a suitable location for such a development.

Car Park Manager

The Quedam application has identified that there is surplus car parking capacity in and around the town centre within the car parks under the control of this Council and the Quedam itself. This will meet the agreed impact that the proposed development would have on the car parking availability of between 200 and 300 additional car parking spaces being needed

The applicant has made this statement following car parking data that this Council provided them prior to the application being made in 2007. It was agreed and accepted that during the week that there would not be an issue with the car parking stock available, the peak demand being on a Saturday

The data provided identified that the additional spare capacity was predominately within the long stay car parks, Huish, Goldcroft and Brunswick Street. The issue then was on the management and signage of these car parks to make them attractive to the shopper.

Further analysis of the surplus car parking availability on the Saturdays in June 2008 has shown that there was a minimum of car parking spaces available as follows:

Saturday 7th June	- 583 spaces of which 292 were long stay
Saturday 14th June	- 528 spaces of which 362 were long stay
Saturday 21st June	- 622 spaces of which 272 were long stay and
Saturday 28th June	- 574 spaces of which 369 were long stay

It can be seen from these figures that there is ample spare capacity at this present time to cope with the anticipated maximum demand of a further 300 vehicles, the majority also being available within the town centre. These figures do not include the short stay car parks, Tesco's car park, or the Leisure Centre and on street parking

This is backed up by the fact that car park income is down again this year from the projected figures.

I can therefore confirm that I am in agreement to the principle that the applicant has put forward that there is ample spare capacity within the car parking available in Yeovil to meet the projected increase in demand that this development will produce. It will be down to management and signage to advise the shoppers on availability and location of the car parking spaces.

Conservation Manager:

Generally comfortable with the scale of the scheme. The proposal follows lengthy pre-application discussions that have sought to address the impact of the development in relation to the Conservation Area and listed buildings as well as trying to reduce the dominance of the buildings when viewed from Central Road.

The external treatment of the elevations facing on to Market Street and Silver Street needs to be controlled through a condition to ensure that there is an acceptable relationship with the smaller historic buildings to the side (Pall Tavern and surrounding structures). The materials for the Central Road elevation also need to be looked at in greater detail - but this can also be achieved through an appropriately worded condition.

Environment Agency:
No objections subject to conditions

Police Architectural Liaison Officer
No comments received.

Area Development Manager:

Supportive of scheme as it will provide Yeovil with a significant competitive edge. It would generally help to achieve the objectives of the Area South Development and the Yeovil Vision, namely:

- to see a vibrant and prosperous economy
- it retains and grows trade within the town centre
- helps to develop Yeovil's sub-regional role.

It will be necessary to ensure that this does not prejudice the viability of other parts of the town. The parking issue needs to be thoroughly considered although it is important to promote pedestrian links and improved bus facilities. Major economic boost to the town with the potential of up to 900 extra jobs - although this itself may create an issue.

Phasing of the development needs to be managed - especially the parking when the existing facility is demolished. Other developments that are potentially coming forward need to be considered to ensure that the town continues to function.

Architects have worked hard to create a scheme that reflects the street pattern of the town and makes best use of the levels. Materials for Central Road need to be considered. Prominent building at entrance on Market Street and creation of square will enhance this area and have a positive impact upon the way it is used. Would prefer to see an active frontage onto Central Road to create a more vibrant feel. Also question the success of the treatment of this elevation.

Treatment of square and the surrounding public realm is important and developers should make contributions to the wider area. The Market Street Brief, approved by Area South Committee requires amongst other things;

- Provision of public toilets is welcome although details need to be clarified.
- Public Art should be required within the site, using local artists.
- Possible contributions towards town centre management.

And this should be sought from the development.

Environmental Protection:

No objection to scheme however recommend various conditions relating mainly to control of potential nuisance during construction phase.

Wessex Water:

No objections to scheme but developer should discuss the issue of drainage and water supply with Wessex Water's Development Engineers.

Yeovil Vision Director:

The proposal accords with the wider aspirations of the Yeovil Vision. In this context one of the key objectives of the Yeovil Vision is to make a step change in the quality of the town centre, to think big and be ambitious for the future. This application meets this aspiration and will help ensure that those living in the surrounding hinterland see Yeovil as a destination choice for their shopping needs. The proposed investment also shows faith in the future of Yeovil and underlines the potential of the town as a regional shopping destination. I am aware that the application poses a number of questions regarding the number of future

parking spaces and the potential disturbance to the town during the construction phase. I am confident that these matters can be resolved by detailed negotiation and in my opinion these issues should not overshadow what is potentially a very positive investment for the town.

Somerset Ambulance Service:

No objections but request that emergency access and egress be provided for the duration of construction.

Economic Development:

Comfortable with this scheme. Well researched proposal that forms part of a larger master plan for the Yeovil area. Economically, this proposal is a good one for Yeovil and is supported by our service.

English Heritage:

Do not wish to comment on this application.

Somerset Disability Forum:

Encourage developers to make full provision for disabled users of scheme.

Transport Strategy Officer:

No objection in principle however important to ensure that a robust Travel Plan is secured. Would also support contributions to the relocation/refurbishment of bus station.

Other Representations:

- A letter from the Methodist Church stressing the obligation of the developer to provide access to the church
- A letter supporting the provision of new toilet facilities but raising concerns about the reduction in parking and the impact upon the highways in the town
- A letter encouraging a more traditional design approach that will preserve the historic character of the town

Planning History

There is no directly relevant planning history for the application site. The original planning permission for the Quedam was granted in the mid 1980's.

Environmental Impact Assessment

The application was accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that addressed the following topics;

- Landscape, townscape and visual impact
- Transport and access
- Noise and Vibration
- Air Quality
- Cultural Heritage
- Socio economic impact
- Water Resources
- Microclimate
- Sustainability
- Ground conditions
- Construction and phasing

Policies

PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development (Feb 2005)

PPS6 - Planning for Town Centres (Mar 2005)
PPG13- Transport (March 2001)
PPG15- Planning and the Historic Environment (Sept 1994)
PPG16- Archaeology and Planning (Nov 1990)
PPG23- Planning and Pollution Control (Nov 2004)
PPS25 - Development and Flood Risk (Dec 2006)

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Draft 2006
Development Policy A - Identifies Yeovil as a Strategically Significant Town
Development Policy D - Required Infrastructure for Development
Development Policy E - High Quality Design
Development Policy G - Sustainable Construction
Development Policy H - Reusing Land
SR24 - Identifies the need for Yeovil to grow in terms of housing and employment
ENV5 - Protecting the Historic Environment
RE5 - Renewable Energy and New Development (currently being reviewed)
TC1 - Cities and Town centres

Joint Somerset & Exmoor Structure Plan Review 1991-2011 (adopted April 2000)

STR2 - Identification of Yeovil as an important sub-regional town
STR4 - Development Towns
Policy 20 - The Retail Framework
Policy 21 - Town Centre Uses
Policy 48 - Access and Parking
Policy 49 - Transport Requirements of New Development
Policy 50 - Traffic Management

South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006)
ST5 - Principles of Development
ST6 - Quality of development
EP5 - Contaminated Land
EU3 - Foul water disposal
EU4 - Surface Water Disposal
MC2 - Yeovil Town Shopping Area
MC7 - Design in Town Centres
EH1 - Conservation Areas
EH5 - Development affecting the setting of Listed Buildings
EH12 - Archaeological Areas
TP1 - New development and Pedestrian Provision
TP2 - Travel Plans
TP6 - Parking Provision

Yeovil Urban Development Framework (UDF) - (Final Draft Sept 2005)

The UDF was commissioned by the district council to articulate the objectives and aspirations of the Yeovil Vision. The purpose of the UDF is to provide a robust and clear development strategy for delivering, through a spatial framework, with specific urban design guidance for key strategic sites. Although the Vincents site was not in itself identified, surrounding opportunities were identified, such as the Cattle Market site, the enhancement of Reckleford and improvements to the bus station area.

Market Street Development Brief (Adopted June 2007)

The Market Street Brief was presented to and approved by the Area South committee in June 2007. The requirement for the brief stemmed from the previous refused application for the cattle market and a realisation that the Council needed to be more pro-active in

influencing the way in which the site could be developed. It was considered necessary to include the Vincents site and Court Ash area within what was formally known as the 'Cattle Market Brief' study because of the clear links between them and the obvious opportunity to provide a more strategic framework that could be pro-active in managing the way the sites were developed. The developers of the Quedam approached the Council at an early stage and this meant that the retail expansion could be 'factored in', which then meant that it wasn't imperative that the cattle market site was developed for retail.

Car Park Study

A study of car parking was commissioned by the district several years ago to allow us to more effectively manage our stock and meet demand. This study, although still relevant, was clearly based upon several variables that have meant that the car parking forecasts are not borne out by the information that we have.

Planning Considerations

Principle:

Yeovil is identified both within the existing Regional Planning Guidance Note 10 - South West (RPG10) and the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) as a strategically important town and is considered to be the most appropriate location within South Somerset for growth. Members will be familiar with the 3 'key sites' surrounding the town that will themselves provide over 2000 houses and there is a further requirement contained within the RSS for many more.

Planning Policy Statement 6 (Planning for Town Centres) clearly sets out the approach local planning authorities should adopt when considering this type of development. In brief, the document stresses the need to ensure that there is adequate retail capacity (money to spend on shopping) within a town to ensure that the development does not have a detrimental impact upon the viability and vitality of the existing shops. The second important consideration is the location of the development, again to ensure that it does not draw shoppers away from the existing town centre and also increases the opportunity for shoppers to use public transport.

Over the period of 2005/2006 the district council employed the retail consultants DPDS to carry out a study to provide a detailed strategy on which we could base our assessment of forthcoming retail applications within. The study concluded that Yeovil had an increasing role to play and that there was potential for significant retail growth within the town. Based upon forecasted expenditure it was predicted that as a minimum there was capacity for the following additional floorspace:

2010 - 13,083 sq m additional sales area
2016 - 33,996 sq m additional sales area.

After allowing for the removal of 4,170 sq m of existing space the proposed development will provide a net addition of 17,445 sq m of comparison goods floorspace. This amount is above the capacity requirements for 2010 however is well below the 33,996 sq m that is required by 2016.

Aside from the demand for the additional floorspace it is also necessary to consider whether the proposed site is the most appropriate location for the town's retail expansion.

The key consideration when assessing the location of such a scheme is its physical relationship with the existing town centre. The reason for this is twofold; firstly a retail scheme that is remote from the existing town centre may reduce its popularity and may serve to undermine its vitality and viability to the detriment of the town. Secondly, a new retail

centre some distance from the existing town is unlikely to benefit from the existing transport links currently enjoyed by the town and as a result may result in an increase in customers having to use the private motor vehicle.

Members may recall the period during the late 1980's and early 1990's when the government policy on the location of retail uses was relaxed. The result of this approach is demonstrated in Yeovil by the presence of supermarkets such as Morrisons and Asda in locations well away from the traditional town centre and it is inevitable that this has had an impact upon the vitality and viability of the town.

It is acknowledged within the adopted Market Street Brief that the expansion of the Quedam is the most appropriate site for significant retail expansion on the basis that it adjoins the site and benefits from a favourable topography. The site will link directly into the existing Quedam and the proposed scheme will provide an extended shopping circuit, rather than attracting customers away from Middle Street. The proposed department store and larger units will provide an additional draw for people who live outside of the town and currently visit other shopping towns such as Taunton. It is also likely that an improved retail offer will reduce the 'leakage' of trade the town currently experiences to its nearest economic rivals.

Members will be aware of a previous application to develop the Cattle Market Site and the fact that the application was refused and a subsequent appeal was dismissed on the basis of poor connectivity with the town and the visual impact of large retail 'sheds' in this prominent location. Subsequent discussions have taken place and the Market Street Brief now identifies the Cattle Market as being a predominantly residential site with the Quedam meeting the need for additional retail floor space. An application for the Cattle Market site is currently being considered and the aspiration is to facilitate two major developments that will have a positive impact upon the town.

Visual Impact:

The existing Quedam was built in the mid 1980's and it is generally acknowledged that its design/layout has been successful in providing an attractive additional shopping street that was required at the time. It is clear from the various studies listed above that there is a need for this additional shopping 'loop' and therefore it is imperative to ensure that this scheme reaches/exceeds the existing standards.

The creation of the additional open street is considered to be a more appropriate form of retail development than the ubiquitous covered shopping mall. The additional street emulates the character of the original shopping areas and it is generally accepted that this type of retail development is likely to be visually acceptable for many years to come whereas there is always a risk an internal 'mall' type development can appear dated fairly quickly.

One of the key views of the development will be from Central Road/Market Street. This is where the development will appear most prominent as it will be significantly higher than the existing car park and garage site. The treatment of the Central Road elevation required detailed consideration as there was potential to create a structure that would have an overbearing and dominant impact upon the road. Following negotiations between the architects and the Conservation Manager an approach was agreed upon that managed to create what appear to be individual elements thereby reducing the perception of the mass of the building although the actual materials for the lower element are yet to be agreed.

Another concern of the Conservation Manager is the impact of the department store upon the adjoining Conservation Area and the adjacent small scale buildings and views through to the church. The scale of building and its position has been chosen to reduce the potential for conflict however the actual treatment of this elevation requires further negotiation and can be controlled through condition. It is however accepted that the entrance onto Market Street is

of an appropriate scale, creating an impressive gateway into the extended retail area. The positioning of the entrance also sits very comfortably with the Cattle Market proposals as the pedestrian movement from this scheme will flow across a proposed public square and in to the Quedam. The creation of this square is considered to be a welcome enhancement and will have a positive impact upon the character of this section of Market Street, thereby increasing the likelihood for pedestrian use. The Cattle Market development also proposes limited retail frontage onto this square.

Within the development it is considered to be necessary to ensure that there is some form of harmony to the shop advertisements and it is recommended that a condition be imposed that requires the developer to submit details of design guidance for shopfronts. A condition is also recommended to ensure that a 'palette' of street furniture within the development is agreed.

Traffic:

It is agreed, based upon established formulas, that the enhanced retail centre may generate up to a maximum of 15% additional visitors. This is obviously a real benefit to the local economy however it will inevitably have an impact upon the local highway system.

The Highway Authority are content that the existing infrastructure can cope with the increase in vehicles however they are adamant that this development generates the need for a revised access onto Reckleford. This would involve an 'all-way' junction controlled by traffic lights that would enable drivers descending over Reckleford to turn right into Market Street, rather than having to drive around the one way system at the bottom of town (Wyndham Street, Central Road etc). The applicants have clearly stated within their submission that they are willing to pay a sum of £250,000 toward this junction however at this time the costs have not yet been quantified. The Highway Authority have stressed that this work should be carried out prior to the retail extension being brought into use and they have also made it clear that the developer will be expected to design and carry out the improvements themselves (in accordance with details to be agreed by the Highway Authority).

Apart from the requirement for highway infrastructure works there is also a requirement for the developer to make a contribution towards the design or construction of a new or refurbished bus station. The developer acknowledges that the scheme will result in additional visitors to the town and therefore as a responsible authority that is committed to the principles of sustainable development and it is considered to be justified to request a contribution toward improving public transport opportunities. The existing bus station is not particularly attractive to passengers and work is currently on-going to assess what is the most appropriate way to enhance it. This may take the form of improving the existing facility or amending its location to create a 'bus street'. The actual figure has not yet been quantified but will be reported to the committee.

There is a potential issue with the creation of a public square on Market Street as the existing road will pass through it, however it is considered that an appropriate design with calming measures can be achieved to ensure that pedestrian safety is not compromised.

Parking:

It is acknowledged that parking provision for both residential and commercial development is a contentious issue within the town and therefore it is essential to ensure that this development does not create a shortfall that would have an impact upon the way in which Yeovil operates.

Members will see from the comments of the Car Parks Manager that there has been a significant reduction in town centre parking. This has meant that there is spare capacity during the peak time (Saturday lunchtime) of approximately 500 spaces in the town. This is

a result of several factors however it seems likely that the free parking available within Tesco's is having a significant effect.

Although a large amount of the free spaces are within Goldcroft, Huish and Brunswick Street there is still other capacity within the town and following negotiations it is considered that improvements to signage and the Vehicle Management System (electronic 'scoreboards' that indicate where parking is available) will improve the usability of these more peripheral car parks. It is also recommended that the Staff Travel Plan provides for free parking for employees in these car parks thereby reducing the pressure on the more attractive car parks and giving each car park a differing role. This approach accords with government policy that encourages local authorities to manage the existing parking stock more effectively to utilise capacity rather than creating new parking facilities

Concern was expressed by the Town Council about the loss of parking during construction of the new facility. These concerns are understood and the developers have indicated that they will phase the construction so as to provide limited parking within the Quedam during this time. They are also agreeable to funding a park and ride during peak times during construction.

It is considered that a development of this magnitude will inevitably have a short term impact upon the way in which the town operates yet it is considered that a pro-active, collaborative approach to managing the situation, using innovative measures will ensure that the inconvenience will be limited and the effects only short term.

Impact upon amenity:

This site is surrounded by commercial development and as such has little impact upon the amenity of private individuals. There is a terrace of properties on the other side of Central Road (Vincent Place) but they are in the region of 30m away and are for the most part screened by a row of trees and shrubs.

As members will see from the representations a letter has been received from the Methodist Church stressing that the development should not have an impact upon their access through the Quedam. The developers are aware of this issue and have stressed that they can accommodate this within the development.

Sustainability:

Sustainability is a term that encompasses three key elements of any development; namely the social, economic and environmental impacts of the scheme. The economic impacts of the scheme have already been addressed and it is clear that the expansion of the town's retail attraction is desirable and necessary to meet the needs of the increasing population. Furthermore, the development will create significant opportunities for local labour during the construction period and the increase in shopping floorspace will require significant numbers of additional retail staff. The social impact of the development is less clear however it is inevitable that a buoyant local economy will have a positive social impact, an effect that will be increased by a greater pride in the town's improved position in the regional hierarchy. The environmental element of sustainability is simpler to assess. Firstly, it has already been acknowledged that the extension of the existing shopping centre is the most appropriate form of retail expansion as this town centre location increases the potential for shoppers to visit without relying upon the private motor vehicle. The Vincent's garage site can therefore be described as a sustainable location for this scale of development. The developer's supporting information states that the development should achieve a 'very good' rating when evaluated against the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM). The criteria that are measured by an independent assessor to score the BREEAM rating include:

- Environmental Policy
- Energy use and system efficiency
- Carbon emissions
- U-values
- Travel Plans and transport links
- Recycling materials in construction
- Waste management and disposal
- Use of materials
- Land use and ecology
- Pollution

It is considered that the BREEAM rating system is a useful measure of how serious the developers are about minimising the environmental impact of the development and it is recommended that a condition be imposed that ensures that the scheme is developed in accordance with this rating.

Construction and Phasing:

One of the biggest challenges associated with a development of this size is managing the impact it has on the town/local population during the construction period. As well as the parking issues that have already been described there are other issues in terms of hours of construction, disruption caused to shoppers etc. This effect is likely to be exacerbated by other developments that may also be commenced within the town, such as Reckleford gyratory or the Cattle Market site and it is therefore essential that there is a strategic overview to ensure that the town continues to function during this period of construction/investment.

The applicants have submitted a plan indicating timescales of construction however it is considered important to impose a condition that ensures the phasing programme is agreed with the relevant officers of the district and county council. It has been also been agreed within the district council that it will be necessary to bring together relevant officers to ensure that the effects of the construction phase are managed pro-actively whilst having the necessary authority and experience to react to specific situations that may occur.

Summary

It is considered that this significant extension of the retail area will, in principle, have a beneficial impact upon the profile of the town and its economy. The development is located within the centre of town and in planning policy terms is the ideal location for this type of development as planning authorities are usually faced with proposals for out of town retail developments. Yeovil is growing and will continue to grow significantly in terms of population and it is essential that its town centre grows commensurately to avoid residents being drawn away from the district to do their shopping. Furthermore, it is advantageous for the town's economy to improve the attractiveness of its retail centre so that it can attract shoppers from outside of the district.

There is no doubt that the proposed extension will have a significant visual impact, especially upon Central Road and Market Street and the creation of a modern shopping centre will invariably change the character of the area. This was acknowledged by officers at a very early stage and as a result of this lengthy discussions have taken place between the developer's architects and the council's architect. These discussions have resulted in a design of a scale and form that will not detract from the character of the area and will not cause harm to the setting of the adjoining Conservation Area and listed buildings.

There are issues relating to parking, however members will see from the report that the relevant officers have been consulted and the appropriate information received and as a

result of detailed and lengthy negotiations it is considered that the scheme is acceptable. It is however considered to be necessary to ensure that the developer makes contributions to improve the visibility of the more peripheral car parks through signage and changes to the electronic system. A travel plan for staff should also provide financial incentives to park in the less attractive car parks, such as Huish. Members will also be aware that the existing Quedam car park is not particularly user-friendly in terms of layout and sizes of space whereas the new facility will be of modern day standard and all spaces will be easy to access.

The Highways Authority are satisfied that the infrastructure is sufficient to cope with the additional demand apart from the requirement to provide an 'all way' traffic junction on Reckleford as this will reduce the amount of vehicles having to circle around what is commonly known as the Reckleford Gyratory. This junction is required for both the Quedam and Cattle Market development and whichever scheme is implemented first is required to construct it. The new entrance to the Quedam car park, directly off Central Road will also reduce the queuing problems experienced at the current entrance next to the bus station

The phasing of the development is going to be crucial especially with the potential for other significant schemes to come forward at the same time and it is considered that both the developer and other relevant authorities have a responsibility to work together to minimise the impact.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application reference 07/03898 be approved subject to:

(a) the prior completion of a section 106 planning obligation (in a form acceptable to the Council's solicitor(s)) before the decision notice granting planning permission is issued, the said planning obligation to cover the following items/issues:

- A30 junction improvements / other highway works
- Improvements to accessibility for existing parking at Goldcroft and Huish and increasing capacity of existing car parks
- Travel Plan for workers
- Park and Ride Provision during construction (Saturdays and other key dates such as Christmas)
- Permanent provision of public toilets within the development to be managed and maintained by operators of the Quedam
- Contributions towards public realm improvements on Market Street
- Contributions towards bus station improvements

and

(b) The imposition of such planning conditions as necessary to address the impacts of the development.

Justification

The proposed extension of this retail development in this town centre location would not adversely affect highways safety, the vitality and viability of the town centre or the provision of parking in the town centre. This development could be achieved without detriment to the character and appearance of the locality and the setting of the conservation area. Other impacts of the development could be satisfactorily addressed by conditions. Accordingly, subject to a Section 106 Agreement to secure the necessary developer obligations, the proposal complies with policies ST5, ST6, EP5, EU3, EU4, MC2, MC7, EH1, EH5, EH12,

TP1, TP2, and TP6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted 2006).

It is likely that the following conditions will be recommended:

- 1) Time limit
- 2) Details of materials to be approved, including sample panels where appropriate
- 3) Details of phasing of development (demolition/parking/public realm/landscaping/highway/utility works)
- 4) Submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan
- 5) Details of hard and soft landscaping
- 6) Details of treatment of communal areas within development (eg seats, lamp posts)
- 7) Details of waste reduction/disposal strategy
- 8) Submission of a strategy for shopfront/advertisement design
- 9) Submission of a strategy for disposal of surface and foul water
- 10) Submission of a strategy for sustainable construction (demonstrating how the BREEAM standard will be met)
- 11) Provision of bicycle parking within the development
- 12) Details of noise/vibration emanating from plant and machinery
- 13) Details of the treatment of the Market Street frontage of the department store
- 14) Archaeology requirements
- 15) Details of public art to be provided within the development
- 16) No deliveries or collections to take place between 23:00 and 07:00
- 17) Details of any music or public address systems
- 18) Details of methods of odour control from food outlets
- 19) Contaminated land remediation works to be carried out
- 20) Oil, fuels and chemicals to be stored within bunded areas
- 21) Site levels to be agreed

Any other conditions as required by the Highway Authority.

A final, full draft of the recommended conditions will be circulated to members in advance of the committee meeting as an Appendix to the agenda.
