

15 October 2007

Miranda Burroughes
Planning Department
St Albans District Council
St Peter's Street
St Albans, AL1 3JE

Dear Miranda,

Odeon Site, London Road, St Albans

I have been instructed by Mike Moulton of Wattsdow Limited to look afresh at the redevelopment of the former Odeon building on London Road, St Albans.

The sketches enclosed (1329/SK107, 110, 111, 112, 113 and 114) are concept studies for general discussion at our meeting. I have looked at all the relevant planning history of the site and strongly believe that the content of these sketches might overcome the constraints of the site and former reasons for refusal. Notwithstanding the wider provisions of the St Albans District Plan Review Adopted November 1994 these sketches are made specifically relative to Policies 69, 70 and 85.

I summarise my thinking by way of the pertinent bullet points.

1. The sketches have been produced on the understanding that the principle of a replacement residential scheme built on a raised podium over basement parking with access via Paxton Road is acceptable.
2. The proposal is for 14 flats arranged as 6 two bedroom maisonettes, 6 two bedroom Duplex apartments and 2 three bedroom penthouses.
3. The key design concept here is to find a plan arrangement that provides a logical elevational treatment, which will avoid previous concerns and be credible when tested by policy.

4. In this regard I have arranged apartments so that they 'stack' as maisonettes or duplexes and thus overcome the issue of overlooking or overbearing upon properties of and gardens of Paxton Road. By doing so I have created a 'module' the proportions of which relate to and are reminiscent of the large art deco panels found on the existing building.

5. This approach successfully creates a building form where plan and elevation relate logically and make for an attractive appearance that has a memory of the Odeon building but in avoidance of being a pastiche of it.

M. Britta
Bsc Hons. Dip Arch RIBA
Consultant: G. Britta
Dip Arch(hons) RIBA MAPS



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- 6. The main body of the building would be set back from the London Road by up to 3m. This will afford privacy and natural daylight to apartments.
- 7. The proposed building would have equal presence on the street scene as the existing but in a different and interesting way. A row of elegant columns supporting a louvered canopy would maintain the building line, frame the elevations provide a greater sense of privacy. This would be integrated with hard surface treatments, handrails and a distinctive glazed entrance feature.
- 8. The height of the building would be as before, 4 storeys above the London Road, five storeys above gardens to the rear and all upon a basement car park as before.
- 9. The depth of the building would be less than before keeping a simple rear building line and allowing for good landscape opportunities for both small areas of private amenity and generous areas of communal amenity.

10. Layout. The building is arranged as six grid bays symmetrical on a central access stair. Maisonettes would be accessed via the rear gardens, upper floor duplex flats by a single corridor. The penthouses have direct access to the central lift and stair. This layout is very economical upon communal access spaces and has allowed me to generate compact access to spacious apartments. This in turn has allowed a less bulky building with a much reduced perceived mass and bulk.

11. Internal layouts. Lower Ground / Ground - living rooms have a southerly garden aspect and natural daylight via decorative pavement lights over kitchen breakfast areas. Bedrooms look north. First Floor and Second Floor duplex apartments have natural light over two floors looking north. Penthouse apartments have North East / North West aspects with a balcony feature to the south and positioned in the centre of the building with views of Paxton Road in avoidance of overlooking gardens in Paxton Road.

12. Materials. The building would be made using brick and render elevations creating vertical portrait proportions. The building would feature modern glazed walling elements to the London Road only. A distinctive coloured glass entrance feature would be reminiscent of Odeon buildings and the use of glass in art deco buildings but in a fresh and contemporary way.

Steven Barker and I would be pleased to discuss the merits of the above when we meet shortly.

Yours sincerely

Emmeline
M Briffa

CC
Mike Moulit + enclosures
Steven Barker + enclosures



Historic St Albans District becoming Hertfordshire's premier community
 Planning Officer
 Miranda Burroughes

Yours faithfully,

Also attached is your receipt.

English Heritage
 East of England Region
 Brooklands
 24 Brooklands Avenue
 Cambridge
 CB2 8BU

So that further proposals can be forwarded directly, Michael Munt's address is:

I refer to your meeting with a member of the Development Control Team concerning the above-mentioned addresses and regarding the development referred to.
 I attach the informal notes and views expressed at the meeting and following any further enquiries or investigations necessary. I would stress that the advice given is on an informal basis only and is not binding on any future decision of the Council as Local Planning Authority. It is not a commitment or guarantee, but simply an indication.

RE: Former Odeon Cinema, 166 London Road, St Albans

Dear Sir,

F.A.O. Steven Barker

Barker Parry Town Planning
 33 Bancroft
 Hitchin
 Hertfordshire
 SG5 1LA

Our Ref: IF/07/0399
 Your Ref: SJB/pm/04093_89
 Please ask for: Miss M Burroughes
 Extension: 2705
 E-mail: planning@stalbans.gov.uk
 Fax No: 01727 845658
 Date: 13 November 2007

ENTERPRISE & CIVIC ENVIRONMENT
 Dean Goodman – Head of Planning & Building Control



19 NOV 2007

INFORMAL MEETING SUMMARY

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| <p>Date: 30/10/07 Officer: Miranda Burroughes, Jayne West Also attending: Michael Munt (English Heritage)</p> | <p>ADDRESS: Former Odeon Cinema, 166 London Road, St Albans</p> | <p>PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing cinema and erection of twelve 2-bed duplex apartments and two 3-bed penthouses</p> | <p>DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES: Policy 4 New Housing Development in Towns Policy 34 Highway Considerations in Development Control Policy 39 Parking Standards, General Requirements Policy 40 Residential Development Parking Standards Policy 69 General Design and Layout Policy 70 Design and Layout of New Housing Policy 74 Landscaping and Tree Preservation Policy 85 Development in Conservation Areas Policy 121 St Albans City Centre Policy Area 7 London Road Design Advice Leaflet No. 1 Revised Parking Policies and Standards, January 2002</p> | <p>ISSUES: Design and layout Impact on neighbours Amenity space Car parking Access/ highway safety Leisure services Bin stores/recycling</p> | <p>HISTORY: 5/06/2193 - Demolition of existing cinema and erection of twenty flats with associated parking and landscaping (resubmission following refusal of 5/05/0435). Refused 12/12/06. Appeal ref. APP/B1930/A/07/2034881 dismissed 12/06/07. 5/06/2194CA - Demolition of existing cinema and erection of twenty flats with associated parking and landscaping (resubmission following refusal of 5/05/0434CA). Refused 12/12/06. Appeal ref. APP/B1930/E/07/2034914 dismissed 12/06/07. 5/05/0435 - Demolition of cinema and erection of 14 flats (resubmission following refusal of 5/03/2078). Refused 22/04/05. Appeal ref. APP/B1930/E/05/1180103 dismissed 30/09/05. 5/05/0434CA - Demolition of cinema including facade. Conservation Area Consent refused 22/04/06. Appeal ref. APP/B1930/E/05/1180104 dismissed 30/09/05. 5/03/2078 - Demolition of cinema, rebuilding and construction of 14 flats and car park to rear. Refused 12/05/04. Appeal ref. APP/B1930/E/04/1158437 dismissed 30/09/06. 5/03/2077CA - Demolition of cinema (including facade). Refused</p> |
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| <p>Conservation Area Consent 12/05/04. Appeal ref. APP/B1930/E/04/1158513 dismissed 30/09/06.</p> <p>5/00/1621 - Retention of existing facade to London Road, construction of an office building to rear and car park structure on opposite side. Approved 08/03/01.</p> <p>5/00/1620CA - Retention of existing facade to London Road and demolition of the remainder of the building. Approved 17/10/00.</p> <p>5/98/2339 - Retention of existing facade to London Road and construction of new office building to the rear, car parks and four one bed flats for social housing. Approved 17/12/99.</p> <p>5/98/2339CA - Retention of front facade and demolition of remainder of building. Approved 17/12/99.</p> <p>5/98/1304 - Retention of front facade and construction of office building and erection of one bed affordable housing and ancillary car park. Refused 03/11/98.</p> <p>5/98/1293CA - Retention of front facade and demolition of remainder of building. Refused 03/11/98.</p> | <p><u>Design and layout:</u></p> <p>The new building will need to reflect its residential use. Human scale will be important (for example, the scale of the columns), as will the presence and legibility of the entrance. The active skyline of the area and existing Odeon building could be reflected by punctuating the roof line of the building, and by adding further relief to the front facade. Further details on the use of materials and finishes would need to be discussed at a later date. With regard to the rear elevation, consideration should be given to how the rear flank presents to the end of Paxton Road. There is an opportunity for bringing some liveliness to this elevation. The LPA would be happy to comment on any informal submissions relating to the treatment of the side and rear elevations of the building.</p> <p><u>Impact on neighbours:</u></p> <p>The proposal sees the building set further from residential properties in Lower Paxton Road. Internal layout would need to be considered to ensure that the privacy of adjoining occupiers is maintained, in accordance with the standards in Policy 70. The garden and screen will need to be treated carefully to prevent overlooking. The increased distance from the rear boundary of the site offers more flexibility in terms of the insertion of windows, and the use of high-level light windows may be acceptable.</p> <p><u>Amenity space:</u></p> <p>Approximately 440m² of amenity space appears to be shown surrounding the buildings, and this would accord with the requirements of Policy 70 and Design Advice Leaflet No. 1.</p> <p><u>Parking provision and access/highway safety:</u></p> <p>The previous application parking provision of 1.5 spaces per unit. This was considered to be acceptable and did not form part of the reason for refusal. No details of parking layout were</p> |
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| <p>shown at the meeting, but the reduction in the number of units does offer some flexibility in layout. A similar level of parking provision (1.5 spaces per unit) is likely to be acceptable for any new application.</p> <p>Attention should be given to sustainable transport measures, including the provision of cycle storage facilities.</p> <p>Attention should also be given to the Hertfordshire Highways produced 'Advice Notes for Applicants' guide, provided at the meeting.</p> <p><u>Leisure services:</u> Leisure contributions are likely to be required, as for the previous application, although the amounts are based on the number and size of units so will be different.</p> <p><u>Bin stores/ recycling:</u> The provision of bin stores will be necessary, detailed advice can be found in the information from the Council's Environment and Health department provided at the meeting.</p> | <p>CONCLUSION</p> |
| <p>In conclusion, further thought will be given to the legitimacy, interest, presence and human scale of the front and rear elevations of the building. Parking standards and access arrangements similar to the previous application are likely to be acceptable for any future application. Privacy of neighbours should be carefully considered for any new application, including the use of screens in the garden area.</p> | |



Our Ref: SJB/pm/04093_90

Ms M Burroughes
Planning Officer
St Albans City & District Council
Civic Centre
St Peters Street
St Albans
Herts
AL1 3JE

22 November 2007

Dear Ms Burroughes

**Former Odeon Cinema
Pre-application advice given on 30th October 2007 and consequent note of meeting**

Thank you very much for forwarding your note of our meeting on the 30th October. With so much history relating to this site certain matters remain as before and are not contentious and I am please to note confirmation that no objection is raised to the height, depth and width of the smaller building block now proposed for the established basement podium. Indeed, you acknowledged that a building of this bulk and scale was less close to housing to the south than all previous proposals both approved and otherwise.

Insofar as our sketch proposals gave rise to debate it is fair to say that this related to the detail design and its effect upon neighbours, particularly to the rear. In this regard, under your headings of design and layout and impact upon neighbours, Matt Briffa and I noted the following matters as either agreed or agreed as acceptable and to be incorporated in the next round of preliminary proposals.

Details agreed as acceptable:

- > The glazed pavement light
- > The idea that the building line is maintained by the columns at back edge of pavement
- > The acceptance of a decorative open louvre
- > The acceptance of a water feature as a means to prevent overlooking at the rear
- > The acceptance of a high level balcony feature affording SW views from penthouses

Details agreed as acceptable to be revised and/or introduced:

- > Treatment of the canopy
- > A more prominent entrance feature
- > A raised entrance feature at parapet level
- > A human scale entrance canopy designed to compliment railings
- > The reposition of decorative louvre (above) at a lower height so as to enhance a human scale

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- > Attention to a varied parapet line and attention to the corner details at penthouse level
- > The suggestion from JW that more curved shapes might be incorporated (see above also
- > The suggestion from JW and MM that window fenestration to London Road might have its own protruding aesthetic
- > The enhancement to the rear situation to emphasise a more domestic opportunity where maisonettes at podium level relate better to houses in Paxton Road
- > The acceptance of high level windows to the rear for kitchens and non habitable rooms

The architect is currently incorporating these agreed details or suggested changes in the next refinement of the plans so please let me know immediately if we have misinterpreted your views.

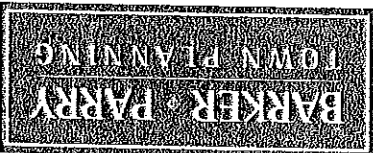
Yours sincerely

Steven Barker

Steven Barker

Email: steven@barkerparry.co.uk

Copy to: Mr M Moulte
Mr M Briffa
Mr M Munt



Our Ref: SJB/pm/04093_9

Ms M Burroughes
Planning Officer
St Albans City & District Council
Civic Centre
St Peters Street
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AL1 3JE

14 December 2007

Dear Ms Burroughes

**Former Odeon Cinema
Further revisions to preliminary drawings pursuant to pre-application meeting of
30th October 2007 and consequent notes (20.11.07 and 22.11.07)**

Following my last letter of the 22nd November Matt Britta has been refining and adding to the preliminary drawings along the lines agreed. The plans along, with Matt's own commentary, are as follows:

1329/SK107B – This describes the front elevation:

- Columns to the back edge of pavement and supporting a metal louvre give the scheme a sense of semi private space where the bulk of the building is set back to allow privacy to future occupants. Columns are positioned on the back edge of the entrance canopy and a balustrade. These architectural elements maintain a visual presence in line with the building line of the London Road. Further to our meeting (30th October) I have lowered the columns so that they create a greater sense of enclosure and of a human scale.

- Canopy. As suggested I have incorporated a canopy that would bridge the space between pavement and main entrance. Again this will enhance the human scale of the proposals.

- Main entrance. The central 'signpost' feature of the building is its entrance and stair access. Previous sketches promoted an idea that this might use coloured glass to contrast the brick and render of the main elevation. It was suggested at our meeting that this element could be pulled forward a little and raised in height. I agree that both ideas would give the proposals more legibility when viewed obliquely in the streetscene.

- Parapet. We discussed how the parapet might be expressed above the colonnade louvre and that the corners of the top floor apartments could be set back and

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without an over sailing roof. These ideas have been incorporated and when developed in detail I think that some additional curved forms would be appropriate in the detailing of these important corner elements.

1329/SK110, 111, 112 and 113 are as before so please note that on Drawing SK111 the columns would now align with the modules - See SK107 above.

These plans demonstrate an efficient plan layout with minimal circulation. By proposing 'duplex' apartments the issue of overlooking the rear gardens of housing in Paxton Road can be avoided. The vertical proportions of these apartments could then be represented on the facade of the building. These proportions are not dissimilar to the large panel elements of the cinema facade. The intent here is for a plan arrangement to be clearly eligible by its facade and for the appearance of this facade to be reminiscent of (but not a pastiche of) the existing cinema. The plans retain pavement lights, rear penthouse balconies and water feature as before.

1329/SK114A

I have amended the side elevation, which describes with clarity the low level canopy, the lowered louvre, the raised entrance feature and the 'cut back roof' of the penthouse. These amendments give the building better articulation and visual interest.

1329/SK115A

This new drawing describes how the rear elevation could be treated in a manner sympathetic to the housing in Paxton Road. The lower levels represent terrace dwellings. Where these are set back from the edifice line of the rear cinema and where they directly relate to landscaped gardens; I think this treatment would create an attractive new urban space, which is both safe and of human scale. I have treated the lower section with brickwork and the upper levels in render. This approach provides some linear interest in an effort to minimise the visual bulk and mass of this elevation.

The elevation is simple and without over embellishment. At a detail design stage I would suggest the careful detailing of linear decorative brickwork to separate brick and render, perhaps a pronounced band of brick together with simple recessed jointing to indicate separate dwellings. Lintels and sills might also be designed to provide visual interest.

In this first preliminary drawing the fenestration is treated similarly across the width of the site but it has been established that habitable room windows with a southerly outlook are acceptable in the western half of the site which aligns with the axis of Lower Paxton Road. Consequently, the rear facade need not be uniformly treated and views of others would be welcome here.

I enclose two sets of the drawings for yourself and Jayne West and a further set along with a copy of this letter has been sent directly to Michael Munt at English Heritage in Cambridge. As I am sure you will appreciate, as we head into another winter Watstdown faces further costs associated with stabilising the ever deteriorating structure and they are keen to progress a formal submission. Consequently, if you do have any comments and observations I shall be grateful to receive them before January 11th (4 weeks today) as by the middle of January Matt Briffa is programmed to begin full application drawings and unless we hear from you by that date it will be assumed that the further refinement of the preliminary drawings meets with your general approval.



Copy to Mr M Munt with drawings
Mr M Munt

Encs; drawings x 2

Steven Barker
Email: steven@barkerparry.co.uk



Yours sincerely

I look forward to hearing from you in due course and in the meantime wish you a Happy Christmas.



19 February 2008

BY EMAIL

Gavin Cooper
Planning Department
St Albans District Council
St Peter's Street
St Albans, AL1 3JE

Dear Gavin,

Odeon Site, London Road, St Albans

I understand that you have now taken charge of this application. We have spoken recently with regard to Steven Barker's letter of 22nd November 2007 and my revised sketch studies made in response to our pre application meeting of 30th October. I understand that Jayne West and Michael Munt of English Heritage have made positive responses to these revised sketches but we have yet to see any formal guidance from you on this. I think Miranda Burroughes may have advised a deadline of 1st Jan for this guidance?

We have been instructed to proceed with detailed plans, elevations and sketches based upon the guidance notes set out by Miranda Burroughes, Jayne West and Michael Munt of the above meeting (30th October). In this regard I attach herewith and for your informal comment our drawings 1329/01D, 03D, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08 and 09 together with details of proposed glazing fenestration.

You will note how my sketches have been faithfully developed as computer drawings and indeed the designs have been refined and generally improved.

In summary, the proposals incorporate the following design matters previously agreed acceptable and not describe in detail the full intentions of this proposal.

- Glazed pavement light
- The idea that the building line is maintained by columns at the back edge of the pavement.
- The acceptance of a high level louvre.
- The acceptance of a high level balcony feature affording south west views at the rear.
- Treatment of the high level (positioned lower) canopy and entrance canopy of human scale.
- A more prominent entrance feature.

M. Britfa
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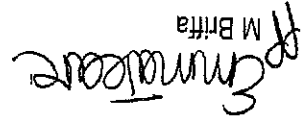


19 February 2008
1329: Gavin Cooper cont.

BRIFA Phillips

- A raised level entrance at parapet level.
 - Development of a varied parapet line.
 - Development of curved shaped enclosures at penthouse level.
 - The development of window fenestration to the London Road. Here we describe a composition that includes for a limited colour statement (vertical opening light) together with large clear glazing elements where timber louvres are fixed within sealed glazing units (see details attached). The thinking here was for a more measured colour statement than before together with a more domestic and welcoming timber aesthetic.
 - The development of the rear situation so as to emphasise a more domestic opportunity where maisonettes at podium level relate better to houses in Paxton Road.
 - The acceptance of high level windows to kitchens and non habitable rooms.
 - The development of flank elevations by the introduction of fenestration (obscure over alley) to add interest.
 - The introduction of a memorial plaque to the west flank elevation.
 - The introduction of horizontal railings between columns to the back edge of pavement to the London Road.
 - The introduction of allocated bicycle stores and allocated motorcycle spaces.
 - The introduction of refuse collection compounds.
 - The introduction of fresh air ventilation on east west elevations in avoidance of ventilation grills on Paxton Road.
 - The introduction of rear facing 'shallow bay windows' to study room windows and with solid elements preventing overlooking toward gardens in Paxton Road but with clear east / west side lights to allow daylight to these rooms.
 - The development of hard surfacing designs for the rear amenity space which includes paving design and soft landscaping proposals.
- I have emailed these drawings directly to Jayne and Michael and await any informal guidance prior to our full plans submission.

Yours sincerely


M Britta

Encs

CC

Mr M Moutt
Mr S Barker
Mrs J West
Mr M Munt