



WALTHAM FOREST LOCAL PLAN
WALTHAMSTOW TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN

Hearing Statement

**Inspector's Matters and Issues – Matter 4 –
Key Opportunity Sites**

Hearing Session – 17th December 2013

7. **Is there sufficient flexibility in the AAP to cope with changes to individual sites which might render them undeliverable for the purposes envisaged in the Plan?**

Relevant Representations

7.1 wtcps20 (Peacock and Smith) – Proposed amendments to proposals on South Grove – Delivery and viability of Opportunity Site 15 is threatened by site proposals.

7.2 WSD22 - Statement of Common Ground - Between Morrison's (represented by Peacock and Smith) and LBWF.

7.3 wtcps25 (Turley Associates) – Amend the 'overly prescriptive' site proposal of Key Opportunity Site 11 (Sainsbury's Site) to "retail led scheme, with potential for additional town centre uses" mixed use scheme with residential and social infrastructure." And remove the requirement that development should provide smaller scale ground floor units.

Council Response

7.4 It is the Council's view that the AAP does provide sufficient flexibility to cope with changes to individual sites to ensure they maintain deliverability. Each development provides flexibility in the fact that they set out development parameters (or ranges) within which proposals can come forward. These parameters are considered to be sufficiently 'wide' to allow for flexibility in proposals coming forward. Paragraph 15.2 states that the Council "consider these development parameters to be appropriate, viable and deliverable". It continues by stating that the Council "will take a flexible approach when applying these development parameters to new development coming forward". The Council also states that it will consider proposals which depart from the proposed parameters where they are supported with "strong evidence" and "demonstrate how the alternative proposals will contribute to the aims and objectives and area wide policies of the plan."

8. **Does the proposed expansion of the Selborne Centre justify the loss of an important area of open space? (Opportunity Site 8)**

Relevant Representation

8.1 wtcps6 (Sean Hexter) – Loss of green space in an area which is 'deficient' of such space should not be considered. Overshadowing is also a concern.

8.2 wtcps13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 (Philip Herlihy) – Building on part of the town square and gardens would seriously and permanently damage the character and amenity of the whole town centre and thus any loss of the Town Square and Gardens should be resisted.

8.3 wtcps36, 37, 38 (Robert Lindsay-Smith) – Rejects the arguments and justification that for the expansion of the Town Square and Gardens. The loss of part of the Town Square and Gardens is contrary to WTC13 (a) – “loss of social infrastructure” and WTC10 (h) –“to enhance and improve the quality of green spaces throughout the centre”.

Council Response

8.4 It is the Council's view that the proposal in Opportunity Site 9 (and Opportunity Site 7 and 8) does, on balance, justify the part loss of open space. As paragraph 10.16 states, “the area of the Gardens proposed for potential extension is the area of the garden least well used and an area identified as a constraint due to the poor interface between Selborne Walk shopping centre and Selborne Road” (in KE164). This loss of space is balanced by the creation of an improved public realm with the creation of a shared surface (as stated on page 115 opportunity site 7 and demonstrated on page 118) all from the Town Square as part of the Arcade Site proposals. In addition, as can be seen on page 124, any proposed extension onto the Town Square and Gardens would be required to include a green roof to further mitigate the loss..

8.5 It is the Council's view that the pedestrian environment of the Town Square and Gardens is not as high quality as you would expect given that it is a ‘gateway’ into the town centre. It is the Council view that this ‘gateway’ is convoluted and confusing and that the Town Square and Gardens lacks character and definition. An eastern extension raises the opportunity to better define and frame the space. The inclusion of uses such as cafes will improve activity and animation of the Town Square and Gardens. As is clearly stated and proposed extension would seek to improve the remaining space by adding value/ quality and enabling better use of the space, particularly enhancing and enlarging the existing children's play space, which a popular and well used area of the Town Square and Gardens. Proposals include the need to provide ‘larger’ retail units (currently lacking in the centre undermining the retail offer) to provide space for ‘higher end’ retailers, improving the retail offer in the centre which will bring additional economic benefits to the town centre.

8.6 The Sustainability Appraisal (WSD8) assessed two options on the ‘Town Square and Gardens’ (Appendix XXVI). The first option was to accommodate an extension of the shopping centre onto the town square and gardens and the second was to retain the green space. The SA concluded that the first option ‘offers significant investment’ opportunities and enhances the ‘quality of the open space’. It would ‘increase footfall’ and ‘reduce fear of crime’. This option would ‘improve recreation amenity’ and ‘improve activity’ in the town centre. Option 2 would not add the ‘the viability and vitality’ of the town centre and would provide no ‘coherent character or definition for visitor and locals’.

9. **Are the proposals for Opportunity Sites 11 and 15 sufficiently flexible, viable and realistic to ensure delivery of the objectives for each site?**

Relevant Representations

9.1 wtcps20 (Peacock and Smith) – Proposed amendments to proposals on South Grove.

9.2 WSD22 - Statement of Common Ground - Between Morrison's (represented by Peacock and Smith) and LBWF.

9.3 wtcps25 (Turley Associates) – Amend the site proposal of Key Opportunity Site 11 (Sainsbury's Site) to "retail led scheme, with potential for additional town centre uses" mixed use scheme with residential and social infrastructure." And remove the requirement that development should provide smaller scale ground floor units.

9.4 wtcps26 (Turley Associates) – Opportunity Site 15 (South Grove) proposal should include; "Any application will need to satisfy the sequential assessment and impact assessment requirements."

Council Response

9.5 In relation to Site Opportunity 15, in response to Morrison's representation wtcps20, the Council has proposed to main modifications MM63, MM64, MM65 and Statement of Common Ground (WSD22).

9.6 In relation to Opportunity site 11, the Council has reviewed Turley Associates (Chris Deeks) representation wtcps25. The Council will now agree to remove the reference for the need to "provide smaller scale ground floor units" as follows:

Activity

The existing building responds poorly to the public realm providing featureless walls without activity and at a scale that is inappropriate for a pedestrian environment. Development of the site should ~~provide smaller scale ground floor units that rap around the development~~ to bring activity to all parts of the development that edge the public realm. The social infrastructure should be on the lower ground floors with residential uses on the upper floors.

9.7 Each designated Opportunity Site proposes 'development parameters' for the proposed uses. Therefore, removal of development parameters from Opportunity Site 11 would be inconsistent with the rest of the document. It is the Council view that the Site Opportunity Proposals are, as stated in paragraph 15.2, "appropriate, viable and deliverable". As stated in answer to question 7 in the matter that the Council "will take a flexible approach when applying these development parameters to new

development coming forward". The Council will consider proposals which depart from the proposed parameters where they are supported with "strong evidence" and "demonstrate how the alternative proposals will contribute to the aims and objectives and area wide policies of the plan." Turley Associates have not proposed any alternative development parameters or provided any 'strong evidence' to support any amendments to the AAP designation. The Council are open to further discussions.