

CENTRAL WINCHESTER REGENERATION INFORMAL POLICY GROUP

18 October 2016

Attendance:

Councillors:

Chairman: Weston (P)

Ashton (P)

Burns (P)

Elks

Hutchison

Izard (P)

Read (P)

Officer: Andy Hickman - Assistant Director (Policy & Planning).

Others in attendance:

Councillors: Bell, Berry, Byrnes, Humby, Pearson Tait and Weir.

Officers in Attendance:

Steve Tilbury – Corporate Director (Service Delivery)

Antonia Perkins – Head of Policy and Projects

Zoe James – Project Manager

Jenny Nell – Principal Planning Officer

Tracy Matthews - Historic Environment Officer (Archaeology)

Rachel White - Historic Environment Team Leader

Louise Dandy – Historic Environment Team Leader

Hatem Nabih – Urban Design and Sustainability Officer

Kathleen McCulloch – Communications Manager

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meetings held on 13 September 2016 (Report CAB2854 CWRIPG refers) and 3 October 2016 (CAB2855 CWRIPG refers) be approved and adopted.

2. **PRESENTATION BY MARTIN BIDDLE (PROFESSOR OF MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD) AND DISCUSSION**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Martin Biddle (Professor of Medieval Archaeology, University of Oxford).

In summary, Professor Biddle stated that the area proposed for regeneration had been an area of dense development as shown by a 1947 aerial

photograph. In 902, at the time of King Alfred, the area of the Broadway had been recorded as being a 'Cheap' street, or market street. The area to the south side of the Cheap Street had been the subject of King Alfred's wife, Ealhswith, gathering property for the foundation the Nunnaminster.

The area to the north of the regeneration site had been the location of important buildings fronting onto the High Street, with service roads to the rear, such as St Clement Street. The street layout had been laid down in King Alfred's time, on top of the Roman core. The Anglo Saxon streets were regular, sophisticated and commercially important.

Of the regeneration area itself, little was known. It was however part of the Roman City with east to west facing streets. There was no evidence of major Roman public buildings within the regeneration area, as these were most probably in the centre of the town; the Roman part of the town had collapsed, but had not been deserted, and there was evidence within the area of people of Germanic origin making pottery.

The Anglo Saxon period saw the street line shift to the north. The area had importance within the medieval period with an AD934 commercial meeting being documented at the time of Athelstan, which led to a Charter being signed by numerous important visitors, many of whom would have had to be accommodated within the town.

The 1965 to 1971 archaeological excavation within the site of the Middlebrook Car Park and under Friarsgate had been funded through donations. The west side of Lower Brook Street excavation had taken place to the lowest layer of archaeological deposits. The Roman settlement had revealed signs of a temple and streets with workshops. The area was not intensely developed and revealed scattered remains up to the first century AD. There was a military ditch from a fort, which was probably a campaigning fort from AD43.

The west side of Tanner Street was built up, with 12 medieval town houses being revealed. This area was redeveloped in the late eighteenth century.

In conclusion, the redevelopment area would contain significant archaeology. To excavate the site would be unnecessarily expensive and take a very long time, which was not encouraged. There was no knowledge of major buildings within the area, but there could be domestic buildings and mosaics. However, experience had shown that the mosaics may be badly damaged by medieval pits.

The approach to archaeology should be to preserve in-situ. New buildings in the redevelopment could be designed so that they had a minimum impact on the archaeology. Reference was made to the Tannery redevelopment in Canterbury, which was comparable to the proposals in Winchester and had been successful. Again, this was a development in a wet area near the River Stour and contained Roman and Anglo Saxon remains, which were not well built up. With careful planning of foundations the archaeology loss could be minimised, with defined sites such as lift pits excavated; this would also keep the excavation to a minimum. Special consideration should be given to lift

shafts which caused greater intrusion. The Canterbury development had pioneered the marshalling of services within corridors keeping to the main access routes, with spurs to service areas to minimise impact.

In answer to questions from Members, Professor Biddle stated that the Tannery redevelopment in Canterbury was later than the Whitefriars development, which had contained an underground parking area and it was this which had led to the widespread excavation of archaeology on that site.

With careful planning of the use of piles, pile caps and foundation beams, the loss of archaeology could be limited to approximately 2% of a single building. However, the inclusion of lifts and service runs made this more difficult, hence the excavation of these areas.

Only a full excavation would reveal what was beneath the site (which was not recommended), but the understanding of the site's archaeology could be improved by the use of trenches and boring. The survey technique of using geophysical technology would not help as it would only identify later buildings.

The archaeology would need to be investigated for each building, but advance planning could take place when the siting of each building was known, including a positioning of lifts and services.

Trenches or excavation for pile cap, into the archaeology could be at a depth of 3 to 3.25metres, which was the likely depth of deposits, and would not be dug by machine. The lift pits would require full excavation, in accordance with the approved plan.

It would not be necessary to do intrusive works at this stage. The impact and scale of archaeological work could be narrowed down by identifying the most desirable pattern of development following consultation with the architect and engineers. This would include looking at foundations, service areas, slabs, ground beams and their width. Historic England guidance set a target that no more than 2% of the site's archaeology should be damaged by piling and 5% for service trenches and lifts. This would be a professional discussion, as the percentages were guidance, and some sites had achieved less than this.

If important archaeology was found, which was unlikely, serious discussion would need to take place to address this. There could be mosaics, but these were more likely to be pitted by rubbish pits, cess pits, wells and foundations. Techniques were available for their lifting if they were found.

The Group thanked Martin Biddle for his presentation and for the answering of questions.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation from Martin Biddle on archaeology be noted.

3. **DISCUSSION ON THE PROCUREMENT AND BRIEF TO COMMISSION SUPPORT FROM AN URBAN DESIGN PRACTICE.**

The Assistant Director (Policy and Planning) explained that a draft procurement and brief to commission support from an Urban Design Practice had been circulated to members of the Group in advance of the meeting for comment, and copies were made available at the meeting for members of the public.

It was the intention to advertise the brief / opportunity on the South East Business Portal.

In answer to Members' questions, the Assistant Director explained that the balance of quality to price could be achieved by including within the brief minimum criteria that the tenderer would have to meet.

It was also agreed that Councillor Hutchinson be appointed to join the Chairman and Vice Chairman and officers on the panel for the scoring and selection of an Urban Design Practice, due to her experience in this area. In addition, it was agreed that all members on the Group be given access to view the bids following the scoring, from prospective companies, which would remain confidential, but they would not be allowed to influence the decision. This would give the process transparency whilst safeguarding the procurement process.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Weir, the Chairman of the Winchester Town Forum, asked if the Brief was too restrictive and formulaic and would not allow the prospective bidders to be creative or bring out their expertise.

Mr Tilbury replied that this matter had been given consideration by the officers in drafting the Brief; it was intended to set a direction but there was still scope for an interactive dialogue as the process progressed.

Mr Hickman added that the Brief was based on similar briefs that had been successful for work at Winnall and Stanmore, with public engagement and feedback integrated with the planning work. It was simple and gave scope for creativity and met the planning requirements for the production of a Supplementary Planning Document. The successful candidate would have full sight of all reference documents, although some technical work carried out for the earlier planning applications would not be available through warranty and copyright issues, and other reports required updating due to the time lapse. The 2003 Brief, which members of the Group had made comments on, would be made available.

In conclusion, members of the Group were encouraged to submit their comments on the draft Brief by Friday 21 October, with a revised draft Brief to be re-circulated to members of the Group in the following week.

The Chairman stated that she would ask Cabinet at its meeting on 19 October 2016 to provide delegated authority in order that the draft Brief could be commissioned at the earliest opportunity.

RESOLVED:

1. That Councillor Hutchinson be appointed to join the Chairman and Vice Chairman and two officers on the panel for the scoring and selection of an Urban Design Practice.
2. That all members on the Group be given access to view the bids from prospective companies following the scoring, which would remain confidential.
3. That members of the Group submit their comments on the draft Brief by Friday 21 October.

4. **UPDATE ON TECHNICAL INFORMATION TO SUPPORT FORMULATION OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT.**

The Assistant Director (Policy and Planning) informed the meeting that technical work relating to flooding risk assessment, contamination, retail assessment, archaeological desktop survey and topography would be advertised and awarded to successful private practices by means of a Portfolio Holder Decision Notice, which would be available for comment by all members of the Group

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

During public participation, Paul McCulloch stated that he was a local resident and professional archaeologist.

He stated, in summary, that he agreed with the comments made by Professor Biddle, who had provided successful advice for the Peninsula Barracks redevelopment in the 1990s.

Outside of Canterbury and Bath, there were also good examples of the protection of archaeology within the town. The Council had its own expertise and there was an Urban Archaeological Database that contained high quality data that could be used. With all known information, including trial work and with the constraints of the proposed building, it was possible to model the characteristics of the proposed development, including the depth of archaeology to be excavated. A low rise development would lead to less structural weight.

The protection of archaeology was a preeminent task and went beyond the line of a Supplementary Planning Document.

6. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was noted that future meetings of the IPG be held in the Walton Suite, Guildhall as follows:

6.00pm Tuesday 8 November 2016
6.00pm Tuesday 6 December 2016
6.00pm Wednesday 18 January 2017

In addition, the following meeting dates were agreed:

6:00pm Tuesday 7 February 2017
6:00pm Tuesday 14 March 2017
6:00pm Tuesday 4 April 2017
6:00pm Tuesday 23 May 2017
6:00pm Tuesday 4 July 2017
6:00pm Tuesday 1 August 2017

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and concluded at 7.50pm.

Chairman