

9-11 Burford Road, Carterton

Good afternoon Chair and Members of the Committee.

I am here today on behalf of the applicant, Gentian Developments Limited, to confirm our support for your officers' recommendation to approve this application.

You will no doubt be aware that an application on this site was refused in May 2015. This new application is notably different and addresses all the previous reasons for refusal: of significant note the new build residential development to the rear has been removed. As such, the new application simply seeks to renovate the existing buildings and bring back into life the upper floors as flats, therefore enhancing the vibrancy of the town centre, and providing an A3 café use in one of the ground floor units, and in doing so enhancing the mix of uses and vitality of the centre.

It is noted that the Town Council has expressed concerns that the proposals compromise their aspirations for this site and wider area. It is important however to note at this point these are simply aspirations, the plans have no development plan status and, importantly, there are no known developers on-board nor plans to realise these aspirations. Notwithstanding this, the scheme is fully cognisant of the Carterton Town Centre Strategy. The Town Council has identified that the wider site offers the opportunity to better integrate backland areas, improve the retail offer for the town as a whole and improve the quality of the built environment. It is also stated that there are poor connections through to the recreation ground and beyond. This application addresses all these needs with: an improved building design, new retail and café premises and the area to the rear retained as existing, with the footpath link also retained, so that future use and connectivity with the recreation ground are not compromised.

You will note that your officers' report states that both the principle of residential development in this location, and the proposed retail and café uses are both acceptable in this location. All policies – specifically Policies H7 and SH3 - with development plan status have been satisfied. There are also no technical objections and your officers accept the scheme will not be harmful to residential amenity. There is therefore no legitimate policy reason for refusing this application.

Furthermore, Members should be fully aware that all of the proposed uses presented before them can be undertaken as permitted development, either via the prior approval or prior

notification route. Buildings in A1 use can be changed to a mixed use consisting of A1 and up to 2 flats without the need for planning permission [**CLASS G**]. You can also change the use of Class A1 buildings to a C3 dwelling [**CLASS M**]. Again, without the need for planning permission. It is therefore clear that the proposals are aligned with Government policy which, given the age of the Local Plan, take precedence in the decision-making process.

The applicant could make these changes at any time, and in doing so remove any opportunity for the Council to have as much control over the development. But it is clear that the buildings are in a tired state and in need of renovation, and this full application offers the chance to enhance the character and appearance of the streetscene with the appropriate redesign proposed; as well as the town centre vibrancy and vitality, and the opportunity to retain greater control over the use of the building and its appearance with the application of suitable and appropriate conditions.

Thank you very much for your time.

Appendix B

Listed below are just some of the cafes, bars, restaurants, coffee shops, and eateries that have opened in Witney since we started trading in 2004.

Hufkins tea rooms
Hackett's bistro
Delice deli
The blue bore cafe
Weatherspoon's
Church green kitchen
Como lounge
Coffeesmith
The shake shop
Starbucks
Costa coffee
Café Nero
Café Rouge
Frankie and benny
M&S CAFÉ
Greggs
Subway
Bills
Still more to come.

Enough is enough including Pubs there are over 40 places where you can buy a cup of tea or coffee in Witney town centre

Witney is in danger of losing its identity as a market town becoming more like a cloned town with the loss of many independent traders due to the big stores moving in. Witney needs it independent shops.

We recently did a customer survey/petition in just a few shops with very short notice and received over 300 signatures in our shop alone to stop any more cafes/restaurants coming to Witney, more retail shops are needed not coffee shops.

A lot of our tourist customers have felt disappointed saying that with all the common big shops and far too many eateries it has no character left at all what was once a beautiful little Cotswold town is becoming no different to any other basic town.

Larry Bowes

Bakehouse diner

18th September 2015

**NOTES OF VERBAL STATEMENT PRESENTED TO THE
COMMITTEE
OF THE WEST OXFORDSHIRE COUNCIL FOR
No. 24-26 HIGH STREET, WITNEY**

1. I am an architect and I represent the owner of 24-26 High Street, Witney.
2. Despite only owning this property for some four years, the owner has been anxious to improve these premises.
3. A building has been on this site for over a hundred years. It was substantially rebuilt in the 60's. As you will know it was the site of a big supermarket before it became a chemist and then Lloyds Pharmacy. They have moved to the hospital and the owner has now split the building into two shops and restored the shop fronts of yesteryear with the traditional pilasters and entablatures and awnings.
4. He has also restored the dry stone wall down the sideway which has been left to deteriorate for over 20 years.
5. Jigsaw have moved into No.24 High Street. They are a good quality fashion store and will add to the attraction of the High Street.
6. There is very great interest in an A3 (Restaurant) use from High Quality establishments - The Boston Tea Party, also Carluccios and others.

These too will add to the attractions of this busy street and will add evening trade for dining. The space lends itself to this use.

All mechanical extract services will be taken care of in a sensitive manner.

There will be no tables and chairs at the front but a small outside area at the rear allowing the enjoyment of dining under the canopy of the existing trees.

We do hope you will support the officer's recommendation, especially after the work the owner has done to restore this building and environs.

Grant Littler
GLS ARCHITECTS

gone is the
bland
blue sign
replaced

Jigsaw, ladies

Quality but
affordable

add to the
attraction

No tables
and chairs at
the front
outside

Summary of Submission by Mr Salmon and Mr Gunby
Application No. 15/01968/OUT – Land South of Burford Road
and East of Downs Road, Witney

Mr Salmon thanked the sub-committee for the opportunity to speak and suggested that the development was an opportunity to deliver much needed affordable housing.

Mr Salmon suggested the scheme was compliant with current government policy on housing and any concerns on residential amenity as a result of the location could be addressed. It was indicated that the site was sustainable and the proposal made best use of the land.

Mr Salmon suggested that the council faced challenging housing targets that would be tested through the local plan process and the scheme would help in meeting those targets.

Mr Gunby advised that the site could deliver affordable housing for people as house prices in the area were beyond the reach of many. The location of the site meant that prices would remain lower in the longer term as well.

Mr Gunby suggested that this would help those looking to purchase their own home and also free up properties in the rental market. It was highlighted that some 177 households were on the waiting list and the development could help meet some of that demand.

Mr Gunby asked the sub-committee to support the application.