

**Officer response to questions from Members on application
12/02551/FUL– Item APP 01 on the 14.2.13 DCC Agenda.**

Question	Response
Outstanding Questions from Cllr Ferrans	
Can we also see capacity figures for ASDA for convenience and comparison goods.	A response is still awaited and will be forwarded later.
Response from Conservation Manager to Cllr Ferrans Question with regards to Design Issues	
Why are the new parts of the frontage not being built in the same style of brick as the old parts? The light brick shown seems a totally unnecessary deviation from the setting style.	This is/was in fact a slightly larger clay tile. The idea was that it was a modern interpretation of the brickwork in Wolverton and, on balance, sat more comfortably with the modern design of the building. It also has the benefit of having a slightly simpler appearance which pulls out the detail and texture of the retained buildings.
Why are the front roofs of the protruding parts not pitched roofs in accordance with the existing style? I am not clear what the vertical white stripes at the top of the community centre end represent in the . Why are they not in keeping with the style either of the roofs or the walls elsewhere in the design?	This was a reference to factories and their northlight roofs, like some of the buildings at the former Bong McCorquodale before they were demolished. Also had the major benefit of giving the roof a genuine form that also had function (allowing natural light into the store and mounting solar PV's on the back. The previous proposal that Officer's rejected was to mount an unconvincing pitched roof around the perimeter of the store with a vast flat roof in the middle.
Will the existing wall along Stratford Road be retained?	This is one of the public benefits, the wall is to be rebuilt above street level, the current wall is completely at odds with the other walls along Stratford Road.
Will new/part/wall be in the same brick as the existing wall?	The officer expectation is that this will be built to give the appearance of a traditional wall.
Will there be any overview of the area beyond for travellers along the wall? –	There was certainly no officer intention to raise the height of the wall, this area needs to be improved

not made worse, so views will be important.

In addition the changes in policy. Clearly we now have the National Planning Policy Framework instead of PPG15 which was in place at the time of the original application. The Conservation and Archaeology Manager is satisfied that those aspects of the proposal which cause less than substantial harm to the designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets, are outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme.

Questions from Cllr Middleton

At present, the use of the car park of Tesco in Wolverton is unconditioned, that is to say, members of the community may use it without being limited to a stay of a couple of hours, or being obliged to visit and buy products from Tesco. Wolverton Ward Councillors would like this to continue in an effort to improve parking choice in the Town Centre, thereby easing congestion.

Question: Would it be possible to specifically condition this as part of granting the planning application?

Condition 30: This condition concerns the completion of junction works at Creed Street/ Stratford Road prior to the new store opening. I agree this is paramount to avoid what would, undoubtedly become, traffic chaos.

Question: Does this condition also require the installation of a traffic management system (can't recall the technical acronym, but the system using a series of sensors to detect traffic, thereby altering the timing of the traffic lights) prior to the store opening? Once again, the motivation being to ease traffic congestion, and

It would not be specifically possible to condition that the Tesco car park be can be used unconditionally. In fact it would not be possible to place any condition on what amounts to a private car park. The Highway Engineer recalls that originally the Tesco car park was not conditioned but it is understood that due to car parking spaces being taken by non-Tesco clientele, a time period for parking was placed on it.

Condition 30 does not require extending to include the installation of any form of traffic management system. It may be that Councillor Middleton is thinking of MOVA (Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation). This is a system that can be retrofitted to existing traffic signal controllers to enable the system to recognise traffic flows and proportion the time given to each approach accordingly. The existing condition and the process for accepting traffic signal control equipment prior to its installation (factory acceptance and site

avoidance of traffic chaos.

acceptance testing) will include for the installation of intelligent thinking systems. MOVA is also used where there is proved to be largely uneven flows around a signalised junction. This is unlikely to be the case with this junction. There is an awareness that Tesco will want to set the traffic signals to ensure that there is no undue delay to their shoppers getting out of the site. At the same time we as highway authority need to ensure that there is no delay to traffic on the public highway. For that reason the Senior Highway Engineer has stated that all adjustments to the traffic signal controller have to be carried out with the approval of the highway authority.

Question: I have been in discussions with Highways over the previous six months concerning the obscured sight lines – for pedestrians - from the crossing at the junction of Creed Street/ Stratford Road, down to Tesco Petrol Station. This, around a year ago, nearly led to a serious RTA with a local resident. I note that the works at this junction do not seem to address these obscured sight lines, although I do concede, it being traffic lighted will help those pedestrians who choose to cross whilst the traffic lights are red – not all do however. The solution mooted was the installation of a stainless steel mirror for use by pedestrians, although this was not discussed in depth, or indeed, agreed by Highways. I doubt that the provision of such a mirror need be conditioned, but would like an Officer in Highways to respond to this item nevertheless.

The installation of a signalised junction will aid pedestrian movement and will be less dependant on the availability of sight lines than is currently required at the existing junction. The phasing for the signalised junction allows pedestrians to cross coincidentally with other non-opposing traffic streams and this will provide safe passage around the signalised junction for pedestrians.

Having digested the plans, it would appear that there is reduced greenery within the proposed Tesco Wolverton development. Indeed, it would appear

There is an overall loss in landscape structure, specifically within the parking area, however new tree planting to mitigate the parking could

that a number of mature trees will be removed, and if they are to be replaced, these replacements will likely, I assume, be immature in stature and appearance. This, in my opinion, risks the new development enjoying much reduced visual amenity and additionally much less habitat for birds etc. In effect, the new store might be at risk of becoming a concrete, wildlife devoid, monolith.

Question: I believe this question would be best answered by Landscaping. Does the proposed development in fact lead to a reduced offering of greenery? If so, would it be possible to condition the planting of mature rather than immature trees upon the landscaping of the site.

Question: Contingent upon the response to the previous question, given the potential for a reduction in habitat for birds would it be reasonable to condition the provision of artificial nesting boxes – for example, I'm thinking something similar to a purple martin nesting box, but of course suitable for local bird populations (see image at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/debplatt/7545015592/>) – within the open car parking element of the site. I realise that provision has been made for the installation of swift bricks, however these would perhaps fail to promote wildlife within the open car parking area of the site. Once again, there is the risk that the proposed development will become a rather bleak, wildlife devoid, concrete monolith.

not be achieved due to the constraints of the raised parking area.

New trees proposed are sizable (4-4.5m in height) and will give an immediate impact, but will be smaller than the trees to be removed. Semi mature sized trees would give a greater impact, however are often difficult to establish and require a much greater space to locate and really in the 'long run' smaller trees tend to be more successful. Tree species as shown are appropriate to the context and site function.

The Countryside Officer has sympathy with the goal of promoting wildlife as much as possible at this site, however this would be challenging due to the nature of a car park being dominated by hard surfaces and traffic. Installing wildlife features such as groups of trees, shrubs, water features and meadows would reduce the number of car parking spaces and put the wildlife encouraged to the car park at risk from cars. Maintenance of the features would incur costs.

The photo at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/debplatt/7545015592/> shows an array of 8 bird boxes being used by Purple martins. The Purple martin is a New World bird species that does not breed in Europe. Our House martin breeds on the sides of buildings in colonies. The Countryside Officer is unaware of any Breeding colonies of House Martins in urban Milton Keynes apart for a colony at the Open University.

In considering the application the Countryside Officer did look at the possibility of asking for bird boxes to be set in the car park, but did not pursue this idea as they would be either set on small trees or artificial objects such as lamp posts; would be exposed to the full sun that would harm nestlings, stand out to people and so risk being vandalised and cause a perceived or real increase in bird droppings on parked cars. In addition after a number of years they would most likely become detached from whatever they were fixed to, so would not be sustainable in the long term.

The swift bricks in contrast, are to be sited in the shade away from cars, will be high up in the building so will be at low risk from vandalism and in areas less visited by people, swifts tending to be shy birds. As well as being a highly appropriate species of bird to target regarding conservation in the context of Wolverton, Swift bricks can be utilised by a wide range of other birds such as House Sparrows and Starlings.

Question: Given the disastrous deterioration in wild bee species over recent years, would it be possible to condition/include provision for the installation of urban bee-keeping on the site in partnership with Bucks Beekeeping Society, and in addition, the provision of bee friendly shrubbery. Once again, motivation being to obviate the risk that the proposed development will become a rather bleak, wildlife devoid, concrete monolith.

The only opportunity to encourage more bees on the site would be to introduce bee friendly habitat the Countryside Officer has already covered the issue of new habitat regarding the car park. Siting bee hives on site would require a secure area to deter vandalism and would also require a buffer zone to separate people from the vicinity of the hives. This would take up a percentage of the car park area, so further reducing the numbers of car parking spaces.

An ideal opportunity to benefit wildlife at this site, would be to install a green or a brown roof on the building. These can be very bio-diverse habitats that do not 'inconvenience'

a sites operation, however the opportunity to try to secure a large scale improvement should have been taken when the original application was submitted. The current application being a renewal of a previous permission could only ever achieve limited bio-diversity gains through the use of the National Planning Policy Framework that has been introduced since the original permission was granted, so the Swift Bricks should be seen as a real gain in that context, that without the National Planning Policy Framework would not have been achieved.