

DELEGATED

AGENDA NO

PLANNING COMMITTEE

DATE 5 NOVEMBER 2008

**REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR,
DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICES**

08/2580/FUL

J T Dove Limited, Bridge Road, Stockton-on-Tees

Student housing development including related collegiate accommodation and external works.

Expiry Date: 25 November 2008

SUMMARY

This is a full planning application for the erection of 226 bedroom purpose built student accommodation including related collegiate accommodation and external works on the J T Dove site, Bridge Road, Stockton on Tees.

The site occupies a prominent location and forms part of a larger site known as Boathouse Lane. Given the important gateway location, the Council has prepared a planning and design brief to guide future development on the site and surrounding area, which was formally adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in June 2006. Importantly the brief seeks to deliver a high quality and commercially successful mixed-use development including residential development for the area through an established masterplan and agreed design principles.

The key objectives of the document are:

- To ensure the appropriate, comprehensive redevelopment of a key River Tees corridor site within the wider context of the Stockton Middlesbrough Initiative;
- To create a Gateway into the town centre, including a regionally-significant landmark building;
- To create a diverse, attractive and exciting place to live work and visit;
- To ensure high quality urban design, which maximises the potential use of the water frontage location;
- To protect and enhance the natural and historic environment;
- To improve linkages with surrounding land uses.

The proposal is considered to be broadly in line with the above objectives and general planning policies set out in the Development Plan and is recommended for approval with conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning application 08/2580/FUL be Approved subject to no outstanding objection from the Environment Agency and the following planning conditions set out below:

Should there be an outstanding objection by the 25th November 2008 then the application be refused.

01 The development hereby approved shall be in accordance with the following approved plan(s); unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Plan Reference Number

0722/L101

0722/L114

0722/E/200

0722/E/201

0722/E/202

0722/E/203

9008-021/101 REVA

0722/L111G

0722/L112F

0722/L100i

0722/L110G

Reason: To define the consent.

02. Notwithstanding any description of the materials in the application no development shall be commenced until precise details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external walls and roofs of the building(s) have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control details of the proposed development.

03. The development hereby approved shall be used solely for the purposes of accommodation of students undertaking full time educational courses.

Reason: In order to define the consent having regard to the nature of the proposal and potential adverse impact of an unrestricted consent on the use of the site and the surrounding area.

04. Prior to the occupation of the development a Management and Travel Plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing. The Plan shall establish measures, mechanisms, timescales, clear targets and procedures for monitoring and review of such targets. The Plan shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: In the interests of promoting sustainable travel and highway safety.

05. The retail element of the proposal shall be restricted to 100 sq.m gross floor space for the sole use of convenience retailing and no other Use allowed within the A1 Use Class as defined by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 2005.

Reason: To ensure that there is no impact on the vitality and viability of defined centres.

06. Notwithstanding the proposals detailed on drawing 9008-021/101 Rev A, no development shall commence until full details of Soft Landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This will be a detailed planting plan and specification of works indicating soil depths, plant species, numbers, densities,

locations inter relationship of plants, stock size and type, grass, and planting methods including construction techniques for pits in hard surfacing and root barriers. All works shall be in accordance with the approved plans. All existing or proposed utility services that may influence proposed tree planting shall be indicated on the planting plan. The scheme shall be completed unless otherwise agreed with the LPA in writing in the first planting season following:

a) commencement of the development

b) or agreed phases

c) or prior to the occupation of any part of the development

and the development shall not be brought into use until the scheme has been completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a high quality planting scheme is provided in the interests of visual amenity which contributes positively to local character and enhances bio diversity.

07. Notwithstanding the proposals detailed in the submitted plans, a soft landscape management plan including long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas/ retained vegetation, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the development or approved phases.

Maintenance shall be detailed for a minimum of 5 years from date of completion of the total scheme regardless of any phased development. Any vegetation within a period of 5 years from the date of from the date of completion of the total works that is dying, damaged, diseased or in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority is failing to thrive shall be replaced by the same species of a size at least equal to that of the adjacent successful planting in the next planting season unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory landscaping to improve the appearance of the site in the interests of visual amenity.

08. No development shall take place until the Local Planning Authority has approved a report provided by the applicant identifying how the predicted CO2 emissions of the development will be reduced by at least 10% through the use of on-site renewable energy equipment. The carbon savings which result from this will be above and beyond what is required to comply with Part L Building Regulations. Before the development is occupied the renewable energy equipment shall have been installed and the local planning authority shall be satisfied that their day-to-day operation will provide energy for the development for so long as the development remains in existence.

Reason: In the interests of promoting sustainable development

09. All construction operations including delivery of materials on site shall be restricted to 8.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m on weekdays, 9.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. on a Saturday and no Sunday or Bank Holiday working.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not prejudice the enjoyment of neighbouring occupiers of their properties.

10. The development permitted by this planning permission shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) dated March 2008 and prepared by SM Foster Associates Limited (Ref: 046/001/doves/fra/0308) and the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:

- **Finished floor levels shall be no lower than 5.7m AOD (residential development), or 5.0m AOD (non-residential development).**

Reason: To reduce the risk from flooding

11. No development shall proceed until a flood warning and evacuation plan has been agreed with the local planning authority. The plan shall confirm how flood warnings will be received and disseminated, and the action to be taken, including the means of directing exit to the dry escape route to high ground.

Reason: To allow safe access and egress from the development in the event of flooding.

12. Prior to being discharged into any watercourse, surface water sewer or soakaway system, all surface water drainage from parking areas should be passed through trapped gullies in accordance with a scheme previously submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment.

13. Prior to the commencement of development approved by this planning permission (or such other date or stage in development as may be agreed in writing with the local planning authority), the following components of a scheme to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site shall each be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority:

1) A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:

- **all previous uses**
- **potential contaminants associated with those uses**
- **a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors**
- **potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.**

2) A site investigation scheme, based on (1) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.

3) The site investigation results and the detailed risk assessment (2) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.

4) A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in (3) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

Any changes to these components require the express consent of the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: The development site has the potential to impact the water quality of the nearby River Tees.

14. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted, and obtained written approval from the local planning authority for, an amendment to the remediation strategy detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with.

Reason: It is difficult to fully characterise sites of this nature, therefore there is potential for unsuspected contamination to be found during development.

15. Piling or any other foundation designs using penetrative methods shall not be permitted other than with the express written consent of the local planning authority, which may be given for those parts of the site where it has been demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to groundwater. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To prevent preferential groundwater flow paths and protect the Sherwood Sandstone principal aquifer and groundwater.

16. Notwithstanding the proposals detailed in the Design and Access Statement/ submitted plans,

a) All means of enclosure including;

b) any requirement for earthwork retention;

c) and street furniture associated with the development

shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development commences. Such means of enclosure, retention and street furniture as agreed shall be erected before the development hereby approved is occupied. All enclosures including boundary walls and fences should be complete before any dwellings are occupied.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the locality.

17. Notwithstanding the submitted plans details of the shared surface access arrangements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to commencement of the development and implemented as approved unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control details of the proposed development.

18. Full details of the method of external illumination

a) siting,

b) Angle of alignment;

c) light colour

d) illuminance

of buildings facades and external areas of the site, including parking courts, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development is commenced. The lighting shall be implemented wholly in accordance with the agreed scheme prior to occupation.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to control details and in the interests of the visual amenity and highway safety.

19. Prior to the commencement of development a Section 278 Agreement shall be entered into for highway works to the existing access that are required to facilitate the development and to close off the existing access to the adjoining Student Accommodation.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

20. Notwithstanding details submitted in the design and access statement, a Section 278 Agreement shall be entered into for the provision of public realm improvements in between the site and the adjacent listed building to further enhance the setting of the proposed development and improve connections to the town centre and in accordance with a scheme to be approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of development and visual amenities of the surrounding area.

21. The arrangements for the storage and collection of refuse waste and recycling shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority before the development commences and shall be provided before the development hereby approved is occupied.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory arrangements are in place.

22. Notwithstanding the submitted information precise details of the cycle parking provision shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before development commences and shall be erected before the development hereby approved is occupied.

Reason: To ensure sustainable means of transport are available to the site.

23. Notwithstanding details shown on the plans hereby approved, prior to any works commencing on site, details of existing ground levels both on site and at adjacent properties which bound the site, finished ground, and finished floor levels for the proposed development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of amenity of the occupants of neighbouring properties and the visual amenities of the area.

The proposal has been considered against the policies below and it is considered that there are no material considerations that indicate a decision should be otherwise.

Policies GP1, HO3, HO11, EN17, EN28, TR15 and S15 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

BACKGROUND

1. To the west of the application site is recently constructed student accommodation which has been developed by the same developer as the proposed development and the applicant considers the redevelopment of the Doves site as phase 2 of the adjacent development.

PROPOSAL

2. This is a full planning application for the erection of 226 bedroom purpose built student accommodation including related collegiate accommodation and external works on the J T Dove site, Bridge Road, Stockton on Tees.

3. The design comprises a modern building designed to act as a link between the city scale landmark building adjacent the application site which features a bold pallet of materials and the listed buildings to the west and less dense development towards the south of Boathouse Lane. This gives the appearance of a cascading design from its highest point to the east and lowest point adjacent the listed buildings with road frontage on Bridge Road which continues around the corner

into Boathouse Lane acting as an entrance feature. The scheme incorporates active frontage facing out onto Bridge Road and Boathouse Lane.

4. The proposal has both physical and design links with adjacent student accommodation but is designed to be subservient to the landmark building and incorporates less bold and a more traditional pallet of materials including red brick. The proposed scheme incorporates a plinth feature which carries through the design of the adjacent student accommodation. The window pattern is also carried through from the adjacent student accommodation although the coloured panels are intended to be more subdued (pastel green and cream) in recognition of the less dominant role of this building. The proposal also incorporates collegiate facilities and additional student facilities such as a café/common room, ancillary leisure (gym), University bookshop, University office accommodation and ancillary retail.

5. The majority of pedestrian circulation is around the front of the site on Bridge Road with the main access point from Boathouse Lane. The scheme proposes hard landscaping works aimed at improving the setting of the eastern range of listed buildings but also to improve the pedestrian route into the Town Centre, this includes a number of environmental improvements to the junction of Bridge Road adjacent to the Listed Buildings.

6. The main access point to the application site is from Boathouse Lane with pedestrian connectivity between Phase 1 and 2 so that students can access all of the facilities across both sites and the wider area. Vehicular access to the site will continue to be via the existing link onto Boathouse Lane. The proposal provides for 16 parking spaces (including 4 disabled parking spaces). The number is based on the Council's parking guidance for student accommodation and office land use (based on the proposed ancillary office floor area). In addition to the car parking provision, 45 secure cycle parking spaces are proposed.

7. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Policy Statement, Transport Statement, Flood Risk Assessment, Travel Plan and Statement of Community Involvement.

CONSULTATIONS

8. The following Consultations were notified and any comments received are set out below: -

Urban Design Engineers

General Summary

Urban Design supports this application as detailed below.

In relation to Highways we support the application in principle subject to the following:

The proposed development will accommodate 226 student rooms adjacent to existing student accommodation on Bridge Road. In addition there will be a number of other uses on site including small retail outlets, café / common room and gym.

The development should be designed and constructed in accordance with the Council's Design Guide and Specification (Residential and Industrial Estates Development) current edition and 'Supplementary Planning Document 3: Parking Provision for New Developments, November 2006', and to that end I comment as follows: -

It is accepted that this is a sustainable site, hence the SBC parking standard of 1 car parking space per 40 students can be applied. A total of 6 would, therefore, required for this development. A total

of 16 car parking spaces are proposed, 4 of which will be designated disabled parking bays. Thus the 16 spaces provided sufficiently accommodate the SBC standards for student accommodation. That said there are other uses on site that require parking provision and it is accepted that the remaining parking will be sufficient for these uses.

The associated Travel Plan indicates that the parking spaces could be restricted to those residents who can demonstrate that they have specific needs. It is recommended that this approach is adopted. It is also likely that more than 10 staff that will want to use the additional 10 spaces. It is therefore recommended that a similar approach be applied to staff parking, with spaces perhaps reserved for staff that car share, this should be included in the travel plan.

The Travel Plan Framework document submitted outlines the basis only for the development of a detailed travel plan. A detailed travel plan will be required, to be submitted to Stockton Council.

It is recommended that the detailed travel plan to be developed using Stockton's Travel Plan Builder <http://www.stocktontravelplans.co.uk/>.

The document details public transport services which are in operation at the moment, it is recommended that timetables of services need to be checked and amendments made accordingly to the framework document.

Cycle parking has been provided in a convenient location close to the site entrance. The number of cycle parking spaces should be in line with the Council's SPD3: Car parking in new developments, therefore space should be allocated for 45 cycles. To ensure this is utilised the cycle store must be covered and secure. Other measures to encourage travel by sustainable modes must be implemented and the Travel Plan monitored. It is anticipated that locating the site adjacent to existing student accommodation will facilitate Travel Plan measures.

It is proposed to locate the site access on Boathouse Lane that runs along the western boundary of the site. The development site is currently a builder's merchant and the proposed access will be located in the same location as the existing access, just south of the Boathouse Lane / Bridge Road signalised junction. It is also proposed that this access will serve the recently constructed student accommodation that adjoins this site and therefore remove its existing access on Bridge Road.

The Transport Statement identifies that there will be an overall reduction in the traffic generated by the development in the peaks. It is acceptable to assume that trip generation for the student accommodation will not increase vehicle trips on the surrounding highway network. The site is within walking / cycling distance of the University so there is no reason for student vehicular trips in the peaks and the number of proposed car parking spaces (16) is the same as that currently on-site to serve the Builders Merchant.

As the access will now be shared with the adjacent site the Transport Statement should have considered the trips associated with the previously consented student accommodation. However, this minor omission is not considered to be significant as trips generated by the adjacent student accommodation already exist on the network and it is preferable that they are moved to a signalised junction.

A Management plan is required to be submitted demonstrating how arrivals/departures from the start and end of the University semesters can be managed as it is likely that all students will arrive and depart at similar times.

It must be ensured that visibility at the access onto Boathouse Lane is unobstructed above a height of 600mm.

Regarding the internal layout:

- All car parking spaces should be at least 2.4m x 4.8m with adequate space to manoeuvre;
- Disabled parking bays must be connected to the entrance without steps (ramps / lifts may be necessary) and should be 2.4m wide with 1.2m hatched area either side of each bay, this hatched area can be shared between adjacent bays;
- The internal access road must be a minimum of 4.1m wide;
- A footway, at least 1.8m wide, should be provided from the adopted highway to the building entrance;
- It is assumed that it is possible to access the cycle storage facility when the parking bays in front of the store are occupied;
- It is stated that the development will use the existing bin store for the adjacent student accommodation. However it is not clear where this is sited and if service vehicles can access the store and exit the site in a forward gear. It is preferable that this development has its own refuse facilities, conveniently located for these residents to access. This therefore requires clarification along with confirmation that recycling facilities are being provided.

Access, kerb details and the footway will need to be constructed in accordance with SBC Design Guide and Specification and the applicant will need to enter into a S278 agreement should any changes to the existing access be required to facilitate this development.

It is not clear from the submitted layout plan how the arrangement for accessing the existing student accommodation would be managed. It seems that an access road is proposed through the development and that this is likely to tie into the existing shared surface arrangement, this needs to be clarified. Details of the existing hard landscaping for phase 1 should be indicated on a plan along with the proposals for this development so that it is clear how this arrangement will work.

To conclude, I have no objection to the proposals subject to conditions being placed on any consent that require:

- Car parking management plans to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA;
- Travel Plan monitoring proposals to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA; and
- Revised drawings are to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA to meet our requirements for the internal layout requirements;
- The applicant to enter into a S278 agreement for all changes to the existing access that are required to facilitate this development and to close off the existing access to the adjoining Student Accommodation.

Built Environment Comments

We support the application in principle and make the following comments in relation to the built environment:

Scale & Massing

Attempts have been made to create both an architectural and aesthetical linkage between the two existing buildings on adjacent sites, both of which are of different architectural scale.

An appropriate site layout has been provided taking into account potential future development on the adjacent site to the south, this also includes appropriate application of building heights.

Building Facade

The palette of materials chosen will be important in delivering a successful design solution. Notwithstanding information provided in the design and access statement in relation to the façade treatments, samples of the chosen materials will be required to ensure successful integration within the public realm. Details of which can be dealt with by condition.

Landscape & Visual Comments

In relation to landscape and visual we support the application in principle being placed on any consent that requires:

- Landscaping Softworks: plans and specifications to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA;
- Enclosure & street furniture and specifications to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA;
- Scheme for illumination and specifications to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA;
- The applicant to enter in to a S278 Agreement for the provision of Public Realm improvements to further enhance the setting of the proposed development and improve connections to the town centre.

Environmental Health Unit

No objection in principle to the development subject to the imposition of conditions covering noise, construction hours and contamination.

Tees Archaeology

This is a former industrial area which was cleared in the early 1990s. I have no objection to the proposal and no further comments to make.

The Environment Agency

Thank you for referring the additional information regarding the above application which was received on 24 September 2008. We would like to make the following comments:

Flood Risk

We continue to uphold our previous objection because no evidence has been provided that the Sequential Test has been adequately demonstrated. Our objection will remain until the Sequential Test has been undertaken to sufficiently demonstrate that there are no reasonably available alternative sites in areas with a lower probability of flooding (i.e. Flood Zone 1 and 2) that would be appropriate for the type of development proposed.

The application site lies in Flood Zone 3, an area with an annual 1 in 100 year probability of fluvial flooding. PPS25 requires local planning authorities to steer new development to areas at the lowest probability of flooding by applying a 'Sequential Test'. In this instance the Sequential Test submitted is not acceptable on the following grounds:.

Defining the search area

We acknowledge that the search area is based upon a catchment area of 1km from the site boundary, however, there is no justification for the chosen search area. We consider that further evidence to support the chosen catchment, based on local planning policy designations and taking into account alternative accessible sites within the area at a lower risk of flooding (i.e. Flood Zone 1 and 2), should be provided to justify the need for student accommodation within Flood Zone 3. This may alter the number of sites that are required to be assessed within the Sequential Test.

Constraints to delivery

In line with PPS25: Development and Flood Risk, the Sequential Test is required to detail any constraints to deliver the identified alternatively reasonably available sites and also include recommendations on how these constraints may be overcome. The submitted Sequential Test has identified alternative sites with a lower probability of flooding (i.e. Flood Zone 2) and those that

have a moderate chance of passing the Exception Test, however, potential constraints and opportunities for development have not been considered to justify that the application site provides a more suitable development site for the proposals.

A number of sites were identified as having insufficient capacity to accommodate the proposals. Justification should be provided to demonstrate that it is necessary to locate the proposal, or if there is scope to disaggregate the mixed uses of the development across several alternative sites which do not compromise environmental constraints within the area.

If you are minded to approve the application contrary to this advice, we request that you contact us to allow further discussion and/or representations from us as advised in PPS25 paragraph 26.

If you are minded to approve this application contrary to our objection, the Secretary of State should be notified, in line with the Town and Country Planning (Flooding) (England) Direction 2007.

Should the above issue be resolved, we would then withdraw our objection subject to the following conditions covering finished floor levels, flood warning and evacuation, drainage, piling, and contaminated land being imposed upon any permission granted.

CE Electric UK

Standard mains record shown.

Northern Gas Networks

No objection and standard mains record shown.

Northumbrian Water Limited

No objection.

Spatial Plans Manager

The proposed site is defined in the Alteration Number 1 to the adopted Local Plan proposals map as being within flood risk zone 3. This means that it is covered by policy EN23a which states:

"Proposals for new development will not be permitted within Flood Zones 2 or 3 as shown on the Proposals Map, or other areas identified as at risk of flooding, unless the applicant can demonstrate by means of a Flood Risk Assessment and sequential tests that:

- i) there is no alternative site at no risk or lower risk of flooding; and
- ii) there will be no increased risk of flooding to the development; and
- iii) there will be no increase in risk of flooding elsewhere as a result of the development.

Where permission is granted for development in flood risk areas, or for development that would increase the risk of flooding, appropriate flood alleviation or mitigation measures, to be funded by the developer, must be undertaken."

The proposed site has been identified as part of the Boathouse Lane SPD adopted in June 2006 which advocates mixed use on this site. Both PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development and PPS3 Housing promote the development of sustainable communities through mixed-use development. It is recognised in the SPD that this is a sustainable location for residential development in terms of access to rail and bus links, Teesdale and Stockton town centre. High density development is also deemed appropriate for this site.

The key objectives of the SPD set out in paragraph 1.6 are:

- . "To ensure the appropriate, comprehensive redevelopment of a key River Tees corridor site within the wider context of the Stockton Middlesbrough Initiative;
- . To create a Gateway into the town centre, including a regionally- significant landmark building;

- . To create a diverse, attractive and exciting place to live, work and visit;
- . To create high quality urban design which maximises the potential use of the water frontage location;
- . To protect and enhance the natural and historic environment;
- . To improve linkages with surrounding land uses."

The Local Plan contains no specific targets or precise allocations for student accommodation. National planning policy for housing, expressed in particular through Planning Policy Statement PPS3 Housing, confirms the Government's intention that everyone should have the opportunity of living in a decent home. PPS3 offers no particular guidance in respect of student housing but one central aim is "to create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas" (paragraph 9). It says also that one specific outcome of the planning system should be "a mix of housing, both market and affordable, particularly in terms of tenure and price, to support a wide variety of households in all areas" (paragraph 10). Therefore, there are no objections in principle to providing student accommodation in this location.

English Heritage

We do not wish to comment in detail, but offer the following general observations.

This development spans the frontage between the recent high rise bridge head buildings and the group of listed buildings at the road junction, including the small two-storey Grade II* listed booking office at its west end. English Heritage has been a party to early discussions on how to make this transition in townscape terms. We are grateful for our early involvement and also appreciative of the efforts that have been made to reduce the scale of massing as one approaches the listed group.

So too, we welcome the architect's efforts to bring in brickwork as a theme of the buildings closest to the listed group, which will help feather-in the new development, making some acknowledgement of the adjacent traditional buildings. All this is good and positive progress.

At our last joint meeting we raised two particular issues that we regret have not been addressed in subsequent design work. The frontage reduction in scale is rendered largely superficial by the increase in scale in the buildings at the back of the site, towards the river. Inevitably this site will be seen as a whole and the road frontage, stepping respectfully down, will be overshadowed by higher development, nullifying the frontage's reduced scale.

Secondly the architectural development from basic massing to a more articulate and considered design does not seem to have happened and the overall quality of the scheme is disappointing. Despite our concerns about the height of the original bridgehead development, there is a breezy Mediterranean air about it that can lift the spirits from the A66. Long may that continue as its render dulls and its colours fade.

But this new development does not yet evoke the same feelings and we hope that between possible approval and construction more design work will improve the scheme, which in many ways has gone a long way towards addressing the tricky massing and materials problems on this site, rear blocks notwithstanding. That further design work will have more to do with greater articulation of the massing, rather than the simple application of primary colours, as on the bridgehead, which may not be so appropriate here.

We would urge you to address the above issues, and recommend that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice. It is not necessary for us to be consulted again. However, if you would like further advice, please contact us to explain your request.

One North East

Thank you for requesting the Agency's comments on the above planning application as part of One NorthEast's statutory consultee role in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure)(England)(Amendment) Order 2003.

I confirm that the proposal does not fall within criteria A to J of the notification criteria which were sent to Local Authorities in October 2005. However in view of the location of this development within the 'Southern Gateway' site and its importance in terms of scale and massing, the application is considered to be of sub-regional importance

- K. Notwithstanding the above criteria (A – J), which are intended as guidance for Local Planning Authorities, the Agency will be required to be consulted upon any application which may have regional or sub regional significance.

The following comments reflect the view of One NorthEast acting in its role as statutory consultee. As such they are provided only in accordance with the provisions of the above regulations and relate to the effects that the proposals are considered to have upon the Regional Development Agency's strategic regional investment or employment policies.

Whilst One NorthEast has no objections to the application, in assessing the proposals the Agency would ask that the Local Authority give consideration to the potential impact of the proposals on the proposals for North Shore, one of Tees Valley Regeneration and the Agency's five strategic regeneration sites in Tees Valley. The proposals for North Shore include the provision of student accommodation for the University of Durham.

As you are aware the Regional Economic Strategy promotes the need for quality of place within existing and proposed development. With this in mind, should the application be viewed favourably, the Agency would request the Local Planning Authority to encourage the developer to pursue the highest standards of quality in the development of this site, e.g. BREEAM, Building for Life and Secured by Design.

In line with Government objectives¹ to generate 10% of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2010 the application should also provide details regarding the provision of renewable energy measures within the scheme.

British Waterways

After due consideration of the application details, British Waterways has no comments to make.

If the Council is minded to grant planning permission, it is requested that the following informative is attached to the decision notice:

"The applicant/developer is advised to contact (insert details of relevant third party works engineer) in order to ensure that any necessary consents are obtained and that the works comply with British Waterways' "Code of Practice for Works affecting British Waterways"."

Police Architectural Liaison Officer

Refers to guidance available on the secured by design initiative.

Durham University

Thank you for your letter dated 11 September 2008, together with details of the above proposal from Mandale Commercial Ltd. I know that we have been asked separately to provide information about our student population, but I think it is important to state immediately that, for the current 2,000 students based at Queen's Campus, there is currently ample accommodation for their

needs. Our proposals to develop Queen's Campus on to the North Shore of the River Tees are not expected to increase the demand for student residences.

Looking at the documents you have sent, I have the following specific comments to make:

1. Travel Plan: this appears to be a generic document seen in previous proposals. It contains out of date information, for example at 3.1 the last sentence is inaccurate, as we have since negotiated different arrangements with Arriva.

At paragraph 3.11, we have serious concerns about students crossing Bridge Road safely on their way to the campus. We negotiated with Simon Milner of Stockton Borough Council, who kindly agreed to put up barriers outside the Rialto Court entrance for Phase 1, and also at the junction with Yale Crescent. We continue however to have significant concerns about how safe the crossing is at this junction. We understand that plans for the gyratory preclude the possibility of making this crossing totally pelican controlled. As such, it is not possible to cross to the TFM side with the benefit of pelican assistance all the way across. In addition, the island nearest Rialto Court is, in our view, not a suitable stopping point part way across Bridge Road.

Whilst we are able to see how future investment can make travelling on foot from Rialto Court and the Dove Site to the Campus safe, the plans as submitted do not provide for this investment. Similarly, at paragraph 3.12, further significant investment would be needed to make safe an appropriate direct cycle route.

At paragraph 3.13, there are further inaccuracies. The Campus now charges a deposit for bicycle hire; we cannot say that the Sheffield stands are secure, as we have experienced a high level of bicycle theft; and we have had no discussions with Bournston about introducing the Bicycle Users Group (BUG) to the Bridge Road Developments.

Again at paragraph 5.19 we have had no discussions with the client exploring the possibility of providing a number of bicycles within the proposed development that will be linked to the BUG. We would however welcome this.

At paragraph 8.3, we would welcome this suggestion, but the developer has as yet made no such contact, even in relation to the initial Phase 1 Rialto Court development, despite our raising this with the client, Bournston.

Policy Statement: Student Accommodation

On page 6, "Need for purpose built student accommodation" the document quotes certain numbers. As already mentioned, we will be providing a separate analysis, as requested. However, we must point out the factual inaccuracy of this section. All figures supplied by the University do include demand from all sections of the student community for this type of accommodation. Our experience however shows that few postgraduates would wish to be in residences dominated by undergraduates. We can confirm that we do include international students in our figures. As Queen's Campus has a relatively high proportion of students from overseas requiring accommodation, it is very important that we factor them into our planning.

Referring to page 7 we can confirm that the University can house about 500 of the 2,000 students attending Queen's Campus. Nearly all of these rooms are allocated to first year students. We should nevertheless point out that we have a relatively high proportion of mature and local students. We estimate that of our 2,000 students, approximately 60 – 65% will require accommodation. So, of the 2,000 undergraduates, approximately 1,300 will need to be housed, 800 or so in the local market, compared with the 1,000 quoted in the document.

2. Drawing No. 0722/L100i

The plans of the proposed ground floor layout (Drawing No. 0722/L100i) indicate certain space identified as "Collegiate". In the description, this is described as University Book Shop, University Café/ Common Room and University Office Accommodation. We would point out that the University has not been consulted about this, nor has it made any commitments to using the space identified in this development as being for the University.

The University has no long-term relationship with Bournston, the client, although we have negotiated with them over accommodation in Rialto Court for a limited number of first year students for the current year only. We have however made it clear to Bournston that we do not foresee demand for this second phase of development, based upon existing student numbers and those envisaged in the expansion of the Campus in its vision to 2020.

PUBLICITY

9. It should be noted that the applicant has undertaken consultation in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement. This involved circulating an information leaflet containing key information regarding the proposal to the surrounding buildings and businesses and was also emailed to ward members. A site notice was also displayed around the application site to advertise details of the proposed development.

10. Local residents/businesses have been individually notified of the application and it has also been advertised on site and in the local press and any comments received are below (if applicable): -

Stockton Churches Mission to the Single Homeless, 48 Bridge Road, Stockton on Tees

Student accommodation within 10m of a homeless men's hostel where residents are vulnerable, alcoholic, drug dependent, lacking assertive skills (liable to be bullied or coerced into unfortunate behaviour) etc; cannot be anything but a very bad idea. The whole idea of locating the hostel at 48, Bridge Road was to make it remote from any residential neighbour. That is why it was sited in a commercial part of the town.

Mrs Lesley Maude, Jubilee House, 6 Roundhill Road, Hurworth, Darlington, Co Durham

The first objection I have to this proposal is the traffic and car parking issues. The Travel Plan sounds good in theory but will take time to implement and will never be 100% successful. There will always be car users especially at the beginning of term and end of term when students have to deliver and collect all their belongings. They will need to park close to the building and there will be traffic chaos. The ratio of car parking spaces to bedrooms is unsustainable.

The second objection is the close proximity of a men's homeless hostel. This causing two very different social groups sharing the same neighbourhood.

The third objection is assuming this project is successful what will happen to the current private student rentals and HMO properties in the area. Contrary to the statements made against them being poorly maintained and not of a high quality. These buildings were often very run down before the purchase by student landlords and in order for them to be advertised within the university accommodation section and having to obtain the HMO license these properties are of a very high standard, many of them having extensive renovations now include wireless internet and state of the art furnishings. Eventually they could revert back to what they were originally i.e. not desirable for normal residential living, and eventually becoming derelict again.

Christopher Wescomb, 150 Broadway Tynemouth

I am informing the Authority of my objection to the planning application 08/2580/FUL.

My reasons for objecting are as stated. Primarily concerns re:

Parking - many more students now own cars and parking at present is stretched to capacity.

Traffic would be much heavier in residential areas causing concern for the local community.

There will be major congestion when students in cars exit onto roads or as pedestrians particularly at busy times.

The location of proposed developments will be adjacent to a homeless men's hostel.

Jeff Elliott, 40 Trinity Mews, Stockton-on-Tees

Young teenage girls should not be housed next to a Men's Hostel especially in large numbers.

University towns have a certain quality about them with the students living among the local residents not all living in a camp type environment. I believe Stockton will lose out if this becomes the case.

Mrs Nicola Farish, 12 Pennypot Lane, Eaglescliffe, Stockton on Tees

I object to this development on the grounds that it is not a suitable area for such a development. The Bridge House hostel next door houses vulnerable young men; these men are trying to overcome their addictions with minimal distraction from the 'outside world'. To put students next door may be a red rag to a bull, as the media often reports on the amount of alcohol students consume. These young men should be allowed to continue to strive for a good and honest life away from drugs and alcohol and the associated behaviour. As a parent of 3 students I would not be happy to find my child placed next door to vulnerable men.

The site is in a flood alert area. The developer should be able to prove that there is a need for this development in this area and there is no other area suitable for this development.

Since the recent student flats were built on the bridge there is now an oversupply of student housing. At this present moment, 2 weeks before students are due back, there are many houses in Thornaby and Oxbridge which are vacant because of the new 'bridge development' which is housing nearly 400 students. This in effect means there are about 100 houses (4 students sharing) vacant. Will these become boarded up I wonder?

This shows that there is not a demand for this development in this flood area.

I am also horrified that the 'bridge development' charges upwards of £82 per week (I am led to understand). Student accommodation provided in Thornaby and Oxbridge is around the £40 per week. As students get into more and more debt surely we have a responsibility to utilise houses that would minimise this debt rather than students paying for a developer to become richer!

I am convinced that this area could with some thought be developed in a more creative way.

Further to my last letter, I have now had time to look at the plans in more detail and am horrified to find that the proposal is for accommodation for 210 students but the car parking provision will only allow 12 of them to bring a car and 4 disabled students. However, 40 students may house their bike! Presumably the other 154 students will have to walk. What about when the students arrive? Will they be given time slots for 16 cars at a time? I know that many students have cars and I would hope the council would ask for a study from the University of the percentage of students who presently bring cars. The traffic implications for this busy area are unthinkable.

Mr.N.Johnson, 4,Tenby Way, Eaglescliffe, Stockton-on-Tees

My concern is for the access to the site for all the cars which will be used by students, or just on foot. All those students drifting across the roads would be a big safety issue at such a busy stretch of road, particularly at rush hour times. Also with all the adjacent junctions and businesses trying to get out.

I also feel that there is now too much over development, with the possibility of many student flats remaining empty. Just how many students are expected?

This is yet another strain on the services, with possible refuse collection and drainage issues, and obviously financial, as students are council tax exempt. Increase on demand, with no increase in Council tax income!

I also feel that some students could be vulnerable due to the close proximity to the homeless hostel next door.

If the planning application does go through, I hope the building is not an eye sore like the existing block.

Mr J H Rutherford, 8 Cover Court, Stockton on Tees.

I write as a student landlord who has provided accommodation for students of Durham University, Stockton Campus for 11 years. During this period, I have had the pleasure of accommodating over 200 students in my properties.

My comments are directed at the applicant's document titled 'Policy Statement Student Accommodation' (The Document) dated May 2008.

It is fair to say, that the comments and assertions contained therein are the applicant's basis for building the proposed student accommodation. Likewise, it is assumed that the application will be reviewed and considered by the Council based on the contents of 'The Document' It would seem reasonable, therefore, that I should be permitted to offer alternative comments, challenging certain aspects of the contents, in order to provide a balanced view for the Councils consideration.

My comments follow the headings and sub-headings of 'The Document' and will refer to page numbers & paragraphs.

Site Specific Policies

P2, Para 3 - The comment *our client's proposals are the only ones to provide a genuine mix of uses* demands clarification, as it would ultimately provide only student accommodation. What other *mix use* will be made, other than that associated with the accommodation

P2, Para 4 - Does PPG3 specifically state that the housing needs of students require assessing? As a landlord, I believe that the needs of students at Stockton Campus have been assessed assiduously by the university accommodation office, and these needs have been passed on to the student landlords as a prerequisite for having accreditation by the university.

I would dispute that further student accommodation is required to help, in this matter.

Supporting Information for Purpose Built Student Accommodation

P2, Para 6 - The comment *By implication, there will be an increase in student numbers and consequently an increased demand for accommodation which can be met, in part, by providing high quality, purpose built student accommodation* is questionable.

There is already a new purpose built student accommodation called 'The Mezzino, built by the applicant, on Thornaby Bridge. This development rather than supplementing the existing student accommodation to meet a so called demand, has caused many student landlords to consider withdrawing from this sector, despite having invested in the provision of quality and safe accommodation.

Quality accommodation was already provided, adequately, in Stockton and Thornaby, prior to the building of Mezzino. It should also be noted that new quality accommodation comes at a price. The current average rent for accommodation for Stockton Campus students is £40 per week in a shared house. These new student accommodations are being built solely as a business, not to meet any perceived demand or to support a perceived growth in the regions Universities.

It is also suggested that an increase in demand has been created by an increase in student numbers. This certainly has not been the case at Stockton Campus; the student numbers have remained static at 2000, for a number of years.

P3, Para 1 - This repeats again the projected growth of students, in NE England, which is not reflected in the numbers at Stockton Campus. Rising demand for purpose built student

accommodation is claimed, but on what evidence. There is now purpose built student accommodation at the Mezzino. Is this fully occupied? If not, where is the demand?

P3, Para 2 - This is extremely disparaging about private landlord housing.

Historically, the exact opposite has occurred, with the majority of student housing being upgraded to reflect the standard that normal competition will generate. Furthermore, student housing can be identified by the care and attention taken to keep the external appearance smart and tidy. Maintenance must be carried out to sustain the investment made by landlords. The standard of décor and furnishing is generally to a high standard, as students will attest to, if asked.

The purpose built student blocks, like those detailed in the application, provides merely a combined kitchen/dining/lounge area for between 5 & 6 students. How does this qualify as quality built accommodation, when private student housing generally provides a good-sized kitchen with dining and a separate lounge, occasionally with added dining.

Merits of purpose built student accommodation

Residential amenity

Is there documented evidence of problems with noise and anti social behaviour from students in Stockton and Thornaby?

On a personal note, I have found that the occasional complaint of exuberant celebrations from immediate neighbours can be dealt with by a quiet word to the student household. I have always found this to be an adequate solution. Perhaps the added pressure of living alongside neighbours is a better environment for students than the suggested free-for-all on the approaches and inside purpose built accommodation. This will also, presumably, be a nuisance to other students in the building.

P 4, Para 3 - Is there evidence of house owners complaining about empty housing, during summer vacation? I imagine one house looks the same as another from the outside, temporarily vacated or not. In fact, it is during the summer vacation that landlords have access to their properties to carry out maintenance, external & internal painting and decorating, etc. I have found that, over the years, neighbours of my properties have taken the opportunity to comment on the behaviour of my students, and I can say that there have been few complaints. On the contrary, I would say that the behaviour of Stockton Campus students reflects the life experience that sharing a home with other students provides.

P 4, Para 4 - The reference to '*Studentification*' is surely an argument that must reflect the location concerned.

In recent history, the dilapidation of terraced housing was of general concern. In Stockton and Thornaby, the decision to build the Stockton Campus of Durham University created a demand for student accommodation that the University could not provide. Landlords therefore took the opportunity to provide this accommodation, and made the investments to reflect the Universities demands. Without this investment, it could be argued that the towns would now be worse off.

On a personal note, I find the word '*Studentification*' offensive. Has *Planning Resource* magazine (APPENDIX 1) identified a *growing clamour for tighter planning controls to allow towns and cities to clamp down on the loss of family homes to other groups*. By other groups I refer to accommodation provided by private landlords for immigrants, asylum seekers, social housing, those recovering from drug and alcohol addiction, etc. Are we to understand that students are no less deserving of a family home, even when attending university?

It would be of interest to hear if the applicant has any plans to build *quality, purpose built accommodation for other groups*, generally at a rent of around £80 per week. If there are such plans, will the location be adjacent to the current application, I wonder.

Regeneration

P 4, Para 5 - In one statement the document states *often student housing can support inner-city areas which may otherwise experience decline*. As I have previously claimed, this is the case in Stockton and Thornaby. The next statement in the document states *the introduction of purpose built student housing in areas suffering from decline will have quite considerable regeneration benefits*. Is the area in question in decline?

P5, Para 2 - On one hand, it is claimed that students may remain in the area where they have studied, after graduation, either renting or buying. It is claimed this could refresh the area and assist in reversing the depopulation of the area. In the next paragraph, it is stated that degradation of the residential environment because of poorly maintained properties will be removed with purpose built student housing. I am certain that a student will be more inclined to remain in the area if he/she has lived within the community, not in a sheltered community.

Support for existing businesses and services

P 5, Paras 4 & 5 - Comparing Leeds to Stockton & Thornaby is not realistic. Leeds has 72,000 students, Stockton Campus has 2000. Besides, Stockton and Thornaby are close to each other.

With regard to the spending power of students, how will a purpose built building change the spending habits of students? They will spend their money in Stockton & Thornaby, either way.

P5, Para 6 - Because almost all student landlords are signed up to the Durham university accreditation scheme for student accommodation, there has been no need for letting signs. Lettings have been carried out with the assistance of the university accommodation office.

Student housing preferences

Many assertions are made in this section, regarding student demands with regard to accommodation. I would comment as follows;

- i) High quality new build accommodation comes at a cost. Quality accommodation is already available, at half the cost.
- ii) Shared areas in student blocks are minimal, compared with private.
- iii) A survey of my current students shows that 47% have cars. The proposed number of spaces at the proposed new build will be severely inadequate.
- iv) Is it evident that a growing number of students prefer to live in purpose built accommodation, as stated?
- v) There is no shortage of family homes on the market in Stockton and Thornaby, as stated.

Need for purpose built student accommodation

My comments regarding the need for purpose built student accommodation are noted in previous pages.

Conclusions

I would challenge the conclusions made in the 'Policy Statement Student Accommodation' as follows;

- 1-There is not clear evidence, as claimed, that there is a need to provide high quality purpose built student accommodation.
- 2-There is no evidence of a proposed campus expansion. If this fact is to be considered by the Council, then confirmation needs to be requested from Durham University.
- 3-There is no need to reduce the concentration of students living in privately rented accommodation,
 Supposedly, to assist in the rebalancing of communities. Students are not a problem in Stockton & Thornaby. Perhaps the Council should examine the impact of other groups in the town, rather than allow a developer to criticise students as a means to gain support for a planning application.
- 4-The development of the Queen's Campus was aided, from the beginning, by the private landlords,
 who invested in providing accommodation to a standard demanded by the accommodation office.
- 5-Evidence of a demand for purpose built student housing has NOT been presented in the document.
- 6-The future growth prospects of Stockton Campus must not be assumed. These must be established, before further new builds proceed.
- 7-Is more high quality purpose built student accommodation required? Is the Mezzino fully let, this year 2008/2009?
- 8-APPENDIX 2 indicates figures for large towns and cities, with high numbers of students, e.g. Nottingham (58,000) and Leeds (72.000). Stockton Campus currently has 2,000. Surely this must be a consideration not to approve this application.

Summary

It is evident that the 'Policy Statement Student Accommodation' has been produced to justify, in a number of statements and arguments, the need for this development. In the same manner, I have endeavoured to highlight areas where there are areas of inconsistency and assumptions, which need to be addressed. It would seem imbalanced if my letter of objection to this planning application was dismissed, due to length, rather than content. I would request that my challenge to the conclusions in the 'Policy Statement Student Accommodation' can be registered as representing my objections to this application.

The frugal design of the Pods, as indicated on the drawings, suggests that the blocks could be absorbed by the University as a managed Halls of Residence. If so, the University will have used private funding to provide new Halls. Consequential charges to students would include for a profit margin to the developer, thus increasing student costs, at a time of severe financial constraint.

Finally, I can see a time in the not so distant future where there is no low cost accommodation for students studying at Stockton Campus, as a result of the over development of new student blocks by developers. The advantage Stockton has had by providing low cost student accommodation will disappear.

Peter Duffy, 21 Skripka Dive, Billingham

I am writing to you to object to this planning application. What we do not need in this location is another student accommodation block. The siting next to a vulnerable/homeless person's house is absurd, and the extra traffic, both pedestrian and motorised, will definitely become an issue once these buildings are fully let.

I do not know if you are aware, but it is common knowledge that most people who have seen the recent new building regard it as an eyesore, and degrades that area along the river.

A. M. Organ, 2 Swan Street, Petersfield, Hampshire

I strongly object to the development of such 'student ghettos'.

There is already considerable high quality accommodation available for students at Stockton and substantial future environmental problems will be created by allowing such a poorly designed and located scheme.

The location adjoining the homeless men's hostel is ill conceived and could create a nightmare conflict putting students lives at risk- an issue which no amount of security can prevent. The traffic generated by students as pedestrians or motorists in the subject location will cause severe conflict in an already high traffic use area. Far better for the Council to promote a safer area around the environs of the Campus. A qualitative Environmental Impact Analysis should be demanded.

Caroline Gilchrist, 7 Grammar School Lane, Northallerton

1.'Need' not properly established - check nat. demographics re 18 yr olds for next decade; check university stats. - falling need for accomm. cos more students living at home 2.Uni influence on raising local housing standards re private sector been substantial -policy statement makes this a negative - far from truth.3. There will be no 'rapid rise' in student spending because students in Thornaby already spend most of there disposable in Stockton centre anyway; Stockton is not on same scale as Leeds. 4. A huge %students need (cost) want private sector accom. in a house and this is well met with no shortfall of accomm.

Alastair Mackenzie, Mayfield House, Middleton Road, Sadberge, Darlington

I object to this planning application on the grounds that there is no need for another large-scale student accommodation block in Stockton / Thornaby.

I believe that I should give some background to my comments. I own one house in Thornaby that -- until the construction of the Rialto --- I used to rent to students. I would have preferred to continue to rent my property to students, but that is no longer possible, so I am making other arrangements.

I believe that the Durham University Accommodation Office will confirm that since the construction of the Rialto there is now a significant oversupply of student accommodation in the Thornaby area. (That message certainly came through loud and clear to the student landlords.) Many of the surplus properties will either be sold (if the market allows) or will be rented to the non-student market. This is going to happen to some extent whether or not the proposed new student accommodation block is built, but if the new block is built then it will happen to a far greater extent.

I take issue with some of the claims made in the "Policy Statement - Student Accommodation". Amongst other things, this document states that "students can be responsible for the degrading of the residential environment because they are less likely to take care of their rented town houses, especially the exteriors". This is nonsense. It is the landlords -- not the students -- who are responsible for the maintenance of the fabric of the properties. The document also states that "landlords of town housing in these areas will often neglect the maintenance of such properties". This is an insult to the many student landlords who take good care of their properties and, in many cases, have refurbished properties that had fallen into a poor state of repair. It is a fact that over the last few years the Durham University Accommodation Office has placed increasingly onerous demands on student landlords wishing to have their properties advertised to students as part of the university's "accreditation scheme". This has helped to drive up the standard of accommodation in the area.

The policy statement also tries to make out that students living in "ordinary houses" are detrimental to the area. I would suggest that this is also nonsense. It is to the benefit of both the students and the local area for students to live in "ordinary" housing. In particular, for the students, this is part of the preparation for their future lives. I would suggest that it is not a good idea for students to be completely segregated in student accommodation blocks.

Gordon Howes, 97 Mansfield Avenue, Thornaby

There is no justification at all for further student accommodation in the Stockton and Thornaby areas. The University, to my knowledge have not stated that there is a massive need for further large-scale accommodation. There is enough good quality private affordable student accommodation in the local area without these purpose built buildings.

There is an issue with parking for student cars in the locality, traffic congestion and too much a concentration of students in one locality.

I most strongly object to this planning application.

PLANNING POLICY

11. The relevant development plan in this case is the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

Where an adopted or approved development plan contains relevant policies, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permissions shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan(s) for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the relevant Development Plans are: - *the Tees Valley Structure Plan (TVSP) and the Stockton on Tees Local Plan (STLP)*.

The following planning policies are considered to be relevant to the consideration of this application: -

Policy GP1

Proposals for development will be assessed in relation to the policies of the Cleveland Structure Plan and the following criteria as appropriate:

- (i) The external appearance of the development and its relationship with the surrounding area;
- (ii) The effect on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties;
- (iii) The provision of satisfactory access and parking arrangements;
- (iv) The contribution of existing trees and landscape features;
- (v) The need for a high standard of landscaping;
- (vi) The desire to reduce opportunities for crime;
- (vii) The intention to make development as accessible as possible to everyone;
- (viii) The quality, character and sensitivity of existing landscapes and buildings;
- (ix) The effect upon wildlife habitats;
- (x) The effect upon the public rights of way network.

Policy HO3

Within the limits of development, residential development may be permitted provided that:

- (i) The land is not specifically allocated for another use; and
- (ii) The land is not underneath electricity lines; and
- (iii) It does not result in the loss of a site which is used for recreational purposes; and
- (iv) It is sympathetic to the character of the locality and takes account of and accommodates important features within the site; and
- (v) It does not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity to adjacent land users; and
- (vi) Satisfactory arrangements can be made for access and parking.

Policy HO11

New residential development should be designed and laid out to:

- (i) Provide a high quality of built environment which is in keeping with its surroundings;
- (ii) Incorporate open space for both formal and informal use;
- (iii) Ensure that residents of the new dwellings would have a satisfactory degree of privacy and amenity;
- (iv) Avoid any unacceptable effect on the privacy and amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties;
- (v) Pay due regard to existing features and ground levels on the site;

- (vi) Provide adequate access, parking and servicing;
- (vii) Subject to the above factors, to incorporate features to assist in crime prevention.

Policy EN17

Within the Urban Development Area, land is allocated at the following sites as appropriate for a range of uses including industry, commerce, housing, sport, recreation, tourism and education:
c) Boathouse Lane, Stockton.

Policy EN28

Development which is likely to detract from the setting of a Listed Building will not be permitted

Policy TR15

The design of highways required in connection with new development and changes of use will provide for all the traffic generated by the development, while parking will normally be required to accord with standards set out in the Stockton on Tees Borough Council Design Guide and Specification No. 1.

Policy S15

Planning permission will be granted for new development or limited extensions for small scale retail use outside the centres listed in Policy S1 provided that:

- (i) The proposal is within defined settlement limits;
- (ii) The facilities intended to serve local needs only, being of a scale appropriate to the locality and being within walking distance of residential areas;
- (iii) The proposal would not give rise to any adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties on account of the area;
- (iv) The proposal would not adversely undermine the vitality and viability of any village shop or retail centre as listed in Policy S1.

Within major new residential and employment developments, where no similar facilities exist within reasonable walking distance, developers would be expected to provide an element of convenience retail development at a scale to be agreed by negotiation.

Supplementary Planning Document 3: Parking Provision for New Developments sets out the Council's standards for parking standards associated with new development.

The Tees Valley Structure Plan does not contain any policy applicable directly to the application site. In general terms however the Structure plan is based on a strategy to ensure that most new development takes place within or on the edge of the main urban areas together with regeneration of rundown, urban areas.

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Communities lists design as one of the fundamental ways of delivering sustainable development and states that planning authorities should prepare robust policies on design and access. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its present defining characteristics.

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing seeks to secure mixed communities with developments incorporating both affordable housing and appropriate levels of housing. Requires housing to be responsive to local need, and designed to a constantly high standard responding to local distinctiveness and reflect wider environmental and sustainability considerations.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport seeks to integrate planning and transport by reducing the reliance on the motor car, encouraging the use of more sustainable transport choices, reduce the need to travel, and promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, cycling and walking.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment provides comprehensive advice on controls for the protection of historic buildings and conservation areas.

Planning Policy Statement 23: Planning and Pollution Control advises on the role of the Local Planning Authority in terms of development and the quality of land, air and water.

Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk seeks to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas at highest risk. Where new development is, exceptionally, necessary in such areas, policy aims to make it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reducing flood risk overall.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

12. The site is approximately 0.45 hectares in size and is currently occupied by Doves Builders merchants (Appendix 1 - site location plan). It is a prominent site and highly visible occupying an important position on the corner of Bridge Road and Boathouse Lane and adjoining one of the main routes into Stockton Town Centre and is considered a Gateway location.

13. The land to the immediate south is vacant, having been cleared some time ago of all buildings and has an extant outline planning consent for residential development but a reserved matters submission has not been made. To the west of the application site is a development which consists of student accommodation which has recently been completed and developed by the same developer as the proposed development. On the opposite side of Bridge Road, to the north, is Chandlers Wharf containing outlets occupied by Burger King and Mecca Bingo. Immediately to the west of the site on the opposite of Boathouse Lane is the original Grade II* listed booking office of the Stockton - Darlington railway that adjoins a Hostel (number 50-56 Bridge Road), which is also listed (Grade II). Immediately to the rear of the listed buildings is a builder's yard currently used by JT Doves and is council owned.

14. The application site forms part of a larger site known as Boathouse Lane, an area characterised by industrial and basic commercial buildings and cleared land. The Council has prepared a Planning and Design Brief for Boathouse Lane to aid the area's comprehensive redevelopment.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

15. The main considerations in this application are the acceptability of the proposed development on this site, the relationship and impact on future development on the surrounding area and, access and highway safety and whether it satisfies the requirements of the Local Plan Policies and Government Guidance. Each of these issues will be examined in turn.

Acceptability of the proposed development and impact on future development on the surrounding area

16. Policy EN17 of the adopted Local Plan highlights part of the Boathouse Lane area as derelict and underused. The adopted policy also encourages the reclamation and re-use of the site and recognises the sites potential for improving the image of the Borough.

17. The application site is previously developed land and within a major urban area and is the subject of a Supplementary Planning Document, which has been prepared by the Council to guide future development on the Boathouse Lane area, which includes the application site.

18. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of any planning application(s) received by the Council and sets out the Council's aspirations for the area. The document also

seeks to clarify planning parameters within which developers can explore options. Consideration must therefore be given as to whether development of the application site in the manner proposed would sufficiently harm the proper planning and comprehensive redevelopment of the area.

19. The proposal is considered to be broadly in line with the SPD key objectives and general planning policies set out in the Development Plan.

20. The importance of adopting a design-led approach to comprehensive redevelopment is fully recognised in Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development which states that planning authorities should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. The Guidance goes on to say that design which is inappropriate in its context or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.

21. Design is also a key consideration of the Stockton –Middlesbrough Initiative (SMI) – “A Vision For Our Future” which seeks to create a distinctive high quality city-region with greater emphasis placed on connectivity of the key regeneration sites and not allowing them to become isolated developments. The document highlights the current lack of a coherent city-scale presence at the geographical core of the sub-region and that this situation will continue to hold back its development unless it is addressed in a strategic and collaborative way.

22. A detailed Design Statement with a thorough analysis of the context and surrounding environment accompanies the application. This includes strategic views into the site, historic mapping and linkages and permeability.

23. The design response has been subject of a number of discussions with Council officers and representatives from English Heritage. The design comprises a modern building designed to act as a link between the city scale landmark building adjacent the application site which features a bold pallet of materials and the listed buildings to the west and less dense development towards the south of Boathouse Lane. This gives the appearance of a cascading design from its highest point to the east and lowest point adjacent the listed buildings with road frontage on Bridge Road which continues around the corner into Boathouse Lane acting as an entrance feature. The scheme incorporates active frontage facing out onto Bridge Road and Boathouse Lane.

24. Importantly the proposal is subservient to the adjacent landmark building but has the necessary scale to ensure a satisfactory relationship between the two. The proposal also has both physical and design links with adjacent student accommodation to ensure an architectural relationship but provides for a variety of height alongside environmental improvements to the junction at Bridge Road adjacent to the Listed Buildings to improve their setting which is currently unattractive and fails to respond to their historic worth.

25. As previously mentioned the application site is considered as part of the Planning and Design Brief for the Boathouse Lane area. The Council envisages a mixed-use residential scheme for the area. The scheme has a high density but this is not considered excessive in view of the highly sustainable location in a central urban location being close to existing facilities and services in Stockton Town Centre, including the University Campus and public transport.

26. The land to the immediate south is vacant, having been cleared some time ago of all buildings and has an extant outline planning consent for residential development but a reserved matters submission has not been made. The proposal provides for the bulk of the accommodation running along the northern boundary of the site adjacent to Phase 1. Two offshoots of five storeys then extend towards the land to the south with gables facing onto the site. A separation space has also been provided between the offshoots and the boundary of the site and the design seeks to negate any impact on the adjacent scheme.

27. The proposed development is considered to be a suitable type of development for the town centre and subject to accordance with Building Regulation provisions with regard to noise insulation, should not unduly affect the surrounding area or adjacent premises.

28. The proposed scheme provides a relatively limited amount of ancillary provision in respect to the student accommodation including ancillary retail (100 m²), university bookshop (100 m²), university café/common room (150 m²), ancillary leisure – gym (200 m²) and university office accommodation (300M²). In the context of PPS6, the retail units are classed as town centre uses, which is also reflected in regional planning policy. Whilst the site is not located within a town centre location, it is considered that due to the scale and the nature of the development, the development of a retail use is ancillary to the wider development proposal. It is therefore considered that the development of the proposed uses to complement the wider development proposals does not present an issue of conflict with national or regional planning policy.

29. Alteration No 1 of the Local Plan includes Policy S15, which is relevant to this site states *“Planning permission will be granted for new development for small scale retail use outside the Centres provided that the facility is intended to serve local needs only, being of a scale appropriate to the locality and being within walking distance of residential areas and the proposal would not adversely undermine the vitality and viability of any retail centre”*. The proposal is considered to be small scale and ancillary to the main development will also serve the local needs of the community.

30. The Environmental Health Manager has considered the proposal and planning conditions to provide sound attenuation to the properties likely to be affected were requested but these are matters which can be dealt with under the Building Regulations.. Given the controls available, it is considered that the proposal does not conflict with Local Plan Policies GP1 and HO3 in this respect.

31. In terms of site contamination, a ground investigation has been undertaken and submitted as part of the planning submission. Planning conditions can be attached to any permission granted requiring remediation works and to implement any engineering measures to facilitate development of the site based upon those findings. The Environment Agency and Environmental Health has no objection to the proposal subject to appropriate controlling conditions. Accordingly the proposal does not conflict with Planning Guidance in respect of contaminated land.

32. A flood risk assessment accompanies the application. The Environment Agency has an outstanding objection on the grounds that sufficient evidence has not been provided to demonstrate that there are no reasonably available alternative sites in areas with a lower probability of flooding (i.e. Flood Zone 1 and 2) that would be appropriate for the type of development proposed. The applicant is preparing additional evidence to seek to address the Environment Agency’s objection. Should there be an outstanding objection from the Environment Agency the recommendation is for the application to be refused. The Environment Agency is satisfied with all other aspects of the scheme subject to the imposition of controlling conditions.

33. In order to fully reflect the objectives of regional planning policy, the development proposals should have embedded within them a minimum of 10 percent of their energy from renewable energy sources. It is proposed to secure this through a planning condition.

34. Objections have been raised in respect to the desirability of housing students close to a homeless person’s hostel given the vulnerability of hostel residents and the possibility of conflict between residents. In response issues such as fear of crime based on assumptions and not supported by evidence as to the characteristics of the future occupiers should not be taken into account in the determination of this proposal.

Need for Student Accommodation

35. In terms of the proposed use for student accommodation, the applicant has submitted a supporting document, a section of which is concerned with need/demand for student accommodation. In summary the applicant argues that there is a need to provide high quality purpose built student accommodation to aid the growth of the northeast's universities. The need for this type of accommodation is twofold: to facilitate the necessary campus expansion of the higher education establishments in line with regional objectives; and to meet the rising demand from students for this type of accommodation. Consequently the provision of purpose built accommodation will also reduce the concentrations of students living in privately rented accommodation which will assist in the rebalancing of communities.

36. The applicant goes on to say that the student population can be responsible for many benefits at a regional level including prestige and recognition of a town or city and the establishment of spin off companies. Furthermore the value of the student population at a local level should not be overlooked. The potential regeneration benefits of a proposal of this nature are quite considerable. A shortfall of purpose built student housing has been identified and the future growth prospects of the Universities should not be overlooked. These suggest a continuing rising demand for student housing. The applicant believes that this should not come at the expense of the existing communities and in Stockton and Thornaby. Purpose built accommodation is the ideal mechanism to deliver high quality accommodation for students.

37. The applicant has also commented in respect of the assumption that the other schemes will result in an over supply, and states that this logic would appear to be flawed and not consistent with the usual planning process. They consider that each scheme should be judged on its own merits and in accordance with the adopted policies of the Local Plan. There are a number of schemes proposed however in their opinion not all of these proposals are likely to be supported due to issues such as design/ sustainability etc.

38. The applicant has expressed concerns about some of the other sites which have been included in the calculations and these are set out below.

- The Thornaby scheme (07/3438/FUL) proposing 175 beds has been dismissed at appeal. It is noted that the Inspector made no comment about the requirements to demonstrate need for this development as it was dismissed largely on design grounds.
- The Dovecot Street scheme (08/0327/OUT) has also been dismissed at appeal again due to concerns about design and impact rather than need
- The Yarm Lane scheme has now been refused at committee on design and highway grounds and is, in their view, unlikely to succeed at appeal.

39. In view of the above, figures regarding the provision of new build student accommodation are already out of date. The 1007 figure used may now be reduced to 690 (even this assumes that the Rocket scheme, Phase II of Bridge Road and Supreme Knitwear would all be approved and implemented), which they consider unlikely. On this basis and reflecting the recent developments, assuming therefore 1700 students requiring accommodation and taking away the 500 University spaces and the 380 spaces built at Rialto Court, there is a shortfall in accommodation to be provided by the private sector of 130 beds.

40. The applicant maintains therefore that there is still a demand/need for the additional units and they maintain their stance that competition between different student accommodation providers should not influence the planning decision.

41. It should be noted that a number of objections have been received which draw different conclusions regarding the provision and need for student accommodation in the Borough. A letter of objection has been received from Durham University based on additional need for further

student accommodation to serve the Stockton Campus. The University have advised that there is no further need in this regard.

42. There is no clear consensus of the amount and type of accommodation that is required. Many of the towns and cities that have a student population have adopted policy in respect of student accommodation. At present Stockton Borough Council does not have any planning policies to guide officers when dealing with planning applications for student accommodation. The Local Plan contains no specific targets or precise allocations for this particular use and previous applications for student accommodation indicate that there is no clear consensus about the amount and type of accommodation that it required. Whilst comments have been made in relation to possible problems of the oversupply of development with regards to over concentration of students and rapid removal of students from houses of multiple occupation within established housing areas, it is uncertain what impact student accommodation is having on existing residential areas around the Borough, although it is understood that concentrations of students within the established housing areas are relatively low.

43. National planning policy for housing, expressed in particular through Planning Policy Statement PPS3 Housing, confirms the Government's intention is that everyone should have the opportunity of living in a decent home. PPS3 offers no particular guidance in respect of student housing but one central aim is to create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas.

44. The adopted North East Regional Spatial Strategy emphasises the importance of the region's universities and further and higher education establishments to the economy. It encourages the development of Universities but offers no direct guidance on the provision of student accommodation.

45. It should be noted that a key element of the development of North Shore (one of Tees Valley's Regeneration's five strategic development sites in the Tees Valley) is an expansion of the University's Queen's Campus which includes a provision for student accommodation. The University (the generator of need) has in place a strategy designed to meet its own needs, however it must be noted that the University does not have a statutory requirement to provide accommodation for its own students and the thrust of ministerial guidance advises that it is not the role of the planning system to restrict competition. The Local Plan contains no specific targets or precise allocations for this particular use and therefore the need or lack of it cannot be addressed through the provisions of the Local Plan. The proposed use is therefore considered to be acceptable in this regard subject to satisfying other planning requirements.

Impact on Listed Building

46. Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment provides guidance on controls for the protection of historic buildings and conservation areas. Within PPG15 there is a presumption against development, which would harm the setting of a listed building. The guidance indicates that the setting of a listed building may be limited to obvious ancillary land, but may often include land some distance away from it. A proposed high or bulky building might affect the setting of a listed building some distance away.

47. English Heritage has commented on the proposal and while supportive of a number of design aspects including the use of brick, has advised on some design issues that require further work. The scheme has been revised with the introduction of architectural features and detailing especially to the roofscape to break up the massing. Furthermore a variety of materials to compliment the brick palette are featured to add visual interest and the development's context. Further refinement of the choice of materials to the front elevation has also been explored. It is considered that the proposed environmental works to the junction of Bridge Road adjacent to the Listed Buildings will improve their setting as well as improve the pedestrian route into the Town

Centre. The design recognises the prominence of the site and represents a significant improvement over the current appearance of the site and buildings.

48. It is considered that the proposed building would have a satisfactory relationship to the surrounding area due to its scale and design and would provide a substantial and attractive feature building when viewed from both road frontages. The scale of the building is considered appropriate for the site and it is considered that the building has the necessary design quality required for this prominent site and would not have a detrimental impact on the character and setting of the adjacent Listed buildings.

Access and Highway Safety

49. It is proposed to locate the site access on Boathouse Lane that runs along the western boundary of the site. The development site is currently a builder's merchant and the proposed access will be located in the same location as the existing access, just south of the Boathouse Lane / Bridge Road signalised junction. It is also proposed that this access will serve the recently constructed student accommodation that adjoins this site and therefore remove its existing access on Bridge Road.

50. It should be noted that the adjacent approved scheme for student accommodation was subject to a contribution towards the provision of pedestrian improvements at the signals at Boathouse Lane and provision of public transport infrastructure. The approval also required the opening up of the access below Victoria Bridge thereby offering the opportunity for the continuation of the Teesdale Way, which runs along the northern bank of the River Tees through the centre of Stockton. Funding for CCTV cameras as part of the approved works was also made available to further encourage better and safer pedestrian and recreational linkages along the riverside.

51. It is considered that this is a sustainable site, and the SBC parking standard of 1 car parking space per 40 students can be applied. A total of 6 would, therefore, be required for this development. A total of 16 car parking spaces are proposed, 4 of which will be designated disabled parking bays. Thus the 16 spaces provided sufficiently accommodate the SBC standards for student accommodation.

52. Cycle parking has been provided in a convenient location close to the site entrance. A condition covering a Management and Travel plan is also proposed to ensure other measures to encourage travel by sustainable modes are implemented and monitored. It is anticipated that locating the site adjacent to existing student accommodation will facilitate Travel Plan measures.

53. The Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy (HITEP) has considered the access arrangements and subject to the applicant entering into a section 278 works to the access and Bridge Road junction raises no objection on highway grounds to the proposed development.

CONCLUSION

54. It is considered that the principle of student accommodation is acceptable in this location. The proposed access satisfies the requirements of Head of Technical Services. It is considered that the development would have the necessary design quality for the site and would have a satisfactory relationship to the surrounding area. It is not considered that the development will adversely affect the setting of the listed buildings and is in line with relevant planning policy and guidance and is therefore recommended for approval with conditions subject to no objection from the Environment Agency.

Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer Mr Gregory Archer

Telephone No 01642 526052
Email address gregory.archer@stockton.gov.uk

Financial Implications – As report

Environmental Implications – As report

Community Safety Implications – As report

Background Papers – Stockton on Tees Local Plan, PPS1, PPS3, PPG13, PPG15, PPS23 and PPS25.

Human Rights Implications - The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Ward Stockton Town Centre
Ward Councillors Councillor D. W. Coleman, Councillor P. Kirton