

## **14/12175/FUL Proposed development of a 65 bed Hotel & MacDonalds Drive-thru & Restaurant at Southampton Road, Salisbury**

The Salisbury Area Greenspace Partnership wishes to raise a strong objection to this proposal.

This site is small but significant multifunctional greenspace & one of the few remaining on the north side of the A36 trunk road at the key gateway into Salisbury City from the south & should be retained for the following reasons.

### **1. Wildlife Value**

Looking at early maps it is clear that this site with its drainage channel along the northern boundary, is a remnant part of the Avon Valley now cut off by the A36. It still remains a wetland habitat with standing water over the winter.

The Ecological Assessment for the Petersfinger site was produced by Ecology Solutions in November 2104. The report stated that 'Ecology Solutions undertook an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the application site in November 2012, with an update undertaken in November 2014. This survey ascertained the general ecological value of the land contained within the boundaries of the site and identified the main habitats and associated plant species, with notes on fauna utilising the site.' The point needs to be registered that November is the wrong time of year to undertake these surveys. It was out of season and therefore the value of the report is called into question.

One consequence is that the temperatures were too low to observe activity of basking reptiles such as grass snake & slow worm that have been observed to inhabit this area and were not mentioned in the report. Furthermore, there are typical plant species such as Yellow Flag Iris & Marsh Marigold that flower in spring which have not been picked up in the Ecological Assessment.

In addition, this site forms an important stepping stone for the transient species, such as dragonflies and other insects, newts, frogs, toads, small mammals such as water voles, and birds that have not been included in the two Phase 1 habitat survey reports.

It is felt that such fundamental failings casts doubt on the veracity of the whole report & especially when recording the presence of water voles.

Lastly, the idea that wildlife would be enhanced by suitable habitat provided by the development is ecologically unsound. Any assessment should not judge sites in isolation from others, since several habitats may combine to make it worthy of importance to nature conservation. There is a significant loss of habitat and open space that acts as a wild life corridor and the site also provides a holding area for retaining flood water when required during the winter.

### **2. Value as Landscape Setting**

This is a gateway project in the wrong place. The Bourne Way roundabout forms the urban 'gateway' identified in the Salisbury District Landscape Character Assessment (2008) and now embedded in the Wiltshire Core Strategy. In line with Core Strategy Policy 51 – Landscape,

extending the urbanization of this part of the Avon Valley eastwards along the north side of the A36 is contrary to policies for conserving and enhancing the 'distinctive and memorable approaches to the historic core of the city from first views and urban gateways'. Furthermore, if this application were to be approved it would set a precedent for further development on the north side of the A36 and in an eastwards direction which would be difficult for the local authority to resist.

The 'Salisbury District Landscape Character Assessment (2008)' clearly identifies the landscape character of the area as having a high sensitivity. The site is an important greenspace with a significant tree group close to the northern site boundary & together with the naturalistic planting of the adjoining park and ride site, makes a significant contribution to the character of this edge of town location on the north side of the A36. Furthermore, it provides a valuable visual connection to the sensitive open countryside and river valley landscape to the south of the A36. Overall it presents an important opportunity to create an attractive **natural gateway and approach**, and enhance the setting of Salisbury and this key approach to the city.

The proposal represents considerable over development of this small site which is less than a hectare in size. It would be difficult to achieve sensitive design & landscape measures & to maintain them, in order to visually integrate such bulky buildings & ensure that this development makes a positive contribution to this sensitive area.

### **3. Unacceptable Traffic Generation**

The hotel and MacDonalDs drive through and restaurant would generate a substantial amount of traffic in an area which is already severely congested and could close down opportunities for more comprehensive landscape/townscape improvements to the A 36 corridor in the future.

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