

APPENDIX A

JON SEAR

I want to address just one specific issue. North – South cycle routes through the city centre. There is going to be a lot of other very significant debate over the next two days, but I think it is vital that this particular issue is not overlooked, whatever the Committee's final decision.

Identifying suitable cycle routes is something I know a bit about. I've recently been working on a Department for Transport project to do just that in Lancaster and other cities around the North of England. Even if you know Lancaster very well, it might help if you have a map of the city centre in front of you for what I'm about to say.

I'd like you to put yourself in the position of someone living in SE Lancaster – Moorlands, Primrose, Bowerham, Hala, Newlands. You want to cycle to Morecambe, or anywhere else north of the river. If you find that hard to visualise, then just imagine trying to get to the Millennium Bridge by bike from here.

Between the railway line and the canal there are only four direct routes north you could take, only two of which are currently legal. There's the one way system Northbound and Southbound. It's hard to imagine how these routes could ever be safe and attractive for the majority of potential cyclists. There's Penny Street and Cheapside – but even if the Council decided to allow cycling through the pedestrian zone, there are plenty of times when it is so busy with pedestrians that it would be physically impossible to cycle anyway. If the Centros development does go ahead, I expect there will be fewer pedestrians using Penny Street – but I still can't see it being approved as the main cycle route through town.

The remaining route uses Bulk Street and Edward Street. This links in with the recently developed route through the car parks and down Phoenix Street to the Millennium Park at Sainsbury's. Brewery Lane is an alternative to Edward Street, but is also affected by the development.

The canal is an alternative but it is less direct, and how many of you would use it after dark? (Looking at it another way, if you're out for a walk on the towpath, you might be happy to share it with leisure cyclists, but maybe not with too many people cycling through at commuting speeds.)

The report in front of us does talk about cycling, but it doesn't fully address the issue of the Strategic Cycle Network. New accesses to the canal from Moor Lane and Alfred Street would be nice, but they don't actually add much to the network. Conversely, Edward Street route is part of the only reasonable route for cyclists from South East Lancaster to the Millennium Bridge, which avoids the main one-way system. As the number of people wanting to travel by bike increases, this route will become more and more important. (I think it's also particularly important we're seen to be improving rather than constructing cycle routes at a time when we are pulling investment for cycling into the district and getting a national profile through the Cycle Demonstration Town project.

It really is vital that a good quality, direct route is retained from Bulk Street through to Phoenix Street. I came here this morning because I am sure that we would regret it for decades to come if we block this route with steps, or hand control to a management company which doesn't want cyclists passing through.

So, if you approve this application, please impose a condition that ensures we retain a direct 24 hours cycle route between Phoenix Street and Moor Lane. Legally, there are a number of options for achieving this. And if after you've considered the objections you decide to reject the application, please include the loss of the strategic cycle route in your list of reasons so that it is addressed by any revised application on appeal.

Thank you for listening.

JACQUELINE SKINNER

I sincerely hope that this committee will turn down, not just the planning application 08/00866/OUT, but all the applications connected with these proposals for the Canal Corridor site.

When I was at primary school, I saw the centre of my home town of Plymouth transformed. It had to be transformed, because it had been bombed flat. This Committee might note that the plans paid attention to the preservation of St. Andrew's Church and the town's guildhall. Later on, I lived in Coventry, where the town centre also needed a complete rebuild after some wartime bombing. The town centre plans were different, but local people were happy, and the Cathedral and the Belgrade Theatre showed how Coventry people wanted something more than shops in their town centre.

How different from these proposals, which are based on commercial calculation rather than considerations of civic responsibility! These proposals would create a shopping area large enough to blight the future of existing businesses. The plans are all about Debenham's concern for the future of their business, and are not concerned with the needs of Lancaster people. (Lancaster people showed what they felt about the plans on March 1st this year.)

I've got no objection to Debenhams earning a living, but the canal corridor development is still inappropriate to the planning needs of Lancaster. Its proposals run counter to central government guidance on giving a fair deal to existing city centres. Where is the extra spending to come from? Why should our existing shops be sacrificed to a shopping chain that wants to build its way out of its existing problems? The current financial crisis should surely be yet another reason for this Committee to think before it acts: it is unclear how long and how serious the results of the credit crunch will be.

These proposals also exhibit a truly astonishing lack of consultation of ordinary Lancaster people. With a development of this size, common sense suggests – and government advice makes clear – consultation should be genuine and extensive. What local people have experienced is rather different. Centros "experts" telling us what we should want in our town centre, and becoming rather irritable when articulate Lancastrians across a wide sample of the social spectrum have politely but firmly rejected these proposals.

By the way – when Plymouth and Coventry people paid attention to the reconstruction of civic and church buildings, they did it because it mattered, and out of a sense of community responsibility, not as a sop to opposition.

EMILIE SECKER

I will focus on the issue of consultation.

The Council is obliged to consult on plans for development, as stated in national, regional and local planning guidance.

However, the Officers' report implies that the Council has fulfilled its obligations regarding consultation by relying on that carried out by the applicant. If the Council rely on Centros' consultation, then it has failed in its obligation to consult. The applicant's consultation has been, in a word, pathetic.

The consultation was extremely limited, in terms of both geographical reach and depth of design and analysis. It was also poorly publicised. Furthermore, they have undertaken no consultation whatsoever with the wider public on the new plans.

Many of the objections to this scheme, including that of It's Our City, have discussed in detail Centros's failures regarding consultation, and I ask Councillors to examine these before making their decision.

Centros could have conducted far more extensive survey, and used techniques such as focus groups and citizens' panels, to more proactively develop a solution in partnership with local people.

In addition, they could have conducted their consultation in a spirit of genuine dialogue. Instead, and I speak as someone who has taken part in almost every aspect of this consultation, what we got was a sales pitch. Centros came to Lancaster with a plan for the Canal Corridor, and spent the next 3 years trying to sell it. Real consultation involves asking people what they want, and trying to provide that, or at least find a compromise solution. Centros are unwilling to compromise, which is why their plans continue to be opposed.

It's Our City have subscribers from Millom, Carnforth, Heysham, Morecambe, Hest Bank to Fleetwood, Galgate and Garstang, as well as Lancaster, which shows opposition from across the district to this scheme. Yet Centros failed utterly to engage with people from these areas, whom this development will undoubtedly affect.

Whilst as the officer's report says no one has been *prevented* from expressing an opinion, real consultation involves actively encouraging and enabling as many people as possible to participate. Centros have clearly not done so. I wonder why?

As you can see from the high level of objections – 761 received regarding both the old and new plans, and the many objectors speaking today, there is a high level of opposition to these plans. I ask why is this not reflected in Centros's Statement of Community Involvement? The only conclusion I have is that the true feelings of local people regarding these plans have been either deliberately ignored, or misrepresented by the utterly inadequate nature of this consultation, in order to give the impression of local support for this scheme. This is unacceptable.

Both Centros and the Council have failed to conduct proper consultation and for this reason the application should be refused.

Finally, I ask Councillors to remember their position and their responsibility to their constituents. Local people have been denied any proper input or voice in the

development of this scheme. You were voted into your current position to represent the people of this district, and it is your responsibility to do that, by refusing permission for this application.

WILLIAM PALIN

SAVE Britain's Heritage strongly opposes this outline planning application. Our objections can be summarised as follows:

SAVE considers the application, in its current form, to be completely inappropriate for this sensitive and finely textured site. It embodies all the muddled-thinking and misguided aspirations of similarly scaled town centre retail developments of the 1960s and 70s. It seeks to impose what is, in effect, an out of town shopping centre within a town centre – in this case on a historic and deeply sensitive site at the heart of one of Britain's most beautiful cities. It completely fails to understand the site, to perceive its qualities or recognise its potential. The elements of this area that make it special, beautiful, interesting and different – indeed which define its Conservation Area status, are not merely disregarded in the current scheme, they are largely obliterated. With so much vacant land on the site, which could provide some of the larger retail elements which the developer says is required, it is inexcusable to instigate such wide-scale demolition of historic fabric with a Conservation Area.

The folly of this scheme, and the profound lack of sensitivity with which it has been drawn up is exemplified by the new 'gateway' to the development on Stonewell. Everything that makes the approach and entrance to the canal corridor special will go. The attractive group of stone fronted buildings on the corner, together with the two charming courtyards behind are to be swept away and with it any possibility of creating an exciting, distinctive place. I wish to draw to the attention of the planning committee a similar example – the Conyn Ching triangle, Seven Dial in London, a group of 18th and 19th-century buildings with rear courtyards faced with redevelopment in the 1980s. After a vigorous local campaign, supported by SAVE, the buildings were retained and imaginatively refurbished. The courtyards were connected and small retail units and restaurants were established in the existing buildings. The result is an internationally acclaimed scheme, and one of the most successful and popular shopping areas in the capital. Lancaster could have the same, if its aspirations were matched by an intelligent understanding of its valuable historic assets and the potential rewards that they could bring.

With regard to the proposed bridge over Stonewell – aside from the damage it will inflict on sensitive local views, will – it will, in SAVE's view, commit another 1960s planning blunder. Lancaster is a city of rich texture, defined by its scale, its building materials, its irregular street pattern and the man attractive, incidental views which unfold before the pedestrian. In a misguided attempt to separate people and traffic the bridge will succeed only in creating a sense of dislocation, removing pedestrians from the rich, involving streetscape of the city and interfering with the natural, clear connections of its existing street pattern.

SAVE remains vigorously opposed to the demolition of the other historic buildings on the site, particularly those of the brewery. Again, buildings that could be easily repaired and, with a little imagination, converted for reuse, are to be pointlessly destroyed, together with the historic street pattern in which they stand. Virtually every quality which could make this new development the envy of the north west is to be eradicated to make way for crude, characterless development.

SAVE wishes to remind the Planning Committee of legislation protecting Conservation Areas and we suggest you study this closely. In our view, and the view of our legal advisers, approval of the current scheme would leave the Council wide open to legal challenge. SAVE is not afraid to instigate Judicial Review proceedings or fight Public Inquiries. We may be a small organisation, but we have an immensely experienced and expert group of Trustees and advisers. Earlier this year, in a case not dissimilar to this, we took on the City of London Corporation and its developer Thornfield at a Public Inquiry over plans to demolish the unlisted General Market buildings at Smithfield and replace them with an office block. In fighting the City SAVE took on the best resourced Local Authority in the land. The inspector found in our favour and the Secretary of State agreed. The application was refused and SAVE won a resounding victory. Were the Planning Committee of Lancaster City Council chose to approve this outline scheme SAVE will not hesitate to pursue such a course of action. When this application is called-in, we will prepare to fight it at Public Inquiry, and we are confident we will win.

In short, this is the wrong scheme for Lancaster. We urge the Planning Committee, in the strongest terms, to reject it before the Council finds itself uncomfortably on the national stage backing a damaging and destructive scheme which brings into question its appreciation of and commitment to the precious heritage assets of this fine city.

JO GUIVER

My name is Dr. Jo Guiver. I have a doctorate in Transport and lecture on transport and tourism. I have been a resident of Lancaster for 22 years.

Traffic: using the figures supplied by Centros Miller relating to the vehicle movements generated per parking space, we can expect between 2,300 and 2,700 extra vehicle movements per day in Lancaster. This would result in increased heart and lung disease, severance to communities divided by busy roads and set back the walking and cycling figures for a number of years.

However, it is not likely that the traffic will increase to that extent. With recession, internet shopping and fuel-price increases, you would have to be highly optimistic about trade to believe that Lancaster could increase the number of shoppers and their expenditure by that extent. More likely, is that that the new Mall will get some new customers and abstract others from the existing centre, this will result in empty units in both, with insufficient rents and business charges to pay for the maintenance, cleaning, repairs and security needed. It is very likely that Lancaster will get more and more down at heel and run down.

This will directly affect its attractiveness to tourists and day visitors. Nowadays it is recognised that high-spending visitors are seeking places with character and identity, usually with heritage and cultural connections. While a few locals might be excited about the prospect of a Debenhams beside the canal, tourists and day visitors are seeking places with individuality, not chain stores they can visit in any town. Once attracted to a place, such visitors like to spend their money in independent shops and eateries which enhance their visitor experience.

The plans to demolish so many groups of historic buildings will reduce the cultural capital of the city, making it harder to attract visitors as well as removing land marks which help orientate residents and visitors, creating a sense of place and connection to previous generations who have lived, worked and shopped there. This is easy to destroy, almost impossible to recreate.

I believe the consequences of this development will put Lancaster squarely back into the twentieth century when towns which resisted pulling down their cultural heritage then, such as Shrewsbury, Bath and Norwich, are now reaping the rewards in visitor numbers and spending.

Lancaster needs to resist this development. If it is successful, we will strangle in the fumes; if it is less than successful, we will face decline, ugliness and decay.

JONATHAN MEADOWCROFT

My name is Jonathan Meadowcroft. I live in West Road and have lived in Lancaster since 1992. My family links go further back and my grandmother recalls standing outside what is now the Grand Theatre and watching the Zeppelin flying over in the 1920s.

I am here to oppose the Centros Miller proposals.

I do not believe I am a Luddite in opposing the development, since my aspirations for Lancaster concur with those set out in Lancaster City Council's "Core Strategy Vision". In particular, with reference to the quality of development in Policy SC5, to be in line with the Council vision it is required that "New development is of a quality which reflects and enhances the positive characteristics of its surroundings, including the quality of the landscape...., complements and enhances the public realm and in high profile locations" (which this most certainly is) "creates landmark buildings of genuine and lasting merit".

- I do not believe that the Centros proposals offer anything which reflects the history, diversity and aspirations of Lancaster.
- It is being sold on the bizarre notion of satisfying the mythical shopping needs of the populace, needs which must surely be questioned in the light of the current global economic downturn.
- I believe it replaces landmark buildings, which have already proved the endurance of their architectural merit, with a contrived development of very low quality.
- The standard of architecture and quality of construction seemingly proposed have more in common with a cheap 1980s shopping mall than a landmark development to demonstrate Lancaster's vision of leading the North West in terms of Urban Design.
- The number of empty business units already in Lancaster's well-defined shopping and amenity centre clearly demonstrate the lack of need for further shopping units, particularly located outside of the current centre.
- The 'sex and the city' image portrayed by Centros of canalside cafes and restaurants is certainly not borne out by the prosperity of existing local cafes, bars and restaurants, many of whom are already struggling to pass on the increase in costs of their raw materials to their dwindling customers.
- Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe that the area concerned is a not entirely blank canvas, but a very charming one, which should wait until a proposal emerges which genuinely improves the amenity of the city centre. One which provides housing with safe, open-spaces for children to play and develop and rightly reflects the energy, diversity and intelligence of Lancaster and its population.

Please, for my part, turn this application down.

Addendum – please note that nowhere in the Centros proposals is there any mention of providing energy by renewable means, regardless of the fact that 4MW of solar energy falls on the site. Is that sustainable?

MAX HERTZBERG

My name is Max Hertzberg – I am director of Seeds for Change Lancaster Ltd. I trust you will have read our written submission, therefore I plan to merely touch on the main points here.

We provide training and support to the third sector, from local authorities to international governments, such as in Australia and Canada as well as the UN. Closer to home, our clients include Amnesty International and Oxfam.

We consider ourselves to be a socially responsible employer and that is why we chose to base our northern operations in Lancaster. In 2000, we considered Lancaster provided our core needs of good transport connections, but also a high standard of living for our staff.

Lancaster enjoys a pleasant situation, interesting architecture and a city centre with an above average proportion of independent retailers.

The downside of Lancaster need hardly be mentioned – traffic above the capacity of its infrastructure and the attendant pollution.

I am speaking on behalf of the company at the behest of our staff. As I mentioned just now, we chose to site one of our offices here because it provides a pleasant living environment. Yet our staff are unanimous that this living environment hangs in the balance.

Our staff have made the following points:

Loss of economic viability of the current town centre contrary to PPS6 the diversity of the current retailers, many of them still independent, will be drastically changed for the worse. The current city centre is the heart of Lancaster – for residents and tourists, and this scheme will destroy that.

Some of our workers live outside the city, and it is clear to them that this scheme will also affect retailers in places such as Morecambe, Carnforth, Garstang and Bentham – to the detriment of these places.

The *City Council's Own Canal Corridor Brief* informs against this scheme – the brief for a cultural quarter enjoys widespread popularity among residents, yet is practically ignored by Centros's plans.

Centros's plans for dealing with traffic contravene the Local Plan T17 and T13, and will clearly lead to much higher levels of pollution and traffic. We don't have to spell out what permanent gridlock will mean to Lancaster.

Our staff, who themselves advise organisations and government on consultation issues are unanimous in declaring the consultation carried out by Centros is mere window dressing. Contrary to PPS1, public opinion has neither been listened to, nor incorporated in their plans.

We are therefore currently considering options for resiting our operations with the full agreement of our staff. If the Centros scheme goes ahead, then we are obligated to consider resiting away from Lancaster in order to provide our employees with the living environment and therefore motivation that we require for and of them.

MATT WILSON (on behalf of Lancaster Bicycology)

I'd like to speak to you today about the twin problems of an energy crisis and an economic crisis, and how they relate to this development.

Over the last few months, we've seen the price of oil rise, and the shares of banks fall and fall.

Iceland, one of the richest countries in the world, has suddenly been thrown into crisis, and the repercussions are being felt in town halls all over England.

The credit crunch is global and it's affecting all of us, including Centros. I'm sure you all know about their withdrawal from Dumfries.

Explaining their inability to fulfil their goals there, their spokesman, Steve Bryson, said:

"What has happened is that the global credit crunch has affected UK retail investment markets."

Richard Wise, his boss, explained:

"Capital values have moved significantly and until the market settles down, it is difficult to be sure about the scheme's viability."

So when *will* the market settle down? If the recent high oil prices were just the result of some economic trend, we might expect things to get better sooner or later, but that isn't the case.

In 2005, the US Department of Energy published a report titled *Peaking of World Oil Production*. The report stated that:

The peaking of world oil production presents the US and the world with an unprecedented risk management problem. As peaking is approached, liquid fuel prices and price volatility will increase dramatically, and, without timely mitigation, the economic, social and political costs will be unprecedented.

Everything we do is linked to oil... it's hard to think of an activity in the modern world that doesn't, in some way, depend on it, but we're running out of that oil; it won't all be gone tomorrow; but the end of its cheap supply, and the material prosperity that came with it, is over.

That doesn't have to mean that things are going to get worse – but they will do, if we keep on thinking with the economic and political mindset of the 20th century.

The era of cheap oil is over – it's time to wake up to that reality, unless we want to end up like the people of Dumfries.

The Council needs to respond to a changing world, of course, in a world of such uncertainty. It's hard to know just what to do – but handing over land for 200 years to

a development company that works on a model of economic growth that is rapidly becoming obsolete seems to me to be nothing short of negligence.

Zac Goldsmith recently said: "Every one of our economic models, every one of our projections, all our assumptions, are based on the availability of affordable oil.

And so, too, are the hopes of those Councillors who think this project is going to be good for Lancaster.

But cheap oil is history: we need to look to a new century where things work differently – this plan isn't progressive; it's regressive; it's old fashioned; it's oblivious to the reality of depleting oil supplies and the changing world that will go with it.

Normally, it's the people who are against these sorts of developments that are called old-fashioned. This time, it's the people who think this plan is progressive who appear to have their heads stuck somewhere in the mid-1980s.

The times have changed, and I urge you to vote against this development that has already passed its sell-by-date.

SUE DE LECEA

There is already traffic chaos in and around Lancaster. This development has the potential to exacerbate the situation. The economic success of the development depends on increased traffic volume demonstrated by the provision of an 800 space car park.

I believe the development will have a huge negative impact on the viability of the existing city centre, particularly in the current financial meltdown. Competition for customers will inevitably badly affect our current retail outlets. Global financial predictions indicate that a development of this type may not be sustainable and an alternative approach to developing this site is needed.

The planned department store, cafes, supermarket and high street stores will negate any incentive people have to leave the new shopping centre to visit the heart of our city. The proposed footbridge is unlikely to funnel people into our existing centre given time limits on short stay car parking fees.

The construction of such a bridge will take away the look and character of this historic site and jeopardise any opportunity to develop the area around the existing brewery buildings.

The public consultation process undertaken by Centros has been a sham. The pre-consultation masterplan is essentially the same as the development being applied for today.

Centros have only taken up the minority results from their surveys which indicated that Lancaster people wanted a department store served by a multi-storey car park and surrounding retail centre.

Their outline applications were withdrawn in 2007 because the traffic and retail assessments were judged to be flawed. This new round of applications does little to assuage previous concerns.

I am not opposed to the development of the site. Some of us appreciate this point more than others because we live there. But this scheme is fundamentally wrong for this site, for Lancaster and the surrounding area where its negative traffic and retail impact will be felt as well.

You have the planning grounds to reject this application laid out in the many written objections received. You have the support of the wider community to turn it down. You now only need to find the will.

SUE DE LECEA ON BEHALF OF PAUL SMITH

I want to draw the Committee's attention to the clear bias of the planning officer's report. It is not the detailed, independent, objective summary that should be required. As a result, because of its status, this substantively undermines the planning process.

I will provide two examples to illustrate this point. The first is to be found in the text on Page 10 regarding the objection of English Heritage. The report indicates that the destruction of Stonewell is not opposed by English Heritage but only the construction of the proposed link bridge.

The report misrepresents English Heritage's objections which clearly states that the demolishing of Stonewell for the construction of a bridge link cannot be justified.

This misrepresentation of the objection in the officer's report is important. The bridge to which English Heritage object is a crucial element of this development.

My second example lies in the officer's report's summary of the retail impact assessment. The report fails to address a number of the assumptions in the retail impact assessment. For example, any forecast of 3.8% growth over this period appears somewhat optimistic given current economic conditions.

As is correctly noted by the report, the scheme's financial viability relies upon (1) bringing in more people from outside the primary retail zones (1-6) and (2) capturing more spend from those already shopping in Lancaster. The first of these aims seems unlikely, as is suggested by White-Young-Green. The second of these aims is also unrealistic. To achieve the outlined levels of expenditure required, 2 out of every 5 pounds currently spent on comparison goods outside of Lancaster, in zones 1-6, would need to be redirected to Lancaster city centre.

White-Young-Green's critique of the retail impact assessment is worthy of comment as well. In spirit, it appears comparable to a teacher who while seeing the flaws in the student's work, and gently pointing some out, is restrained from a detailed critique, since they know it is not what is desired. One wonders as to how they got this impression.

Perhaps the clear, almost unqualified support of the Council's planning officers for this development, as embodied in their report, is a clue.

IAN WILSON

I'm here this morning to remind Councillors of one consequence if they vote in favour of the planning application before them. A decision in favour of this application will mean that a lease of 250 years will be granted to Centros to dispose of as they will. This was decided at a Cabinet meeting on 25th July 2006. The deal, secret, because

we are told, it is commercially sensitive, is dependent on this Committee's granting planning permission. That is the situation. I believe that it is stark enough, but in case some of you may consider what I am arguing is somehow incredible, I should like to put this into its historic context.

In 1999, the Government's lease on Hong Kong expired and the Crown Colony was returned to Chinese rule. That lease was for 150 years. It was a consequence of China's defeat and agreed under an international treaty. If you agree planning permission today, the lease already agreed with Centros would be two-thirds as long again as that agreed with China in the 19th century. The Hong Kong Treaty was signed in 1849.

Forty-two years before that date, the slave trade was abolished in the British Empire. Before then, slavery was an important source of income, both nationally and locally. Many eminent figures argued against its abolition strenuously. I'm confident that no one in this chamber today would do so. That was in 1807, just over 200 years ago.

Supporters and abolitionists alike could not have imagined 200 years ahead to the world we live in today. Fifty years before that Act, steam engines as forms of locomotion had not been seen let alone the internal combustion engine, aeroplanes, antiseptics, computers – the list of innovation since that time is so extensive that citing these things appears random and arbitrary. And so to the matter before you.

The developer's withdrawal from the Lunesdale East project has not only left the city with a massive debt. It also illustrates the fickleness of such businesses, particularly in the current financial climate. Contrast this recently demonstrated fickleness of the private sector and Centros's guaranteed 250 year lease. It may dispose of this at any time that it chooses without laying one brick on another.

Regardless of any short-term party allegiances, I would ask each of you individually to consider the following:

- Whether you have no doubts that the proposed development will benefit an overwhelming majority of Lancaster's citizens until 2258;
- Whether you think that none of the serious objections raised over the last three years will affect the area's congestion, economy or social wellbeing;
- And whether, unlike me or our forebears in 1758, you can see 250 years ahead; if not, you must reject this application. On your decision will rest the future not only of our children and grandchildren, but the future of the next 25 generations. Reference to their futures will be found not in the business plans of Centros or Debenhams, but your decision today will be judged by them and the present electorate if they seethe in the traffic choked future.

ANDY YUILLE

This decision will have a huge impact on the future direction of the whole of Lancaster district. But that direction has already been given a strong steer by the Regional Spatial Strategy, published 2 weeks ago, and therefore the most up-to-date element of the statutory development plan, which you must have regard to.

The Regional Spatial Strategy is very clear about the type of development that should take place in Lancaster. Policy EM1 *requires* you to protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment and support conservation-led regeneration in areas

like *this* that are rich in historic interest, and *in particular* to exploit the heritage potential of Lancaster specifically.

Policy W6 also identifies *Lancaster* specifically as a destination with strong potential for heritage-related development, which supports and compliments its status as a historic city.

And CNL4, the key policy focusing on Lancaster district, requires you to “ensure that development is compatible with the conservation of the historic city”.

Preston will always have a greater retail offer than Lancaster, in terms of sheer number and variety of shops. We should not be competing on that basis. As the Regional Spatial Strategy makes very clear, we should be playing to our strengths and exploiting – and protecting – our heritage assets. The very strong objections from four *key* national heritage agencies prove that this development will not do that. Your officers’ report does not deal adequately with heritage issues.

Does Lancaster have the potential to rival Bath, Chester or York? The answer, today, is yes. But if you give permission for this application to continue, that potential will be lost. No heritage city has ever sanctioned such a disproportionate increase in retail floorspace within the historic city but outside the existing centre. Its scale and proposed layout will fundamentally compromise Lancaster’s historic character, contradict the Regional Spatial Strategy, and undermine the city’s genuine ambitions.

There are dozens of solid planning grounds for rejecting this application. But maybe most important is how detrimental it will be to the long-term prosperity and potential of the whole of Lancaster and District.

And also, according to the Regional Spatial Strategy overall framework, Lancaster is the lowest priority for development of the named towns and cities in the region. It should not be taking development on this scale when most places judged to be a higher priority are not doing so.

DAVID BANNISTER

The supporters of the Centros proposal believe that it will prepare Lancaster for the future.

The truth is that this scheme is more about the past than the future.

It assumes that the conditions of the past will be sustained in the future, that high levels of growth in discretionary spend will continue and existing patterns of retailing will be maintained.

The fact is that we cannot, in the face of current economic insecurity, make these comfortable assumptions.

On Montague Evans’s own figures, the development does not become feasible unless there is a one-third increase in Lancaster’s market share.

Underpinning that assumption it is assumed that we can expect 5% growth year on year in discretionary spend, money spent on clothing and footwear.

We are more likely to see negative growth in the next couple of years.

Spend per head on comparison goods such as clothing and footwear was running at about £1,000 per capita before the current economic uncertainties.

There is a case to be made that this kind of spending, inflated by loose credit and perceptions of affluence, is unlikely to see any kind of growth in the uncertain times ahead.

And then there is the unknowable impact that internet shopping might have on traditional retailing.

The scale of this development is too large. If it goes ahead, this will lead to a “hollowing out” of the existing town centre, with displacement of existing retail representation to the new development, and vacant capacity both in the existing town centre and even in the new development.

White Young Green, in their report of 2006, estimated an additional retail capacity requirement for comparison goods of £65 million by 2011, to sustain current market share.

This they equated to a gross floorspace requirement of some 14 thousand square metres.

Compare that with the floorspace envisaged in the Centros proposal: a gross floorspace of 37 thousand square metres for comparison goods alone.

Other town centres, such as Preston will also be seeking to sustain, or indeed expand their own market share.

Can we really be confident that the retail offer that Centros envisage will be so radically different that we can expect clawback on this scale? All indications are that it will be populated by the usual run of stores that can be seen in any English high street.

The new development leaves little scope for retail growth in Morecambe. Even if we accept that Montagu Evans's figures are feasible, the new scheme will have soaked up most of the new retail spend available in 2013, leaving no room for other schemes to thrive.

I put it to you that Morecambe should be a priority for locating new retail space, it needs the jobs and regeneration far more than Lancaster.

I urge you to reject this proposal.

JONATHAN BROOKS

Ref: Agenda Item 5 – 08/00866/OUT

I am a Lancaster resident.

The air quality report models pollutants Nitrous Dioxide and Particulate Matter, which are known to cause a wide range of adverse health effects especially on the young, so we should be doubly sure that this development is not going to leave us with a persistent air quality problem.

Diesel vehicles like buses and lorries, are known to be the major source of particulate emissions and the Council admits that heavy duty vehicles cause over 50% of nitrous oxide pollution on the gyratory system, yet they have allowed the assessment to exclude this data from the area with the highest pollution levels because the developers claim that accurate bus movement data is unavailable. I think Stagecoach would disagree. The continuous monitor near the bus station gives the most reliable readings whereas diffusion tube data that this report relies on are known to be unreliable.

The particulate matter predictions ignore the real data from the only particulate monitor in Lancaster located near the bus station and instead, their model uses unverified data from their own model as a basis for predicting figures for existing as well as future pollution levels. This exclusion of actual data and use of modelling may even be illegal given that the upper assessment thresholds specified by Air Quality Standards Regulations 2007 have been exceeded on at least three out of the previous five years for both particulates and nitrous dioxide.

In their dispersion modelling they put sensors at a minimum of 5 feet. Pollutant concentrations can reduce rapidly with height and this unrealistic height means that the true pollutant concentrations at the level of, say, a toddler or a baby in a pram will be much higher. As well as this, the nitrous oxide model was verified by assuming a sensor height of over 11 feet.

Despite the fact that large numbers of schoolchildren transit the development area to and from school, there are no predictions for during the development when pollution will be much higher. Why is this?

The results of this assessment are very close to the target limits and with the questionable traffic predictions, it would be treating the health of present and future generations of Lancastrians very irresponsibly if you pass this planning application on the basis of this study.

There is far too much that is wrong and inconsistent with this assessment to cover in the allotted time, but overall it is simply not robust as claimed. On the face of it, it looks quite credible, but the deeper you look into it, the more apparent it becomes that it is very selective in its use of modelling data, which distorts the results it presents and it is doubtful that it has properly conformed to technical guidance associated with Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and other government legislation.

The officer's report has failed to properly address the report in detail and as we all know, the devil is in the detail.

TIKI HURLEY

Speaking against the development.

I have lived in Lancaster since 1997. I chose to move to Lancaster as I was attracted by the character of the city created by its historic buildings, the compact and unique town centre, the comparative lack of traffic and the absence of box-type development.

I feel that the current proposals for the Canal Corridor site would destroy the historic character of the city. The size, scale and design of the buildings are not in keeping with the surrounding buildings, or in keeping with the city as a whole.

I also feel that the demolition of historic buildings on the site, particularly those of Stonewell, which are still in use or could be used, is merely a convenience for the developer and should not be allowed to happen.

In the current economic climate, it would be foolhardy to imagine that shopping is going to generate wealth or employment for the city. I feel that the Council would be taking a very short term and unimaginative view if they saw the future of the city as being dependent on retail when the city has so much more to offer. Surely more consideration should be given to raising the profile of the historic, artistic and cultural strengths of the city and using them to attract visitors by the city's unique qualities rather than making it yet another clone town.

Building such a large amount of retail space away from the main city centre will only result in the loss of trade from the centre and the closing of yet more shops, many of which are already struggling to survive. A boarded up town centre is not going to attract people in to the city.

I am very concerned at the amount of traffic that will be generated by the shopping centre. It cannot be seen as environmentally friendly to encourage people to make unnecessary car journeys, and as a Council you should not be condoning such action. I also have concerns, not only in terms of congestion and air pollution, but also in terms of noise pollution. At present, Lancaster is a relatively quiet place to live, but the amount of traffic generated will also greatly increase the noise for residents who live close to the city centre.

If the development is given planning permission, Lancaster could be left with a very expensive and very ugly White Elephant which could destroy the character and economy of our wonderful city forever.

I therefore ask the Council to consider the application very carefully and to reject it as totally inappropriate.

LILIAN CADOUX

My objection is to a specific part of the Centros proposals. This is the plan to develop part of the towpath roughly between the Shaw Street bridge and the Mill House student block. Shops and cafes will line this area and the pavement will extend to the edge of the canal. British Waterways has agreed to sell this stretch of their land to Centros because they need the money. So they're not objecting to the removal of mature trees and bushes and the wildlife they support. I regard this area as a welcome patch of countryside near the centre of the city, and believe it should be left as it is for the enjoyment of walkers and cyclists.

The construction work alone would be horrifying for local residents. The ground level in some parts would have to be raised by about 15 feet. I'm told that this would involve 20 foot piles being driven into the ground and the noise would be deafening. I don't think it's reasonable to expect Lancaster people to put up with that for the sake of having tourists visit the shops and cafes, probably only in summer. Planning regulations state that developments should maintain biodiversity networks. Let's not forget that people are part of that biodiversity.

DAVID JENNINGS

I have no problem with the overall idea of development, but

- (1) I strongly object to the designs that Centros have produced.
- (2) I don't think that Centros are the right developers for Lancaster as they do not have a satisfactory track record for building in historic town centres.
- (3) Here in Lancaster we have a legacy of superb Georgian and Victorian buildings made of the finest materials. This legacy has been preserved and enhanced by succeeding generations but that will change if Centros have their way.
- (4) Our tourism is based on Lancaster's historic look and feel. We can't keep calling it an historic city if we tear down buildings in conservation areas.
- (5) New buildings in Conservation Areas must match existing structures in size and style and materials. Local stone should be used.
- (6) As examples of good practice, Kendal and Durham have sensitive and modern developments.
- (7) Centros's plans are ugly and brutal and unworthy of such a high-profile development.
- (8) If Centros can't or won't create buildings that integrate sensitively with the historic built environment, then they must withdraw their intent in Lancaster and confine their activities to non-historic areas.

AURORA TRUJILLO

I am speaking on behalf of the Lancaster Climate Action Group. We object to Centros's proposal for many reasons, but today I want to focus on the issue of climate change.

- The Government's scientific adviser has said that "Climate change is the most severe problem we are facing today" – and Gordon Brown has said that he is considering increasing the Government's target of a 60% cut in Britain's carbon emissions by 2050 to an 80%.
- Centros's proposal appears to be completely oblivious to these issues. But let's not forget that when sea levels rise, places like Morecambe could literally be lost to the sea – there's certainly nothing in their planning application to suggest that they take this threat seriously – but we do, and we hope our Councillors do too.
- This proposal involves demolishing many of the historic buildings in the area. If the buildings were restored instead of demolished we would not only save CO2 emissions, but we would be saving historic buildings of great value to the city.
- If the proposal goes ahead, it will add thousands of extra cars each day on to our roads clearly contributing to CO2 emissions. Moreover, the construction

of an 800 space multi-storey car park is far from encouraging sustainable modes of transport in the city.

- Centros relies on large companies like Debenhams or Tesco, instead of local businesses which tend to create less CO2, because they do not need to rely on large and dispersed supply networks, and because they are more likely to receive their products from local producers and not larger national, or even international companies based far away.
- 25% of the housing that is proposed will be affordable but there is no mention of building sustainable housing. In the face of climate change and the increase in energy prices, we think the Council should be encouraging the construction of not only affordable but also sustainable housing, with proper insulation and greener heating system. These are more expensive to build but are much cheaper once they are in place, and they will of course help reduce CO2 emissions.

So, with regard to climate change, the only positive thing we can find about this development is that given the serious economic crisis we are going through, much of the retail space may well remain empty! But then we would be left with a piece of land full of abandoned buildings, owned by a large and distant firm, financially unable to do anything with it, but excluding local people from using it in more positive ways.

And this land could be used in many positive ways.

We are not opposed to development per se. In fact, we think our Council should decline this application and opt for a responsible and sustainable development that takes problems like climate change seriously. We could be restoring the existing buildings and using them to encourage local independent business; encouraging people to shop locally and use sustainable forms of transport; creating open spaces and building more community facilities like a swimming pool, allotments, sustainable and affordable housing or a much needed youth centre.

Thank you for your time!

CAL GILES

I have no intention of using my precious 3 minutes talking about Planning Policies, although I may lob one in just to show I have taken the time to read them.

I want to talk about the effect on Lancaster this development will have, and I will specifically deal with conservation issues.

The proposed demolition of Stonewell for a bridge is bad enough, but the demolition of the former Yates and Jackson brewery beggars belief. There has been a brewery on this site since 1778 and there is very little doubt that the stone buildings on the southern and eastern part of the site pre-date 1778.

Not only that, as far as I'm aware, there are no more surviving industrial buildings in Lancaster dating from before the nineteenth century. The brewery is classed as having townscape interest; I would take that further and say that the building is an integral part of what Lancaster is. Culturally, architecturally, historically and it is part of our economic history.

We only have to look at what has been done with the Brewery Arts Centre in Kendal to see what can be done with a disused brewery. Yes, this will take funding and imagination but surely this is why we employ a regeneration officer.

As far as Stonewell is concerned, what we have to remember is that Stonewell defines the character of the area. Many of the buildings are Victorian, but Victorian buildings should not be ignored. Georgian Lancaster, quite rightly, is celebrated but not so much is made of the Victorian legacy we have in Lancaster, apart from the Victorian Monument, the Town Hall and the Ashton Memorial. The inner courts of the Stonewell area show how ordinary people and tradesmen lived and worked. This is history from the bottom up, not top down. The fact that these buildings which are privately owned, have been allowed to decay is nothing less than shocking. We should be looking to the restoration and re-use of Stonewell as part of our urban history.

The officer's report quotes Policy E37 of the LDLP and says "Demolition will only be approved where detailed planning permission for a scheme of redevelopment has been given". He seems to have been economical with his quotes. The actual wording of E37 is this: "Proposals to demolish any building within a conservation area will only be approved where detailed planning permission has been given for a scheme of redevelopment which would preserve and enhance the conservation area including effective guarantees of early completion." I repeat, "Including effective guarantees of early completion". Centros have offered no such guarantees. How can they in today's economic climate? Remember, this is an outline application only, not detailed. Turn this application down now. Do not hope that everything will be dealt with at the reserved matters stage later in the process.

BILLY PYE (OBJECTING FOR IT'S OUT CITY ON TRANSPORT GROUNDS)

Page 105 of the officer's report talks about this development, combined with other committed developments, producing so much congestion in the future that the road network around the development will, at some places, exceed its theoretical capacity.

That County Highways says that this development itself will not be a primary source of increased congestion in the future does not negate the point. The fact remains that this development will be a major contributor to future increased traffic volumes and congestion in and around the city.

None of the documentation which supports this application including the officer's report, cites a figure which indicates how many extra cars this development will bring into the city every day or week.

Using the base data supplied with the applicant's Transport Assessment, or TA, and the multiplying base factor used by the TA itself, it is possible to predict traffic movements at peak times, as the TA does. It is also possible to use the same data to predict the actual number of extra cars the development will attract.

The base data and the applied multiplying factor predicts that we can expect an extra 14,208 cars alone in any normal week to come into Lancaster – and this is a conservative estimate confined to cars only.

For more detail and a demonstration of this point, please read the It's Our City written objection on the matter.

The absence of clearly understandable figures like these from the TA is only one respect in which it falls short of the CCNDB – paragraph 6:12 in this instance which calls for a full and detailed traffic impact assessment. Perhaps Centros will today explain the absence of such figure from their TA.

Why is it necessary to build an 800 space car park on this site? The answer is that this development, for its economic success, will depend on attracting ever more shoppers in cars from far afield. This is a clear breach of Lancaster District Local Plan Policy T17. This is also detailed in the It's Our City written objection.

The new car park will entail an increase in short stay and long stay parking spaces across the city. On page 98 of the officer's report acknowledges that this is a direct breach of LDLP Policy T13.

These are just a few of the reasons that this application should be rejected on transport planning grounds.

You know better than most people that planning policies and rules exist for very good reasons. They are not simply made up by various elected bodies to make life difficult for developers. They exist to protect all of us from inappropriate development schemes like this one – no matter how many body swerves developers and officers employ to get around them – which has clearly been the case in this instance.

The It's Our City written objection highlights at least 10 instances where this application should be rejected on proper planning grounds in relation to transport alone. I urge you to read the It's Our City objection to this application if you have not done so already before you cast your vote. Having done so, it is our contention that as a planning committee you can only turn it down.

PETER JACKSON

We are the only Specialist Orthodontic Dental Practice in Lancaster providing NHS Orthodontic treatment to children aged between 11 – 14 years, predominantly from Lancaster and Morecambe.

Orthodontics is a highly specialized branch of dentistry where children's teeth are straightened using advanced braces (the children call them train tracks).

Our practice was deliberately positioned on Moor Lane which is a very central position for the local secondary schools, and most of our patients are thus able to walk safely to the practice from school, thus reducing the amount of lesson time they miss.

We rent two floors of the building, which is destined to be demolished if the Canal Corridor redevelopment goes ahead as per the current planning application.

We wish to formally register our objection to this development on the following grounds:

(1) Restriction of Orthodontic Services to Children in Lancaster and Morecambe

As a result of the long drawn-out planning period (December 2005), our practice has been prevented from expanding and progressing by reconfiguring the present rooms, because the whole area is planning blighted. There would be little point in making a major investment in this building if it is

to be demolished. The result of this is that (despite very positive support from North Lancashire Primary Care Trust, who wish to expand the provision of Orthodontics) children in this area are being disadvantaged as their access to Orthodontic Services is now severely curtailed. In fact, we have to close our waiting list for new patients. This situation is likely to pertain for at least a further two years if the plan is approved, therefore no early solution to this shortage of access seems to be available.

(2) Destruction of Buildings of Character

We acknowledge that the buildings at the corner of Stonewell, Leonardgate, Moor Lane are not particularly aesthetic, at present, but they are very old buildings and form part of the character of Lancaster City centre. With a certain amount of care and knowledge they could be restored to give a most attractive street frontage.

(3) Lack of Sympathy with Local Buildings

We feel that the proposed bridge and modern glass based architecture are completely at variance with the Georgian character of the City in comparison with what has been achieved in the Mill Race development.

(4) Traffic Issues and the affect on our Patients

We do not think that the traffic flow figures, as presented by Centros, reflect the amount of extra traffic which they hope to bring to the city. We do not think that their traffic flow solution is practicable. At present, those patients from Morecambe are able to park within a short walk of the practice at a reasonable cost. Any new car park associated with the shopping centre would not be close or cheap.

(5) Disruption of service due to moving

We have been informed that we will be moved, lock, stock and barrel, at no financial cost to ourselves. We believe that Centros have underestimated the complexity involved in moving a dental surgery. The result of this must be a break in the continuity of service provided.

SUMMARY

In summary, we object on the grounds of ongoing and long-term disruption to the orthodontic service provided to the children of Lancaster and Morecambe, together with the destruction of the character of Lancaster City centre.

CORINA REDMORE

- (1) I object because Stonewell is in a Conservation Area and demolition shouldn't be allowed. Policy E37 of the Lancaster and District Local Plan states that "These buildings should only be demolished if rehabilitation is impractical." Firstly, these buildings are still in use. Secondly, the empty ones can easily be brought back into use and are only empty because of the uncertainty as to their future.

These buildings do have merit, contrary to the assessment of Centros. Buildings at Stonewell can be seen on Stephen Mackereth's map of 1778,

which also shows a brewery. The shop which is Mason's, is very old as is a medieval crook building. If you look at the front of Stonewell, the flats next to the post office are also very old. The brewery is old as are various buildings behind it, and the alleys are old. Brewery Lane is marked on the 1778 map with the Brewery, and houses are marked where Stonewell post office is. At the side of the post office is a building and plaque on for Thomas Edmunds the inventor of the railway ticket. These buildings are possibly Georgian or earlier, mixed in with some Victorian, but it is scandalous that they be demolished in a Conservation Area and also possibly illegal.

- (2) The proposed new building is completely out of scale and keeping with the Conservation Area. It is too large and intrusive, too modern in design and so will not be appropriate in a Conservation Area. Traditional design and materials would be required and specifications have not been given. The proposed development is not appropriate next to Dalton Square Conservation Area.
- (3) With reference to the possible loss of the fountain and plaque in Stonewell Square, the development could easily be placed further back to leave Stonewell intact and the historic alleys intact, leaving a traditional part of Lancaster where it is. Georgian buildings should not be demolished in a Conservation Area, especially when the front of Stonewell is being demolished just to put in some paving, some shrubs and a possible walkway bridge to the left of Stonewell. There is no justification for the demolition of Stonewell. The Stone Masons and Tramway pub are listed. These old buildings would be stranded in the middle of a modern development leaving them completely out of context.
- (4) Young people wanted to object regarding the Musicians' Co-op, but were unable to attend today, being at school and college.

JENNY GREENHALGH

I have lived in the Lancaster area since 1971 and have seen the implementation of the one-way system, the closure and demolition of Mitchell's Church Street brewery and the adjacent historic New Inn. I have seen the lack of regeneration of that site since. I've seen the redevelopment of Perpignan Way and St. Nicholas Arcades, but did not see the demolition of St. Nicholas Street.

So, in these uncertain economic times, one views with trepidation the proposed changes for the other Brewery site, and adjacent land from the Canal to St. Leonardgate. English Heritage's comments are surprising and would suggest that they are not recent visitors to this city. Buildings we care for should be looked after around Stonewell. Stonewell's buildings, if they ought to be conserved, should have had better care in the past and, unfortunately, although Brewery Lane is an ancient thoroughfare, few residents in Lancaster supported it and Mitchells enough to keep their businesses sound. We did our best in Camra. If this new development is embraced by the Council's Planning Committee, one should hope to see the flow of new buildings on this sloping site contiguous with their remaining neighbours, with the street pattern in sympathy with this flow. Centros say they are looking at Lancaster's townscape and that inspiration will be taken from architectural features and materials. It is hoped that financial constraints will not leave us with cheap and cheerful. Small shops are part of the delight of Lancaster. Will such businesses be intimidated by national names? Give us a street market to encourage them!

The density of housing, retail and leisure will have an impact on traffic flows, and I'm yet to be convinced that solving this problem will ever be successfully addressed and implemented. Closing down known rat-runs makes uncomfortable reading for those of us who drive a car.

One commends the variety of housing suggested and the expansion of leisure use of the land and its environs. At the moment, Lancaster land is not integrated into the City, which is one reason we have a few problems in this area.

The link between the City Centre and the new development is crucial and essential. One does not want to see two separate areas with the new ignoring the old. How one does this will be key to the whole scheme. Strategic measures to embrace all the problems and fears of existing retailers must be addressed.

If I make it, I'll probably be in my 80s by the time this project is completed and will have a completely different view of such things. Change throughout our lives is inescapable – be brace and optimistic.

RICHARD TREVITT

Mr. Chairman, Committee Members,

I've been a citizen of Lancaster for 18 years and prior to that I've lived in half a dozen other towns and cities at home and abroad. I've observed quite a lot of major developments in all those places. Contrary to some previous speakers, I think there has been a sound public consultation.

I have been fortunate to be involved in a series of workshop meetings with this developer and a range of local interest groups, though I must stress that I'm speaking personally now.

This close involvement in the consultation process has given me a clear understanding of the proposals now in front of this Committee. I have seen the scheme initially presented. I have seen the detailed reports that have been produced on retail market analysis, environmental issues, ecological studies, traffic studies and construction phase management. I have heard a wide range of comment made, from positive support, to constructive criticism, to knee-jerk opposition.

I have seen the developers and their team go away for a full 12 months and come back to present a revised scheme taking account of very many of the comments they received.

It's in the nature of things that those who argue against tend to shout louder than those in favour, and that is clearly the case here. This doesn't mean that they represent the majority of opinion but all voices have had a fair hearing in the consultation meetings. What concerns me most about the opposition to this scheme is the amount of misinformation being put about and the absence of any viable alternative for this site.

The Canal Corridor site was already suffering from planning blight when I first moved to Lancaster and I've seen it go from bad to worse, until most of it is now an eyesore. And this is a valuable site right in the heart of the City.

I believe that the application now presented is a bold and imaginative scheme which will breathe new life into the City. Three of our major cultural venues stand to gain

substantially under these proposals, and some of our worst so-called 'grot spots' will be eliminated.

Many people will find points of detail to disagree with, but after the great amount of development work and consultation that has gone into the scheme, we should appreciate the benefits of the package as a whole. Of course we want it to include low cost housing and open spaces and green parks but these all have to be paid for by the revenue earning aspects of the package.

We must move forward in Lancaster and not stagnate. If this application is rejected, the site will remain a blot on the landscape of the City for decades more. There's no queue of other developers waiting to look at it in such a comprehensive way. We may get some piecemeal development, but we won't get the benefits of scale that this scheme is offering the City.

I urge the Committee to approve this application.

MIKE HARDY

My name is Mike Hardy. I am speaking in favour of the scheme. I am Chairman of Lancaster Footlights, the owner and operator of the Lancaster Grand Theatre. Our city is fortunate to have two successful theatres, and especially fortunate that one of them is the third oldest provincial theatre in the country. It is sad that both theatres are currently located in an area of comparative dereliction. The Centros scheme presents a unique opportunity to improve the setting of our two theatres and also improve the lot of the Musicians' Co-operative.

As part of the proposals, the Grand will benefit from a large new foyer, a much needed improvement as many who experienced the recent full houses of Lee Evans would testify. Without the support of Centros, it will take us a very long time (if ever) to raise the funds needed to construct a new foyer let alone construct the much needed extension to the side of the stage. In addition, under the proposals, I understand that the Dukes will benefit from additional performance space and the Musicians' Co-operative will be re-housed in brand new premises. If the scheme comes about, we have the makings of a renewed, quality, cultural quarter for the City of Lancaster.

I am aware that other plans have been proposed for the area by the Green Party, but it is clear that they are not able to attract the capital needed to implement them. Lancaster is likely to only get this one chance to improve the area. Failure to approve the application will condemn the area to further decay for many years to come. If you reject it, it is unlikely that any other developer will come forward for a long time. Having looked at the scheme in detail and seen the changes to the plans made by Centros in the light of consultations, it is clear that the scheme now offers a very positive and attractive way forward for this part of the city and I hope that the Council Members will take the opportunity offered and agree to this Planning Application.

HOWARD DOGSON

- (1) My name is Howard Dodgson, resident of Lancaster for 18 years, and speaking as just a man in the street.
- (2) I would like to register my 100% support for the Centros development. It is just what this city needs.

- (3) We have, in Lancaster, some wonderful historic buildings and some very impressive culture.
- (4) What seems to be lost in much of the argument against the development is that we might lose the culture and the history, given this modern building plan – an absolute myth in my view.
- (5) There are numerous examples in England where cities have mixed the new with the old – Harrogate, Bath, York, Hull – these towns and cities have thrived and moved forward.
- (6) There are hundreds of people out there that are proud of this city, but by the same token, they are crying out to see a bit of progress – a department store and the modernising of an unsightly area.
- (7) Every development will come in for an element of criticism, but this is our best chance and it's on the table.
- (8) If this application is turned down, we'll still be talking about an alternative plan in 10 years' time – look at the M6 link – we're still arguing the toss after how many years?
- (9) Pundits have said, we'll have too much traffic – I'm firmly convinced that half the present traffic problems are Lancaster residents (like me) travelling elsewhere to shop and taking their money with them.
- (10) So come on Councillors – lets have some positivity – pass this application and all sides will move forward to a better future.

MARTIN WIDDEN SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF LANCASTER CIVIC SOCIETY

Lancaster Civic Society is positive – cautiously positive – about the Canal Corridor North proposals, for the following reasons:

- The Canal Corridor site has been largely derelict for many years. Much of it is car park. It has become a major eyesore close to the City Centre.
- The site was cleared for a road scheme over 40 years ago. There have been other road schemes, but all are now dead. The area can, and should, be turned to other uses.

In this location, a mix of retail, housing and other uses, including cultural uses (such as the Duke's Theatre, the Grand Theatre and the Musicians' Co-op) is entirely appropriate. It would bring much-needed investment to Lancaster and help to bring shoppers to the City, rather than their going to Kendal, Preston or Manchester.

Turning to the demolitions that form part of the scheme, particularly of the Brewery and parts of the Heron Chemical Works: the Civic Society believes that unlisted buildings should only be retained if they can be put to good contemporary use and are of good architectural quality. The Brewery is not an outstanding building and it is derelict. Heron Chemical Works is currently in use, but if an alternative location can be found for the business locally, we would have no objection to the demolition.

We have read some of the many comments made by the public and interest groups. We were particularly impressed by the response of CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment), and would like to commend this response to the Planning Committee. We support their view that the principle of the present scheme could work on the Canal Corridor North site, but that further work is needed if the scheme and the City are to take full advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Centros have worked hard at consultation with the local community. The Civic Society's view is that this application should not be rejected, but that further consultation should take place before the scheme is approved, between Centros, the local authority, local interest groups, and organisations such as CABE. It is worth this small delay to secure the best possible scheme for Lancaster.

JOHN BRAITHWAITE

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee,

The Civic Society is cautiously positive regarding the redevelopment plans for this neglected part of Lancaster. We have always attempted to view these proposals objectively and to consider what might be best for the city as a whole.

The proposals do offer an opportunity to regenerate the area in a way that is comprehensive, cohesive and integrated. The current application also represents a big improvement on the original plans.

We have always maintained that the devil will be in the detail, and this application is for outline permission only. The detail of the buildings, which, from the Society's viewpoint, will be critical to the success of the development, will come later.

The demolition of some buildings on Stonewell is controversial. However, many of the buildings proposed for demolition are sadly neglected and dilapidated, and have been so for many years. Their contribution to the street scene and the affection in which they are held by some has not resulted in all of them being well maintained or restored. They are not buildings of great architectural merit and, offset against their demolition, is the restoration of the Tramway Hotel on St. Leonard's Gate and significant improvements to the Grand and Dukes theatres.

The proposed bridge across the A6 from St. Nicholas Arcades to Stonewell is unpopular. However, linking the retail elements of the new development and the existing city centre is essential for the success of both areas and therefore the town as a whole. A bridge is a safe way of providing a suitable link, particularly for the disabled, separating people from the traffic on a heavily used road.

However, the design of the bridge will be crucial. Bridge design has greatly improved over the past few years and a successful and acceptable bridge ought to be possible. Commissioning it could provide the opportunity to create a landmark feature for 21st century Lancaster.

Of course, we have reservations about the proposals, but on balance, and pragmatically, we believe this outline proposal offers a way forward for this long neglected and blighted area.

The design of all the elements is absolutely crucial. Should the application be granted, the detailed designs must be of a very high standard, blending the

vernacular tradition of Lancaster with good modern architecture, and constructed throughout in high quality materials.

STEVE BRYSON

Councillors, my name is Steve Bryson and I have organised all of the Centros consultation on this project.

In response to the criticisms of our consultation, I would just like to put the record straight.

As I'm sure you will know, Government planning policy puts the onus on developers to undertake public consultation, and this policy is reflected in your own SCI.

Centros has pioneered community consultation from long before it became policy. The company takes it very seriously, and even CABE has endorsed our consultation work as an exemplar.

In Lancaster, we have undertaken six stages of consultation, starting with the masterplanning process in December 2005.

As well as provided opportunities for people to have their say, consultation relies on good communication. During the past three years, we have provided clear explanations and updates on the scheme via the local media, through leaflets, presentations, and our project website.

Examples include our publication of these two freesheet wraps delivered to every local household – reaching more than 70,000 people on each occasion. Earlier this year, we distributed this briefing on how the scheme as evolved in response to consultation.

To gain feedback, we have provided a Freepost address, a telephone hotline and email conduits throughout. Plus we have held public meetings and a host of briefings and workshops with all of the key interest groups and their representatives.

In June last year, we held a public exhibition over two weeks, at which we spoke to some 3,500 local people.

Additionally, we commissioned the highly-respected opinion polling firm, ICM, to conduct a survey of a cross-section of 1,000 local residents – which last year confirmed that 61% of local people supported the development proposals, and just 16% were against.

Even with that measure of support, the Centros team continued to respond to all the consultation feedback by making further refinements.

Some highlights of the many changes made include:

- A 20% increase in the number of new homes;
- The introduction of a right turn from Skerton Bridge to give Morecambe traffic better access to the city and deter the desire to rat-run through Freehold;
- A reduction in the size of the department store and the overall amount of comparison goods retailing;

- A general reduction of heights across the scheme and the relocation of Debenhams to preserve key views; and
- Big increases in the size of the public spaces at Stonewell, the central square (36% bigger), next to the Grand (25%) and the public park (20%).

Such real and significant changes resulting directly from consultation should be taken as a good measure of its success. We have reported every stage to you and believe that it all stands up to scrutiny. Should you approve the outline plans, we will then move on to much further consultation on the detailed architectural designs to come during the reserved matters stages.

Thank you.

MARK ANDERS

Councillors, my name is Mark Anders. I am director of 3DReid and the lead architect on this project.

I have been involved in this type of city centre regeneration work for 25 years and that experience has taught me to take a city-wide view from the outset – and not just take the site in isolation.

Lancaster for me is unique – and in my view, one of the best parts of the scheme has been the creation of a series of pedestrian-friendly open public spaces. These take the form of meeting places and squares connected by streets and passages. All of these are based upon the scale and character of everything you are familiar with here in Lancaster.

The integration and restoration of many of the historic and listed buildings with our new urban blocks will create a seamless integration between the old and the new, adding to the permeability of the scheme.

The changes in level have not only allowed us to hide such items as servicing but also to create a scheme that preserves and enhances some of the city's key views.

The proposals will bring many benefits for the community, especially shoppers, theatre-goers and visitors.

For the shopper, we have created a safe pedestrian-friendly environment that will quickly feel part of the existing city. Its central street provides a variety of space that not only suits the needs of retailers but will also protect the historic core.

For the theatre-goer and visitor, the development will offer a safe car park and well-lit routes to the site's unique mix of performing arts venues. The Grand, the Dukes and the Music Co-op will all benefit from a range of improvements. New cafes and restaurants will add to the attraction from morning through to evening.

The local community will benefit from the inclusion of a mix of residential units – which will not only act as a buffer to the surroundings, but will also reinstate the traditional character of Alfred Street.

In particular, the community will benefit from the creation of a new public park and the enhancement of the canal side.

The key to the success of the whole development is its integration with the existing city centre via the new bridge – providing level access right across the city centre from Penny Street through St. Nicholas Arcades to the development's central square.

The scheme has and will continue to be designed with sustainable best practice in mind. It is our aim to make this an exemplar project.

In summary, this site and your brief has presented many challenges, but I believe that we have met those challenges and I am extremely proud of what we have all achieved.

Whilst you have heard much criticism about our proposals, I have not seen any credible alternative that achieves a comprehensive solution while being both viable and deliverable.

The proposals go beyond the aspirations of the development brief by creating a new gateway into the commercial heart of the city. It will at long last link the city with its neighbouring community. It works well for everyone and will serve Lancaster well into the future.

This is the right choice and I would urge you to recommend approval.

Thank you.

PAUL STOCKER

Chairman,

My name is Paul Stocker. I am the Principal Highways Consultant on this project, advising Centros on highway matters.

My company has been involved in this project since 2004 and has developed a very detailed appreciation of the City's transport system.

Through the Consultation exercise, we have been able to design the proposals to fit with the City and the County Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy and Vision for the City's future.

The proposals essentially involve new shops and facilities being provided in an already well used centre. Despite assuming all trips will be new, it is accepted that shoppers will visit the proposals as part of an overall visit to the City centre, i.e. there will be a high level of link trips.

We have carried out a very extensive, in depth, robust and unrealistic worst case assessment, which has taken two years to complete to the satisfaction of the County Council.

For the very first time, an assessment of the combined traffic impact of all the key committed developments on the City's network has been undertaken. Over recent years, significant traffic generating developments have been approved on an ad hoc basis and our studies have shown that if all of these developments are built, traffic conditions in the centre will significantly worsen, as no improvements are proposed to mitigate their collective impact.

In-line with the Master Plan, the proposals include a new link road and a strategically placed northern interceptor car park that will operate as a town centre car park, reducing the need for traffic to enter the City Centre to the benefit of the internal road system.

It also includes in excess of £3m of extensive off-site improvements that will, not only accommodate the additional traffic attracted to the scheme, but which will also mitigate the impact of the committed developments and provide significant general benefits to the City and its users overall, e.g. provide a potential reduction in rat-running traffic through the Freehold area.

This is confirmed by the County Council who state that:

“Measures provided by this development provide additional local capacity around the development and provide City Centre network efficiencies.”

Our work has also been thoroughly examined by the City Council’s own independent Consultants, MVA, who have also confirmed that the methodology used in our assessment work is sound and robust.

To summarise:

The City Centre, as with most towns and cities, suffers traffic congestion and delays at busy times. Lancaster is no exception and this is unlikely to change if the City remains vibrant and meets the demands of its catchment population. The measures proposed are aimed at managing and controlling the traffic movements to get the best out of the system. If these proposals are not implemented, then we have shown that highway conditions will worsen, resulting in more shoppers and visitors migrating away to other competing centres with obvious environmental consequences.

Chairman – there are no reasons for refusing this proposal on highway grounds.

Thank you.

COUNCILLOR MAIA WHITELEGG, WARD COUNCILLOR FOR BULK WARD

I have a very simple message I wish to put across to the Committee in protest of this development. I want to appeal to you personally as Ward Councillor and on behalf of those who cannot be heard here today – children. I am deeply concerned about the harmful effects this development will have on the welfare of people within the ward, old and young alike, but my main concern lies with the well-being of literally thousands of children attending schools within the area. I have absolutely no doubt that this scheme will add a lot more traffic onto the roads in this ward. And traffic causes pollution. Air pollution is a major threat to child health. Children are particularly vulnerable to the damaging effects of air pollution because their lungs are growing and their innate defences against inhaled pollutants may be impaired. We have literally thousands of primary and secondary children attending the Ridge Primary School, the Boys’ Grammar School, Lancaster Central High and Christchurch School, not to mention those children who cross the ward to go to school elsewhere.

As you will know in your own wards, in Bulk we have some particularly bad roads that we expect children to cross every day. Ridge Lane, Ullswater Road, Derwent Road are renowned for rat-running, Moor Lane and Quernmore Road are particularly bad. For example, there are 7,000 boys crossing Quernmore Road and East Road at

Lancaster Royal Grammar School each day and equally, hundreds of children are pushed onto narrow pavements on Derwent Road going to Christchurch, Central Lancaster High and the Ridge Primary. I have personally helped children of 10 and 11 across Quernmore Road at busy times when they have stood for considerable time unable to cross in the face of such busy traffic. I personally dodge between backed-up cars on Ullswater Road with my 6 year old son. We have a responsibility to protect our children and encourage them to lead healthy, safe, independent lives. Being active in our daily lives is recognised as the most important way to combat the rising tide of obesity, so why are we looking to put yet more cars on the streets, restricting children from walking and damaging their health? I urge you to vote against this scheme on the grounds that we have a responsibility to provide a clean, safe and healthy environment for children of this district. I appeal to the Committee to protect children the damaging effects this scheme will have and provide a better alternative for their future.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW KAY, WARD COUNCILLOR FOR BULK WARD

I am speaking to you as Bulk Ward Councillor, as a parent and resident for thirty years, who believes passionately about the future of our town.

Two things you might have noticed if you looked around our Ward this morning: the traffic congestion, due to rat running through Newton, up Ridge Hill, along Ullswater Road.

Secondly, many posters in house windows saying *Stop Centros, It's our City*, which show the strength of feeling against the development. But never mind, states the report, about rat running.

The County Engineer's report states there will be additional vehicle movements as a result of the central canal corridor development – mainly due to other developments already in the pipeline. So we already have extra congestion coming: it's all right to add yet more! The figures just do not add up.

The applicant's measures to deter rat running, such as the provision of a right turn into Parliament Street, will make little difference to those trying to avoid the clogged up one-way system. Motorists already go to great lengths, even going back up Caton Road to perform, in effect, a "U" turn on Newton.

Similarly, the new traffic lights at the junction of Caton Road and Bulk Road will make little difference, as the junction is already backed-up and not deterring motorists from piling onto Ridge and Freehold. So what are the benefits of us being gridlocked into Bulk Ward?

I urge you all to reject this scheme.