

AVON VALLEY: ST. ANNES  
DEVELOPMENT BRIEF AND CONSERVATION POLICY

ADDENDUM

At the meeting of the Planning and Traffic Committee on 2nd July 1986 an outline planning application for the comprehensive redevelopment of land covered by Development Site Brief No.6 and part of Open Space Brief Zone E for predominantly residential purposes was considered. For further clarification this equates to the land indicated as being in the ownership of British Steel (Fig.12 - Page 35).

In approving the proposal the Committee also RESOLVED:-

"That the Committee agree to amend the Avon Valley Development Brief and Conservation Policy by the addition of a residential option to the zones covered by this application, and subject to the provisions outlined in the report."

The relevant extract from the report is attached.



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Zone A : Land between Crews Hole Road and River Avon

- 7.17 Given that the Zone is now assessed technically as being capable of supporting residential development, this use would offer a number of local advantages:-
- (a) It would provide a land use and environment sympathetic to the adjoining residential development of Niblett's Hill and Troopers Hill.
  - (b) The City's policy of encouraging leisure activities both on and adjoining the river can be better achieved with the development of a land use that would create activity and be designed to take advantage of the attractive aspect offered by the river and the Avon Valley.
  - (c) The traffic impact upon Crews Hole Road is likely to be less than with industrial development. This is particularly so since, even if industrial development took place on the site, it is unlikely that it would fund the construction of the proposed bridge.
  - (d) It would make an attractive residential site and early development could be achieved.
  - (e) In view of the amount of industrial land currently available in more accessible locations it is unlikely that this site would be developed in the near future with a quality of development that would be compatible with the environmental potential of the valley.
- 7.18 To counterbalance these advantages the employment potential of the site would be lost. However, as mentioned above, this potential is not immediate and there has been little public support for it.
- 7.19 The other land use option included in the Development Brief, was for use of the land as Public Open Space. There was a limited measure of support for this option at the public meeting but the supporters accepted that the acquisition, treatment of the site to render it safe, laying it out and maintenance of the Open Space would be a considerable cost to the City. The City Planning Officer accepts this but would point out that such arguments have not in the past prevented the City Council from laying out and maintaining difficult sites as open space (e.g. Eastwood Farm, Lawrence Weston Tip), although none has been as polluted as Zone A.
- 7.20 It was also argued at the public meeting that there is adequate provision for Public Open Space, either proposed or existing, in the locality. This is true to some extent if the Troopers Hill Open Space and the Conham River Park (in Kingswood) are taken into account.
- 7.21 It was evident from the public meeting that the use of this land as additional Public Open Space would be seen as a use that may have to be adopted if other forms of development were precluded through adverse ground conditions. This view was recognised by the Committee when the Avon Valley Policy was prepared in 1982.



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- 7.22 On balance the City Planning Officer believes that this part of the application has considerable merit and that the use of Zone A for residential purposes is acceptable, subject to the safeguards recommended by the Wessex Water Authority, the Chief Environmental Health Officer and the County Engineer and Surveyor.
- 7.23 Although the material is only illustrative, the City Planning Officer's view of the notional layouts and sketches of the development is that they will not provide a development of a high enough environmental quality and design for this important part of the Avon Valley and that the applicant should consult with the Avon Planning Officer at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.24 A major concern of local residents, the City Planning Officer and the County Engineer and Surveyor is the capacity of the road network to deal with the traffic generated by this part of the development. Following discussions with the County Engineer and the applicant, the City Planning Officer would make the following points:-
- (a) It will be essential for a detailed application to incorporate improvements to Crews Hole Road where it passes alongside Zone A. The County Engineer (see 6.5 above) has indicated that he is satisfied that this can be dealt with via a Planning Agreement and as part of the detailed application;
  - (b) It may be necessary to seek improvements to 'bottlenecks' some distance from the site. The applicant has agreed to assist the County Engineer to identify these and to consider a contribution to the cost of the works as a part of a Planning Agreement.
  - (c) The construction of a bridge across the Avon - which would have been essential if Zone A was to be developed for industrial purposes - may not be necessary if the site is to be developed for residential use. Indeed, it appears that such a bridge may be a major obstacle in achieving an acceptable layout and frontage to the river. (See Section 8 below).
- 7.25. Site B Land at the rear of the Bull Public House Plan No.2

The Development Brief identified this area of land, a former storage tank site, as a possible public car park to serve the open space. Investigation of this land suggests that it is capable of supporting residential development.

- 7.26 This proposition was discussed at the public meeting. There was no opposition to housing in principle, but the extent of the housing development and its relationship to the existing housing was a matter of considerable concern.
- 7.27 The need for public car parking for visitors to the valley can now be satisfied on land being dedicated to the City by the Imperial Group for use as open space. This is on the same stretch of hillside but is nearer the City and is at a point close by the pedestrian bridge crossing the River Avon. A small portion of this site was used by the St. Annes Board Mills for fuel storage but, as part of the dedication agreement, the tanks have been demolished. This site is now available and in an excellent position to serve the leisure parking needs of both sides of the river without further adding to the traffic problems of Crews Hole Road.



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- 7.28 In the circumstances, a duplicate car park on the land at the rear of The Bull Public House will no longer be an advantage. The City Planning Officer believes that a limited residential development would be acceptable.
- 7.29 The points raised by local residents and Kingswood District Council regarding the effect of a development here on the landscape of the area and the skyline are strongly supported by the City Planning Officer. However, as this is an outline application, this is a matter which would need to be dealt with as part of a subsequent reserved matters application. The applicant would be well advised to seek the City Planning Officer's advice on design and layout at the earliest opportunity.

Zone C The woodland fronting Crews Hole Road

- 7.30 The Brief assumed that this woodland has no development potential and advised that it should be dedicated to the City or its nominee in order that the wooded hillside could be improved and made accessible to the general public. Since that time the Avon Wildlife Trust have inspected the site and consider it to have considerable ecological value and support the general view of the City Council.
- 7.31 The applicant also supports this view and has agreed to dedicate the woodland to the City Council as part of a wider planning agreement.
- 7.32 However, the application also indicates limited housing development in the woodland. This was raised at the public meeting but no support was voiced for the idea. Kingswood District Council have objected to this, as have several local residents.
- 7.33 It is fair to say that, at an early stage in the application, the applicant indicated that the form of housing on this site would be as a 'string' of cottages fronting Conham Road. It was mistakenly assumed that each would have its own access. The City Planning officer subsequently ascertained that the applicant's intention was to serve all of the cottages from a single access. No highway objections were, therefore, forthcoming.
- 7.34 However, the City Planning Officer informed the applicants that he would strenuously oppose the principle of placing 'frontage' residential development between the woodland and the road. This is because such development would substantially change the character of this charming road frontage and would drastically reduce the opportunity for public access to the woodland area.
- 7.35 The applicant, therefore, has indicated that any dwellings within this zone would be grouped in locations at one, or both, ends of the Zone in areas which are either presently open or very sparsely wooded. Thus the main frontage would remain undisturbed. An added advantage pointed out by the applicant is that such dwellings would be located close to the only viable points of public access to the woodland and would give a large measure of added security to the footpath.



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7.36 Because of the overgrown nature of the area the City Planning Officer has been able to look briefly at the location indicated by the applicant. However, it does seem that it might be possible to identify sites for a single dwelling at the southern end of the woodland and for a small group of dwellings at the northern end.

7.37 It is, however, important, if the Committee concurs with this view, that a set of 'ground rules be established to guide the applicant in trying to identify any sites. The City Planning Officer has considered this and has formed the view that:-

- (i) Any residential development within this zone must be considered as part of the woodland setting, must not encroach into the mature woodland areas and must not prevent public access along the whole length of the zone from north to south;
- (ii) Consequently, dwellings must be located in or around the former quarries at each end of the site;
- (iii) The loss of mature trees will be resisted;
- (iv) Access should not, unless unavoidable, be from Conham Road;
- (v) A full landscaping scheme, including heavy tree planting, must form a part of any subsequent detailed application;
- (vi) Materials used must be chosen to reflect the rural nature of the landscape.

7.38 The applicant has indicated a willingness to comply with these views and has stated that if, in meeting the requirements, it proves impossible to identify six sites, then the subsequent detailed application will be submitted for less.

7.39 The general view expressed at the public meeting supported the City Council's policy of protecting the bulk of woodland from development. The exception to this is the large disused quarry which has been partially filled by the British Steel Corporation before they vacated the site. Clearly this filling needs to be completed to complement the existing woodland and remove a scar from this very attractive portion of the valley. A separate application has been made to the Committee to complete these works.

7.40 At a meeting of Kingswood District Council held in May, the proposed Green Belt in the Conham area was discussed and that Council agreed to inform the County Council that in their view the woodland should be included as part of the Green Belt. The City Planning Officer agrees with the principle of this but has objected to enable the Committee to determine this application on its merits.