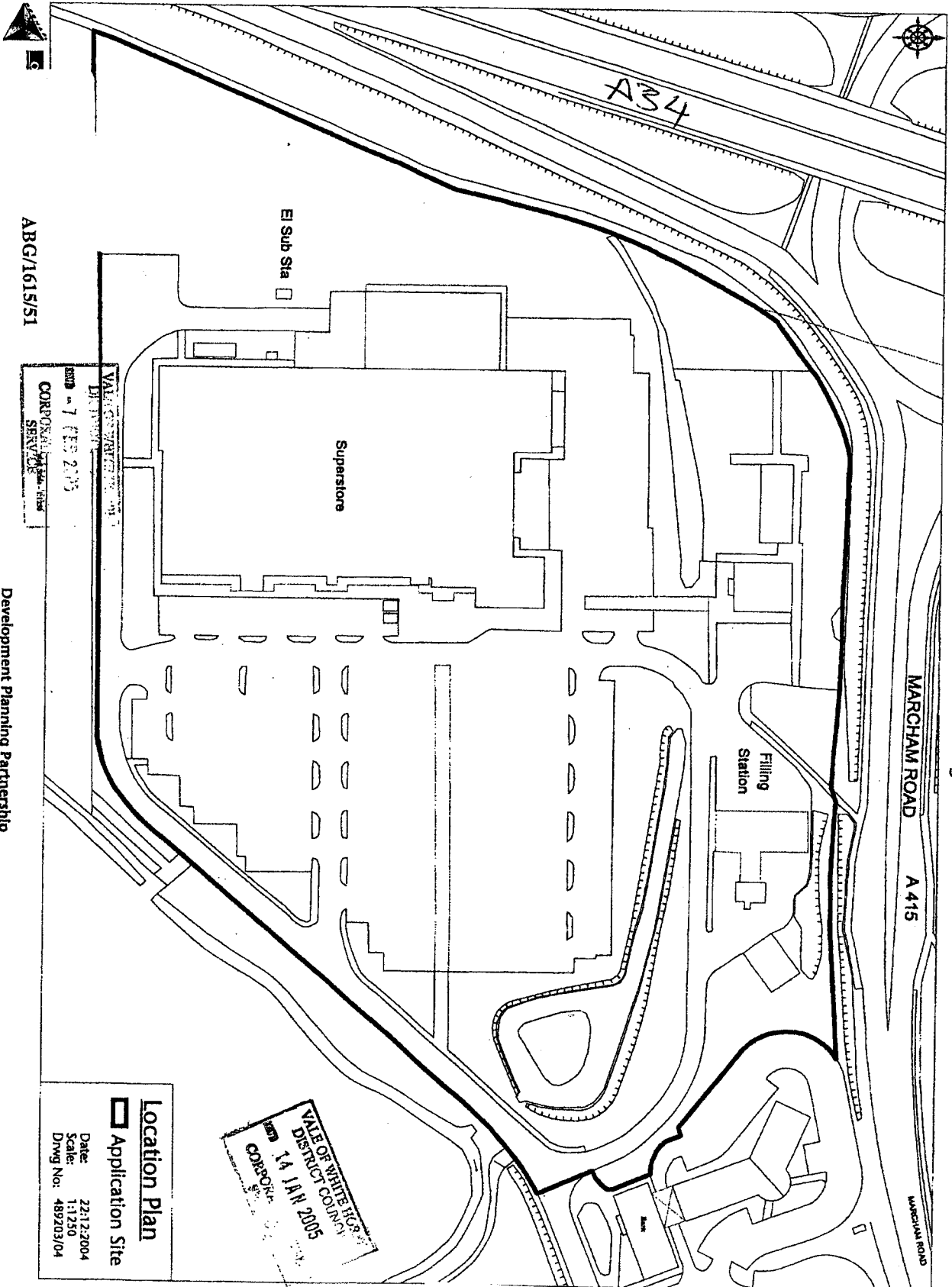


APPENDIX 1



www.developmentplanning.com

Tesco Stores Limited
Marcham Road
Abingdon



ABG/1615/S1

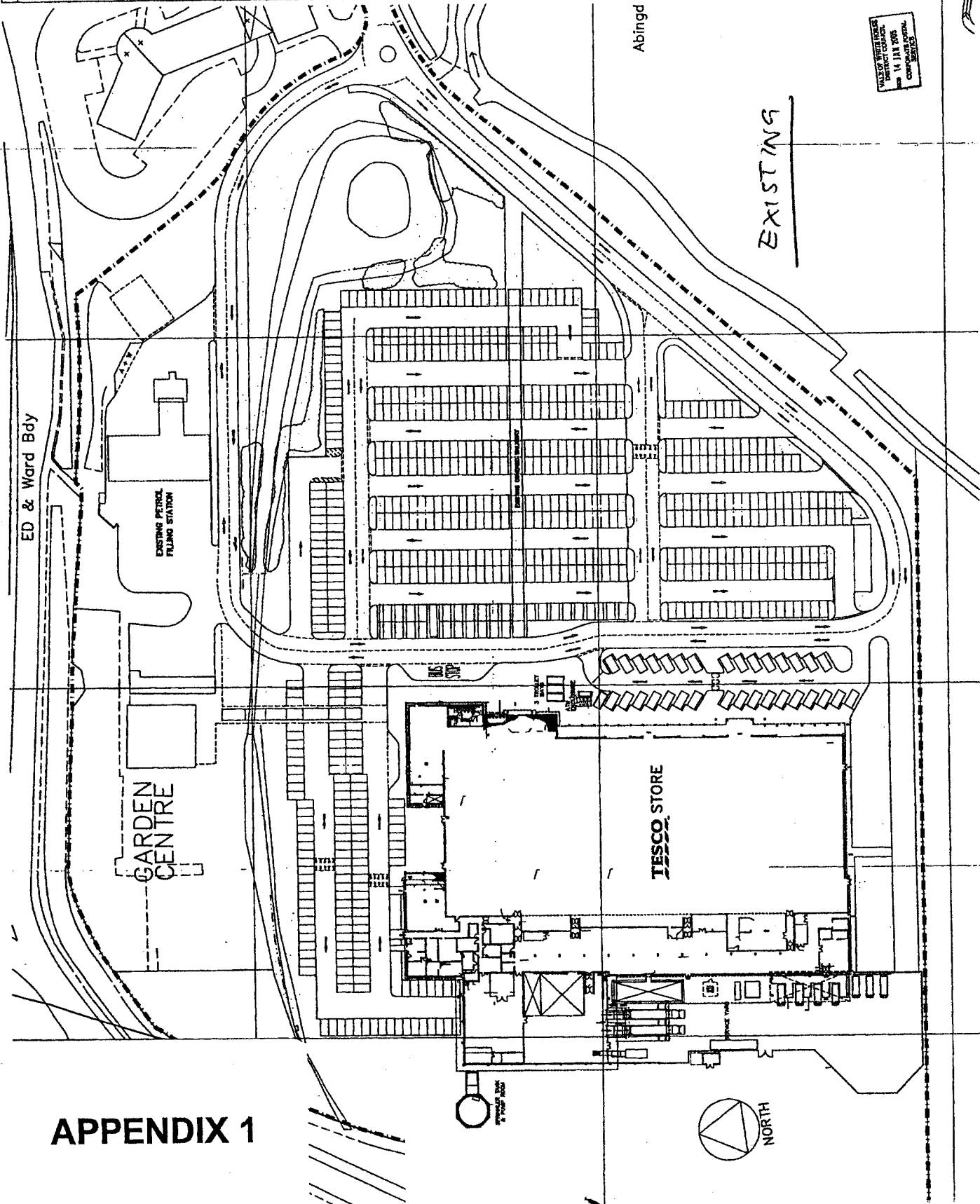
VAL OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL
DATE: 14 JAN 2005
CORPORATION OF SERVICERS

Location Plan
Application Site

Date: 22/12/2004
Scale: 1:1250
Drawg No: 489203/04

Development Planning Partnership
Bedford - Leeds - Manchester - Glasgow - Cardiff - Dublin

APPENDIX 1



NOTES

All dimensions to be noted from this drawing. All related drawings are to be drawn to the same scale as this drawing. The drawing shall be used in accordance with the conditions of contract and the provisions of the relevant Acts and Regulations. The drawing shall be used in accordance with the conditions of contract and the provisions of the relevant Acts and Regulations.

THE PLAN, SPECIFICATIONS, DRAWINGS, LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS SHALL BE SUBJECT TO SURVEY AND SITE INSPECTION.

REPRODUCED FROM ORDINANCE SURVEY DATA © CROWN COPYRIGHT 2003

SCHEDULE OF PARKING

SPACE WIDTH 2.4m
AISLE WIDTH 5.0m
PARKING SPACES 673
PARKET AND TODEER
OVERIGHT PARKING

TOTAL

WHEELWAYS (PARKING SPACES+P&T) 114
PARKING SPACES 673
PARKING RATIO (TOTAL) 1:1.8

EXISTING PARKING TOTAL

SCHEDULE OF AREAS

NET AREA 114
ADDITIONAL LAND

EXISTING STORE

NET SALES 15,200 sq.m.
BULK STORE 1,247 sq.m.
GROSS FLOOR AREA 16,447 sq.m.

PROPOSED EXTENSION

NET SALES 16,447 sq.m.
BULK STORE 1,247 sq.m.
GROSS FLOOR AREA 17,694 sq.m.

PROPOSED STORE

NET SALES 16,447 sq.m.
BULK STORE 1,247 sq.m.
GROSS FLOOR AREA 17,694 sq.m.

CARVED STORAGE AREA 2,337 sq.m.
WITHIN BULK STORE.

PROPOSED EXTENSION
TESCO STORE
MARCHAM ROAD
ABINGDON
SIDNO. 2008

EXISTING SITE LAYOUT

ABG0161501

Scale 1:500
Date MARCH 2004
Drawn @AI
Checked SUG

Project Number P/EXT/1093 - P01

Client VULCAN WITHIN AREAS
Project MARCHAM ROAD
Site 14 JUNE 2005
Contract CONTRACT NO. 05/01/05

NOTES
 1. Dimensions to be marked from this drawing, all related to the finished ground level, unless otherwise stated.
 2. All dimensions are to be marked from the finished ground level, unless otherwise stated.
 3. All dimensions are to be marked from the finished ground level, unless otherwise stated.
 4. All dimensions are to be marked from the finished ground level, unless otherwise stated.
 5. All dimensions are to be marked from the finished ground level, unless otherwise stated.

SITE PLAN, INCLUDING PARKING LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS, BASED ON THE SURVEY DATA PROVIDED FROM ORANGE SURVEY DATA © ORANGE COPYRIGHT 2004.
 SUBJECT TO SURVEY AND SITE INSPECTION
 SITE AREA
 SCHEDULE OF PARKING
 SPACE WIDTH 2.5m
 AISLE WIDTH 6.5m
 PARKING SPACES 811
 DISABLED (4%) 32
 VISIT VEHICLE (4%) 17
 OVERFLOW PARKING -
 OVERALL TOTAL 873
 TROLLEY BAYS 17

DATE OF SURVEY: 14 JAN 2008
 CONTRACT NO: 04/08/001

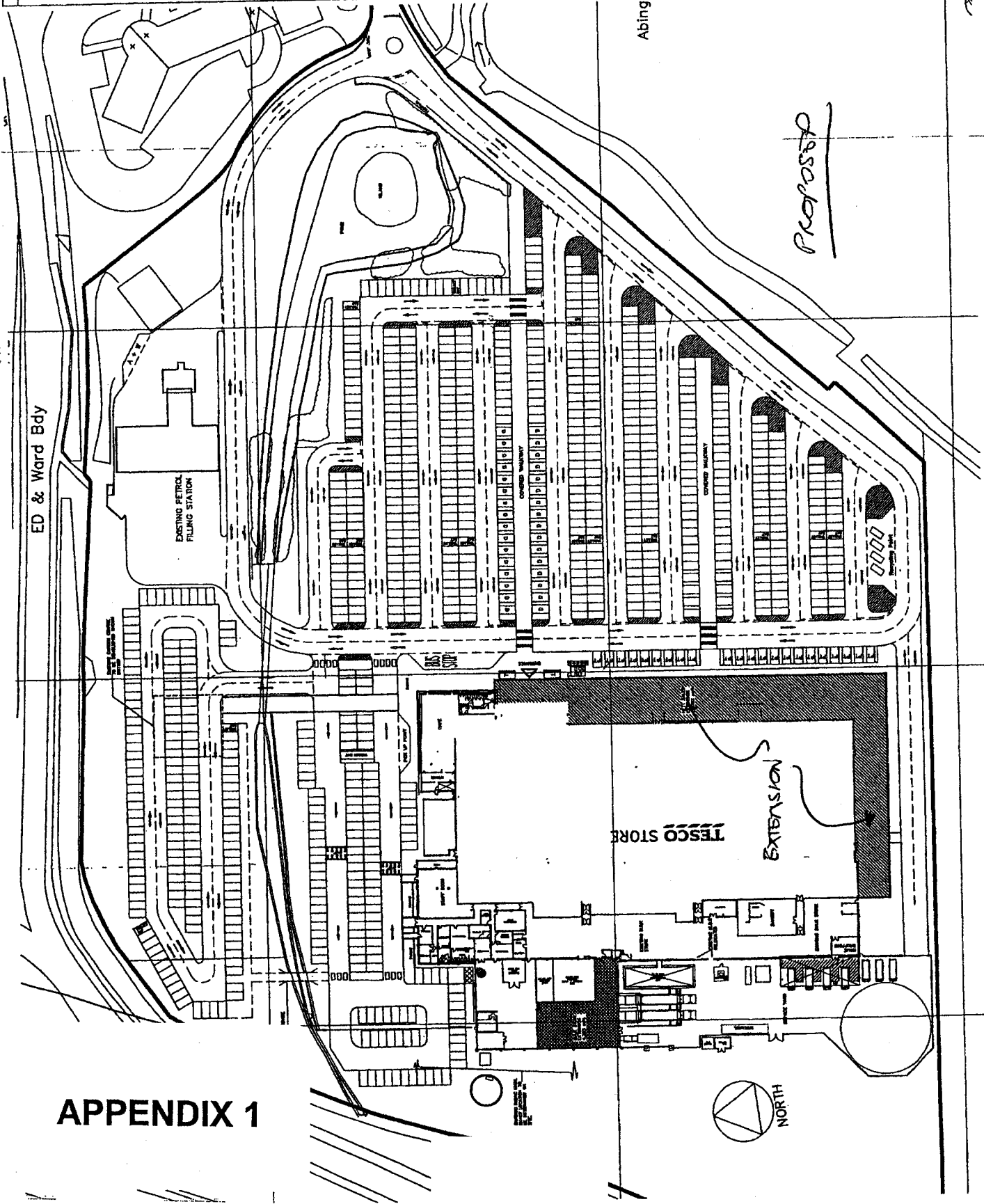
PROPOSED EXTENSION
 TESCO STORE
 MARCHAM ROAD
 ABINGDON
 SIDNO, 2008

PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT

ABG/161551

Drawn	BAJ	Date	MAY 2004
Checked			

PROJECT: FEXT/1093 - P02



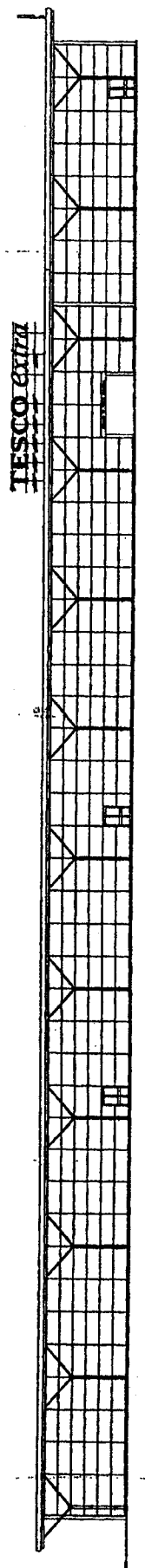
APPENDIX 1

10/2008

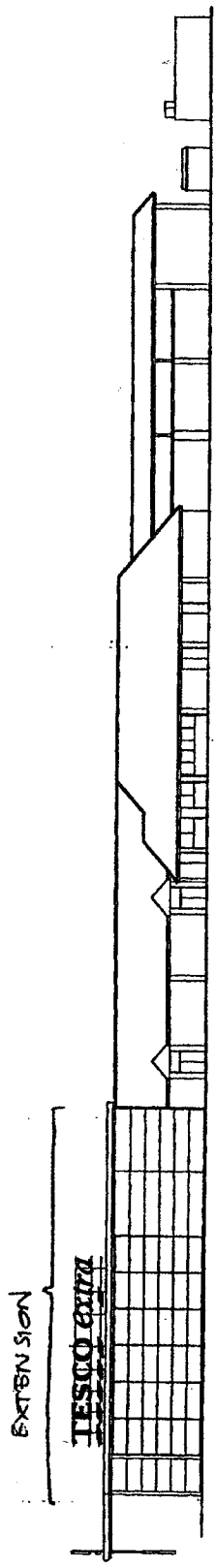
All elevations to be noted from this drawing. All other elevations are to be noted from the appropriate number of any other drawing. All elevations are to be noted from the appropriate number of any other drawing. All elevations are to be noted from the appropriate number of any other drawing.

SIGNAGE INDICATED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

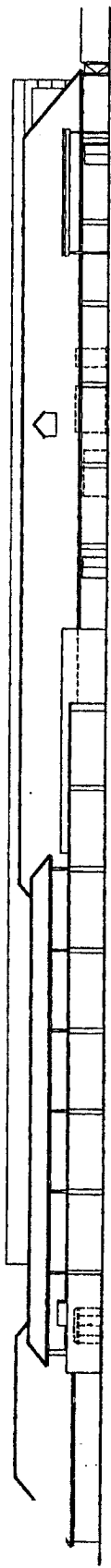
APPENDIX 1



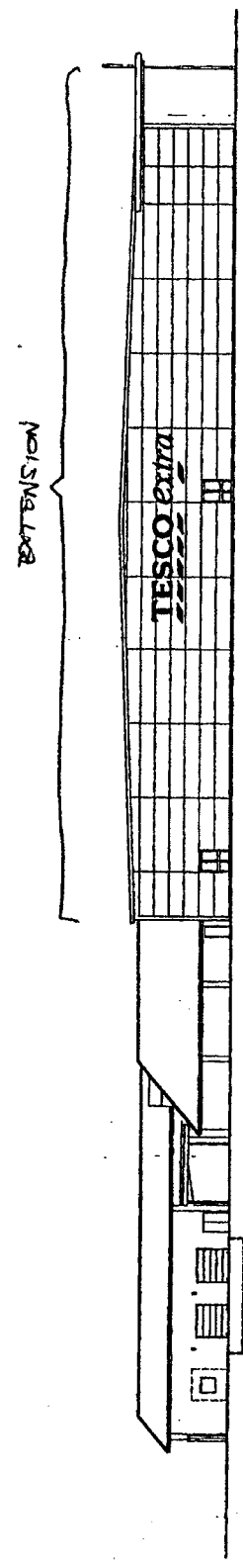
PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION



PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION



PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION



PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION

APPROVED PLAN 2/4

PROPOSED EXTENSION
TESCO STORE
MARCHAM ROAD
ABINGDON
SIDNO. 2008

PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
11 JAN 08
COMPOSITE INITIAL SERVICES

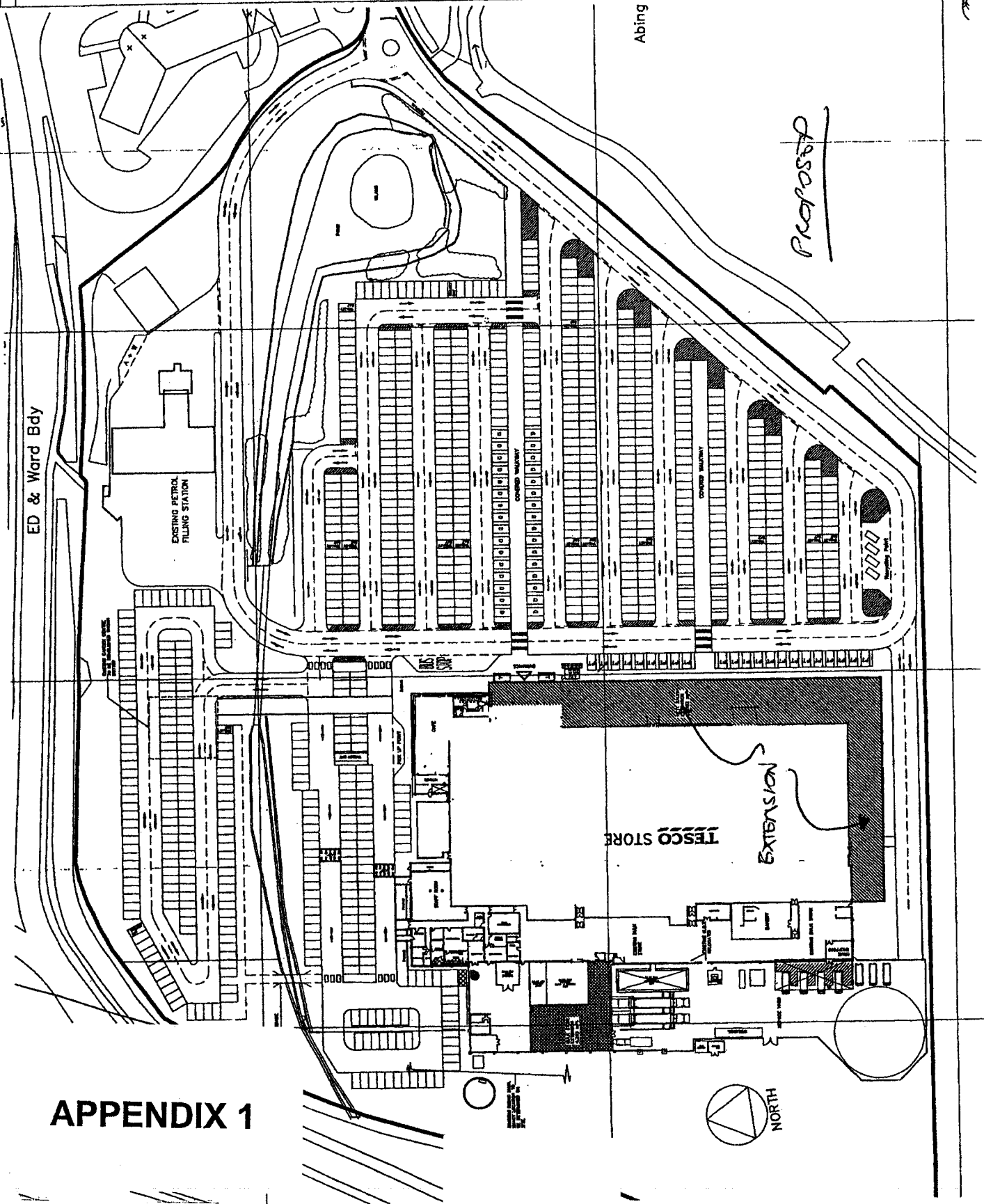
Scale	Date	Drawn	Checked	Project
1:200 @A1	21.11.04			
Client	Project Number	Revision	11 JAN 08 COMPOSITE INITIAL SERVICES	
	FIEXT/1093 - P04	A		

Page 1/16/5/51

10
 The information to be used from this drawing shall be used in accordance with the conditions of use set out on the drawings. It is the responsibility of the user to ensure that the information is used in accordance with the conditions of use set out on the drawings.
 SITE PLAN INCLUDING PARKING LAYOUT AND TROLLEY BAYS PREPARED BY TARRANT ELLIS. REPRODUCED FROM ORDINANCE SURVEY DATA © CROWN COPYRIGHT 2004.
 SUBJECT TO SURVEY AND SITE INSPECTION
 SITE AREA
 SCHEDULE OF PARKING
 SPACE WIDTH 2.5m
 AISLE WIDTH 6.5m
 PARKING SPACES 511
 BICYCLE SPACES 36
 BICYCLE AND TROLLEY (4%)
 OVERFLOW PARKING
 OVERALL TOTAL 873
 TROLLEY BAYS 17

TARRANT ELLIS LTD.
 11, 11A, 12B
 CROWN COURT
 1000000

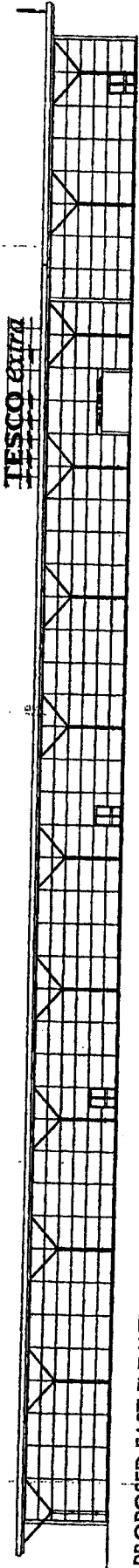
PROPOSED EXTENSION
 TESCO STORE
 MARCHAM ROAD
 ABINGDON
 SIDNO, 2008
 The
 PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT
 ABG161591
 Date MAY 2004
 Checked
 Drawn
 Scale 1:500 @ A1
 Drawing Number
 Project Number
 F/EXT/1093 - P02



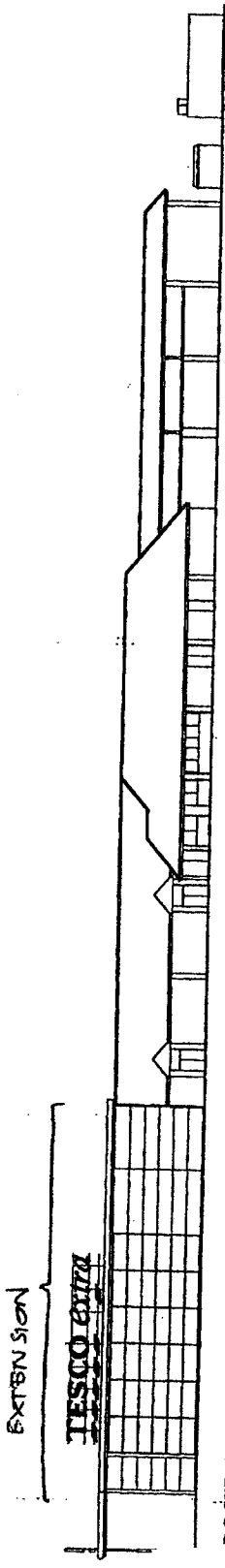
APPENDIX 1

NOTES
 All dimensions to be noted from this drawing. All rights reserved. No part of this drawing may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the architect. The drawings are to be read in conjunction with the specifications, bills of materials and related drawings.
 SIGNAGE INDICATED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

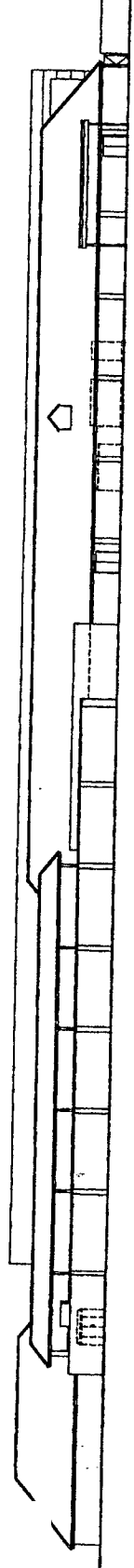
APPENDIX 1



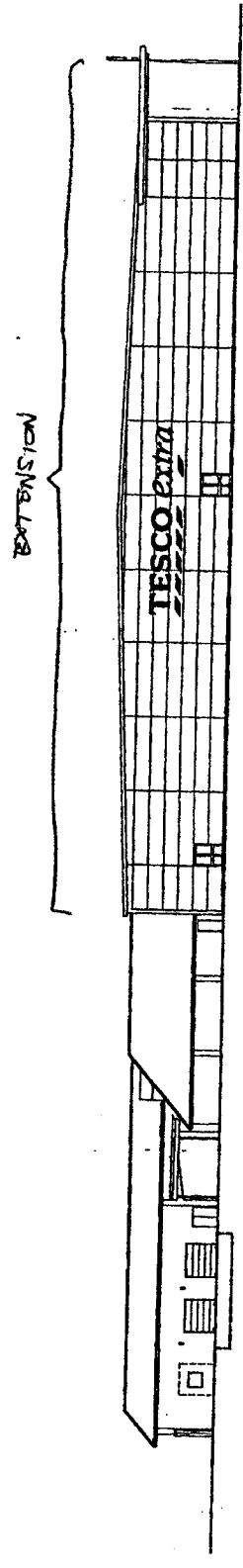
PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION



PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION



PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION



PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION

REVISED PLAN 2/1

PROPOSED EXTENSION
 TESCO STORE
 MARCHAM ROAD
 ABINGDON

SIDNO. 2008

PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

VALLEY WEST WOODS
 DISTRICT COUNCIL
 11 ANNE
 COMPTON ROAD
 BRISTOL

Scale	1:200	1:50	1:100
Date	21.12.04		
Drawn	BY	Checked	
Project	FEXT/1093 - P04		
Sheet	A		

Notes: 1. For information only. This drawing is not to be used for construction purposes without the written consent of the architect.

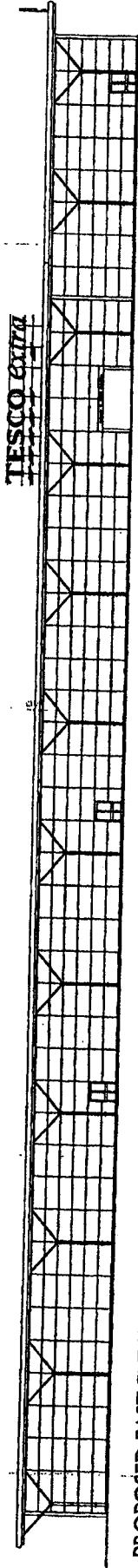
16/13/07

NOTE

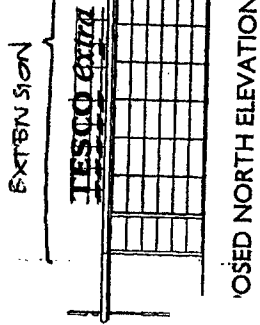
All elevations to be updated from this drawing. All signs to be worked on site and the finished condition of any sign to be confirmed by the contractor. The contractor is to be held responsible for the accuracy of any drawings, plans, specifications, and related drawings.

SIGNAGE INDICATED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

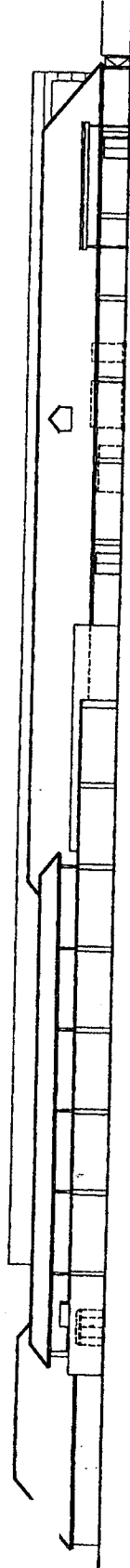
APPENDIX 1



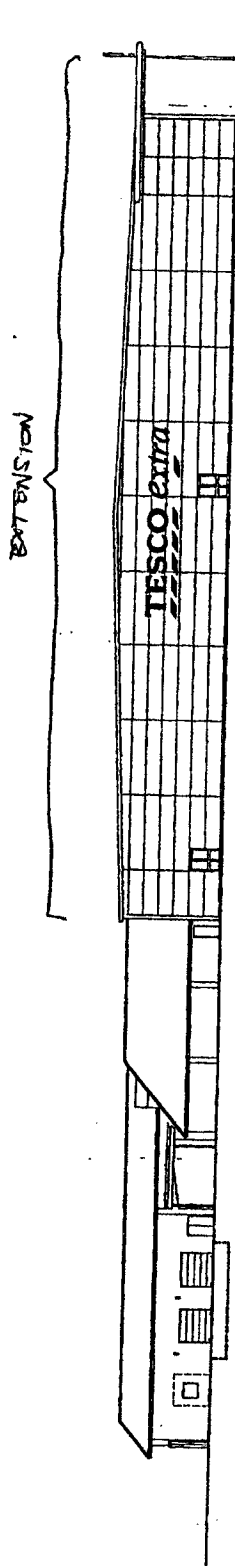
PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION



PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION



PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION



PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION

REVISED PLAN 2/1

PROPOSED EXTENSION
TESCO STORE
MARCHAM ROAD
ABINGDON

SIDNO, 2008

PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS
DRAWING NUMBER
1:1 A11 2008
COMPOSITE TOTAL
SERVICES

Scale: 1:100
Date: 21/12/04
Author: [Name]

Drawing Number: FEXT/1093 - P04

Date: 16/13/05

**ABG/1615/51 – Tesco Stores Ltd
Demolition of existing garden centre. Extension to store and car park.
Tesco, Marcham Road, Abingdon.**

- 1.0 **The Proposal**
- 1.1 The Tesco superstore on Marcham Road currently has a gross floorspace of 9,275 sq.m and a net retail floorspace of 6,365 sq.m (including the garden centre). This application seeks permission to demolish the garden centre and extend the main store building to the front and side. The garden centre would be replaced by additional car parking, while a re-organisation of the existing car park is also planned. Gross floorspace would increase by 2,490 sq.m to 11,765 sq.m, and net retail floorspace would increase by 1,996 sq.m to 8,361 sq.m. Extracts from the application drawings are in [REDACTED].
- 1.2 The main reasons behind the proposal are to increase the amount of retail floorspace, mainly for non-food (comparison) items, and to improve internal circulation space particularly around the tills. The proposed extensions would be fully glazed to allow much more natural light into the store. The design has been amended to address concerns expressed by the Council's Consultant Architect.
- 1.3 The site lies in the flood plain. The application is a departure from the development plan because of a conflict with retail policies and has been advertised as such. It comes to Committee due to the number of objection letters that have been received.
- 2.0 **Planning History**
- 2.1 Planning permission for the store was granted in 1981 (ref. SAH/1615/8).
- 3.0 **Planning Policies**
- 3.1 Policies S3 and S4 of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan deal with proposed expansion of retail development outside Abingdon town centre. These seek to direct new development to edge-of-centre sites where possible. Where this is not possible, new development can be permitted on out-of-centre sites provided –
- it is not detrimental to the vitality and viability of the town centre
 - the site is accessible by a choice of means of transport
 - the visual impact of the proposal is acceptable, and
 - the proposal would not prejudice land for housing or business development.
- 3.2 Policies D1 and D3 require all development to be acceptable in terms of design and highway safety. Policies D16 and D17 seek to ensure that any development within an existing floodplain does not exacerbate flooding either through additional built form or increased runoff. Also relevant is Policy S11 which supports the refurbishment of Bury Street Precinct.
- 3.3 Similar policies in the Second Deposit Draft Local Plan 2011 are S1, S7, DC1, DC5, DC13 and DC14.
- 3.4 National guidance is provided by PPS6, "Planning for Town Centres". Paragraphs 3.3-3.29 deal with assessing proposed retail developments, including extensions to existing stores.
- 4.0 **Consultations**
- 4.1 Abingdon Town Council – do not object provided there is no harm to the vitality and viability of town centre shops.
- 4.2 Local Residents – 5 letters have been received raising the following objections:-

APPENDIX 2

1. Increased risk and extent of flooding
 2. Impact on the local retail economy
 3. Additional traffic and highway safety problems
- 4.3 A letter has also been received on behalf of Sackville TCI Property (GP) Ltd, who are the long-term leaseholders and managers of the Bury Street Precinct, which raises concerns about the application (see [REDACTED]).
- 4.4 County Engineer – no objection subject to a financial contribution to ABITS, a reduction in the proposed parking spaces by 20, and the completion of a travel plan for staff (see [REDACTED]).
- 4.5 Environment Agency – no objection subject to completion of flood mitigation works within the site (see [REDACTED]).
- 4.6 Consultant Architect – supports the revised design (see [REDACTED]).
- 4.7 County Archaeologist – no objection subject to an archaeological informative.
- 5.0 **Officer Comments**
- 5.1 This application raises the following issues
- The impact on the vitality and viability of Abingdon town centre
 - Whether there is an alternative edge-of-centre site available
 - Transport and parking
 - The impact on flooding
 - The visual appearance of the proposal.
- 5.2 With regard to the first issue, the implications of the proposal in terms of retail policy have been carefully assessed by the Council's retail consultants, Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP). This has involved a detailed examination of the applicant's retail impact assessment and of supplementary information submitted in response to queries raised by NLP regarding the assessment. In conclusion, NLP consider the proposal should not harm the retail base of Abingdon town centre. This is largely because there is a projected surplus in available expenditure on convenience and comparison goods shopping by 2011 for the Abingdon retail catchment which should sustain both the town centre and the expanded Tesco store.
- 5.3 Officers have also been mindful of the impact this proposal might have on potential plans to refurbish Bury Street Precinct. The company that manages the precinct has expressed concerns about the proposal, but has not objected. Officers have been assured that this is an accurate reflection of the stance of the company on the application. In light of this, Officers consider there is no justification for refusing the application on the ground that it would harm any plans to improve the precinct.
- 5.4 Turning to the second issue, national and local retail policy require a search to be undertaken to find more centrally located sites for a proposed out-of-centre retail development, including an extension to an existing store. However, it is a fact that in Abingdon the availability of potential edge-of-centre retail sites with suitable space and access is limited. Sites previously available for such use, such as the Vineyard Action Area and West Central, are now either developed or in the process of being developed. Officers have suggested two potential significant sites in Ock Street worthy of investigation, namely the Post Office Sorting Depot and Knights builders' merchants. The applicants have approached both site owners but without a positive response in either case. Consequently, it is concluded that there are no sites that are more centrally located for the proposed development.
- 5.5 The third issue is transport and parking. A Transport Assessment was submitted with the application and this has been carefully considered by the County Engineer. He considers that the increased traffic flow from the proposed extension would not have a significant impact on

APPENDIX 2

the local road network. He notes however that the amount of parking proposed exceeds maximum standards by 20 spaces. Provided no more sustainable site is available (as concluded above), the County Engineer's recommendation is one of no objection subject to a Section 106 Obligation to secure a financial contribution to ABITS and a travel plan for staff, and the reduction in the amount of proposed parking by 20 spaces, which can be controlled via a condition.

5.6 Regarding the impact on flooding, the applicants have discussed the proposal in detail with the Environment Agency. The floor level of the existing store building and the proposed extension lie above the critical 1 in 100 year flood level, but much of the site is below that level. A flood compensation scheme has been agreed for the site whereby any proposed increase in levels on that part of the site lying within the flood plain will be countered by a corresponding lowering of levels elsewhere on the site. Subject to the implementation of this scheme the Environment Agency raises no objection.

5.7 Finally, concerning design, the application drawings have been amended in response to concerns raised by the Council's Consultant Architect concerning the junction of the proposed extension with the existing building. Following these amendments, the Consultant Architect now supports the proposal.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 It is recommended that authority to grant planning permission is delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair subject to:-

- i) Referral of the application to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as a departure from the development plan, and a decision not to call-in the application;
- ii) The completion of a Section 106 Obligation to secure a financial contribution to ABITS and a travel plan for Tesco staff;
- iii) Conditions to include materials and detailing, reduced parking, and flood compensation.

ad and considered an agenda item which advised of two appeals which the Planning Inspectorate for determination, one which had been withdrawn.

The appeal in relation to GFA/2796/4 the Committee noted an amendment to the application had been to allow the conversion of a garage into a part dining

to be received.

PLANNING PUBLIC INQUIRIES AND HEARINGS

The Committee received and considered a list of forthcoming public inquiries and hearings.

RESOLVED

that the list be received.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee received and considered report 288/05 of the Deputy Director detailing planning applications, the decision of which are set out below. Applications where members of the public had given notice that they wished to speak were considered first.

DC.344 ABG/1615/51 - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING GARDEN CENTRE, EXTENSION TO STORE AND CAR PARK, TESCO, MARCHAM ROAD, ABINGDON

Councillor RT Johnston had declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and in accordance with Standing Order 34 he left the meeting during its consideration.

The Committee was advised that further to the report a plan showing amended elevations; a reduced amount of parking and a reorganisation of the car park had been received.

The Committee was advised of the details of the flood mitigation plan which set out level for level reductions in flood storage capacity and how the replacement of that loss would be provided. It was noted that subject to the measures proposed in the mitigation plan being carried out, the Environment Agency had no objection to the application.

Further to paragraph 4.1 of the report, it was noted that the Town Council had objected to the application raising concerns regarding the proposal being out of keeping and its adverse affect on the vitality of the town.

Finally, the Committee was advised that the County Planning Authority had recommended that this Council should object to the application, although it recognised that the District Council was better placed to determine whether there were material reasons to outweigh refusal. It was also suggested that South Oxfordshire District should be consulted namely because of the impact of the proposal on Didcot (although it was noted that this had been taken account of by the Council's Consultant) and that the Environment Agency should be consulted (which it was noted had been undertaken). Further concerns were raised regarding traffic, the creation of an out of town market centre, contributions towards highway improvements and the need to advertise the application as a departure from the Development Plan (which it was noted had been done).

The Committee was advised of an amendment to the recommendation in the report in that it was not necessary to include a condition regarding reduced parking as this had been covered by the revised plans.

Mr B Hedley, Vice-Chairman of the South Abingdon Flood Plain Action Group made a statement objecting to the application raising concerns relating to matters already covered in the report. He referred to a letter dated 12 February 2005 to the Council. He particularly raised concern regarding the increased effect of incipient and immediate run off rain water including run off from the increased roof area; surface material absorption; any new hard-standing should be permeable blocks over gravel; flooding; the need for foundation work; the speed at which water would penetrate the area and the diminished ability of the flood plain to cope with it; the proposed ancillary works and the need for details and advice on those; the need for consideration of other measures such as permeable blocks on the ground for car parks and underground storage tanks; the impact on rescue services; the conditions required by the Environment Agency; and quantities of run off from nearby farm land.

Mr M Buxton the applicant's agent made a statement in support of the application. He advised that the aim of the proposal was to make marked qualitative improvements to the shopping environment, details of which were explained. He reported that there would be a reduction in peak hour congestion; there would be an additional storage area to meet the existing needs of the store; and an improved external appearance including glazing which would provide maximum natural light to the store. He reported that the independent retail assessment did support the proposal and there had been significant consultation. He reiterated that there was a need for the development justifying its approval. He explained the layout and commented on the sequential approach taken in that other sites had been looked at. He commented that the Officers were satisfied that these investigations were exhausted. He reported that the Environment Agency was satisfied with the proposed flood mitigation measures and the County Engineer had no objection subject to a contribution towards ABITS and reduced parking. Finally, he reiterated that this was the most appropriate site.

One of the local Members speaking on behalf of the other local Member raised concern at the proposal in terms of flooding. He commented on the need to keep local residents advised of any works and highlighted their real concern regarding the constant threat of their homes being flooded. He questioned whether the Environment Agency was correct in its response. He asked Members to be certain that the mitigation measures proposed would be sufficient as he was not confident that they would be. Also, he raised concerns regarding the existing lighting and abandoned trolleys around the town, notably in the river. The Officers advised that these matters were not relevant to consideration of this application, although the comments made could be taken up with the applicant.

Some Members spoke in support of the application making the following comments:-

- In terms of permeability, the existing ratio would be unchanged. A condition specifying this could be added should the Committee be minded to approve the application.
- Independent experts such as the Environment Agency raised no objection to the proposal and were satisfied with the mitigation measures proposed.
- The independent consultant was satisfied with the likely impact on the town centre.
- There were 400 - 500 new units of accommodations in Abingdon which required shopping facilities. The independent consultant would have had regard to the pattern of development in the town, income levels etc.

Some Members spoke against the application making the following comments:-

- There was concern regarding the detrimental impact of the proposal on the retail units in the town centre. Small businesses were finding it hard to survive already. The Officers

reported that there had been a thorough consideration of the likely impact on the town centre and the independent expert consultant was in support of the proposal.

There was a concern that further businesses would be pulled away from the town centre to this site.

The adverse affect on the vitality of the town centre had not been adequately considered.

The Abingdon Chamber of Commerce and the Abingdon Association of Small Businesses should be specifically consulted on the application. However, this was not specifically agreed.

If there was no intention to attract new customers then there should be no need for an additional 200 spaces.

It was suggested that the extra car parking would be taken up by customers travelling from further away. It was questioned whether this was acceptable in view of the Council wishing to discourage use of the private car. The Officers explained that the proposal now provided for the maximum number of parking spaces for a facility of this nature.

There was an extra supply of car parking to meet the maximum level. The County Engineer had advised that parking should not be provided above the maximum level.

There was concern regarding the types of sales and the types of businesses in the town centre which might be affected. It was questioned whether there had been any restrictions placed on sales as had been the case for other stores. The Officers responded that planning permission for any extensions was required but there were no restrictions placed on the type of goods which might be sold at this store. The Officers commented that there had been a public inquiry in the early 1980's regarding a site for this store. It was noted that the expansion of food stores to enable them to sell non food items was a phenomena of the last 10 years, which had not been the case when the store application was originally considered.

Whilst measures were to be put in place to mitigate the building and an alternative area provided which could flood, the problems associated with sudden run off had not been addressed. The Officers reported that the issue of run off had been discussed with Environment Agency which was content with the ratio and had raised no objection.

Further measures to hold water when it was at its peak and could cause flooding were needed. It was not certain that the Environment Agency had addressed this.

The car park and nearby the store had been flooded which indicated that the existing mitigation measures were inadequate. The Officers reported that the store was built above the flood plain. The proposed works were to compensate for the loss of the flood area and not to improve the existing situation.

There was concern that the Environment Agency had not had regard to other matters such as the likelihood of a reservoir. It was questioned whether consideration had been given to the impact of the proposal on the whole of the Thames Valley. Also reference was made to the proposed development at Grove and the possibility of drainage being northwards and the impact of this on the River Ock. The Officers responded that these were not matters relevant to this application. It was explained that the Environment Agency would have taken into account all relevant considerations including run off and the need to ensure that flooding elsewhere was not worse as a result. It was commented that the Committee must have regard to the advice from technical experts.

More alternative sites should have been investigated. Reference was made to the Bury Street Precinct; the Old Gaol and the Cattle Market. The Officers explained that there was guidance on looking at alternative sites which had to be reasonably available within the time limits of the Local Plan. The Officers commented that Bury Street had been considered by the agents as part of their original assessment, but had been deemed unsuitable for their business needs. It was commented that the Old Gaol was a listed building and therefore any development would be restricted and the availability of the Cattle Market had been unknown at the time of considering alternative sites. It was explained that the Ock Street sites had been the only ones which would reasonably have

been available. It was questioned whether it was reasonable for the applicant to have considered two sites only and whether the Committee should determine the application knowing that alternative sites might be available now. The Officers responded that the applicant could be asked to consider the alternative sites mentioned.

It was proposed by the Chair that the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and/or Vice-Chair and Opposition Spokesman of the Development Control Committee be delegated authority to approve application ABG/1615/51 subject to the following:-

- (1) Referral of the application to the Department of Local Government and Community as a departure from the Development Plan and a decision not to call-in the application.
 - (2) The completion of a Section 106 Obligation to secure a financial contribution to ABITS and a Travel Plan for Tesco staff.
 - (3) Conditions to include conditions addressing materials and detailing; flood compensation; the control of the ratio of permeable to impermeable surface treatment on site (i.e. how much surface allowed water to drain through to control run off); external lighting; the prohibition of a mezzanine floor; and conditions recommended by the Council's retail consultant Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP).
 - (4) The retail consultant (NLP) investigating alternative sites including the Cattle Market.
- However, this proposal was lost by 7 votes for to 9 against.

At this point, it was suggested by one Member that the application should be refused, with the reasons for refusal to be formally endorsed at a future meeting, such reasons to include the availability of other sites within the town centre and the adverse affect of the proposal on the retail vitality of the town centre. However, the Officers reminded the Committee that there was no evidence to support this and therefore further advice should be sought in the first instance.

It was proposed by Councillor Terry Cox, seconded by Councillor Tony de Vere and by 10 votes to 2 with 4 abstentions (with one of the voting Members not being present during consideration of this item) it was

RESOLVED

that consideration of application ABG/1615/51 be deferred to enable issues raised in relation to flooding and surface water run off and the impact of the development on town centre vitality to be further checked with the Environment Agency and retail consultants including the appointment of second consultants if necessary.

DC.345 DRA/9138/2 - ERECTION OF AN EXTENSION TO THE REAR, 14 CRABTREE LANE, DRAYTON

By 17 votes to nil it was

RESOLVED

that application DRA/9138/2 be approved subject to the conditions set out in the report

DC.346 ABG/14753/9 - VARIATION OF CONDITION 1 OF PERMISSION ABG/14753/8 TO TWO DELIVERIES BETWEEN 2100 AND 0630. WAITROSE, ABBEY CLOSE, ABINGDON

The Committee noted that letters of objection had been received raising concerns special delivery methods which were aimed at ensuring that noise was kept to a minimum were not being adhered to. The Officers had reviewed the evidence and had concluded that the practices were followed noise would be minimal.

APPENDIX 3



2004-2005
Supporting People

Telephone 01235 540350
Fax 01235 540396
email www.Whitehorsedc.gov.uk
Website
Our Ref ABG/1615/51/MD
Your Ref
Date 19 May 2006

Knight
ment Control
ent Agency
e
r Park
sh Gifford
vvaunngjford
Oxon
OX10 8BD

Dear Mr McKnight

**Ref Planning Application ABG/1615/51
Extension to Supermarket, Tesco, Marcham Road, Abingdon**

I refer to the above planning application. In a letter dated 6 June 2005, you commented on a flood risk assessment prepared by Pinnacle Consulting Engineers. I enclose a copy of that letter for your convenience.

The application was presented to the Council's Development Control Committee on 8 May 2006. Members of the Committee noted your comments regarding compensatory works, but were concerned about changes to the ratio of permeable to impermeable surface resulting from the proposal - for example, the proposal involves increasing the amount of parking on the site, which presumably has implications for the ratio.

I would be grateful if you could let me have your comments on this particular aspect of the proposal.

Yours sincerely

Martin Deans
Area Planning Officer (North)



creating a better place



Vale of White Horse District Council
Abbey House
Abingdon
Oxon
OX14 3JE

Our ref: SU49NE/8/1
Your ref: ABG/1615/51/MD

VALE OF WHITE HORSE
DISTRICT COUNCIL
REC'D. 29 JUN 2006
CORPORATE POSTAL
SERVICES-6

Date: 28 June 2006

Dear Mr. Martin Deans

RE: Planning Application ABG/1615/51 – Extension to Supermarket, Tesco, Marcham Road, Abingdon

Thank you for your letter dated 19 May 2006, I reply with the following comments:

A Flood Risk Assessment undertaken by Pinnacle Consulting Engineers Ltd, dated April 2005 was undertaken to explore the impacts of the proposal on the floodplain, not only due to its direct impacts, but also the surface water drainage impact.

The FRA states:

"The existing and proposed impermeable areas have also been assessed to determine the extent of any potential increase in surface water runoff. It can be seen from enclosed drawings that there is no increase in impermeable area"

Drawings: 020103/003 – Existing Pervious and Impervious Areas
020103/211 – Proposed Pervious and Impervious Areas

"There is consequently no increase in surface water runoff resulting from the development proposals"

The surface water drainage assessment indicated that there was no change in impermeable areas over the existing as the proposed extension is replacing existing impermeable areas currently draining to the surface water system.

The increased areas of parking on the site do not change the ratio of impermeable areas and the resultant impact on the receiving watercourse and flood risk is not considered to be an issue here.

Red Kite House, Howbery Park, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 8BD.
Customer services line: 08708 506 506
Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

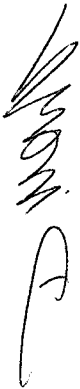


APPENDIX 3

My understanding of the surface water drainage system, is that flows are transferred to a balancing pond on-site prior to discharge. This device will store water following rain and control its release to the receiving watercourse.

Please feel free to contact me again on this or any other matter.

Yours sincerely



David McKnight
Technical Specialist – Development Control
Direct dial 01491 828303
Direct fax 01491 834703
Direct e-mail david.mcknight@environment-agency.gov.uk

VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL
EXTENSION TO TESCO FOOD STORE,
MARCHAM ROAD, ABINGDON
PLANNING APPLICATION NO. ABG/1615/51

VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXTENSION TO TESCO FOODSTORE, MARCHAM ROAD, ABINGDON

PLANNING APPLICATION NO. ABG/1615/51

Introduction

1.1 A planning application was submitted on behalf of Tesco Stores Limited for an extension to their existing food store at Marcham Road in Abingdon. In order to assist the Vale of White Horse District Council in making an informed decision on the application, the Council instructed Nathaniel Litchfield & Partners (NLP) to review the retail assessment undertaken by Tesco's agents, DPP and further submissions made. Following this work, the Council instructed Signet Planning Limited to assess NLP's findings and to evaluate the contention made by DPP that there are no sequentially preferable sites available that can realistically and practically accommodate the development proposed.

Application Proposal

1.2 The planning application provides for an extension to the existing Tesco store at Marcham Road in Abingdon. The store (for which outline planning permission was granted in 1981) is located about 1 mile to the west of the town centre on the edge of the urban area. It is therefore classified as an 'out of centre' development, although it adjoins an established retail park known as Fair Acres which comprises a number of warehouse units primarily retailing in bulky goods.

1.3 The application proposal is for an extension of 2,490 sq.m. (26,790 sq.ft.) gross which would allow for alterations to the store's internal layout. Implementation would see the store's existing footprint increase in size to 11,765 sq.m. (126,600 sq.ft.), 80% of which would translate into additional sales floor space. Consequently, the total retail sales area would increase from 6,365 sq.m. (68,500 sq.ft.) to 8,360 sq.m. (90,000 sq.ft.).

1.4 The floor space increase proposed by Tesco (2,490 sq.m.) is coincidentally a little short of the threshold identified in the Town and Country Planning (Shopping Development) Direction 1993 which triggers a referral to the Secretary of State if the

SIGNET PLANNING
12B Hornbeam Park Oval
Hornbeam Park
Harrogate
HG2 8RB

Telephone: 01423 878550
Facsimile: 01423 879514

Signet Ref: HG0476

Date: 24 October 2006

COPYRIGHT
The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of Signet Planning



SIGNET PLANNING
VISION | STRATEGY | ACTION

Council is minded to grant planning permission. Whilst the application proposal seeks to create an optimal operating size and layout of the store through the construction of the extension, the scale of floor space increase has, in part, been influenced by the Shopping Direction and avoiding referral to the Secretary of State on retail development that is **"...not less than 2,500 sq.m...."**

1.5 Notwithstanding the above, the Town and Country Planning (Development Plans & Consultation) Direction 1992 requires local planning authorities to notify the Secretary of State of "departure" applications which **"...by reason of their scale, nature or location would significantly prejudice the implementation of development plan policies and proposals"**.

1.6 Therefore the Council if minded to grant planning permission could refer the application to the Secretary of State under the 1992 Direction if it believes that development could potentially damage development plan policies and proposals as they relate to the regeneration of Abingdon town centre. In this regard, the role of the Bury Street Shopping Precinct will need to take much greater prominence and this point is discussed later in the report.

Report by Nathaniel Litchfield & Partners

1.7 We have looked at the critique undertaken by NLP which examines DPP's retail assessment and the variables used in the calculation of retail headroom. However, rather than go over the same points again in this report, we have confined our comments to those areas where there would appear to be significant differences of opinion.

1.8 In terms of study area, price base, design year and the robustness of the household survey, there would appear to be general agreement between DPP and NLP. A slight difference in population estimates was revealed where DPP recorded a marginally higher population in 2007 and in 2011 (1.8% and 3.3%, respectively).

More critical differences of opinion were over:

- i. The 'benchmark turnover' of the proposed extension to the Marcham Road food store, and

- ii. Comparison goods turnover within the study area.

These 2 points are examined below.

Benchmark Turnover of Proposed Extension

1.10 DPP's quantitative argument for additional convenience and comparison goods floor space relies in part upon the Council accepting that the proposed extension to their existing store will only trade at a sales density of about 35% of the company average. This represents a very conservative estimate of turnover which indirectly undermines the principal argument presented by DPP that the proposed extension is needed in order to relieve congestion due to over-crowding and over-trading. This point is made throughout the retail assessment that **"...the store is particularly busy and problems occur within the store at peak times causing inconvenience to customers"**. (Paragraph 3.1) In other words, the turnover (or the sales density) of the existing store is much greater than the national average. To what extent turnover exceeds the company's national average is not known, but it is interesting to note that a letter received by the Vale of White Horse District Council from DPP (dated 30 September 2005) made the following comments:

"Whilst we cannot reveal the actual convenience turnover of the store, Tesco have advised us that the store is trading in excess of the company average. Indeed we have since received further confirmation from Tesco that the store's food turnover is higher than that of much larger Tesco stores elsewhere such as Watford, Sandhurst, Newcastle, Milton Keynes and New Malden. Additionally, the store is over-trading when compared to Tesco stores of a similar size in other market towns such as ...Newbury, Aylesbury and Stratford upon Avon".

1.11 Having regard to the above, it is quite clear that a sales density of just 35% of the company average is too low to be used in the exercise. Whilst it is standard practice to use lower densities for extensions to existing food stores in retail assessments, the turnover attributed needs to have proper regard to the current performance and function of the existing store. NLP comment that a sales density of between 30% and 50% is normally adopted for such proposals at the target year only, after which sales densities would significantly improve. Therefore, having regard to "over

trading" at the existing food store, the use of a sales density of 50% of Tesco's national average is both reasonable and appropriate for 2007. Furthermore, 2011 (and the passage of four years) should reflect an anticipated sales density for the proposed extension which accords with the company's national average.

Comparison Goods Turnover within the Study Area

1.12 NLP noted that DPP failed to include the turnover of existing retail warehousing in their calculations of comparison goods retail headroom. As a consequence, an additional benchmark turnover of £47.5m (attributable to these facilities) was not acknowledged, and therefore the study area's retention level was significantly underestimated.

1.13 Having regard to the above, and adopting a 50% sales density for 2007 (as opposed to the 35% used by DPP), the level of convenience goods retail headroom is insufficient to support the proposed extension in 2007. However, by 2011 there will be surplus capacity.

1.14 In terms of comparison goods floor space, NLP's capacity study is a better guide to understanding the level of headroom available to support new development for the simple reason that it was more comprehensive in identifying the existing distribution of facilities. NLP's critique reveals that the proposed extension to the Tesco food store would result in an expenditure deficit of more than £8 million in 2007 but then generally speaking, sufficient capacity would exist in 2011.

1.15 Notwithstanding the above, NLP conclude that it would be inappropriate to refuse planning permission on the grounds of lack of need only, particularly as it is anticipated that retail need will exist by 2011 (and in the case of the convenience element, by 2009). NLP make a valid observation in this regard as it is worth noting that the process of identifying retail capacity is a theoretical exercise which depends on a range of data inputs (for example, the forecast level of expenditure growth, floor space efficiency ratios, business turnover ratios, etc). Only modest changes to any of the variables used can bring about considerable changes in the results of the capacity forecast, as evidenced above. Therefore, the outputs from a capacity study should be treated as a general guide only and should not be applied prescriptively. This point has been made by the Secretary of State in a number of planning appeals,

where it has been accepted that turnover does not have to equal the identified surplus in expenditure. However, refusal of planning permission on the grounds of need could be supported if it could be shown that development would put at risk the spatial strategy for the area or town, and would prejudice the implementation of specific town centre development opportunities. This leads on to the Bury Street precinct and whether there are any medium to long term plans for its refurbishment and/or redevelopment which could be undermined if planning permission was granted for the Tesco extension.

Bury Street Precinct

1.16 Sackville TCI Property (GP) Limited, the owners of the Bury Street precinct had submitted a 'letter of concern' to the Council regarding the application proposal but drew back from formally objecting. However, despite the precinct's dated appearance and style, and the limited size of individual shop units (significantly smaller than modern retailer requirements, particularly clothing/fashion), there would appear to be no plans to either refurbish or redevelop what is a key town centre site. There is currently a good level of retailer interest for representation in Abingdon town centre which, due to the absence of shop unit accommodation of a suitable size, quality and configuration, cannot be satisfied. FOCUS reveals that there are currently 23 requirements:

Retailer requirements (2006)

Category	Number of registered interests	Maximum floorspace requirements – net sales area (gross)
Convenience	4	1,023 sq.m. (1,573 sq.m.)
Clothing/footwear	3	976 sq.m. (1,501 sq.m.)
DIY/hardware	1	279 sq.m. (429 sq.m.)
Furniture/carpets	1	929 sq.m. (1,429 sq.m.)
Vanity	2	1,766 sq.m. (2,717 sq.m.)
Other/specialist	8	3,206 sq.m. (4,932 sq.m.)
Comparison		
Cafe/restaurant	3	651 sq.m. (929 sq.m.)
Miscellaneous	1	829 sq.m. (929 sq.m.)
Total	23	9,659 sq.m. (14,439 sq.m.)

1.17 The bulk of the interest expresses is for prime pitch or good secondary locations, and this amounts to around 71% of the floorspace requirement. We would add that there are likely to be other retail and leisure operators who have a requirement for

Abingdon, or who may wish to relocate within the town centre to larger and/or better quality premises but have not registered their interest with this particular company. The details of these interests are attached as Appendix 1.

1.18 From an investor's perspective, Abingdon's commercial property market also appears to be very healthy. The Valuation Office Property Market Report (July 2006) records a strong performance over the last few years. The town's prime retail yield has improved on the 9% recorded in 2000 and more recently has exhibited a hardening over the last 1½ years, achieving 6%. This is better than both Didcot and Wantage, and is on a par with Banbury, Witney, Bicester and Cowley:

Abingdon town centre: prime retail yield

- January 2005 – 7%
- July 2005 – 6.5%
- January 2006 – 6.25%
- July 2006 – 6%.

1.19 Having regard to the above, there would appear to be favourable market conditions to support a town centre redevelopment scheme which could potentially accommodate a number of those retailers who have an outstanding requirement for representation. Such a scheme would strengthen in qualitative terms the retail offer of the town centre, and consolidate its position in the shopping centre hierarchy. However, there are no plans by the owner to undertake any refurbishment works or redevelopment in the town centre. Furthermore, there are no known plans by any other land/property owner to pursue a development proposal in the town centre. It is therefore, difficult to argue that the proposed extension to Tesco's existing store in Marcham Road would adversely impact upon future public and private sector investment if (even in very favourable market conditions) there would appear to be no development plans for the town centre.

Qualitative Need

1.20 In terms of qualitative need, DPP comment that the application proposal is necessary to improve the shopping requirement of the store and address issues of customer congestion. However, whilst some of the new floor space is devoted to increasing

aisle width and enlarging lobby and checkout areas, the bulk of the new floor space seeks to increase the sales area, particularly in respect of comparison goods. The qualitative need argument has therefore been presented from an operator's perspective rather than a community perspective.

1.21 Paragraph 2.35 of PPS6 comments that a key consideration in assessing qualitative need is to provide for consumer choice. However, this is in the context of accessibility for the whole community and meeting their needs, particularly the needs of those living in deprived areas. A specific issue in this respect is that the existing store (and the application proposal) is in a location that has very poor public transport accessibility (only two services per hour) so the convenient use of the food store is primarily confined to those with access to a private car. The qualitative benefits identified will therefore only be available to existing car borne Tesco customers and new car borne Tesco customers attracted to the store following the improvements proposed.

1.22 A further qualitative argument used by DPP is that the Marcham Road food store "does not stock the full range of goods normally expected from a modern supermarket" (third line on page 4 of DPP's letter to the Vale of White Horse District Council, dated 30 September 2005). However, this point could be challenged. The size of the existing store is substantially larger than other food stores within DPP's study area. In fact, it is already 45% bigger than the second largest food store which is Sainsbury's in Heyford Hill, Oxford. The existing net sales area of 6,365 sq.m should be able to stock a complete and comprehensive range of food items which one would normally expect from a modern supermarket. However, the principal purpose of the application is to significantly expand the "higher margin" non-food offer which the big four (Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury and Morrisons) are actively doing in order to increase sales growth and market share. Therefore, the definition of the term 'modern supermarket' that DPP has used has unsurprisingly been expanded to reflect this new store model which now has a much larger non-food range comprising higher margin, smaller, 'quick moving' items. In particular, clothing and home entertainment goods.

1.23 If we use DPP's definition, then the proposed extension to the Marcham Road food store is necessary in order to create the "one-stop shopping facility" that Tesco is

striving to achieve. As a consequence, the proportion of sales floor space devoted to the retailing of non-food items will change from around 25% to 40%.

Scale

1.24 In terms of the scale of the proposed development, the extension amounts to 2,490 sq.m. gross which if implemented would result in a format 90 store with a gross footprint of 11,765 sq.m. (although Appendix 1 of DPP's Retail Assessment refers to a larger footprint of 12,235 sq.m.). When compared to Abingdon, the total gross retail floor space of the new Tesco store would equate to around 75% of the combined convenience and comparison goods gross retail floor space available in the town centre. However, it is important to bear in mind that the existing Tesco store (which has been in operation for many years) is already of a size that equates to 60% of Abingdon's town centre floor space total.

Sequential Test

1.25 PPS6 requires that where need has been identified, the sequential approach to site selection should be applied in order to bring forward sites for development. All options in a centre should be thoroughly assessed before less central sites are considered for main town centre uses. This means that in priority order of assessment, first choice should be given to suitable sites or buildings for conversion within town centres, followed by edge of centre locations with preference given to sites that are or will be well connected to the town centre. Only if no sites can be brought forward in either a town centre or edge of centre location should an out of centre site be considered and only then if it is or will be well served by a choice of means of transport.

1.26 NLP's earlier capacity study and their critique of the applicant's retail assessment concluded that in the target year of 2007, there will be insufficient expenditure to support the development proposed but by 2011 population growth and increases in per capita expenditure on convenience and comparison goods will create a level of headroom capable of accommodating the application proposal. Therefore, there will be capacity to support further retail floor space in the medium to long term although it is important to note that the anticipated level of retail headroom would not be substantial.

1.27 The absence of any developer/investor interest in redevelopment or refurbishment plans for Abingdon town centre limits the ability of the Council to refuse planning permission for the Tesco foodstore extension. Such plans would provide robust and justifiable grounds to oppose further retail development elsewhere, on the grounds that this would undermine the development strategy for the town centre and prejudice investment opportunities. Therefore, the only supportable reason to oppose the Tesco proposal would be the availability of a sequentially preferable site or sites.

1.28 DPP has assessed a number of sites both within and adjoining Abingdon town centre to determine their availability, suitability and viability. The conclusion drawn is that none of the sites identified either in the Local Plan or suggested by the Council are capable of accommodating the application proposal, and therefore there are no sequentially preferable sites available. We have looked at these sites again and would concur that most can be dismissed on the grounds that they are not realistically available within a reasonable period of time. However, the Cattle Market Car Park site (which the Council brought to the attention of DPP for consideration) could be made available. The question is would development here be suitable and viable? This is considered below.

Cattle Market Car Park Site

1.29 The site in Abbey Close is located partly within and partly outside the defined town centre policy area (Policy S1), and is approximately 0.2ha in size (0.5 acres).

1.30 In simple locational terms, this site is better related to the town centre of Abingdon than the application proposal, although it is important to acknowledge that it is nevertheless an 'edge of centre' site in that it is not within the town centre's Primary Shopping Area (PCA) as defined by PPS6 (Annex A, Table 2 – an area comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are contiguous and closely related to the primary shopping area). It is very peripheral to the function and operation of the town centre, being some 120m from Stert Street the nearest primary shopping frontage in Abingdon centre.

1.31 The availability of the site is not disputed by DPP as it is owned by the Council, and subject to an appropriate Committee resolution could be brought forward for

APPENDIX 4

development purposes. However, there may be an issue about the loss of a town centre car park. The importance attached to safeguarding such a facility is highlighted by a specific Local Plan policy – TR6 which states that the loss of public car parking would not be permitted if it would adversely affect the vitality and viability of Abingdon town centre. Therefore, it will need to be shown that the car park is “surplus to requirements” in the context of the way the town centre currently performs and functions.

1.32 The Council, is likely to hold data on car park occupancy which will need to show a consistently poor level of use in order to justify its loss (for information, during our visit the Council offices on 23 August 2006, the car park was just 20% occupied). However, we understand that Waitrose has recently reduced the ‘free time’ shoppers are able to use their supermarket car park. Furthermore, the Integrated Transport Strategy for Abingdon (AbITTS) seeks to create a pedestrian friendly shopping environment by reducing vehicular congestion and the number of cars in the town centre. These works are progressing, but completion is likely to result in a greater use of peripheral short stay shoppers car parks around the town. This point will need to be carefully considered before a decision is taken about the Cattle Market car park, as its loss may impact upon the way the town centre functions.

1.33 The size of the irregular shaped site (approximately 0.2ha) is too small to accommodate all of the development proposed at the Tesco store. It could potentially accommodate a retail unit of 743 sq.m (gross) but whilst this would allow for onsite servicing and deliveries, it would nevertheless require shared car parking with the adjoining Waitrose food store. However, having regard to recent changes to the way they operate their car park (limiting the length of stay), this will not be welcomed. Furthermore, the new development will require a car park of about 50 spaces which would put further pressure on car parking provision elsewhere within the town.

1.34 The ‘hidden’ location of the site and its detachment from the rest of Abingdon town centre would normally limit retailer interest. Generally speaking, most retailers rely upon the support/presence of others to ensure that they are able to trade at a satisfactory level, unless they are a specific magnet or destination draw. The main food store operators qualify in this respect although their strength of draw is based

upon the quality and range of retail offer that can be provided through the large scale of their respective stores. However for this site, only 743 sq.m. gross (520 sq.m. net) could be provided on a single level. The construction of a mezzanine would increase the net sales area to around 929 sq.m but despite Tesco’s name, the proposed development would not constitute a magnet attraction or draw and therefore may experience difficulties in operating a limited range non-food store. Furthermore, the remainder of Tesco’s floor space requirement would need to be accommodated elsewhere.

1.35 To secure a retail unit providing 929 sq.m. of net sales area on this site would require between 50 and 70 car parking spaces. A failure to secure agreement with Waitrose on shared car parking would require the construction of multi-decked car parking on the Cattle Market site. However, for the size of retail unit that is realistic on this site, multi-decked car parking would result in a development cost that would make the proposal unviable.

1.36 In addition to the above, it would be important for the Council to consider whether the acceptance of retail development on such a detached ‘edge of centre’ location would set a precedent in the way it applies shopping policy. In other words, would the granting of planning permission for retail development here be damaging to the Council’s shopping strategy and would it open the door to other enquiries for smaller scale development in locations that are very peripheral to the centre?

Conclusion

1.37 There is anticipated to be a quantitative need for further comparison and convenience goods floor space within the Abingdon area by 2011, although the scale of retail headroom will not be substantial. However, the absence of any redevelopment or refurbishment scheme or plans within the town centre (either by the public or private sector) limits the ability of the Council to refuse planning permission for the proposed Tesco food store extension on the grounds of lack of quantitative retail need.

1.38 Notwithstanding the above, Abingdon town centre’s commercial property market continues to improve as evidenced by the hardening of prime retail yields. Furthermore, there remain a good number of retailers who have unsatisfied

APPENDIX 4

requirements for representation in the town centre, and this has been the case for the last 3-4 years. Conditions would therefore appear to indicate a climate that is becoming more favourable towards redevelopment opportunities.

- 1.39 The argument presented by the applicant to justify qualitative need for the scale of the proposed extension is unproven. Whilst improvements in store layout to allow for the ease of shopper movement and circulation are justified, the need to significantly extend the non-food sales floor space in order to stock **"...the full range of goods normally expected from a modern supermarket"**, is difficult to accept bearing in mind the size of the existing store which is already substantially larger than any other supermarket in the area. The qualitative argument used by the applicant is based on a revised definition of modern supermarket which now reflects the move by the principal food store operators to significantly expand their range of non-food goods.
- 1.40 In terms of the sequential test, there are no sites either within or adjoining Abingdon town centre that can accommodate the scale of development proposed by the applicant. Whilst the Cattle Market car park site adjoining the town centre could be made available within a reasonable period of time in order to house a portion of the floor space requirement, its loss as a car park (particularly having regard to the AbITS improvement works), may have an adverse affect on how the town centre functions. Furthermore, its peripheral, 'hidden' location and the cost of development raise serious questions over the viability of such a scheme.
- 1.41 Therefore, having regard to the above and in particular the absence of any alternative redevelopment opportunities either within or immediately adjoining Abingdon town centre, it would be difficult to refuse planning permission for the application proposal.

29 November 2006

Mr M Deans
 Planning Department
 Vale of White Horse District Council
 PO Box 127
 Abbey House
 Abingdon
 OX14 3JN

By Post and E-mail

Dear Martin

**PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TESCO STORE, MARCHAM ROAD - PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE
 ABG/1615/5**

We write further to receipt of Signet's report dated 24 October 2006 which provides an analysis of DPP's Retail Assessment further to the critique prepared by NLP (May 2005). Having considered the report, we thought it would be helpful to clarify our position on a number of points prior to the planning application being reported back to Planning Committee.

Whilst the Signet report concludes that there is quantitative need for the development and that there are no sequentially preferable sites in or on the edge of the town centre available for the proposed floorspace, we do have some reservations about how the report considers matters of retail turnover, scale of development, accessibility and the potential effect of the development on future investment in the Bury St. Precinct.

Turnover of Store Extension and the Existing Garden Centre

The report criticises the benchmark turnover percentage applied to the extension floorspace indicating this should be much higher, at 50%. We do not agree with this assertion and maintain that the benchmark turnover of 35% of the store's turnover is more realistic as the extension is primarily intended to relieve qualitative problems at the store. In this respect, we draw support from the Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 2.2 (April 2005) which explains that increasing the share of comparison goods sold from a convenience store does not necessarily increase the growth of sales densities in these stores as a whole. This is because comparison densities are lower than convenience densities.

BEDFORD · BELFAST · CARDIFF · DUBLIN · GLASGOW · LEEDS · LONDON · MANCHES
 PARTNERS · RJ FICK MKTPI · JS RILEY MKTPI · SCT ANOIG MKTPI WELSH · RJ ROBINSON MKTPI · JD FRANCIS MKTPI · G ARMSTRONG MKTPI
 MB DOUGS MKTPI · SJ MACEY MKTPI · GE SWINON MKTPI · MC BAIN MKTPI · JRE HILLS MKTPI · A BARNFORD MKTPI · N CUSSEN MKTPI
 AD HUGHES MKTPI · JJ WILLIAMS MKTPI
 ASSOCIATE PARTNERS · LE RIGG MKTPI · MH BUXTON MKTPI · M NEBY MKTPI · E LOUGHTEY MKTPI · N PRISORE MKTPI · R MBSGBII MKTPI IHCC
 U CROSSER HPIPI · MC HESSE MKTPI · C AKIILL MKTPI · K CROWDER-JAMES MKTPI · C GREEN MKTPI · K GOIT MKTPI
 www.dewplanning.com

Nevertheless, as our December 2005 submission demonstrates (e-mail dated 4 December re-attached for completeness), the anticipated comparison goods turnover of the Tesco store extension from the Catchment Area could increase to £6.69m (£4.02m plus the residual capacity of £2.67m) in 2007, or more realistically now, £9.49m in 2008 before any concern should arise over headroom expenditure. This would equate to a more than doubling of the forecast comparison goods turnover of the proposed Tesco extension (£4.02m) derived from the Catchment Area. In other words, the extension could theoretically generate a comparison goods turnover 66% of the existing store turnover before the levels of quantitative need become marginal.

Therefore, even if we did accept the upper end of the expenditure range for extensions (i.e 50% - see Signet report para 1.11 and NLP para 2.26) there would be sufficient expenditure capacity by 2008 to comfortably accommodate the Tesco proposals, alongside the now permitted Fairacres Retail Park proposals. An increase to 50% of the existing convenience goods trading density for the proposed extension would also still leave a marginal residual capacity in convenience goods by 2008.

There is no reference to our December 2005 sensitivity assessment in Signet's report.

Furthermore, they have not taken into account the potential turnover of the Tesco garden centre which we contend could deliver at least £1.2m in turnover as open A1 retail floorspace.

We therefore maintain that there is a quantitative need for the proposed extension by the 2008 design year in both convenience and comparison goods, which will further increase by 2011. The proposals will not therefore put at risk the spatial strategy for the area/town. The proposals to refurbish the Bury Street Precinct will not materially affect this conclusion.

Scale of Development

In dealing with qualitative need, Signet suggest the existing Tesco store is already 45% bigger than the second largest food store (Sainsbury, Heyford Hill). However, the difference is clearly less than this when comparing the relative net sales areas of the two stores (Tesco 6,365 sqm, Sainsbury 4,738 sqm), which should be the main consideration when passing comment on the respective retail offer.

Additionally, Signet's calculations on scale appear to be incorrect in respect of the size of the Tesco store relative to Abingdon. The report asserts that the Tesco store post extension would equate to around 75% of the combined gross retail floorspace in the town centre, whereas our analysis, based on the net floorspace figures (including the extended Waitrose) contained in the 2004 NLP Retail Capacity Study (Appendix A) suggests the figure is closer to 38%. Furthermore, if the other existing out of centre retail units in Abingdon were included, such as Fairacres Retail Park, the figure would drop to around 20% following Tesco extension. This is a significant difference of opinion in our view and should be clarified before the planning application returns to committee.

APPENDIX 5

Accessibility

The report raises concern over the accessibility of the planning application site. However, your consultants are seemingly unaware of our client's proposals to improve public transport accessibility. The level of contribution is £485,000 of which £150,000 of the contribution will go towards a forthcoming scheme for the construction of a dual carriageway in Marcham Road to connect with the recent widening scheme between the A34 and the store access. The remaining £335,000 is to be directed towards the Drayton Road bus priority proposal, which remains a priority of the County Council.

Impact on Future Bury St. Precinct Proposals

The report appears to be inconclusive in its views about whether the Tesco proposals could impact on any proposals in the future for the redevelopment or refurbishment of the Bury St. Precinct. We have previously tested this scenario in earlier correspondence with the Council. However, the Signet report does overtly not refer to any of this additional work carried out.

In terms of available capacity for potential new retail floorspace in the town centre, we previously provided a sensitivity test at the time of the Fairacres planning application (see above) confirming there to be sufficient comparison goods capacity (after taking account of retail commitments) in 2007 for additional floorspace. Furthermore, we tested a revised design year in view of the time elapsed since the Assessment was first produced (January 2005) which showed that surplus comparison goods capacity would increase by £2.8m leaving a larger residual capacity by 2008. We maintain the view that with the Tesco development there would still be capacity for additional floorspace in the town centre should any proposals come forward.

Notwithstanding our contention that the improvements to the Tesco store as a result of the proposed extension would compete most directly with other supermarkets rather than Abingdon town centre, even NLP's test of the 'worst case' impact assuming 50% of the study area derived comparison expenditure is diverted solely from Abingdon town centre, considered that this impact of 8.6% would be offset by expenditure growth between 2003 and 2007 such that no harm would result. The position at the revised design year of 2008 would be improved further.

It now transpires that an investment package amounting to £1.7 million has been announced by Threadneedle, and planning applications are expected to be submitted within four months for a programme of refurbishment works to the Bury St. Precinct. Clearly, we are pleased to see that long awaited environmental improvements are to be pursued by the owner, and this should be considered

as an indication of confidence in the future of Abingdon town centre in the full knowledge of my client's proposals.

We trust that the above response has provided you with sufficient details to enable the completion of your report in time for the 18th December Planning Committee, and look forward to discussing your recommendation at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Lynn McIver

THE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

ABINGDON-on-THAMES CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Commentary on the report by the Retail Consultants appointed following the Development Control Committee meeting on 8th. May 2006.

Firstly, it is apparent that the new consultants, Signet Planning Ltd were given the same terms of reference as those provided to NLP, but their report is more wide ranging, less reliant on statistical data, which is extrapolated from a theoretical base than the NLP report; it is much more specific in it's conclusions and does not shy away from criticism of the District Council. It is more easily understood as it is written in plain English, is 30% shorter and it picks up on two significant factual points omitted from the NLP report.

Turning to the report from the Signet Planning Ltd. we submit the following comments:

They highlighted that Tesco's application falls short by just 10sq.m. of the threshold which would trigger an automatic referral to the Secretary of State; a coincidence? - we do not think so. If the application is approved the Council's Planning & Building Control Inspectorate will have to keep a very close scrutiny at all stages of the project to prevent infringement; 10sq.m. is a mere 0.4% of the total area of expansion.

There is broad agreement between the two consultants that Tesco's statement that the store is overtrading is not accurate. However if Tesco's are overtrading as they claim, there is no evidence that the existing car park is inadequate. Their planned allocation of space to improve customer comfort is inadequate and their request for 240 additional car parking spaces is grossly overstated.

The case for additional space for convenience and comparison goods is not made; both reports point out a significant omission by Tesco in that they failed to include figures for Fairacres turnover estimated at £47.5m; thus Tesco's own figures do not even get their theoretical base right so any extrapolation is meaningless. Signet Planning point out "that the process of identifying retail capacity is a theoretical exercise which depends on a range of data inputs" Signet Planning also point out that "the outputs from a capacity study should be treated as a general guide only and should not be applied prescriptively."

Even if these theoretical turnover figures are proven in fullness of time, we submit there is no case for expansion of the store, other than for customer

2.

comfort (in itself not proven) until the year 2011. Assuming a 12 month building programme, the extension if approved need not commence until the year 2010.

Signet Planning's report highlights the very poor accessibility by public transport from Abingdon and there is nothing in Tesco's application to improve this facility for the non-car user, in contravention of planning policy PPS6. Accordingly, we would strongly recommend outright refusal of any extension to the car park, alternatively as a condition of approval, Tesco should be invited to contribute an annual sum of money equal to the provision of 2 hours free parking in the Charter and West St. Helen car parks.

The lack of any published plans for the future development of the town centre is mentioned no less than four times in Signet Planning's report and they state that the existence of such a plan would provide solid grounds for refusal of the application. It is astounding that the District Council, being the planning authority have failed to act in a proactive way when Signet Planning are able to provide data of retail requirements (2006) comprising 23 registered interests amounting to almost 10,000 sq.m. They add that there could be other retail and/or leisure operators who have a requirement but have not registered. Who holds this register and are the Council aware? We feel it is essential to depart from a commentary of the consultant's report to enlarge on the previous paragraph.

Approximately 7 or 8 years ago at an informal meeting between Councillors and the Chamber, the Leader at the time, Councillor Paul Bizzel outlined a vision for the future development of the town centre, centred on the Charter:

1. Build a new user friendly multi-storey car park on the site of the old cattle market. (See note 1.)
2. Demolish the existing multi-storey car park
3. Create new facilities to accommodate on several floors the following:

Bus Station
Medical Centre
Library
Day Centre
Modern shopping mall with units large enough for the needs of modern retailing
Limited short term car parking.

With the potential retail requirements previously referred to we do not believe that it would be too difficult to find a developer to undertake/underwrite the capital cost of such a project, given a suitably long lease. We assume that

APPENDIX 6

3.

a long lease should not be a problem as we understand that Sackville TCI Property (GP) Ltd have recently had theirs extended as sitting tenants. Such a project, if in the hands of another developer, could prompt Sackville to carry out a redevelopment of Bury Street, not just a refurbishment, which is what is currently planned and has taken at least 10 years to negotiate. We cannot understand how the Council, who had such a project in mind 7 or 8 years ago and with a latent requirement for 10,000 sq. m., has failed to address this glaringly obvious means of improving the viability and vitality of the town centre when it is part of the Council's policy. At the same time get rid of the ghastly 1960's eyesore of a multi-storey car park.

If the Council is minded to save the town centre from the clutches of Tesco or any other predatory supermarket and implement the foregoing, the town centre could be restored as a premier shopping destination by the year 2011.

If the South Oxfordshire District Council can create a completely new shopping centre for Didcot, surely it is not too late, or beyond the capability of the Vale of White Horse District Council to do the same for Abingdon?

Returning to a commentary of Signet Planning's report it appears that they were not made aware of the status of the Bury Street precinct and it's planned refurbishment, a fact that was in the public domain although details were confidential, but they were aware of Sackville TCI Property (GP) Ltd letter of concern. They state "there would appear to be no plans to either refurbish or redevelop what is a key town centre site." We consider the withholding of this piece of most significant information prejudices the conclusion of their report and makes their final paragraph null and void.

It is not up to us to try and establish how this happened, but the consultants should be made aware of the omission and invited to reconsider their conclusion. In the meantime we believe that a reconvened Development Control Meeting should be held in abeyance until this matter is resolved.

Finally, having read both consultants reports several times and referred to them many times, we are of the opinion that the NLP report states what the client wants to hear, bearing in mind that Tesco are amongst their clients, whereas the Signet Planning report clearly states their opinion, warts & all; it is particularly distressing that a key piece of information was withheld which could have changed their conclusion.

4.

We are even more firmly of the view the application should be refused for the following reasons:

1. Two formal objections from local authorities.
2. One letter of 'concern' from Sackville TCI Property, the leaseholder of Bury Street precinct responsible for it's refurbishment.
3. The applicant is trying to avoid the application being called in.
4. The applicant's case has not been confirmed by 2 Retail Consultants.
5. Planning policies have not been adhered to.
6. There are significant redevelopment opportunities:
Already planned and negotiated in Bury Street.
Redevelopment of the Charter could be achieved by 2011.

Note 1.

Signet Planning reported that the old cattle market was only 20% occupied on their visit to the offices at Abbey House. They were obviously not aware that the charge for 1 to 2 hours is a massive £2.40, whereas in the Charter and West Saint Helen Street car parks the charge is £1.00 for the same period. Council Officers have told us that the Council does not want people parking there for more than 1 hour.

Signed on behalf of Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce.

Jill Carver, President

ABINGDON-on-THAMES CHAMBER of COMMERCE

15 Dec 06

Martin Deans,
Area Planning Officer,
Vale of White Horse District Council,
Abbey House,
ABINGDON.

Dear Martin Deans,
Re: Signet Planning Ltd. Report


Thank you for sending the Chamber of Commerce a copy of the above report and we hope our commentary reached you in time.

In our commentary we neglected to mention the rebuilding of the Co-op in West Saint Helen Street as a significant redevelopment plan which we are sure can be used, together with the published refurbishment plans for Bury Street precinct as a reason for refusing Tesco's planning application for a major extension of their store. This is in addition to the vision that was conveyed to us informally by the previous Leader; we are not aware if this vision has been developed, but with a potential of 15,000 sq. m. gross in retail requirement this year it would appear to be a golden opportunity for a developer.

In the meantime, we would be most grateful if you would include our note about the rebuilding of the Co-op with our commentary delivered to your office on 8th. December 2006.

Yours sincerely,

Signed on behalf of Abingdon Chamber of Commerce,



Jill Carver, President.
14 Stert Street,
Abingdon
OX14 3JP

Planning Policy

Our previous letter to you dated 20 March 2006 outlined the planning policy background to the proposal. At this time, the Local Plan was at the Second Deposit Draft stage; subsequently, the Local Plan has been adopted in July 2006. Policy S7 of this document is particularly relevant which supports proposals which lead to environmental enhancement and major refurbishment of the Bury Street Precinct. The supplementary text promotes the provision of modern well-serviced retail accommodation and paragraph 12.51 states that the precinct "is now dated in design", "remains in need of major refurbishment" and;

"The improvement of the precinct together with proposals in the Abingdon integrated Transport Strategy... are vital elements in any strategy aimed at enhancing the vitality and viability of Abingdon's town centre".

There is therefore strong policy support for protecting Abingdon Town Centre generally and the Bury Street Precinct more specifically.

Quantitative and Qualitative Need for the Proposed Extension

A Retail Impact Assessment was submitted by Development Planning Partnership (DPP) in support of the Tesco planning application. DPP conclude that there is sufficient capacity to support the proposed convenience and comparison goods floorspace (481 sqm and 1,341 sqm net respectively) in their chosen design year of 2007. However, the Signet Planning report, undertaken on behalf of the Council (following the Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners' (NLP) report) identified that:

"the level of convenience goods headroom expenditure is insufficient to support the proposed extension in 2007. However, by 2011 there will be surplus capacity". (paragraph 1.13)

In terms of comparison goods, the NLP report identified that in 2007 there could be an expenditure deficit of £8 million, but that generally there would be sufficient capacity by 2011. Notwithstanding this, the reports conclude that it would be inappropriate to refuse planning permission on the grounds of lack of need only (as need will exist by 2011). However, the Signet Planning report states:

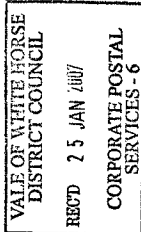
"refusal of planning permission on the grounds of need could be supported if it could be shown that development would put at risk the spatial strategy for the area or town, and would prejudice the implementation of specific town centre development opportunities. This leads on to the Bury Spatial strategy and whether there are any medium to long term plans for its refurbishment and/or redevelopment which could be undermined if planning permission was granted for the Tesco extension". (paragraph 1.15)

The Signet Planning report states that there appears to be no plans to either refurbish or redevelop the key town centre site of Bury Street Precinct, despite there being a good retailer interest for representation in Abingdon Town Centre ("which due to the absence of shop unit accommodation of a suitable size, quality and configuration, cannot be satisfied" (paragraph 1.16)).

As outlined above, the Council and Sackville TCI have entered into an agreement for lease and the leaseholders have undertaken to submit planning applications by March 2007 for extensive refurbishment works to the precinct. Accordingly, plans do exist for significant investment in the precinct and the leaseholders are concerned that the proposed Tesco extension will absorb a large amount of available retail expenditure within the catchment area and, as a consequence, have a potentially negative impact on the vitality and viability of the precinct and the town centre generally.

35 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4BW

t 01732 845 845
f 01732 223 808



Martin Deans
Development Control
Vale of White Horse District Council
Abbey House
Abbey Close
Abingdon
OX14 3JE

BY POST & FAX: 01235 540396

14470/A3/KL/SH

24 January 2007

Dear Mr Deans

PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TESCO STORE, MARCHAM ROAD, ABINGDON **PLANNING APPLICATION ABG/1615/51**

Following your confirmation that the above application will be re-presented to the Development Control Committee in the near future, we are writing to submit an objection to the proposal. This letter is written on behalf of Sackville TCI Property (GP) Ltd who hold a leasehold interest in the Bury Street Precinct and Threadneedle Property Investments, the company responsible for managing the precinct. Barton Willmore is acting to represent the interests of these companies in protecting the vitality and viability of the precinct and Abingdon Town Centre generally.

Sackville TCI has recently signed a new agreement for lease with the Vale of White Horse District Council and has undertaken to submit planning applications in March 2007 for extensive refurbishment works to the Bury Street Precinct. These works include improvements to the external appearance of the precinct (including new signage, lighting, new glazed canopies and new windows for example). A significant amount of investment will take place which will improve the appearance of the precinct and enhance the shopping experience for its customers. Subject to tenant demand, future works may include the provision of larger units in the precinct by the amalgamation of units and the construction of new units. The intention is for the precinct to expand in order to increase its vibrancy, which in turn will help to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre generally.

The managers of Bury Street Precinct are concerned that the proposal to extend the existing Tesco at Marcham Road will affect the viability of these potential future works and impact negatively on both the viability of the precinct itself and the vitality and viability of Abingdon Town Centre as a whole. It is considered that the proposed Tesco extension will absorb a large proportion of the surplus retail expenditure available within the catchment area and this may be at the expense of improvements to the town centre. In addition to this quantitative concern, we consider that qualitative need has not been clearly demonstrated for the proposed extension to the Tesco store.



Therefore, whilst the reports by NLP and Signet Planning accept that a quantitative need for the proposed development is likely to exist by 2011 (but not at the design year as adopted by DPP in their Retail Assessment), we consider that the scale of the extension would leave limited capacity for future extensions within Abingdon up to 2011. We are of the view that that the proposal should be considered within the context of a wider development strategy for Abingdon, which includes the proposed refurbishment of Bury Street Precinct.

In terms of the qualitative arguments for the proposed extension, DPP state that the floorspace is aimed at 'improving the quality of the shopping experience and to maximise convenience for customers' (DPP report page 6). Paragraph 6.28 of the DPP report states that 'a substantial element of the extended area relates to non sales floorspace such as larger checkout areas, wider aisles and additional circulation space' and therefore significant levels of additional new customers or turnover will not be generated. However, as the figures in Table 8 of Appendix 4 of DPP's Retail Assessment show, the proposed net additional convenience goods floorspace would be 481 sqm, and the proposed net additional comparison goods floorspace would be 1,341 sqm. The proposal will therefore more than double the provision of existing comparison goods floorspace, which should ideally be located at town centre sites. Indeed, the Signet Planning report rightly points out that:

"the bulk of the new floor space seeks to increase the sales area, particularly in respect of comparison goods. The qualitative need argument has therefore been presented from an operator's perspective rather than a community perspective" (paragraph 1.20).

We acknowledge that whilst the demonstration of qualitative need is given lower prevalence in Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6), DPP have nonetheless failed to clearly demonstrate qualitative need for the development. Due to the quantitative concerns regarding the extension's absorption of a large proportion of the surplus expenditure, and the fact that the qualitative arguments have not been identified fully and proven by the assessment; in our view the proposal is contrary to planning policies outlined in the Oxfordshire County Structure Plan and the advice in PPS6.

Sequential Site Analysis

We understand that the Council is now satisfied that the applicant has met the requirements of the sequential test outlined in PPS6 in considering further sites (the Old Gaol and Cattle Market) since the application was submitted to the Development Control Committee in May 2006. In our view the Bury Street Precinct site is a sequentially preferable location which could accommodate at least part of the need that has been identified for comparison goods retailing.

Impact

Paragraph 3.22 of PPS6 requires that Local Planning Authorities should consider the impact of a proposed development on the centre or centres having regard to a range of assessment criteria. These include the following:

- "the extent to which the development would put at risk the spatial planning strategy for the area and the strategy for a particular centre or network of centres, or alter its role in the hierarchy of centres;
- the likely effect on future public or private sector investment needed to safeguard the vitality and viability of the centre or centres;
- the likely impact of the proposed development on trade/turnover and on the vitality and viability of existing centres within the catchment area of the proposed development...."

- changes to the range of services provided by centres that could be affected;
- likely impact on the number of vacant properties in the primary shopping area;
- potential changes to the quality, attractiveness, physical condition and character of the centre or centres and to its role in the economic and social life of the community."

In our view, the proposed development does not adequately comply with the criteria set out in this paragraph of PPS6. Specifically, we consider that the proposed extension, by virtue of its absorption of a large proportion of surplus retail capacity, may impact upon investor confidence in the town centre which could result in the prejudicing of future refurbishment/improvement works. This would impact upon the attractiveness and physical condition of the Precinct, and this in turn would have a negative impact upon the vitality and viability of Abingdon Town Centre.

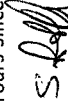
Summary

This letter has raised an objection to the proposed extension at the Tesco store, Marcham Road. Both NLP and Signet Planning Ltd consider, in their respective reports on the DPP Retail Assessment, that there is insufficient retail expenditure to support the proposed extension to the Tesco store at DPP's design year of 2007. Notwithstanding this failure to demonstrate sufficient quantitative need, both sets of consultants consider that the extension would absorb a large proportion of the surplus expenditure available up to 2011, and that the scale of the development would leave limited capacity for future extensions within Abingdon Town Centre. If the Council were to permit the proposed extension to this already large store, in this out-of-centre location, this may be at the expense of future town centre extensions or improvement works.

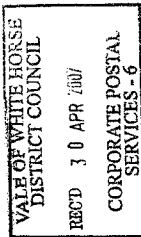
In particular, the extension may impact upon the future investment plans for the Bury Street Precinct which could harm the vitality and viability of Abingdon Town Centre. As detailed above, Sackville TCI has recently signed a new agreement for lease with the Vale of White Horse District Council and has undertaken to submit planning applications in March 2007 for extensive refurbishment works to the Bury Street Precinct. As a key town centre location, the improvement of the Bury Street Precinct is important to sustaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of Abingdon Town Centre and helping to secure its future. We consider that the proposed Tesco extension could prejudice future investor confidence both in the precinct and the town centre as a whole.

We consider therefore that the proposed Tesco extension would be contrary to adopted planning policies which seek to safeguard the health of Abingdon Town Centre and promote the environmental enhancement and major refurbishment of the Bury Street Precinct. We hope that you will take these points into consideration when determining the application.

Yours sincerely



STEPHEN HILL
Director



VALE OF WHITE HORSE
DISTRICT COUNCIL
REC'D 3 0 APR 2007
CORPORATE POSTAL
SERVICES - 6



SIGNET PLANNING
VISION | STRATEGY | ACTION

SM/LH/HG0476
ABG/1615/51/MD

mortons@signetplanning.com
25 April 2007

M Deans Esq
Area Planning Officer (North)
Planning Department
Vale of White Horse District Council
Abbey House
Abingdon OX14 3JE

Dear Martin

EXTENSION TO FOOD STORE, TESCO, MARCHAM ROAD, ABINGDON

Further to our recent telephone conversations and correspondence regarding the above, and to the submission of planning applications by Sackville TCI Property (GP) Limited for refurbishment and improvements to the Bury Street Shopping Precinct in Abingdon town centre, I have the following comments.

Bury Street Shopping Precinct

I have had opportunity to look at the two planning applications submitted for the Bury Street Shopping Precinct. These are:

1. A detailed application for refurbishment, alterations and the amalgamation of two units into one (planning application no. ABG/19956/1); and
2. An outline application for the construction of one retail unit and extension of six others (planning application no. ABG/19956-X).

These applications are to be welcomed. They go some way to showing a commitment from the owners and recognition that the existing precinct is tired and 'unwelcoming'. However, the nature and scale of improvements proposed largely represents a long awaited (and much needed) facelift, rather than a significant enhancement or extension of the retail offer that is currently provided by Bury Street. The Planning Design and Access Statement submitted with the outline planning application provides a summary of the precinct's planning history and confirms that there has been little development activity and improvement within the precinct for some time, so the applications that have now been submitted are long overdue.

Whilst additional floorspace is proposed in the outline planning application, this amounts to no more than 249 sq.m. A new retail unit is to be provided, with the remaining additional floorspace used to enlarge the footprint of a number of shop premises in order to provide a size that is more suited to modern retailers' more exacting requirements. Therefore, the improvements proposed by the applicant are really recognition that the precinct needs to be upgraded in order to be competitive.



Whilst it was built in phases during the 1960's and 1970's to a style, scale and configuration that was appropriate to the market at the time, it is now out of date and requires the improvements that are now proposed. However, these improvements will need to be undertaken irrespective of what happens with regard to the proposed Tesco extension at Marcham Road.

The refurbishment works have been submitted as detailed planning application, although the additional floorspace proposed is contained in an outline application. Bearing in mind the relatively small scale of the floorspace increase, and the policy compatibility of such a proposal, an outline submission seems an unusual way forward, and could be interpreted as being a late consideration which may (or may not) progress to a detailed planning application.

An important point to note in the context of the outstanding Marcham Road store proposal is that the small scale of floorspace increase that is proposed by the Bury Street outline scheme means that the Council will still need to consider other development opportunities to satisfy the level of comparison goods retail headroom that is anticipated to exist by 2011.

Marcham Road Proposal

I would also make the following brief comments in response to DPP's letter of 29 November 2006 which you have passed on to me.

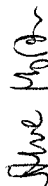
- i. **Retail turnover** – I would stress that it is both reasonable and appropriate for the Council to consider a worse case scenario when assessing the expenditure range for proposed extensions to existing foodstores. Therefore, there are strong grounds to use a 50% increase in trading density for the Marcham Road proposed foodstore extension rather than the 35% presented by DPP.
- ii. **Accessibility** – the existing foodstore has, without question, poor levels of public transport accessibility. The applicant's financial contribution towards road improvements and towards the bus priority measures merely confirm this point.
- iii. **The Bury Street Precinct proposals** – see my comments above.

iv. **Scale** – in terms of scale, the comparison has been made with the town centre and not Abingdon as a whole. The proposed Marcham Road development would result in a foodstore which would equate to 82% of the combined convenience and comparison goods retail floorspace of Abingdon town centre. This is calculated by adding the 12,730 sq.m. comparison goods floorspace (Table 2a of the NLP Study) and the 1,574 sq.m. convenience floorspace (Table 1a of the NLP Study – Other Town Centre and Somerfield only, expressed as a gross figure using 35/65% split). It is important to note that this **does not** include the Waitrose foodstore which although located within the town centre policy area, is to all intents and purposes an edge of centre store being separated from the town centre's nearest retail frontage by residential and B1 offices and a distance of 130m. If the Waitrose store is included in the calculation above, this will provide a total convenience and comparison goods town centre floorspace figure of 20,870 sq.m. gross. (Tables 1a and 3a of the NLP Study), which would mean that the Marcham Road store would equate to 57% of the combined convenience and comparison goods floorspace of Abingdon town centre. I would, therefore, disagree with the figures presented by DPP, but I think the difference may relate to the fact that whilst the convenience goods floorspace figure is expressed as net in Appendix B of the NLP Study, the comparison goods floorspace figure is expressed as gross

(Tables 1a and 2a, respectively). The point I was making was to give an indication of size. However, it is important to acknowledge as I did in my planning statement, that the existing store (which has been trading for many years) is of a large size, and furthermore the town has adapted to its pattern of trade.

I trust that the above comments will be of use to you. If you have any question relating to the above then please give me a ring on the number given below.

Yours sincerely
for Signet Planning



STEVE MORTON
Senior Planner