

# Gloucester Centre Site Building for Life 12 Critique by Residents for comparison with Critique by Planning Specialist

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## Building for Life 12 role

Is there a risk of the Developer changing their mind and eroding their design quality after the stages of scrutiny

- Part of the defence is the need to comply with Buildings for Life 12
- Under NPPF the scheme will be subject to complying with Buildings for Life edition 12
- <http://builtforlifehomes.org/go/building-for-life-12>
- **BfL12 is designed to help local communities become more involved in design conversations and in shaping development proposals.**
- Its 12 questions provide a structure for discussions between local communities, the local planning authority, the developer and other stakeholders, to ensure that the design of new homes and their neighbourhood are as attractive, functional and sustainable as possible.
- **Warning: It is not a design standard but a guide for interaction**
- **'Complying' with it means very little, engaging with its intentions means more**
- **So far the public presentation, resident feedback and joint discussions, show no signs of following the spirit of BfL12**
- This process will be assessed by the 'planning specialist'.
- And he hopes not to decrease the value of the project
- **P.S. (defensive talk on behalf of maintaining developer excessive profits and Government Purse)**

## Q10 Buildings for Life 12

- HE says they will retain leasehold of the site, and the contractor tenders to build and building occupiers will be freeholders of the properties and their plot?
- The Developer needs only to meet 9 of the 12 basic principles of urban design or 'Green' indicators
- Developers achieving 12 are eligible for an outstanding quality mark once it has secured planning permission
- **We think that at the point of planning permission is too soon, if the decanting of bats from their numerous existing long term roosts to an inappropriate shape for the species, inadequately sized for the colony, modern construction probably incompatible materials, poorly chosen and remotely located, over-lit and disturbed by pedestrians and cyclist, dedicated roost, is unsuccessful this should not be a given as a premature credit when the long term success of this (licensed but otherwise illegal action) is not assured success.**

## 1 Connections:

Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing buildings and land uses around the development site?

1a Where should vehicles come in and out of the development?

- **This is a major point of contention, the existing use is non-domestic use, its management instructed its staff to enter and leave via the industrial estate**
- **The proposal is all domestic and all of the vehicles will be prevented from using the industrial estate by removing the vehicular connecting road.**
- **All the new development property's 200+ cars are to be redirected through the surrounding residential streets, which are already overcrowded with on-street parking, narrow road and which are already used as 6 No. rush-hour rat-runs, adding to risks to all including children and elderly alike.**

1b Should there be pedestrian and cycle only routes into and through the development?

If so, where should they go?

- **Original scheme eroded this existing amenity towards the north-west of the site, the new scheme has not resolved this.**
- **The site plan currently shows no connection through to Caldervale.**
- **The dedicated and stand alone footpath/cycleway from the underpass to Caldervale has been turned into a road with footpaths putting cyclists at higher risk and pedestrians at risk of HOHO (half on half off car parking).**
- **The route of this footpath and cycleway on the road is now contorted and no longer visible; without inter-visibility the users may be discouraged from exploring to determine if there is a way through.**
- **If the existing route is maintained, a corner of one plot's back garden is lost to maintain the route.**
- **Secured By Design principles related to landscape and site layout principles need to be considered with the only three small scraps of public open space on the site, these may encourage anti-social behavior, intimidation or worse and discourage or prevent the use of this important public route used by school children and residents on foot and bike.**
- **The proposed changes to the south west route is an improvement by providing a highway with footpath both sides, near to the rerouted cycleway/footpath, and adding a new route to Morley way inside the site boundary running parallel to the existing cycleway/footpath outside of the boundary, improving on the publicly displayed site plan.**
- **It will be important to consider the risk of over-lighting this route near the proposed bat roost putting them at risk of predation; consideration of reclaiming the existing photovoltaic cats-eyes and reusing them or installing new with Photovoltaic and retro-reflective cats-eyes (still work when the**

### rechargeable batteries flatten or die).

1c Where should new streets be placed, could they be used to cross the development site and help create linkages across the scheme and into the existing neighbourhood and surrounding places?

Thinking carefully before blocking or redirecting existing routes, particularly where these are well used.

- **An existing exit from the proposed estate via the industrial estate is to be closed and reconnection prevented by the close proximity of the proposed social housing**
- **The existing Morpeth Close narrow residential street is being proposed as the only option for connections from proposed residential development into and through existing estate streets**
- **Emergency services will no longer get access from the existing link via the industrial estate**
- **There is only one other option for vehicular traffic access and egress from this site is at the existing North west cycle path route through the existing estates.**
- **This option will be most unwelcome by the residents of Caldervale drive as it is too narrow for this purpose, whilst it could be seen as a desirable exit direction.**

1d How should the new development relate to existing development? What should happen at the edges of the development site?

- **The current proposals shows a combination of house back gardens and road verges up against the site boundary and a road dead end up to a brick wall on the boundary**

Does the development provide **No** (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?

- **The development makes no non-residential provisions**
- **Some community facilities are close but all are full; shops will always welcome more business**
- **Proposed new retail store by others at Sugarbeet Office site north-east, if it happens,**
- **Tesco and Coop are in the area along Oundle road to the North and East of the site.**
- **Public Houses are on Oundle road and in the adjacent villages**

## 2 Facilities and Services

2a Are there enough facilities and services in the local area to support the development?

- **No they are already overcrowded or oversubscribed**

If not, what is needed?

- **Schools, Doctors, Dentists, Cafes**

Where new facilities are proposed:

- **None are proposed**

2b Are these facilities what the area needs?

2c Are these new facilities located in the right place? If not, where should they go?

2d Does the layout encourage walking, cycling or using public transport to reach them?

## 3 Public Transport

Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?

- **Footpaths to bus stops, but the bus routes are hidden from roads so there is little visibility to encourage switching.**

3a What can the development do to encourage more people (both existing and new residents) to use public transport more often?

- **Bring bus route through adjacent residential estate again?**

3b Where should new public transport stops be located?

- **No change needed**

**BfL12 We recommend that you avoid**

For example, bus only routes (or bus plugs) can be used to connect a new development to an existing development and create a more viable bus service without creating a 'rat run' for cars.

- **We have 6 rush-hour rat-runs already, we do not need anymore**
- **One rat-run will be closed off by this development**

## 4. Meeting local housing requirements

Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?

4a What types of homes, tenure and price range are needed in the area (for example, starter homes, family homes or homes for those downsizing)?

- **There is a national and local need for more bungalows for elderly, downsizing and disabled**
- **If bungalows were built here existing elderly residents could move to this site and stay local to their friends and families, freeing up more homes for families**
- **Bungalows for the elderly would potentially reduce the overall numbers of cars in the development and reduce the number of journeys through the surrounding estate**
- **1-2 bedroom homes are required apparently, so that is what is proposed for the Social housing**

4b Is there a need for different types of home ownership (such as part buy and part rent) or rented properties to help people on lower incomes?

- **15% of the site is intended for 29% rented social housing (objected to by residents)**
- **No opportunities are being offered to Self-builders**

4c Are the different types and tenures spatially integrated to create a cohesive community?

- **No the original scheme put the social housing on the west side of the site was inadequately planned**
- **The later version keeps all the social housing in one u shaped block of terraces turning its back on the remainder of the site, not blended in**
- **The other 69% of properties are a mixture of sizes and formats: terraced (objected to by residents), semi- and detached.**
- **A mixture of 5 Detached, 30 Semi-detached, 34 terraced**

## 5 Character

Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?

5a How can the development be designed to have a local or distinctive identity?

- **Predominantly flat site**
- **Site is surrounded by tall mature trees give an impression of surrounding countryside**
- **Dense tree and hedge row to site perimeter against views of dual carriageway Parkways and slip roads and its street lighting**
- **Scattered and 67 mature trees throughout the site, plus hedgerows, bushes and shrubs**
- **Predominantly single storey buildings with shallow monopitch roofs**

5b Are there any distinctive characteristics within the area, such as building shapes, styles, colours and materials or the character of streets and spaces that the development should draw inspiration from?

- **The existing site is predominantly single storey, but includes a two storey building despite assurances to residents at the time of construction that all would be single storey**
- **The surrounding estate buildings include: Bungalows, Chalet Bungalows and 2 Storey Homes**
- **Yellow and pale pink, red, brown, coloured bricks and dark grey roof tiles**
- **No Terraces and no blocks of 3 storey buildings.**

## 6 Working with the site and its context

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), trees and plants, wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimate?

- **Trees and Plants: No advantage to be taken of the over 40 years old trees, the whole site is to be clear felled of trees (only 1 of 67 is shown to be retained) and plants and put back tarmac roads and pavements, houses and gardens**
- **Topography: The site is predominantly flat with 3 raised banks and under pass ramps, to the west.**
- **The site of a raised bank with silver birch tree coppice is proposed to become a SuDS settlement pond requiring felling, leveling and excavating**
- **Landscape features:**
- **Trees: 67 mature >40 year old trees, the intention is that the 'trees are unlikely to stay'**
- **Many trees with hedgerows or bushes are dense and continuous or in clusters**
- **Foxes, Muntjac deer, Hedgehogs all frequent the area, but we do not know where there habitats are**
- **We do know that bats occupy parts of the site and occupy numerous existing buildings**
- **A survey has revealed the existing buildings that have been empty for over 20 years, do have bat colonies, the intention is to demolish them and provide compensatory, accommodation and bat roost in a risky location on the site adjacent to an illuminated footpath and cycleway.**
- **All of this is presumptuous and risky for the bat colonies.**
- **All the buildings are intended for demolition rather than refurbishment to make sheltered housing using the existing bungalows**
- **The site runs North-South and it lends itself to easterly, southerly and westerly solar access.**
- **The current layout ignores solar orientation and only some properties benefit from easterly and westerly rear elevations and with potential for summer evening overheating of bedrooms**

6a Are there any views into or from the site that need to be carefully considered?

- **One conical tree forms the focal point and makes a great view north onto the site from the industrial estate link road from the south and can continue to do so.**
- **It should be retained whether there is a link road or not.**
- **There are two more of the same species trees in close proximity**
- **4 Cherry trees demarcate a pedestrian route and vista into the site from the north**
- **Numerous Silver Birch form a coppice on the western side of the site on a raised bank, it is a popular site for picnics and wedding photographs**
- **One Lime tree is known to support a bat population foraging for food at the north end of the site, we suspect there may be more of the same species near the site entrance.**

6b Are there any existing trees, hedgerows or other features, such as streams that need to be carefully designed into the development?

- **67 existing mature trees, could be saved and designed into the scheme adding dispersed public open**

**spaces**

- **Site perimeter trees and hedgerows**
- **“The tree lines that currently provide a barrier between the site and the Parkway and the industrial estate are likely to be retained”**
- **‘Likely’ is not strong enough, we want assurances.**
- **The hedge rows along the A1260 Parkway will be completely removed in the scheme shown in the Public exhibition.**
- **The site plan included in the Outline Planning Application avoids the problem outlined above.**
- **However the trees and shrubs may be deemed to be incompatible with SuDS settlement ponds and may still be removed.**
- **The suggested, in words only, Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme (SuDS) has two proposed settlement pond where a raised back and much loved trees exist, there are no evident swales or other components to the SuDS show in the plans.**

6c Should the development keep any existing building(s) on the site?

- **Yes many of the special supported housing could be saved refurbished and reused**
- **All the buildings containing bat colonies should be retained and refurbished**

If so, how could they be used?

- **Bungalows or Sheltered housing for the elderly from the exiting local community**

## 7. Creating well defined streets and spaces

Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?

- **No, the scheme proposed in the public exhibition was just a number crunching exercise to see how many plots can be crammed in without any enhancement, place making or safe neighbourhood children play areas, or retaining existing trees**
- **The revised scheme submitted for outline planning application makes little difference, but removes one block of public open space fills it with social housing and car parking and the remaining open space is dedicated to SuDS settlement ponds.**
- **The Social Housing in the second scheme creates a 3 sided quadrangle enclosing potentially shared communal space potentially with a westerly orientation, it could be the best place in the development bathed in summer evening sun.**
- **However it appears to be used entirely for car parking which will become a noisy courtyard with much disruptive activity at night time**
- **The car parking could have been relocated around the perimeter of the block, leaving the smaller courtyard for social housing health and wellbeing and a focus for communal activity**

7a Are buildings and landscaping schemes used to create enclosed streets and spaces?

- **Plots with obligation-minimum car-parking provision, but for larger older families insufficient car parking spaces will force considerable on street parking**
- **Half on half off (HOHO) parking on pavements is inevitable eroding the provision of footpaths for pedestrians, children on bikes, prams and wheelchairs**
- **Endless roads with on-street parking does not conger up a ‘sense of place’**

7b Do buildings turn corners well?

- **No, many corners are planned as car parking drives at the side of houses in terraces, up to corners**
- **Cars on those drives will block the views at the corners, potentially making them more dangerous**

7c Do all fronts of buildings, including front doors and habitable rooms, face the street?

- **A question for Reserved Matters or Full Application rather than Outline Application?**

## 8. Easy to find your way around

Is the development designed to make it easy to find your way around?

8a Will the development be easy to find your way around?

- **The original scheme had 3 loop roads, 9 tee junctions, 3 dead end at site boundaries, 1 dead end facing open space, making it difficult to find your way around**
- **The revised scheme has 3 loop roads, 6 tee junctions, 1 dead end at site boundary is a small improvement.**
- **One single road the full length of the site could be something of a drag strip with speeding cars between on-street or HOHO parking**

If not, what could be done to make it easier to find your way around?

- **Retaining matures trees will provide landmarks to navigate by?**

8b Are there any obvious landmarks?

- **The undeveloped side of the site with 2 settlement ponds, footpath and cycleway, distinguish themselves from the car lined street on the other**
- **1 mature tree retained in a back garden will not help navigate round the site**
- **Mature trees would be preferred to a 3 storey bulky block of flats may make it easy to find your way**

around.

8c Are the routes between places clear and direct?

- **In the second scheme; one long straight road from one end of the site to the other**
- **Routes linking these two sides will be simple**
- **Three lengths of road joined by chicanes should not be too difficult to navigate**

## 9. Streets for all

Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?

- **The 3 loop roads potentially create a loop road race track**
- **Loop roads and many off set junctions prevent highest speeds, but may encourage accelerating and breaking between junctions**
- **Tee junctions are generally considered safer than cross roads which this scheme avoids.**
- **6 Tee junctions will mean much breaking and accelerating around the streets**

9a Are streets pedestrian friendly and are they designed to encourage cars to drive slower and more carefully?

- **Nothing about the original scheme or the submitted scheme suggests this is a consideration**
- **These are car and other vehicle friendly so that does not make them pedestrian or cycling friendly**
- **Demarcation of vehicle and pedestrian lines is part of the national requirements standards**
- **The public exhibition described a scheme free from safety-focused raised crossing tables**
- **Its is not clear if any are included in the submitted scheme**
- **The use of dropped curbs makes crossings easier with prams, wheelchairs and bikes**

9b Are streets designed in a way that they can be used as social spaces, such as places for children to play safely or for neighbours to converse?

- **In the submitted scheme one long straight road from one end of the site to the other may encourage speeding**
- **Inevitable on-street parking will make the streets unsuitable for street play**
- **There is no public open space left for play and socialising, just slitters of left over strips, this site is overdeveloped**
- **Front garden to footpath conversations can occur anyway.**
- **The social housing block inner courtyard could have been a good place for socializing but it will be completely covered in 60 car parking spaces, making no room for children's play, health and wellbeing or socializing.**

## 10. Car parking

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?

10a Is there enough parking for residents and visitors?

- **2 parking spaces for homes is standard requirement, on-street parking will be inevitable with larger older families**
- **No dedicated space for visitors parking anywhere, other than on-street parking in east-west link roads**
- **The social housing layout is void of any details indicating numbers of car parking paces, motor bike or cycle parking, there is insufficient room for 30 let alone 60 car parking spaces.**
- **The social housing is a insufficiently developed part of the proposals and is probably inadequate to put 30% of the housing into 15% of the site**

10b Is parking positioned close to people's homes?

- **2 frontage car parking spaces, could be permeable pavement for SuDS**
- **2 side drives at road junctions making corner visibility bad, could be permeable for SuDS**
- **Additional spaces could be in the east west link roads on-street parking or HoHo parking (Half on Half off pavements)**
- **Insufficient car parking for Social Housing may push parking further away, possibly into surrounding streets**

10c Are any parking courtyards small in size (generally no more than five properties should use a parking courtyard) and are they well overlooked by neighbouring properties?

- **Social Housing car parking need is far greater than is provided for and will push some parking on street and remote from the block and possible off site into neighbouring roads.**
- **30 social housing units will share the car parking, all will be overlooked and have the potential to disturb people's sleep evening and morning.**

10d Are garages well positioned so that they do not dominate the street scene?

- **No garages are indicated all provision is frontages, side drives, and courtyard**
- **A question for Reserved Matters or Full Application rather than Outline Application?**

## 11. Public & private spaces

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to have appropriate access and be able to be well managed and safe in use?

11a What types of open space should be provided within this development?

- All public open space on the site is now occupied by buildings or SuDS settlement ponds suggesting overdevelopment
- Make the settlement ponds safe for children's play with places for parents to observe
- Cycle routes and footpaths ran along grass verges, raised banks and coppices, these will now be turned into SuDS settlement ponds
- Retain the existing coppice on the mound, it is a popular spot for local residents
- Design the building layout to fit between the trees and create public open space around them
- Retain all the mature trees and make something of them, make them places in their own right
- Make the most of the shade and cooling provided by mature trees and hedgerows as we progress towards Climate Emergency conditions
- SuDS settlement Pond might provide foraging for bats and other wildlife if the right plants and trees are provided in their vicinity.
- Retaining the existing mature trees (lime trees in particular) may well provide the necessary foraging sources for bats and birds

11b Is there a need for play facilities for children and teenagers?

- Yes but nothing indicated so far and no open space is left for them
- Consider exercise equipment for children and oldies along the footpath/cycleways if there is any room left

If so, is this the right place or should the developer contribute towards an existing facility in the area that could be made better?

- There is no room on this overdeveloped site, under-develop this site and make space of health and wellbeing, or spread it further afield

11c How will they be looked after?

- SuDS should need little maintenance
- Settlement ponds will need some maintenance or margin planting
- PCC landscape maintenance department, unless they want to pay the community to do the job for them

## 12. External storage and amenity space

Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling, as well as vehicles and cycles?

- A question for Reserved Matters or Full Application rather than Outline Application?
- Probably more important an issue for Social Housing layout
- The social housing layout is void of any details indicating numbers of segregation bins for recycling, spaces for cars, motor bike or cycle parking, there is insufficient room for 30 let alone 60 car parking spaces.
- The social housing is a insufficiently developed part of the proposals and is probably inadequate to put 30% of the housing into 15% of the site

12a Is storage for bins and recycling items fully integrated, so that these items are less likely to be left on the street?

- The social housing is a insufficiently developed part of the proposals and is probably inadequate to put 30% of the segregation bins into 15% of the site
- To contain segregation bins for recycling and encourage reuse by others

12b Is access to cycle and other vehicle storage convenient and secure?

- The social housing is a insufficiently developed part of the proposals and is probably inadequate for convenient and secure storage for cycle and other vehicles
- But with car parking on front garden/drive there may not be enough provision for bike storage

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