

From: Paul Kemp [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 July 2017 10:52
To: Planning Policy Internet
Subject: SPD, THE BUS STATION & THE TOWN CENTRE

As town centre retailers of some 10 years standing, we avidly read and absorb everything that appears regarding any initiatives to revitalise our ailing town.

It would be quite wrong of us to write and comment on areas where we have no understanding of the particular problems or future requirements, and quite rightly we won't be so presumptuous as to offer any solutions to those.

So with strict regard to the bus station and town centre area only, where we have both in depth experience and vested interests, we believe we deserve to be given a fair hearing, so here goes:

Accepting Realities

The high street is currently experiencing rock bottom and is in the depths of an unprecedented downturn in footfall, turnover is now 50% lower on weekdays and 20% down at weekends compared to 2012.

Do we need to spend yet more tax payer's money on a survey to verify this? Absolutely not, just take a photo every day for a week at say noon from the town gateway looking west, you won't need both hands to count the shoppers right up to the town hall, we've done it often lately.

Gosport is not alone of course, out of town retail parks, internet shopping, we all know the stories only too well, but we do have the two unique circumstances that other towns have not had to try and deal with:

1. Gun Wharf, 90 shops, 30 eating places, bars, clubs, cinema and a bowling alley, all just a very pleasant £3 boat ride away.
2. On July 22nd 2012 the rapid transit bus service opened from Holbrook to Fareham, absolutely brilliant concept, great service, we can't fault it, except to say:

It Went The Wrong Way First!

It sounded the final death knell for Gosport as a viable shopping venue, it didn't take very long to catch on at all, and people have deserted Gosport in their droves ever since, a big indoor shopping centre with brand names, cafes and lots of variety, and who can blame them?

The knock on effects have been the complete demise of the Tuesday market, it would now fit in the town hall lobby, no punters = no traders, when we opened in 2007 you just couldn't move on the high street on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and now? Now people just **cycle** through it without difficulty, please note the word **cycle** Councillor!

Why the final death knell? Recovery could only be a possibility if a like for like or better offering was on the cards to compete against either of our neighbours, quite simply put, it is not, very far from it.

The Proposed Solution

Develop the bus station and tidy up the shops at the gateway:

“It could include apartments, bars, restaurants, shops, offices and a new transport interchange”

And of course lest we forget - the much heralded “Iconic” building.

We are now being given a chance to have our say on the proposals by the 19th September 2017.

Our Comments and Responses

Forgive us but what proposals? A very vague statement about what just **one** vision of just **one** development idea **might** offer does not constitute “proposals”.

It seems to us that this is unashamedly turning into a clear case of you can have any colour you like as long as it's black - **there is no choice**, and we know what's best for you - **our mind is made up**.

The site itself is small, just 2.2 acres, not very much bigger than 4 pretty large back gardens, and by the time enough space has been allocated for just a couple of buses to enter, pass and exit it doesn't leave a lot of room over for everything else does it?

So what's in it for Developers?

Firstly we need to assume that the following conditions will prevail:

1. That there is not much hope of the funding being found to complete the rapid bus transit right into the quayside and that parking will remain non-existent, almost all of the short stay is already taken up into the new site area we believe.
2. That the remaining town centre retail will not improve and dramatically increase its footfall.
3. That Fareham shopping centre remains unlikely to suffer a mini quake.
4. That Gun Wharf won't be closed as a flood risk.

Now let's also assume that with great ingenuity as many as a dozen retail units of mixed small and medium size can somehow be shoe horned in alongside the restaurants, cafes and bars:

1. The rent in the small units will be far too high for any independents to contemplate.
2. Medium size units will still be too small to attract the “brand names”, who need lots of other big names around them to bring in variety and draw the footfall that they need for vital high turnover numbers.
3. Offices, who wants them? Companies are shifting out of high rent town offices in droves, people now work from home more and more on the net, company meetings take place in hotel conference suites.
4. That leaves us with the apartments, and there at last we have it, what this is really all about!

The future risk of a few more empty shops and offices will be of no real consequence to them, they are not kind benefactors, those apartments at a million plus each are the real hidden treasure.

Just how many will be required for a developer to buy in to the project is a burning question.

For Iconic Building – Please Read:

ICONIC BLOCK OF LUXURY APARTMENTS

Now Let's Move the Discussion Forward

Accepting the harsh reality that Gosport as a viable shopping venue isn't going to make it out of intensive care is pretty painful to grasp, but it is mandatory, **it just ain't ever coming back!**

We now need a new end game so that all the pieces of a jigsaw can come together and dovetail, it's no good whatsoever just redeveloping the bus station in isolation and hoping upon hope that all the underlying problems will somehow miraculously disappear.

Gosport Marina Village Maybe?

1. Urgently keep trying everything possible again and again to seek the funding to complete the rapid bus transit right through to the ferry, it must be as slick and quick as it is northbound to Fareham, **whatever** happens with the bus station site it will still need the very best transport links possible if it's to stand any chance of a viable future.
2. Form partnerships with quality local builders and mutually acquire every poor quality town centre unit as it vacates, convert or rebuild low cost town dwellings that blend in with the surrounding remaining retail in their place, until a balance with the current demand is met.
3. Allow and actively encourage the marinas to grow and encroach as close as is possible to the ferry, creating a vast spectacular marina, now that is a very tangible source of increased footfall and future employment prospects.
4. Plant gardens, trees, create low walled seating areas and archways at the town's western end to break it up, centre the markets on the gateway at the east end, at what will remain the hub.

The above can be well underway while the most important step of all is being undertaken:

Pull Down the Bus Station

Create a family themed parkland that both enhances & compliments the Falkland Gardens.

1. Gravel paths separating grassed areas with family picnic trestles.
2. Low height willow trees and some bushes to preserve the view, lit up at night.
3. An extensive and fully equipped children's play area, paddling pool?
4. An old fashioned roundabout?
5. Water features, rock pools, lily ponds.
6. Viewing platforms, castellated tops? One at the Falkland garden end and one at the parkland end, the harbour view should be left almost unbroken over the complete **new** length.
7. A centre piece performance area for open air music nights in the evenings.
8. An attractive refreshment and ice cream "shack" log cabin style?
9. Provide discreetly tucked away **quality** toilet facilities.

The list can grow and grow with some imagination, we are just trying to encourage a spark of creativity amidst all the tired old dogma, and last but not least the crowning glory:

Gosport's Most Priceless Hidden Treasure

A STUNNING NEW VIEW OVER THE ENTIRE HARBOUR FROM THE TOWN GATEWAY

Some Observations in Closing

As café owners we are sick and tired of hearing the “let's develop a café culture” slogan, has it never dawned on town planners that cafes only exist to provide a service, no shops = no cafes, no attractions = no cafes, would you spend £3 on a bus ride just to get a cup of coffee?

And now for that much fabled “let's start a night time economy” thing, the vast majority of people don't go out on week nights, it's a Friday-Saturday thing, and they demand that multiple and varied choices for eating and drinking are readily available, just a few yards stroll apart, that one's always packed out let's try..... never been in here let's give this one a go.

Now imagine a **twice the size** but very much smarter version of the Precinct with apartments on top and there you have it! Take that on the chin Fareham and Gun Wharf you both had it coming!

So the most pressing question that you need to ask yourself is what can possibly be achieved with this 2.2 acre site?

Is it going to be enough to draw shoppers from Fareham and night time revellers from Gun Wharf in sufficient numbers to even support itself? Time to think again perhaps?

Whether it turns out to be a family themed parkland or a far better concept yet to be tabled is irrelevant, that is just one possible alternate to sleep walking into past mistakes.

This must not continue on as purely “a vanity project” it is far too important.

For some of our inspiration we looked no further than Lee, with no shopping centre, no iconic building and no marina, in the summer it is packed out, in the winter it does more than okay, far fewer shops than Gosport but rarely an empty one, it's in a balance with its current demand.

We could share an incredible and priceless asset with Lee, a stunning view, but we are seriously considering pulling down one obstruction only to replace it with, albeit less of an eyesore, another.

With a panoramic view across the harbour, family themed parkland and all the other assets ready in place, we feel this counter proposal is at least worthy of further discussion and consideration.

Nothing we have put forward is a complete or perfect solution, it is a work in progress, a concept, let's give Gosport its own identity and culture, where for once it can be a bride and not a bridesmaid.

Thanks for your time, please just kindly acknowledge that you have at least read this through, if however you wish to debate, discuss or maybe just criticise the content, please don't hesitate to make contact with either of us:

Paul & Tracy Kemp – Harvey's Kitchen 6 South Street

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

10 - 2nd submission - consultation
arrangements

From: Paul Kemp [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 September 2017 10:41
To: Planning Policy Internet
Cc: [steve.g.hammond](mailto:steve.g.hammond@...) [REDACTED]
Subject: SPD CONSULTATION

PAUL KEMP
[REDACTED]

Dear Sir/madam,

As both a concerned resident and town centre retailer I feel compelled to write to you and respectfully request an extension of 28 days minimum to the SPD consultancy process due to end 19th September 2017.

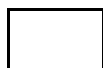
To support my request I can inform you that straw polls taken regularly in our fairly busy café, reveal that less than 1 in 15 Gosport residents are even aware that the process is underway let alone of the possible implications.

Although not a scientific study, if these figures were to be extrapolated for the population of Gosport, it would indicate that fewer than 11,000 people from an estimated adult population of 72,000 are aware of it.

I am sure that you will share my concern at the figures above, it indicates that the publicity vehicles chosen were woefully inadequate to say the least.

The effects that some of the proposals might have on peoples lives and livelihoods is far too important to have adopted the minimum exposures required by law, I believe that the planning department and the council have a duty to undertake all they are possibly able to do when dealing with such an important issue.

Sincerely
Paul Kemp



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