

Draft Canterbury District local plan 2040

Comments of the St Peter's Residents Association.

Preamble

The St Peters Residents Association incorporates the former Blackfriars and Northgate Associations and was established in the early 1980s with the aim of improving the local environment, by taking an interest in all matters affecting the amenity of the area, in particular, commenting on planning applications, licensing matters and working with the local Neighbourhood Watch Committee.

The Association organises social events such as barbecues, quizzes, Christmas parties and arranges occasional lectures on subjects of local interest.

The Association publishes a bi-monthly newsletter distributed to all residents.

The membership is currently 125 households.

The Association covers the area from St Peters Street to Northgate, including the Blackfriars and St Radigunds areas, extending from Black Griffin Lane and St Peter's Grove to the south-west, to Northgate and Broad Street to the north-east.

Introduction

The St Peters Residents Association has attempted to assimilate and form its views on the **Canterbury District Local plan 2040** document which is currently out for public consultation and therefore wishes to submit the following statement as its comment on the Local Plan 2040 at this, the consultation stage.

General comments

There has been much controversy over the extent of proposed development for new housing sites, these built over countryside to the **south-west of the city** on land beyond Thanington (over and above the large areas already allocated there), which would extend out beyond the bypass as far as Hollow Lane; at **Merton Park**, which would cover all of the farmland between Wincheap and the Chaucer Hospital/ Simon Langton Boys School; at *Milton Manor*, built on the valley sides above the roundabout there and, most controversially, on a large area of farmland at **Blean**, beyond the University, between the Whitstable road and Tyler Hill.

The St Peters Association considers that these vast areas of land are only being allocated for development as a result of the council accepting unrealistically high targets for housing growth in the area, far greater than is required by the government. For this reason, the Association wishes to express its concern at the magnitude of the general housing targets expressed in the plan.

However, the Association appreciates that this massive urban growth will be distant from the city centre and considers that these projected new development areas are unlikely to impact directly on our area, but the Association is, however extremely concerned that the spin-offs from this growth – a massive increase in the population of the city and an uncontrolled growth in vehicle traffic will inevitably affect the character of our area at the centre of the city in a detrimental fashion.

Policy C4 -Canterbury City Centre Regeneration Opportunity Areas

Closer to our local area, a number of sites are proposed for development in the immediate locality (together with others around the city) and the SPRA wishes to comment on these so-called "regeneration opportunities" in more detail. There are four sites listed in **policy C4** of the plan, these being:

- The former Northgate garage
- Northgate car park.

- Pound Lane car Park
- North Lane car park.

In general terms, the Association is concerned that, together, these sites represent the loss of a significant amount of local car parking, with only the Millers Field and St Radigund car parks remaining unaffected.

At **Northgate Car Park**, the Association supports the principle of some development here which would help reinstate the urban frontage to Northgate, which was so brutally cleared away in the 1960s, but considers it *essential* that some car parking is allowed to remain at the rear, to enable the health centre and local residents to park their cars.

Northgate Garage was never a parking area, and the site has been left derelict and undeveloped after the failure of the previous development proposals for the site. Here, the Association welcomes the development of this area but considers it essential that the development should be designed so as to match, and not exceed the height of its surroundings and with a more sympathetic architectural style than the previous, rather aggressively designed modern flats development scheme which never happened.

North Lane Car Park, North Lane was, until the war, an extremely narrow street, built up on both sides, but the houses were cleared away and the street widened in the 1950s. Here, the Association considers that the site should *not* be redeveloped with buildings, but should be left open, with an element of local car parking allowed to remain, to enable local businesses, such as The Pound and Café de Soliel to continue to function. However, we consider it important that more of the land here should be given over to riverside landscaping – a continuation of the attractive character of the Westgate Gardens so as to enhance the setting of the riverside and the Westgate towers.

Pound Lane Car Park The Association is most concerned over the future of the Pound Lane Car Park. Here the car park is surrounded on all sides by houses, and we are concerned that any sort of intensive development of the area would impact harshly on the surrounding residents. The car park here is an essential parking area for local residents and so the Association's view is that a significant area of parking here should be allowed to remain here – for use by both the local residents and also to ensure the continued success of the Westgate Hall. The Association, however, considers that the parking area should be softened by tree planting and other landscaping so as to improve the appearance of the area and restore historic references back to the ornamental gardens that used to extend across the whole of this area.

In particular we feel it is important that the smaller area at the northern end of the car park enclosed by high walls and with the historically important Sidney Cooper Gates should be retained as a separate space and given over as an amenity area for the benefit of the immediate local residents

Policy C5 – Canterbury Urban area The Association has also studied policy C5 – Canterbury Urban Area, parts of which are, of course, directly applicable to the area covered by the St Peters Residents Association.

In general terms, the Association is supportive of this policy, and in particular item 7, which seeks to protect the network of Eden spaces and green infrastructure of the city.

The St Peters Residents Association therefore request that these comments on these particular aspects of the local plan should be registered as its comments on the Canterbury District Local Plan 2040 - consultation stage.