

EXAMINATION OF THE CORNWALL SITE ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

POSITION STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF SAINSBURY'S SUPERMARKETS LTD (SSL)

REPRESENTOR ID: 76B

MATTER 6 – FALMOUTH AND PENRYN SPATIAL STRATEGY AND ALLOCATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Representations were submitted on behalf of Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd (SSL) to the Cornwall Site allocations DPD in August 2017. The representations focused on the proposed allocation of site ref: 'FP-H4 Falmouth Road'. Representations were also made relating to supporting text in the following paragraphs of the DPD 7.16, 7.31, 7.39, and 7.46-7.51. Our client wishes to rely upon the content of their original representations. This statement provides an update on progress relating to the proposed site allocation.

PROPOSED ALLOCATION

The draft DPD proposes the allocation of the site (FP-H4) for residential development for approximately 210 dwellings (apartments and town houses) and limited A1/A3/A4 uses which are of an appropriate scale for the new neighbourhood.

BASIS OF PREVIOUS REPRESENTATIONS

Objection was raised to the proposed residential allocation identifying that given the context of the surrounding area, planning history, site characteristics and market demand, the site was better suited to mixed use development including provision of student accommodation. A key factor in the objection was that marketing of the site in 2017 resulted in no interest from housebuilders for residential development in line with the aspirations of the DPD. Interest expressed was generally for mixed use development with the majority including the provision of student accommodation as part of the mix. In addition, Falmouth University identified their general support for the provision of student accommodation on the site given its accessible location in meeting the demand from second and third year students who desire to live off campus.

SITE UPDATE

Curlew Alternative Asset Management (Curlew) remain SSL's chosen development partner. Curlew and its management team has a track record in bringing forward mixed use schemes, including commercial, student and residential accommodation and has been actively exploring options for the site since last summer. In seeking to progress proposals and engage with both the Local Planning Authority and key stakeholders in advance of submitting a formal pre-application to Cornwall Council, Curlew has undertaken and presented site analysis and development options to:

- Cornwall Design Review Panel;
- Falmouth Town Council; and,
- Penryn Town Council.

The options prepared and presented were for mixed use development of the site including residential development, student accommodation, retail/commercial uses and a hotel. The options included the following approximate quantum of development and are illustratively shown on the following pages:

- Residential (90-101 apartments – assumed two bed units)
- Student accommodation (up to 500 beds)
- Hotel (80-110 beds)
- Retail floorspace (2,000 – 2,500 sqm)



SITE PLAN @ 1:2000

PONSHARDEN SITE PROPOSED SITE PLAN OPTION 1



SITE PLAN @ 1:2000

PONSHARDEN SITE
PROPOSED SITE PLAN OPTION 2

Cornwall Design Review Panel

Presenting to the Cornwall Design Review Panel (CDRP) at an early stage and in advance of submitting a formal pre-application submission to Cornwall Council was an important step in testing the capacity and design aspirations for the site. Feedback from the CDRP was received in early January 2018 and is being used to inform the iterative design process for pre-application submission that is to be made by Curlew to Cornwall Council. The feedback from the CDRP was generally positive and early engagement was welcomed regarding what was acknowledged to be an important site. Further analysis of the site and, in particular, the ability to physically connect with the surrounding area given the topography of the site was recommended by the CDRP and is being undertaken by Curlew. This site constraint is highlighted in the August 2017 representations and the potential difficulties in connecting to other areas as sought be draft Policy FP-H4.

In terms of land uses proposed no in principle objection was raised to the mix of student accommodation, residential, retail and hotel uses. The CDRP advised of the need to provide an inspirational place in this important gateway location and look to provide an environment that would attract a diverse set of residents and a wide demography. Intensive development of the site was encouraged but with care to avoid overdevelopment. There was an acknowledgement from the CDRP that the topography of the former quarry site was challenging, particularly in terms of seeking to integrate with the adjacent existing and emerging neighbourhoods.

Falmouth and Penryn Town Councils

Both Town Councils were pleased to be presented with the concepts for the site at an early stage of the process. They were keen to see the previously developed site redeveloped and wished to be kept informed and involved with the emerging proposals. There was an acknowledgement that a mixed use development would make a good use of the site.

Pre-application process

Following feedback from the CDRP and Town Councils the analysis of the site has continued and further options are being considered by Curlew. The intent is to submit a formal pre-application submission to Cornwall Council in the next few weeks. The proposal will be for a mixed use development of the site including residential, student accommodation and commercial uses.

Student Numbers

The representations submitted in August identified that the University of Falmouth supported the delivery of student accommodation on this site; this remains the case. In terms of student numbers and subsequent requirement for student beds, we understand that Falmouth University will be attending the Examination to present evidence on this matter, updating the position to that set out in our August 2017 representations. The position remains that provision of 2,000-2,500 student bed spaces is required to fulfil the Universities obligations to provide campus bed spaces to all first year students. Provision of in excess of 2,000 bed spaces, through delivery off-site, on appropriate sites such as FP-H4, will reduce the demand for Houses in Multiple Occupation ((HMO's) in both Falmouth and Penryn. This reduced pressure on HMO's will assist in the supply of housing in the towns to the benefit of the wider community.

SUMMARY

Our client wishes to reiterate their previously made representations that the proposed allocation of site FP-H4 at Ponsharden for a solus residential development is misplaced. There is no market demand for a pure residential development of the site, proven by our clients recent marketing of the site. As such, there is no realistic prospect of delivery of residential only development on the site in the quantum's sought by the DPD. That said, the mixed use scheme being progressed by our client's development partner will still make an important contribution to the delivery of housing, as part of a mixed use scheme.

Moreover, a mixed use development of the site, including provision of student accommodation, as supported by Falmouth University, better reflects the context of the site, the specific site characteristics and market demand. The provision of student accommodation at Ponsharden was previously acknowledged by Cornwall Council to be an appropriate use of the site in earlier versions of the DPD. Mixed use development of the site can provide a meaningful level of residential development. This coupled with the reduced pressure for HMO's, resulting from the student accommodation, which will make a net contribution towards meeting the housing land supply for the area.