

LEE MANOR SOCIETY



Revised plans for Leegate – July 2017: Lee Manor Society’s initial response to the proposals

Lee Manor Society broadly welcomes the revised proposals which incorporate many of the ideas that the Society and residents have been urging for many years. We note that St. Modwen has taken active steps to address the key issues arising from the previous scheme which had a large supermarket as the anchor tenant.

The Society makes the following suggestions:

Housing

The Society welcomes the use of the space freed up by the smaller food store to increase the number of homes on the site. The opportunity should be taken to increase the percentage of homes allocated to affordable housing. Consideration also needs to be given to the impact this will have on local services including schools and doctors’ surgeries,

Car parking

We recommend that a larger proportion of the resident and customer parking spaces should be located underground so that the space released can be incorporated into the public realm.

Shadowing from the tall residential blocks.

We urge St Modwen to demonstrate through modelling that the passageways and square (low areas to the centre and east of the development) are not in permanent shadow.

Community centre

We welcome the allocation of space to a community centre but are concerned that it is located at first-floor level. We think it is vital that there is lift access to the centre. Even then there remains the real possibility that infirm and wheelchair-dependent visitors could be left stranded in the premises should lift(s) fail – an all too frequent happening in public areas. If more ground level space were freed up – see our comments on car parking – the community centre could be sited on the ground floor.

Permeability

We welcome the much-improved permeability of the site with the additional north/south passageway but we are concerned that the design could encourage criminal behavior and we want to see active, proven methods deployed to ensure defensible space.

We are concerned that the outward-facing boundary alongside Leyland Road appears to be impenetrable along its entire length. Design at ground floor level should create an active and welcoming street frontage. Another possibility is the creation of a way to access the site around about the middle of this elevation. We also suggest work be taken to widen and landscape the pavement along the west side of Leyland Road to soften the monolithic elevations as viewed from Leybridge Court. This could be achieved by removing a small number of parking spaces on the west side of Leyland Road. The opportunity should be taken to create a pedestrian-friendly environment in Leyland Road to form a strong visual and walking link with Edith Nesbit Gardens, a currently underused space

Public realm

We welcome the much larger public square penetrating deep into the scheme and the thinking behind the intention to encourage a 'café culture' to the north of the space. We would not want to see excessive street furniture clutter in the square but welcome the proposal for the planting of trees.

Retail space

Whilst appreciate that occupation of a retail unit is a commercial decision we would hope to encourage provision of a non-chain café in this space. Similarly, private cinemas are a growing niche business and perhaps such an organisation could be encouraged to take up some of the retail space?

Youth provision

We urge St Modwen to work with local youth leaders to see if any positive contribution to youth activities can be contained within the scheme.

Lee Manor Society

Dr R White – Chairman

Charles Batchelor – Immediate Past Chairman

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