

IT'S OUR CITY TURN CENTROS DOWN!

**THE AMENDED CENTROS PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR
THE CANAL CORRIDOR NORTH SITE HAVE NOW BEEN
SUBMITTED.**

**IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT AS MANY PEOPLE AS
POSSIBLE OBJECT IN WRITING TO THESE APPLICATIONS IN
ORDER TO STOP THIS DEVELOPMENT.**

STOPPING THIS DEVELOPMENT DEPENDS ON YOU!

HOW TO OBJECT:

You have 2 options :

1. You can object to a specific planning application quoting the application reference number and giving details of your objections - (examples are given in this leaflet)
2. You can object to ALL of the planning applications as a group (in detail or in general) in which case you must make this clear and quote all the application reference numbers. Most of the scheme is covered by reference 08/00866/OUT but be aware that some elements are not. General reasons can include, increase in traffic and pollution, lack of consultation, threat to the existing city centre, and demolition of historic buildings in a conservation area. This leaflet gives more details.

Details of all the planning applications can be found on our website www.itsourcity.org.uk or in the 'planning section' or on the City Council's website at www.lancaster.gov.uk.

To object:

- Write to Planning Services PO Box 4 Town Hall, Lancaster , LA1 1QR
OR
- Email: dcconsultation@lancaster.gov.uk

Please make sure you keep a copy of your objection with the date that it was submitted.

**PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU SUBMIT YOUR OBJECTIONS BY
7th AUGUST 2008 AS THIS IS THE END OF THE STATUTORY
CONSULTATION PERIOD FOR THESE PLANNING APPLICATIONS.**

The Planning Committee is due to consider this in the autumn. If you wish to speak at the Planning Committee you **MUST** register with Democratic Services on 01524 582903.

Here are some suggested grounds on which you might object to the Centros proposals but please note that this not an exhaustive list. There are many more possible grounds for objection. If you would like assistance with your letter of objection please don't hesitate to contact us via email admin@itsourcity.org.uk or telephone 01524 843353. There will be a public meeting on Tuesday 22nd July at the Gregson Centre Moorgate at 7.30 pm. This will include a short presentation followed by a workshop on How to Object. You can also see us at our stall in the town centre between 11.00 and 1.00 on Saturdays (weather permitting).

You can find more information on our website: www.itsourcity.org.uk

LACK OF PROPER CONSULTATION

The Government's own policy on what constitutes proper consultation is summed up in 'Planning Policy Statement 1 Delivering Sustainable Development' which states in paragraph 41 that *“Community involvement in planning should not be a reactive, tick-box, process. It should enable the local community to say what sort of place they want to live in at a stage when this can make a difference. Effective community involvement requires an approach which: tells communities about emerging policies and proposals in good time; enables communities to put forward ideas and suggestions and participate in developing proposals and options. It is not sufficient to invite them to simply comment once these have been worked-up..”*. What has happened with the Centros proposals is the opposite of what is required by PPS1.

The Centros proposals should also comply with the City Council's own 'Development Brief' for the Canal Corridor site (Section 2.4) *“the regeneration of the area must be carried out in close consultation with local people and address their needs and aspirations”* and that there should be (Section 2.7) *“extensive public involvement in the development of the proposals”* and further still that (Section 4.14) *“The Council intends to progress the development of the area in such a way which maximises the involvement of local people and which reflects local concerns as much as possible. This could mean involving local residents in the nature and detailed design of the proposed improvements and hopefully engendering a sense of ownership in the outcome”*.

In addition to the above there have been no alternative plans put forward by the Council so that the community could choose the one it wanted. The Centros plans for the site have been presented as the only choice available all along. These plans have not been altered in line with what local people have asked for in Centros' own surveys. Furthermore, Centros have made no response to resident's concerns or objections and have not conducted **any** consultation on their amended plans.

For the above reasons you have not been properly consulted about this proposed development and can ask for the development to be rejected on these grounds.

IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT ON TRAFFIC AND AIR POLLUTION

The proposed development will bring thousands of extra cars every week on to our main roads. This contravenes LDLP (Lancaster District Local Plan) Policy T17 which states that: *“Where the developer is unwilling to meet reasonable targets for minimising the proportion of journeys made to this site by car, development will not be permitted”*. Centros claim that the proximity of the bus station and railway station and the city's cycle facilities will mean that many people will visit the development by means other than by car. However, the proposal to build an 800 space multi-storey car park on the site exposes the falsity of this claim.

The 800 space multi-storey car park contravenes LDLP Policy T13 which states that: *“Proposals for additional shopper/ visitor car parking will only be allowed where this is accompanied by an equivalent reduction in the all day commuter parking”*. Centros are actually proposing a net increase in short-stay parking spaces AND long-stay parking spaces across the city as a whole. (Centros Transport Assessment p57 para 7.21 and table 7.6) The long-stay car parking currently accessed from Alfred St. and Edward St. is not to be reduced accordingly, but merely displaced to the Moor Mills and Nelson St. car parks, adding to the peak-time volumes on the one-way system. The current rat-runs of Alfred St./Edward St. will be closed off meaning that the development will lead to an increase in traffic on Derwent Rd., Ullswater Rd. and Moor Lane. Centros claim that a new right turn off Skerton Bridge and new traffic signals at the junction of Caton Road and Bulk Road will encourage drivers to stay with the one-way system to avoid the delay of getting onto Bulk Road. Far from stopping rat running through Freehold Centros have only 'committed' to not making the situation worse (Centros Transport Assessment p21 para 4.42). This means that there will be no effective measures put in place to prevent rat running through Freehold. This problem

will get worse because the economic success of the development depends on attracting people to the city by car. The development will mean more lorries on our roads to serve the new shopping centre, more exhaust emissions in the city and an increase in Lancaster's contribution to global warming.

All these factors contravene PPS1 (Government Planning Policy Statement 1(Key Principles (13:ii)) which states that: *“Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should ensure that development plans contribute to global sustainability by addressing the causes and potential impacts of climate change through policies which reduce energy use, reduce emissions (for example, by encouraging patterns of development which reduce the need to travel by private car, or reduce the impact of moving freight)”*.

Furthermore, Policy C1 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy states that the Council will “improve residents Quality of Life and minimise the Environmental Impacts of Traffic”. However the Centros Environmental Statement shows that air quality will get worse at over 85% of measuring station locations as a result of this development.

EFFECT ON EXISTING CITY CENTRE RETAIL

The Centros proposals will increase the amount of non-food retail floorspace in Lancaster city centre by more than 75%. The central assumption made in Centros’ Retail Impact Assessment is that individuals’ non-food spending will increase by 3.8% per year every year - and that’s excluding inflation! Even at 3.8% per year, it would take more than 15 years before spending increased by 75%. According to the figures presented, if everybody in the district stopped shopping in Preston and Kendal, that would still add only a fraction of the increase of 75% in spending needed to justify Centros’ new development.

There are already many empty shop units in the city. And there is nothing to stop existing national retail chains in the city centre from moving onto the new development. The development would become an alternative city centre. It would have particularly grave implications for Lancaster's independent retailers and the indoor market as it would undoubtedly draw people away from the current centre. Richard Hyman, a leading analyst of the retail sector, has recently stated that the growth of retailing seen over the past 10 years is now a thing of the past.

We argue therefore that Centros’ plans fail to conform with national planning guidance expressed in Planning Policy Statement 6 to protect the ‘vitality and viability’ of existing town centres. Paragraph 2.41 of PPS6 states that: *“The aim should be to locate the appropriate type and scale of development in the right type of centre, to ensure that it fits into that centre and that it complements its role and function”*.

Centros’ Retail Impact Assessment shows that Morecambe and other places will suffer a loss of trade in 2012 when the development is operating. PPS6 however states in paragraph 3.21 that *“In assessing sites, local planning authorities should consider the impact of the proposal on the vitality and viability of existing centres within the catchment area of the proposed development, including the likely cumulative effect of recent permissions, developments under construction and completed developments”*.

Centros’ plans also fail to conform with Regional Spatial Strategy expressed in policy W5. The RSS goes out of its way to avoid the suggestion of concentrating growth in one centre at the expense of others. Policy W5 states: *“Plans and strategies should promote retail investment where it assists in the regeneration and economic growth of the North West’s town and city centres. In considering proposals and schemes any investment made should be consistent with the scale and function of the centre, should not undermine the vitality and viability of any other centre or result in the creation of unsustainable shopping patterns...”*

If the development goes ahead it will fundamentally alter the nature of the city and Lancaster would become just another cloned town with no intrinsic individuality. More national chains in the City will mean more money leaks out of the local economy.

In any case, the proposed retail development extends far beyond that envisaged in the City Council's own Canal Corridor Development Plan Brief. Referring to land between Alfred St./Edward St. and the canal, the Brief states that (Paragraph 7.8) *“The Council would not wish to encourage retail, commercial, leisure, food and drink uses and other uses likely to attract a lot of people.”*

Which is of course exactly what Centros is proposing.

DEMOLITION OF HISTORIC AND POTENTIALLY USEFUL BUILDINGS

Under Centros' plans the old brewery buildings will be demolished. In addition to the Brewery , buildings on Stonewell, including the local Post Office, will be demolished to make way for a footbridge from the development over the road (at a height of at least six metres) into the St Nicholas shopping arcade opposite. Stonewell is a designated Conservation Area.

The opening statement of the chapter entitled Historic Buildings and Areas in the Lancaster and District Local Plan declares that *“the city council has a long standing commitment to the conservation of historic areas and buildings”* and goes on to state that *“within conservation areas, the council has a duty to preserve and enhance the character of the area”*. The proposal within Centros' plans to demolish the dance studio (the old Coach House) and the Musicians Co-op clearly do not comply with Policy E 37 in the Local Plan, which states that: *“proposals to demolish any building within a conservation area will only be approved where detailed planning permission has been given for a scheme of redevelopment which would preserve and enhance the conservation area including effective guarantees of early completion”*.

Centros are currently applying for 'Outline' planning permission as opposed to 'Detailed' planning permission. This means in general that their ultimate plans for the site will remain hidden until after planning permission has been granted and it is too late to object. This clearly contravenes Policy E 37 above. E37 also states that *“the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building which makes a positive contribution to the conservation area will be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate conclusively that; rehabilitation is impractical and reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or find viable new uses for the building and these have failed”*. Centros has not demonstrated that these buildings cannot be rehabilitated, nor have they made any effort to show that these buildings cannot sustain their existing usage or that there are no viable new uses for the buildings. For this reason the application should be turned down.

THE ABOVE POINTS ARE POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS THAT YOU COULD MAKE. BELOW IN BRIEF ARE SOME OTHER POINTS WHICH COULD BE BROUGHT INTO LETTERS OF OBJECTION:

The development is a threat to the continued existence of the **MUSICIANS COOP**, as fitting out any new premises provided to it within the development is likely to be dependent on the securing of outside funding. Its rent and overheads will be likely to increase to a level way above what it current pays.

The development does not entail the provision of a new '**CULTURAL QUARTER**' for the City. As everyone knows we already have a Cultural Quarter on the site which exists without being overshadowed by a massive department store and a multi-storey car park.

The lease with Centros allows up to two Class A5 **HOT FOOD TAKEAWAYS** and one Class A4 use as a **PUBLIC HOUSE**, wine-bar or other drinking establishment on the site.

The '**PUBLIC SPACE**' included in the plans is minuscule compared to the size of the development. There are no **NEW YOUTH OR COMMUNITY FACILITIES** in the plans. We are unaware of any firm plans to relocate the **HOMELESS ACTION CENTRE** to an appropriate location.