

**St Albans
Civic Centre Opportunity Sites**

**Development Partnership' Vision Statement 1.4 Working Draft
7 September 2016**

There is strong strategic planning policy support for the right kind of change and investment. This is underpinned by the 2012 CCOS Planning Brief SPD as well as the Look! St Albans Draft Design Codes (2013).

As key local landowners, we understand our responsibility in supporting St Albans city centre as a whole and its role as the major town centre for over 140,000 people in the district. For far too long citizens and landowners have made do with too many of the issues in buildings, public spaces, layout and landscaping of the civic centre sites. This part of our city is just not making a great enough contribution to our city. This to the detriment of citizens, visitors, employers, employees, landowners and the environment.

In late 2015, we formed a Civic Centre Opportunity Sites Development Partnership to approach this complex and considerable challenge together. We do this with fresh momentum and in the hope that through collaborative working with many local stakeholders we can create a shared, ambitious and credible masterplan.

The Development Partnership currently brings together: St Albans City and District Council – Community Services, Hertfordshire Constabulary, NHS, Boulton LDN (owners of The Maltings)

We see this Civic Centre masterplan as the definitive guide to the making of a much improved city centre experiences for citizens and visitors, a prosperous City economy and revenues to deliver great services in the medium and long term. We believe such a place will derive from a generous increase in beautiful 21st century city center living, working and learning environments and a much improved cultural offer set in an enjoyable public realm and resourceful approaches to parking.

Our ambition is to deliver this major city center placemaking initiative in a manner so it leads to a generous place of well build, healthy and beautiful homes, workspaces with a mix of complementary retailers activating the street scene and set in a network of productive and diverse urban gardens. This is envisaged to enable us to make a significant contribution to the city and district of St Albans. Key measures in this programme are:

- A step change in public realm quality and city center experiences: an attractive public route/loop from St Peter's Street via The Maltings, across Victoria Street, through the site currently owned by the Hertfordshire Police to a larger Civic Square linked with St Peter's Street;
- 'The New St Albans Arena': An extension of the St Albans Arena including the creation of a 21st century library and learning space, a smaller and bigger stage, cafe/restaurant/bar services, flexible meeting/conference facilities etc.;
- The retention of the current council offices/ police services with the aim to improve, perhaps extend the existing buildings;
- A larger new Civic Square framed by the New St Albans Arena, the Council offices, the police and possibly new community health facilities;
- About 500m² of state of the art Community Health Service facilities at an accessibly location within the site and in ambient environment;
- A new, consolidated and beautiful Civic Square multi-story car park and cycle parking if no other solution can be found;
- Building 40% of the new homes as 'affordable housing' including social rented, for keyworkers, shared ownership and starter homes to the same quality as the private homes and spread across the sites.

As landowners, we genuinely welcome this long-awaited opportunity to design, explore and test with you masterplan scenarios that will help us shape and coordinate a series of well designed, inspired and credible planning applications. We envisage bringing the individual planning applications back for further work on design detail beyond this masterplan work we are likely to be able to cover during this charrette.

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Supplement #1 :

Since the invitations for this Civic Centre charrette went out, the owner of the Maltings, Boulton LDN, came to the view that it would be greatly appreciated if the participants of this charrette could lend some of their time and knowledge to the emerging concepts for the investment plan for the Maltings.

From the Civic Centre masterplanning point of view the Maltings investment programme has the potential to enable improvements along Victoria Street and contribute to creating a state of the art learning centre/library right at the civic heart of our City as well as creating a more varied roofscape. Sean Dempsey of Boulton LDN is keen to engage in conversations and ideas on how initial concepts could be improved.

We would like to suggest exploring and testing emerging concepts as part of this charrette. The main reason for bringing this to this charrette is the relationship between the delivery on some of our key ambitions for the Civic Centre and the city centre as a whole.

The Maltings Shopping centre is considering a comprehensive programme of alterations and extensions. This includes:

- A 4 to 5 screen cinema (about 500 to 600 seats), a terrace, a outdoor /pop-up roof garden cinema;
- An office building at the currently underused and unattractive service yard;
- A number of new homes set in a generous roof garden, with fantastic views across St Albans and with its own access from a more attractive and used court yard;
- Additional retail outlets within the current building;
- Improvements to tired facades and the public realm;
- An extended and improved Maltings multi-story car park overall to accommodate the increased demand and making the building a more positive (architectural) feature of the city centre;
- St Albans horticultural and cosmological heritage could play a key theme in this programme.

It's a complex structure the Maltings, however, and only if there is enough interest in the room tomorrow, we would like to propose something what you could call an 'informal community design review' of the emerging concepts. Sean Dempsey of Boulton LDN would explain the initial design concepts through a walkabout and visuals and then invite ideas to improve the current thinking.

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