

**RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER OR OFFICER**

This form can be used for any decision but **MUST** be used to record:

- any decision taken The Elected Mayor or an individual Councillor
- a key decision taken by a Council Officer

In these circumstances the form must be completed and passed to the Service Manager (Members' Services) no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Service Manager (Members' Services) has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

To approve the appointment of Erith and Terry Architects to prepare a sketch scheme detailing floor plans and main elevations for a classical development on Riverside Square.

2. Date of decision

23 January 2004

3. Reasons for decision

To inform the development potential for this key riverside location and to stimulate the further consideration of potential site uses and scale in the context of the emerging development framework for Bedford Town Centre.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

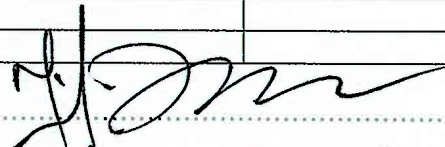
Shortlisted developers for the potential development in and around the bus station were, as an entirely separate consideration to their interest in the bus station, invited to offer any ideas and views as to the potential development opportunity afforded by the site.

5. How decision is to be funded

To fund the commission, in the sum of £5,000 (plus expenses and VAT), from the established Town Centre Project Management/Consultancy Reserve.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (if yes give details and date of dispensation)

Signed  Date 23-1-04

Name of Decision Taker F. J. BRANSTON  
 [this must be signed by the decision maker or, if the decision was made by the Mayor or Councillor then the relevant Head of Service may sign it].

**This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Service Manager (Members' Services) as soon as it is completed.**

Date decision published: 23.1.04

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: 4.2.04

## **Bedford Borough Council – Report to the Mayor**

**23 January 2004**

### **Report by the Head of Economic Development & Corporate Support**

**Subject: TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT: RIVERSIDE SQUARE**

#### **1. Introduction**

To commission a sketch scheme for the Riverside Square based upon a proposal submitted by Quinlan Terry, Classical Architect, in order to further inform the development potential for this key location.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- (a) To approve the appointment of Quinlan Terry to prepare a sketch scheme detailing floor plans and main elevations for a classical development on Riverside Square;**
- (b) To fund the commission identified in (a) above, in the sum of £5,000 (plus expenses and VAT), from the established Town Centre Project Management/Consultancy Reserve.**

#### **3. Keys Issues**

##### **Resource Implications**

###### **Capital**

The Council is the key landowner and the opportunity, therefore, exists to derive a capital payment from the sale of land or to translate this benefit into a revenue return. The eventual scheme design and uses will influence the capital value.

###### **Revenue**

There is potential for a loss of car park revenue during the development period and following scheme implementation from displaced parkers although relocation to other sites in the town centre may occur.

##### **Risk Implications**

The development options for the site will need to be considered in the context of the emerging development framework, legal power (given that the Council is not able to speculate), risk exposure and funding constraints. The Council will need to satisfy the provisions contained in Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 in terms of obtaining best consideration for land transactions.

#### 4. **Details**

##### Background

The Riverside Square site has been identified by the Council as an emerging project for the regeneration and redevelopment of Bedford Town Centre and, specifically, 80% of respondents at the May 2002 Exhibition supported the imaginative development of Riverside Square to provide entertainment for all ages night and day and a new waterside environment.

Shortlisted developers for the potential development in and around the bus station were, as an entirely separate consideration to their interest in the bus station, invited to offer any ideas and views as to the potential development opportunity afforded by the Riverside Square site. These indicative proposals were outlined at the Bus Station development Selection Jury meeting held on 15 September 2003.

A commercial review for the site was undertaken in August 2002 by Chesterton Plc as an integral part of the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit assignment. The results of the appraisal, based upon land use alternatives, are reproduced at **Appendix A**. The review specifically identified that a high quality of development was essential with effective linkages back to the main shopping centre.

##### Potential Waterside Development

Further consideration has now been given to the form of development and, as part of this process, Quinlan Terry (Erith and Terry Architects) visited Bedford town centre on 15 January 2004 to assess the characteristics of Bedford and to consider the form of development sympathetic to the area and the riverside environment. Quinlan Terry has undertaken a number of relevant developments, including the riverside development at Richmond, and further details of the Architect practice can be found at [www.erithandterry.com](http://www.erithandterry.com).

Quinlan Terry has confirmed an interest in Bedford and has forwarded a proposal by letter and based upon the assessment made during the recent site visit. This provides for a first stage commission, in the sum of £5,000 (plus normal expenses and VAT), for the preparation of a sketch scheme to 1:500 scale showing the main floor plans and important elevations. This would provide a basis for further detailed discussion in terms of use, maximum potential of the site, further linking the river to the town centre and servicing aspects. The full proposal, outlined in a letter dated 16 January 2004, also provides for more detailed work on a stage by stage basis and this is reproduced at **Appendix B**.

Further discussion has taken place with GVA Grimley, lead consultants for the development framework commission, regarding this process and to advise that the Mayor intends to consider commissioning sketch designs for the site to give some indication of the scale of development and potential uses. This will help inform the master planning process.

To further inform the process, a site visit is being organised for the Town Centre Working Group on 17 March 2004. The itinerary will include visits to the riverside development at Richmond and a recent development at Baker Street. Quinlan Terry is prepared to meet the Council on site to discuss the developments.

*Report Contact Officer(s):* Trevor Roff, Head of Economic Development & Corporate Support  
(e-mail: [troff@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:troff@bedford.gov.uk))

David Joyce, Service Manager (Land & Property) (e-mail: [djoyce@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:djoyce@bedford.gov.uk))

*File Reference:* GEN/T.2(f)

*Previous Relevant Minutes:* None

*Background Papers:* Commercial Review: Chesterton PLC – August 2002

*Appendices:* A: Extract from Chesterton Plc Commercial Review: August 2002

B: Proposal letter from Erith and Terry Architects: 16 January 2004

# BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE

## COMMERCIAL REVIEW

### Extra from Final Report by Chesterton PLC: August 2002

#### 5.3 Riverside Square

##### 5.3.1 Land Use Schedule of Options Tested

Use	Basement	Grd Floor	1 <sup>st</sup> Floor	2 Floor +
Retail		1340 sq.m		
Food Retail				
Residential				42 units
Commercial				
Hotel/A3		1000 sq.m	1000 sq.m	1000 sq.m
Car Parking	1,100 sq.m		750 sq.m	

5.3.2 The appraisal of a new development based on the above net floor areas indicates that in commercial and financial terms the scheme provides a marginal return. This is primarily as a result of the high infrastructure costs associated with providing basement car parking. Outlined below are the key observations made in response to the evaluation as follows:

- The redevelopment of this site based on the creation of a relatively high density mixed use scheme with a mix of retail and leisure uses on ground and first floors making the most of the sites strategic river location. In order to attract high value retail and leisure operators to the scheme it is essential that the quality of the development is high and that it effectively linkages back to the main shopping centre.
- New leisure uses on the river frontage are likely to be both commercially and financially viable as corporate restaurant and bar operators continue to expand and seek prime locations such as this.
- The ability of the site to attract more culturally based uses such as theatres, galleries and cinemas is questionable as this sector does not produce a market return and a large edge of town cinema venue is already in existence. Such uses may be provided as part of the planning agreement but, based on the suggested land mix, the development profit generated is insufficient to provide a venue of sufficient size and quality to sustain this.

- At prevailing rents, yields and build costs, we anticipate the retail provision on the site to contribute positively to the financial viability of the overall scheme subject to the following caveats:
  1. Sufficient retailers with good covenant strength are attracted to the development – quality leisure offer and environment will help achieve this;
  2. No abnormal development costs apply, including basement car parking and associated floor defence measures;
  3. One or two larger retail units of 3000 m sq. + with national multiples are accommodated within the development, as well as smaller specialist retail units. This will provide an appropriate retail balance for the site.
  
- The upper floors of any development proposal will play an important part in contributing to the financial viability of the scheme. A Hotel use on the first and second floors on the river frontage, with links to the leisure uses on the ground floor, is a commercially attractive package but overall produces a marginal financial return.
  
- We consider residential units will provide good financial returns to the scheme based on current land values and demand indicators for quality riverside properties. Up to three storeys is indicated on the plan but there is potential to go higher.
  
- The main infrastructure cost associated with development on the site will be the construction of the underground and first floor car parks. The car park costs are considerable especially the basement parking as flood defence and water-table issues will have to be taken into account. The development value generated by the proposed scheme has indicated that this is viable but the returns are not substantial enough to permit any considerable additional infrastructure costs or void periods. With this in mind it is suggested that the basement car park or first floor car park be removed. In relation to parking provision, linked use of the adjoining Harpur Centre car park should be investigated as this facility is underused especially in the evening.
  
- Factors such as the extent of any community benefit/section 106 requirements and conditions for special architectural features have not been factored into the appraisal.

**ERITH AND TERRY**  
ARCHITECTSQUINLAN TERRY, F.R.I.B.A.  
C.M.T. TERRY, R.I.B.A.  
FRANCIS TERRY, R.I.B.A.

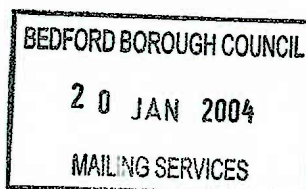
ASSOCIATE

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QT/KA./1200



16th January 2004

Trevor J Roff Esq CPFA FMAAT  
Bedford Borough Council  
Town Hall  
St Paul's Square  
Bedford  
MK40 1SJ

Dear Trevor

**Riverside Square, Bedford**

I said I would write and confirm the main points of our discussions last week.

I propose to start by preparing a sketch scheme to 1:500 scale showing the main floor plans and important elevations for discussion with you and the Mayor and anyone else who you think appropriate at that stage particularly your technical advisors so that we can establish the requirements for retail service access, car parking, fire fighting etc.. The Brief will be left open, however, it is envisaged that the main uses would be retail/restaurant/casino with residential on the upper storeys. I suggested that Riverside Street might be extended down to Queen's Walk with a pedestrian bridge over the river thus dividing the site into east and west. I would also indicate suggestions for the east part of the site in place of the boat house and Salvation Army Hall which might form a second phase of the main development in Market Square. I hope to have this sketch scheme completed for discussion mid February. My fee for this work would be £5,000 plus normal expenses (mainly travelling and cost of prints) and VAT.

The next stage would follow our meeting and your comments, and would involve incorporating any revisions that are necessary and the preparation of more detail drawings and include presentation drawings for the public exhibition in early May. These drawings would enable us to obtain an estimate of cost and start negotiations with a developer if appointed. It would also enable us to obtain detail comments from the planning authority, although it would not be a full submission. My fee for the second stage would be a further £15,000 plus expenses and VAT.

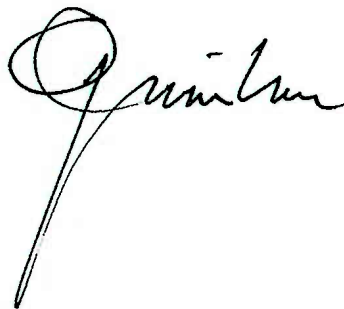
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The above fees are based on my assessment of the time it would take but it is well below what I normally charge on more commercial schemes. That said, my reputation would be seriously damaged if the design was then taken on and used by a developer with their own architects doing the detail work. I have therefore assumed that if and when the work goes ahead I would be retained as the architect responsible for the project when my fee would be 5.5% on the cost of the work plus expenses and VAT. This was the arrangement I used at Richmond Riverside when I worked for Haslemere Estates. I also told you about the arrangement on the Baker Street scheme where I was responsible for the construction of the external walls and all detailing of the exterior parts – roof, cornice, doors, windows, architectural ornaments, ironwork and stonework etc, and the developers architect was responsible for the interior, costs and supervision. This may be a satisfactory way forward when it comes to negotiations with developers. My fee for this reduced service would be 3%.

When I spoke to you on the telephone last Friday I said that I felt a basement car park would be very expensive near to the river and I would omit it from my preliminary scheme unless I hear further from you. You also indicated that there are major services running along River Street and you will send me further details. If anything else occurs in the immediate future please let me know, in the meantime I look forward to pressing ahead with the scheme.

I confirm that I shall keep Wednesday 17th March free to show you and your committee round Richmond and Baker Street. We have tentatively arranged that we would meet at Richmond at 12 o'clock.

With kind regards  
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trevor Roff', with a long, sweeping tail stroke extending downwards.

cc: The Mayor of Bedford