



CHARTERED TOWN PLANNERS

Objection Number: 66-McKay Securities Plc

Summary Proof of Evidence of Neil Warner MRTPI

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## 1.0 Summary of Proof

### Introduction

- 1.1 My name is Neil Warner. My qualifications and experience are set out in my main proof of evidence.

### Background

- 1.2 My evidence compares the proposal for the replacement of Bicester Town Station and the associated car parking and circulation areas produced by Chiltern Railways (the "Proposal") and an alternative scheme produced on behalf of McKay Securities Plc by Mayer Brown (the "Alternative Proposal") and how those schemes relate to the development plan and other material considerations in order to reach a conclusion as to whether the Planning Direction should be confirmed.
- 1.3 I describe the area around Station Approach, including the existing buildings and uses. I also describe the planning permission which exists for the adjacent Park and Ride.
- 1.4 I refer to Circular 06/04, which deals with Compulsory Purchase at paragraph 23. It states that where planning permission will be required for the scheme, and has not been granted, there should be no obvious reason why it might be withheld. In particular, this means that, irrespective of the legislative powers under which the actual acquisition is being proposed, the provisions of section 38(6) of the 2004 Act require that the scheme which is the subject of the planning application should be in accordance with the development plan for the area unless material considerations indicate otherwise. My evidence examines relevant Government statements of planning policy, the Development Plan, the Emerging Core Strategy and Non Statutory Local Plan.
- 1.5 I conclude that there are significant shortcomings in the Proposal such that it would fail to comply with Government planning policy, the Development Plan and other relevant policies and request that the Planning Direction insofar as it relates to the Proposal, is not confirmed.

**Planning Considerations**

- 1.6 Specifically, my view is that the Proposal causes an unnecessary loss of a significant employment site which could continue to make an important contribution to the economic development of Bicester, contrary to the provisions of the Development Plan and emerging Core Strategy for the area. The Alternative Proposal which has been prepared, meets the same objectives in terms of parking provision and accessibility to serve the proposed redeveloped Station, but demonstrates this can be achieved with significantly less harm to the provision of employment generating land in Bicester and which would provide a better opportunity for the comprehensive redevelopment of the retained land in accordance with the Local Planning Authorities aspirations.
- 1.7 I also conclude that the Proposal pays insufficient regard to the core principle of Government planning policy, sustainable development. It does not have due regard to advice in PPS1 or PPG13 (paragraphs 21 and 63) in respect of making the best use of the most accessible sites (i.e. those close to major transport interchanges) – the Proposal and Alternative Proposal sites are just such a location. I state that the Proposal singularly fails to take this advice into account, in not considering the large car parking resource already in close proximity to the Station – the Park and Ride and wider parking provided for Bicester Village.
- 1.8 I state that the Proposal has been shown to pay insufficient regard to the need to better reveal the designated heritage asset and local distinctiveness and to have poor consideration of urban design, contrary to the provisions of Government planning policy in PPS1 and PPS5. The Alternative Proposal properly considers these matters. I consider that the Proposal fails to have regard to local distinctiveness and the appearance of what will be a major entrance point for visitors to Bicester. The retention of the Bodyshop building and electrical wholesaler does not provide any opportunity to improve the appearance of the area and would provide poor legibility for pedestrians, whilst the retained units on the McKay Trading Estate would not allow any significant space for suitable landscaping.

- 1.9 I note that in contrast the Alternative Proposal better relates to local distinctiveness. It provides for the retention of existing mature landscaping at the rear of the retained units on the McKay Trading Estate and this is kept as a self contained use. An appropriate relationship with the historic Station Master's House is provided and better legibility would be provided at the entrance to the Station and at the junction with Station Approach and London Road.
- 1.10 I state that the Proposal does not adequately consider the scope for the comprehensive redevelopment of the land identified in S17 of the NSCLP. In particular, the separation of the area of employment land into two parcels does not provide the same opportunity to provide a suitable buffer for the residential development and the separate parcels of land would make the comprehensive development of the residual land more difficult. By contrast the Alternative Proposal retains a single parcel of land which would better allow a comprehensive and well planned redevelopment as is the aspiration of the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.11 I state that highway safety is also a proper planning consideration. The evidence of Alec Philpott of Mayer Brown deals with the matter of highway safety in detail and concludes that the Proposal has some significant failings which will prejudice both highway safety and the operation and safety of the retained land on the McKay Trading Estate. These are overcome in the Alternative Proposal.