

18 December 2006

Westgate Application Gets Go-Ahead From Secretary Of State

The First Secretary of State, Ruth Kelly, has confirmed that the planning application for the £300 million refurbishment, part redevelopment and extension of the existing Westgate Shopping Centre in Oxford city centre will not be called in. Oxford City Council will now be responsible for issuing final planning permission for the scheme.

Speaking on behalf of The Westgate Partnership, Richard Cable, Development Director, said; "This is excellent news. Our plans provide for a truly mixed used regeneration of the Westgate area of Oxford, including a John Lewis store, new cafes and restaurants, 127 private and social apartments, an enhanced public realm and improved public transport links. We believe that these proposals set a standard of design, quality and sustainability to which other towns and cities will aspire. We look forward to working closely with Oxford City Council and the local community to deliver wide ranging benefits for those who live, work and shop in Oxford."

The team will now take forward the necessary pre-development work such as detailed design, site assembly and survey work. Work on the main construction contract could start in spring 2008 and the completed shops open to the public in autumn 2011.

- ENDS -

Editor's Notes

The mixed use scheme to regenerate the Westgate area includes:

- A shopping area of approximately 750,000 sq ft (69,000 sq m), (including the existing centre) with 90 new shops, bars, restaurants and cafes, together with a wide range and variety of shops including a John Lewis department store, aspirational fashion and lifestyle brands and smaller independent retailers.
- Facilities will include Shopmobility, toilets, baby care, a crèche and a children's play area
- 127 new city centre apartments, 50% of which will be affordable homes
- A total refurbishment of the existing Westgate Centre to ensure that it blends seamlessly with the new buildings and with its surroundings, particularly Oxford City Council's proposals for the redesign of Bonn Square
- A prominent new three storey glazed entrance for Oxford's County Library
- A variety of street facing shops, kiosks, and cafes to bring new vitality to Castle Street and Norfolk Street
- A roof-top garden at the heart of the development, providing a local habitat for wildlife and a unique location for a restaurant operator
- An extensive landscaping strategy for the streets and green spaces around the development, including enhancements to the existing Paradise Square and the area alongside Castle Mill Stream
- Design to achieve "Very Good" ratings for BREEAM for Retail and EcoHomes, with proposals to provide approximately 12% on-site renewables, rainwater collection, green roofs and naturally ventilated malls
- Over 2000 jobs will be created when the new retail offer opens, increasing the number employed in the centre to around 3,300. In addition, there will be around 2,000 jobs during construction. The Westgate Partnership will support a programme of skills training in conjunction with the City Council, local colleges and job centres
- Accessibility for all including provision for pedestrians, cyclists, buses and taxis
- A new 1,335 space multi-storey car park to provide better, safer parking facilities including wider parking bays, clearly marked pedestrian walkways, enhanced lighting, CCTV and help stations
- A significant investment in delivering improved public transport.

The Westgate Partnership

The Westgate Partnership is a joint venture between Capital Shopping Centres and Coal Pension Properties Limited. Capital Shopping Centres PLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Liberty International PLC, is the leading company in the UK specialising in the ownership, management and development of regional shopping centres. It specialises in retail-led town centre regeneration, providing mixed-use schemes, which respond to the needs of particular locations. Its portfolio includes Chapelfield (Norwich), The Glades (Bromley), The Harlequin (Watford) and The Chimes (Uxbridge), all of which it owns and manages.

LaSalle Investment Management, one of the UK's largest property investment fund managers, is responsible for the Coal Pension Properties' property portfolio, which includes The Westgate Centre.

For further information, please see www.westgateoxford.co.uk or contact:

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