



# Waitrose



21 October 2015  
JMG/JOK/0152

Mr P Frampton  
Framptons  
Oriol House  
42 North Bar  
Oxford OX16 0TH

Dear Mr Frampton

## **Waitrose - Banbury**

Thank you for forwarding the consultation responses from DPDS, and the letter of representation submitted by Turleys. I respond to the request for further clarity on the reasoning why the Spiceball site is not suitable for Waitrose.

The Spiceball site has a number of constraints and I set out below an analysis of the points illustrated on the appended plans of the Spiceball layout, which I am informed, is with the Council for determination subject to the agreement and signing of a S106 agreement.

### **1. Size of store is too small**

The 'Spiceball' scheme shows a store of 25,000 sq ft net sales, this is 16% less than the Southam Road scheme and is not large enough to suit our operational requirements. We have set stock lines that should be accommodated in each store, a lack of space limiting supply of stock will result in loss of trade to competition. The Council's retail consultants have advised that 10% flexibility in size is considered a reasonable degree of flexibility, at 16% the difference in size is clearly greater than this.

### **2. 'Long and thin' rectangular shape does not suit store layout or operation due to increase in aisle length and reduction in number of aisles achievable.**

Our specification allows for a regular shaped building to give sufficient aisle width and length. Not only is it inconvenient for customers to need to walk further down a longer aisle to access product, we have a set layout and product mix common among our stores which is familiar to customers to aid in finding products quickly. Longer aisles result in reduced visibility and customer footfall to the product at the far end of aisles ultimately reducing trade volume for these products. The width of our aisles is wider than some of our competitors to make it easier for customers to navigate the store and access product. We are not convinced that this design objective would be achievable.

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Food shops of the John Lewis Partnership

Property Department  
Partnership House Carlisle Place  
London SW1P 1BX  
Telephone 020 7828 1000  
www.waitrose.com

### **3. Store frontage**

The width of frontage is important to Waitrose as it provides visibility of the store which drives trade and makes the store inviting to our customers. A 35m frontage is too far removed from our objective of a frontage of around 68m to be attractive to Waitrose; this is 49% less than is sought at the Southam Road scheme.

### **4. Only 112 car park spaces at store level – Waitrose seek 220**

To give customers easy access to the store and provide enough spaces for customers to park easily, Waitrose require circa 220 spaces. It is our experience that reduced car parking results in reduced trading. As mentioned above, the positioning and access to parking spaces should be convenient for shoppers. Hence store level parking is preferred. The Spiceball scheme only provides for 50% of the spaces required at store level.

### **5. Poor car park layout creates clogging/congestion**

It is important that our customers are able to access the store as easily as possible; the layout to the 'Spiceball' scheme is convoluted and is likely to cause congestion. There is also too much conflict between pedestrians and cars due to the undesired number of spaces accessed off the main routes into and out of the car park.

### **6. End of car park too far from store**

This is an inconvenience for our customers; the distance to the front of the store from the furthest parking spaces is more than is considered acceptable to Waitrose.

The far end of the car park on the Spiceball scheme is 122m from the store entrance as opposed to 88m on the Spiceball site – 39% further with a larger proportion of spaces further away from the store. The Spiceball site also has 64% less spaces within 50m of the store frontage at store level (44 opposed to 122 spaces on the Southam Road scheme).

### **7. Decked car parking contrary to Waitrose specification**

Decked car parks by their nature are more difficult to navigate than single level car parks creating further inconvenience for our customers; it is a disincentive to customers using the store and would put Waitrose at a disadvantage to competitors with single level parking. The environment of a covered parking area is not as pleasant as an open air car park and does not fit with the aesthetics Waitrose are aspiring to achieve. There is also the undesired result of having split levels and as such customers are required to take trolleys up and down lifts/escalators between floors, this is inconvenient for customers. As such decked car parking is generally not preferred as a car parking arrangement.



## **8. Poor/convoluted entrance and exit for customers leaving store**

The proposed 'Spiceball' car park entrance and exit are inconvenient and complicated requiring customers to drive up a ramp, through the first floor car park, down a further ramp into the underground car park and then out via a different exit, it is more complex than is desirable and does not allow for the ease of access that is preferable to Waitrose.

## **9. Escalators/lifts taking up trading space**

As discussed above, escalators and lifts are far from ideal. Not only do they detract from the customer experience by creating inconvenience whereby customers are required to take trolleys up and down escalators, they also reduce trading floor space which as mentioned above is less anyway than sought by Waitrose.

## **10. Product storage at lower ground level complicates store operation**

We prefer to have storage/back of house at the same level as the sales area to enable the efficient transfer of stock to the sales area. Whilst it is not ideal to have the stock at a different level, Waitrose are willing to show flexibility on this.

## **11. Constrained service yard**

The service yard on the 'Spiceball' scheme is smaller than the Southam Road scheme, and is likely to cause issues when HGVs are manoeuvring particularly when you bear in mind that there will be more plant in the service yard than shown. The Spiceball scheme does not show the sprinkler tank, generator base and temporary container storage areas required for the store to be operational.

There is also no room to accommodate the eight parking spaces, and associated manoeuvring areas, required for our home delivery vans and as such it is likely that these will need to park and load in front of the store, which is not acceptable. This is more inefficient than loading at the rear of the store; it produces more traffic in the car park and takes up parking spaces, which are already less than desired at store level on the Spiceball scheme.

For the above reasons, I hope that it is clear why the 'Spiceball site' is far from suitable for Waitrose in its current layout and due to physical constraints it is simply not possible to amend the layout to fit these requirements.

The cumulative impact of all of the points must be considered as well as in isolation as the impact on trade will be cumulative and greater than when assessed on each point independently. We have considered whether the design deficiencies in the submitted drawings could be overcome sufficiently to satisfy investment by Waitrose in this location. Waitrose has concluded that the cumulative deficiencies could not be overcome to provide confidence for investment in a new store in this location.

Whilst Waitrose are able to offer flexibility on some of these issues such as having the back of house at a different level and a reduced frontage to the store, other factors such as the reduction in store size, reduction in store level parking spaces, poor parking layout and decked parking are enough to deter investment in isolation and would certainly not receive Board approval regardless of whether the other points were resolved.

Waitrose must pull customers both locally and from a wider area from competitors to secure the sales required for a sustainable shop. We therefore have to provide a better shopping experience including car parking that will attract customers to Banbury and away from the very good competitive supermarket schemes in the wider geographical context.

There are several examples of compromised stores that Waitrose have committed to in the past that have been shown to underperform and, as such, we have a good understanding of the factors that drive trade:

Aylesbury – the store underperforms due to the shop/scheme not being competitive due to the poor layout and entry fee/multi-level parking.

Huntingdon – the store underperforms due to poor scheme and car parking layouts Cheadle Hulme, Oadby, Crewkerne and Rickmansworth – all underperform due to decked parking.

Milton Keynes and Horsham – both stores were relocated due to poorly designed schemes becoming uncompetitive.

Having learnt lessons from the past it is now highly unlikely that any of these stores would receive board approval in the current competitive marketplace. As such we have recently rejected a store in the town centre redevelopment of Bishop's Stortford (following a CPO of the existing branch) due to the relocation option on offer being compromised compared to our existing shop and our competition. We have also recently rejected a store on the Cambridge University Local Centre site due to no surface parking.

Likewise, we would not invest in the Spiceball scheme due to the reasons outlined in this letter.

To reiterate from our previous correspondence, we are entirely satisfied that the site at Southam Road – which we believe is very well connected to the town centre – meets our trading requirements. We have received a considerable amount of positive feedback for this scheme and look forward to opening if consented. If planning permission is not achievable on the Southam Road scheme, then there is no suitable alternative site within the town centre or edge of town centre for Waitrose.

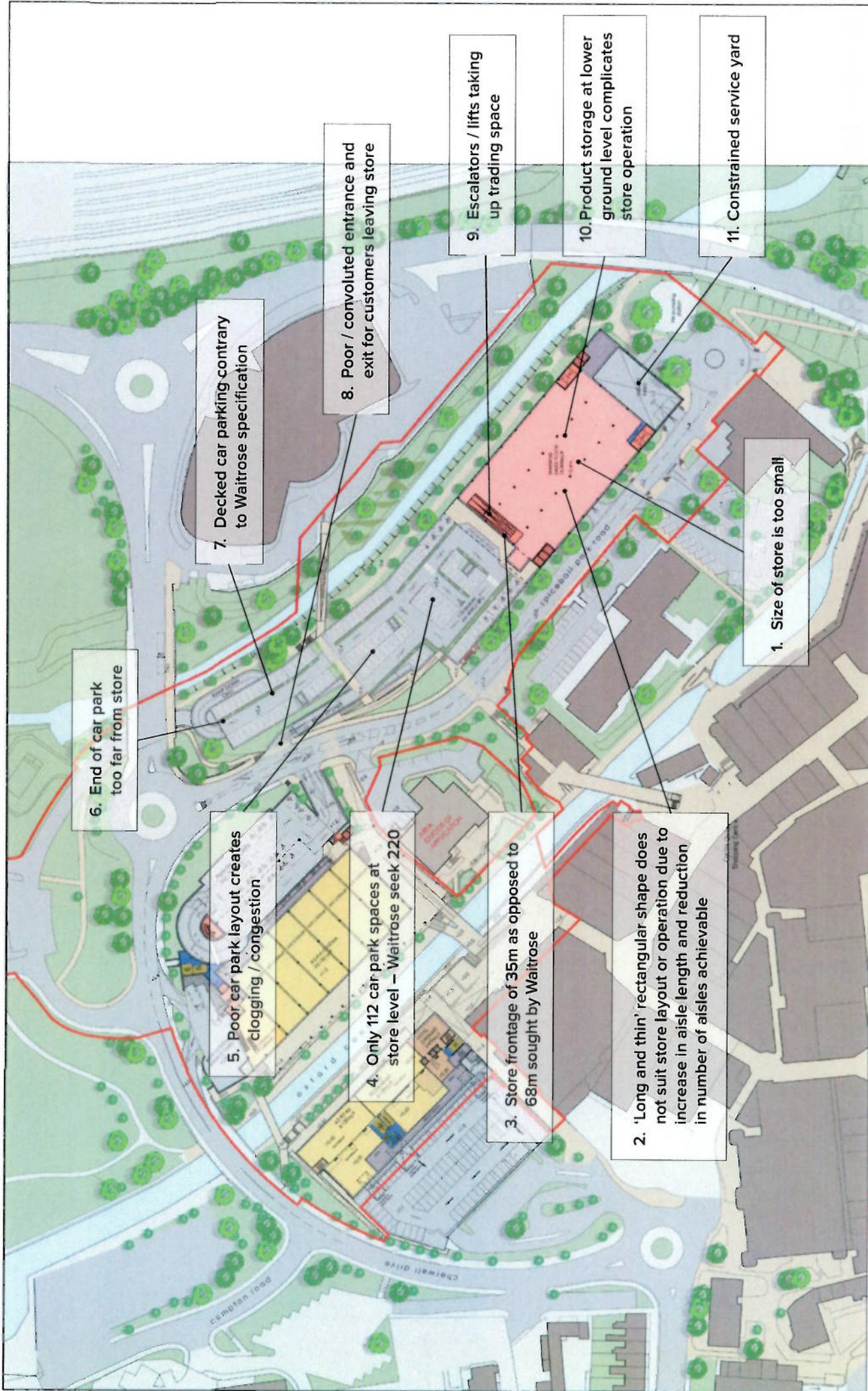
Yours sincerely



James Gilhooley  
Head of Property (Development), Waitrose

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5. Poor car park layout creates clogging / congestion

4. Only 112 car park spaces at store level – Waitrose seek 220

3. Store frontage of 35m as opposed to 68m sought by Waitrose

2. 'Long and thin' rectangular shape does not suit store layout or operation due to increase in aisle length and reduction in number of aisles achievable

7. Decked car parking contrary to Waitrose specification

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10. Product storage at lower ground level complicates store operation

11. Constrained service yard

1. Size of store is too small



PROJECT: BANBURY		panterhudsphith	
GENERAL ARRANGEMENT		4-8 Emerson Street, London SE1 8DU	
PLAN - LEVEL 01 (43.0m)		© PanterHudsphith & Associates Ltd 2014	
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