

## **This flysheet is issued in the names of those supporting the motion**

*'Congregation welcomes the conclusions of the EIA, resolves that of the three options that it offers for mitigation of the environmental damage caused by the Castle Mill Development, Option 3 is the only one that offers substantial mitigation, and therefore instructs Council to proceed with mitigation work according to the recommendations of Option 3.'*

We now seek to clarify a number of points about the motion:

- Once the essential recommendation of Option 3 (to remove the top storey of the Castle Mill flats) is accepted, **there can be great flexibility in achieving that aim**. The work does not have to be done straight away, or all at once. No current student living in Castle Mill need leave the complex before their present contract expires. Phasing work could reduce costs. We are committed to working creatively with the University to find ways of funding option 3.
- Opponents of the motion repetitiously quote a figure of £30 million, yet they admit it includes some substantial double counting. They have no real idea what the true figure is. **Yet they go on quoting it.**
- Opponents raise the possibility that donors will be discouraged and public opinion alienated by modifying a building recently built. They ignore the certainty of the bad public impression made by half-hearted and ineffective remedying of harm done by the buildings in their present form.
- Mr Vice-Chancellor in his recent letter insisted that the Environmental Impact Assessment 'concludes that the best option is [Option 1,] to carry out additional landscaping and exterior work to make the buildings blend more.' Only the most selective reading of the EIA can produce this conclusion. **The decision as to which is most effective lies in our hands.**
- A flysheet from those members of Council opposing the motion minimises the difference between Options 1 and 3. **But Option 1 is expensive and achieves virtually nothing. Option 3 is more expensive and achieves a substantial result.**
- Option 3 involves losing 38 bedrooms. Set this in the context of present student housing provision of around 14.5 thousand units within the University and three thousand in the private sector (City Council will approve up to three thousand). The University has 627 units in the planning pipeline.
- The Castle Mill flats even if modified under Option 3 **could still provide 24 multiple-occupancy flats.**
- Port Meadow and the Oxford skyline are heritage sites of national importance. Port Meadow, an SSSI, is an exceptional ancient landscape; St Barnabas Church, a Grade 1 listed building. 2700 people signed the initial petition opposing the development. More than 950 responded to the City Council's December 2014 consultation on the University's Environmental Statement: approximately twice the number of public responses to any other set of planning documents in Oxford. Around 95% of respondents rejected Option 1, and instead supported Option 3. **Do you wish the University to ignore this plain expression of public opinion?**
- The "Goodstadt review" (the independent Roger Dudman Way Review commissioned by Oxford City Council in late 2013) documented a number of errors in the University's handling of the planning application. Had the University accurately modelled the impact of Castle Mill on Port Meadow in drawings at the planning application stage, and consulted publicly and transparently on such accurate visualizations, **the buildings would never have been approved by Councillors**, against what we can now say with certainty would have been huge public opposition.

- ***We fully support the development of the site for student purposes.*** It is critical that Congregation members understand there has never been any objection in principle to this development for student accommodation. The issue has always been that the negative impact on the environment of these new buildings in their present form is not justified by the extra 38 rooms created on the fifth storeys.
- We also wish to make it clear that the campaign to ensure that Council implements Option 3 is ***not simply about the aesthetics of North Oxford, nor is it the work of a small number of North Oxford residents.*** It is not, as Mr Vice Chancellor suggests, a 'local campaign', but has support from people all over Oxford, within and outside the University. They believe that the University's reputation will be seriously damaged if it chooses to continue to create several '***substantially adverse impacts***' on the famous and historic Oxford skyline, part of the reason that the best students wish to come to Oxford and benefactors to support its work.
- ***Congregation must decide whether the degree of harm inflicted on four precious environments by the Castle Mill Development, assessed by the Environmental Impact Assessment as High Adverse, is justified if only Option 1 is implemented.***

### ***Vote for the motion***

On these grounds, we ask that you ignore the proposal to defeat the motion, based on the premise that there is 'No Alternative', and vote for the motion as the most promising way forward.

Signatories to the flysheet:

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