

OLD TOWN, NEWBURY
STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT
FEBRUARY 2025

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“Making Newbury a town we can all be proud of”

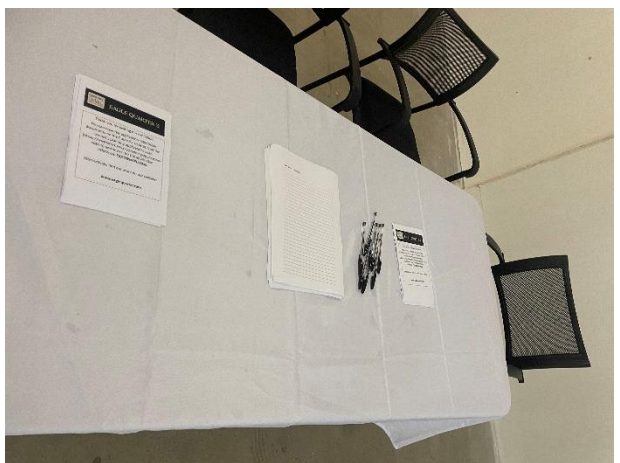
Newbury Town Council Strategy 2019-2024 – Newbury Town Council

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Lochailort Newbury Ltd (LNL) (the applicant) is committed to ensuring that appropriate stakeholder engagement has informed and influenced its proposed masterplanned mixed-use redevelopment of the *Kennet Centre* in Newbury town centre. Accordingly, the purpose of the consultation that has been undertaken was to provide the opportunity for residents, the Town Council and other key stakeholders to express their view about the proposed development, and to influence the proposal prior to its formal submission to the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.2 The applicant has undertaken significant consultation since 2020 for the proposed redevelopment of the shopping centre for a mixed-use scheme comprising commercial/office space and build to rent units.
- 1.3 The applicant undertook a great deal of consultation prior to the submission of Eagle Quarter planning application refs: 21/00379/FULMAJ and 21/00380/FULMAJ. These applications were refused on the 4th of November 2022 and subsequently appealed (refs: APP/W-340W/23/3321517 and APP/W0340/W/233321484). The appeals were withdrawn on the 1st of September 2023.
- 1.4 Eagle Quarter II (ref: 23/02094/FULMAJ) which was submitted following the withdrawal of the appeals built on all consultation held to date with West Berkshire Council, the local community, Town Council, and statutory consultees for the Eagle Quarter applications.
- 1.5 During the course of the above applications the applicant held a number of meetings with officers, members, Town Council, Chamber of Commerce. Details of these can be found in the Statement of Community Involvement reports submitted with the applications.
- 1.6 In January and February 2025, LNL has undertaken a consultation exercise for the Old Town proposals.
- 1.7 The applicant has employed a range of consultation methods since 2020 which together seek to ensure that views and opinions have been sought from a wide range of potentially interested parties. This has included:
 - (a) Meetings with the Town Council;
 - (b) Meetings with the Local Authority;
 - (c) Technical consultee discussions;
 - (d) Individual meetings with interested parties;
 - (e) Public exhibition;
 - (f) Online consultation; and
 - (g) Media engagement.

2.0 PREVIOUS SCHEME EAGLE QUARTER II CONSULTATION

- 2.1 As part of the consultation for Eagle Quarter II the applicant held a live exhibition in a vacant unit of the Kennet Centre following submission of the application.
- 2.2 An exhibition was held over two days on 12 and 13th October between 2 and 6pm. The exhibitions were advertised in the Newbury News newspaper on the 28 September 2023 and 5 October 2023.
- 2.3 The exhibition boards detailed the scheme and members of the applicant team were available to discuss the scheme and answer any questions to members of the public. Images of the exhibition are shown below.



- 2.4 The exhibition boards remained live in the unit for five months between 12 October 2023 and 25 March 2024. At the same time as the exhibition was live, the scheme was available on a website www.eaglequarter.com.

Responses

- 2.5 During the consultation period a total of 403 consultation forms were received. On the application web page on the council’s website a total of 68 comments were received. A total of 93 supported the application, 257 objected, and 121 were either neutral or made comments that were not relevant (including comments received on the planning portal). A petition objecting to the scheme was also submitted against the application.
- 2.6 The key concerns raised included that a) the scheme was not in character with the local area and in particular the historic nature of the market town; heights were too tall, less shops wanted, and more houses wanted.



- 2.7 Key quotes from during the consultation of Eagle Quarter II are listed below.

Newbury Society

“The existing Kennet Centre/ Kennet Shopping forms a large and prominent part of Newbury town centre. It broadly responds to the rest of Newbury town centre in terms of its height, but otherwise is largely a poor design, of little architectural merit, loved by few, and commercially in relative decline over recent years. We do not object to redeveloping the Kennet Centre, and believe this can be a benefit to the town.”

“In order to add positively to Newbury in the long term, and help the town continue as an attractive destination and place to live, any redevelopment here should be sympathetic in design and scale to the surrounding part of the town centre. It should enhance Newbury.”

“We accept that the architecture of the section of the Kennet Centre nearest the cinema is poor. This was part of Phase 1 of the Kennet Centre, and is three-storeys tall.”

“we also have to ask whether the development proposed in these applications would tend to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area as a whole?”

“It is in our view that amenity space is even more necessary in an urban location”

“The Eagle Iron Works of Plenty & Son were not more than three storeys in height, and (apart from the access) were entirely concealed behind the street frontages.”

Town Council – current scheme

“At no point should the Cheap Street elevations exceed the height of the Vue cinema.”

“Market Street is within the town centre conservation area and it is the view of the Heritage Working Group that street elevations in the conservation area should not exceed four storeys in height.”

“The Heritage Working Group welcomes the materials used in the Robert Adam elevations on Bartholomew Street and Cheap Street. However, many of the buildings in this development still propose features and materials which are out of keeping with the existing heritage assets and listed buildings. Berkshire brick, or brick of similar colour and texture, and tile-hung walls, should be features integrated in this development.”

“Plenty’s Eagle Iron Works, which occupied part of this site, were no more than three storeys high.”

“In accordance with Historic England guidance, any proposed development should preserve and enhance the town centre conservation area.”

“our town’s unique charm which lies in its identity as a market town”

Members of the Public

“We want to keep the historic nature of our town”

“Will we call it heritage?”

“With the historic centre please rethink the design”

“Respect the fact that Newbury is a market Town and develop with this in mind”

“Newbury has always been a historic market town, that is the attraction”

“The charm and attraction is the current human scale and age of the buildings”

“The location of the development is in the heart of Newbury’s historic town centre”

“It must be right for the future of Newbury”

- 2.8 The above comments demonstrate the key desire of the town to both redevelop the Kennet Centre, but to create a scheme that reflects the character of the historic market town of Newbury. These have been considered in the design for Old Town, Newbury.

3.0 OLD TOWN

- 3.1 The applicant has taken on board the extensive comments raised during the Eagle Quarter II consultation and a new scheme is proposed altogether – *Old Town*.
- 3.2 Old Town has reinvented the masterplan to include exceptional high quality designed new heritage homes that are sensitive in scale, traditional in design taking inspiration from the historic use of the site and surrounding area, and will still continue to add vitality to the Town Centre. Key changes to the scheme in comparison to Eagle Quarter include:
- (a) Height reduced with a majority of buildings being 2 and 3 storeys with the exception of flats to the south of the site which mirror the Market Scheme (6 storeys) and buildings adjacent to the Vue Cinema that are required to be 5 storeys to cover the unsightly flank wall of the cinema and car park buildings.
 - (b) The proposals are predominantly traditional in design to reflect the historic character of Newbury, but also the historic layout of the site itself.
 - (c) The scheme includes a greater variety of housing types including flats, houses, maisonettes, and duplex maisonettes.

Old Town Exhibition

- 3.3 The applicant has consulted with the local community and stakeholders through an exhibition on site, in the former Laura Ashley unit within the Kennet Centre. A series of events have taken place for the following stakeholders:
- Council officers
 - WBC Officers
 - WBC Members
 - Newbury Town Councillors
 - Newbury Society
 - Local Residents
 - Press
- 3.4 The consultation events took place on 4th and 7th February 2025.

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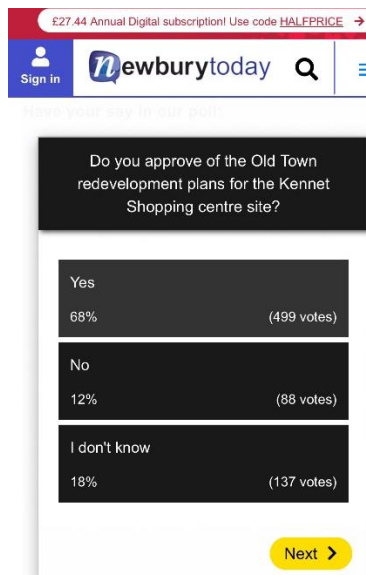


- 3.5 The applicant has promoted the scheme and consultation via the Old Town website (<https://www.oldtownnewbury.com/>), newspapers, and social media.
- 3.6 The media coverage of Old Town is compiled within Appendix 1.
- 3.7 In terms of responses, 50 have been received to date from the exhibition and website, all of which are in support of the proposals. Comments on the new scheme include:
- *“Looks really good and well thought out. Would be good to make the Cinema more in keeping.”*
 - *“Concerns over carpark alleviated.”*
 - *“Well thought out. A celebration to returning what was already there, Reusing existing materials like bricks greatly admired. Looking forward to it.”*
 - *“Impressive - a breath of fresh air.”*
 - *“Much more in keeping with Newbury as a town.”*
 - *“A significant improvement on the EQ design and more in keeping with the needs of the community.”*
 - *“Happy family units have increased. Town Centre evening security is a problem but trust concierge/gates will mitigate the problem.”*
 - *“Very well thought out scheme and will enhance the town.”*
 - *“Much better than previous high rise proposal as long as 6 storey buildings along Market Street have no deep balconies.”*

- *“Very sympathetic and aesthetic to the centre of Newbury will benefit both occupiers and those visiting the town centre.”*
- *“Well done towards diversity of shape, style, finish.”*
- *“Very impressive. Great to see people centric scheme rather than car centric.”*
- *“Love the idea of using old street names, not sure about the name Old Town. So much better. Make sure it looks pretty.”*
- *“Really like the link back to historical styles and town centre mews. Consider EV charging for homes not just vehicles.”*
- *“Love property styles – would like more information on EV charging.”*
- *“Looks good. Add more EV chargers.”*
- *“Newbury lags behind its potential partly because of Kennet Centre this scheme goes a long way to addressing the problem.”*
- *“Consider areas for future older inhabitants, storage for mobility scooters, space for dog exercise.”*
- *“Layout, facilities, heritage are a plus. Reservations about lack of council involvement towards maintenance. Options for low level of noise.”*
- *“Brilliant scheme design and layout. Can only be good for Newbury.”*
- *“Like this proposal that references the history and local vernacular of Newbury.”*
- *“The only weakness to this design is the lack of affordable housing.”*
- *“Like in principal needs looking at to make sure that there are not lurking corners.”*
- *“Sympathetic to town character and environment.”*
- *“Very interesting. Reflects the huge amount of time and work put in.”*
- *“Well done, major step forward, sets a standard for other town centres.”*
- *“Scheme much better suited to small market town, Newbury's Poundbury.”*
- *“Very attractive in keeping with the character of Newbury. Pleased to see GSH included.”*
- *“Fantastic. Fits in with the character of the area. Fully supportive.”*
- *“Very well considered scheme. Has my full endorsement.”*
- *“Time to get this done. Excellent solution.”*

- *“Congratulations on the design and imagination. 200% better than Eagle Quarter.”*
- *“Very attractive design in keeping with an old market town. Strongly in favour.”*
- *“Looks like it belongs in Newbury.”*
- *“Love the idea of bringing old Newbury back.”*
- *“Achieved sense of place.”*
- *“Concept appears good mix of sky and fabric of buildings.”*
- *“Attractive development in keeping with character of market town.”*
- *“Should be congratulated on an excellent scheme exactly what Newbury needs.”*
- *“Beautifully conceived in materials used, scale and vernacular to the rest of our beautiful town.”*
- *“Would like to see building facing Market Street more colour balanced. Perhaps make left side white like the right side. Like the concept.”*

3.8 In addition to the above, a poll for the Newbury News has shown considerable support for the scheme (see below screenshot taken on 11 February 2025):



3.9 Discussions with stakeholders have resulted in a number of changes to the scheme including:

- Alteration to the colour and materials of the external elevations of Market Street.

- Additional screening on the new floor of the MSCP to prevent car lights disturbing properties opposite.
- Levelling of cobbles to help wheelchair users.
- Inclusion of Newbury College for sub-contractor apprenticeships.

3.10 The applicant intends to continue to engage with the local community, technical consultees, stakeholders and interested parties during the application's consideration and determination by the Local Planning Authority.

4.0 SUMMARY

- 4.1 The public consultation has confirmed there to be widespread support for the proposed Old Town development.
- 4.2 The Old Town scheme has drawn on the many comments raised during the consultations for the Eagle Quarter schemes. The result is a scheme of exceptional design quality that relates to the historic character of Newbury. Old Town will replace an out of date shopping centre, which relates poorly to its surroundings, with a bespoke residential-led redevelopment of the highest quality which will, in turn, act as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of Newbury town centre.
- 4.3 Interested parties have provided comment on a range of matters since 2020, which has informed the supporting documentation and technical reports that now accompany the formal planning application for Old Town.
- 4.4 The new consultation events have confirmed that there is widespread support for the proposals across all stakeholder groups.
- 4.5 Given the nature and extent of consultation that has been undertaken, and the manner in which this has demonstrably resulted in amendments to the initial proposals, *National Planning Policy Framework* paragraph 128 is undoubtedly engaged.
- 4.6 This Statement of Community Involvement sets out the extensive steps that the applicant has taken to engage with the Local Authority and wider community from the inception of the design process, and the overwhelming positive feedback that has been received as a result of that consultation.

APPENDIX 1

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Shopping centre plans rejected by council



GETTY IMAGES

Four hundred and twenty seven flats were proposed for the shopping centre site

Patrick O'Hagan

Political Reporter - BBC Radio Berkshire

Niki Hinman

Local Democracy Reporting Service

9 January 2025

A £158 million project to transform an ageing shopping centre site into a residential and retail development with more than 400 flats has been

rejected by a council.

Developer Lochailort had said its plans for the Kennet shopping centre in Newbury, Berkshire would have created jobs and brought millions of pounds to the local economy.

Councillors on West Berkshire Borough's Council's planning committee rejected the proposals, citing a lack of parking, affordable homes and open space.

Lochailort said the decision flew in the face of the government's push to see more homes built on town centre brownfield sites and that it would appeal the decision.

The rejected plans for the 1970s-built shopping complex would have seen all 427 flats on the redeveloped site marketed as build to let properties, with a one bedroom flat going for £1,200 a month, a three bedroom apartment £2,000 a month.

Lochailort said previous build-to-let schemes it had created, including in Reading's Thames Quarter, had proved popular with renters.



| The size and scale of the development was criticised by councillors

The Kennet centre site is a short distance from Newbury's railway station and the developer argued that would mean most of those living there would not need a car.

The company also said 34 new shops built underneath the new flats, would have brought more shoppers into the town.

Director Hugo Haig told the meeting: "We are replacing a shopping centre and those shops are affordable and ready to move into," he said.

"It will bring up to £8.5m additional spending for the town."

The development was rejected by councillors, despite council officers recommending its approval.

Parking was a key issue raised - members of the Newbury Society said 1,168 signatures had been gathered online against the scheme.

West Berkshire Council has been told by the Labour government it needs to build more than 1,000 new homes a year, more than double the amount it was told to build by the previous Conservative administration.

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Plan to build flats on shopping centre refused

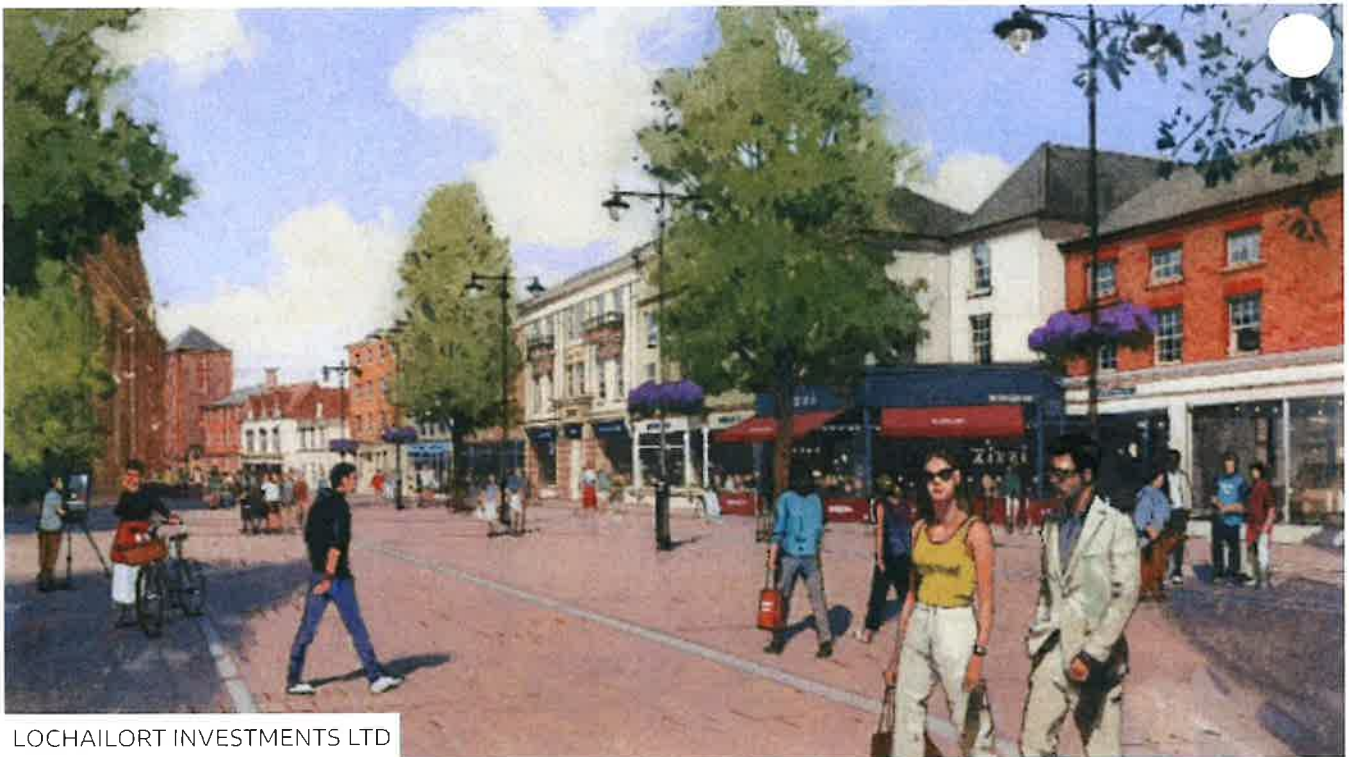
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Shopping centre plans aim to preserve heritage



LOCHAILORT INVESTMENTS LTD

| Those behind the plans say they want to look at the development as a conservation scheme

Patrick O'Hagan

BBC Berkshire Political Reporter

3 hours ago

Just weeks after a £158m scheme to redevelop a town centre was rejected by planners, the project's backers have drawn up new plans to try and win over the doubters.

The new proposals for Newbury's ageing Kennet shopping centre site would see the tallest buildings on the town centre shopping complex drop from eight

storeys to six.

The number of new homes would also be reduced from the previous total of 427 to 317.

Under the new plans the number of car parking spaces on the current Kennet Centre site would rise by more than 100.



Four hundred and twenty seven flats were original proposed for the shopping centre site

As of now, these are proposals, nothing more.

It will be some time before the developers, Lochailort, will be ready to make another attempt at getting them past council planners.

For now it's looking to win over locals' hearts and minds.

Lochailort met stiff resistance last time round, with many saying its previous plan failed to take into account that Newbury is at its heart a small market town.



LOCHAILORT INVESTMENTS LTD

The tallest building in the new development would be reduced from eight storeys to six

A public exhibition has opened in the Kennet Centre so people can see for themselves how the new plan differs from the previous one.

Lochailort's director, Hugo Haig, says the new project is more in keeping with the town's history: "This scheme is very much based on the character of Newbury.

"It is in essence a conservation scheme and the heritage of Newbury runs through the whole project."



LOCHAILORT INVESTMENTS LTD

One of the criticisms directed at the redevelopment is the lack of affordable housing

One thing that hasn't changed under this new set of proposals is the total absence of affordable housing.

This was one of the main reasons West Berkshire Council rejected Lochailort's previous scheme but the developers hope the other changes it is proposing will be enough to bring councillors round to its way of thinking.

West Berkshire Council has been told by the Labour government to build more than 1,000 new homes a year, more than double the current figure.

With the Chancellor Rachel Reeves making it clear that she believes **building new homes, science parks and a third runway at Heathrow** are vital to the economy, the Kennet Centre scheme's backers believe that time and history are very much on their side.

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**BROCKHURST & MARLSTON HOUSE SCHOOLS**

11TH FEBRUARY 2025

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A Round Table Discussion



By Andy Murrill

Good morning – and have we got news for you today!

New plans have been revealed for the dilapidated Kennet Shopping centre – and they couldn't be more different to the controversial high-rise Eagle Quarter recently rejected by council planners.

The new scheme is called Old Town and features individually-designed mews houses and buildings in courtyards aimed to reflect Newbury's heritage.



You can read more on this massive news below, but first we have another exclusive for you.



In what can only be described as a complete design U-turn, **dramatic new plans to redevelop Newbury's Kennet Shopping centre have been revealed.**

Most of the controversial multi-storey flats have gone. And the new plans dial up the heritage.

It is called 'Old Town', dropping the much vaunted 'Eagle Quarter' idea.

In place of the flats are Georgian-style mews houses, all individually designed in a four-acre plot referencing old alleyways, arches and metalwork of the old and pretty parts of Newbury town centre.

[For the full story and more pictures, click here.](#)

Send The Briefing to a friend

Picture of the Day

Kennet Centre redevelopment plans see complete shake up with new designs revealed by developer, Lochailort

By [Niki Hinman Local Democracy Reporter](#)

Published: 06:00, 30 January 2025

In what can only be described as a complete design U-turn, dramatic new plans to redevelop Newbury's Kennet Shopping centre have been revealed.

Most of the controversial multi-storey flats have gone.



Alma Court North in the new plans

And the new plans dial up the heritage.

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It is called 'Old Town', dropping the much vaunted 'Eagle Quarter' idea to, in the words of the architect, "intrinsically knit back into the urban grain of the historic settlement pattern".

In place of the flats are Georgian-style mews houses, all individually designed in a four-acre plot referencing old alleyways, arches and metalwork of the old and pretty parts of Newbury town centre.

Most of the shopping units have gone too – and the developer Lochailort's enthusiastic director Hugo Haig seems evangelical about the possibilities of reinventing town centres away from the old and fading shopping centre model.



The proposed view along Bartholomew Street under the new plans



The current view of the Kennet Shopping centre from Bartholomew Street

His plans – drawn up at the same time as his first effort to put 11-storey blocks of flats on the site – show twisty lanes, mews houses, cycle storage, bespoke designs and a concierge building.



0:18

/

0:29

So he's gone posh and pricey.

The plans were certainly not drawn up at the last minute in response to the latest multi-storey effort being booted out by the council at the end of last year.

ADVERTISING

"I just had a moment of realisation that Newbury doesn't need any more shops," explains Mr Haig.

"I was having a wee dram when I came up with it," he said about his eureka moment of ditching the shops and the high rises.



Artist Mews South

The new plans have 317 'high quality' homes, nine commercial units and four acres of open space.

Three previous attempts to get the £154m high-rise solution, with a shopping alley, through the council planners have failed, with politicians split on deciding their future. Those plans may still go to appeal.

TOP STORIES ON NEWBURY TODAY

- [Welcome to Old Town](#)
- [Shortlist announced for the Newbury Weekly News Best in Business Awards 2024/25](#)
- [Nearly £1,000 raised for youth centre at party attended by Denise van Outen](#)
- [Community production of Disney favourite live on stage this half-term](#)

Mr Haig won't be drawn on a cost plan for the new scheme; he just says it will cost "a lot".

So why the change of direction?

“We have put back character of what was in Newbury before the shopping centre was built,” said Mr Haig.



Plenty's Place

“This scheme is 317 homes, and is 200,000 sq m less than the last Eagle Quarter proposal.

“The previous scheme was designed for build for rent and had a lot of community spaces. This one doesn't. It has more public open space, and a concierge.

“I love them both... they are both good schemes and both would complement the town.”

He describes the new scheme as “conservation charm with heritage assets,” no doubt aimed at pacifying his harsh critics, conservationists The Newbury Society.

“We haven't just used standard railings,” he explains, enthusiastically pointing to hand drawn drawings with different types of railings.



Ashton Thicket

“We looked at the old ordnance survey maps and looked at the old courts that used to be here before the shopping centre was built. So we have put back some heritage.”

He said the Arcade, Saddlers Court and Weavers Yard, which exist already, served as inspiration.

“We ran out of mews designs so we looked a little further and went to London,” he adds.

“We have owned the shopping centre since 2020. There are 50 shops available and 100,000 sq foot of retail available here.

“There is no need to build more shops in Newbury.”



Plenty's Place



Plenty's Place



Smiths Yard

Conservationists have not held back in their disdain for previous plans with some councillors using the ‘over my dead body’ adage in previous meetings.

The blurb for the new plan says the scheme will “enhance the Newbury Conservation Area by restoring the heritage character of this part of the town by removing the existing shopping centre and studying the past to inform the redevelopment”.



The current view of the Kennet Shopping centre from Market Place



The proposed view from Market Place under the new plans

Developers say they want to “create a charming sense of place, ownership, community and belonging and to deliver a unique, exemplary scheme that will enhance the Conservation Area, restoring the identity of this part of Newbury and offer a truly creative take on modern living and to intrinsically knit back into the urban grain of the historic settlement pattern”.

There are 557 car parking spaces, some in the development, others on a new car park level on the existing car park.

Mews houses are not cheap – and this scheme has no affordable housing.



The proposed plan

It is unashamedly upmarket but Mr Haig seems quietly confident the matrix of affordability used to determine these things will fall in his favour.

There is a full range of units, from studio flats to four-bed houses.

“One of the founding principles was to give everything its own front door,” he says. “It allows that bit of open space outside and balconies.”



This was the view of Cheap Street and the proposed Kennet Shopping development in the old plans



This is what the redevelopment of the Kennet Shopping centre would look like from Bear Lane under the old plans



The former plans for the Kennet Shopping centre would have looked like this from Market Street

The new plans are expected to be formally submitted to West Berkshire Council in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, Mr Haig is charming the great and the good of Newbury with personal tours of his plans in an empty shop next door to Caffè Nero in the Kennet Shopping centre, which will be open to the public next week.

It is open on Tuesday (February 4) and next Friday (February 7). Doors open at 3pm, with hourly slots available at 3pm, 4pm, 5pm and 6pm.

You must register and book to attend, which can be done by calling (01635) 40748.

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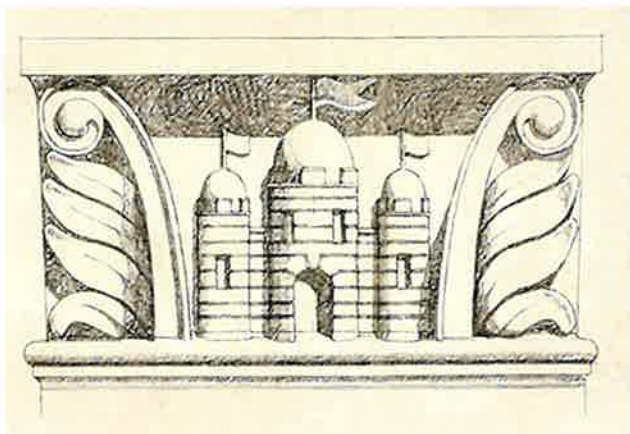
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Eagle Quarter v2, now known as Old Town, Newbury: new scheme announced on 30 January 2025



Over the last few years, debate has raged about the future of Newbury's Kennet Centre.

Background

On one point, virtually all agreed: the Centre needed a facelift, perhaps a very radical one. Unlike wine, cathedrals and Oxbridge colleges, shopping centres don't age well aesthetically: commercially, the signs of decline were becoming increasingly evident as well. Retailers were moving out; Parkway had been opened; the death of the high street was being widely predicted. Then Covid struck. If anything was likely to deal the final death blow to the KC as was, this was surely it.

Shortly before the pandemic, another event took place, largely unnoticed at the time. This was the sale of the Kennet Centre to the developers Lochailort. The timing must have seemed to many to be a black joke. However, it may well have made the decision-making easier. Any plans – if any were indeed entertained – to revitalise the Centre as it stood must have seemed out of the question. A root-and-branch approach was surely now needed.

For several years thereafter, proposals were debated which culminated in the application which was, after two previous sessions were timed out, refused by WBC's District Planning Committee (DPC) on 8 January 2025. This was for a mixed development, with some retail space, but primarily of build-to-rent flats. There were various points of contention, including parking and the lack of affordable housing, but one issue loomed over three all and never went away: the scale.

Compromises were made, discussions were held, petitions were initiated, further drawings were produced. There were disputes over how accurate any one drawing was and what the effect might be were the impression to have been taken from a position a few yards to the left or right. Still the opposition continued, the Newbury Society being at the forefront of this. There were also suggestions from the developers that further erosions would render the project unviable and possibly reduce the possibility of including a number of sustainable features on which they had earlier set so much store.

[This separate article covers the main issues and points of disagreement](#) up until the application

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At that point, the developers effectively had two choices (if one excludes walking away). One was to appeal the refusal; the other was to submit new plans. If they chose to adopt a belt-and-braces approach, they could do both.

I'd always suspected that the latter was more likely: and so it proved. However, my assumption (and that of many others) was that any new plans would merely be a lightly chopped-down version of the old one. New government housing targets and the increasing exhaustion of WBC's officers and members would perhaps get the thing over the line.

How wrong I was.

An inverse proposal

When I first saw the new plans, I first thought there had been some mistake and that I was for some reason being shown an artist's impression of the 19th-century street plan.

As the maps below show, aside from the cinema and the car park, the new layout (right) of "Old Town, Newbury" (OTN), as it's now known, bears many similarities to the late-Victorian layout (left). More surprisingly, most of the high elevations have disappeared. The result is a mixed residential development; and on a scale which, rather than dwarfing, is in some cases dwarfed by the nearby buildings. In many ways, the two proposals are inverses of each other.



The developers' summary describes the aims of the new proposals as follows:

- To enhance the Newbury Conservation Area by restoring the heritage character of this part of the town by removing the existing shopping centre and studying the past to inform the redevelopment.
- To embrace the Conservation Area's character to create a charming sense of place

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- To deliver a scheme with historical reference balanced with the remit of modern living expectations for living accommodation, sense of place, ownership and belonging within a development rich in charm, character, and amenity.
- To create a special community with a broad range of beautifully crafted homes that is highly sustainable in terms of build and location.

As currently envisaged, the new scheme has 317 residential units (as opposed to 427 before) and 575 car parking spaces (as opposed to 475). Options are being kept open as to whether the homes will be for rent, for sale or a mixture of the two. There will also be seven retail units (there were 34 before but the proposed new ones are larger).

A planning application is expected imminently. The matter will then be out for the usual consultation after which it will probably come before WBC's DPC again for approval. The members will be there confronted with a very different proposition from what they encountered before.

Issues and artwork

Some issues remain. The current scheme doesn't, for instance, include any provision for affordable housing. This is a matter on which the officers and members will have to take a view. If this is accepted, hopefully a S106 agreement will provide some money toward creating these elsewhere.

The issue of parking and traffic will also need to be revisited. WBC's Highways' team was pretty consistent on its views about accepting the implications of this for the last development but the policies and calculators will have to be got out again.

Why the change of heart by Lochailort, particularly as new government targets might have made an appeal more likely to succeed? Perhaps Liz Truss is the answer, interest-rate rises having made the build-to-rent model for this development less viable.

It has also been increasingly clear that there was local opposition to the scheme. The compromises that were agreed risked giving neither party what they really wanted. The economic circumstances had changed. Given all this, the OTN plans would have been submitted anyway, regardless of what had happened at the DPC.

The OTN proposals are clearly the result of a good deal of work. There are, for instance, a *lot* of drawings accompanying them. The only thing I can draw is an elephant from the back and I generally have to tell people what it is, so I wouldn't see myself as an expert. Even I, however, can tell that these weren't all knocked off in the last few weeks. Indeed, it seems the plans have been being worked on since about mid 2023. It was a slow task as well, each being done by hand and then digitised.

Appeal, or not?

Lochailort has said it will appeal the original refusal. It's the developer's prerogative to have more than one plan to choose from. Each of the schemes has its advantages. Moreover, their respective viabilities depends on the prevailing economic circumstances (including interest rates) at the time.

However, there has been the suggestion that this appeal, and its costs and uncertainties for both parties, might be paused if WBC proceeds swiftly to getting the new ones approved. Progress

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If this supposition is correct, the council is in an interesting position. It would surely prefer to have only one approved plan on the table as it at least then knows which will get built I also doubt it want to fight an appeal: the officers certainly don't. as they supported the scheme that was rejected on 8 January. If it seems OTN is likely to find support and be deliverable, speed would be required to ensure that this was the one that happened.

A quick decision would also be to the liking of the nearby businesses. All of these have suffered much uncertainty in recent years and are near a shopping centre that's not exactly bursting with customers. Then there's the actual construction time, which will produce disruptions of its own. The upshot, with either scheme, will be more customers on their doorsteps, although many businesses might worry if they can survive that long on the edge of a building site.

On this point, the OTN scheme might be the more welcome: with about 200,000 square feet less of building, it's expected that the work will take less time than the four years suggested for Eagle Quarter. In either case, much will depend on how well the developers engage with local residents, businesses and Newbury and WB Councils to mitigate the impacts of the work and to ensure that the conditions – of which there will be a lot – are properly discharged.

What next?

Once the plans have been submitted and validated, the officers and members, informed by public opinion, will decide. I thought – as did several members of the DPC, and of the Western Area Planning Committee (WAPC) that first considered the matter – that the previous plan though not ideal was the best that was likely to be offered. Lochailort has surprised us. Is *this* now the best on offer? Might there even be a plan C?

OTN surely addresses the biggest single concern, that of scale. It also provides architectural aspects that were lacking from earlier plans and which will be to the liking of erstwhile opponents. Parking issues seem also to have been addressed. There is, however, bound to be discussion about affordable housing.

"We have to wait for the actual application to arrive and for officers to review," WBC Councillor and DPC and WAPC member Adrian Abbs told Penny Post after having seen the proposals. "However, what I've seen appears positive. Should it arrive for discussion and possible approval at committee, I'll be doing what I can to get the best result possible for Newbury and West Berkshire. Every application must be looked at without predetermination, but this one seems to have a lot going for it."

As soon as the application is validated by WBC, we'll publicise the details. The best way you can make your views known is to comment via the official process explained on WBC's site. Residents can also contact the [Newbury Society](#), their councillors at [Newbury Town Council](#) or [their WBC ward members](#).

More information can also be found [on the project's website](#).

Two dates for a public exhibition of the plans have also been arranged, on Tuesday 4 and Friday 7 February. These will take place at 139 Bartholomew Street (next to Caffè Nero) with hourly slots at 3pm, 4pm, 5pm and 6pm. Advance booking and registration is essential: call 01635 40748.

Will it get approved? I thought the last application would, and I was wrong. Let's see...



Author: [Brian Quinn](#)

Brian Quinn January 30, 2025 7:00 am No Comments

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New 317-home heritage scheme proposed for Kennet Centre site

Posted by [Alan Bunce](#) | Jan 30, 2025 | [Berkshire](#), [BTR](#), [Development](#), [Environment](#), [Mixed Use](#), [New Build](#), [New Homes](#), [Newbury](#), [News](#), [News](#), [Plan](#), [Politics](#), [Residential](#), [Retail](#), [Thames Tap](#), [Thames Valley](#) | [0](#) |



Newbury’s ailing Kennet Shopping Centre could be replaced by a development of period-style housing in the latest twist in the saga of redeveloping the site.

Developer Lochailort has unveiled its latest plan called Old Town, following [the refusal of its Eagle Quarter development by West Berkshire Council](#), five years after it was first proposed.

Old Town comprises 317 homes, a mix of houses, flats and maisonettes, likely to include both Build-to-Rent and market housing. There will be a diverse combination of styles with several private courtyards. However, all the homes will have their own front door.

Just five retail units are included in the scheme and two existing ones will be refurbished. The tallest building will have six storeys.

The existing Vue Cinema will be retained along with the multi-storey car park, which will be enlarged, but the scheme will predominantly be modern homes in traditional styles. In recognition of the site’s one time Eagle Works, iron work will feature throughout Old Town.

Lochailort director Hugo Haig, who spoke exclusively to Thames Tap about Old Town [in this podcast](#), said: “We are thrilled to be able to release our new ‘Od Town’ scheme for the redevelopment of the Kennet Shopping Centre.

“We have been working on it for some considerable time in the background. We have taken on board a lot of the criticisms of the previous scheme where the big concern was that there were too many flats and that they were too high.

“This scheme has been very significantly reduced. It is six storeys at its highest and consists of mainly houses.

“It is a heritage-based scheme, formulated on what was on the site before the Kennet Centre was built – it has oodles of character and is truly unique.

“I am unaware of any other development in the country where a developer is proposing to remove an outdated, ugly, and unloved shopping centre and replace it with an exceptionally carefully crafted, conservation housing scheme.”

You can hear much more about the scheme from Mr Haig in [our exclusive podcast](#) with him.

Mr Haig said architects at Woods Hardwick initially hand drew the scheme before those drawings were computerised.

Its aims and objectives statement says the scheme seeks to “enhance the Newbury Conservation Area by restoring the heritage character of this part of the town by removing the existing shopping centre and studying the past to inform the redevelopment.”

Despite the traditional appearance, homes will have modern sustainability features including ground source heat pumps which will provide low-cost energy. The precise mix of BTR and market housing is yet to be decided and could be up to 100 per cent of either.

Mr Haig told Thames Tap he will continue to pursue the appeal over the Eagle Quarter scheme in parallel with the Old Town development. If both are eventually given permission the chosen project is likely to depend upon variable economic factors such as interest rates and yields.

Visit: <https://www.oldtownnewbury.com>

Video Player

00:00

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You can listen to the podcast [here](#).

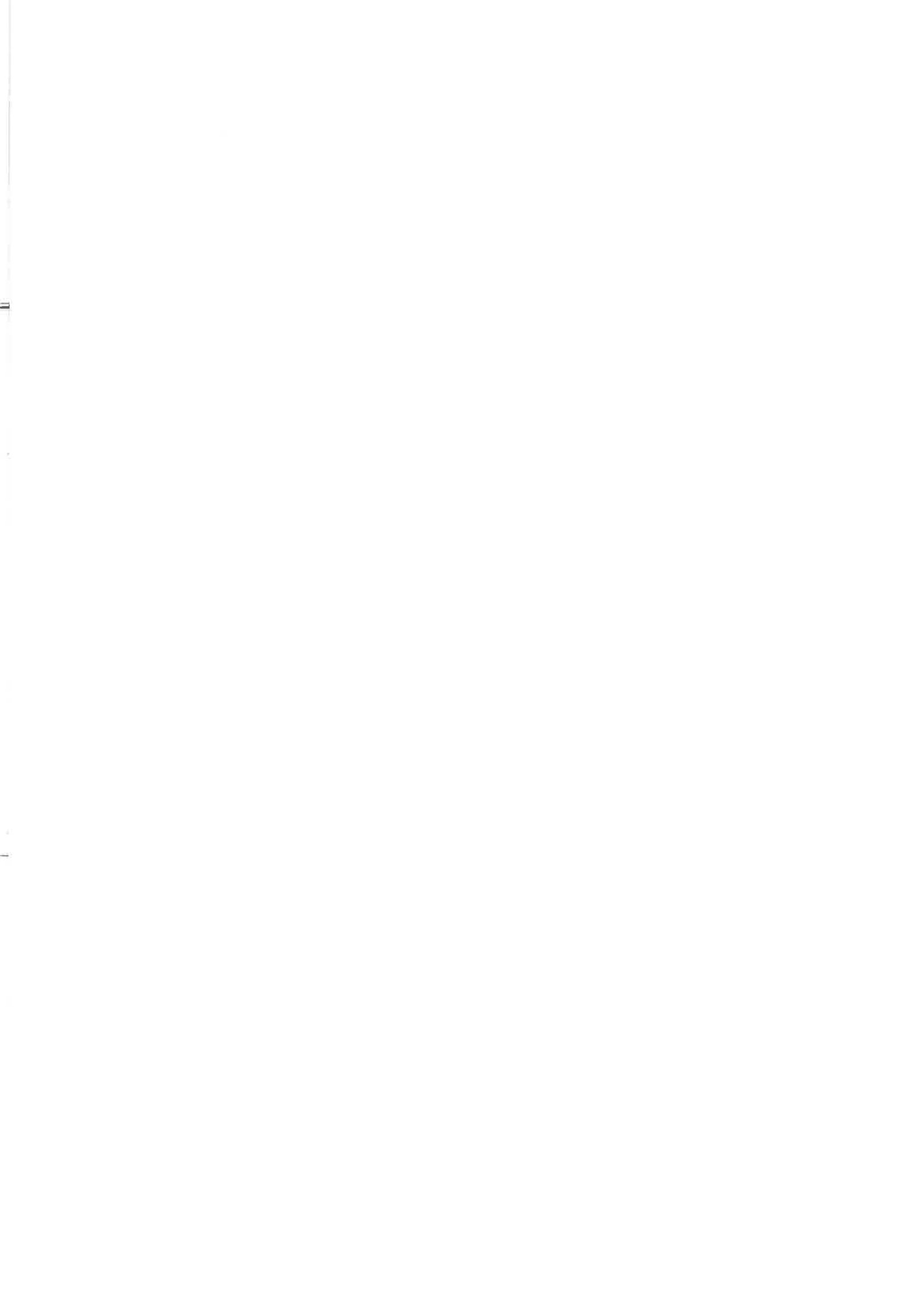
Gallery images 1-8 below show scenes from Old Town. Image 9 is Hugo Haig.

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This area would be called Artist's Mews (South) and the town hall is visible behind



This area is Alma Court North and features a range of individually designed houses sympathetic to Newbury's past

WELCOME TO OLD TOWN

Eagle Quarter replaced by scheme with less high-rise, fewer homes, more parking, mews houses and courtyards

IN what can only be described as a complete design U-turn, dramatic new plans to redevelop Newbury's Kennet Shopping centre have been revealed.

Most of the controversial multi-storey flats have gone. And the new plans dial up the heritage.

It is called 'Old Town', dropping the much vaunted 'Eagle Quarter' idea to, in the words of the architect, "intrinsically knit back into the urban grain of the historic settlement pattern".

In place of the flats are Georgian-style mews houses, all individually

By NIKI HINMAN
Local Democracy Reporter
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designed in a four-acre plot referencing old alleyways, arches and metalwork of the old and pretty parts of Newbury town centre.

Most of the shopping units have gone too – and the developer Lochailort's enthusiastic director Hugo Haig seems evangelical about the possibilities of reinventing town centres away from the old and fading shopping

centre model.

His plans – drawn up at the same time as his first effort to put 11-storey blocks of flats on the site – show twisty lanes, mews houses, cycle storage, bespoke designs and a concierge building.

So he's gone posh and pricey.

The plans were certainly not drawn up at the last minute in response to the latest multi-storey effort being booted out by the council at the end of last year.

"I just had a moment of realisation that Newbury doesn't need any more

shops," explains Mr Haig.

"I was having a wee dram when I came up with it," he said about his eureka moment of ditching the shops and the high rises.

The new plans have 217 'high quality' homes, nine commercial units and four acres of open space.

Three previous attempts to get the £154m high-rise solution, with a shopping alley, through the council planners have failed, with politicians split on deciding their future. Those plans may still go to appeal.

Mr Haig won't be drawn on a cost

plan for the new scheme; he just says it will cost "a lot".

So why the change of direction?

"We have put back character of what was in Newbury before the shopping centre was built," said Mr Haig.

"This scheme is 317 homes, and is 200,000 sq m less than the last Eagle Quarter proposal.

"The previous scheme was designed for build for rent and had a lot of community spaces. This one doesn't. It has more public open space, and a concierge.

■ Continued on page 3



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The proposed development viewed from Bartholomew Street

Old Town, new look

Continued from front page
"I love them both... they are both good schemes and both would complement the town."

He describes the new scheme as "conservation charm with heritage assets," no doubt aimed at pacifying his harsh critics, conservationists The Newbury Society.

"We haven't just used standard railings," he explains.

"We looked at the old ordnance survey maps and looked at the old courts that used to be here before the shopping centre was built, so we have put back some heritage."

He said the Arcade, Saddlers Court and Weavers Yard served as inspiration.

"We ran out of mews designs so we looked a little further and went to London," he adds.

"We have owned the shopping centre since 2020. There are 50 shops available and 100,000 sq ft of retail available."

Conservationists have not held back in their disdain for previous plans.

The blurb for the new plan says the scheme will "enhance

the Newbury Conservation Area by restoring the heritage character of this part of the town by removing the existing shopping centre and studying the past to inform the redevelopment."

There are 557 car parking spaces, some in the development, others on a new car park level on the existing car park.

Mews houses are not cheap - and this scheme has no affordable housing.

It is unashamedly upmarket, but Mr Haig seems quietly confident the matrix of affordability used to determine these things will fall in his favour.

There is a full range of units, from studio flats to four-bed houses.

The new plans are expected to be formally submitted to West Berkshire Council in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, Mr Haig is holding personal tours of his plans in an empty shop next door to Caffè Nero in the Kennet Shopping centre, which will be open to the public next week.

See more pictures of the Old Town scheme on pages 28&29

Dance teacher Sonia is the people's choice

Thatcham instructor receives national award at prestigious ceremony

By MIREK GOSNEY
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A THATCHAM dance teacher has received her first-ever national award win.

Dance instructor Sonia Brown has received One Dance UK's People's Choice Award at a ceremony hosted at the Birmingham Hippodrome on Friday.

Her independent dance school Dance with Sonia Brown offers jazz, tap and ballet classes for adults, specialising in over-50s, in Thatcham, Newbury and Reading.

"We're still in a state of shock," said Ms Brown, who lives in Thatcham.

"This is our first-ever award and we're not sure we can go any bigger."

"Receiving this award means so much more than an acknowledgment of our hard work over the past six years."

Ms Brown was put forward by her dancers, setting her against other industry heavyweights.

"I was up against dance studios, professional performing companies, choreographers, casting directors, people who do research."

"It literally is open to anyone



Sonia Brown with her administrator and dancer mum Gill Brown

from the sector," she continued.

"This would not have been possible without my fantastic and fabulous dancers. We are

one big family."

But thanks to further lobbying from family and friends, she made it to the final three and was invited to the cere-

mony - where she says never expected to win.

"I made the final for the same award for People's Choice in 2022," she added.

"I sat the entire way through the [2025] awards going 'well, it was nice coming up but didn't think I'd win again'."

"So, I was very shocked when my name got called up."

Ms Brown founded her school in 2019. But she has been dancing since she was two-years-old and started teaching at 17.

She currently gives classes at Newbury Rugby Club and twice a week at Thatcham Parish Hall, with some her pupils attending for up to five years.

The One Dance UK Awards is the most prestigious national awards event for the dance sector.

The People's Choice Award is granted based on the highest number of public votes.

This would not have been possible without my fantastic and fabulous dancers. We are one big family

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Strangler could now face prison

A MAN who strangled a woman until she passed out has apparently blown his chance of avoiding prison.

Christopher Flynn's victim was moments from death during the brutal attack. Reading Crown Court heard at the time.

The 53-year-old, of Wilson Close in Compton, admitted assault by beating and intentional strangulation.

Flynn also has convictions for 25 other offences, including assaults causing actual bodily harm, harassment and breaching a restraining order.

Nevertheless Judge Neil Millard gave him a chance to stay out of prison in November 2023, sentencing him to 18 months imprisonment suspended for two years.

On Wednesday, January 22, Flynn was summoned to appear before the same judge - having breached the suspended sentence order by committing a fresh offence.

However, he did not appear.

His solicitor, Robert Jacques, told the court that his client had been in touch the previous day and intended to be present in order to be sentenced.

Judge Millard said that he was prepared to give Flynn more time to attend court.

However, Mr Jacques, pointed out that Flynn was due to be sentenced soon for his latest offending which occurred in breach of the suspended sentence order.

He added: "Given the breaches, and given that there is a committal for sentence on March 10, we know where this is going; we know it is inevitable."

Judge Millard agreed the most practical option would be for the breach and the latest offending to be dealt with on the same occasion. He extended Flynn's bail and adjourned sentencing until Monday, March 10.

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NEWBURY NEWS



The Old Town proposal is totally different to the Eagle Quarter



How the Kennet Shopping centre looks now



Houses would be individually designed



Lanes would link up through the Old Town



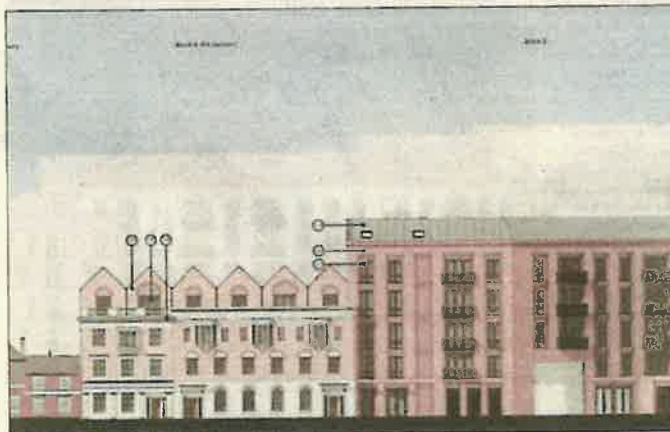
Parking spaces outside the proposed homes



And aerial view of the proposed Old Town



Flats in the original Eagle Quarter design



The original Eagle Quarter plans with the multi-storey flats behind



How the Eagle Quarter would have looked from Bear Lane

NEWBURY NEWS



Mews houses in the proposed development

A glimpse into the future of Newbury

How the town would look if Old Town is approved

THE Newbury Weekly News can today show you what Newbury's Kennet Shopping centre could look like if new plans are given the go-ahead.

In a dramatic design U-turn, the plans now show Georgian-style mews houses, all individually designed.

Most of the controversial multi-storey flats have gone and the redevelopment would be called Old Town - not Eagle Quarter.

And most of the shopping units have gone too. Instead the new plans, revealed for the first time today, show

By SARAH BOSLEY
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@newburytoday

twisty lanes, mews houses, cycle storage, bespoke designs and a concierge building.

For the full story, see our front page.

Meanwhile, here are some of the images that show you what the development could look like if these plans, which are expected to be submitted to West Berkshire Council shortly, are approved.

A public exhibition on the redevelopment is being held next week.

It is open on Tuesday (February 4) and next Friday (February 7).

Doors open at 3pm, with hourly slots available at 3pm, 4pm, 5pm and 6pm.

You must register and book to attend, which can be done by calling (01635) 40748.

The exhibition is being held at 139 Bartholomew Street located next to Caffè Nero, at the Kennet Shopping centre.

You can view the new proposals and members of Lochallort's team will be there to answer any questions.



Above, how the Kennet Shopping centre looks now from Bartholomew Street and, below, how it will look after Old Town is built



A view of the proposed development from Market Place

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Council call for £16m to avoid going into the red

West Berks is asking Government for a loan

WEST Berkshire Council is asking for a £16m Government handout to stave off going into debt.

And the green bin charge will go up to £75 in top council tax band properties, and down for those under band D, generating another £140,000 for the cash-strapped authority.

Its cash reserves are now projected to dip to around £2m... that's £5m below its own safety net.

But, council costs will continue to be more than its income this year - with a starting deficit of £12.1m.

It means that West Berkshire has had to find further savings to set a balanced budget and it said it has identified nine saving and income generating proposals.

The council has found £3.7m of savings which don't require public consultation and included £1.2m that do.

On top of that, there is a further £5.5m of savings being assessed, meaning another £1.7m needs to be found.

It has already stated that a 4.99 per cent council tax increase, the max-

By NIKI HINMAN
Local Democracy Reporter
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@newburytoday

imum allowed, will happen and the £12.1m figure is based on that.

And the council has said it wants to pay the Government back - if granted the £16m - once it sells some of its commercial property investments.

Those are worth around £60m, and include supermarkets and business park buildings.

"This budget reflects the harsh reality of the current financial climate that faces all councils across the country," said Iain Cottingham (Lib Dem, Thatcham Central), executive member for finance.

"As the demand and cost of statutory services that we provide to the most vulnerable residents in West Berkshire continues to rise, we continue to find innovative ways, such as AI, to improve our financial efficiency."

Continued on page 3



Marina Puxley, aged four, and Archer Puxley, one, survey the snowdrops at Welford Park with Emma Rudland-Burrows. Ref: 06-1325N

A magic carpet of snowdrops at Welford

WHITE snowdrops are blooming at Welford Park, hinting that spring is on its way.

Welford Park, the home of TV's *Great British Bake Off*, has been showing off its blankets of blooms for many

years, raising money for good causes.

The dainty flowers thrive among the five-acre beech wood and along the banks of the River Lambourn as it winds its way through the glorious grounds of the country house.

You can enjoy the Welford snowdrops from 11am to 4pm every Wednesday to Sunday, until March 2.

See pages 28 and 29 for more pictures and the full story.

Public reacts to new Kennet Shopping centre plan

THE first public presentations of new plans for redeveloping the Kennet Shopping centre have been taking place in Newbury.

Developer Lochallort's Old Town plans have ditched the controversial high-rise flats of Eagle Quarter and replaced them with Georgian-style mews houses.

There are also fewer commercial units and several lanes connecting

them all to the town centre.

The Vue cinema, as well as The Newbury and The Catherine Wheel pubs, will all be retained.

Lochallort held its first public presentation on Tuesday, with some visitors calling the plans "impressive" and "a step in the right direction" when compared to the Eagle Quarter scheme.

Others were concerned that Old

Town contained no plans for affordable housing and that it was too "twice and country" to attract young professionals.

Our reporters went along to hear what residents think of the new proposals.

Turn to pages 8, 9 and 10 to read more and to see some images of what the development would look like if it goes ahead.

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NEWBURY NEWS

Residents give thumbs up to Old Town plans

Proposals that would change the face of Newbury are met with approval

By CAMERON BLACKSHAW
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NEWBURY residents have had their initial say on the new proposals to redevelop Newbury's Kennet Shopping centre.

Developer Lochailort's Old Town plans have ditched the controversial high-rise flats of Eagle Quarter and replaced them with Georgian-style mews houses, fewer commercial units and several lanes connecting them all to the town centre.

After revealing the plans last week, Lochailort held its first public presentation of the scheme on Tuesday afternoon.

We spoke to those present to find out their thoughts on Old Town, which would radically change the look and feel of Newbury town centre.

Jan Ellis lives with her husband David in a town centre property facing Victoria Park.

Mrs Ellis said she liked everything about the plans, including its design, character and layout.

"You would want to live



Hugo Haig of Lochailort explains the plans

Ref: 06-1525F

there if you could afford it," she said.

"It is impressive and a breath of fresh air. It is just a wonderful development."

She described the previous Eagle Quarter plans as "truly awful" and "depressing", but thought that Old Town would "make Newbury come up in the world" if built.

She didn't think the lack of affordable housing was an issue as she said "there is enough social housing around".

She added: "This is obviously going to be more upmarket I suppose, and there's nothing wrong with that."

Tony Linden, who has previously served as a West Berkshire councillor, said that Old Town was an "improvement" on the previous plans.

He said: "We can see that the Kennet Centre is falling to pieces and we need to get the right mix [of commercial and residential properties] in and some businesses may have to move, which is sad, but we need

to look into the long-term interests of the area.

"We've got to realise that Newbury is a large town. It is not a city and it never will be, and you need to be able to attract more people."

Mr Linden said he was pleased with the proposals, but he wanted assurances on improvements to infrastructure and the inclusion of affordable housing in the scheme.

Lifelong Newbury resident Hilary Bowsher said it was a "shame" that the Kennet Shopping centre was not "fulfilling its potential anymore".

She said: "I think it is unrealistic at this stage to hope that the Kennet Centre as it stands can be reinvigorated for today's economic situation."

Speaking of Old Town, Mrs Bowsher said: "Many more people feel like this is not an affront to their sensibilities."

"They felt that the previous proposal was too big of a change for an incredibly historic area with a lot of culture and a lot of history within a conservation area."

"I don't think that should be misunderstood as not being



One of the images of the proposed development

open to change. It just felt too much of a change that wasn't appropriate for Newbury."

She felt the scale of the new proposals were more appropriate to the town and hoped that they would help Newbury to flourish economically.

Bob Dodridge, a retiree who worked as the chief architect for fast food chain Wimpy for 30 years, was "very impressed" with the proposals and said he "looked forward" to a planning application being submitted.

A lifelong resident in the area, Mr Dodridge felt that the Old Town scheme recalled Newbury's past and is "a step in the right direction" when compared to Eagle Quarter.

He compared Old Town favourably to Poundbury, the experimental urban extension on the outskirts of Dorchester spearheaded by King Charles.

Edward Marriage thought it

was a "vast improvement" upon previous plans to redevelop the Kennet Shopping centre, but wanted more information on whether the properties would be for sale or to rent.

He felt the Eagle Quarter plans were too "congested" and "dense" while Old Town feels "more relaxed and spread out".

His father Chris Marriage was unsure whether the Old Town development would attract young professionals to Newbury.

"Is this too twee and country to attract the urban high-flyer into the town?" he asked.

A second public presentation is taking place tomorrow (Friday) within the empty shop next door to Caffè Nero in the Kennet Shopping centre.

There are slots available at 3pm, 4pm, 5pm and 6pm. You must register to attend - call (01635) 40748.

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Your views

POST: Newspaper House, Faraday Road, Newbury, RG14 2AD EMAIL: editor@newburynews.co.uk

CHRISTIAN Viewpoint

All you need is love

WE have just entered February; not many people's favourite month of the year. Unless perhaps you have a birthday coming up, what exactly is there to look forward to in this dark, cold and rainy month?

As someone once said to me: "The only good thing about February is that it's the shortest month of the year."

What is there to look forward to?

Well, there's Valentine's Day. It's just over a week away.

Now is the time to get your card(s) before the only ones left in the shops are all the rejects that no one else wants!

On Valentine's Day we celebrate love – the love we have for, and receive from, those closest to us.

And, perhaps more significantly, many people send cards and messages to those who aren't close to them yet, but they'd like them to be!

Our love is but a reflection of God's love. Just as on Valentine's Day many people are looking for love, so God, who is love, is looking for us. He has not sent us a card. He sent us his Son.

The Bible says: "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world."

In the middle of a gloomy February, and in the midst of a broken and hurting world, what better to focus on than the God of love, who has coming looking for us.

REV WILL HUNTER SMART
Rector, St Nicolas Newbury and St Mary Speen

I'm generally in favour of new Old Town plan

I AM writing in a personal capacity to express my general support for the newly-announced development plan for the Kennet Centre.

It addresses the many grave objections to the previous rejected scheme, and is much closer to the design principles which we had always hoped would be adopted. The buildings are of reasonable height and a mixture of flats, maisonettes and houses of varied architectural design.

In this respect, they should fit in well with the architectural pattern of Newbury town centre, as a market town which developed gradually over a several centuries.

The proposed new storey to the Kennet Centre car park will go some way to allay our fears on parking.

The district planning committee did well to reject the previous scheme, and I commend in particular those councillors who made up the 5-4 majority.

Construction of the Kennet Centre in the 1960s and 1970s was a planning disaster for Newbury, involving destruction of six listed buildings (one being Grade II*), and it was always our hope that any replacement should reflect Newbury's general character.

These new proposals should do so.

ANTHONY PICK
Andover Road Newbury

We want the Kennet Centre lovely like it was

WHEN is the company that wants to redevelop the Kennet Centre going to realise that the people of Newbury do not want it?

What they want is shops and food outlets in the Kennet Centre. Why can't they make the centre the lovely shopping destination it once

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talk to us

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DEADLINE: MONDAY NOON

can be built in any one development?



When cars could park in Newbury's Market Place

Market Place used to be a bustling area

DO you remember when the Market Place was bustling with activity during the daytime? Handy 30-minute parking. A convenient taxi rank outside the Corn Exchange and shops rather than a glut of restaurants (some of them struggling to survive).

I walked through the Market Place recently and apart from a couple of dossers, it was just an empty void.

BRIAN BURGESS
Andover Road Newbury

It seems the developer when faced with such strident opposition had a very well developed Plan B in hand, in case everything went wrong.

Such as councillors objecting. I do wish the previous Conservative administration at our beloved council had such clarity of thought when faced with the omni-shambles that was the London Road Industrial Estate, especially where the issues of drainage and the football pitch were concerned.

If we want to avoid another Eagle Quarter debacle perhaps it would be a good idea to put a limit in the planning regulations that puts a maximum number of floors that

Put a limit on number of storeys in buildings

I THOUGHT your front page last week was very good.

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My Newbury



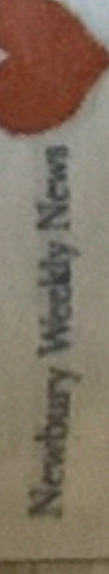
THIS My Newbury picture of canal boats on the Kennet and Avon at Aldermaston Wharf, Padworth, was taken by Tracey Godsmark.

Why not take some inspiration from this and send the Newbury Weekly News and Newburytoday some of your photographs?

They can be of anything - the weather, events you are attending or what's happening in and around West Berkshire.

If you have a picture that you would like to submit for consideration, please send it to editor@newburynews.co.uk. Remember to let us know where the picture was taken and by whom.

It may then be published online at www.newburytoday.co.uk or in the Newbury Weekly News and our Instagram and Facebook pages.



You POST: New

process that is local planning and not included in the Delivery Plan.

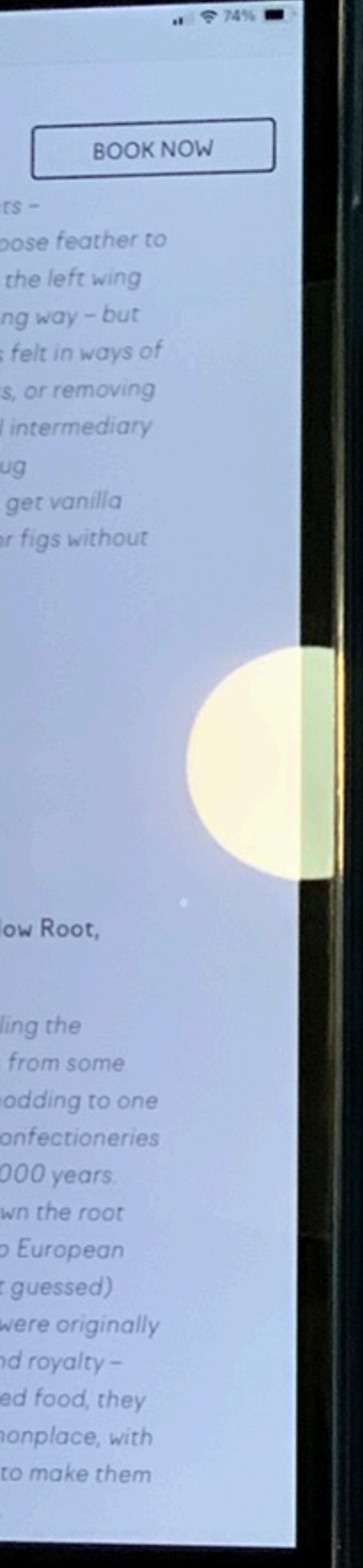
4. If major PDL sites this why we seem to over longer-term provision of infrastructure planned for:

Peak traffic volume upgrades, parking services, GP surgeries, pharmacies, food fresh water provision specialist/ adaptable affordable and social nursing beds, education and adult social care employment space prevention, spatial water drainage, of wildlife habitats.

Provision of these required for development sustainable.

5. There is a lack of Planning Document guide Newbury to centre, out of town. There are to Newbury Town D (2018) does not give guidance for the Bond Riverside. SPDF has been can.

6. Newbury Town Masterplan is not therefore not a consideration for



Your views

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process that is undertaken by a local planning authority. They are not included in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

4. If major PDL sites are excluded is this why we seem to be muddled over longer-term planning for Newbury? Are services and provision of infrastructure well planned for?

Peak traffic volumes, highways upgrades, parking provision, bus services, GP surgeries, dentistry, pharmacies, foul sewage upgrades, fresh water provision, specialist/adapted housing, affordable and social housing, affordable private care and nursing beds, education, children and adult social care, retail space, employment space, flood prevention, sustainable surface water drainage, open space, wildlife habitats.

Provision of these aspects is required for development to be sustainable.

5. There is a lack of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) to guide Newbury town planning - centre, out of centre, and out of town. There are two. Sandford is the only site with an SPD (2015) and Newbury Town Design Statement (2018) does not give quality design guidance for the Kennet Centre or Bond Riverside. Bond Riverside SPD has been cancelled.

6. Newbury Town Centre Masterplan is not an SPD, therefore not a material consideration for planning

applications. The West Berkshire Strategic Vision to 205, mostly Newbury and Thatcham, fails to mention the Kennet Centre.

7. Modern planning gives great weight to quality design. Local Plan Reviews (LPR) are expected to include Design Guide and Model Design Codes. Our LPR does not. The current Design SPD is 2006 and does not include all the aspects of built form like building heights.

8. Thankfully the NPPF says if these are lacking the LPA should revert to those within the NPPF and NPPG. With the National Design Guide (2019) and the National Model Design Code (2021), councillors can expect future designs for key sites such as the Kennet Centre and Bond Riverside to comply with these excellent documents.

PAULA SAUNDERSON
River Walk
Newbury

Who would be liable if I fell on icy bridge?

ON the subject of the icy bridge connecting Theale and Calcot (*Newbury Weekly News*, January 23) and the quote from West Berkshire Council.

"It only treats footbridges listed in Appendix S of its Winter Service Plan and where the criteria for treatment has been met. These include Monkey Bridge (Newbury) and Northcroft River

(Newbury)" ... etc.

I had the pleasure of crossing both these icy, and in places, snow-compacted bridges during the two-week freeze earlier in the month, and they were not gritted.

I'm lucky in that I'm a reasonably sprightly pensioner of 68, but I witnessed people of my age and younger struggling to cross both these bridges that connect Northcroft Leisure Centre to the south of Newbury.

What happened to West Berkshire Council's Appendix S of its Winter Service Plan here then?

Would West Berkshire Council have been liable if I, and others, had slipped up and broken bones?

NEWBURY PENSIONER
Name and address supplied

The elephant in the room is Gaza, Mr Dillon

IT was with interest that I read Mr Dillon's column last week where he reflects on the horrors that we have faced over the last 80 years, but strangely he failed to mention the genocide that has been going on in Gaza.

He then goes on to praise schools that are keeping alive the hope that it never happens again where it blatantly is, in Gaza.

Certain members of the global community have failed to heed the experiences of the past and is it not time we brought this community to

account?

If we do not, we might well fall foul of gross negligence and hypocrisy.

There is an elephant in the room and it is mightily savage and morally bankrupt.

JIM CROCKATT
Newbury

Local government change not the answer

I CANNOT give any positive endorsement to the major changes to local government that would affect Hampshire.

Surely voters must provide approval before any form of action is taken?

It cannot be democratic or accountable to make these developments and decisions without recourse and acceptance of the voting public.

It is difficult to support the new forms of government.

It will not provide more local democracy and better, cost-efficient services, just more autocratic and costly administration.

All we shall get will be big councils with even less thought and understanding for the electorate.

I want more freedom and responsibility. These developments are not the answer.

K WATTS
Tadley

Pet of the Week



Name: Sage
Breed: Mixed breed
Owner: Hailey
From: Newbury
Likes/dislikes: Sage loves treats, climbing, being naughty and chasing her sister Pumpkin. Sage dislikes the word no, following commands and being rushed.

newburytoday.co.uk

COMING UP THIS FEBRUARY

BONKERS BINGO - FRIDAY 28TH
7.30PM-9PM

30+ CLUB - SAT 15TH
4PM-8PM

80's 90's

SCAN QR CODE FOR MORE DETAILS

Reloaded BAR February

THURSDAY	THURSDAY
6 Back to the 80's Reloaded Bar 7.30pm-11pm	20 Back to the 80's Reloaded Bar 7.30pm-11pm
FRI	FRI
7 Back to the 80's Reloaded Bar 7.30pm-11pm	21 Back to the 80's Reloaded Bar 7.30pm-11pm
SAT	SAT
8 Back to the 80's Reloaded Bar 7.30pm-11pm	22 Back to the 80's Reloaded Bar 7.30pm-11pm
THURSDAY	BONKERS BINGO
13 Back to the 80's Reloaded Bar 7.30pm-11pm	28 Back to the 80's Reloaded Bar 7.30pm-11pm
FRI	SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL
14 Back to the 80's Reloaded Bar 7.30pm-11pm	28 Back to the 80's Reloaded Bar 7.30pm-11pm
SAT	30+ CLUB 70's 80's 90's
15 Back to the 80's Reloaded Bar 7.30pm-11pm	1 Back to the 80's Reloaded Bar 7.30pm-11pm

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