

On 15 Jul 2014, at 13:18, Grover, David (Mace Real Estate) wrote:

Dear Ms Cottee and Mr Meldrum

Thank you for taking the time to write to Stephen Pycroft in relation to Mace's investment into Doric Properties and our joint proposals for Botley. As the Mace Group Board Director with direct responsibility for the project, I would like to respond to your concerns and apologise for the time it has taken to respond .

As you have identified, at Mace we take a particular pride in our work and our ethics in the way we do business and we believe that we can back this up with our excellent track record in the Oxford area. We've delivered complex redevelopment, regeneration and restoration schemes across the city including Oxfordshire County Council's Central Offices, the Said Business School, the New Bodleian Library and the Ashmolean Museum. We firmly believe our latest joint venture and investment into this project will enable these corporate objectives to be maintained.

In our initial assessment of the development we did take great care in establishing the overall context of the plans and it was clear to us that Botley was an important part of the local and wider community which we value but it was also clear that the site becoming obsolete under-utilised by the district and it was clear to us by providing a new modern facility will provide for a sustainable future to Botley and serve the wider community in the district better.

Mace take pride in delivering projects which have a positive impact on the communities where we operate and we appreciate that significant change does bring anxiety and anticipation, particularly to those whose residences are involved in the scheme. However, the nature of the scheme means that we are able to plan in a comprehensive and cohesive manner, along the lines of Mary Portas's recommendations – mixing town retail, leisure and community uses in a single, attractive centre. The retail offer for the scheme provides an opportunity for choice to the residents of Botley; they can complete their weekly shop or pop down to one of the smaller shops for a pint of milk without needing to use their car. The leisure offer, including the cinema, will bring a new lease of life to the Botley community offering local residents of all ages the opportunity for socialising throughout the day and evenings.

Mace has already started to make a positive impact on the plans, and we will be announcing significant improvements in the existing proposals in the near future particularly regarding the timetabling of construction and phasing. We have now been able to ensure through careful phasing that shops and facilities will be made available to existing retailers and the community throughout the development process. We have also been able to address minimise the disruption to residents of Field House before they are relocated to their brand new accommodation, which is going to be a significant improvement on the existing non-compliant accommodation. This can only be positive.

In response to the article published in the Construction Index, we are uncertain where this comment has arisen because our experience is nothing but support and encouragement from industry peers. However, should the writer care to make themselves known to us we would be very interested in understanding the source of their concern.

We will continue to work with Doric and the Vale of White Horse Council and the Community to enhance and improve the scheme in coming weeks. While there is considerable support as well as opposition, we believe that the changes will address the many of the concerns raised.

Many thanks again for your email.

Regards
David Grover

David Grover

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