



23/1130/MP Southgate Redevelopment

Dear Chris Cummings,

Exeter Cycling Campaign are grateful for the opportunity to comment on this pre-application.

General layout

Overall this proposal looks to significantly improve the provision of safe walking and cycling routes around the end of South St, Southernhay and Magdalen Street. Whilst the positions of pedestrian / cycle crossings remain unfinalised in the plans, providing surface level crossings towards the Quay will improve equality of access across Western Way. This in particular when compared with the current stepped bridge crossing that adjoins the Cathedral and Quay car park.

We would support the proposed idea of making the Southernhay road one way for cars approaching the Southgate site. As discussed in the Design and Access statement, this would allow ample space for bi-directional cycle access into Southernhay from and to the Southgate site. In combination with the north-south shared use route planned across the site and the proposed surface level crossing to Friars' Gate, this provides the beginnings of a new pedestrian and cycle route between the city centre and the Quay.

Cycle parking and access

Section 7.4 of the Design and Access statement states that:

Every building will benefit from secure bicycle parking on the ground floor of each building in close proximity to the cores.

Providing cycle parking in each building is ideal, however pedestrian access to these cycle stores from the flats is not consistently good in the current designs. In Block 2, the larger of the two cycle stores includes a rear access door, allowing residents to access the cycle parking directly from within the complex, close to the entrance lobby. This should be the model for the other cycle stores as well.

The entrance to the cycle store in Block 1 is around a 50m walk from the entrance lobby which reduces the convenience of accessing a bike. An alternative entrance or position should be considered to reduce this distance. The entrance to the smaller cycle store in Block 2 would similarly benefit from being closer to the entrance lobby. In Block 3 there appears to be the potential to add a pedestrian access between the cycle storage and entrance lobby and this opportunity should be taken.

In terms of cycle access to the stores, it also appears that conflict with pedestrians is currently being designed in. The access plan shown in section 8.2.2 of the Design and Access statement is included below.



The cycle stores in Blocks 2 and 3 are both accessed only by “Dismount cycle routes” (yellow dotted lines). If as the name suggests it is intended that cyclists dismount and wheel their bikes, this seems likely to lead to conflict. Many people cycling will cycle all the way to the stores whether this is what the designers intended or not and pedestrians may resent this infraction, leading to conflict. At this design stage the routes should be made safe for shared use, allowing people cycling to reach the stores on their bikes and pedestrians to feel safe.

Finally in relation to the cycle storage, at this stage there is no explicit number of cycle spaces provided in the plans. Section 8.1.8 of the Design and Access statement includes the following:

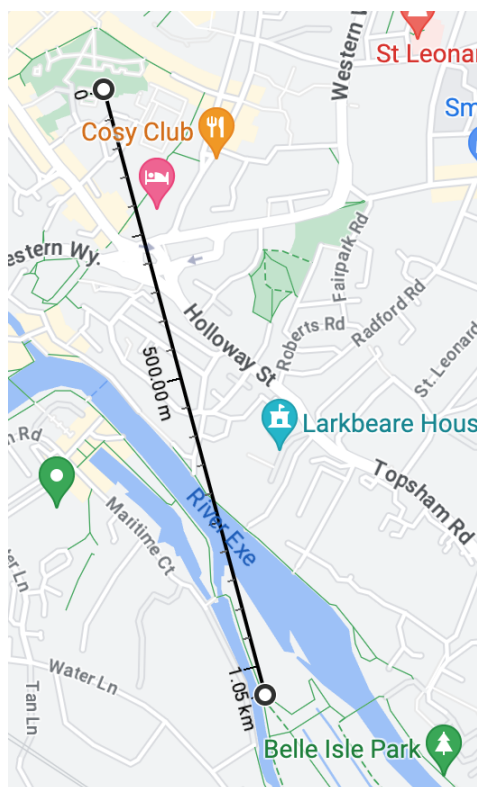
The cycle storage also aims to exceed the minimum requirement.

It would be hoped that in a car free development the provision of cycle storage would be sufficient that every resident might store a bike. This has become more important with the collapse of Co-Bikes which leaves future residents without access to a bike share scheme. As such we would push the designers to maximise the possible bike storage with the aim of providing a cycle space for every bedroom in the complex. This bike storage should use Sheffield stands, with some widely spaced to accommodate adapted bicycles and cargo bicycles. Vertical bike stands should be avoided as these are difficult to use for children, the elderly, or anyone with disabilities. There should also be provision for charging electric bikes in the final designs.

Impact on existing leisure routes

It is notable that these buildings are very tall, several storeys taller than the nearby Mercure Hotel for example. What is missing from the 3-D rendered views at present is the view of the city from the river approach. Exeter's skyline from this vantage has long included the towers of the cathedral, and this outlook features on myriad souvenirs that can be bought around the city. It has been the view enjoyed by ships approaching the city for hundreds of years. This view is also enjoyed by thousands of pedestrians and cyclists using the routes that run between the river and shipping canal. It contributes to making these routes so popular. The image below is from a vantage where the Southgate development would fall directly between the viewer and the cathedral (see the map snippet also included).





The impact of this development on this view is likely to be a source of potential contention, and it would be useful if the plans could include evidence that this impact has been considered and mitigated. A rendering of the view would be useful for others wishing to review this application.

We thank you again for the opportunity to look at these exciting plans. Hopefully our comments can be incorporated to further improve on these designs.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Ayliffe

for and on behalf of:

EXETER CYCLING CAMPAIGN

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