

**Stoughton Community Centre Project**  
**Minutes of meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> October 2003 at Linden Sales Offices**

*In attendance :*

<i>Richard Lingard (RL)</i>	<i>GBC solicitor</i>
<i>Jonathan Dawson (JD)</i>	<i>SCCP solicitor</i>
<i>Cllr Fiona White (Cllr FW)</i>	<i>Stoughton Councillor</i>
<i>Cllr Pauline Searle (Cllr PS)</i>	<i>Stoughton Councillor</i>
<i>Ivan Ball (IB)</i>	<i>Director of Linden Homes</i>
<i>Ian Godfrey (IG)</i>	<i>SCCP</i>
<i>Maureen Bell (MB)</i>	<i>SCCP</i>

*Apologies were made for :*

*Cllr Jayne Marks , whose husband is very ill*  
*Jim Dennis, unwell, suffering from a bad back*

Before the meeting began, Cllr FW (whose presence had not been expected) wanted to know if it was known that the planning application made by IB was not valid, the reason she gave was it had not included a design statement. IB confirmed this is in hand.

As the meeting had been called by Jim Dennis, the agenda was to have been his with a number of inclusions requested by SCCP. As Jim Dennis was not present, MB requested that the items requested by SCCP should be dealt with.

***Constitution:***

IB reiterated that Linden Homes had no concerns about the draft constitution and any problems were to be dealt with by SCCP and Jim Dennis. MB explained that the various requests made by Jim Dennis to alter the constitution had been responded to and he had been advised his demands could not be met as they would destroy all hopes for SCCP to acquire charity status.

IB explained that a management company for the site has already been established. The board of directors of which are at this time directors of the two partners, Laing and Linden (not Ivan and Jim). In time this company will take on the lease of various parts of the site not owned by the residents.

It was believed that Jim Dennis's concerns could be met through the association's Standing Orders. It was agreed that contact with Jim Dennis would be established again on his recovery to decide whether a further meeting was required.

Action: MB

***Amendment to s106 dated 29/11/02 :***

MB asked IB if he could explain why a g.e.a. of 390 sq m had been chosen for the community building. IB stated that he had not selected the area as this had been indicated in a letter written by Jim Dennis on the 14<sup>th</sup>

November 2002. MB explained that because SCCP had now done considerable research into all of the various drawings, they have concluded that architects John Thomson and Partners (JTP) had done an excellent job having been given the brief for the building prepared by SCCP and had designed a building to accommodate all of the requested facilities which was presented to SCCP on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2002 and which we now know has a g.i.a. (gross internal area) of 390 sq m. This internal measurement has also been carried through on later drawings, so it could be assumed that this area is required to adequately accommodate the brief.

MB then asked RL if it is standard practice to show two measurements on s106 documents. RL indicated the two measurements, 390 and 370 referred to here were maximum and minimum. RL also indicated that this amendment had been a one-off and had been drawn up according to instructions. RL had not previously executed such a legal agreement.

MB then asked for confirmation that the aforementioned amendment to the s106 states only areas and does not in any way refer to cost. The developers will be obliged to stick to the letter of this legal agreement. Despite this legal explanation, IB continued to refer to the budget of £390,000. After one attempt by IG to correct this, no further attempts were made nor discussed.

RL also commented that he had indicated that £1,000 per sq m. approximated the cost anticipated for the conversion of The Spike to a community building in Holy Trinity ward but this is not a new building, and that it was an off-the-cuff remark

IG said the s106 appeared to allow the developers to only build 370 sq m g.e.a. IB confirmed the developers' intention to continue with plans for building 390 sq m, and because £390K was their budget, it did not matter how big or small it was so long as the extra funding was obtained.

### **Lease :**

Before presenting his draft lease, IB explained that although Laing Homes and Linden Homes are partners, the freehold of the site was actually purchased by Laing's and as appropriate, bits of the site have been sold on to Linden Homes and to Terrace Hill. Consequently, as the land upon which the community centre will stand is actually still owned by Laing, the lease will be effected between SCA and Laing.

JD had a cursory examination of the draft lease document which was written for 125 years and reported he felt it broadly workable but indicated that he required additional information i.e. title to be deduced and sight of the Rent Charge Deed

Action: IB

JD the draft lease is a fully repairing and insuring lease, i.e.. SCA was to be fully responsible for the whole of the building. JD explained that it was more normal for community association to assume such responsibility where no rent or a peppercorn rent was to be charged. IB indicated the lease could be altered accordingly if this was desired.

MB indicated that SCCP do not wish to lease the two play areas. IB advised

Action: MB

otherwise. Cllr FW was concerned that to do so would incur additional costs and management. MB agreed to discuss it amongst SCCP.

It was agreed that JD would, on closer inspection of the lease draft, report back to SCCP with his recommendations on the lease and the pros and cons of taking on the two play areas.

Action: JD

IG asked that the lease include at least a 2m perimeter around the building for pathways. IB and JD said this would be possible.

### ***Alternative Floorplans of Building applying for Planning Permission :***

A version of the floorplans (Rev 8 dated 24 Oct 2003) prepared by IG was given to IB and discussed at length. IG explained how to accommodate all of the rooms, the badminton court, etc., every size had been pared to the minimum. MB explained that there were serious concerns about the amount of storage this size of building afforded.

IG mentioned stacking systems and portable offices as a way of saving space. Cllr FW pointed out that you cannot always count on users tidying up after themselves and this ought to be factored into the timings of people using the building.

Cllr FW supported SCCP's wish to maintain the overhang as this could accommodate later expansion. Cllr PS asked where alternative expansion of the building could be and it was explained if the layout of building and play areas submitted for planning approval were adhered to, no further space would be available.

At this point both RL and JD excused themselves as they had no further roles to perform in the meeting.

The debate about whether the badminton court should be kept or dropped from the design was discussed and the fact that because of the height of a badminton court, it would not be possible to successfully divide the main hall so that it could be used for alternative purposes. IB agreed to research the availability of a satisfactory method of dividing a badminton hall, and would report back to SCCP.

Action: IB

IB explained that if the badminton court was discarded, the footprint of the building is more likely to revert to a more square shape and certainly would not cost more than the design being discussed.

IB indicated his disapproval of rotating the building by 32 degrees and discounted SCCP's claim that this made the building more of a focal point from the village square.

The ideas and history behind the concept of the 'visual and physical link' between the Village Square and the Community building were discussed without a common understanding. IB asked why SCCP were so keen on the building looking the same as those in the Village Square. Why not something more unique or individual? MB explained that being the same as the commercial centre was not mandatory and believed it was more DEPS opinion than SCCP's. SCCP's objective was to make the building inviting.

IB explained different internal roof arrangements. A fake roof would look good but would probably be more expensive (no conclusion). IB agreed to IG's suggestion that storage space above the offices was acceptable (not desired over the landing area).

### ***Building Costs :***

IB gave his approval of IG's floorplans and agreed to pass this drawing (and CD) to JTP for elevations and review, reporting back to SCCP before passing them to their QS for costings, again reporting to SCCP as the work progressed. The revised elevations will include an alternative design for the windows.

Action: IB

IB re-iterated that the overhang was the most expensive element in the design and he would recommend that it is the first thing to be removed if the badminton hall was ever to be discarded. IB also suggested that the largest function room would be better if it was on the ground floor with the smaller rooms being upstairs.

### ***Alternative positions for the two Play Areas :***

IB was adamant that his proposed layout was the only one acceptable to the developers. IG and MB explained Peter Gunner's objections:

1. The proximity of the kickabout will cause noise or damage and will render the building undesirable to potential tenants
2. Older children and teenagers will object to feeling supervised if the community centre is so close and they will not wish to use the areas intended for them.

IG presented two alternative layouts prepared by SCCP (Layouts 3 & 4). IB could not be shifted from his argument that the kickabout could not extend above his arbitrary red line (IB worried about the 'Property Mis-descriptions Act'), despite having it pointed out to him that the available space had been reduced because Linden Homes had built Phase 1 some 7 metres at odds with the masterplan (a recent discovery by SCCP) and the community building had also to be accommodated here. Valuable space was also lost for building because of the sewers running through the area.

The possibility of relocating the play areas to other parts of the site was discussed but no-one at the meeting could think of anywhere suitable. IG thought that it was extremely desirable for the LEAP to be relatively near the community building especially as disabled users would benefit from the disabled facilities in the building. (There was no confirmation whether the LEAP would contain play equipment specifically for disabled children.) IB commented that it made sense for all these facilities to be located near the Village centre.

MB agreed to consult further amongst SCCP although it is unlikely any layouts other than those previously suggested by IB, SCCP or DEPS will solve the problem. Something new will need to be worked out.

Action: MB

Because Peter Gunner's argument had been so very strong, a call was

placed to him to ask him for legal or regulatory justification. He called back to advise that none had been located but the 20 metre rule (from play area to a residential building) and that applied between the Phase 1 housing and the play areas were not enforceable. Peter Gunner stated he would have no further participation with SCCP if the layout was not altered accordingly.

IB agreed to consult his team to find out if any definitive rules exist on this matter. An impasse was reached as IB did not find any of the alternatives offered by SCCP acceptable.

Action: IB

IB offered no comment on the changing of existing paths as proposed by SCCP and/or the Teenage Meeting Shelter (TMS) as indicated on the drawings.

Cllr FW left the meeting to return to work. The remaining members discussed the project further whilst waiting to receive the telephone call from Peter Gunner.

IB explained the likely order of events for building and expressed his belief that no building activity should begin until all of the required funds have been secured. As the amendment to the s106 has no time limits, the developers will not be obliged to build the proposed community centre during any given time scale

IB expressed his extreme disappointment that the project is not eligible for SITA funds, having been assured by John Davey that this was almost a certainty. IB also said he thought we were all wasting our time without knowing where funds are likely to come from, however he was still willing to put in a revised planning application.

The meeting ended about 3.00pm

Maureen dh Bell  
Chair of SCCP