

**Meeting of the SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM RESOURCE CENTRE
PROJECT TEAM held on 21 DECEMBER 2009 at 10.00 am in the School
Room, Saffron Walden Museum**

Present: Councillors K L Eden (Chairman) Councillors R M Lemon, D J Morson and S V Schneider (Uttlesford District Council Members); Mr D Haylock, Mr D Laing, Mr P Salvidge and Mr A Watson (Museum Society Ltd).

Also present: Tim Powter-Robinson (Cowper Griffith Architects) and Roger Custance (Henry Riley Consulting).

Officers present: Richard Auty (Head of Community Engagement), M Cox (Democratic Services Officer), Tony Cowper (Principal Accountant), Phil Hunt (Engineering and Safety Officer), Sarah Kenyon (Natural Sciences Officer), Adrian Webb (Director of Central Services), and Carolyn Wingfield (Curator).

MRC20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence or declarations of interest received.

MRC21 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 August 2009 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

MRC22 NEW SITE FOR HERITAGE QUEST CENTRE AND SUBMISSION OF PLANNING APPLICATION

The Curator reported that following further negotiations with Sainsbury's a legal agreement was now being prepared for the proposed exchange of land which would take place if Sainsbury's obtained planning approval to construct a new supermarket. The agreement specified that the new application for the Heritage Quest Centre should be submitted by 31 January 2009. The Chairman and Tony Watson as the nominated signatories would need to sign off the application by mid January. On the condition that the Sainsbury's application proceeded as expected the site swap was likely to take place in 2010. The Heritage Lottery Fund had agreed to vary the contract to incorporate these new arrangements. Construction of the Heritage Quest Centre would be put out to competitive tender in compliance with HLF's conditions and the Council's Financial Regulations.

The legal agreement took into account any complications that might occur in the process, particularly in the event of the refusal of the planning application and a subsequent appeal, and included a cut off date of January 2011 for the land swap to be completed. After that time the project would revert to the old site.

The Architect then explained the detailed specification and planning application for the new site. Information from Sainsbury's on the levels of the new roundabout and access had been incorporated into the drawings. It had proved possible to use the existing plans and design for the building and to successfully relocate the building on the site. He felt that, on balance, the new site was probably better as it was in a more prominent location and the ground conditions appeared to be more favourable. There had been limited ground investigations to date and the engineer had suggested drilling further bore holes to ascertain details of the ground conditions.

The location of the building would provide a good view of the public part of the building from the access road and would look out over the road to the fields beyond. The car park was a similar size to the first application and extensive landscaping was planned. The group then considered the proposed materials for the building and noted that elongated dark bricks had been chosen for the side of the building, the end of the building would be aluminium cladding and the front would be glazed. Sun and heating calculations had been taken into account.

The timetable was now for the Sainsbury's planning application and the revised HQC application to be considered at Development Control meetings early in the New Year. Taking into account the referral period, the tender process and site exchange, it was not expected that construction could begin before August 2010. It was hoped that the building could be open by early 2011. The group was concerned about the effect that any delays might have on the funders of the project but it was too early to know how the situation would develop.

MRC22 OLD SITE AND ASSOCIATED ISSUES

The group was advised that if the project was forced to revert to the old site there would be a significant problem with the difference in levels (about a 2m drop) between the recycling centre, the Sainsbury's site and the old HQC site. The Architect advised that it would be possible to submit a revised application to raise the building by 2 metres but this would have cost implications. There was discussion as to where the responsibility lay for this situation but the cost could well fall to the district council. It seemed likely that if the Sainsbury's application did not proceed there would eventually be some other development on this site, but there was no guarantee of the timescale for this and the future of the HQC project.

MRC19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Monday 15 February 2009 at 2.00pm.

(NOTE: This date will not now go ahead – the meeting will be rearranged)

The meeting ended at 11.00 am.