

The History of Waverley's planning decision.

On 15th June Waverley's Joint Planning Committee decided by 15 votes to 8 to allow developers Crest Nicholson Sainsbury (CNS) to demolish the Brightwells Tennis Club Pavilion before the 7th August, when the present planning permission runs out for their East Street/Brightwells development. The Non-Material Amendment (NMA) approved on the 15th was a scaled-down version of the original, which had included the demolition of the Redgrave Theatre among several other very material works. Due to many strong objections, CNS revised their schedule of works and eventually asked only for permission to remove the tennis facility and for the provision of temporary 'welfare facilities' - toilets. However, the impact will be just as significant as CNS will now be allowed to occupy the Brightwells site for an indefinite period of time, without having the funds with which to complete the development. ... As the contract between Waverley and CNS is still conditional, the future of East Street could look very bleak. There is an alternative. Legal action taken against Waverley is a possibility. Over the years, the Borough Council has allowed undue advantage to Crest Nicholson over other competitive bidders to the original brief. Several of the required elements of the development have been dropped, for example the Bowling Clubhouse and Green, the Cobbett Clock, the CAB building *and* most recently the Gostrey Day Centre, as well as the avoidance of requirements of several Planning Policies and an Environmental Impact Assessment. A solicitor's letter of objection made on behalf of the Farnham Interest Group, to the NMA throws down the gauntlet to Waverley, challenging the Council to re-open the bidding for the development to ensure best value and fair competition in line with EU law. This appears to be the opening move before action is possible.

In preparation for any such legal action, FTA Consultant, Michael Holden has been busy preparing an alternative scheme for Brightwells with the support of local retired architect, Michael Blower. ***A scheme has been devised which includes the possibility of the Redgrave Theatre running in combination with Curzon Cinemas***, and this plan has the approval of the Farnham Society and has awoken the interest of the Farnham Town Council. The plan retains Brightwell House as a restaurant and is the centrepiece of an area of parkland, contained by two terraces of town houses to the south. Retail units with cinema screens above are planned to the north and another terrace of housing is placed above a car park on the east side. Affordable housing is included over the retail units. [See Brightwells Restored image here...](#)

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