

SWINDON CIVIC TRUST - Ref: 108

Swindon Central Area Action Plan 2008

Written Statement – Session 3

Area Based / Site Specific Issues (1)

“Pg 73, Policy 12

Object to the fact that the importance of secondary shopping is not adequately recognised. Whilst the Retail Core may attract the chains that can pay the highest rents, it is the secondary shops which provide much of the interest, and are often the factor which attract people to visit the centre in the first place. The current proposals relegate this important sector to the outer darkness. Proposals need a rethink if the "vibrancy" is to be captured.”

Development Requirements for the Retail Core, page 73. Policy 12

Consider the map supporting the policy regarding Secondary frontages to be unsound as it fails both parts of test 7. It shows the secondary frontages isolated and fragmented from the primary retail core. It is often the attractiveness of the secondary offer that endears people to a town centre. More thought needs to be given as to how the two types of frontages can interact with each other to provide the required 'vibrancy'.

“Pg 78, Policy 13

The cultural offer proposals for the Cultural Quarter are mainly directed at the high end of the presentation of achievement in the arts. There is little or nothing on offer for the practical aspects of the work that goes into the development of artistic achievement. The studios, workshops, rehearsal rooms, space for experimentation and mistakes.

The ability to offer the community a variety of affordable spaces for formal and informal activities should also be seen to be a vital function of the town centre acting as a focus for the community as a whole

We object that no allowance has been made for these in the Action Plan, although, they in themselves are often significant contributors to the vibrancy and vitality of centres. Evidence of need has been established by the Council through consultation and by the Community Sector active in the town. This issue should be taken up with the Arts Officer, who conducted the consultation and with the organisations representing the Community Sector.”

Work carried out by the New Mechanics' Institution Preservation Trust Ltd at the now extinguished “Community Crossroads” demonstrated the need for affordable spaces for creative community activity.

The Promenade, page 78, Policy 13

The policy is unsound as it fails both parts of Test 7. Workshops and studios should be a clear commitment under Infrastructure Requirements.