

Frequently Asked Questions

February 2010

- **BACKGROUND**

Why does Richard Burbidge Ltd need to relocate?

Richard Burbidge Ltd has been at the Whittington Road site since 1964 and during that time the company has grown and evolved producing a wider variety of goods. The business is still changing and has reached a point where the buildings no longer meet the needs of the business. Relocating would allow for current and future expansion plans, provide employees with an improved working environment and enable the company to remain in Oswestry.

Will Richard Burbidge Ltd remain in Oswestry?

Richard Burbidge Ltd has a long history in Oswestry and continuing to operate here is a key priority for us. We are committed to keeping employment, and investment in the town but in order to ensure this can happen we are keen to agree a regeneration scheme for the Whittington Road site. We will sign a legal agreement stating that the company will relocate within Oswestry if planning permission is granted and a site has been secured in that regard.

- **THE PROPOSALS**

How will the relocation benefit Oswestry?

The proposals for the Whittington Road site include a supermarket, restaurants, five-screen cinema and other leisure/community facilities which would create a further 350 jobs, improve the retail choice, enhance the leisure facilities and revitalise the night-time economy. If these plans go ahead, Richard Burbidge Ltd will be able to continue to

trade within purpose built premises, retaining our highly skilled workforce and securing the company as a major employer in Oswestry for years to come.

Can the town sustain a supermarket?

Yes, Oswestry is the largest market town in Shropshire. It is important that it has a wide range of facilities and services to serve its wide catchment population. Independent research shows that significant numbers of residents are currently travelling out of Oswestry to Wrexham and Shrewsbury for their shopping. The Sainsbury's store is reportedly overtrading and Morrison's offers limited choice; therefore a Tesco store would increase consumer choice and help to retain the shoppers in the town. Almost 70% of respondents during our public consultation*, agreed that Oswestry needs another supermarkets and that the Richard Burbidge site would be the most suitable location for the store.

Does the town need a new cinema and other leisure uses?

It has been a longstanding aspiration for Oswestry to have its own cinema and at our public consultation some 92% of respondents supported a cinema, which is particularly important for young people. There are also limited leisure venues in the town.

Are the plans deliverable?

Yes, this is the only scheme which has named operators for the cinema and supermarket which shows Tesco's and Reel's commitment to the plans. If planning permission is granted for these plans we anticipate that the development will be complete by 2012.

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What will happen if planning permission is refused?

If planning is not granted at during the forthcoming Planning Committee meeting in March 2010, then Richard Burbidge will have to reconsider its plans for the future of the business in Oswestry

- **THE SITE**

Why is the Richard Burbidge site better suited for mixed-use development?

The site is within easy walking distance of the town centre and has excellent public transport links. As part of the development an investment will be made into providing a traffic-free pedestrian and cycle path along the old railway line to promote linked shopping trips.

Has the Central Car Park site been considered?

Tesco did consider the site but dismissed it given the known constraints identified 13 years ago, when it was last the subject of a retail planning application. It would lead to severe traffic congestion and lack of parking for the town centre. The site owners are also not able or willing to make it available for development. The current proposals also only include a single screen cinema which is not attractive to mainstream cinema operators and offers little choice for customers.

Where will Richard Burbidge move to?

A site has been identified within the employment area of Oswestry which is suitable for the current and future needs of the business. The planning officers are fully aware of the location of this site and its suitability.

What will happen to the listed buildings?

The two Cambrian railway sheds will be renovated for leisure and community uses including a new home for the Border Counties School of Gymnastics.

- **TIMETABLE**

At which stage of the planning process are these plans?

The planning application for the development was submitted in January 2009. The application is expected to be determined by Shropshire Council's Planning Committee on 18 March. Keeping to this timetable is essential for Richard Burbidge so it can progress with its future plans

When can we expect the development to start taking shape?

If planning permission is granted for the development on the Whittington Road site without delays in the planning process, then a completion date of 2012 is achievable.

**The results from the public consultation can be viewed at www.cambriangateway.com*
For more information on these proposals please contact Paul Boyfield on 07917 764 148.