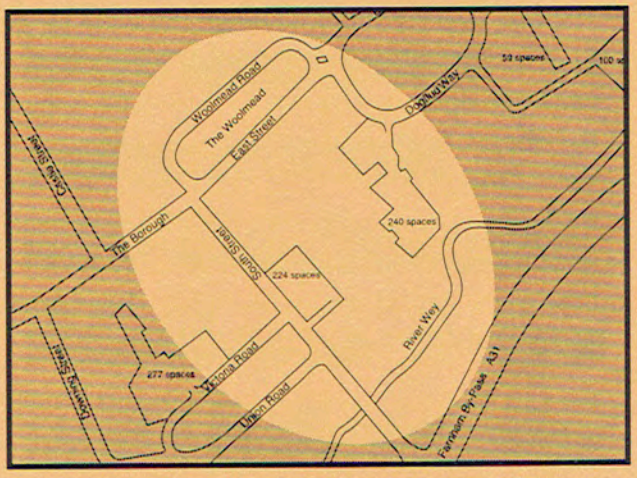
What's happening

around

East Street?



Keeping you up-to-date on progress

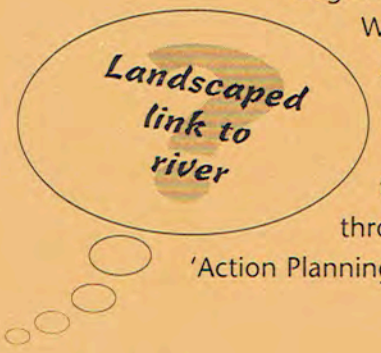
EAST STREET NEWS

February 1998

Parts of the East Street area are suffering neglect and there are question marks over the future of prominent sites such as the old cinema site, health centre and Redgrave Theatre. Ideas for regenerating the area are being taken forward by the independent East Street Steering Group which is supported by Waverley Borough Council and the Town Council and includes representatives of landowners, developers, the planning authority, the local health trust, and the Chamber of Trade.

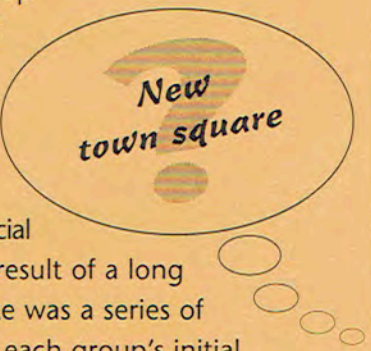
The first step is to narrow down the wide range of development possibilities into a number of workable options. This would usually be done by developers, with proposals kept under wraps until very late in the process, when planning permission is sought. Local people can be the last to hear what's being proposed in their area, by which time many important decisions have been taken by the developer.

For East Street it was felt that a different approach was needed, one that would enable local people to have an input right from the beginning. The Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture was brought in by Waverley to facilitate this involvement through an innovative 'Action Planning' process.



In November a series of public events was held in Farnham to explore how the East Street area of the town could change for the better.

The chosen venue for all the events was a empty shop unit in the Woolmead. The first event was an Urban Design Workshop attended by members of the Borough and Town Councils, Farnham Society, the Chamber of Trade, landowners and others with a commercial interest in the area. The result of a long day of enthusiastic debate was a series of sketch schemes showing each group's initial ideas for the area.



These sketch schemes provided the basis for a 'hands-on' public exhibition. People were able to respond to the ideas by using sticky labels and post-it notes and by writing or drawing their own comments and suggestions. Around 200 people visited the event, 80% of whom were Farnham residents.

Ideas which emerged with strong support included:-

- **uses to bring new life to the area**
- **new spaces and pedestrian links**
- **new/refurbished buildings**
- **proposals to tackle traffic**

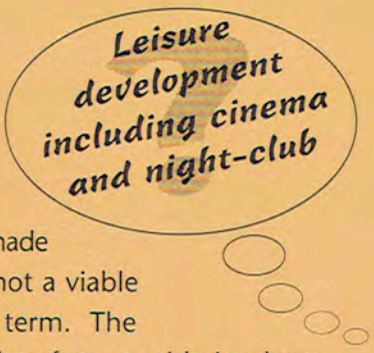
So what did you think?

The graph shows how visitors to the exhibition responded to the most popular ideas.

In contrast, some ideas from the Urban Design Workshop were supported by very few people at the exhibition. These included office development by the river side and the relocation of the Redgrave Theatre to the Maltings.

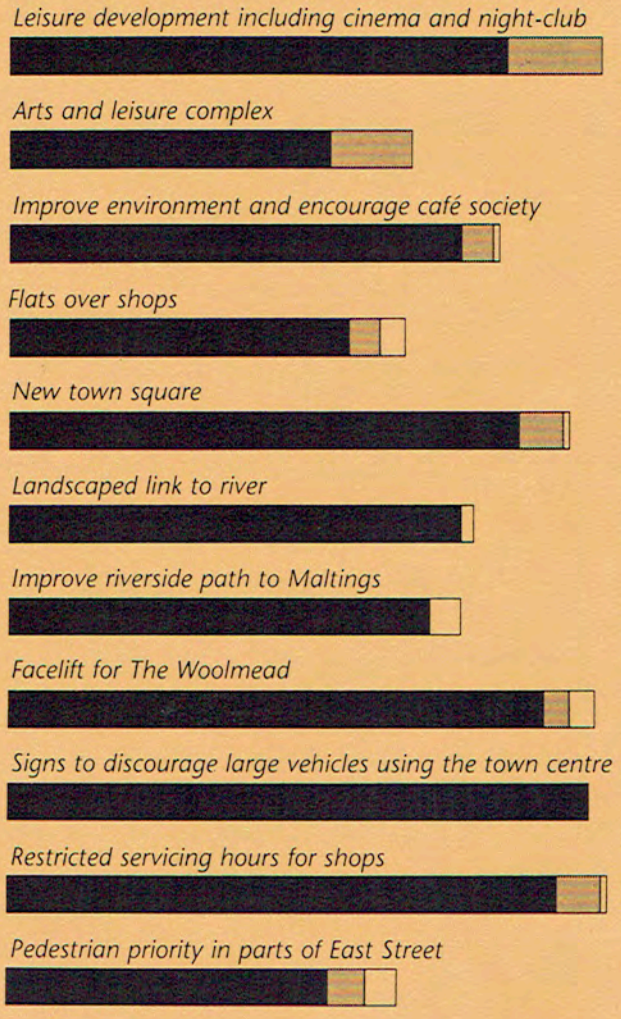
What's happening now?

The East Street Steering Group is looking carefully at all the comments and ideas that arose from the Action Planning events. The 'shopping list' of desirable land uses and features is the starting point. However, any proposals will need to be realistic and must be supported by the landowners. This might involve including less popular features in order to make an overall development package work.



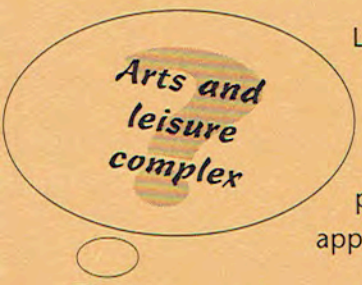
For example, the idea of redeveloping the Woolmead received strong public support but the landowner has made it clear that this is not a viable option in the short term. The Steering Group is therefore considering how any proposals can enhance the environment of the Woolmead and strengthen the valuable contribution that it makes to the town's economy.

Some of your views



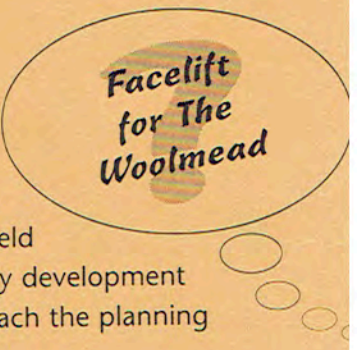
...and where next?

The comments and ideas put forward will help shape a 'development brief' which will be the subject of further consultation.



Land owners and other interested parties will decide whether to work up detailed development proposals for a planning application.

Decisions will have to be made about how the private and public sectors should work together to implement any proposals that are agreed.



Both the East Street Steering Group and Waverley are committed to involving local people throughout the process. A further event will be held to discuss and review any development proposals before they reach the planning application stage.

If you have any thoughts about these ideas you can write to:

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