



The Friends of Abingdon  
Civic Society

**To help preserve what is best worth retaining amongst its old buildings and to encourage new building worthy of its civic traditions and character**

Re application for planning consent:

**P13/V0821/FUL**

**57–59 Stert Street and Abbey Court, Abingdon**

The Friends of Abingdon Civic Society does not object in principle to the conversion of redundant offices into much needed homes. However, the proposals in this application are unacceptable for the following reasons.

The facade of the building on Stert Street is ugly and out of character with the surrounding buildings in one of the oldest streets in Abingdon. The design and the materials used are such that the building dominates its surroundings and could well be described as a 'monstrous carbuncle'. It is so out of kilter with the rest of Stert Street that one wonders whether the architects have actually visited the site. The existing facade, although a modern pastiche in need of cleaning and repair, is much more sympathetic and has interesting features (e.g. the windows). The applicants' claim that their redevelopment will be more in keeping with the medieval buildings than the present one is ludicrous.

The large windows at ground floor level, apparently to fit with the neighbouring shop fronts, are ridiculous. While shops want people to look into their windows, homeowners most certainly don't! Shutters have been provided, but are the residents supposed to sit in the dark all day, leaving passers-by to look at blank frontages? In addition, the frontage has been brought forward so that it is now in line with the neighbouring buildings and directly on the pavement – little privacy and a lot of traffic noise for the residents.

The remainder of the development at the rear of the building leaves much to be desired. The town houses and the maisonette are out of scale with the surrounding buildings, and look as if they will adversely affect the natural light available to neighbouring properties. The old wall is attractive and should be preserved.

In summary, Friends of Abingdon request that this application is refused, and the applicants asked to produce a better design which is more in keeping with the surroundings. There are other examples in Abingdon where this has been done sensitively and there is no reason why this cannot be done here.

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Executive Council Member

Friends of Abingdon Civic Society

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