

Cedric's Place and the East of England Co-op:

A New Centre in the Heart of Wivenhoe for People, Commerce, Business and the Community



A Proposal by the Wivenhoe Society

May 2015



This site has the potential to become a new and exciting place which is pretty much in the centre of Wivenhoe. A new 'heart' even, especially when the Co-op store opposite is taken into consideration. This location should be thought of as Cedric's Place plus the store.

This should be a place for people to meet, socialise, get fit, work and do business, get their car fixed or valeted as well as an address to live.

If you want somewhere that is quiet and peaceful, this will not be the place for you. Cedric's Place needs to be a vibrant, a place that draws people to it. A place where things can happen, where there is something going on, where events might be organised and where business might be transacted.

Nick Denny, Property Manager of the East of England Co-operative Society, recently addressed the Wivenhoe Society AGM. He told us that the Co-op had bought the Cedric's site as a long term strategic opportunity earlier this year and that site assessment and evaluation could take until the end of 2015.

They have agreed the Garage and the separate car-valeting service could stay there for the time being. In the meantime they would welcome suggestions for its future use from Wivenhoe residents.

Hence this proposal to the Co-operative Society which has come from the Executive Committee of the Wivenhoe Society.

Peter Hill, Committee Member, Wivenhoe Society, May 2015

Note: Many people have suggested this location would be a better place for the new Surgery than Phillip Road Centre but it is too late to consider changing it as a lease has already been signed with ECC locking the doctors into Phillip Road, and in any case the Cedric's site would be far more expensive to develop than to refurbish the old school building.

Cedric's Garage and the Site

This was started in 1928 with the advent of the motor-car. By 1982, Cedric's Garage closed and the Wivenhoe Garage was started by Brian Turner and Ian Grimwade. They service the needs of some 40 -50 care-owning customers each week.

The car valeting business started just a few years ago and it appears successful.



These two businesses should stay and become a useful corner-stone on which the site could be furthered.

The Co-operative Store

The present building replaces an earlier one in the 1970s built in a style of that time and is a feature of Wivenhoe in its own right. It has three flats on the upper floor of the building which are let out.

The car park, at the side and rear of the building is inadequate to service the needs of customers at peak

times with part of the area being also used for delivery vehicles at various times of the day.

The Gatehouse

On one side of the site is a building known as the Gatehouse which was built in 1864 and stood at the entrance to the Wivenhoe Hall estate.

The building is considered by many people in Wivenhoe as an attractive feature and should be retained in its prominent position facing into the site. It could become offices for a firm as an alternative to a residential dwelling.

Existing Planning Consent

We are aware of the planning consent which was obtained a few years ago for 24 residences on the site.

At that time we felt that this site could have been better used for the benefit of Wivenhoe and its people, and we welcome the opportunity given by the Board of the East of England Co-operative to put forward this idea. Of course, this idea is not costed, and so we have no way of knowing whether it is viable a proposition.



Figure 1: The Gatehouse building built in 1864

Our Vision for the Future of this Important Site

A U-shaped building comprising three levels built around a courtyard in the front.

The Ground Floor to incorporate:

- The **garage workshop** with its reception in the front and the workshops at the rear of the building away from the public view
- A coffee shop which would also be the access point to the other internal areas as:
 - **Business 'pods'** being small one-person working spaces which could be ideal for someone who in theory works from home but in practice would benefit from a quiet space away from the family home and is willing to pay a rental sum to secure such a facility.
 - **A gymnasium** (we noted 106 people specifically mentioned the need for a gym out of the 980 people who responded to the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan survey conducted at the end of 2013).
 - **A large meeting room** that could be used for:
 - Fitness classes
 - Exhibitions
 - Meetings, public lectures of various sorts
 - Social occasions
 - A new home for the young people of Wivenhoe as the Youth Centre (called the 'Hub') has lost its meeting place at the Phillip Road Centre

The coffee shop would benefit from trade of the people passing through to the other facilities and from people meeting up there for different purposes. It should be wi-fi enabled to encourage people to drop in for a coffee or whatever. It might have a drinks licence to sell wine and beer. There should be tables outside in the courtyard area to encourage customers to the coffee shop.

- One or two small retail units might be added for businesses which don't rely on passing trade and might be attracted to this site because of its central location. These businesses might be already operating from alternative premises, or which are Co-operative owned.

The Courtyard

A courtyard in the front area could be both visually attractive as well as a place to hold a regular market or social events as musical gigs it has been suggested to us.

Access to the Courtyard would be via an arch under the main building to connect the front area with the rear area. This access should be large enough to allow cars to pass under. Whether car parking could be allowed in the front area would have to depend upon final design and site measurements.

Site Contamination

The site has been previously used as a petrol station as well as vehicle servicing including heavy vehicles as coaches. The petrol tanks have previously been made safe by filling with foam and have been sealed. According to a recently published document by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) the cost of decontaminating a petrol station is circa £600,000 - £700,000.



Figure 2: Rear of the site when used by Cedric's Coaches

We wonder, given these proposals, which would rely largely on a concrete surface over the site, whether there is any need to remove this contamination?

One suggestion, from one of our members, was if it has to be dug out and cleared, would it be possible to construct an underground car park in its place. We suspect that this might be possible but far too expensive to contemplate but perhaps an idea worth considering given that car parking is a growing problem in Wivenhoe.

The Upper Floors

There could be two upper floors which would match other buildings in the area as in De Vere Close which are built as three-storey town houses or the Wine and Tapas bar opposite Cedric's Place.



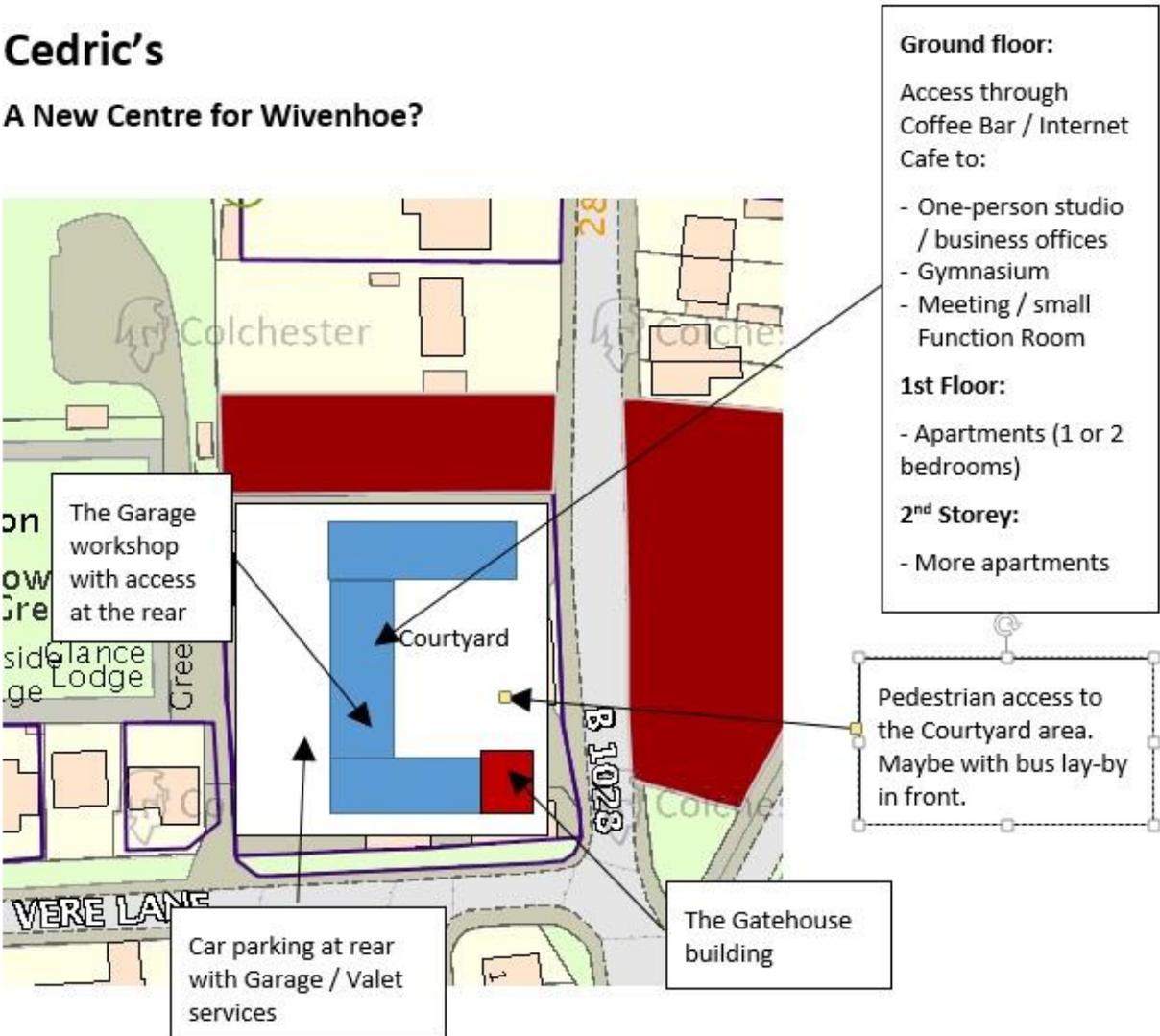
Figure 3: The former Park Hotel now a Wine and Tapas bar opposite Cedric's Place

These upper floors to comprise flats and apartments for sale or rent.

The Wivenhoe Housing Trust, a registered almshouse charity, could be interested in acquiring some properties for older people on an affordable rent basis. The Housing Trust has been looking to expand for a long time and provide more accommodation suited for Wivenhoe people somewhere close to shops and services. This location would be ideal and could complement the almshouses in Rebow Road which are also owned and managed by the Trust and would provide level access for people with mobility problems. A stair-lift could be added to the Cedric's Place properties to assist people get upstairs, especially carrying heavy bags of shopping.

Cedric's

A New Centre for Wivenhoe?



Note: Young people gathering on street corners can be a nuisance but these days the police offer guidance as to how areas can be designed to minimise such a risk.