

**PRESS RELEASE - West 005
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THE WESTGATE PARTNERSHIP STARTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Oxford Archaeology will be carrying out some initial investigations in the areas around the Westgate Centre in the next few weeks on behalf of The Westgate Partnership. The work will help to build further evidence of the importance of this area to Oxford's historic past. During this time, small areas in the car parks around the Westgate Centre will be closed at specific times; this includes the Multi Storey Car Park and surface car park to its south, as well as the Abbey Place surface car park.

Archaeological investigations in the 1960s and 1970s before the current Westgate Centre was built revealed evidence of medieval buildings including the home of the Greyfriars monastic order. The order was established in the 13th Century and was central to Oxford's development. The current investigations will build on this work and explore levels not excavated previously.

Jane McFarland, Group Development Manager for The Westgate Partnership commented; "This is an important piece of work which will enable us to discover more about the rich history of the area which is known to date back to Saxon times. The work has been carefully scheduled to minimise disruption."

Sharon Cosgrove, Strategic Director for Physical Environment for Oxford City Council commented; "We anticipate that the work should only last for a six week period and will take place in phases, so that not all the parking areas will be affected at any one time. We would encourage local people to take care when driving near these areas and take note of any temporary signs, changes in traffic flow or moving plant traffic."

The Westgate Partnership submitted a detailed planning application for the £300 million refurbishment, part redevelopment and extension of the Westgate Centre, Oxford on 13 June 2006. Oxford City Council currently undertaking its statutory consultation on the proposals. Full copies of the planning application can be viewed at Ramsay House.

An additional two phases of archaeology works will take place if The Westgate Partnership receives planning consent for its proposals.

- ENDS -

Editor's Notes

The Oxford Greyfriars

The priory was the mother house of the Franciscan order in England, known as Grey Friars from the colour of their undyed woollen habits. The Oxford house was founded in 1224 by Agnellus of Pisa, a colleague of St Francis of Assisi after whom the order is named. The Oxford church replaced the line of the city wall at this point, and extended out to a watercourse called the Trill Mill Stream, which may previously have provided water for Saxon and medieval industrial activities.

The Westgate Partnership

The Westgate Partnership is a joint venture between Capital Shopping Centres and Coal Pension Properties Limited.

Capital Shopping Centres PLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Liberty International PLC, is the leading company in the UK specialising in the ownership, management and development of regional shopping centres. It specialises in retail-led town centre regeneration, providing mixed-use schemes which respond to the needs of particular locations. Its portfolio includes Chapelfield (Norwich), The Glades (Bromley), The Harlequin (Watford) and The Chimes (Uxbridge) all of which it owns and manages.

LaSalle Investment Management, one of the UK's largest property investment fund managers, is responsible for the Coal Pension Properties Ltd's property portfolio, which includes The Westgate Centre.

Summary of the Westgate planning application

- Mixed use development including the alteration, refurbishment, part redevelopment and extension of the existing Westgate Centre to provide new retail and residential accommodation
- Replacement multi-storey car park at Abbey Place and new access onto Thames Street
- New bus facilities and a bus priority route
- Environmental improvement to the public realm
- Associated highway, access and landscape works

How the development will be sustainable

The Westgate Partnership is looking to incorporate the latest design and construction techniques to encourage an environmentally friendly approach to the development. This includes the more efficient use of energy, the management of waste through the lifecycle of the development, the use of recycled or reclaimed materials and the recycling of demolition materials.

For further information, please see www.westgateoxford.co.uk or contact:
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