GUILDFORD North Street Site

OUTLINE BRIEF

October 2012
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1 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Council is determined to secure a comprehensive development scheme that secures the town’s future shopping status, provides a new departmental store and reinforces the quality of the historic urban environment.

The 6.33 acre (2.56 ha) North Street area is the only land within the town centre capable of accommodating the required scale of needed retail floor space.

Furthermore, redevelopment offers considerable potential to enhance Guildford’s townscape, extend the public realm, stimulate the regeneration of neighbouring streets and improve Guildford’s position as a popular shopping and visitor destination. Much of the site was assembled under a 2006 Compulsory Purchase Order and area has suffered since with vacant properties and temporary car parking.

The Council wishes to select a preferred development partner (the Developer) to deliver the redevelopment of the North Street area through working up an agreed master plan, securing planning permission and undertaking the agreed scheme. Prospective development partners were invited, by particulars dated 10 September 2012 and subsequent advertising, to register interest by the 12 October 2012. Details of the Council’s intended selection process were provided on 17 October to all parties registering interest. This document is being issued to those parties short listed by the Council.

At this stage, the Council is NOT seeking worked up scheme designs or detailed financial appraisals. This Outline Brief provides further information on:

- preparatory work that has been undertaken by the Council;
- the envisaged form of the proposed development partnership;
- and the Council’s intended approach to selection of a development partner.

1.2 SELECTION

This Outline Brief forms the second stage of the selection process and invites the shortlisted parties to respond, in writing, as outlined at Section 7. As part of the selection process, each of the shortlisted parties is also being invited to:

- attend a two hour workshop in Guildford on the 12 November 2012,
- escort representatives of the Council to view one or two of their comparable projects,
- attend an internal forum in Guildford on the week commencing 10 December 2012 to meet with key stakeholder groups,
- and deliver a written submission with some illustrative material by 1 February 2013.

Informal advice on matters requiring further clarification will be available from nominated staff at the Council.

The selection of the preferred Developer will be taken by the Council’s Executive guided by a specially convened Councillor Evaluation Panel. Details of the Panel are provided at Appendix 1. It is intended that the selection of the preferred Developer will be taken by the Executive on 28 March 2013.

It is then considered the parties will exchange a short Co Operation Agreement and work together in taking forward a master plan for the North Street area. When both parties are satisfied that a feasible and viable scheme has been identified that addresses the agreed objectives, the nominated Partner will be invited to respond to a full Development and Financial Brief with detailed proposals which, if acceptable, will form the basis of the Development Agreement.

That Development Agreement will set out the provisions for making a planning application, securing an anchor store agreement, assembling the site and undertaking the development.

2 North Street

The identified site is intended to realise the long standing ambition to secure comprehensive renewal of the area and a major extension to the town’s retail offer.

2.1 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

As stated in the preliminary particulars, the Council envisages that the North Street redevelopment will encompass the following principal features:

- A design that reflects the high quality of the town’s historic urban environment. An enclosed, unitary and monolithic development would not gain support.
- The North Street area is to address the identified retail needs for the town but as part of a mixed use scheme that will form a vital and lively extension to the town centre during the day and into the evening.
- The development should contribute to an extension of the current prime area through a retail circuit in Guildford to include North Street.
- The Council wishes to promote the development of streets and blocks that reflect Guildford’s urban grain and architectural diversity. A variety of architects and designs should ideally be used in different parts of the development to achieve that vitality in appearance and character.
Throughout the new development, all streets and lanes should be open for public access at all times. It will also be important to retain and enhance north-south linkages with the Friary Centre.

Development proposals must use the topographic changes across the site sensitively and creatively. Solutions that endeavour to create a single engineered level across the site are unlikely to be acceptable.

2.2 SIZE AND CONTENT
The North Street Site development should provide:

- A critical mass of between 30,000 m² and 45,000 m² of predominantly retail accommodation.
- A new department store of some 16,250-18,500 m²
- Sufficient parking to meet tenant requirements balanced with the Council’s sustainable transport policies.
- Bus passenger facilities provision.

One key objective is a new department store offer within the town centre. Details of the John Lewis Partnership’s requirement is provided on the web site and short listed parties are invited to comment on that requirement and other potential department store operator requirements: www.northstreetsite.co.uk

The Council aim to avoid the new scheme competing directly against the existing High Street shop provision. Careful consideration will need to be given to the proposed range and number of units contained within the evolved master plan together with the proposed mix and identity of occupiers of the larger units. Shortlisted parties are invited to outline their intended approach to this aspect.

In addition to the main retail element, the Council will welcome proposals that include a range of complementary uses to the town centre function potentially including commercial, leisure, residential and hotel leading to enhanced sustainability and commercial viability. Again, short listed parties are invited to outline their initial approach.

2.3 PARKING
Guildford offers a total of 47 spaces (short- and long-stay) for every 1,000 m² of retail development in the town centre. This is a little above the average of 43 spaces across the competing centres. (Steer Davis ‘Guildford Strategic Parking Strategy Stage 1: Parking Demand’ August 2011).

The comprehensive redevelopment of the North Street area could remove the 384 car spaces currently provided within the Leapale Road multi-storey car park. There are also 114 surface car spaces currently provided on the site. Car parking will need to be re-provided on and /off site to appropriate levels following the Guildford Strategic Parking Strategy.

The current parking strategy for Guildford, agreed by the Council and Surrey County Council, aims to maintain existing levels of short-stay provision, in response to redevelopment of town centre car parks. The second stage of the ‘Strategic Parking Strategy’ will be concluded by January 2013 and will identify how and where the additional space needed can be provided.

The car parking provided as part of the proposals will need to be well managed, utilising charging policies consistent with the Council’s wider policies in relation to public car parking. Innovative solutions and approaches to car parking within the wider borough will be encouraged.

The Council will continue to own and operate the primary car parks serving the development.

2.4 PREVIOUS SCHEMES
There is a considerable development history relating to the overall site.

MEPC proposed the 18,580 m² ‘Dominic Square’ scheme (1997).

MEPC / Westfield partnership proposed the 24,155 m² ‘Dominic Square 2’ (2000).

The Westfield / Hermes partnership proposed the 26,250 m² ‘Friary Extension’ scheme (2002) and secured planning for the 24,923 m² ‘Friary Extension 2’ scheme (2004).

Details of the previous permissions are available on the web site: www.northstreetsite.co.uk

A large number of alternate designs have been considered over the years and it may be helpful for the shortlisted parties to review and understand the issues which impacted on the viability of previous designs. For example, the 2004 consented scheme was unable to viably support, on the agreed site, a major department store, the on-site bus station replacement, affordable housing requirement, extensive public realm, highway changes, park and ride, community building, utilities and underground car parking following the fall in capital values due to the economic downturn.

3.0 Planning Policy
The promotion of the North Street area has been a long held aspiration of the Council starting in 1995 with the adoption of a development brief; subsequently revised and readopted in 2003 as the ‘Design and Development Brief for North Street, Commercial Road and Leapale Road’.
The Council has consistently promoted its development through its local planning policies. Outline permission (04/P/00090) for a 24,923 m² ‘Friary Extension’ scheme was granted in March 2004 and the permission renewed in December 2009. A Compulsory Purchase and Stopping Up Order was confirmed in support of the scheme in January 2006.

3.1 BACKGROUND
The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 requires authorities to “promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of the town centre” and to provide suitable sites to meet the scale of the development need.

The development plan currently consists of the saved polices of the Guildford Borough Local Plan (2003). The Local Plan identifies the area bounded by the Friary Centre, North Street and Leapale Road as a major approved development site.

The Council’s draft Core Strategy was last subject to consultation in March 2009. Consultation on the Site Allocations DPD took place in 2008. The future stages of these documents are set out in a revised Local Development Scheme (March 2011) which anticipates adoption of the Core Strategy by February-June 2014 and the Site Allocations DPD by October 2014.

The draft Core Strategy provides for reinforcing Guildford Town Centre’s role as the county’s prime shopping centre and location for cultural, leisure, offices, housing and public facilities.

Consultation on the draft Interim Town Centre Framework and the draft North Street Design and Development Brief were completed in January 2012 and August 2012 respectively. Both documents will be used to form part of the evidence base in support of the Council’s impending Local Plan review.

It is, however, envisaged that the North Street Development will be promoted in advance of the completion of the Local Plan review on the basis of using existing development plan policies and the application of the provisions of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

3.2 EVIDENCE BASE
The desired design principles are set out in the draft North Street Design and Development Brief which is intended to inform the Local Plan preparation. It is available to download on; www.northstreetsite.co.uk

The town’s retail capacity has been evaluated in some depth The Chase and Prts ‘Guildford Retail Study’ (2006) and the Roger Tym ‘Retail and Leisure Study’ (2011) is also available to download on; www.northstreetsite.co.uk

The web site also provides copies of a number of expert studies in respect of car parking strategy, infrastructure requirements, economic development, town centre development and vitality and viability.

3.3 TRANSPORT ISSUES
Initial work undertaken by the Council and its transport advisor (MVA Consultancy) has explored a range of solutions for the provision of bus passenger facilities including on and off street schemes. However work remains ongoing with the Highway Authority (Surrey County Council) and bus operating companies.

The Council and its preferred development partner will need to continue working closely with the bus operators and the Highway Authority.

The Portsmouth Road car park, a site owned by the Council, has been reserved for a temporary bus station in the event that such is found to be a satisfactory solution. This was the interim solution agreed for the extant planning permission (December 2009). Shortlisted parties are invited to make observations on how this issue might be tackled.

Guildford town centre currently faces traffic congestion issues. Shortlisted parties should also consider, as part of their preliminary assessment, how the North Street Site development will relate to the transport network.

The County Council is currently working on the traffic model scenario for growth in the county and will commence more detailed transport modelling for Guildford Town Centre in November 2012.

Following the selection of the preferred partner and initial master planning work, a full transport assessment will be required addressing issues of integration with the public transport networks, justification of levels of customer car parking and servicing, as well as the effect of generated traffic on the existing highway network.

There is a recognised need for a more integrated approach to car parking across Guildford, with clear signposting providing real-time information to motorists. At this stage shortlisted parties are asked to provide an indication of the likely level of car parking to be required, identifying the means of access to the car park, together with examples of best practice in car parking solutions from other developments.

3.4 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
A high level of stakeholder engagement and consultation is proposed in bringing forward the master planning of the North Street site.

It is essential that at an early stage the Developer, together with the Council agree a detailed and structured strategy in relation to stakeholder engagement. This will
be required to cover the whole ‘life cycle’ of the development above and beyond the statutory pre-planning requirements.

At this stage the Council have indicated that they would favour the ‘Advisory Group’ approach whereby senior and well established representatives of key interest groups are invited to regular briefings and provide general counsel to both Council officers and Developer.

In addition, the Council would favour ‘Open Forum’ events open to all interested parties held at periodic intervals through the master planning stages. As part of the developer selection process, an informal Forum on 10 December has been arranged to engage with the community and key stakeholders. Section 7.3 sets out further detail of what the forum will entail.

Information in regard to the Council’s statutory approach is set out in their ‘Engagement Strategy’ (July 2011) and ‘Community Involvement in Planning Statement’ (July 2011), available on: http://www.guildford.gov.uk/ces

4 OWNERSHIP

4.1 COUNCIL
A plan indicating the extent of the Council’s freehold ownership within the preferred development area and the wider zone of influence is available to download on; www.northstreetsite.co.uk

As a landowner, the Council has given an undertaking to assist the Council’s policy initiative in order to effect the delivery of this important policy objective.

4.2 OTHER OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS
A plan indicating the Council’s understanding as to the principal freehold and leasehold interests within the preferred development area and the wider zone of influence is available to download on www.northstreetsite.co.uk

Shortlisted parties are reminded that the existing property interests of the shortlisted parties will not be a material consideration in their selection as the preferred development partner.

Shortlisted parties are required to reconfirm any existing ownerships within the North Street area or the wider zone of influence, or relationships with existing landowners (including option agreements) as part of their written submission.

4.3 COMPULSORY PURCHASE
Subject to a full cost indemnity provided by the preferred development partner and the provisions of the future Development Agreement, the Council, will, if ultimately necessary, seek to exercise its statutory powers of compulsory purchase in order to assemble the site to enable the development to proceed.

4.4 KEY TERMS
During development, it is envisaged that ownership of all the development land will vest in the Council who will hold as trustee subject to the provisions of the Development Agreement. The preferred development partner will be responsible for procuring all land outside the Council’s ownership and it will be transferred to the Council at nil cost. The preferred development partner will, upon ratification, enter into a Development Agreement and an Agreement to Lease.

Following the completion of the construction of the North Street Development, and on certification of practical completion of the building works, as provided for within the Development Agreement, the preferred development partner will be granted a 250 year lease. The lease will provide for an annual rent to be paid to the Council, and the rent shall be calculated as a percentage of rents received. The relevant percentage shall be agreed prior to ratification, dependent upon the financial model finally agreed and adopted. It is anticipated that the relevant percentage shall not exceed 10 per cent.

Should the development be undertaken in phases, arrangements will be considered to permit phased drawdown, so as to facilitate funding and delivery.

5 FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1 WRITTEN SUBMISSION
The written submission should provide a clear indication as to how the proposed development is thought to be funded.

Please note that the Council will wish to seek particular clarification from short listed parties as to the extent that funding is, or will be made available, particularly between selection and start on site. The submission should provide full details sufficient to address the point.

As part of the written submission, shortlisted parties are required to provide the following financial information:

- The company’s required minimum internal rate of return or capital profit on total cost and/or the required development yield
- Any development or project management fees envisaged and how such would be calculated
- An indication of anticipated retail rental levels for each different element of the proposals including the target prime Zone A rental levels considered achievable
- A provisional estimate of the likely investment yields potentially applied to the completed project
Clarification of the short listed party’s short term debt finance rate which it may seek to apply to any financial provisions

An undertaking to reimburse all reasonable costs incurred by the Council, including costs incurred in promoting the opportunity, the cost of the Council’s property advisers, legal and other professional fees.

Confirmation of capital available to progress the opportunity from selection until ratification and then until satisfaction of conditions precedent, including an estimate of the sum involved.

5.2 FOLLOWING SELECTION

Following selection and prior to ratification, the preferred development partner will work with the Council to agree a detailed transparent financial model. Part of the process of ratification will include detailed consideration of all financial matters, including financial and commercial feasibility, the timing and amount of all payments to be made to the Council, both as reimbursement for expenses properly incurred and in respect of land assembly and future rents, a complete development appraisal including the timing and amount of all expenditure and receipts.

Ratification will depend upon agreement between the Council, the preferred development partner and their respective advisers as to all financial matters, together with a regime as to how changes to the base model can be agreed and effected during development process.

6 PROGRAMME

The preferred development partner will be notified by 29 March 2013.

Immediately following selection the preferred development partner will be required attend a press briefing with the Council. Please note that no contact is to be made with the press either during the selection process, or following selection without the specific authorisation of the Council.

The preferred development partner will as a matter of urgency be required to enter into a Co-operation Agreement and Confidentiality Agreement immediately thereafter.

6.1 CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT

The relationship between the Council and the preferred development partner will be covered by a Co-operation Agreement. The details of this Co-operation Agreement will be subject to negotiation between the parties, and will be based on the draft Co-operation Agreement attached as Appendix 5.

The Co-operation Agreement will run until exchange of a Development Agreement being the time when the development proposals are fully designed, costed and the financial return to the Council can be quantified and agreed. It is envisaged that this will take a period of 8 months.

During this period the preferred development partner will, in consultation with the Council, be:

- Organising such additional research as is necessary,
- Commissioning further analysis,
- Developing scheme design
- Agreeing a site assembly strategy,
- Providing a robust and transparent financial model,
- Reaching agreement (in principal) with the Department Store
- Producing a clear development programme through to delivery of the new scheme
- Provide proof of funding in place to take the development through to completion

At the end of this period the proposals will have advanced to the stage that:

- A planning application can be made
- The proposals are capable of being fully costed,
- There is agreement as to the process of land assembly
- There is an acceptable transparent financial model.

At the end of this period the status of the preferred development partner will be formally ratified and the preferred development partner will be required to enter into a Development Agreement ("the Agreement")

6.2 DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

The Agreement will, inter alia, stipulate the period within which the scheme is to be delivered, together with agreed conditions precedent and the required timescale for satisfying those conditions.

The Agreement will incorporate the form of the head lease ("the Head lease") that will be granted to the preferred development partner over the entire scheme. The Head lease will be granted on completion of the agreed scheme.

The Head lease will provide for a ground rent to be paid to the Council, calculated as an agreed percentage share of net rents received.

The Development Agreement will also include overage provisions.

The Council require the preferred development partner to work on a fully open book basis, based upon a fully transparent financial model. Details of the model and way in which the development account is to work will be provided for within the Agreement.
It is anticipated that the Development Agreement will be subject to a number of conditions precedent, including:

- Site assembly; and
- Receipt of detailed planning consent and all other statutory consents

The Council are looking to a timetable that provides for a start on site no later than October 2014

The Development Agreement will incorporate provisions to safeguard the Council’s interests as a landowner, and will stipulate the form, criteria and timescales for the delivery of the proposals.

7 STAGE TWO SUBMISSIONS

The Stage Two submission intended to demonstrate that shortlisted parties wholly support and fully understand the vision and ambitions of the Council to regenerate and re-energise the centre of Guildford by way of the North Street Site development, and that the shortlisted parties have the commitment, experience and resources to deliver a commercially successful and sustainable proposal within a clearly agreed timeframe.

The information requested has been kept to minimum and the procedure has been designed to provide sufficient and equal opportunity to each of shortlisted parties to obtain the information required and to meet those representatives of the Council who will be involved in the life of the project.

There are a number of stages within the submission process.

7.1 MEETINGS

This Outline Brief and accompanying documents are being made available immediately following selection to the shortlist.

- On 12 November 2012 the shortlisted parties will be invited to Guildford for a workshop with the Councillor Selection Panel, Officer Steering Group and consultants to present their company, explore the issues and discuss how the development partnership could progress.

- It is anticipated that the workshop will take approximately 2 hours.

Representatives of the Council and their advisers wish to visit no more than two recently completed projects, or projects nearing completion, of a similar scale and/or complexity to the new retail quarter.

Visits are to be arranged during December 2012.

Each shortlisted party will be individually invited to attend a two hour informal forum on week commencing 10 December 2012 with the Officer Steering Group and representatives from stakeholder groups. These will not be limited to, but may include representatives from the following, for example:

- Guildford Business Forum
- Guildford Society
- Surrey County Council
- Local residents associations
- Bus companies and other public transport providers
- Guildford Borough Councilors

The Forum is designed to review work in progress, to provide feedback to inform further work, and to initiate a dialogue that will inform future design development. The shortlisted parties will be asked to present a brief development case study with comparable development issues to those anticipated at the North Street area and detailing how these were managed or resolved. The stakeholders will be provided with structured feedback forms in which to make their initial comments and observations based on material discussed on the day.

7.2 SUBMISSIONS

The written submission and any supporting material is to be in A3 format and bound into a single volume. Six copies are required plus one loose set for further copying. Submissions will not be returned following the selection process.

The written submission is to contain the following information and to be generally in the following format:

Part One

Confirmation of Information previously supplied, including a full list of the professional team, including legal advisers, with the name and contact details of the principal contact within each firm.

Part Two

Illustrative schematic design thinking

- Site plans at street level demonstrating the overall extent of the schematic proposal
- A site plan of the proposed vehicular and pedestrian access
- Schematic plans at a scale of 1:1250 of proposed buildings with indicative sections to demonstrate the general bulk and massing of the proposals
- Supporting sketches to help illustrate key elements of the proposals
- Details of the uses proposed and indicative floor areas against each
- An estimate of the number of shoppers car parking spaces to be provided
- Graphic material provided should be of sufficient detail to explain the broad concept approach. Each drawing should be clearly numbered, carry a scale
and where appropriate show the names of surrounding streets and buildings.

Part Three - A written statement

• Anticipated approach to the development opportunity
• The design philosophy behind the concept plans submitted
• A description of the further research and analysis anticipated following selection
• Provisional views on anchor tenants and key target occupiers
• An explanation of provisional transportation solution, including if appropriate the justification for the indicative number of car parking spaces provided
• A clear statement as to how the developer proposes to engage with the community
• Any additional information that shortlisted parties may wish to include to demonstrate their ability to deal with the complex issues arising from the development.

Part Four - An indicative development programme,
The programme should run from selection, taken as March 2013 for comparison purposes.

Part Five - A transport statement
A concept statement is required outlining key issues to be resolved.

Part Six - Financial Information
The financial information set out in Section 5 including details of the financial reference.

Part Seven - Confirmation
Please confirm the following matters:
• Any existing ownerships/options within the identified development area.
• A written commitment that any such ownerships will be transferred to the Council at nil cost as part of the development process
• A statement that the ownership/tenure proposals set out in Section 4 are acceptable
• An undertaking to enter into the Co-operation Agreement if selected

The written submission and supporting material is to be delivered to the offices of Cushman & Wakefield, marked for the attention of Alistair Parker.

The deadline for submitting all the information required (both the illustrative material and the written statement) is noon on 1 Feb 2013

8 SELECTION CRITERIA

It is intended that the selection of the preferred Developer will be taken by the Executive on 28 March 2013.

In reaching their decision the Executive will have due regard to information provided to them by the Evaluation Panel, officers of the Council and key stakeholders as part of the ongoing consultation process.

Shortlisted parties are reminded of the need to supply all the information requested. There is however no need to provide additional information, and any additional information supplied will not be considered as part of the evaluation process.

Although every effort will be made to accommodate the shortlisted parties, it is unfortunately not possible to change the dates scheduled for briefings, technical workshops and the presentation day due to the commitments of all those involved.

8.1 PRINCIPLES
The Council does not require fully worked up schemes, detailed financial appraisals or financial offers prior to nomination. The desire is to select a preferred development partner with sufficient track record, resources and experience to undertake this significant urban development. The selected development partner must demonstrate an understanding of the complexity of the issues involved and offer potential solutions.

The preferred development partner will have shown a willingness to explore and review a number of possible design solutions to achieve the planning and development objectives.

8.2 CRITERIA
In selecting the preferred development partner, the selection panel will have regard primarily to the following matters:

• Demonstration of an understanding of the objectives of the Council
• Views on the size and content (including the range of uses) proposed
• Means of integrating the redevelopment within the Town Centre
• Illustrative schematic proposals
• Means of protecting and enhancing the exiting retail provision within the town centre
• Financial information provided
• Consideration and understanding of transport issues
• Provisional programme and the strategy for the implementation of the development
• The level of capital and management resources immediately available for progressing to ratification and beyond
• Local training and employment opportunities and the socially inclusive aspects of the proposals.
• Commitment demonstrated by the shortlisted parties and their advisers.

9 RESERVATIONS

Reasonable care has been taken in the preparation of the information provided to the shortlisted parties, but its accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Shortlisted parties are responsible for satisfying themselves by way of independent verification, inspection and inquiry that the information upon which they rely in preparing their submissions and proposals is accurate.

Further information provided by Guildford Borough Council or by their respective officers, consultants or advisers is given without any guarantee, warranty or representation.

Subject to Contract

This document shall not form part of any contract and its particulars are expressly excluded from such.

This invitation to make a submission to the Council is made without prejudice to the Council's statutory powers and is subject to the restrictions and limitations placed upon it by virtue of its role as a Local Authority.

Rights to Alter the Selection Process

The Council reserve the right to alter, extend or amend the selection process and assessment criteria contained herein.

The Council reserve the right not to select a preferred development partner.

The Council accept no liability whatsoever in relation to costs and expenses incurred by shortlisted parties during the selection process.

Costs and expenses incurred by the shortlisted parties in responding to this Outline Development Brief are entirely at the shortlisted parties' cost and risk. Furthermore, the Council will not consider any submission costs to form a proper part of the scheme's development expenses.

The Council is determined to secure a comprehensive development scheme that protects the town’s future shopping status, provides a new departmental store and reinforces the quality of the historic urban environment.
Appendix 1

Evaluation Panel

Guildford Borough Council representatives

Councillor Stephen Mansbridge (Leader)
Councillor James Palmer (Deputy Leader and chairman of Evaluation Panel)
Councillor Nigel Manning (Finance)
Councillor Monika Juneja (Planning and Governance)

Friary and St Nicolas Ward Councillors

Surrey County Council representative.