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Basildon Westgate Redevelopment Plans Unveiled

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Basildon Council has unveiled plans for Phase 1 of the Westgate Shopping Park masterplan, signalling a major milestone in the town centre's regeneration strategy. Phase 1 proposals include a landmark hotel of approximately 95 rooms, purpose-built extra-care housing for older residents, and a 5,000-seat arena, aimed at revitalising Basildon town centre.

Phase 1 will redevelop roughly half of the Westgate Shopping Park, including demolition of buildings once occupied by Argos, JD Sports and Home Bargains to free up space for the new scheme. The council's vision, illustrated through detailed computer-generated images,

showcases open walkways connecting the new structures to Basildon's town centre, promising improved accessibility and a modern aesthetic.

The cornerstone of the project is a 95-room hotel overlooking St Martin's Square. The hotel will feature a rooftop terrace and bar, offering guests panoramic views of the redeveloped town centre. Following public consultation, the council adjusted the hotel's footprint to create a taller, more prominent structure that complements nearby heritage assets without overwhelming them. Planning documents note that this change ensures the building remains "sensitively proportioned" while establishing it as a landmark in the area.

Next to the hotel, extra-care apartments designed for older residents are proposed on the Fodderwick Park site. These specially adapted rental units aim to meet rising demand for accessible housing in Basildon. The council's submission highlights the building's strategic placement behind the hotel, ensuring it integrates seamlessly into the broader redevelopment.

This phase is part of a larger effort to rejuvenate Basildon town centre.

Elsewhere in the town, demolition at Market Square has begun, and work is progressing on East Square redevelopment, where the former Wetherspoons pub and other buildings are being cleared. The council's plans reflect a broader trend of urban renewal, though some residents have raised concerns about the loss of familiar retail spaces and the pace of change.

Some local commentators have questioned whether councils such as Basildon are advancing major development schemes while public services continue to face funding pressures. However, the council insists the redevelopment will boost the local economy, attract visitors, and provide much-needed housing options. In a recent interview with *Essex Live*, a council spokesperson stated, "This project is about creating a vibrant, sustainable future for Basildon, balancing modern development with respect for our heritage."

The Westgate redevelopment is not without challenges. Rising construction costs and economic uncertainty could complicate delivery, and the council will need to ensure the project delivers tangible benefits to residents rather than just glossy promises. For now, the submission of Phase One plans marks a bold step forward, with the potential to reshape Basildon's town centre for generations.

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