

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FORUM

12 November 2003

2.30pm - 3.10pm

APPLICATION: C/03/0982/FP: 101 – 139 St Matthews Gardens (off York Street)

PROPOSED DEVELOPEMNT: Amendment to application C/01/0257/RM to replace 12 'A' type houses on plots 5- to 55 and 64 to 69 with 4 blocks of 'X' type flats (8 flats to each block, 4x2 bed and 4x1 bed)

Present:

For Applicant

M Casey - Wilson Connolly (Anglia)

G Neil - CHBC Architects

N Parkinson - CHBC Architects

For Petitioners

B Howard-Smith, Resident, Silverwood Close

D Harris, St Matthews Gardens Residents Assoc

Members of Planning Committee: Councillors Baker, Blencowe, Dixon, Wright.

Officers: John Summers, Head of Development Services (Chair), Sarah Dyer, Principal Development Control Manager.

Case by Applicant

1. The representatives of the applicants explained the background to the current application which was to amend an application previously approved (C/01/0257/RM) to reflect experience of sales of the part of the development which had been completed.
2. Town houses included in the original plans of the development had not been popular with families and older couples and redesigning them as flats would make the development more commercially viable.
3. In carrying out the redesign, care had been taken to consult the planning department and comply with council and national guidelines, in particular to avoid the invasion of privacy, to deal with car parking and cycle parking issues and provide a reasonable quality of life to occupiers of the properties.
4. Residents concerns about parking had been noted and a clamping regime would be introduced to deter illegal parking in the ring road of the development prior to the adoption of the road.
5. Stairwells would be obscurely glazed to discourage overlooking, other measures were being taken so as not to antagonise residents in existing properties.

Case by Petitioners

1. Petitioners representatives were concerned that a further application had been received amending the application.
2. Considerable effort had been spent on contesting elements of the original application and residents had been content with the result.
3. A further 40 signatures had been collected expressing objections.
4. These were on a number of grounds, including:

- a. The height of the proposed amended design which was some 0.5m above that previously approved adjacent to Silverwood Close.
- b. Significant loss of privacy as bedrooms in existing properties would be overlooked.
- c. Obscure glazing, while welcomed would create unnecessary light pollution in stairwells, particularly as lights were being left on all night.
- d. The distance between the new development and existing properties increased the perception of residents' loss of privacy.
- e. Although the inability of the developers to dispose of properties was not the petitioners' concern they felt that the basement flats would prove hard to sell because of the quality of life they offered.
- f. Parking was a major issue for most existing residents, the policy of some occupants being prohibited from car ownership was not enforced. Parking is an emotive issue for local residents; they are concerned that parking difficulties will be exacerbated by the proposal. The resulting effect on existing residents was not acceptable.
- g. The site was being used for parking by people not living nearby and this was increasing pressure on available parking for residents.
- h. The parking situation was inhibiting building work on the site and heavy plant was damaging footpaths.

Principal Development Control Manager

1. A number of emails and letters had been received in support of residents concerns including the increased density of the site.
2. The application would be reported on to the meeting of the Planning Committee on 3 December.

Members Comments

1. Members asked for clarification of the differences between the original approved plans and the proposed amendment and the proximity of the site to Silverwood Close.
2. The obscure glazing should be addressed to deal with any light pollution and loss of privacy issues.
3. The alterations in car parking spaces as a result of the amended plan should be clarified in the Committee report, as there appeared to be a shortfall in provision.
4. The proposals for prohibiting car ownership by some residents would be difficult to enforce.

Response to Comments and Questions

1. Applicants representatives:
 - a. clarified the dimensions of the development.
 - b. attempted to clarify the parking arrangements.
 - c. confirmed that they would look into the light pollution issue
 - d. would review the car parking issues to see what further could be done to alleviate concerns

Summing Up

1. The applicants confirmed that the issues raised by petitioners and members would be taken up and residents would be consulted.
2. A clamping regime would help alleviate the parking problems until such time as the Highway Authority can determine the traffic regulations for the new roads.
3. The light pollution problem will be reviewed and the timing of the lighting in the stairwells.
4. Petitioners said they were concerned at having to repeat discussions with the applicants and that parking continued to be of major concern.
5. The Chair confirmed that these minutes would be incorporated and taken into account in the report on the application to Planning Committee.

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