

# CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF A DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FORUM

7 July 2004

11.30am – 12.10pm

**APPLICATION:** P/C/04/0561/FP Land to the rear of 163-167 Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge

Present:

**For Applicant**

Mr Khazai, Optima (Cambridge) Ltd

**For Petitioners**

Michael Nicholson, Resident, on behalf of other residents

Members of Planning Committee: Councillors Baker, Blencowe and Hipkin

Apologies had been received from Councillors Dixon and Dryden

Officers: John Summers, Head of Development Services (Chair) and Sarah Dyer, Principal Development Control Manager (for the Case Officer, Michelle Guppy).

Also Present: Councillor Herbert, Ward Councillor for Coleridge Ward.

### Case by Applicant

Mr Khazai spoke as the applicant.

1. He outlined the location and characteristics of the site. It was accessed through a narrow archway on Cherry Hinton Road. It was surrounded on 2 sides by industrial premises including the Swiss Laundry Company.
2. Permission had already been granted for 2 houses on the site.
3. It was now thought to be suitable for student accommodation because of difficulty of access for vehicles through the archway and because there is great demand for student accommodation.
4. The site abuts on to the houses on Coleridge Road but the site is secluded.
5. All windows face the industrial premises and not the houses in Coleridge Road which are 25 metres away.
6. It would be constructed of brick and would be sound proofed. There were trees already planted 8 metres from the proposed building.
7. The Fire Authority was happy with the provision of equipment in the event of fire eg sprinklers.
8. He believed there was more noise from the industrial units than there would be from students.

### Case by Petitioners

Michael Nicholson spoke on behalf of residents in Coleridge Road:

- 9 He explained that the lead petitioner Alistair Boyd and another neighbour were unable to be present.
- 10 All the petitioners were shocked about the proposed development as it seemed to them to be a huge over-development.

- 11 It would overlook and overshadow his garden. He realised there was no right to a view but this would block out all the light. It was only 27 feet from his house to the boundary of the site.
- 12 The noise from 40 students would spoil the pleasant neighbourhood and this would be five times worse at night than during the day. It was not possible to sound proof open windows.
- 13 There was concern that regulations could be relaxed in future such that the accommodation was let to other tenants and not to students.
- 14 There was also concern that there was a risk of flash over to the Coleridge Road properties from any fire on the site and that the access could not allow fire engines through.
- 15 In his view the site was more suitable for 2-3 low roofed bungalows.
- 16 Mr Boyd had concerns about the development being overbearing and that the flats would be only 1 metre from the hedge at the bottom of his garden.
- 17 He was also concerned about the large amount of development already taking place in Cherry Hinton Road.
- 18 Also concern that there were only 3 spaces for car parking.

#### Councillor Herbert (Ward Councillor)

- 19 He said that he lives about a quarter of a mile away from the site.
- 20 From his observations visiting the site, while it was derelict land in need of development, it was neither industrial land nor surrounded by industrial land. The site was bounded on three sides by residential development and on the fourth by the Swiss Laundry.
- 21 The access was unusual such that he wondered if in the past it had been an old stables. In his view no vehicle larger than a very small car would be able to get through the archway. There was no obvious other access.
- 22 The concerns of local residents, as reflected in the 29 people who signed the petition, in summary were the very high density of the development, the potential for a lot of noise, that it was not really appropriate development for the site, that there were just as many windows on the residential side as the Swiss Laundry side and that there were only 3 conifers (not 6) and they were on someone else's property and so not within the control of the developer.
- 23 He asked if the applicant were willing to explain why the original application for 2 houses had not been pursued.
- 24 He indicated that residents were willing to enter into dialogue with the developer about their concerns.

#### Case Officer

- 25 Permission had been granted in 1998 for 2 flats with 2 garages, in 2001 for 2 semi detached houses and in 2001 for an amended application for 2 semi detached houses.
- 26 The Transport Authority advised the need for cycle parking and a contribution to the Southern Area Transport Plan.
- 27 Environmental Health suggested standard conditions and were concerned about noise.
- 28 The Fire Authority was happy with the proposed measures in the event of fire.
- 29 Building Control were concerned about the lack of suitable access for fire engines.

- 30 The Environment Agency had no objections.
- 31 There had been 6 letters from residents in addition to the petition and these focused on amenity, parking and the appropriateness of the development.

### **Members Comments**

- 32 What was the distance between the flats and the houses in Coleridge Road?
- A: The Case Officer said the distance between the boundaries was 1.2 metres and between the flats and to the nearest Coleridge Road house was 9 metres. Councillors suggested the applicant needed to have sight of the Council's design guide as the standard distance between properties was recommended as 20 metres. It was noted that the previous approved applications pre-dated the design guide but were also differently oriented on the site.
- 33 How would the development be serviced with regard to maintenance and waste collection etc since there would be more demand for this with the proposed development than with the plans already approved?
- A: The Case Officer said that the relevant authority had raised no issues about the amount of use of the access.
- 34 The previous applications had permission for 2 car parking spaces and this one wanted 3.
- A: The Case Officer reported that Engineering Services would make it a condition that proctorial control for use of cars would be required along with adequate cycle parking provision. The Chair said it would be very important to give clear guidance on this aspect in the report to the Planning Committee.
- 35 Was there provision for a warden's flat on the site ie for a resident warden?
- A: The applicant said there was provision for a management office on the site but the plans would need to be amended for a warden living on site.
- 36 Would the objectors agree that having students living in larger managed units of accommodation was preferable to having them living in individual houses bought for the purpose?
- A: Mr Nicholson said perhaps in principle but not on this site.

### **Summing Up**

- 37 Michael Nicholson said the development would be totally overbearing and there would be considerable trouble with waste disposal and the proposal was just totally out of order on this site.
- 38 Mr Khazai said that the height of the development was no different to that for the 2 semi detached houses which already had permission. It was 2-storey with velux windows in the roof. And this was no higher than the dwellings on Coleridge Road. The proposed development complied with the fire authority's requirements. Noise could be addressed in other ways. He requested that they be given time to address residents' concerns before the application went to the Planning Committee.
- 39 The Chair said that his request was noted and confirmed that these minutes would be incorporated in the report on the application to the Planning Committee.