

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

NOTES OF A DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FORUM

24 November 2004

10:05am – 11.07am

APPLICATION: P/C/04/1008/FP – Former Magdalene College Boathouse Site, Pretoria Road, Cambridge

Present:

For Applicant

Anne Page and Nicholas Phillips of David Page & Associates

For Petitioners

Nigel Osmaston – Local Resident

Members of the North Area Committee

Councillors Bailey, Hymans, Nimmo-Smith and Ward.

Officers

Sarah Dyer (Principal Development Control Manager-Chair), Neville Doe (Case Officer) and Jason Agar (Committee Manager).

Case by Applicant

Ms Page and Mr Phillips advised:

- They were approached in mid 2003 to look at the original proposals with a view to improving the architectural design of the property.
- The current proposal is more costly than the original, which was successful on appeal in July 2001.
- The floor area (foot print) of the new proposal is roughly the same, however, two extra floors have been added with an emphasis on over-looking the river. The extra height of the building will be screened by very large trees. Building will be on stilts to guard against flooding.
- Better overall design which will fit in with existing houses and environment.

Case by Petitioners

Nigel Osmaston (resident) spoke (and power-point presentation interleaved) on behalf of the petitioners and advised:

- Has followed the history of the site in which there has been 11 planning applications over 18 years - six failed between 1986-96.
- Six separate petitions (containing over 4900 signatures over 100 letters of objection) have been lodged since May 1986 against the proposed development.
- Residents have concerns in regard to the height and total area covered by the development as it is significantly greater than the approved project in 2001.
- Development too imposing over local foot bridge and neighbouring properties. Wildlife and trees will be adversely affected. Street parking problems would be created.

- Not convinced the new proposal is about improving the architectural design - more about maximizing profit. New proposal contradicts Inspector's report.

Neville Doe (Case Officer) advised:

The petition against this proposal contains 26 signatures. 42 letters of objection had been received. The Environment Agency has objected to the development on the basis of insufficient information. More information will be requested from the applicant which will be forwarded to them. The Arboricultural officer has no objection to the removal of sycamore trees that do not have a preservation order.

Councillor Nimmo-Smith asked:

- Would the changes occurring in the new Local Plan impact on the new proposal?
- Has the national guidance on flooding changed since the original proposals on this development were made?
- Which trees are protected on the site and could a condition be placed on the development that no trees be removed?
- Could the studio be converted into a separate room without another planning application being made. Could a condition be placed on the development that the studio could not be converted?
- What is the residual height of the proposal above the footbridge?

The case officer advised that the changes in the emerging local plan do not impact on this development and little had changed in regard to flooding guidance. In regard to the trees seven had been given preservation orders and conditions could be placed on the development to prevent trees being removed and the non-conversion of the studio. The applicant advised that the property would be six metres from the bridge and sit twelve metres above it.

Councillor Bailey asked:

- Has the site been flooded in the last five years?
- If the site/development was flooded would it still be accessible for people with disabilities given the recent changes to the Disability Discrimination Act?
- Would the house be insurable given the possibility of flooding?

The applicant advised that the house will be built on stilts two metres above the ground and there will be a ramp which will allow wheelchair access. It is not known whether the house is insurable. The case officer advised that the site was flooded two years ago.

Cllr Hymans asked:

- In the event of the site being flooded what would happen to cars parked on the property.

The applicant said that they could not advise on this issue as the flood plain covered half the site and it depended where the cars were parked.

Summing Up - Applicant

- The new proposal was better than the previously accepted proposal as it was more in keeping with the character of the river front and neighbouring properties.

Summing Up - Petitioner

- The proposal is not keeping with neighbouring properties as it will be five metres taller than any other home and sit an imposing 12 metres above the foot bridge.
- There are no trees between the footbridge and proposal. The current trees will be on the side of the property where there will be no windows and only serve to screen the sun.