

## CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

### NOTES OF A DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FORUM

8 February 2006

10.00am – 11.20am

**Application No:** 05/1332/FUL  
**Site Address:** Land at 94 to 100 St Andrews Road, Chesterton (SIMOCO Site)  
**Description:** Amendment to planning permission ref: C/02/1287/FP and C/03/1323/FP to replace 16 x 1 - bed flats, 10 x 2 - bed flats and 46 x 4 - bed houses, with 44 x 1 - bed flats, 90 x 2 - bed flats, 12 x 2 - bed houses, 8 x 1 -bed affordable flats, 23 x 2 - bed affordable flats and associated parking and landscaping.  
**Applicant::** Redeham Homes Southern Ltd.,  
**Agent:** Mr Matt Diamond, PRC Planning, 32 Victoria Road, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 4JT  
**Lead Petitioner:** Mr M Bond  
**Case Officer:** Janine Richardson

#### Present:

##### For Applicant

Jason Lewis (Scott Wilson Ltd)  
Gary Symes (PRC Architects)  
Matt Diamond (PRC Planning)

##### For Petitioners

Michael Bond (Old Chesterton Residents Assoc)  
Sebastian McMillan “  
Clive Brown “

#### Members of the Planning Committee

Councillors Baker, Dixon, Hymans, Reid, Slatter and R Smith.

(Apologies were received from Cllrs Blencowe, Dryden and Hipkin)

#### Officers

John Summers - Head of Development Services (Chair), Janine Richardson (Principal Development Control Manager), and John Blunt (Committee Manager).

#### Text of Petition

The petition is in the following terms:

We, the undersigned, being residents of Chesterton, request that this application be referred to the Development Control Forum to hear our objections in full and to examine options for this important site.

Summary of grounds for objection:

1. The proposed amendment to increase the number of units from 224 to 329 produces an excessive density of development and far exceeds the limit of 230 dwellings set when outline consent was given for this site.
2. The traffic generation from the new development will be greatly increased.

3. The parking provision was likely to prove inadequate in practice for the type of development proposed as a significant number of flats are likely to be in shared rather than single family occupation.
4. The balance of residential provision has been tilted too far towards flats.
5. The hazard arising from the access into the new estate is increased substantially by the increased number of traffic movements arising from an additional 105 homes.

### **Case by Applicant's Representatives**

Following a description of the amendments to the proposal arising from recognised demand for smaller scale affordable housing rather the larger units envisaged in the original scheme. The Applicant's representatives made the following points:

1. The redesign moved the buildings away from the boundary with Lynfield Lane to allow more daylight penetration.
2. Additional space between buildings had been created to reduce massing.
3. The streetscape had taken account of the need for passage by utility vehicles.
4. The turning heads that were within the flood plain had been pulled back from that area.
5. Additional garages had been added and accommodation was introduced at ground level.
6. Originally 72 dwellings were planned and 177 flats and houses were now proposed. Lobbies had been omitted from some of the units and these would be included in the final design.
7. Outline consent had not specified the number of units to be included.
8. The amended design represented an increase from 90 to 132 dwellings per hectare, PPG3 permits higher densities.
9. The traffic survey had been undertaken on 11 and 18 October. and the distances to a number of local schools were listed.
10. The trip assessment had taken into account the most recent census figures and the evaluation that smaller flats were less likely to be occupied by families with children, resulting in a lower trip rate.
11. Location of the site made it likely that occupiers would find it relatively easy to cycle to the city centre and other centres of work as well as the universities and colleges.
12. The amended proposal provided a sustainable travel pattern.
13. The traffic impact on the surrounding residential area was acceptable; the issue of rat running in the vicinity and car parking around the development had been considered and taken into account.
14. Traffic calming was proposed for the junctions into the development. No cycle accidents had been recorded at the sites of the proposed accesses.
15. Car ownership was anticipated to be low, and accommodation provided for 2 cycles per dwelling.

### **Case by Petitioners**

The petitioners' case was as follows:

1. The Urban White Paper 2000 gave people the right to determine schemes regenerating areas; in this instance local residents had been engaged in discussion rather than consulted in the proposals.
2. The adjacent site already developed at St Andrews Road was a more attractive development with 90 units.
3. This site, although comparable in size, was overdeveloped and would lead to problems with parking and traffic as well as the constrained access points. One access was onto Elizabeth Way with inherent difficulties; the other was onto Chapel Street, a small residential road.
4. Comparison of the site with the adjacent completed site taking into account the flood plain, showed a maximum occupancy of 2 hectares with 30 to 50 units per hectare.
5. A development brief produced for this site commented on the adverse effect of increased vehicular traffic on the area. The recommended density had been 40 units per hectare. The increase in density proposed ran significantly counter to that.
6. Objections had been received from Sport England and the Environment Agency.
7. The proposed density was far in excess of the average of the density for the city, to the detriment of the standard of living of occupants and was not sustainable.
8. The absence of accidents noted by the applicant's agents was a result of the heavy use when the site had been in industrial use and residents had been aware of the problems associated with using the roads leading to the site.
9. There would be inevitable traffic conflicts and additional hazards arising from the number of proposed units.
10. Car use should be discouraged in the inner city; although this site had been compared to an inner city, it was effectively a suburb.
11. The character of occupation in Chesterton was changing and this development was likely to lend itself to Buy to Let, with an increase in rented dwellings.
12. Cars were unlikely to be garaged on site during the day.
13. Rat running would be inhibited by the narrow roads and parking would be inhibited.
14. The change of mix did not present a problem although there was still a market for 4bedroomed houses for families of which there was a shortage in the city.
15. There was no objection to the design principles used on the revised proposal but the density and its effect on traffic and parking concerned the residents.

**Janine Richardson's (Case Officer) comments:**

1. Outline Planning Permission had been granted in November 2003.
2. The Transport Assessment for the outline application had been conducted in June 2001.
3. The current application was for amendment of planning permissions C/02/1287/FP and C/03/1323/FP as set out above.
4. 28 representations had been received from residents comprising objections on the grounds of:
  - a. density
  - b. increased traffic
  - c. problems with the safety of access to the development
  - d. parking
  - e. the design not being in keeping with surrounding residential housing
  - f. the danger of flooding

5. Responses from Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Environmental Health and Access Officer, raise no objections in principle to the proposal. Initial comments from Highway Authority are that the traffic figures are not acceptable for the surrounding network. Cycling Officer has concern that there is insufficient space for cycle parking.

### **Members' questions and comments**

1. The degree to which the Council was able to direct what the mix of residential units proposed.  
*Officer's response: that the new deposit draft Local Plan refers to the site and the necessity to look at the site as a whole.*
2. Whether it would be possible to compare the density proposed to other areas in the city.  
*Officer's response: it would be possible to give a comparison with density elsewhere in the city, but not at the current meeting.*
3. How best to compare the difference between the original permission and the amended proposals.  
*Officer's response: that the current amendment effectively comprised a new planning application in its own right.*
4. What the impact would be on the trip assessment and on traffic on site of the amended application.  
*Applicant's representative's response: a description of how the calculation of the trip assessment had been carried out. The difference between the original application and the amended had been considered.*
5. Concern at loss of family accommodation in the city and the inevitable use of smaller units like those in the application by commuters. Advice from the relevant housing officers would help in consideration of the application  
*Officer's response: some consideration of this would be given in the report to committee and the housing officers would be asked to comment. Detail of the affordable housing included in the proposal was given.*
6. The discrepancy between the views of applicant and petitioners on the generation of trips  
*Applicant's representative's response: use had been made of the national trip generation database at the request of the County Council. No separate information was available on flatted dwellings.*  
*The petitioners' said that they were concerned with the broad principle of increased traffic generation. Public transport was already erratic and in some cases, because of existing traffic problems, took longer than either cycling or walking.*
7. There was some doubt about using the term urban for this type of development.
8. The area was not yet a controlled parking zone.

### **Applicant's Agent Summing Up**

1. The original proposal included a large proportion of 4 bedroom units which was seen as no longer commercially viable. The proportion of smaller 1 and 2 bedroom units had been included in the proposal.
2. Despite the increased density on site, the visual effect would be improved because of improved design.

3. No separate garaging was proposed, all parking would be provided on hard standing. In comparisons with the completed site on St Andrews Road referred to earlier, there was to be no half space parking which led to cluttered roads.

### **Petitioners' Summing Up**

1. The site with its limited access was unsuited to the urban design proposed.
2. The high density proposed was represented over-development.
3. The existing village character of the area would be swamped by the development
4. The traffic generated by the development would exacerbate the already congested road network and the access roads.
5. The density proposed on the site was not matched elsewhere in the area or in the City as a whole.