

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Notes of a Development Control Forum CB1 Cambridge Station Redevelopment

8 March 2006

3.30pm – 5.20pm

Application No: 06/0008/OUT
Site Address: CB1 Cambridge Station Redevelopment
Description: Erection of a mixed use scheme, comprising 84054 sq m of Class C3 (dwelling houses) floorspace (up to 1400 new dwellings); 65400 sq m of Class B1(a) (Offices) floorspace; 4849 sq m of Classes A1, A2, A3, A4 and/or A5 (shops, financial services, food and drink, cafes, drinking, hot food takeaway) floorspace; 7968 sq m of Class C1 (Hotel) floorspace; 2035 sq m of Class D1 (non-residential institution) exhibition and conference centre floorspace; 3912 sq m of Class D1 (non-residential institution) historical resource and cultural centre floorspace; a multi storey car park and major transport interchange facilities, including associated car and cycle parking; demolition and conversion of existing buildings; construction of new buildings; alterations to existing buildings and structures together with alterations and modifications to the highway network; construction of new roads, footpaths, public spaces, public and private open space and ancillary and incidental development

Applicant: Ashwell
Agent: Rod Dowle
Lead Petitioner: Michael Chisholm
Case Officer: Sarah Dyer

Present:

For Applicant

Julian Dudley-Smith	Ashwell
Michael Derby-Smith	Ashwell/Hepher-Dixon
Mike Palmer	Ashwell/John Allen Consulting
Mike Carter	Ashwell/Mott-MacDonald

For Petitioners

Michael Chisholm	Residents Associations
Frank Gawthrop	Residents Associations
Nick Giesler	Residents Associations
James Woodburn	Cambridge Cycling Campaign

Members of Planning Committee

Councillors Baker, Blencowe, Hipkin, Hymans and Slatter

Declarations of Interest by Members

None

Officers

John Summers (Head of Development Services) Chair, Sarah Dyer (Case Officer), Huw Nicholas (County Council, Transport) and John Blunt (Committee Manager).

Text of Petition

The text of the initial petition is set out below. Further summaries of objections were received to aid discussion at this meeting; these were circulated to the applicants and members prior to the meeting.

'We the undersigned residents of Cambridge object to this planning application and seek a meeting of the Development Control Forum in the hope of persuading the applicant to come forward with a very substantially scaled down and re-balanced application. Some of the grounds for objections are listed below:

1. The planning application shows substantial disregard for the Station Area Development Framework, adopted by the City Council.
2. The seriously inadequate provisions for traffic interchange at the Station, including long-distance buses.
3. The scale of development would generate an impossible amount of traffic – vehicular and pedestrian/cyclist.
4. The proposed heights and densities show scant regard for the setting /adjacent areas, including the Grade II listed Flour Mill and Station.'

Case by Applicant's Representatives

The applicants representatives responded to issues and questions listed by the Petitioners and circulated prior to the meeting.

The questions listed by the petitioner are shown at Appendix 1 (Residents Associations) and 2 (Cambridge Cycling Campaign)

The response by the applicants is shown at Appendix 3

Case by Petitioners

- Ashwell have accepted that their estimates for net traffic generation are underestimates in the order of 15% on their own figures.
- The junction modelling is on the unrealistic assumption of free flow for vehicles leaving the junctions.
- 25 August was a curious choice for a pedestrian survey given that it was the school and summer holiday period. There would not be students from Hills Road VIth Form College, Perse Girls School and fewer commuters.
- The figure of 2.1 hectares of open space is not understood . At the Public Forum on 22 February it was apparent that included land on the Laing Triangle site. The Environmental Statement Ashwell submitted referred to the square in front of the station as open space. Neither of these was admissible as open space within the

application site. It was difficult to identify any capacity for this quantity of open space within the site.

- Much was made of the Council's Development Framework being flexible and non-prescriptive. Government policy and guidance is used to support the scale of development in the application, but this is similarly flexible and non-prescriptive.

The Case Officer's comments:

- The Case Officer set out progress on the application to date and the process by which residents associations, special interest groups and individual comments and questions had been taken into account.
- Following a meeting convened by Residents Associations in the South and East of the city, a Public Forum had been held on 22 February to allow a broad range of discussion. This Forum had been held following receipt of petitions from the Residents Association representatives and the Cycling Campaign. A separate note of this meeting is available
- The application itself is to be considered at a special meeting of the Planning Committee on 5 April.

Members' questions and comments

The applicants had been advised of the officers' intention to recommend members' refusal of the application when the application was considered by the committee. Some Members expressed concern that the applicants had assumed that this meant the application would be refused on 5 April and that the case for approval remained to be made by the applicants.

The Chair clarified the situation about advice that had been given to applicants.

- It would help to assess the application if the proportion of planning gain could be established, given the 'wish list' being compiled by residents associations and special interest groups as well as individuals.

Officers replied that this will be a matter that will be covered in the officers report. Planning Obligation requirements have to meet the necessary tests, relate to and mitigate the impact from the development and be in accordance with the Development Plan and other policy guidance including the Station Area Development Framework and in the context of its merits on planning grounds.(Officers)

Residents don't necessarily have a wish list, the major concern is that the results of the development don't impact on existing facilities and detract from existing amenities. For example, insufficient playspace was provided within the site. This would put pressure on existing facilities and it was hard to see where open space was available within the site to provide it. School capacity presented the same problem. (Residents)

- There was lack of detail on how the conflict between modes of transport was to be dealt with.

*The applicants would continue to discuss the application details with relevant officers and the residents' associations' representatives and special interest groups.(Applicants)
The application was for outline permission and reserved matters still remained to be settled.(Officers)*

- What status did issues such as access and routes have at this stage, would existing drawings be binding on the applicant.

The overall principle of access into the site formed part of the current application. All those details shown on the access plans submitted with the application fall to be considered at this stage. (Officers)

- Would the bus interchange to be provided at the station accommodate the expected increase in population of 30% to 40% within ten years, when the need for buses is significantly greater?

The 12 bus stops had been provided based on an existing requirement for 8 to 10 stops and 2 additional stops to accommodate growth and any change in facilities. This had been arrived at in consultation with Stagecoach and County Council Officers. The responsibility for the transport network remained with the County Council. The applicants were aware of the need for a world class interchange and retained this as a primary aim of the application. (Applicants)

- There seemed little scope for compromise between petitioners and the applicants. The vision for the area was not matching resident's views.

The applicants were whole hearted in support of the scheme based on the Masterplan by Richard Rogers and the belief that full advantage should be taken of the opportunities provided by the site.

If the application was refused in April the applicants would take stock and look at the terms of the refusal to guide changes in the future, the drivers of the scheme are the transport issues, once those issues are settled the residential and commercial components can be addressed. (Applicants)

- Are the applicants willing to listen closely to comments from stakeholders in the area and, should the application fall, come back to the Council with a revised application taken the comments and views expressed into account?

The applicants intend to keep in touch with all parties, but it will be necessary to evaluate the Council's response and respond accordingly to ensure the success of the scheme. (Applicants)

- Would the application be assessed against the existing local plan or will the Inspector's report on the emerging Local plan come into play?

Currently it would have to be assessed against the existing local plan. Timing of a future application would determine how it would be assessed against the emerging Local Plan. (Officers)

Applicant's Agent Summing Up

The applicants' representatives felt that they had covered the aspects of the application in the discussion.

Petitioners' Summing Up

- Residents were not against redevelopment of the site and welcomed the comments recognising the importance of the transport component and need for a world class interchange, However they felt that this was not provided by this application.
- The large scale of the development was not practicable, given the impact of increased traffic on the area and on the city as a whole and those living outside it.
- Evidence for the implementation of a scheme of this size was inadequate and was not persuasive.
- If outline permission was granted by the Committee on 5 April, it would give approval to the scale and quantum of development shown in the application..