

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Notes of a Development Control Forum

197 Huntingdon Road

3 May 2006

9.30am – 10.20am

Application No: 06/0242/FUL
Site Address: 197 Huntingdon Road
Description: Demolition of existing house, and erection of new block of nine flats and one house.
Applicant: Prof. V Whittaker
Agent: David Page Associates
Address: 96 King Street, CB1 1LN, Tel: 01223 361803,
Lead Petitioner: E Traversone
Case Officer: Rebecca Flood

Present:

For Applicant

David Page Agent
Nick Phillips Architect

For Petitioners

Mrs E Traverson

Members of Planning Committee

Councillors Baker, Blencowe, Dixon, Hymans, Hipkin, Holland (as Ward Councillor), Slatter

Declarations of Interest by Members

None

Officers

Joh Summers (Chair), Rebecca Flood (Case Officer) and John Blunt (Committee Manager).

Text of Petition

The text of the petition was as follows:

We, the undersigned, would like to object to the application for the demolition of the house at 197 Huntingdon Road and the request for redevelopment of the site into 9 flats and a house.

We would like to object for the following reasons:

Increased traffic generation on an already busy road.

Over-development of the site. A building significantly larger than the current house.

Increased noise

Possible loss of privacy and overshadowing.

Increased refuse.

We would like to request a Development Control Forum.

Case by Applicant's Representatives

David Page:

1. This is a modest scheme on a wide site at the widest part of Huntingdon Road, using the same width of frontage and height as the existing house.

2. Traditional designs were used so as to fit in with existing properties in the area. The density of the proposal met the Council's guidelines.
3. The design concept was to retain the fine back garden and make it into a feature of the scheme. The proposed block of flats had been centralised to minimise impact.

Case by Petitioners

Mrs E Traversone

1. The petitioner represented the residents in Huntingdon Road and was herself a neighbour of the site.
2. The proposal formed another demolition of another large family house, depleting the number available in the City.
3. While she felt that the residents could not change the direction that development was taking in the city, it was a concern to residents that no option was available to them.
4. The previous application, which had been refused, had been for 14 flats and she felt that it would not take a great deal to change the nature of the application to one for 13 flats.
5. Residents were surprised at the layout which they would have set the proposed house against the neighbouring house to reflect the original design and others in the Road
6. The garden was beautiful and needed to be protected against being spoilt by the process of development as well as being changed itself.
7. There was concern about the effect of the provision for cycle access for perhaps 2 cycles per flat and storage and the recycling storage bins, with rubbish storage for the flats at the boundary close to the neighbouring house.
8. The number of cars using and having access to Huntingdon Road would be increased significantly; the predicted car movements seemed very low.

The Case Officer's comments:

This application was submitted on the 15 March 2006 and is for the demolition of the existing house and erection of a new block of nine flats and one house. On the adjacent site, no. 193 planning permission was granted for 8 flats with associated parking and landscaping with works having already commenced on site.

As part of this current application consultations were sent out on 16 March 2006. The application was also advertised in the Cambridge Evening News on 24 March 2006, and a site notice was displayed outside the site on the same date.

As a result of the consultation exercise that took place, I have received a petition containing 26 signatures and 8 letters of representation, all of which have raised objections to the proposal. The main grounds for objecting are as follows.

Principle of development

These objections suggest that the proposal constitutes overdevelopment of the site and will set a precedent. The loss of the existing house is strongly opposed and there is concern that the loss of houses such as this will lead to a change in the character of Cambridge. There was also concern that the replacement of single family houses into flats such as is being proposed here, will continue the loss of family accommodation which is in short supply.

Massing and design

These objections suggest that the proposal is out of character with the rest of Huntingdon Road and site the adjacent plot at no. 193, which is currently being redeveloped as being out of character also. Concern was expressed about the scale of the proposal and the visual implications from within the street scene.

Amenity

Some of the objections made reference to the potential overpowering effect on no. 199 Huntingdon Road and the overlooking of rear gardens leading to a loss of privacy. Concern was also expressed about the increased noise and disturbance with one representation drawing attention to the location of the car parking associated with the house element of the scheme and its proximity to the adjacent amenity space on the site of 193.

Traffic/Car parking

Many of the comments raised concerns about highway safety from increased traffic numbers, particularly with regard to the entrance and exit from the site, as well as the increased hazard for pedestrians and cyclists using the pavement along this side of Huntingdon Road. Representations also made reference to the entrance into the site being extremely close to the proposed access from Huntingdon Road to the development on the NIAB site.

Other Concerns

Other concerns were raised about there not being enough provision for refuse and the need for the refuse store to have a door.

The consultee responses to the application are as follows;

Cambridge Highways Agency

Raised no objections with regard to highway safety but requested a condition be included on any approval to ensure that any redundant vehicular crossings of the footway should be returned to full face kerb at no cost to the highway authority.

Environmental Health Department

Raised no objections but recommended conditions regarding construction hours, delivery times, dust suppression, site lighting, noise insulation, waste storage and piling.

Access Officer

Commented that the toilet doors should open outwards.

Planning Obligations

I have written to the applicants making clear my expectation that they will in conjunction with this application, enter into an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act, under which, they will, if granted permission for the development, contribute to the costs of the provision of educational facilities, open space, community facilities, transport and public art in the city, in accordance with the terms of the City Council's Planning Obligation Strategy. Legal discussions are currently taking place and I expect such an agreement to be completed in the near future.

Members' questions and comments

1. Members had noted an increasing trend for intensification of development, with a loss of family homes some of which were turned into Houses in Multiple Occupation. It would be appreciated if the case Officer's report addressed this problem and compared this application with previous applications. *(Case officer to note)*
2. The impact on the street scene of the additional flats on the site would be significant and issues such as light-spill from communal stair cases needed to be dealt with by the developer. *(Agent to note)*
3. The proposed use of the basement of the flats needed clarification.
4. *The Agent said that basement was to be used for cycle storage*
5. How did the footprint of the existing house compare with that proposed? The proximity of the flats to the adjacent house needed further explanation.
6. *The Agent said the footprint of the new proposal was larger, and the design had been carried out to enable the retention of the garden which, he agreed, should be retained. The flats were one and two bedroomed flats.*
7. The case officer should cover the Highways Authority's view on the increased vehicular and cycle traffic and ease and safety of access onto Huntingdon Road at this point in a 40mph limited stretch of road. *(Case officer to note)*
8. The design statement notes that the house is a good example of neo-Georgian 1930's architecture, what reasons were there for demolishing such a building? Was there to be a management agreement for the house and flats?
9. *The house is a good example of its type and the design of the replacement was intended to keep the spirit of the design. However it was difficult to convert the existing building into flats and the property was too large for the current occupier. The proposals for a management agreement would be taken into account in the conditions attached to any permission granted.*
10. How will the retention of the garden in its current state be ensured and how would the design aspect affect the house?
11. *The Agent said that the residents of the flats would not be able to change the garden and the occupants of the house would be unlikely to want to do so.*
12. *The Chair said that the issue of the garden would be taken up with the applicants.*
13. In response to a number of questions and comments from members the Chair reminded them that the application had to be determined on its merits alternative proposals could not be taken into account.
14. *The agents said that there was no precedent for grouping of flats or houses together in the manner suggested and the current proposal gave a rise fall to the street scene.*
15. Mrs Treversone pointed out that the existing yew hedge would be threatened by the building programme, was there a possibility of 'flipping' the design to reduce some of the impact on the neighbours and save possible damage to the yew hedge?
16. The Agent agreed to look at the possibility of flipping the design as suggested to alleviate some of the neighbours' concerns and to retain the fine rear garden and hedging to the side and front of the property.
17. Members asked for clarification on the car parking standards which the case officer responded to.

