

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Notes of a Development Control Forum

- St Faiths School, Trumpington Road, Cambridge
- Football Field, rear of 17 Trumpington Road, Cambridge

30 April 2008

10.00am – 12.00pm

Application No: 08/0337/FUL
Site Address: St Faiths School, Trumpington Road, Cambridge
Description: Erection of multi-purpose sports hall to accommodate 4 badminton courts and associated changing rooms, together with a reconfigured car park/outdoor play facility and associated works (following demolition of existing building).
Applicant: St Faiths School
Agent: Justin Bainton of January's 7 Dukes Court, 54-62 Newmarket Road, Cambridge
Lead Petitioner: Dr John T Green
Address: 40 Newton Road, Cambridge
Case Officer: Amy Lack

Application No: 08/0285/FUL
Site Address: Football Field, r/o 17 Trumpington Road, Cambridge
Description: Gravel access road with provision for 22 parking spaces
Applicant: St Faiths School
Agent: SMC Covell Matthews (Justin Bainton of January's will cover this application).
Lead Petitioner: Dr John T Green
Address: 40 Newton Road, Cambridge
Case Officer: Tony Collins

Present:

For Applicant

Colin Brown – Januarys

Carol Smith – St Faiths Bursar

Justin Bainton – Januarys

For Petitioners

Dr John Green – Chair of Bentley & Newton Roads Residents Association (BENERA)

Andy Gordon – local resident

Alan Browne – Director of Arup

Members of Planning Committee

City Councillors Baker, Blair, Blencowe, Dixon and Zmura

Members of the South Area Committee

City Councillor Blackhurst and County Councillor Kent

Declarations of Interest by Members

Cllr Kent: As Member of Latham Road Residents Association and therefore a consultee

It was agreed that Cllr Kent would not ask questions relating to this application (08/0285/FUL)

Officers

Sarah Dyer (Chair), Tony Collins (Case Officer) Glenn Burgess and Toni Birkin (Committee Managers) and Dr Jon Finney (Development Control Engineer (City and South))

Text of Petition

The text of the petitions was as follows:

I have been asked by my membership to write in my capacity as Chair of Bentley & Newton Roads Residents Association (BENERA), which has around 100 member households, comprising over 80% of households eligible to be members in this area (which covers Newton Road, Bentley Road and their side roads). We object to the above application.

Case by Applicants

Application 08/0337/FUL

Mr Brown made the following points:

- 1) Highlighted that these are two entirely separate applications
- 2) Each application needs to be addressed on its own merits
- 3) The sites are not connected in any way
- 4) Any decision on one application will have no impact on the other

Justin Bainton made the following points:

- 5) The proposed sports hall is a strong and attractive design
- 6) There will be no increase in staff or student numbers as a result
- 7) For 1 academic year there will be a need for temporary classrooms – and these will be subject to a separate planning application

Carol Smith made the following points:

- 8) The current sports hall has 1 gym and is too small for use by year 7 and 8 pupils
- 9) These pupils are required to use facilities at the Leys Schools - resulting in 34 additional minibus journeys and approximately 120 additional walking hours per year
- 10) The available time slots at the Leys School are also reducing
- 11) A new sports hall will mean:
 - less wasted time for pupils and staff
 - easier to manage timetables
 - increased use in bad weather
 - comparable facilities to other local schools

Mr Brown made the following points:

- 12) We have looked at alternative sites but are limited due by policy considerations
- 13) Parts of the site are protected by open space policy in the local plan
- 14) In order to use the proposed new facilities for inter school events, and for the wider local community, it is essential to have main highway access
- 15) We have looked at the possibility of an 'in-out drop off' facility but it would reduce the functionality of the running track and the cricket pitch
- 16) Sports England have objected to changes in the running track and cricket pitch and it would also mean pupils still traveling off site to use other facilities
- 17) We have looked at all the alternatives and this is the only viable option
- 18) The car parking provision will be used for both parking and informal play
- 19) We consider the proximity of parking to the borders of residential properties to be acceptable but have offered to reduce this
- 20) The proposal will require new foundations but this will not affect the existing trees
- 21) The height will increase from 7.8m to 8.4m – but this will not affect the existing trees
- 22) This a replacement facility – there will be no additional staff or pupils
- 23) No additional traffic will be generated as a result of the proposal
- 24) Journeys to the Leys school will be dramatically reduced

Carol Smith made the following points:

- 25) St Faiths (and other local schools) meet jointly with Cambridgeshire County Council to discuss the traffic implications of schools
- 26) Based on 2006 information:
 - 60% of school journeys are part of another journey (i.e work/shopping)
 - 58% of pupils live more than 2 miles away from the school
 - 22% of pupils walk, bike or catch a bus
 - 24% of pupils car share (with regular lists produced for parents)
 - 50 pupils travel on park and ride (with other buses from further a field)
 - The school has cycle parking for 100
 - Times of drop off and collection are staggered to reduce traffic and parking issues

Mr Brown made the following points:

- 27) A circuit through the school car park (as in the Perse School example) to alleviate traffic problems would not be suitable for our site. We also feel it would be unsafe for pupils

Application 08/0285FUL

Mr Bainton made the following points:

- 28) Work originally started last year as we were not aware that consent was needed
- 29) As soon as we became aware – all work stopped
- 30) Retrospective planning consent has now been applied for
- 31) The application is for a low-key upgrade to the area – allowing for 22 car spaces
- 32) This will allow for improved drainage and increased use of the site in the winter
- 33) The site will be mostly used on Wednesdays and Saturdays during term time and gated to stop unauthorised use
- 34) We have increased the proposed landscaping on the site to break up the gravel areas
- 35) The vistas across the playing fields have been retained

Case By Petitioners

Dr Green presented the views of the petitioners against the application:

- 36) BENERA represents around 100 households in the affected area
- 37) Never before have members been so united in support of a objection petition
- 38) We have good relations with St Faiths and support development of the school and its activities - provided they are developed in a reasonable way that takes into account the impact of its business on its environment
- 39) This good neighbourliness is lacking when it comes to issues around parking and traffic
- 40) We recognise that the applications are separate but feel they cannot be considered independently because:
 - the activities (namely sport) are interdependent and within 50 metres of one another
 - both include new parking arrangements which have implications between sites
 - both include access to improved sports facilities - leading to increased usage and therefore increased traffic and parking

Application 08/0285/FUL

Dr Green presented the views of the petitioners against the application:

- 41) A full and comprehensive traffic assessment is needed
- 42) There are safety issues at Latham/Trumpington Road junction
- 43) The approach to parking on this site is piecemeal
- 44) Parking demand is greater than the capacity provided
- 45) The proposal for parking near the boundaries of residential properties is unacceptable in environment and amenity terms. If one application is turned down on this – both should be
- 46) Residents asked for consideration to be given to alternative transport linkages when the previous Astroturf application came forward – nothing came of this
- 47) Other possible solutions need to be looked at and a thorough professional assessment of transport and parking undertaken
- 48) There needs to be a holistic traffic management plan and parking management plan for both sites

Application 08/0337/FUL

Dr Green presented the views of the petitioners against the application:

- 49) We agree with the concerns of the Aboricultural Officer - particularly around potential damage to trees on the site during construction
- 50) A possible solution is to set back the proposed sports hall to protect the trees. This would also enable an in-out drop off facility which would elevate traffic and parking problems
- 51) The site and mass is appropriate to the streetscape – a better design is needed
- 52) The traffic assessment needs to deal with the *whole* site and offer solutions – not just raise issues and concerns
- 53) The proposed 4th entrance at the bend of Newton Road raises safety issues. There have already been 3 major accidents in the last 12 months
- 54) Illegal parking to the north side of Newton Road is currently discouraged by unregulated bollards – which is a fudged situation
- 55) Parking alongside the boundaries of residential properties is unacceptable in environmental and amenity terms
- 56) Double yellow line enforcement in this area is weak

57) Recent developments have been progressed with no traffic management policy – now the time has come to say ‘no’ to incremental developments unless the consequences of them are addressed too

58) The site is large – there is unquestionably room to fulfil the requirements of Sports England and have off road parking and a drop-off

Mr Gordon presented views of the petitioners against the application

59) Rides bike on Newton Road every day and sees the issues

60) There are lots of cars in bus lanes and on yellow lines

61) The coning on Newton Road is effective but is ugly and unnecessary

62) Deliveries at the Nuffield Hospital involve large trucks during peak time – sometimes on yellow lines. This does not help visibility

63) This is a good opportunity to insist on a traffic management plan

64) Usage of the site will increase – and the conduct of drivers will not change

Dr Green presented the views of the petitioners against the application:

65) The issues raised by Sports England are being used inappropriately by the applicants to support their case

66) The possibility of an in-out system has been rejected as they have made an assumption that it would result in queuing in the bus lane. The Perse School example shows this is not always the case and should not be dismissed without thorough and professional examination

Mr Browne presented the views of the petitioners against the application:

67) Is Director of Arup (Consulting Engineers to the Planning and Building Industry)

68) We work mostly with schools and universities and project managed the Perse School developments - advising them on 2 applications.

69) We recommended that the Perse School applications be linked in transport assessment terms and looked at junctions, trip generation, traffic surveys and parent/pupil consultation

70) It is recommended that the long-term consequences of any work is looked at carefully

71) A full transport and parking plan should always be done – looking at issues around pupils, teachers and deliveries

72) Safety, DDA and neighbourhood issues should be addressed and incorporated into any Green Transport Plan

73) A holistic approach should be taken looking at current and future transport flows

74) It is essential to generate the confidence of key stakeholders such as residents

The Case Officer’s comments:

Application 08/0285/FUL

75) This application was received on 27th February 2008. Further information was required; this was received on 10th March, when the application was accepted as valid

76) The application follows concerns raised locally about engineering operations which were taking place on site and advice to the applicants from the Planning Investigation Service that planning permission was required for the development. Considerable work had been carried out on site before the application was made, including the laying down of chipped stone across almost the whole of the application site

77) Notification of the application was sent to neighbours at all addresses on the west side of Trumpington Road from 1 to 23, all addresses in Latham Road except for River Farm Cottages, and all the flats in Southacre Drive. A site notice was also posted and an advertisement placed in the Cambridge Evening News on 4th April

78) Received written representations from 2 residents in Latham Road, from the Southacre, Latham Road and Chaucer Road Residents' Association and from County Councillor Anne Kent.

The main grounds given for objecting are as follows.

Residential amenity. These objections refer to additional noise and pollution, especially for No 7 Latham Road.

Highway issues. Objections under this heading refer to the narrowness of the road, the conflict with extensive pedestrian traffic, restricted visibility at junctions, and the possibility that the field could be more safely accessed by cars at other points.

Impact on the conservation area. Under this heading it is suggested that the proposed openness of the proposed layout, the hard surface and formal layout, the presence of more cars and the loss of part of the hedge at the entrance would detract from the quietness, greenness, rural character and attractive views which characterise the conservation area.

Sustainability. These objections suggest that the development conflicts with the need to discourage access to the field by car and encourage sustainable alternatives.

79) Also undertaken a number of policy consultations, as follows.

1. **The Highway Authority** states that visibility splays of 2.4m x 70m must be demonstrated, and full details of access road width and parking and manoeuvring space provided. The authority also recommends conditions governing 2m x 2m pedestrian visibility splays and the hard paving of the first 5m of the access road to prevent the spread of debris.
2. **Sports England** has no objection.
3. **The Planning Policy team** raise concerns that the development would be contrary to policy on the protection of open space, and would conflict with government guidance on Green Belts contained in PPG2. The team also suggest that the proposal might result in overprovision of car parking, contrary to the City Council's maximum standards.
4. **The Arboriculture Department** raises concerns about the impact of the development on adjacent trees and hedges, and urges that remedial work be undertaken and any proposal for car parking on the site be redesigned to avoid damage to trees and hedges. Subsequent investigations on site have offered reassurance on aspects of this issue, but the Principal Arboricultural Officer is of the view that to be acceptable, car parking provision on this site would need to be configured differently from that proposed

80) Amended plans have been received from the applicant, but the timescale for the determination of the application does not allow sufficient time for me to renotify neighbours or consultees, and at present I expect to make a recommendation on the basis of the details originally submitted

Application 08/0337/FUL

81) This application was received on 10th March 2008

82) Notification of the application was sent to 27 neighbouring addresses in Newton Road, Trumpington Road, and Latham Road on 20th March 2008. The application was also publicised by a site notice, and by an advertisement in the Cambridge Evening News on 28th March 2008

83) The case officer has received written representations from 19 individual occupiers or owners: 10 from Newton Road, 3 from Bentley Road, 5 from Rayleigh Close, and one by email without address. She has also received representations from the Bentley Road and Newton Road Residents Association.

The main grounds given for objecting are as follows.

Principle of development. These objections oppose the intensification of use on the site or question the need for the facility at all.

Residential amenity. These objections refer to the impact of additional car parking spaces for the inhabitants of 13 and 15 Newton Road

Highway issues. These are by some margin the most frequent objections. They centre on two main issues: the hazards which might be created by additional traffic, and particularly by the positioning of the proposed access points, and the anticipated worsening of the problems created around the school by vehicles dropping off and picking up pupils at the beginning and end of the school day. Objections suggest that this problem requires a thorough review.

Design. Under this heading it is suggested that the building is too massive, that it would be like a fortress, and that it should be sited further away from the street.

Trees. These objections suggest that the development would threaten the health and welfare of trees which are of amenity value.

In addition, five representations state that one of the alternative sites for the sports hall, analysed in supporting documents, but not proposed in the application, would be unacceptable

84) The case officer has also undertaken a number of policy consultations, as follows.

1. **The Highway Authority** states that the proposed access to the temporary car park is insufficiently wide, and recommends refusal of the application on these grounds. The authority also requires that the entrance gates to the new car park must be set back 5m from the back of the highway, and that the first 5m of the access track must be hard paved to prevent the spread of debris on to the highway. The authority also requires empirical evidence of representative vehicle speeds in Newton Road before being satisfied that the visibility splays proposed are adequate. A condition requiring a traffic management plan for the demolition and construction periods is also sought.
 2. **Sports England** is satisfied that the benefits of the scheme outweigh the detriment caused by the loss of part of the playing field. Sport England raises some issues about the detailed layout, and recommends a condition requiring the submission and approval of a Community Use Scheme.
 3. **The Planning Policy team** has no objection to the development of a sports hall. The team recommend a condition to ensure the removal of temporary car parking and temporary buildings from the site after the development. The team raise concerns that the development would be contrary to policy on the protection of open space, and also suggest that the proposal might result in overprovision of car parking, contrary to the City Council's maximum standards.
 4. **The Arboriculture Department** state that they cannot support the proposal because it will lead to an adverse effect on 8 of the 10 lime trees fronting Newton Road, through root damage and because of the amount of additional pruning required. The clearance from the tree trunks is also felt to be insufficient to allow construction without further damage.
 5. **The Environmental Health Department** recommend conditions to control construction hours and dust suppression during construction, and noise insulation when the building is operational.
 6. **The Environment Agency** recommends a condition requiring a minimum ground floor level to provide a reasonable freeboard against extreme flooding
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Members questions and comments

85) It is stated that, as this is a replacement facility, there will no increase in pupils or staff – but with more community and inter school use overall numbers will increase. Will the final officers report address this?

Colin Brown: Inter school matches are currently held on the site – so this will not change. At the moment there is no community use of the site but this is something we are exploring. It is unlikely that this additional activity would have an impact during the 'stress times' of the day (i.e school drop off and collection)

86) Although they are separate applications will the officer look at the cumulative impact of the traffic issues?

Tony Collins: The report will address will address this – but the applications deal with two separate aspects of car parking with differing objections

87) Has the Schools Transport Plan been shared with local residents and have they had an input into the document?

Carol Smith: A full transport plan is in place and regularly monitored but has unfortunately not been shared with residents. We do work with parents to encourage them to be considerate to our neighbours and use the car sharing schemes – however we cannot control their actions

88) Is the parking outside No: 13 and No: 15 Newton Road permanent or temporary?

Colin Brown: During construction there is a need for this as temporary parking and the applications set down the details of this and the permanent spaces. These are similar but with a different configuration

89) What is the impact for the trees on Newton Road?

A: We feel we have addressed any issues around the impact on the tree roots by using special piling methods for the foundations. With regard to visual amenity – there will be limited additional crown raising needed

90) Sitting of the proposed sports hall: is it exactly the same footprint but higher?

Colin Brown: The footprint is not identical:

- *Existing building: 23m long and 12m deep (height: 7.8m)*
- *Proposed building: 32m long and 17m deep (height 8.4m)*

91) I would hope that there were further negotiation to be had between the neighbours and the applicants and that the County Councils advice address all the issues raised

A: Noted

92) Highlighted that the issue of illegal parking would not form part of planning consideration. Any issues should be reported to 01223 458520

A: Noted

93) Highlighted that the two applications would be determined by different committees

Sarah Dyer: The Planning Department has delegated power to approve/refuse 08/0285/FUL so it may not have to go to the Area Committee

94) How will the number of car parking spaces change?

Tony Collins: The number of available spaces is the same – but configured differently

95) Were the Aboricultural Officers views given after all the representations were received?

A: The Councils Aboricultural Officer has not seen some aspects of the applicant's tree advice information

96) Have the County Council seen all of the information?

Dr Jon Finney: We have not seen the Transport Assessment in detail but intend to

97) Asked for clarification regarding the open space policy

Tony Collins: The site is within a conservation area but outside the green belt. However planning policy PPG2 states that if it has an impact on the green belt (even though it is outside of it) – it can be considered

98) When the County Council looks at the Transport Assessment they need to be mindful that parking in Trumpington Road bus lane is to be reviewed. It was only a temporary measure

A: Noted

Summing Up by the Applicant

99) We fully understand and accept the concerns regarding traffic but every effort is being made by the school to address this

100) It is inevitable that the school has an impact on the local area but we work hard with the residents and aim to continue this dialogue

101) This is a replacement sports hall – with no increase in pupils or staff – and all planning issues have been covered

102) There is no intention to use the car parking (08/0285/FUL) outside of the times of matches – mostly on Wednesdays and Saturdays

103) An in-out drop off facility would not be viable and would be a safety issue for pupils

104) The Purse School example is very different due to the configuration of the site. They were proposing an increase of 250 students so were required to take extra measures

105) Sports England are supportive of our proposals

106) We are taking a holistic view of the site

107) Revised proposals have been presented to the council to protect the trees

108) We are happy to work with local residents to address any issues

Summing Up by the Petitioners – against the application

109) Residents have good relations with the school apart from on traffic and parking matters

110) We are happy to be consulted but were only given 3 days on this occasion

111) The school has an obligation to control parents actions – it is their responsibility

112) The school cannot guarantee that parking will only happen on Wednesday and Saturday

113) Although they are separate applications – we hope that planning is not so inflexible that it cannot look at things holistically

114) We are not oppose to the expansion and progress of the school – and in fact welcome it – but it has to be done in a strategic way