

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Notes of a Development Control Forum • 66-74 Ditton Walk, Cambridge

28th May 2008

11.45am –12:50pm

Application No: 08/0429/FUL
Site Address: 66-74 Ditton Walk, Cambridge
Description: Erection of 5 four bed dwellings and 1 three bed dwelling.
Applicant: Afterway Ltd
Agent: David Page Associates, The Gallery, 96 King Street, Cambridge
Lead Petitioner: Nicola Bown
Address: 78 Ditton Walk, Cambridge
Case Officer: Andrew Thompson

Present:

For Applicant

Tim Dean – Applicant
Jenny Page – Applicants Agent
Chris Senior – DPA Architects Ltd

For Petitioners

Jessica Martin – Resident
Nicola Bown – Resident
Sue Swaffield – Resident

Members of East Area Committee

City Councillors Blencowe, Walker, Wright

Declarations of Interest by Members

None

Officers

John Summers (Chair), Andrew Thompson (Case Officer) and Glenn Burgess (Committee Manager)

Text of Petition

The text of the petitions was as follows:

The petitioner has listed 6 points of objection against the application. These are:

Inappropriate development
Sustainability and vegetation
Additional traffic, overshadowing and loss of privacy
Public space and the public realm
Increase in noise and disturbance

Case by Applicants

Ms Page made the following points:

- 1) This is an extension to the phase 1 scheme which was recently approved on appeal (a copy of the phase 2 plans and the appeal information was circulated)
- 2) This proposal follows a similar design

Mr Senior made the following points:

- 3) A traditional approach has been used with slight variations on the phase 1 scheme
- 4) Car ports and increased green space to the front of properties has been incorporated
- 5) A 'kink' in the road and been proposed to add some interest to the street scape

Ms Page made the following points:

- 6) As the development is for only 6 houses it does not constitute a major application or require an allocation for affordable housing
- 7) Plots 11, 12 and 13 do have bedrooms overlooking houses on Ditton Walk – however they are over 25 metres away so there will be no loss of light or privacy to Ditton Walk residents
- 8) There will not be a considerable increase in noise or disturbance as the proposal is residential and covers low numbers of houses
- 9) Access issues have been discussed fully with the County Council Highway Officer
- 10) Ongoing discussions are taking place with the Planning Department regarding drainage
- 11) Solar panels to heat water will be incorporated into the design
- 12) We aim to retain as many trees as possible on the site and S106 conditions will apply
- 13) We have taken into account all the issues raised through the previous schemes appeal process and believe this proposal meets the requirement of Local Plan Policy

Case By Petitioners

Ms Martin presented the views of the petitioners against the application:

- 14) Does the Council have an overall plan or vision for this area, and will it be discussed with the existing residents?
- 15) What is considered as 'overdevelopment'? – we currently have 5 areas of development occurring simultaneously within a section of street 50 yards long
- 16) In an area previously supporting 18 residential dwellings, a further 61 are either planned or under construction
- 17) Currently (with only 2 developments) there is increased noise, dust and nuisance with the road being constantly blocked by plant equipment and lorries
- 18) The Victorian drains will simply not be able to cope with this new development and it is suggested that a comprehensive assessment is undertaken
- 19) Residents have never been consulted about the plans for Ditton Walk and, of the homeowners that have sold their gardens for building, all but one are either residential landlords or have subsequently sold up and left
- 20) The land behind 66-74 Ditton Walk is described as 'brownfield' but it is residential gardens full of trees. These are significant and support a lot of wildlife and diverse vegetation.
- 21) If building must happen in Ditton Walk could the unused office blocks and industrial units not be used instead of resident's gardens?

Ms Bown presented the views of the petitioners against the application:

22) The application and planning officers reports make it clear that this application is now considered as part of a *single* development (phase 1 and phase 2). As such, the accommodation totals 16 dwellings, meaning that it is considered a 'major development' and requires a Sustainability Statement and completed checklist to be submitted by the developers. As neither document is available we must assume this to be in breach of the councils planning requirements

23) The application is incomplete:

- it states that no trees or hedges will be uprooted or disturbed but more than 30 trees would be lost if the plans went ahead in their current form
- the requirements of the Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (in the areas of renewable energy, bio-diversity and lighting) are not addressed
- there is no provision for affordable housing

24) We suggest the following measures:

- full assessment of tree cover be made and a condition attached that an agreed number be retained
- independent bio-diversity survey to be commissioned at the developers expense
- a revised external lighting scheme to minimise light pollution
- a turning circle to be included for refuse collection lorries
- plans amended to include renewable energy sources capable of providing at least 10% of the energy requirements of the dwellings

Ms Swaffield presented the views of the petitioners against the application:

25) The Planning Inspectorates decision to allow phase 1 was accompanied with the proviso that *conditions relating to restricting future developments were necessary*. Does this new proposed development not constitute a 'future development'?

26) The gardens of Ditton Walk dwellings constitute an important and valued amenity as described in Section 3/30 of the Local Plan

27) The development would significantly diminish the amenity and impact negatively on neighbours, contrary to section 3/12 of the Local Plan

28) With the size of the proposed development, overshadowing of neighbouring dwellings would be significant and also result in loss of privacy, loss of light, a sense of enclosure and have an adverse impact on neighbouring amenities (contrary to section 3/10)

29) We propose the following measures:

- The proposed road to be 'kinked' the other way to reduce the impact of amenities on neighbouring properties
- All windows on the end walls (facing directly into gardens of 76-82 Ditton Walk) to have frosted glass and a condition that these are retained in perpetuity
- The building height reduced to 2 storeys to decrease overshadowing
- New development to stop at least 5 metres short of boundary with 76 Ditton Walk to diminish overshadowing and loss of privacy
- Trees and shrubs (on boundary with no: 76) to be retained
- Screening fencing to be retained

The Case Officer's comments:

30) The Highways Authority comments were as follows:

- Whilst no objection is raised to the proposal per se, it must be brought to the attention of the developer that the total number of units served from the access off Ditton Walk by a shared surface road is considered by the Highway Authority to be the maximum that could be accommodated
- Car parking spaces in front of plot 13 are too short to accommodate a vehicle without overhanging what is stated to be a highway to adoptable standard
- The parking spaces between plots 11 and 12 are of a length that would not accommodate two cars, yet which would encourage a second car to be parked overhanging the carriageway to an unacceptable degree. The length of these paved areas must be reduced to 5 metres clear of the public highway

31) The County Archaeologist indicates that an archaeological survey should be done before development commences. This can be secured by the imposition of a condition

Members questions and comments

32) Will there be overlooking onto Ditton Walk from the ground floors of the new dwellings?

A: As the living rooms will be at the rear of the ground floor the garden fencing will provide adequate screening

33) Plots 13 and 14 have side elevation windows – what is the purpose of these?

A: Again these are ground floor and are secondary windows for the kitchen and toilet. The first floor bathroom window will obviously be obscured

34) Why are plots 12 and 13 set back further than the rest of the scheme?

A: This is just to vary the street scene but there is scope to move them further forward if needed or requested

35) Why have garages not been incorporated into the whole scheme?

A: Again this is just to vary the street scene

36) Is there an overall plan/scheme for this whole area and what is the definition of a 'brownfield' site

A: The site is not part of an allocated site in the Cambridge Local Plan 2006. The site is therefore regarded as a 'windfall site' and the development has to be considered on its merits.

All gardens are normally defined as 'brownfield sites' – whereas only totally undeveloped sites would be classed as greenfield

37) What are the plans for refuge and bike storage?

A: Undercover shelters are provided in the gardens for bike and refuge storage. A turning circle has also been discussed with the Highway Authority to aid vehicle refuge collections

38) Which trees will be retained within the development?

A: A survey will be undertaken once the low level debris has been removed and we aim to keep as many trees as possible

Summing Up by the Applicant

39) We are happy to take away all the issues raised today

40) We would welcome members or petitioners to come and view the approved scheme

Summing Up by the Petitioners – against the application

41) Concerned that the 2 separate applications have been looked at as one 'scheme' when it suits the applicant (i.e highway issues) but this has been ignored in other areas

42) An ongoing dialogue with the applicant would be beneficial

The Chair offered to facilitate a meeting between Council Officers, members and petitioners to go through longer term planning for the area and discuss further issues