

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Notes of Development Control Forum

• Old Malting, Prospect, Cambridge

23 July 2008

10.00am – 11.35 am

Application No: 08/0485/FUL
Site Address: The Old Maltings, Prospect Row, Cambridge
Description: Erection of 14 residential units – 9 x studio apartments and 5 x one bed apartments.
Applicant: Hill Residential Ltd
Agent: Barber Casanovas Ruffles (Neil Ruffles)
Lead Petitioner: Maureen Donnelly
Case Officer: Neville Doe

Present:

For Applicant

Neil Ruffles – Barber Casanova Ruffles
Nick Parkinson – Hill Residential Ltd

For Petitioners

Maureen Donnelly – Resident
David Crowther – Resident
John Leigh - Resident

Members of Planning Committee

City Councillors Baker, Blair, Blencowe (Vice Chair), Dixon and Dryden

Apologies

City Councillors Hipkin and Holness

Declarations of Interest by Members

Cllr Dixon Trustee of City of Cambridge Educational Foundation, which is closely associated with Parkside Community College

Officers

John Summers (Chair), Neville Doe (Case Officer) and Toni Birkin (Committee Manager)

Case by Applicants

Mr Parkinson made the following points:

- 1) The proposal places a high value on good design
- 2) Interest and comments from local residents is welcome as is this chance to discuss the issue

Mr Ruffles made the following points:

- 3) Barber Casanovas Ruffles has a good track record and has been in existence since 1984
- 4) Has been involved in sensitive project such as the of conversion Eden Lilley
- 5) Has won awards locally and nationally for good design and sustainability

- 6) Proposed development complies with current statutes and presents an opportunity to innovate
- 7) Is in keeping with the character of the kite area
- 8) Complies with current regulations and is an appropriate and desirable residential development
- 9) Existing building is not a listed building and is not considered to contribute to the area
- 10) Currently used for storage although it is not ideal for this purpose
- 11) It offers poor natural light and is not suitable for conversion into housing although this had been investigated
- 12) Proposal is best option for the site offering limited parking to discourage car ownership
- 13) Cycle parking and refuse areas will be at the rear of the site and not visible
- 14) The proposal has been designed to preserve the character of the area, reflect other buildings and extend the variety of the area.
- 15) It plans to retain the historical notion of the area
- 16) The new building will be inset by 3 to 4 meters from the boundary walls to create a walled garden, preserve the character of the site and create a sound buffer
- 17) The lower ground level will be retained and the roof will be raised by 2.5 meters
- 18) Units will be serviced from the North to limit overlooking
- 19) The scale of the development will be in line with the existing variety of the area
- 20) The Maltings is an island site and this character will be preserved
- 21) Materials from the Malting will be reclaimed for the new build
- 22) New materials used will be complimentary
- 23) The usable space in the new building will be approximately the same as the old (5,500 feet)
- 24) The company is keen to work with local residents to resolve any differences

Case By Petitioners

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

- 25) Representing the views of resident in the area including: Prospect Row Residents' Association, Melbourne Place Residents' Association and members of Christ's Piece Residents Association.
- 26) Against demolition. However, if this is the only option, the new development should enhance the area and not intrude or disrupt
- 27) Although not listed, the Maltings, is of local historical interest and was originally a part of the Cricketers Public House
- 28) Retention of some commercial activity in the Kite area is desirable
- 29) Although not beautiful at present the building has the potential to be improved without being demolished
- 30) The area is distinctive and the proposal does not reflect this
- 31) There are a number of historic building in the area
- 32) New building will be 8 feet taller than the existing building and will overlook it's neighbours.
- 33) Summary of objections
 - Proposal not suitable for the area
 - Appearance and size out of keeping with the area
 - Adjoining properties will be overlooked and suffer lose of privacy
 - Increased noise and disturbance likely
 - Car parking inadequate

- Not in keeping with planning policies for the area

Mr Crowther then demonstrated the objections using a model

- 34) Area is currently open to the south and attractive
- 35) Recent developments in the area have been in keeping with existing area
- 36) Area currently works very well and any development should compliment this
- 36) Proposed development would be enclosed by high walls limiting light
- 37) Density far in excess of local plan for Brownfield developments
- 38) Pub garden would be ruined by loss of light
- 39) Area would be swamped by size of development
- 40) Character of area not being respected

The Case Officer's comments:

- 41) 20 representations have been received

Members questions and comments

- 42) Clarity on number of units?
 - A. 5 one bed units and 9 Studios
- 43) Is the existing building a Building of Local Interest?
 - A. No. However, it is in a conservation area
- 44) Does the planning application encompass the demolition of the existing building or are these separate issues?
 - A. Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of the existing building and a separate application has been submitted for this.
- 45) Have the concerns about overlooking been taken into account?
 - A. These issues have been noted and will be addressed with revisions to the plan
- 46) Is the density level acceptable?
 - A. Government advice suggests a density of 30 to 50 per hectore. A development of this kind will be higher. This is desirable for efficiency and sustainability.
- 47) Has a shade mapping exercise been carried out and what will the impact of loss of light be on the pub garden?
 - A. This has not been done to-date but could be if required.
- 48) Will the footprint of the building be the same?
 - A. No, but the usable space will be comparable.
- 49) Are studio flats in keeping with the area?
 - A. A number of properties in the area that were in multiple occupation have been converted back to family housing. However, there is a long history of single person housing in the area.
- 50) If noise from the pub garden disturbs the residents of the new development will they be able to complain and is this fair to an exiting business?
- 51) If density is a concern and the unit are to be very small, why not make fewer unit that are bigger to address the concerns?
 - A. Studies of local are show a demand for small unit, close to the City Centre. Economics are a factor and larger units would attract a different demographic and require additional parking.
- 52) What amenities will be available to residents of the new properties?
- 53) Will all properties be for sale?
 - A. Yes
- 54) The text of the petition is ambiguous. How accurately does it reflect local opinion?

A. The petition represents a range of opinions in the area. What residents are asking for is a careful consideration of what is appropriate for the area. They are not opposed in principle to a residential site.

Summing Up by the Applicant

55) Research into the heritage of the site has been completed and considered in the design

56) We believe the height of the property is in keeping with the wider area

57) This is an opportunity to utilise a Brownfield site in a way that fits in with local policies for sustainable development.

58) The proposal is sympathetic to the area and will add to the social mix.

Summing Up by the Petitioners – against the application

59) Proposed development is too high density

60) Neighbours will be overlooked

61) Any new development should retain the original footprint

62) It should enhance and not detract from the existing character of the area