

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Notes of Development Control Forum

• Station Area Development - CB1

3rd September 2008

10.00am – 12.25pm

Application No: 08/0266/OUT

Site Address: Station Area CB1

Description: The comprehensive redevelopment of the Station Road area, comprising 331 residential units (inclusive of 40% affordable homes); 1250 student units; 53560 sq m of Class B1a (Office) floorspace; 5255 sq m of Class A1/A3/A4 and/or A5 (Retail) floorspace; a 6658 sq m Polyclinic; 86 sq m of D1 (Art Workshop) floorspace; 1753 sq m of D1 and/or D2 floorspace (Gym, Nursery, Student/Community Facilities) and a 7466 sq m Hotel; along with a new transport interchange and station square, including 30 taxi bays and 9 bus stops (2 of which are double stops providing 11 bays in total), a new multi storey cycle and car park including accommodation for c.2750 cycle spaces, c.50 motorcycle space and c.652 car parking spaces; highway works including improvements to the existing Hills Road/Brooklands Avenue junction and the Hills Road/Station Road junction and other highway improvements, along with an improved pedestrian/cyclist connection with Carter Bridge; and works to create new and improved private and public spaces.

Applicant: Ashwell CB1 Ltd

Agent: Savills, First Floor, Lansdowne House, 57 Berkeley Square, London

Petitioners 1: Stephen Walsh, Unex House, Church Lane, Newmarket CB8 9TN

Petitioners 2: Diane Winkleby, Ravensworth Residents Association,
92 Ravensworth Gardens, Cambridge

Case Officer: Sarah Dyer
Tel: 01223 457153

Present:

For Applicant

Michael Derbyshire – Savills
Andrew Rawlings - Ashwells
Sven Topol – Ashwells

For Petitioners

Stephen Walsh - Unex
Diane Winkleby – Ravensworth Gardens R.A

Members of Planning Committee

City Councillors Baker (Chair), Blair, Dixon, Dryden and Hipkin

Ward Councillors

City Councillors Blackhurst (Trumpington) and Walker (Petersfield)

Cambridgeshire County Councillors

Councillors Harrison and Kent

Officers

Simon Payne (Chair), Sarah Dyer (Case Officer) and Glenn Burgess (Committee Manager)

Text of Petitions

The text of petition 1 was as follows:

We the undersigned object to the above application and request that our representatives, Unex Technical Services, are permitted to present our objections at a Development Control Forum. Our specific objections are as follows:

A: we object to the alterations to the Hills Road/Brooklands Avenue junction and the traffic congestion which this will cause. The updated transport assessment is flawed but even that admits to extra queuing on the Hills Road/Brooklands Avenue junction.

B: we object to the over-development of the site which will result in over 27,000 daily trips being generated. The updated transport assessment is flawed and its 'nil detriment' claim is not credible. The split between modes underestimates the number of vehicle trips.

C: We object to the lack of adequate public open space within the development. The amended open space schedule in the 'Responses to issues' proves the shortfall.

D: We object to the overwhelming impact on the station building and the inadequate and poor design of the station forecourt. The supplementary conservation issues report does not sufficiently justify the demolition of the historic buildings.

E: We object to the amount of commercial space proposed within the development and the location of the student accommodation.

The text of petition 2 was as follows:

We, residents of Cambridge are concerned about the height of buildings on the Ashwell Development, particularly ones that overlook Ravensworth gardens, inadequate public open space for the size of the development, and about the development of traffic it will create on Tenison Road. We request a Development Control Forum to discuss these issues.

Chairman's Introduction

Simon Payne welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with round the table introductions

It was expected that the final application would be brought before the Planning Committee on 15th October 2008 but this was obviously subject to the outcome of ongoing discussions

The following timetable was agreed:

Petitioners (1) against the application	20 minutes
Petitioners (2) against the application	20 minutes
Applicants/agents response	40 minutes
Case Officer update	10 minutes
Members Questions and issues arising	30 minutes
Summing up from Petitioners (1)	5 minutes
Summing up from Petitioner (2)	5 minutes
Applicants/agents summing up	10 minutes
Chair's final comments	

Declarations of Interest by Members

Councillor Holness – Member of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign

Councillor Baker – Patient of GP on Hills Road that would be affected by the development

Case by Petitioners (1)

Stephen Walsh presented the views of the petitioners against the application:

- 1) As an architect for 24 years he had worked on City Centre Development projects
- 2) The CB1 scheme would have a huge impact on Unex properties and Cambridge in general
- 3) The following concerns were raised:

Traffic

- the Transport Assessment (TA) stated 'nil detriment' to the area but in paragraph 9.312 it admitted that on Brooklands Avenue there would be an 'expected increase in the degree of saturation' – which effectively meant more queuing
- it had been stated that the new entrance would be for bus, cycle and left turn access only but the drawings showed a right turn waiting bay which would increase queuing
- 27,273 daily trips would be generated throughout the site (table 7.6 of TA) – how could that not be detrimental to the area?
- table 7.7 of the TA stated that a relatively low percentage of these would be by car (3652) – which raised questions about the methodology used by the developers

- the high amount of commercial space would increase congestion further
- questioned whether the developers had made their required contributions to the Southern Corridor Area Transportation Plan

Open space

- the lack of *true* open space proved over development of the site
- 33,440 (sq m) of 'informal' open space and 1152 of 'play space' was proposed *but*
- only 1/5 of this was *true* open space and much of it was not actually part of new scheme

Poor design of station square

- questioned the rationale of taking the highest point of the existing building and matching it with the new scheme (therefore losing the impact of the proposed 'feature' building)
- the rest of the square would dwarf the station building and it would be too dominating
- student accommodation on the south side of the development would result in increased foot/cycle traffic across the station square (as they make their way to ARU)

Case by Petitioners (2)

Diane Winkleby presented the views of the petitioners against the application:

- 4) Highlighted the need for the proposed shops to reflect the needs of local residents (i.e pharmacy, cycle repair, convenience store) as this would reduce trips into the City Centre
- 5) Too much commercial space could affect the feel of 'community' and result in increased litter and other associated problems
- 6) The following concerns were raised:

Traffic

- the transport infrastructure needed to be in place *before* the development starts
- concerned about the ability of Tenison Road to cope with the extra traffic
- concerned that Tenison Avenue would become a 'rat-run' for cars
- with 12,500 extra students there would be a need for extra traffic lights and cycle lanes
- how would the start/end of term student change over be dealt with?
- the northern access road should not be the main access for the multi-storey car park
- concerned that air quality would be affected with the increased traffic
- highlighted the need for cycle racks in the station square area and the need to widen the lane to Devonshire Road (as it was too narrow for cycles and pedestrians)

Loss of amenity

- the scheme must respect the scale and height of buildings in Ravensworth Gardens
- residents disagreed with the Design and Access Statement that the impact on Ravensworth Gardens would be 'negligible' and that the present car park is 'noisy'
- more information on the loss of light was requested from Ashwells
- the entrances to building F1 and F2 should not be on the west side
- highlighted the need for the buildings to be attractive

Open space

- the residents strongly objected to the open space at Ravensworth Gardens being joined to the new development. It was felt that this could encourage older children and anti-social behaviour, and result in more foot/cycle traffic through the site
- the Design and Access Statement gave incorrect information on crime – there had been *no* security problems with the car park and it was locked and secure at night
- the proper requirements for public open space must be met and adequate management of the site should also be put in place

Students

- 12,500 students would have a big effect on the area
- it would be better to have students nearer to or on the ARU complex
- there could be a safety issue for students at night
- it would be more appropriate to have accommodation for post-graduate students only
- more information on the planned activities of the student union was requested
- the best place for the student accommodation would be the south side of the site
- highlighted work by the University of Washington to monitor and regulate the behaviour of students when off campus i.e working with police, enforcing policies
- ARU must be responsible for the behaviour of their students living off site
- Highlighted the need for a residential porter/manager
- Having 79% of the development as transient students would not be beneficial for community cohesion
- there was a bigger need in Cambridge for more affordable family housing

Applicants Response

Representatives of the Applicant made the following points:

Traffic

- the junction of Hills Road and Brooklands Avenue was for buses and cycles only and formed a big part of the transport structure for the development. Confirmed that there would be *no* right turns
- a lot of work had been done with the Highway Authority and the present proposal was deemed the best solution
- there was likely to be a slight increase in queuing on Brooklands Avenue but the benefits of the transport improvements would out way any slight issues
- the improvements to the junction were for the benefits of those using the station and without the changes we would not be able to get people out of their cars and using public transport
- a stage 1 audit had been completed and the Highway Authority were now happy that the scheme could be delivered
- the level of daily trips generated had been discussed at length with the Highway Authority and the modelling methodology had been in-depth and comprehensive
- the developers were aware of the required contributions to the Southern Corridor Area Transportation Plan and discussions were ongoing

Open space

- policy stated that open space provision should be 'appropriate to the development'
- as a constrained city centre site it was felt that the provision was appropriate
- there would be a total of 2 hectares of open space
- there was a need for quality as well as quantity
- the other open space areas included in the figures were seen as *part* of the site and it did not seem sensible to separate these
- if residents of Ravensworth Gardens would prefer not to have their open space joined that could be arranged

Station Square

- 2 storey buildings would be inappropriate as the impact of the station would be lost
- the shoulder height of the station building was used as the basis for the rest of the square - resulting in uniformity and correct proportions
- the 9 storey building had now been moved away from the square area
- discussions on the final square design were ongoing and would involve all stakeholders
- discussion were ongoing regarding cycle parking on the square but at the moment 250 spaces had been proposed

Students

- it was interesting that the petitioners had differing opinions regarding the location of the student accommodation
- confirmed there was no space on the ARU site for additional student accommodation
- the proposed accommodation could be used for post-graduate students but discussions were ongoing with ARU
- the flow of students across the square would be staggered due to differing timetables
- ARU would provide management for student areas and discussions were ongoing
- A plan would be put in place for start/end of term student change over

Commercial office space

- 53,000 (sq m) had been agreed with the City Council
- with 23,000 (sq m) of commercial space already on site this was deemed appropriate
- car parking for the commercial office space would be limited and below policy figures
- number of cars would not be increased by the proposed office space

Loss of amenity

- a full sunlight and daylight analysis of the effect on Ravensworth Gardens had been undertaken and the impact was deemed 'negligible'
- agreed to send the full results to Diane Winkleby
- building F1 would be 3 storeys and backed onto Ravensworth Gardens
- building D1 had been reduced to 1 storey as it impacted on Ravensworth Gardens
- the developers had worked closely with the Design and Conservation Panel
- further discussions with the residents was welcomed
- agreed that proposed shops needed to reflect local need and it was in the interest of the developers to encourage people to use these facilities

Crime and ASB

- the transport police would be relocated onto the site
- there was a suggestion that Cambridgeshire Police could have a presence on site
- CCTV would be linked to the city wide network
- It was obviously in the interest of the developers to manage the open space appropriately as this would have an impact on the sites value

The Case Officer's update

7) 24 additional comments had been received with mixed views on the development

8) Concerns included:

- additional traffic/congestion
- transport interchange
- Carter bridge link
- use of space
- lack of open space
- loss of amenity
- need for more family housing

Members questions and comments:

9) What is the Case Officers view on the open space issue?

Chair: Reminded Members that the purpose of the Forum was not to discuss the merits of the scheme but that full information would be in the final report

10) It is important that the developers and local residents have the opportunity to discuss all the issues in detail. A workshop approach, with an organisation such as ShapeEast to facilitate, could be useful

Ashwells: Agreed

11) Traffic congestion in Tension Road has been a long standing issue and the developers should not be asked to solve existing problems – however the S106 figure quoted for traffic calming measures seems inadequate and discussions need to reflect this

Ashwells: The suggested figure is £45,000 but we are considering allocating around £100,000

12) The figures regarding daily trips generated need some clarity – specifying current and expected figures

Case Officer: Happy to provide percentage change figures

13) Regarding overshadowing – how definite are the proposed building heights?

Case Officer: The reserved matter application will cover this in detail

14) Suggested more detail in the final report regarding the link of open spaces, likely queuing on Brooklands Avenue and S106 arrangements

Chair: Agreed – this will be covered in final report

15) Regarding community cohesion – what will be the impact be of all the new students considering the large numbers already living near the site?

Ashwells: Savills have a lot of experience in student accommodation issues and our specific views are included in the planning statement. We understand it is a mixed area and we will be thinking carefully about the potential impact of students

16) It would have been beneficial for the County Councils Transport Assessment to be available before this meeting. I hope that it will be finalised well in advance of the Planning Committee meeting

Case Officer: The County Council has asked for more work to be done and it is crucial that they complete their assessment of the Applicant's TA. A members briefing will be given at the end of September and we hope to have the County's comments for circulation before that meeting. The application will not come to the Planning Committee without the County's comments being in the public domain

17) The density of the site is far in excess of that suggested in the Station Area Development Framework (SADF)

Ashwells: The SADF is unhelpful when looking at a mixed-use site and density is hard to measure. PPS3 states that density should be design led and appropriate to the location – and we feel that our proposal is in line with that statement

18) As this is only the outline application which matters will be 'reserved matters'?

Case Officer: All matters will be reserved and subject to further applications except 'access'

19) The whole thing hinges on the transport issues and it is unfortunate that the County Council is not here. Will there be a need for an independent transport assessment as it is important that it is right?

Chair: We had advice from the County Council on the original application and found it to be robust and thorough so it is unlikely we will need an independent assessment

20) The City Council needs to look at the open space issues and Community Development Officers should be actively involved. The impact on the residents of Ravensworth Gardens and the potential issues with Tenison Road need to also be considered at an early stage

Chair: Agreed and this will all be picked up in the Case Officers final report

Summing up by Petitioners (1))

Stephen Walsh summed up:

- 21) There would still be an increase in traffic even though there is no additional car parking space for the commercial office spaces
- 22) 'Real' open space provision needs to be adequate – children cannot play football on the station square area!

Summing up by Petitioners (2)

Diane Winkleby summed up:

- 23) Agreed with the facilitated workshop idea for residents and developer
- 24) Very concerned about overlooking of Ravensworth Gardens by building D1
- 25) Less car parking for commercial office space would mean more queuing and more air pollution
- 26) Highlighted the need for proper planning of start/end of term student change over
- 27) 79% of the development allocated for students is too high and the City Council may suffer as it would mean less council tax income
- 28) Highlighted need for 'real' open space
- 29) Better provision for cyclists needed
- 30) Pleased that the developers would consider keeping the open spaces separate

Summing up by Applicant

- 31) There had been lots of consultation and it was felt to be a robust and positive process
- 32) It was a great scheme but there would be some compromises as it was a mixed-use site
- 33) S106 discussions would be ongoing
- 34) It was genuinely believed to be the right scheme and Ashwells and Savills were looking forward to delivering benefits to the residents of Cambridge

Chairs final comments

Simon Payne thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 12.25pm