

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Notes of a Development Control Forum

127 Milton Road

12 November 2008

11.45am – 12.50pm

Application No: 08/1083/FUL
Site Address: 127 Milton Road, Cambridge
Description: Erection of six one bedroom apartments.
Applicant: Mark Smith and Debra Allard
Agent: Richard Ball, Architectural Drawing and Design, 1 Ward Road Cambridge
Lead Petitioner: Ellen Lee
Case Officer: John Evans

Present:

For Applicant

Richard Ball
M. Smith
D. Allard
J. Smith

For Petitioners

Ellen Lee
Guillermo Makin, 58 Mulberry Close
Mario Hyvonen
Bronwyn Hipkin

Members of North Area Committee

Councillors Blair, Boyce and Nimmo-Smith

Declarations of Interest by Members

Cllr Nimmo-Smith had met the applicant and the neighbours informally prior to this forum.

Officers

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

Text of Petition

The text of the petitions was as follows:

Increased traffic on Pye Alley is a safety risk on a heavily used public right of way from Mulberry Close to the Milton Road shops.

There will be an increase in noise and disturbance to local residents including Ellis House (retirement home) given that the building will be occupied by at least 6 individuals.

Adjoining houses (22 metres from the development) will be overshadowed, overlooked and suffer loss of privacy.

Pye Alley is primarily a public footpath and will not cope with the additional traffic.

Case by Applicants

Mr Ball made the following points

1. Surprised by the response and level of feeling against plan
2. Keen to seek compromise
3. Unaware at outset of the project that the Residents Association owned the access road or they would have been involved earlier
4. The site currently has outline planning permission to convert to residential use for a single property

5. The road to the rear is dark and troubled by anti-social behaviour and drug users
6. Development would bring improvements to general area
7. Consideration was given to overlooking and design seeks to maximise distance from existing properties for privacy
8. By design the proposal is compatible with existing properties in the area
9. Following long and helpful discussions with the planning department the original application was withdrawn
10. Applicant met with Cllr Nimmo-Smith to assist conciliation process with neighbours
11. Proposal complies with target 5.1 of the Cambridge Local plan 2006, in seeking to utilise a Brownfield site
12. Will have a positive impact on the area
13. Planners concerns over amenities have been addressed
14. Original application generated concerns over scale and mass; these have been addressed by new design.
15. Car parking spaces have been reduced and courtyard area increased
16. New plan reduces width and scale of building to bring it in line with existing buildings
17. This will reduce impact on Mulberry Close
18. Sustainability will be a feature of the design and solar panels will be used
19. The site will have a maximum of 4 car parking spaces and it is expected this will have no impact on the traffic flow
20. Area currently a mix of residential and business properties and the access road is used by both
21. Increased noise is not relevant in this case
22. Overshadowing will not be an issue
23. Current properties overlook each other
24. New build will not lead to loss of privacy
25. Early meetings with planning department did not highlight any problems
26. Revised plan is sympathetic to area and small scale
27. Applicant would have liked an earlier dialog with the petitioners
28. Currently sees little room for more compromise but is keen to talk

Case By Petitioners

Ms Lee made the following points

29. Apologies for not meeting earlier and explained the problems in getting a representative group together.
30. Building will introduce 6 extra households to the area
31. Will create privacy issues by overlooking existing properties: full width windows on the first and ground floors which make overlooking more a problem.
32. Access road has limited use and few cars travel the full length of the road
33. Pye Alley is owned by Mulberry Road Resident Association
34. It is difficult to maintain
35. Anti-social behaviour problems linked to poorly maintained rear gardens and fencing of business properties (Wilco's, dentist, pharmacists).
36. The development will not regenerate an otherwise derelict area
37. Security Lighting has been introduced by the Residents Association
38. Improvements have been carried out in area and £3,000 was spent on hedging
39. Can a condition be added to ensure the residents association is reimbursed for any damage done during the construction work?

- 40.6 additional households will generate more than 4 cars and these will park where they choose in area
- 41. Consultations with a solicitor have suggested that highway safety of young children using a blind corner could be a grounds for refusal of planning permission
- 42. This blind corner will bring pedestrians into conflict with cars
- 43. Increased use of the intersections of the private road and the main highway will be dangerous
- 44. Current flow of traffic at peak times tends to be in a single direction
- 45. Additional housing would generate traffic flowing in the opposite direction
- 46. Road is narrow and cars park in the passing area which may cause vehicles to have to reverse creating dangers for pedestrians and cyclists
- 47. Ellis House (sheltered housing) warden has written to express concern that 27 frail residents use this road as their main access to local amenities and will be at risk from the additional traffic
- 48. Numbers 30 to 35 will be overlooked this will be intrusive and will invade privacy
- 49. Work to deal with the anti-social behaviour in the area is on-going and improvements have been made
- 50. Broken fencing to the rear of business premises add to this problem
- 51. Powerpoint map used to demonstrate the narrowness of the road and to illustrate points made above
- 52. In one hour in the peak morning period Pye Alley was used by 30 cyclist and pedestrians and only one car
- 53. At pedestrian access point a chicane slows cyclists
- 54. Prentis car park is full during the day leaving no room for vehicles to pass

The Case Officer's comments:

55.3 responses have been received from:

- a. Highways have no objection in principle
- b. Education: S106 contribution will be required
- c. Environmental Health had no objections

55.14 written representations have been received from individuals raising the following issues:

- a. Development too high
- b. Density
- c. Overlooking
- d. Proximity to other building
- e. Safety of access
- f. Noise disturbance
- g. Right to use Pye Alley
- h. Access of service vehicles

Members questions and comments:

56. Members asked for clarity on the S106 requirement for education.

A contribution is required

56. How will parking spaces be allocated?

The two ground floor properties will be allocated a space with the other properties having no parking allocation

57. How much cycle storage will be available?

8 places

57. Members requested more information be available on the status of the access road before this application goes to the planning committee.

58. Members also asked for more clarity on the Highway Department comments. Did these relate only to the access point with Milton Road?

The main remit of the Highways Authority is the junction with Milton Road

60. If the primary concern of the Highways Department is the Milton Road junction, how will other road safety concerns be addressed?

As the Planning Authority Cambridge City Council will be addressing these concerns

61. What existing planning permission exists?

Permission to convert from business to a single residential unit exists. Further details will be available at the next stage of the planning process. The petitions did not object to this application.

62. What rights of access exist?

The applicants Grandfather established the right of access in 1920, prior to the building of Mulberry Close

63. Members asked for clarity on the relationship between the existing building and the planned development

The agent demonstrated this on the plans.

Summing Up by the Applicant

64. Discussion on increased traffic is misleading. If there is no extra traffic at the egress and regress points there can be no impact further into the site.

65. It is reasonable to expect people to behave sensibly on a narrow road.

66. There has been a lawful right to pass since 1092 and applicant has right to allow business access

67. Properties will be aimed at the student market.

68. If Mulberry Close residents work with the developer there could be gains for all

70. Overlooking is within acceptable levels for an urban site

Summing Up by the Petitioners – against the application

71. Concerned over the nature of the development and the introduction of 6 potentially noisy young person households into the area

72. Parking issues will create safety issues

73. No dispute over access

74. Willing to meet the applicant and find a compromise

75.Safety concerns over increased traffic in conflict with a largely pedestrian area heavily used by children