

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Notes of a Development Control Forum

89a Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge

14 January 2009

10.00am – 11.30pm

Application No: 08/1501/FUL
Site Address: 89a Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge
Description: Erection of 14no apartments (following the demolition of the existing building) together with associated infrastructure
Applicant: Cambridge Veterinary Group
Agent: Januarys Consultant Surveyors
Lead Petitioner: Roger Crabtree
Case Officer: Amy Lack

Present:

For Applicant

Chris Jones – Architect
Justin Bainton – Januarys

For Petitioners

Roger Crabtree
John Saunders
Robert Groser

Members of the Planning Committee

Councillors Al Bander, Baker, Blair, Blencowe, Dixon and Dryden

Declarations of Interest by Members

Councillor Dryden: Dog is registered with Veterinary Group
Councillor Baker: Cats registered with Veterinary Group
Councillor Dixon: An acquaintance of Mr Crabtree

Officers

John Summers (Chair), Sarah Dyer and Amy Lack (Case Officers) and Glenn Burgess (Committee Manager)

Text of Petition

Overdevelopment and lack of amenity for residents.
Overdevelopment and loss of amenity for residents in adjoining properties.
The arrangements for waste management are inadequate and inappropriate.
There are issues about the proximity to the electricity sub station.

Case by Applicants

Mr Bainton made the following points:

- 1) The development would consist of 14 two-bedroom apartments
- 2) Car park facilities for 15 cars including 1 visitor space and 2 disabled spaces
- 3) Cycle storage and waste facilities on-site
- 4) The development is not in a conservation area

Mr Jones made the following points:

- 5) Company has been in Cambridge and working on high quality developments for 25 years
- 6) Most of the buildings around the development are non-residential
- 7) All the trees on site will be retained except 1
- 8) Car parking facilities would be in a similar position as they are at present
- 9) The waste/bin areas are contained and have been signed off by all Council departments
- 10) Benches and planters will form part of the design
- 11) The form of the proposed development follows the existing tree line
- 12) The gardens will be communal and properly managed
- 13) Screens will be placed on windows to control solar glare and limit overlooking
- 14) The flats will have screened terraces and small balconies made of timber and glass
- 15) The development will have a non-reflective zinc pitched roof
- 16) 'Slot windows' will be installed to control the views from the bedrooms

Mr Bainton made the following points:

- 17) A traffic survey has been completed and it is estimated that the new development will result in a reduction in people and vehicle movements
- 18) Environmental Health have recommended conditions to mitigate potential noise issues
- 19) Cannot comment on the issue of 'electro-magnetic radiation' around the sub Station as this is not a planning consideration
- 20) Have worked hard to limit the potential for overlooking from the site
- 21) Screen planting planned
- 22) Vandalism has been an issue in the area and the new development will aid with security
- 23) The height of the development would be in line with the surrounding properties
- 24) The scale and mass of the development is in context with the area
- 25) Renewables and landscaping issues are being worked on

Case By Petitioners

Mr Crabtree made the following points:

- 26) The site is surrounded on 3 sides by mature residential housing and all of the residents are in opposition to the proposed development
- 27) We are disappointed that the developer did not consult us on the emerging plans
- 28) No objection in principle to a residential development on the site but this represents an overdevelopment of the site in terms of scale and height
- 29) We feel this contravenes a number of planning policies
- 30) Trees will be used for screening but this may not be effective in winter
- 31) Trees will take up all the boundary space between the site and the fence – resulting in a lack of natural lights for the proposed flats
- 32) Because of the large amount of trees to the west and north of the site this should not be classed as usable amenity space
- 33) The proposed 3-storey building does not sit well with the traditional 2 storey residential properties that surround it
- 34) It is proposed that the waste facilities are situated right besides the boundary fence. This is long way for residents to carry rubbish and the smells etc will impact on the existing properties
- 35) The noisy hum from the electricity sub station already affects the existing residents and will be a major issue for any new residents

Mr Groser made the following points:

- 36) Representing the Flamsted Road section of the Rustat Road Residents Association
- 37) All of the 6 residents affected by the new development have strong objections and five have objected in writing (the 6th has been unable to do so due to serious ill-health)
- 38) It is a relatively secluded road made up of family homes with a mixed community
- 39) Residents enjoy the use of their gardens and the views from their homes and this will be threatened by the proposed development
- 40) We do not object in principle but feel that it adds nothing to the character of the neighbourhood and the scale and footprint is disproportionate
- 41) The proposal contravenes point 3/4, 3/11 and 3/14 of the Cambridge Local Plan
- 42) The proposed building would be very close to the boundary and be overbearing
- 43) There would be a loss of privacy due to overlooking
- 44) There would be a loss of light and shadowing for the existing residents

Mr Saunders made the following points:

- 45) Raising issues on the behalf of the residents of Rustat Road
- 46) The development will be out of character and overbearing
- 47) It will be only 4.4m from the boundary at the closest point – whilst the current vets is 18m
- 48) There will be a significant loss of light and sense of enclosure
- 49) We have enjoyed over 70 years of privacy and this will greatly affect it
- 50) The proposed balconies would be very intrusive to the present residents and the wooden screens would not prevent overlooking
- 51) Noise disturbance (such as radios and TVs) from the balconies would also be a problem
- 52) Concern over the close proximity to the high voltage electricity sub station
- 53) There are claims that prolonged exposure to electro magnetic radiation is a danger to physical and mental health. Further investigation is required prior to permission being given
- 54) The station currently emits a low frequency hum which is subject to an unresolved complaint by residents of Rustat Road. Our houses are 100m from the sub station – the proposed development is as close as 10m

The Case Officer's comments:

Ms Lack made the following points:

- 55) The application was received on 4th November 2008 and residents were invited to comment from the 17th November 2008
- 56) Tree Protection conditions have been suggested by the Arboricultural Team
- 57) The Highways Authority did raise concerns over the width of access and car parking
- 58) The Landscaping Team suggested a Landscape Plan be put in place and recommended bigger balconies
- 59) The Design and Conservation Panel are looking at the application this afternoon
- 60) The Environmental Health Team have no objections but are suggesting conditions

Member's questions and comments:

61) What is the distance between the rear of the houses and the new development?

From Rustat Road it is 36m and from Flamsteed Road it is 28-29m

62) What is being done to address the issues over access?

A Transport Assessment has been completed and visibility meets the required standards. Improvements have been made by the Vets in the last few months and the new development would actually result in reduced traffic movements

63) Air Source Heat Pumps are not always regarded as 'renewable'

We are in constant dialogue with the City Councils sustainability Co-ordinator

64) What are the developer's views on the availability of private amenity space and the aboricultural issues?

We have only just received the Councils comments but our own consultant feels there are no issues. A number of the units are in close proximity to the tree cover but as these are dual aspect units there will be light from different aspects. The majority of units have their own balconies and the site has generous garden and usable amenity space on all three sides

65) What about the noise issue raised by Environmental Health?

This could be tackled through conditions and more survey work is being undertaken

66) What about amenity space for children?

The garden is suitable for a variety of residents

67) Concerned with over development – what are the density figures for the area?

47 dwellings per hectare

68) Concern over shared gardens as these are generally not looked after, and there is also no space for growing your own produce. Why not consider a Community Garden?

Noted

69) Can the developers justify the location of the waste facilities?

It is located 20m from the building and is easily accessible for residents and refuse lorries. The facility will be brick built, contained on 3 sides and use wheelie bins. The City Council is happy with the proposal

70) What is the distance from the street to the windows?

The width of the street is 5m but the design has been looked at carefully to ensure privacy

71) What are the comparative heights of the development?

The tallest element of the development is designed to match the ridge height of the adjacent properties. The highest point in total is 9.8m

Summing Up by the Petitioners – against the application

Mr Crabtree made the following points:

- 72) If anything is investigated and changed please let us know as soon as possible
- 73) The noise from the substation is a real issue and will cause major problems for any new residents
- 74) 20m is a long way for residents to carry their waste
- 75) You need to be careful when comparing heights as our houses have high roofs whereas the new development doesn't
- 76) We question whether the development meets the requirements of the Local Plan

Summing Up by the Applicant

Mr Bainton made the following points:

- 77) Welcomes all the comments made by residents
- 78) This is a unique development
- 79) It will have a strong sense of community that works well with the existing properties
- 80) The development is sensitive to its neighbours where possible

Final Comments of the Chair

81) The application will not now be considered at the February Planning Committee but may be presented to the March meeting