

## CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Notes of a Development Control Forum  
DRAFT

Land at 180 – 190 Newmarket Road,  
Cambridge

3 June 2009

10.00am – 11.30am

**Application No:** 09/0297/FUL  
**Site Address:** Land at 180 -190 Newmarket Road, Cambridge  
**Description:** Erection of 220 bed hotel and restaurant (following demolition of existing buildings), together with associated infrastructure.  
**Applicant:** Eastern Gate Properties Ltd  
**Agent:** Januarys, York House, 7 Dukes Court, 54-62 Newmarket Road, Cambridge  
**Lead Petitioner:** Lynette Gilbert on behalf of Riverside Residents' Association  
**Case Officer:** Tony Collins

### Present:

#### For Applicant

Neil Ruffles -  
BCR for Eastern Gate Properties Ltd  
David Graham –  
BCR for Eastern Gate Properties Ltd  
Alan Hatton –  
SLR Consulting for Eastern Gate  
Properties Ltd  
Justin Bainton –  
Januarys for Eastern Gate Properties Ltd  
Colin Brown –  
Januarys for Eastern Gate Properties Ltd

#### For Petitioners

Lynette Gilbert –  
Riverside Area Residents Association  
David Halford –  
Riverside Area Residents Association  
Richard Allen –  
Petersfield Area Community Trust

### Members of the Planning Committee

Councillors Al Bander, Blair, Blencowe, Dixon, Hipkin, Reid and Stuart

### Other Members in attendance

Councillors Walker and Wright

### Declarations of Interest by Members

None declared

### Officers

Sarah Dyer (Chair), Tony Collins (Case Officer) and Fatima Rahman (Committee Manager)

## **Text of Petition**

**09/0297/FUL**

The appearance of the hotel will be out of character with the surrounding area.

Provision of on-site parking for only 50 cars for a 220 bed hotel.

Access via Coldhams Lane, New Street and Harvest Way will cause increased traffic congestion.

Change of use from office accommodation is not in accordance with the Local Plan.

Need to establish whether the issues of shadowing and overlooking have been properly addressed in considering the office block for which planning exists. These issues remain concerns in the case of the proposed hotel development.

## **Introduction**

The Chair welcomed everyone and explained the role and purpose of the meeting having provided a short summary of the application.

## **Case by Applicants**

Justin Bainton made the following points:

- 1) The proposed site for development provides for a s106 agreement and a provision for a bus lane.
- 2) The reserved matters approval was granted in 2006 and is capable of implementation.
- 3) The policy position has been rehearsed with David Roberts, Head of Policy and Projects.

Neil Ruffles made the following points:

- 4) We have tried to find some form of uniqueness for the area.
- 5) The surrounding area is currently devoid of tree life as opposed to the other end of Newmarket Road near Maids Causeway which is very elegant with trees.
- 6) The density of the existing building is 70% of planned floor area and the remaining area is concrete
- 7) The proposed hotel will only cover 37% of the total area and thereby provide more footprint and scope for landscaping.
- 8) The distance between the proposed hotel and Newmarket Road will be further away from the road than the distance of the current building.
- 9) This will make way for a genuine urban design with trees and landscaping and therefore become a strong focal point for urban design when coming into Cambridge via Newmarket Road
- 10) Overshadowing assessments were carried out in normal months of the year.
- 11) The cross-section of the building is within the curtailage of centred office scheme.
- 12) There is already a presence of tall buildings in Cambridge

Alan Hatton made the following points:

- 13) Cycle parking will be provided
- 14) Public transport level has been examined and car transport has been assessed
- 15) Parking provision has been considered suitable.
- 16) On-street parking strategy and local public spaces such as the Grafton Centre car park have been considered.
- 17) Parking surveys have been carried out in the evenings in which none of the parking spaces have been at full capacity.

## Case By Petitioners

Lynette Gilbert made the following points:

- 18) Concerned of the impact of the hotel upon residents as it will be too intrusive and the parking provision will be grossly inadequate
- 19) The capacity of 220 beds and 6 storeys is too high and will set an undesirable precedent for future development in Cambridge
- 20) A 220 bed hotel has a greater impact on residents than an office block
- 21) An office block will generate peak hour traffic where more people will travel via sustainable methods of transport. A hotel will generate 24 hour traffic
- 22) A hotel will encounter frequent deliveries and will constantly remain occupied as opposed to an office, which remains empty during the evenings and weekends.
- 23) The proposed Travelodge is exceptionally high in capacity when compared to other branches across the UK.
- 24) Travelodge Hotel site target list is to achieve 45 to 100 beds for all East or South East locations. The existing hotel at Cambridge Leisure Park has only 120 beds.
- 25) The first three storeys alone of the proposed hotel would provide 105 beds.
- 26) At 220 beds, the proposed hotel would concentrate a very high proportion of budget hotel beds in a not-very-sustainable location, namely 85% of predicted needs over the next 6 years, and 58% of predicted needs over the next 11 years.
- 27) Large amenities such as the railway station, Addenbrookes, Science Park are not within walking distance
- 28) Access from the hotel to the A14 and M11 is only via congested roads such as Newmarket Road

David Halford made the following points:

- 29) All new developments within the local area have been two to three storeys high
- 30) The proposed height is equivalent to the Belvedere 6 storey tower height.
- 31) As the proposed area falls upon a Ridgeway, it will result in the fourth floor overlooking the entire neighbourhood.
- 32) The top three storeys of the building will dominate the sky line
- 33) The height, scale and bulk of the proposed building does not relate to the scale and grain of the area and is visually intrusive.
- 34) The excessive height of the building will negate the effect of the tree screen. Most buildings in Cambridge do not tend to go further than the tree line.
- 35) Reducing the number of rooms might also reduce the ground floor back of house areas so that the building could be pushed back a little to accommodate full size trees across the whole frontage (rather than the cotoneaster bushes proposed).
- 36) A four storey office parapet level stands at 28.850 AOD. However the proposed hotel will stand at 31.800 AOD
- 37) The proposed site cannot be compared to the Belvedere as it overlooks the railway and does not affect residential neighbours.
- 38) The development would adversely impact views into and out of the Conservation Area, as well as being highly visually intrusive for local residents. It may also give rise to precedent for 6 storey buildings

Lynette Gilbert made the following points:

- 39) Highways identified the Newmarket Road/Coldhams Lane junction as a serious congestion problem in 2003 and stated that they considered almost any increase of traffic or additional delays would be unacceptable.

- 40) Highways Authority stated that zero impact on the Coldhams Lane/Newmarket Road junction should be recommended.
- 41) Traffic congestion on Newmarket Road has increased significantly since 2003 due to the new retail parks, including weekdays and weekends. Therefore it is inaccurate to focus solely on weekday peak hour traffic.
- 42) The projected trip numbers exclude 85 goods vehicle trips, 70 train arrivals (many guests will take taxis), and 326 bus and coach trips
- 43) The true additional trip number could be almost 1400 over 24 hours
- 44) All traffic including coaches will need to enter or exit via New Street and Harvest Way
- 45) There is no commercial or strategic justification for 220 beds in this location
- 46) This level of capacity in an unsuitable site creates serious traffic problems, has a negative impact on residential amenity and sets an undesirable precedent for future development in Cambridge
- 47) 3 storeys will resolve or reduce these problems and provide 105 bedrooms, well within the commercially viable range for a successful Travelodge

**The Case Officer's comments:**

Tony Collins made the following points:

- 48) The application was received on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009
- 49) Notification of the application was sent to neighbours at all addresses within the quadrangle formed by Newmarket Road, Abbey Street, New Street and Coldhams Lane.
- 50) Notification was also sent to all addresses on the south side of New Street from 128 to the junction with Coldhams Lane, all addresses in River Lane south of Rowlinson Way, the whole of Beche Court, all of Godesdome Road except numbers 22c and 22d, and nine other addresses in the area where Henley Way meets Coldhams Lane.
- 51) Following a request, notification was also sent to the Riverside Area Residents' Association. A site notice was also posted and an advertisement was placed in the Cambridge Evening News on 17<sup>th</sup> April.
- 52) 23 written representations have been received from residents within the area, from the Riverside Area Residents' Association and the Petersfield Area Community Trust, and from Councillor Wright and County Councillor Paul Sales.
- 53) There are seven main grounds for objecting.
- 54) The principle of development. These objections suggest that the change from the approved office use is not appropriate.
- 55) Comprehensive development. These applications raise concerns about the consideration of this proposal in isolation from proposals for the land immediately to the west.
- 56) Design. These objections suggest the proposed building is too high, and that its length is insufficiently relieved by articulation. It is suggested that this would be harmful to the conservation area, and set an undesirable precedent for Newmarket Road. The proposed materials are also criticised as inappropriate.
- 57) Residential amenity. These objections refer to additional noise, loss of privacy, and overshadowing.
- 58) Car parking. These objections assert that the level of car parking to be provided is too low, and that unacceptable pressure will be placed on on-street car parking space in the vicinity.
- 59) Traffic issues. Objections under this heading assert that the use would generate an unacceptable increase in traffic, which would exacerbate congestion at nearby junctions, and in Harvest way, and would endanger the safety of cyclists. It is also suggested that

the proposed extension to the bus lane would be ineffective, and that the moving of the existing bus stop would be inconvenient.

- 60) Air quality. Objections suggest that this issue is not sufficiently considered by the application.
- 61) A number of policy consultations have been undertaken.
- 62) The Highway Authority seeks additional disabled parking spaces, improvements to cycle parking and conditions relating to the siting of the bus stop, the funding of a TRO, the agreement of a delivery management plan, the submission of a Green Travel Plan, limits on the weight of delivery vehicles, the provision to be made for tree roots, and the completion of a highway works agreement.
- 63) The Planning Policy Manager concludes that neither the loss of the previously approved office space nor the introduction to the site of hotel use involve conflict with development plan policy. She also indicates that the levels of car and cycle parking proposed are in line with local plan policy, but raises concerns about a statement within the application regarding on-street parking, and suggest that a Green Travel Plan should be required.
- 64) The Joint Urban Design Team judge the height of the building to be acceptable, but criticise the design for its failure to achieve satisfactory interaction with the street, and its inadequate articulation. The team also criticise the configuration of the service area, and the design of the Newmarket Road entrance canopy. The team consider the application gives insufficient information about surface finishes to be able to judge their appropriateness. The team concludes that the proposal would be contrary to local plan policy.
- 65) The Head of Environmental Services does not object to the proposal, but recommends conditions relating to construction noise, construction hours, piling, concrete crushing, construction deliveries, dust suppression and wheel washing, ground contamination, plant noise, fume extraction and waste storage provision. Further comments of the issue of air quality are anticipated.
- 66) The Principle Arboriculture Manager states that trees outside the site should not constrain development, and recommends a minimum distance between tree stems and the building.
- 67) The Access Officer objects to the proposal because of its reliance on platform lifts for access on both sides. He also raises concerns about insufficient disabled parking, and insufficient fully accessible rooms, and suggests a number of improvements which are necessary to internal arrangements and detailed design.
- 68) The Fire and Rescue Service state that additional supplies of water for fighting are not required.
- 69) The Defence Estates Safeguarding, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the County Archaeology Unit, the County Transport Department, the Environment Agency, the head of Active Communities, the Historic Environment Manager, the Cycling and Walking Officer, and the Principal Landscape Architect have been consulted but have not yet supplied a response.
- 70) The application has been discussed by the Council's Design and Conservation Panel.
- 71) The panel expressed deep concerns about the height and bulk of the proposed building, and rejected as inappropriate the proposed surfacing materials.
- 72) The panel also expressed doubts about whether the proposed tree planting would be at a large enough scale.
- 73) The Council's Disability Access Panel have suggested a number of improvements which should be made to internal layout and design detail in order to improve accessibility and inclusiveness.

74)The applicants have proposed improving accessibility by the creation of a ramp to the main (Harvest Way) entrance.

**Members' questions and comments:**

75)Could you confirm the traffic light system?

*There will be four reds and four ambers.*

76)To what degree do your clients insist on an architectural format?

*The architect is torn between many positions and directions. It is a budget hotel which will sit on a rectangular site. Simplicity has to be achieved elsewhere. Therefore if the rooms do not sit on top of each other, the costs will increase.*

77)How will the drop off facility for taxis relate to the building and the area for entering and exiting?

*The concept of access is related to the front and back. There will be an access way off Newmarket Road in order to create more street dynamic activity. Access at the back will have prime access.*

78)The sketched designs seem to be similar to the material used for the Travelodge on Hills Road.

*We have put forward timber frame as the material for the building. As a result, it will be very quick to build. As we will not be able to brick the outside of the building, we are working on a rain screen cladding.*

78) How large will the drop off area be?

*It will cover four to five external spaces with a linear lay-by for drop offs for two to three taxis. The client feels it is workable and adequate. The cars will be underground, which therefore gives the opportunity to make use of the land and townscape. The large drop off point will be very well used.*

79) Can we have a comparison of height and footprint we can agree on?

*(Case Officer) Previous approval for a wider site was made in 2002 and approved in 2006. Reserved matters was also approved in 2006.*

80) Will the proposed hotel have multiple conference rooms?

*No conference rooms have been planned.*

81) What is the situation regarding the number of windows facing towards the front of the building?

*An office building requires 60% additional glass than a hotel. The hotel will not be fully occupied at all times, and one's oblique view out will be limited.*

82) *(Case Officer comment) The Design and Conservation Panel are deeply concerned of the height and scale of the building. The impact on neighbouring houses would be immense. Aluminium cladding does not seem appropriate. The Panel are pleased to see the landscape proposal but are concerned whether there are enough trees.*

83) What is the situation regarding parking on side streets and at the Grafton Centre?

*The car park will provide for 50 spaces. 34% of the occupants are likely to arrive by car. 24% are likely to arrive by bus or train. A travel plan will give us the opportunity to monitor the impact.*

84) On the corner of Coldhams Lane, there is a glass building. What is the height?  
*I'm unsure but I think it is 4 metres for floor to floor heights.*

85) I'm concerned about the junction at New Street with Coldhams Lane.  
*Highways have undertaken an accident risk assessment and have not seen it prone to accidents.*

86) I would like to hear the views on the projection of traffic.  
*The proposed hotel would be a 24/7 operation. This would mean that you would not have the traditional peak periods of traffic that an office would generate. Traffic congestion would be much more spread out and people arriving by train would be able to use the bus service.*

87) (Cllr Reid comment) *We need a clear position from Highways in order to be in a better position to analyse.*

### **Summing Up by the Applicant**

Justin Bainton made the following points:

88) If we are to reduce the bed numbers to 120 beds, there is a commercial issue.

89) We have worked closely with Travelodge and there is a need for 250 beds.

90) The traffic that is accumulated from a hotel is very different to an office as there are no peak periods.

91) The site will benefit from having activity as opposed to being dormant.

92) It is in a sustainable location, and the proposal sits comfortably with the site.

### **Summing Up by the Petitioners – against the application**

Lynette Gilbert made the following points:

93) The information from Travelodge states that they have a target to achieve 30 to 130 beds

94) From an operational point of view, the hotel can make it work

95) The height of the current office building consent is 3 metres lower than the proposal

96) There are unsafe crossing points and traffic blocks access to New Street

97) The Eastern Transport plan came up with 1,296 projected trips, however the applicants have projected 788 trips as they have based it on various Travelodge sites that differ from the proposed site on Newmarket Road.

98) They have excluded 85 goods trips, 70 train arrivals and bus and coach trips

99) The local parking is unrestricted and the parking provision is only 36% of the Local Plan.

### **Final Comments of the Chair**

100) The Chair stated that the item was likely to go to Planning Committee at the end of the month and thanked everyone for attending.

The Meeting concluded at 11.30am