

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

**DRAFT Notes of a Development
Control Forum**

**Lensfield Hotel, 53-57 and 47-51
Lensfield Road, Cambridge**

29 July 2009

10.00am – 11.15am

Application No: 09/0544/FUL

Site Address: Lensfield Hotel, 53-57 and 47-51 Lensfield Road, Cambridge

Description: Rear extension to Hotel, including Spa facility and extension to existing residential properties (work to include part change of use), re-instatement of railings and shutters to front elevation.

Applicant: The Lensfield Hotel

Agent: Linda S Russell

Lead Petitioner: Katie Maynard

Case Officer: Catherine Linford

Present:

For Applicant	For Petitioners
Sharon Smith – Planning Consultant	Katie Maynard
Andrew Yeoh – Stamosyeoh Architects	Arthur Gibson
George Stamatopoulos - Stamosyeoh Architects	Christopher Thorpe

Members of the Planning Committee

Councillors Al Bander, Baker, Blair, Blencowe, Hipkin and Zmura

Other Members in attendance

None

Declarations of Interest by Members

None

Officers

Peter Carter (Chair), Catherine Linford (Case Officer) and Glenn Burgess (Committee Manager)

Text of Petition

09/0544/FUL

We, the undersigned consider the proposed development to be inappropriate because the proposals completely ignore the integrity, form and materials of the Georgian Grade II listed terrace. The rear façade and vital garden space would be completely destroyed. The designs are not at all in keeping with the Grade II listed buildings. There is also a proposal of a spa facility (with underground plant room), which could also increase traffic on an already narrow lane in central Cambridge. The proposal in many ways would have a detrimental effect in a conservation area.

Introduction

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the role and purpose of a Development Control Forum. The Chair provided a short summary of the application and stressed that this was not a formal meeting and that although notes would be circulated they would be picking up on the main points of the discussion and not be formal minutes.

Case by Applicants

Sharon Smith made the following points:

- 1) It was unfortunate that earlier extensions and additions to the hotel did not fit the character of the building.
- 2) The 1993 application had been refused on a number of issues including the loss of the internal features. Loss of residential amenity had not been an issue.
- 3) The suggested spa facility would be for hotel guests only, and no swimming pool had been suggested.
- 4) There would be no increase in waste collections.
- 5) The proposal would improve the current poor residential accommodation.

George Stamatopoulos made the following points:

- 6) The architects were based in London and worked closely with the SPAB principles (Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings).
- 7) 50% of their current work was on historic buildings or on buildings in a historic setting. They worked closely with English Heritage and Conservation Officers.
- 8) The existing eaves and pitched roof line of the building were very low.
- 9) The current hotel extension was 8 metres and bared no resemblance to the original building.
- 10) Saxon Street was made up of terrace housing, many with extensions.
- 11) Previous applications in 1993 and 2007 had proved unsuccessful.

- 12) The Architects brief was
- To re-organise the existing buildings to provide modern standard accommodation.
 - To introduction limited leisure facilities.
 - To comply with local authority requirements.
- 13) The Architects proposal was to:
- Have a projection of 4.5 metres for the extension.
 - Have a clear demarcation between the listed building and the new.
 - Allow part of the existing structure to be seen from Saxon Street.
 - Have a concealed plant room.
 - Introduce a mature tree in the garden area.
 - Reduce car parking by 50%.
 - Introduce solar shading – which also provided privacy screening.
- 14) They had been in consultation with the local authority for 18 months.
- 15) They would reinstate the lost features and repair historic fabric.
- 16) The rear façade behind No: 53 would be limited to 1m.

Case by Petitioners

Katie Maynard made the following points:

- 17) Many local residents were concerned about the proposed development. A huge number had objected to the application.
- 18) The key concern was the irreversible damage that would be done to a listed building. The proposal ignored the integrity, form and material of the Georgian Grade II listed building.
- 19) Two previous applications were refused for being ‘inappropriate, unsympathetic, disproportionate in scale and detracting from the quality of the original buildings’. These matters had not been resolved in this application and it went against Local Plan Policies: 3/4, 3/7, 3/10, 3/14.
- 20) The proposal was not based on a ‘clear understanding of the buildings and their context’ (as stated in Local Plan Policy 4.3)
- 21) The Conservation Area guide specifically produced for the Lensfield Road area by the Council clearly showed that the terrace was built in 1819 with the materials being gualt brick and slate. It also stated that ‘there was very little in terms of development potential’ in the area.
- 22) The grade II listed terrace should be preserved and restored.
- 23) The terrace was recognised by experts as being of interest to both the City and the nation.
- 24) On their website the applicant had incorrectly stated that the building dates from around 1850.

- 25) The design was disproportionate and detracts from the quality of the original building. It was also unsympathetic and out of context.
- 26) Saxon Street was the last original complete cobbled street and needed to be preserved as an important part of historic Cambridge.
- 27) The proposal would be overbearing – and result in a substantial increase in the footprint of the building.
- 28) There would be significant loss of light for No: 45.
- 29) Concern that the application proposed a detrimental change of use.
- 30) The spa facility and change to residential accommodation would result in increased noise and vibration and an increase in traffic and delivery problems.
- 31) The destruction of garden and open space would be a loss to Saxon Street and the Conservation Area.

Christopher Thorpe made the following points:

- 32) Was a resident of Fitzwilliam Court.
- 33) The proposal would set a precedent for other owners of listed buildings.
- 34) It would result in more traffic, an increase in noise and disturbance at unsociable hours.
- 34) It would be a change from residential use to commercial use.

Arthur Gibson made the following points:

- 35) Resident of Saxon Street and concerned about significant change of use.
Change of use objections were:
 - Loss of family residential accommodation contrary to Policy.
 - Excessive intensification of use – there were three proposed uses where previously there was only one – residential.
 - Lack of any supporting independent evidence to demonstrate a need for any of the proposed new uses.
 - Availability of existing commercial premises in City Centre or suburbs for a spa facility.
- 36) The proposal went against Local Plan Policies: 2, 5, 5.3, 5.4, 5.6, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.9, 6.10 and 6.12.
- 37) Reiterated concerns about massing.
- 28) Questioned accuracy of architect's drawings – as road was much narrower than noted. Deliveries and emergency vehicles currently had trouble.
- 29) Noise from hotel is currently a problem i.e extractor fans and the proposal would only increase this.
- 30) It would be best to remove the 1960's extension and take it back to its original form.
- 31) The loss of family residential accommodation was unacceptable.

The Case Officer's comments:

Catherine Linford made the following points:

- 32) A petition with 36 signatures 31 letters of objection had been received.
- 33) Environmental Health had recommended conditions.
- 34) Highways had requested further information on the cycle parking.
- 35) Archaeology had requested an evaluation of the site.
- 36) Conservation had only issued draft comments.
- 37) Comments were expected from Aborigicultural and the Georgian Group.

Members' questions and comments:

38) Has the proposal been to the Design and Conservation Panel?

The Case Officer confirmed that it was going that afternoon.

39) Do the petitioners believe modern designs could ever fit within a Conservation Area?

The Lead Petitioner stated that they would not rule out change but any proposal would need to follow good practice of preservation and matching original features. It would also need to be sympathetic with the original building.

40) What is the justification for the materials proposed?

The Architect confirmed that they would use reclaimed yellow gault brick – to match the current building. The inclining roof would be made of slate, the down sloping roof of lead and there would be use of glass for the spa.

41) Where would the main hotel entrance be?

The Architect confirmed that that this would be the existing front entrance. Staff and wheelchair access would be at the rear of the hotel.

42) How much of the existing listed building would be visible for pedestrians?

The Architect confirmed that it would be visible through the down sloping roof pockets.

43) Would any residential use be lost?

No.

The Chair confirmed that the building currently had a mixture of uses and this would be set out in full in the officer's report.

44) To what extent have you taken on board the views of the petitioners?
The Architect confirmed that comments had only been received in full last week, so they were still being looked into.

45) The issue of the cobbled street needs to be addressed in the officer's report
Noted.

46) Would the petitioners prefer no extension at all?
Mr Gibson stated that they would prefer the 1960's extension to be removed and replaced with a more sympathetic design.

Summing Up by the Applicant

47) Proposal retained the existing external and internal fabric of the building.

48) Historic features would be reintroduced.

49) It retained some of the residential accommodation.

50) Would help the local economy and create jobs.

Summing Up by the Petitioners

51) The proposal would be overbearing and out of keeping with the area.

52) It would go against the Local Plan Priorities.

53) The proposal did not respond to the reasons for refusal of the previous applications.

54) We must not repeat the same mistakes of previous planning in the 1960's.

55) Previous rejections were not based in any way on the fact that the previous designs had been 'traditional' as stated by the applicant.

56) PPG 3.10 States that "the best use for which the building was originally designed and continuation or reinstatement of that use should certainly be the first option when the future of the building is considered"

57) We must preserve and restore heritage for future generations.

Final Comments of the Chair

The Chair felt that it had been a useful discussion and that both parties could now go away and discuss the issues in more detail with the aim of meeting a compromise

The Meeting concluded at 11.15am