

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Notes of a Development Control
Forum

22 & 23 Kelvin Close, Cambridge

20 January 2010

10.00am – 12.00pm

Application No: 09/1106/FUL

Site Address: 22 & 23 Kelvin Close, Cambridge

Description: Erection of 8 x 4 bed dwellings and a detached car port structure, cycle parking facilities, amenity areas and landscaping following the demolition of numbers 22 & 23 Kelvin Close.

Applicant: Laragh-House Developments

Agent: Paul Belton, Januarys Consultant Surveyors

Lead Petitioner: Jane Rich

Case Officer: Amy Lack

Present:

For Applicant	For Petitioners
Paul Belton (Agent)	Brendan Davies (Objector)
Paul Phelps (Applicant organisation representative)	Jane Rich (Objector)
Simon Sommerville-Large (Architect)	Barry Stevens (Objector)

Members of the Area Committee

Councillors Blencowe, Howell, Shah, Smart and Walker

Other Members in attendance

Councillor Herbert.

Declarations of Interest by Members

Not applicable.

Officers

Peter Carter (Principal Development Control Manager - Chair), Amy Lack (Planning Officer) and James Goddard (Committee Manager)

Text of Petition

09/1106/FUL

Our objections to the application are:

- 1) It will have an adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties: overlooking, overshadowing, loss of privacy, loss of trees, very close proximity to existing properties, unacceptable increase in traffic (people and vehicles), unacceptable increase in noise and disturbance, increase in on-street parking causing access difficulties.
- 2) It will detract from the prevailing residential character of the area. Demolition of existing dwellings will create a gap in the landscape/street scene. Development totally out of character with the rest of Kelvin Close. Majority of units are terraced and all are higher than existing properties. The Close will be split into two communities. Safe and quiet space at the end of the Close under threat from increased traffic.
- 3) An over-intensification of the site. The proposed density is out of keeping with the remainder of the cul-de-sac and the proposed number of units will cause cumulative adverse effects as listed in (1).
- 4) Negative effect on eco-balance exacerbating existing problems with surface water: high water table with clay subsoil, loss of natural soak-away, increased hard surfaces, excess burden on existing drainage ditch.

Changes that could be made to overcome concerns:

- 1) Reduce number of units from maximum of four.
- 2) Properties to remain at same roof height as rest of Kelvin Close.
- 3) Architectural design in keeping with rest of Kelvin Close.
- 4) Position of new properties to be of less close proximity to existing properties and with no overlooking or overshadowing.
- 5) Units to have larger gardens and side parking areas as with rest of Kelvin Close.

Case by Applicant

The Applicant made the following points:

- 1) Various design options have been considered since the scheme was first proposed in 2007. These are listed in the Design & Access Statement.
- 2) The site has been surveyed to identify buildings to be demolished, trees in situ and trees to be removed.
- 3) The close and wider neighbourhood around the site have influenced the application's design (style, materials etc) so it is sympathetic to the area. The colour, form and materials proposed should be sympathetic to the character of the area whilst making best use of the site.
- 4) A variety of materials have been used for properties in Kelvin Close and (neighbouring) Brother's Place. This is reflected in the design of the proposed semi-detached and terrace properties, which are influenced by the style of neighbouring properties.

- 5) Comments from City Council Planners have been taken on-board to amend the design, such as waste disposal facilities, car parking spaces and access width.
- 6) A car port, cycle store and refuse store are used along the southern boundary to make the best use of space and minimize the potential for overlooking neighbour's properties.

Case by Petitioners

The Petitioners made the following points:

- 7) Local residents understand the need to redevelop parts of Cambridge in principal, but take issue with the specific development proposed in Kelvin Close. A large number of local residents have objected to this development.
- 8) The proposal is an over development of a restricted site, with too many houses planned for a small site.
- 9) The new housing design is inconsistent with neighbouring properties.
- 10) The Petitioners feel the design contravenes policy 3/10 of Cambridge Local Plan 2006 concerning:
 - Impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties.
 - Inadequate amenity space, or vehicular access arrangements and parking spaces for the proposed and existing properties.
 - Detracting from the prevailing character of the area.
- 11) Petitioners feel that the design of proposed semi-detached properties is inconsistent with existing properties in terms of design, dormer windows and height (overlooking/overbearing).
- 12) The impact of traffic and extra noise is a concern. Kelvin Close is a narrow road that is already crowded due to existing resident and visitor parking. If more houses are built, it will exacerbate the situation. There is no overflow capacity like in other roads.
- 13) An increase in vehicles in the road could block access for existing residents and service vehicles. This is of particular concern to residents with medical problems and those who work for medical services.
- 14) An additional planning application is being considered for the opposite end of Kelvin Close to numbers 22 and 23.
- 15) Being a cul-de-sac, the area near numbers 22 and 23 are used as a play area. Losing this to a new development could affect the community spirit.
- 16) The new development could impact on the turning circle at the bottom of the close, ie reducing it.
- 17) Kelvin Close has been recognized as a marshy area since circa 1930. The nearby area between Hills Road and Perne Road has also been identified as having a high water table. Drainage ditches around Kelvin Close are generally blocked, although one near Chalmer's Road was unblocked in 2009. If the

development goes ahead in Kelvin Close, it may exacerbate the existing problem.

Case Officer's comments:

18) Policy consultations have been undertaken with:

- Highways Agency - no objection, but conditions suggested concerning access if application goes ahead.
- Environmental Health - no objection, but conditions suggested if application goes ahead.
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Engineer - no objection, but conditions suggested concerning surface run off and foul water drainage if application goes ahead.

Members' questions and comments:

19) Clarification was sought on whether the new design would overlook neighbours.

Semi-detached buildings in the new development would be taller than neighbouring properties (the eaves are higher by 1m). The third storey is to get maximum use from the roof space.

By setting back the proposed properties in their own gardens, this should minimise the potential to overlook neighbouring properties. Dormer windows will look out into the owners garden, the roof of the car shelter (to screen neighbours first floor areas), plus a limited/oblique view of neighbours gardens and side house walls.

The pitch of the car port roof could be altered if required to help screen neighbours.

20) Clarification was sought concerning the design aesthetics.

The Architect did not want to replicate the form of buildings in Kelvin Close, but act as an intermediary between the two styles (characteristics and materials) of buildings in Kelvin Close and Brother's Place.

21) Clarification was sought on alternative configurations for space usage ie number of properties.

The Design & Access Statement was signposted as a summary of options considered.

22) Clarification was sought on the target market for properties and if sufficient amenities were provided.

The properties are designed as family homes, meet current design standards and have a generous garden by modern standards.

As the City Council Environmental Health Officer is aware, refuse will be stored in a communal area with different size/types of bin. These have not been allocated to individual houses.

Bicycles can be parked in a communal area at site front or in individual's gardens. The minimum standard for storage space has been met.

The development has been designed with one car parking space allocated per property. Buyers will be made aware of this to discourage more than one car per household. The Agent has not been in liaison with a car club, but new occupiers can make arrangements independently. The City Council has a policy on car parking standards that does not encourage provision of more than one per household. Any variation to this is outside of the DCF's remit.

A turning area/head has not been included in the design as the development spur roadway can be used for manoeuvring by cars and service vehicles.

23) Councillors asked how drainage issues would be addressed.

The site will take on responsibility for the northern drain near Chalmer's Road. The site design will improve drainage, particularly surface run off, through the use of attenuation tanks. Properties will empty water into tanks then drains at a prescribed rate.

24) Have site redevelopment options been considered that do not require demolition of existing properties?

The site is too small to redevelop without demolition work.

Summing Up by the Applicant

25) The Applicant referred to the Planning Statement and felt the proposed building would not overlook/shadow neighbours.

26) The design reflected comments received from the Planning Officer.

27) The provision of attenuation tanks should improve site drainage.

28) One car parking space per household and two visitor spaces have been allocated. A car parking club could be signposted to residents, but car clubs work best for sites without allocated parking. Residents may choose to use alternative modes of transport.

Summing Up by the Petitioners

29) Reiterated concerns previously raised with regards to:

- Over development of site.
- Building height and potential to overlook neighbours
- Drainage – the current situation needs to be addressed before development goes ahead. Application will have negative affect on eco-balance.
- Development out of keeping with local neighbourhood eg dormer windows.
- Amenities such as refuse and cycle storage.
- Additional properties will exacerbate existing parking problems.
- Infringement of turning circle/head at end of cul-de-sac.
- Loss of play area at end of cul-de-sac.

Final Comments of the Chair

30) The Chair observed the following:

- Minutes of the Development Control Forum will be circulated to relevant parties.

The Meeting concluded at 12.00pm