



# Public Document Pack

## Cambridge City Council

### **WEST / CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE**

**To:** Councillors Smith (Chair), Kightley (Vice-Chair), Bick, Cantrill, Hipkin, Reid, Reiner, Rosenstiel, Tucker, Brooks-Gordon, Nethsingha and Whitebread

*Despatched: Wednesday, 17 August 2011*

**Date:** Thursday, 25 August 2011

**Time:** 7.00 pm

**Venue:** The Hicks Room, University Centre, Granta Place, Mill Lane, Cambridge CB2 1RU

**Contact:** Toni Birkin

**Direct Dial:** 01223 457086

### **AGENDA**

**3 PLANNING APPLICATIONS** *(Pages 1 - 24)*

## ***Information for the public***

### **Public attendance**

You are welcome to attend this meeting as an observer, although it will be necessary to ask you to leave the room during the discussion of matters which are described as confidential.

### **Public Speaking**

You can ask questions on an issue included on either agenda above, or on an issue which is within this committee's powers. Questions can only be asked during the slot on the agenda for this at the beginning of the meeting, not later on when an issue is under discussion by the committee.

If you wish to ask a question related to an agenda item contact the committee officer (listed above under 'contact') **before the meeting starts**. If you wish to ask a question on a matter not included on this agenda, please contact the committee officer by 10.00am the working day before the meeting. Further details concerning the right to speak at committee can be obtained from the committee section.

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**WEST/CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE MEETING – 25<sup>th</sup> August 2011**  
**Pre-Committee Amendment Sheet**

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

CIRCULATION: First

ITEM: APPLICATION REF: 11/0653/FUL

Location: 68 Maids Causeway

Target Date: 03.08.2011

To Note:

I have attached the most recent correspondence between Cllr Rosenstiel and residents of 57 Maids Causeway. The following points are raised;

- That the reality of Fitzroy Lane being used as a pedestrian access rather than James Street needs to be addressed. That the County Council has a duty of care to ensure that adequate pavement should be provided on both sides of Fitzroy Lane;
- That the proposed boundary wall will limit traffics visibility to see pedestrians when exiting or entering Fitzroy Lane; and
- If the transport authority have not visited the site, the planning application should be adjourned until they have and that they have properly investigated the situation to the Committee's satisfaction.

Officer Comments:

I believe that my report has addressed these concerns and that no further concerns have been raised within these comments. The proposed wall does not encroach onto public highway land, the existing pavement will remain in its present position and while I understand that neighbours are concerned that pedestrians use Fitzroy Lane, the recommendation to construct a pavement for their use is not within the remit of the City Council or this planning application.

The shrubbery which is present in the piece of land, which is hoping to be purchased by No.68 is relatively tall and while it does drop down in height on the junction with Maid's Causeway, to provide visibility, so too does the proposed wall, reducing down to 800 mm for a depth of 3 m, to ensure that good visibility is maintained for road users.

I have been unable to confirm if the Highways Authority have visited the site, however, they make a professional judgement as to whether they physically visit a site or make a desk top assessment from their intimate knowledge of the city and this area. This is the same practice, which the Highways Authority adopts for the

assessment of all planning applications.

I have also received comments from the applicant and the agent, both of which are attached to the amendment sheet. There are no Officer comments in relation to these.

Amendments To Text: None

Pre-Committee Amendments to Recommendation: None

**DECISION:**

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CIRCULATION: First

ITEM: APPLICATION REF: 11/0726/FUL

Location: Victoria House, 1 Victoria Street

Target Date: 05.09.2011

To Note: A revised car parking layout has been received and is considered to be acceptable. A copy of this is attached to the amendment sheet for convenience.

Amendments To Text:

Replacement paragraph 1.1: 1 Victoria Street is located close to the junction with Emmanuel Road, to the east of the City Centre on the northern side of the street. The property forms the end of a terrace, although it is connected to the west via a single storey shared passage to 1A Victoria Street, which appears to be a converted outbuilding, which is now in residential use. 1 Victoria Street comprises four floors, 3 above ground level and one below. The street is mainly residential with the Unitarian Church situated on the opposite side of the road.

Addition to paragraph 8.11: 1A Victoria Street, to the west is not physically attached to the application site and does not benefit from any external space. The proposal does not seek the addition of any windows and those, which exist on the western elevation of 1 Victoria Street are obscure glazed. As a result, I do not consider that the amenity of residents at 1A will be compromised as a result of the proposed change of use.

Pre-Committee Amendments to Recommendation:

That condition 4 on the Officer recommendation is removed if Committee are minded to approve the application.

That condition 7 should as a result of the removal of condition 4 read as follows:

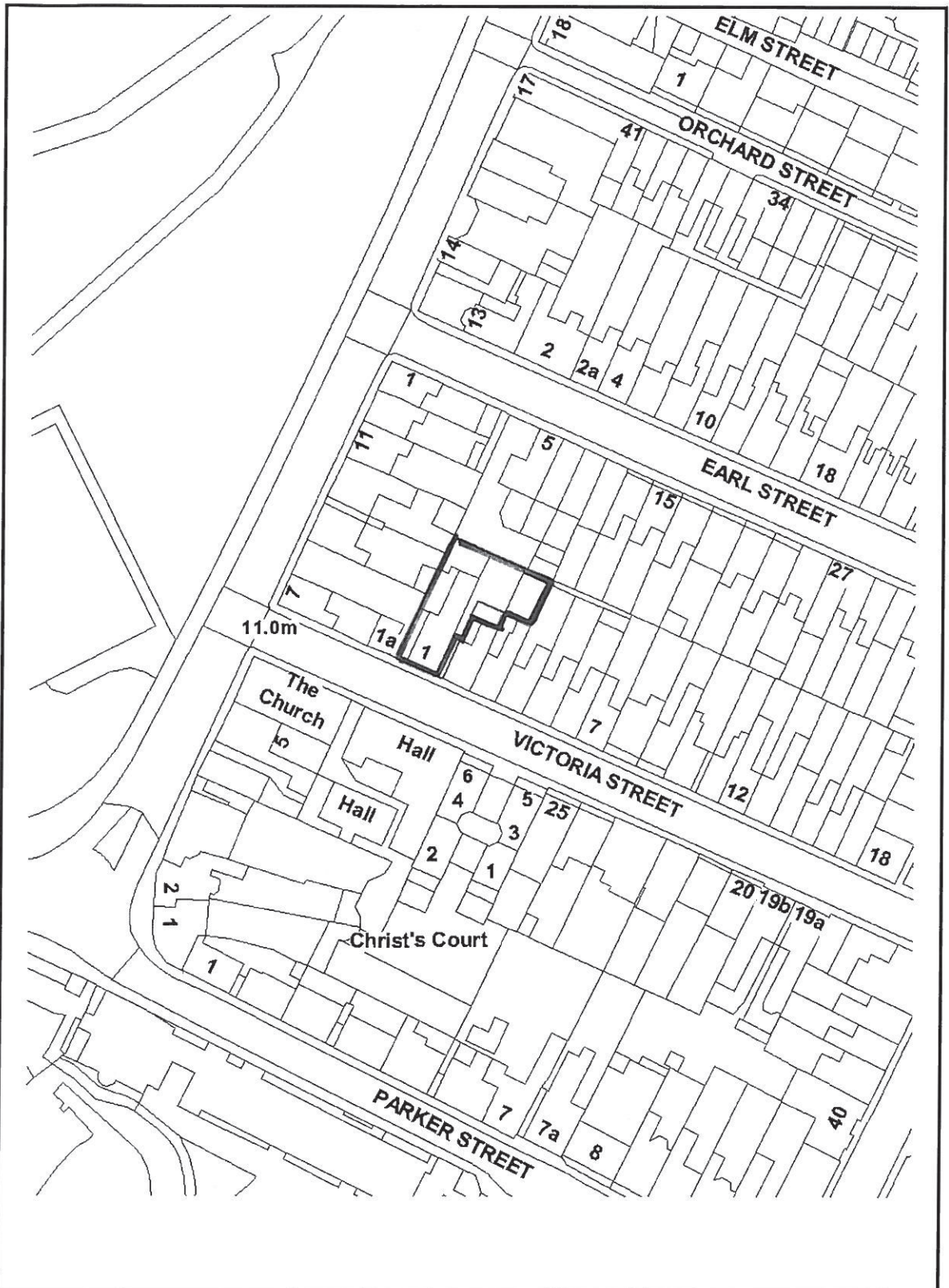
The rear car parking area shall accommodate a maximum of 2 cars in accordance with the approved car parking details.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the neighbours (Cambridge Local Plan 2008 4/13).

**DECISION:**

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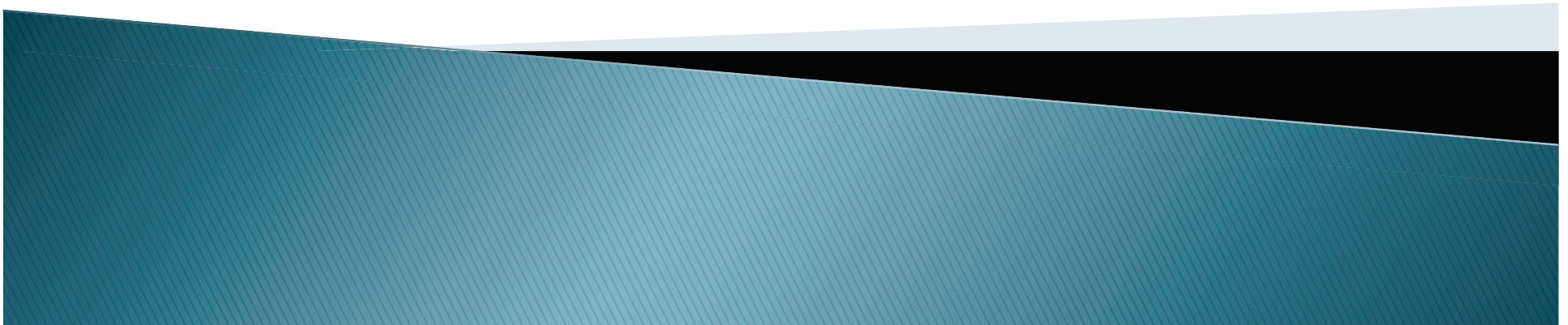
**11/0726/FUL**  
**Victoria House 1 Victoria Street Cambridge Cambridgeshire**

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# 68 Maids Causeway

Responses to objections



# Agenda

- ▶ Background
- ▶ Objections raised
  - Scale of development
  - Visibility concerns
  - Pedestrian “right of way”
  - Height of wall
  - Flat porch roof
  - Stained weatherboarding
  - Glass bricks
  - Velux windows
- ▶ Summary

# Background

- ▶ We might like to think that Maids Causeway is all Victorian Doll's houses, but the reality is that there are a wide variety of styles nearby
- ▶ The existing building at no 68 was built in c1960 and was not particularly aesthetically pleasing. This has been improved upon by the existing owner, but cannot disguise its initial heritage
- ▶ We are not here to argue whether it should have been built like that - the fact is that it already exists
- ▶ Part of the intention of the proposed works is to improve the visual aspect, but this is in the context of improving a 1960's house not creating a mock Victorian dwelling
- ▶ The proposal must be viewed in this context



"Doll's House" on Maids Causeway



68 Maids Causeway in c2001



No 68 and adjacent properties on Maids Causeway today



Zebra pub  
Indicative of one of the many other architectural styles in the area

# Scale of development

- ▶ The existing house occupies c 42% of the land and the proposed alterations increase this only marginally to c45%
- ▶ The height of the proposed addition is less than the existing roofline and neighboring structures
- ▶ Most neighboring houses are terraced and hence occupy a significantly greater proportion of the frontage
- ▶ The house sits well back from the road compared to other houses which further reduces its perception of scale
- ▶ As an example, No 52 is a detached house that has a much greater scale relative to the visible plot compared to the current proposal. This house is located right on the pavement and with narrow gaps on either side



68 Maids Causeway today



68 Maids Causeway as proposed



52 Maids Causeway

# Visibility concerns

- ▶ Visibility at the corner is currently limited by
  - A wall 1.05m high (measured from the drive of no 68)
  - A bush, currently trimmed to a similar height as the wall
  - Two trees
  - A pole
- ▶ The proposal replaces the above with a lower wall (c0.7m)
- ▶ The proposal maintains this low height for a further 2.25m towards the house compared to the original where the wall starts to rise
- ▶ The combined effect of these two measures will be to improve visibility rather than reduce it
- ▶ The experts in this matter are the Cambridgeshire Highways dept who are content that the proposal “should have no significant impact on the public highway”



Current view from Maids Causeway



View as proposed from Maids Causeway

# Pedestrian “Right of Way”

- ▶ At least since 2001 the land has been heavily planted with bushes and trees. See pictures. The land could not have been used for pedestrian access.
- ▶ The land has only recently been partially cleared. Even so, only part of the land is passable on foot the remainder comprising a holly bush and other dense vegetation
- ▶ A survey undertaken on 13th August 2011 between 4pm and 5pm showed that 30 pedestrians used Fitzroy lane in this period
  - All walked on the road apart from:
    - One person who put both feet on the land momentarily
    - Another person put one foot on the land whilst her dog urinated against the wall
- ▶ To establish rights as a public footpath requires either the consent of the owner or 20 years of continuous informal use. Clearly neither of these is the case



Image 2007 Source Cyclestreets



Image 2006 Source Google Earth



Image 2001 Source Estate Agent details

# Height of Wall

- ▶ The height of the proposed wall on the new land is equal to or less than the existing wall
- ▶ The walls all along Fitzroy Lane are of similar height and the proposal is in sympathy with this existing structure
- ▶ The height of the wall for the property adjacent to no68 along Fitzroy Lane is even higher
- ▶ Even in the more traditional parts of Maids Causeway and adjacent streets there is a pattern of high walls



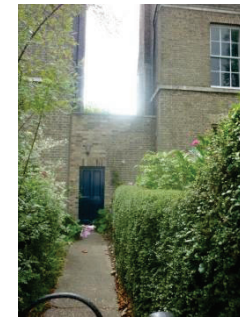
High Walls along all of East side of Fitzroy Street



Even higher wall adjacent buildings on West side of Fitzroy Street



Traditional high wall at 20 Maids causeway



High wall adjoining 20 Maids Causeway



High wall in adjacent street

# Flat porch roof

- ▶ The concern raised is that
  - the flat roofed porch is not a traditional feature
  - In this section of the Conservation Area, porches in themselves are not part of the established character.
  - The introduction of a porch will create an incongruous feature
- ▶ Firstly we reiterate that it would be inappropriate to try and create a mock Victorian façade on a 1960's house by the incorporation of “traditional features”
- ▶ In fact there are several examples of flat roof porches, bay windows and other structures on both old and new properties in the area
- ▶ The house as it stands is part of the established character of the area - like it or not. This proposal is a genuine attempt to improve the visual aspect whilst staying true to the original style and as such is not incongruous



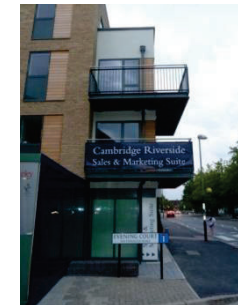
Flat roof projection at 54 Maids Causeway



73 Maids Causeway



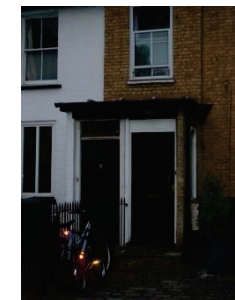
Grafton car park Fitzroy La



Cambridge Riverside New development



CBS on Newmarket Road



Newmarket Rd near Buddhist centre



# Stained Weatherboards

- ▶ The concern is that:
  - The stained weatherboards proposed... are also not considered appropriate in this location as this is an incongruous feature that detracts from the established character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- ▶ In fact stained weather boarding is used extensively in new buildings in the Conservation Area and therefore cannot be inconsistent with the established character of the area.
  - ▶ The new Cambridge Riverside development is a notable example
- ▶ There is already stained weather boarding used on the front of no 68. The proposal will significantly improve on the aesthetic quality of this weather boarding, but its existence demonstrates that the proposal cannot be an incongruous feature



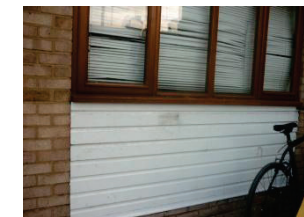
Extensive stained weatherboards at Auckland court



Extensive stained weatherboards at Cambridge Riverside devt



Stained Weatherboards at 16 Auckland Road



Stained weatherboards currently used at 68 Maids Causeway

# Glass blocks

- ▶ The concern is that the proposed glass blocks
  - are inappropriate for this location, particularly on such a prominent wall that is visible in views down Maids Causeway.
  - will allow a negative feature to stand out further, as it is not in keeping with the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- ▶ We have included the glass blocks partly to increase light into the proposed dining area and secondly because we believe they are a visual enhancement that improves the look of the walls.
- ▶ We note that there are several examples of the use of glass blocks in the area.
  - ▶ 19 North Terrace has extensive use of glass blocks, clearly visible from Midsummer common
  - ▶ Glass panes resembling glass blocks are used extensively in the Zebra pub adjacent
- ▶ Nevertheless, we are prepared to concede this feature if necessary



19 North Terrace from Parsonage Street



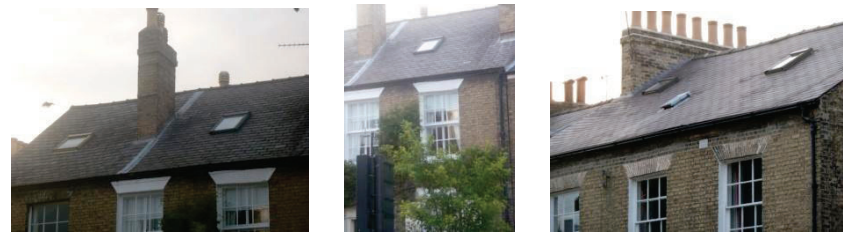
Panes resembling glass blocks at Zebra Pub adjacent to no 68



Glass blocks in nearby rd

# Velux windows

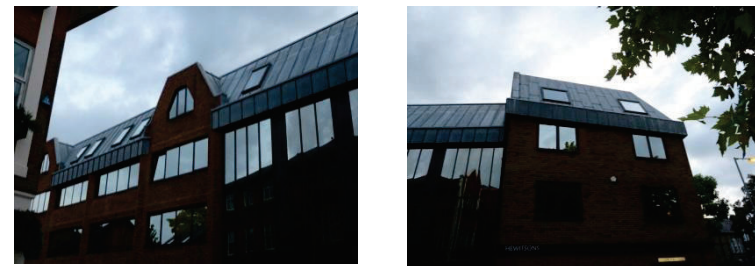
- ▶ With regard to rooflights, the statement is made in the conservation consultation that
  - types which stand proud of the plane of the roof (“velux”) are unlikely to be approved
- ▶ We note that there are numerous examples of such roof lights that stand proud of the plane of the roof on both older and newer properties on Maids Causeway, in Fitzroy lane and in other adjacent streets
- ▶ This comment appears inconsistent with the reality of existing practice in the area
- ▶ There are rooflights in the attic of the existing building and it would be incongruous to use a different style of “conservation” roof lights adjacent to these.



Velux on traditional buildings in Maids Causeway



64 Maids Causeway viewed from no 68 and Fitzroy La



Velux on Hewitsons building



Existing rooflights at 68 Maids Causeway

# Summary

- ▶ The existing building stands as an isolated example of 1960's architecture and is not particularly aesthetically attractive
- ▶ It would be inappropriate to try and re-create a mock Victorian house
- ▶ Any alterations need to be sympathetic to the original style and any aesthetic judgment on the proposals should be made in the context of the original building
- ▶ We believe the proposals represent a significant improvement on the aesthetics of the building and hence represent an enhancement to the area
- ▶ We have demonstrated that there will be no reduction in sight lines for pedestrians or motorists and the experts in this area indicate that this is not an issue of concern
- ▶ We believe the choices of materials are appropriate given the above, nevertheless we are willing to concede the issue of the glass blocks if that is the considered opinion of the planning experts.
- ▶ We commend this plan to you for your approval

Miss Sophie Pain  
Development Control  
Environment & Planning  
Cambridge City Council  
The Guildhall  
Cambridge CB2 3QJ

Tuesday, 23 August 2011

Dear Miss Pain

ALTERATIONS - 68 MAIDS CAUSEWAY, CAMBRIDGE  
Planning Ref: 11/0653/FUL

The following is a response to your report prepared for the meeting of the West /Central Area Committee due to take place on Thursday 25th August. It should be read in conjunction with the "68 Maids Causeway Responses to Objections" document, dated 18 August 2011, prepared by the applicant.

- Introduction - In general we welcome your report, which in our view provides a generally balanced treatment of the issues, and a recommendation for approval. Clauses follow the numbering of your report.
- 1.3 Boundary wall: described as "2m high". The ground cuts away towards Maids Causeway (and the height of the wall therefore increases); at the corner where the high boundary wall turns back towards the house it is some 2.5m high.
- 2.2 First Floor Extension: The width of this extension is some 1.5m, not 2.6m as stated.
- 2.4 Land Purchase: Our client is adamant that there have been no irregularities with respect to the purchase of the land, which is for garden use. It is unclear why the land was retained by the Council at the time of the original development, but in practical terms it is poorly maintained and is a left-over and an anomaly; furthermore the growth of the shrubs to some extent reduces sightlines when exiting Fitzroy Lane. It should also be stated that the proposed height of the front part of the boundary wall is some 700mm, not 1m as stated.

Historic Environment Manager's Comments:

- 6.2 Glass Blocks: We disagree that glass blocks are inappropriate for this location. They are a modern material, appropriately used on a modern wall, around a modern building on a road that leads to a modern car park and a modern shopping development. They have been introduced as a means of providing some relief to what we fear would otherwise be a rather stark section of wall, and provide some visual benefit to the public realm without compromising on privacy of the private accommodation. However the client is willing to sacrifice this element of the design if there remains a strong feeling against it.
- 6.2 Porch: Clearly the porch is not a traditional feature; to apply a traditional porch to a modern building of limited architectural merit would be a travesty - putting lipstick on a gorilla does not make it any the more attractive. The current house is a banal example of a 1960s standard estate house parachuted into a 19th Century setting with no thought for context. The aim of the proposals is to use the first floor extension and the porch to pull the house from its existing status as something of a jarring eyesore into sensible modern design with some sense of integrity, and thereby to a better job of turning the corner from the 19th Century jumble of Maids Causeway to the modern

development behind. The HEM is right to quote Policy 4/11, as the design will both “*preserve [and] enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area by ... providing a successful contrast with it*”.

- 6.2 Flat Roofs: It should be noted that each of the three immediate neighbours has at least one flat roof: the adjacent house at No 66 has a flat roofed bay window, the office building to the rear has a lead flat roof on top of a pitched roof, and the Zebra pub opposite has a number of flat roofs to the side and rear.
- Policy HE10: In no sense does the existing building “*make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset*” This is not an attractive building! Our client is wishing to spend some money improving matters - this should be welcomed (as your recommendation implies) rather than opposed. We are indebted to the HEM in drawing attention to Policy HE10 which, if used, should clearly be deployed in support of the application.

Assessment:

- 8.2 Wall: For clarification, the proposed parapet wall to the flat roof is some 600mm higher than the existing - clearly a parapet is the most elegant solution, and the most natural in light of the existing language of boundary walls with brick on edge copings etc.
- 8.4 The comments on the appropriate means of altering a mediocre 1960/70s design are well judged. The building already of course has weather boarding on it, infilling under the main ground floor front window. There are also numerous examples of the appropriate use of timber in modern design in the immediate vicinity, as alluded to in the client’s accompanying presentation.
- 8.5 Conservation Rooflights: We understand (though disagree with) the Council’s preference for conservation-style rooflights in conservation areas. However this is inappropriate in this situation for a number of reasons:
  - Tile section - The roof is covered with a relatively bulky concrete interlocking tile. Given the pronounced depth of this section, the proposed rooflights would not protrude significantly from the roof covering.
  - Existing installation - There are already two other standard Velux windows within the same roof plane - to switch to a “conservation” style rooflight would simply serve to confuse matters, and is at odds with the correctly expressed sentiment in the third sentence of your para 8.4.
  - Immediate neighbour - The pitched section of the immediately adjacent roof to the south has no fewer than four ordinary Velux windows that project far more than the proposed ones (because of the slate roof covering) and are more prominent because on a single storey section of building they are much closer to the viewer.
- 8.11 Public Right of Way: It is correctly observed that there is no public right of way over the existing area of planting.

Conclusion: Should this application be unsuccessful the applicant is minded to appeal. Given that the design represents a clear improvement on the existing situation, we would expect this appeal to be successful.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter to Councillors prior to Thursday’s meeting. If you have any queries on the above please do not hesitate to let me know.

Yours sincerely

**Nigel Walter MA (Cantab), Dip Arch, RIBA, MAPM**

**Director**

*nw@archangelic.com*

cc: Mrs Judy Davis



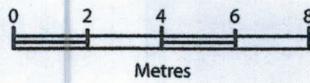
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Elizabeth Cameron  
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Miss Sophie Pain  
Planning Permission  
Cambridge City Council Building Control  
Environment Department  
Cambridge City Council  
PO Box 700  
Cambridge CB1 0JH



7 August 2011

Dear Sophie

**Change of use – planning permission – 1 Victoria Street, Cambridge Ref:11/0726/FUL**

Following our telephone conversation last Friday I was delighted to hear that you will be recommending that our change of use application should be approved. I confirm that we will revise our plans to reduce the car parking allowance to two rather than four cars and I enclose an amended block plan for this. From our previous discussion I also understand that there might be a security issue relating to the boundary with 2 Victoria Street. If this is the case, I can also confirm that we are happy to improve the boundary structure to aid security.

I hope this provides you with everything you need and I look forward to hearing from you regarding the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> August.

Many thanks for your help.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Cameron".

Elizabeth Cameron

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