

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FORUM**4 July 2012  
11.30 am - 12.50 pm**Present:****Members of the Planning Committee**

Councillors: Blencowe, Dryden, Hipkin and Saunders

**Other Member Present:** Councillor Swanson**Officers**

Sarah Dyer (City Development Manager - Chair), James Goddard (Committee Manager) and Sophie Pain (Planning Officer)

**For Applicant**

Chris Clark (Agent), Bev Garth (Applicant) and Richard Owers (Agent)

**For Petitioners**

Brian Dawson and Warwick Pethers

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL****12/11/DCF Declarations of Interest**

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Swanson	12/12/DCF	Personal: Attends St John's Church in Hills Road
Councillor Dryden	12/12/DCF	Personal: Has provided accommodation to students in the past.

**12/12/DCF Application and Petition Details 12/0616/FUL 221 Hills Road****Application and Petition Details for 12/0616/FUL 221 Hills Road**

Committee: Planning Committee

Date: 4 July 2012

Application No: 12/0616/FUL

Site Address: EF Language School, 221 Hills Road, Cambridge,

Description: Cambridgeshire, CB2 8RW  
Demolition of the existing non-residential language school (Use Class D1 - Non-residential Education and Training Centres) and replacement with a new purpose built language school with on site accommodation for students (Use Class C2 - Residential Schools and Colleges).

Applicant: Ms Bev Garth  
Agent: Mr Richard Owers  
Lead Petitioner: Mr Ray Frith  
Case Officer: Miss Sophie Pain  
Text of Petition: The grounds for the DCF are:

1. The proposed development is too dominant in aspect on both Hills Road, Blinco Grove and Cavendish Avenue
2. The proposed development will cause loss of privacy and peace for immediate neighbours
3. The proposed development does not do enough to alleviate the additional parking demands that it will create.

### **Opening Remarks by Chair**

The Chair outlined the role and purpose of the Development Control Forum. She stated no decisions would be taken at the meeting.

### **Case by Applicant**

Mr Owers gave a description of the proposed application and made the following points:

- 1) Materials and detailing would be sympathetic to the area.
- 2) The site is on a major arterial route accommodating a variety of scales and uses.
- 3) The scheme scale and massing could be justified in design terms. The scale of the design is in-keeping with other buildings in Cambridge such as Blinco Grove. The height would be similar to the existing building.
- 4) The design aimed to mitigate overlooking existing neighbours through the positioning of windows to overlook common areas instead of houses, obscured glazing towards Lady Jane Court, set back of the application building and trees on the perimeter.
- 5) The design includes noise mitigation features. A Porter and Nighttime Manager would oversee management of these
- 6) A shadow study suggested the application would cause minimal overshadowing.

- 7) The application should not significantly affect existing parking issues in the area. The Highways Officer has raised no concerns.

### **Case by Petitioners**

Mr Dawson spoke on behalf of local residents. He made the following points:

- 8) Residents understood that EF Language School wished to improve facilities, but took issue with this application as it would inconvenience residents.
- 9) A planning application for St John's Church (Hills Road) was dependent on a no noise post 10:00 pm condition. Mr Dawson queried if the EF Language School would be subject to a similar condition.
- 10) Concerns of Local Residents:
  - Proposal will have a significant impact on resident's amenities.
  - The building has a dominant mass, there are no others as big in the area. It is the only commercial building in a residential area.
  - Over development of site, which is intensively used currently.
  - Insufficient living space for students.
  - Overshadowing of neighbour's gardens.
  - Overlooking and associated loss of privacy.
  - Noise and disturbance to neighbours from the existing site, which could be exacerbated by the application.
  - Safety of proposed site entrances/exits.
  - Traffic flow and parking, for service and commuter vehicles.
  - Inappropriate refuse store location.

### **Case by Ward Councillors**

Councillor Swanson spoke as a Ward Councillor on behalf of local residents. She made the following points:

- 11) Supported resident's comments that it was understandable that EF Language School wished to improve facilities, but this application should do so in an appropriate way.
- 12) Referred to the Council Tall Buildings policy and queried if the application would dominate St John's Church view.
- 13) The applications' plant room was close to St John's Church. The applications' smoking area was close to St John's Church open space which is non-smoking.
- 14) Referred to Environmental Health comments.
- 15) Suggested the site could not accommodate expanded teaching and accommodation facilities.

- 16) The South Area Parking Review was underway. Cavendish Avenue was identified as an area for a possible change of use.
- 17) Concern over site parking facilities.
- 18) Suggested the application was too big and out of context for the section of Hills Road it would be located in. It was better suited to being a teaching and learning site, without accommodation.

**Case Officer's Comments:**

- 19) Details concerning the application were sent to neighbouring properties. The consultation period was extended to 20 July 2012.
- 20) A petition with 41 signatures requesting a Development Control Forum had been received. In addition to this, another petition was received from residents of Lady Jane Court with 26 signatures, which did not request a Development Control Forum. On the morning of the Forum, written representations had been received from 36 addresses.
- 21) Policy consultations have been undertaken with statutory consultees:
  - Highways Agency: Noted 3 car parking spaces would be retained on-site. Would seek further information regarding cycle parking and servicing of site. Clarification was required.
  - Head of Environmental Services: Requested suite of conditions and informatives to address concerns.
  - Principal Arboricultural Officer: Raised objections due to the impact on trees.
  - Sustainable Engineer: Objections raised.
  - Access Officer: Objections addressed.
  - Urban Design and Conservation, Policy and Renewable Energy officers yet to respond.

**Members' Questions and Comments:**

Mr Owers and Ms Garth answered as follows in response to Members' questions and comments:

- 22) Amenity space, a canteen and games room were provided as recreational facilities for students. The School has a full time recreational programme; an Activities Officer oversees off-site activities. Building facilities were only available for students who had booked and paid for these.
- 23) Internal and external amenity space consisted of the perimeter space under trees, the courtyard and terrace

- 24) The School has 1 on-site Supervisor and 2 on-site Assistants. The School would be happy to accept proctorial control conditions for the application.
- 25) Inspiration for the application design had been taken from its surroundings to set the architectural style and material palette. Design influences also came from building recognised to be well designed, such as Accordia.
- 26) Students aged 16 and over could join the School.
- 27) School teaching hours were:
  - 9:00 am – 5:00 pm Monday to Friday in the winter.
  - 8:45 am – 6:30 pm Monday to Friday in the summer, classes would also be held Monday to Saturday for a 5 week period.
- 28) If the application goes ahead, some increase in deliveries to service the school would be expected for food and laundry. The Highways Authority has not commented on the frequency of service vehicle trips, but no change is expected to the types of vehicles servicing the school.
- 29) Various schemes had been considered to mitigate over dominance of Lady Jane Court, such as a wall between the properties and consideration of a basement in the design. If a storey was removed from the application design, it would reduce the number of students the school could cater for, which would impact on its business viability.
- 30) The School anticipated the application would lead to fewer commuter journeys as more students would be located on-site, instead of travelling to it.
- 31) The application would seek to increase the provision of cycle parking on-site on top of that already provided. The highways Authority were satisfied with current provision, but the School recognised that additional students would require extra facilities.
- 32) The application is not expected to affect on-site drainage, but this will be reviewed.
- 33) The Planning Officer answered in response to Members' questions and comments that the application would require a change of use from category D1 to C2.

### **Summing up by the Applicant's Agent**

- 34) Noted concerns from residents and would aim to take these on board through liaison with city Officers.

### **Summing up by the Petitioners**

- 35) Welcomed the opportunity for liaison between residents and the Applicant.
- 36) Queried the purpose of the terrace if access would be controlled.
- 37) Reiterated concerns previously raised with regards to:
- Traffic flow and parking.
  - Dominant mass and scale of the development.
  - Noise.

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

- 38) The Chair observed the following:
- Notes of the Development Control Forum would be made available to relevant parties.
  - Application to be considered at a future Planning Committee.

The meeting ended at 12.50 pm

**CHAIR**