

PLANNING - PRE-APPLICATION DEVELOPER PRESENTATIONS

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

15/1/Preapp PRE-APPLICATION BRIEFING BY THE DEVELOPER - West's Garage site, 217 Newmarket Road.

Attendees:

Councillors Blencowe, Hipkin, Johnson and Smart

Officers:

Lisa Lamb – Principal Planning Officer (Chair)

Lorraine Casey – Principal Planning Officer

Presenters:

Justin Bainton – Januarys (Planning Agent)

Paul O'Connell (Architect)

Christian Davis - Three Sixty Developments

Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interest:

None

Introduction

The Chair explained the role and purpose of pre-application developer presentations to Councillors and the format of the meeting. She referred to the guidance contained in the agenda.

Presentation by the Developer Team

Justin Bainton provided a brief summary of the proposal, which seeks to redevelop the site for student accommodation (195 bedrooms) and that the scheme has been developed since a previous proposal for student accommodation on the site was refused for 6 reasons. JB explained the agents are aiming to submit an application in December 2015.

Paul O'Connell provided an in-depth explanation of the current scheme and how it has been developed to respond to the previous reasons for refusal. A number of images were shown of the proposals including floor plans, elevations, perspectives, and viewpoints. He referred to the site having two separate contexts – River Lane (2-storey domestic) and Newmarket Road (5-6 storey commercial). The proposed development is intended to act as a bridge in scale of the two contexts, and seeks to split up the mass of the building into two separate blocks. Compared to previous scheme, the building has been set further back from River Lane and reduced in scale to 2-storey adjacent to the western boundary. Proposals to

provide a landscaped treatment to the Newmarket Road/River Lane corner are currently being developed.

POC explained, with regard to the neighbour amenity impacts, that the window positions are designed to prevent overlooking of adjacent dwellings. There is a minimum of 40m from first floor windows in the west elevation and rear of properties in Godestone Road and there are no gable windows directly adjacent the western boundary. A shadow study has been undertaken which purports to demonstrate the development would not give rise to unacceptable shading of adjacent dwellings. In terms of the amenities of occupiers, the current proposal includes increased bedroom widths compared to the previous scheme.

JB advised that, at this stage, the intended occupier of the development would be ARU. He also explained that the proposal was discussed at the Council's Design and Conservation Panel on 7/10/15 and that the response was generally positive (6 amber and 2 greens). A management plan would be submitted as part of the application. It is intended the site would be managed 24 hours and there would be a designated community contact based on site.

Member questions and Developer responses

Cllr Hipkin – does the corner building contain student accommodation?

Paul O'Connell – confirmed not at ground floor, upper levels only

Cllr Johnson – Commended the work done on improving the concept compared to previous scheme but queried:

- Why no attempt to meet Eastern Gate SPD requirement to screen northern side of Newmarket Road. Can buildings be set back to enable additional planting and trees; and
- Can it be confirmed that rear windows on the western end of Newmarket Road building would not overlook Godestone Road properties?

POC/JB advised:

- Have thought about trying to meet SPD requirement but tight on space (particularly in view of pedestrian footpath requirements) and difficult to make it work whilst ensuring scheme would be viable. At D&CP, they felt a compromise/halfway house solution would be the worst approach to adopt.
- Confirmed no overlooking and that obscure glazing to be used.

Cllr Smart – considers River Lane boundary to be very important and commended the way it has been broken up. However, expressed concern regarding visual clutter of bins/bikes etc to River Lane frontage, and also queried if cycle storage provision is convenient enough to be used by residents.

POC responded by stating the scheme is designed so that pedestrians would access the site from Newmarket Road entrance, and cyclists from River Lane. The scheme has been developed in consultation with the Cycling and Walking Officer who expressed a preference for a concentrated storage solution rather than spreading cycle parking along the River Lane frontage. A wall along the River Lane frontage would conceal low-level clutter.

Cllr Hipkin – Queried who would occupy development and whether, if conditions would be imposed to restrict occupancy, whether this could potentially be lifted/varied at a later date.

Lisa Lamb – Confirmed any application would need to be considered against policies in force at the time. Occupation requirements would therefore currently be based on policies contained in the 2006 Local Plan. Impossible to advise if any future application to vary any applicable conditions/S106 agreement relating to occupancy would be acceptable as this would need to be assessed against relevant policies in force at the time.

Cllr Hipkin – Queried if the term ‘student’ could be defined within any consent.

Lisa Lamb – Advised policy being referred to here has not been adopted and reiterated that any application can only be assessed against relevant adopted policies at time of submission.

Cllr Johnson – Referred to previous scheme and that he objected at the time as he felt height related more to opposite side of Newmarket Road than buildings on this side. Can developers explain why the current scheme is more in keeping with the character of this side of the road?

POC – Advised that current proposal seeks to unite the 2 contexts of Newmarket Road and River Lane and to provide a transition in scale between the 2.

Cllr Hipkin – Expressed the view that Newmarket Road has a dual character – commercial 1 side and residential the other. He expressed the view that the proposed scheme is ‘heavy’ in appearance and reminiscent of commercial buildings in the area.

Lisa Lamb – Summarised the discussion and points raised. She thanked everyone for their contributions and for attending, and the meeting then closed.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

CHAIR