

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FORUM

14 June 2017
12.30 - 1.25 pm

Present

Planning Committee Members: Councillors Bird, Blencowe, Hart, Hipkin, Holt, Page-Croft, Nethsingha, Sarris, Smart and Tunnacliffe

Officers:

Principal Planner: Toby Williams

Senior Planner: Sav Patel

Committee Manager: James Goddard

For Applicant:

Tim Dane (Applicant)

Chris Senior (Agent)

For Petitioners:

Quentin Gueranger

Anne-Claire Vergnaud

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

17/3/DCF Introduction by Chair to the Forum

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

17/4/DCF Apologies

No apologies were noted.

17/5/DCF Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

17/6/DCF Application and Petition Details 17/0675/FUL Land to the rear of 1 Fen Road and 179 - 183 Water Lane, Cambridge CB4 1PB

Description: Demolition of existing garages and erection of three x2 bed dwellings with associated landscaping and access arrangements
Applicant: Fallowfield Property Ltd
Agent: PIP Architecture
Lead Petitioner: Resident of Water Street, Cambridge
Case Officer: Sav Patel
Text of Petition:

1) Lack of Privacy

The 2006 Cambridge Local Plan states:

310 Subdivision of Existing Plots

Residential development within the garden area or curtilage of existing properties be permitted if it will have a significant adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy...

The Cambridge Local Plan 2014 proposed submission states:

Policy 50: Residential space standards

In providing appropriate amenity space, developments should:

F. Address issues of overlooking an enclosure, which may otherwise impact detrimentally proposed dwelling and any neighbouring dwellings:

The application conflicts with the local plan as follows:

- a) The ground for back windows of P and P3 are only 17 to 24m from the back windows of 177, 179, 181 and 183 Water Lane.
- b) The garden of P1 has a direct inside Hodge house flats which are only 7m away.

2) Overbearing sense of enclosure

3/10 Subdivision of Existing Plots

Residential development within the garden area or curtilage of existing properties will not be permitted if it will:

a. have a significant adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties through... an overbearing sense of enclosure

The application conflicts with the local plan and follows:

- a) The scheme is still completely out of scale for small enclosed plot and is not the general character of the surrounding. The outlook from opening on the elevation of Water Street dwelling, particularly the first and second floors, will be dramatically altered with the addition of the proposed development.
- b) Proposed buildings are significantly taller than the two most recent precedents of new buildings behind the road frontage: i) the studio behind 163/165 Water Street was limited to 1.5 storeys.
ii) 23a Fen Road was required to be dug 1m below the surface to limit it to 1.5 storeys and prevented overlooking neighbours.

3) Noise nuisance

The 2006 Local Plan states:

3/10 Subdivision of existing plots

Residential development within the garden area or curtilage of existing properties not be permitted will:

- a. *have a significant adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties through... The generation of traffic or noise nuisance;*

The application conflicts with the local plan as follows:

- a) The creation of three new two bed dwellings will generate noise levels in the garden and the parking spaces in disproportion with the scale in the enclosed nature of the plot.

4) Loss of Parking

The 2006 local plan states:

3/10 Subdivision of existing plots

Residential development within the garden area or curtilage of existing properties will:

- b. *provide accessory parking spaces for the proposed and existing properties;*

The application conflicts with the local plan as follows:

it proposes to replace 12 garages with three two-bedroom houses and three parking. Each house will require parking for two cars (possibly if house is let to multiple co-tenants) which creates loss of 15 parking spaces. There is not

space to accommodate 15 extra vehicles on Fallowfield. Nine extra cars are likely to be parked on Fen Road and Water Street. Existing parking on Fen Road and Water Street is regularly fully occupied.

5) Aesthetics out of Character

The 2006 Cambridge Local Plan states:

3/10 Subdivision of Existing Plots

Residential development within the garden area or curtilage of existing properties will not be permitted if it will:

c. Detract from the prevailing character and appearance of the area:

3.29...While new residential accommodation is welcomed, the development of existing gardens or curtilages needs to be handled carefully in order to avoid creating new developments, which adversely affect the amenities of local residents or the character of the area.

Changes that could be made to overcome concerns

We would suggest building fewer, lower dwellings. The scheme should be restricted to the brown field only.

Alternative parking arrangements should be provided nearby for the local residents currently storing their cars in the garages.

Properties should be constructed using materials in sympathy with neighbouring properties.

Case by Applicant's Agent

Chris Senior made the following points:

- 1) Described the current scheme, context of the site and how the current iteration differed from the previous scheme.
- 2) Responded to concerns raised by the Petitioners as follows:
 - a) Lack of Privacy.
 - The distance between the proposed property and existing neighbouring properties met Local Plan guidance. It was similar to other (existing) properties in the area.
 - Trees would provide some screening.
 - No overlooking was expected as properties would be set back.
 - b) Overbearing sense of enclosure.

- Statutory consultees supported the scheme.
 - The design complimented existing buildings in the area, as did scale and massing in the new scheme.
 - The height of the new dwelling was appropriate for a new build, no negative impacted was expected on the character of the area.
- c) Noise nuisance.
- The application would replace garages with houses. It was hard to tell if this would increase noise in the area.
- d) Loss of Parking.
- Information was being sought on whether the (existing) garages were being used. The Applicant was liaising with the Planning Officer to determine this.
 - The maximum number of parking spaces were being applied for through 17/0675/FUL.
- e) Aesthetics out of character.
- Properties in the application matched the boundaries, size and scale of (existing) neighbouring properties. Gardens in this application maybe bigger.

Case by Petitioners

Quentin Gueranger spoke on behalf of local residents. He made the following points:

- 3) 3 planning applications had been made in 13 months. Neighbours objected to all 3.
- 4) Specific objections:
- a) Invasion of privacy due to overlooking from proposed development and lack of screening through trees in gardens.
 - b) Overdevelopment of a small plot.
 - Garden grabbing.
 - Sense of enclosure.
 - Noise concerns.
 - “Bunker feel” to the design.
 - Overbearing.
 - c) Residents wanted fewer, lower buildings.
 - d) Design not in keeping with the character of the area.
 - e) Parking space and traffic issues.
 - Parking provision recently reduced in Water Street.
 - The application would exacerbate existing issues eg Cambridge North Station commuter traffic.

- f) The application would set a precedent for inappropriate development in the area.
- g) Waste water evacuation.
- h) Increased risk of flooding by covering the site with buildings and a sealed driveway.

Case Officer's Comments:

- 5) Summarised the process to date and consultee responses. No objections had been received to date from statutory consultees, subject to planning conditions being met. The Case Officer was awaiting some information from the Drainage Officer.
- 6) The Applicant had submitted revised plans due to concerns over accuracy. 15 July 2017 was the consultation deadline. 15 objections from residents had been received to date. Due to this, the application would go to Planning Committee for consideration.
- 7) The Case Officer would liaise with the Applicant and Petitioners/Objectors prior to writing his report.

Members' Questions and Comments:

The Principal Planner and Case Officer answered as follows in response to Members' questions and comments:

- 8) The application met car parking standards in the Local Plan by providing 1 car parking space for a 2 bedroom dwelling.
- 9) There were no standard distances between habitable rooms and new developments in the adopted Local Plan. Each application would be judged on its merits.

Chris Senior answered as follows in response to Members' questions and comments:

- 10) Would be happy to liaise with the Petitioners on options to mitigate overlooking through screening on the boundary, such as trees or a trellis on the wall/fence. Neighbour support was required for high screening.

Anne-Claire Vergnaud said she would prefer trees to trellises to prevent a higher wall effect and sense of overbearing. She would also prefer houses on the development to be orientated north/west rather than south/east to prevent overlooking. Re-iterated that screening and building orientation were important.

- 11) 70% of the plot being developed was hard standing ie covered with concrete.
- 12) There were national standards on distances between habitable rooms and new developments for first floor windows, but not ground floor ones. First floor windows were obscured in the development due to this.

Quentin Gueranger said that the drive and garages were unsealed.

- 13) Details on why the scheme design was appropriate for a back garden development as opposed to a front of street development were set out in the design report.
 - Materials, scale and massing were inspired by adjoining buildings.
 - The design was contemporary.
 - High quality materials were used.

Summing up by the Applicant's Agent

- 14) Waste water disposal:
 - Historically this fed into a septic tank.
 - A mechanism for the new scheme was to be determined, but a septic tank may not be suitable. Clarification would be sought.
 - A flood risk assessment had been undertaken for the site. Petitioners had stated the site contained a lot of clay, so the impact of this could be checked as drift maps had been used for assessment information. It would be verified if these were up to date. Sustainable Drainage Officer comments were still pending.
- 15) The Agent could ask the Applicant if the scheme scale and massing could be reduced, but could not predict the response.
- 16) Invited petitioners to liaise regarding screening and types of trees to use in landscaping, this may result in the bike store being moved.
- 17) A tracking assessment had been included in the last application to assess parking provision. This could be done again to ensure standards were met.

Summing up by the Petitioners

- 18) This iteration was similar to previous schemes. Neighbours' objections had generally not been taken to account.

- 19) The main issue was lack of privacy, this could be addressed through building re-orientation and screening.
- 20) This was an overdevelopment of site, 3 houses were too many on a small plot

Final Comments of the Chair

- 21) 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, probably August.

The meeting ended at 1.25 pm

CHAIR