

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FORUM**

6 September 2017

1.00 - 2.00 pm

**Councillors Present:** Councillors Blencowe, Hipkin and Smart**Officers Present:**

Principal Planner (Chair): Toby Williams

Senior Planner and Case Officer: Charlotte Burton

Committee Manager: Emily Watts

**For Applicant:**

Domenic Padalino

Jonathan Lindon

Andrew Neophitou

**For Petitioners:**

Richard Burns

Melanie Rein

Jonathon Thomas

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL****17/7/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.

**17/8/DCF Apologies**

No apologies were noted.

**17/9/DCF Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

**17/10/DCF Application and Petition Details: 17/1103/FUL 51-53 Argyle Street, Cambridge, CB1 3LS**

**Description:** Demolition of the existing workshop buildings and the erection of four one bedroom dwellings

**Applicant:** Mr Johnathon Lindon Jawaz Developments LTD  
**Agent:** DPA (London) Ltd  
**Address:** 25 Tudor Hall, Brewery Road, Hoddesdon, EN11  
8FP  
**Lead Petitioner:** Dr. Melanie Rein, Argyle Street, Cambridge  
**Case Officer:** Charlotte Burton

**Text of Petition:**

The residents and owners of neighbouring homes are very concerned about the scale and nature of the proposed development. Concerns include adverse effects related to the following:

**RESULTS OF DEVELOPMENT**

- The layout and density of properties proposed and the large number of potential occupants on a relatively small plot.
- The negative effect on the light levels currently available to immediately adjoining properties.
- the large loss of privacy to neighbours (e.g. siting 2 houses directly against the back of properties with very small gardens on Stockwell Street; the positions of roof lights and a window overlooking these gardens; and the increase in noise owing to access to the proposed rear development ).
- The implications for current party-walls.
- The potential for proposed '1 bedroom properties' to be converted to 2+ bedroom properties.
- No off-street parking provision at all being made for 4 proposed properties.
- The possible long-term implications for proposed sunken gardens, in terms of drainage, sewers, dampness, unhealthy conditions, etc.
- The long-term knock-on effects of building numerous very small properties: especially the likelihood of their attracting temporary rather than stable residents, which would not be conducive to good neighbour relations.
- The implications for rubbish collection.
- Maintenance of the style of neighbouring houses in a conversation area.

**PROCESS**

- Disruption of the livelihood of neighbours who work at home in at least one adjacent property at the front of the plot, and compensation for likely loss of earnings.

- Further aspects of disturbance, including: noise levels, builders parking on yellow lines, etc.
- The impact on neighbours and their properties, of builders' removal of longstanding plants that hide the current structures at the rear of the plot.
- The impact on neighbours and their properties, of damage to the root systems of plants and trees caused by excavation at the rear of the plot.

## GENERAL

- In general, the application does not provide sufficient detail about the proposed construction materials to enable any determination as to whether they will complement the surrounding properties and long established gardens.
- We would also welcome clarification as to the nature of the current contamination on the plot.

### **Changes that could be made to overcome your concerns:**

We are not against development in itself. But we are strongly in favour of a development that is in harmony with the style of the street, and the lives and needs of current residents. This plan in its present form falls far short of fulfilling these requirements.

### **Case by Applicant**

Domenico Padalino made the following points:

- 1) Described the current scheme and gave an overview its design and dimensions using drawings.
- 2) Responded to concerns raised by the Petitioners as follows:
  - The scheme had already been reduced in size and number of properties planned for the plot.
  - Siting on the rear units had been designed to ensure that they did not impinge on the privacy of residents in the surrounding area.
  - Any future conversion of the rear units from one bed dwellings would need to undergo additional planning permission. Offered reassurance that there were no plans to do this.
  - Affirmed that developments with no parking provision were common in Cambridge. On street parking could be a possibility in the future. Cycle provision had been included in the application.
  - The sunken gardens were viewed as a good use of space. Engineers would design the drainage system to ensure no detrimental side effects occurred.

- The small properties were designed as starter homes and not to attract temporary residents.

### **Case by Petitioners**

Richard Burns made the following points:

- 3) Had no objection to a development but wanted only 2 dwellings at the front of the site which would be in keeping with the surrounding area.
- 4) Specific objections:
  - The site was surrounded by 12 houses, all of which would be detrimentally impacted by overdeveloping the site. Residents felt it encroached on their welfare, health and privacy.
  - Stated that the application was an attempt to ruthlessly overdevelop a site for profit.
  - Highlighted the intrusiveness of the development and how little space the rear two properties would have both inside and outside the house.
  - Noise levels would increase because more people would be living on the site and through the use of the ally leading to the rear houses.

Dr Melanie Rein made the following points:

- 5) Evidence showed that increase in noise had serious impacts on mental health.
- 6) The 'workrooms' within the current plans of the rear units could easily be converted into more bedrooms in the future which would exacerbate problems further.
- 7) Neighbours had not been consulted on this application. Research from other countries suggested that where neighbours had been consulted in new developments the outcome had been more successful and harmonious.
- 8) Sited errors in the application.

Jonathon Thomas made the following points:

- 9) Outlined the proximity of the rear dwellings to his garden. He worked from home in an office in his garden and worried about:
  - Noise levels
  - Loss of privacy
  - What impact the roof lights could have on his garden.
- 10) Questioned the materials used in the plans.

11) The exterior of the site had previously been covered by established foliage but would now be bare brick and unsightly.

### **Case by Ward Councillors**

12) Councillor Baigent was unable to attend the meeting but wanted to speak as a Ward Councillor on behalf of local residents. He made the following points in a written statement which was read out to the Forum:

'I am Dave Baigent the ward Councillor for Romsey. I have been giving support to the people in the Argyle Street area who are going to be badly affected by the current planning application.

Other council business prevents me from attending this meeting, but I and the other councillors in the ward and the MP believe that the residents have a very real point - the proposal to put four 'homes' on this site is a very clear case of overdevelopment.

I do hope that this forum today provides an opportunity for the developer and the representatives of the local population to fully consider a situation that will enhance the area - a change from four to two houses.'

### **Case Officer's Comments:**

13) Summarised that the consultation had expired 43 objectors and 4 supporters made representations. The application was due to come to Planning Committee on 1 November at the earliest.

14) The applicant had suggested amendments in response to the objections.

15) The Case Officer would liaise with the Applicant and Petitioners/Objectors prior to writing her report.

### **Members' Questions and Comments:**

The Applicant answered as follows in response to Members' questions and comments:

16) The large existing commercial unit at the rear of the site would be demolished and the two new units would follow its original footprint so the structure size would be no different. However, with the additional two units at the front of the site there would be more overall development than at present.

17) The alley way leading to the rear units would have a wall on one side running along the perimeter of the site. The roofs of the rear units had an incline which reached 300mm higher in the centre of the site.

18) The highest point of the rear units was 3.8m from the existing floor height.

19) The amenity space for the front units was approximately 10 metres squared. The amenity space for the rear units was approximately 15 metres squared.

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

20) The existing building had B1C industrial use class; any other potential use for the structure would be explored further in the officer's report.

21) The proposed floor level would change so the exact height of the rear unit could not be confirmed at present. This would be confirmed prior to committee.

### **Summing up by the Applicant**

22) Reiterated how they had worked closely with the Planning Officer to design an application which accorded with existing policy and was a good use of space to replace a commercial site.

23) Affirmed that the development was not intrusive and felt that it would not create any further noise than what is currently present.

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

24) Reiterated that local residents were supportive of a development but only wanted two units at the front of the site so that it was in keeping with the surrounding area.

25) Reiterated concerns previously raised with regards to:

- Increased noise
- Overdevelopment and changing the character of the area
- Errors in the application

26) The floor level of the rear units would be sunk into the ground by 1 meter which would impact on drainage and water accumulation.

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

27) The Chair observed the following:

- The Forum had been useful to hear the views of both parties.
- At present he was unsure of the scope for change
- Confirmed that the case officer would report to both parties once more information was available.

The meeting ended at 2.00 pm

**CHAIR**