

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FORUM**

11 October 2017

1.00 - 2.15 pm

**Present:**

Councillors: Blencowe, Hipkin, Holt, Sarris, Smart and Tunnacliffe

**Officers:**

City Development Manager: Sarah Dyer

Principal Planner Nigel Blazeby

Committee Manager: Emly Watts

**For Applicant:**

Peter McKeown (Agent)

Michael McKay (on behalf of the Agent)

Nick Phillips (on behalf of the Agent)

**For Petitioners:**

Philip Kratz

Valérie Lechene

Wendy Blythe

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL****17/11/DCF Introduction by Chair to the Forum**

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

**17/12/DCF Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Hart and Nestingha

**17/13/DCF Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were made.

**17/14/DCF 17/1372/FUL - 291 Hills Road**

**Description:** Residential development containing 15 flats comprising 10 2bed units and 5 1bed units, along with access, car parking and associated

landscaping following the demolition of the existing building.

**Applicant:** C/O Agent

**Agent:** Carter Jonas LLP

**Lead Petitioner:** Resident of 289 Hills Road Cambridge, CB2 8RP

**Case Officer:** Charlotte Burton

**Text of Petition:**

The Hills Road Area Residents Association, the Queen Edith's Way Residents Association and many local residents are concerned about the proposal to demolish a fine Edwardian home and replace it with a block of 15 flats. We consider that the proposal is at odds with other houses on Hills Road and Queen Edith's Way, and has a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the locality, due to its scale massing and appearance. We are also concerned about (A) overlooking and loss of privacy from windows, balconies and roof gardens onto neighbouring properties. (B) The overbearing and domineering effect of the proposed building. (C) The proximity to the very busy Hills Road/ Queen Edith's Way/ Long Road junction and the impact on the convenience on other road users by reason of traffic congestion. (D) The further provision of 'investment style luxury apartments' when there is an unmet need for both genuine family homes and affordable housing for workers at the nearby Biomedical Campus and local schools.

**Case by Applicant**

Peter McKeown made the following points:

- 1) Gibson Development submitted the application. The company had a long history of successful building developments in Cambridge.
- 2) The Applicant had sought pre-application advice from City Council Officers, and had addressed some issues from the consultation responses.
- 3) The development was supported by the Local Plan and was situated outside the Conservation Area. Trees on the site had been considered and measures taken to avoid root damage.
- 4) The new development had similar proportions to the existing dwelling. There was more massing from the Hills Road aspect but this was mitigated from the road by tree coverage.
- 5) Stated that there was no overshadowing.
- 6) Referred to potential for overlooking, the windows were located in a similar position to the existing dwelling and trees provided natural screens to any direct view of surrounding properties.
- 7) Cycle storage and access had been amended after receiving comments from the Cycling Officer.
- 8) The building had a contemporary design like many new developments in the area so would not dominate the townscape.

9) There was a demand for the proposed accommodation.

### **Case by Petitioners**

Philip Kratz spoke on behalf of local residents. He made the following points:

10) With reference to the NPPF guidelines on Previously Developed Land (PDL) the proposals did not follow the footprint of the exiting property and would dominate the area.

11) Highways Officers, the Tree Officer and Cycle Officer had all found issues with the development so far.

12) Access would cause convenience issues. Calculations show that with a minimum of 15 people living on the site over 100 anticipated additional journeys per day would be generated. It would also contribute to vehicle congestion.

13) The development would overlook surrounding residents. This was highlighted by the intention to install a screen around specific windows which sat at a 45 degree angle.

14) Although many of the surrounding trees had been protected during the initial stages of the development, there would inevitably be calls from new residents to trim, chop or fell the larger trees in the future.

15) The neighbour at number 289 and the residential annex in its garden would suffer from a loss of light and disturbance.

16) Overdevelopment would have a detrimental environmental impact. The area was popular with bats, birds and small animals.

17) The proposal did not adhere to NPPF Government guidelines which advised that the area should be developed in accordance with surrounding design.

18) The development also failed to comply with section 3.10 of the current Local Plan and section 5.2 of the emerging Local Plan.

19) There should be provision for affordable housing on the site.

Wendy Blythe spoke on behalf of local residents. She made the following points:

20) 90 objections had been submitted in response to the application.

21) The plans contravened planning policy.

22) Similar applications to this had been refused in the past. The overall design was not in keeping with the character and surroundings of the area.

23) The local community wanted to preserve and maintain the tree lined avenue on Hills Road.

24) Many of the dwellings would be purchased by overseas investors and kept empty rather than providing accommodation for local residents.

25) No provision had been made for affordable/social housing.

26) Employees of Addenbrooke's needed more affordable housing; they were struggling to recruit as a result.

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

27) The application was received on 8 August 2017 and the neighbours were subsequently notified.

28) 86 representations had been received; all of them were in objection to the proposals. Reasons for the objections covered:

- Principle design
- Overdevelopment and out of scale for the site
- No provision for social housing
- Removal of trees
- Disturbance
- Highways issues and access
- Damage to biodiversity.

29) Policy consultations had been undertaken with statutory consultees:

- Highways Development Management queried issues related to parking and set conditions.
- Environmental Health, suggested conditions.
- Sustainability Officer, set conditions
- Urban Design Officer, stated that the design was unacceptable
- Tree Officer, did not fully support the proposals
- Anglian Water, reported concerns about surface water
- Landscape Team, reported that it was too early for them to comment.
- Environment Agency, set conditions which they want responses to.

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

Members raised the following questions:

30) Displayed surprise at the Agent's comment that the application 'was likely to be acceptable'. Stated that this outcome should not be presumed because it was a committee decision.

31) Highlighted that the petitioners appeared to have an unrealistic view of the powers held by the committee and wanted to manage these expectations.

- 32) Asked what was the reasoning behind the applicant's approach after the comments made by the Urban Design Team?
- 33) Queried the available external amenity space. There appeared to be parking and pathways but not much green useable space.
- 34) Asked for clarification from Philip Kratz about his reference to trip generation and how he reached a figure of over 100 journeys per day?
- 35) Queried disabled and cycle access to the basement?
- 36) Asserted that underground cycle access was not always popular. Asked if Sheffield stands could be built at surface level?

The Applicant's Agent answered as follows in response to Members' questions and comment:

- 37) Affirmed that there were a range of different developments and styles of build in the area so there did not seem to be a reason to conform to a particular style for this development. The roof was a contemporary and modern interpretation of a pitched roof. After the comments made by the Urban Design Team the materials had been given further consideration.
- 38) There were sustainable aspects to the proposals, recess balconies, green flat roofs.
- 39) Highlighted that each unit had a recess balcony or terrace which was at least 1.5m deep. The 21 hectares of land surrounding the property was designated communal space which would be landscaped appropriately.
- 40) Outlined that the current access from Hills Road would be closed off to cars but still useable by pedestrians and cyclists. The vehicle access would be via Queen Edith's Way which was deemed acceptable. 14 parking spaces would be provided in the basement with a further two on ground level. The ground level spaces would encompass a visitor and a disabled space.
- 41) All cycle parking provision was in the basement after advice from the Cycling Officer. This could be accessed via steps or a ramp.
- 42) The internal lift serviced all floors enabling disabled access throughout.
- 43) Plans to install visitor cycle parking outside near the doorway could be reinstated.

Philip Kratz confirmed that the standard anticipated trip generation per resident per day was 6 to 7 trips (this is through any method of movement or transport).

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

44) Re-iterated:

- The proposals did adhere to current planning policy.
- The development provided housing on a central arterial route.

- The development would be sustainable and sympathetic which gave due regard to the character of the area and allowed for safe access.

**Summing up by the Petitioners**

45) Reiterated local residents were deeply unhappy with the proposals and the overdevelopment of the site.

46) Reiterated concerns previously raised with regards to:

- Garden space was inadequate
- Long-term detrimental impact to biodiversity
- Petitioners were not adverse to regeneration but would like it to be in keeping with its surroundings by potentially developing the existing building.

The meeting ended at 2.15 pm

**CHAIR**