

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FORUM

17 January 2018
10.00 - 11.30 am

Present: Councillors Blencowe Hipkin, Holt, Smart.

Other Officers Present: Councillor Johnson

Officers:

Principal Planner: Toby Williams
Senior Planner: Michael Hammond
Committee Manager: Emily Watts

For Applicant:

Matt Hare (Agent)
Simon Dazeley (Agent)
James Money (Architect)

For Petitioners:

Lynette Gilbert
Richard Newman
Al Hanagan

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

18/1/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.

18/2/DCF Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Tunnacliffe and Sarris.

18/3/DCF Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

18/4/DCF 17/1815/FUL 143-147 Newmarket Road and 149 Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8HA

Description: Demolition of No.149 Newmarket Road and existing garage structures, the erection of new buildings producing a total of 12 residential units, the formation of a cafe space (use class A3) on the ground floor of Logic House, brick and tile tinting to Logic House and associated infrastructure and works.

Applicant: Agent

Agent: Mr Matt Hare, Carter Jonas LLP

Lead Petitioner: Resident of 47 Riverside, Cambridge, CB5 8HN

Case Officer: Michael Hammond

Text of Petition:

1. Block B of the development would overshadow and visually dominate Beche Road properties to the north to an unacceptable degree, due to its height (exacerbated by a 3.3m difference in ground heights) and its placement hard against the southern boundary of its site. The balconies would directly overlook Beche Road gardens, leading to an unacceptable loss of privacy. These impacts would be contrary to policies 3/4, 3/7 and 3/12 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2006 and government guidance on good design in Section 7 of the National Planning Policy.
2. In their current form, the proposals would prevent the proper planning of the area by making it impossible to develop the adjacent Abbey Church site in any way, contrary to policy 3/6 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2006. There is strong local support for the stated intentions of Christ Church to develop the site in a low level and sensitive way to fund essential repairs and maintenance, and to improve community facilities. These proposals were first discussed with the City Council in October 2016, communicated to residents in December 2016 and a detailed pre-application submitted to the City Council in February 2017.
3. The loss of the local Post Office is unnecessary, since the proposed retail space within a refurbished Logic House could be used for this rather than a cafe. Closing the Post Office would remove a valued facility used by Abbey and Petersfield residents to meet their day to day needs, contrary to Para 70 of the National Planning Policy Framework. There are already multiple cafes nearby, so the proposal to add another seems illogical and likely to lead to a future change of use.

Case by Applicant

Matt Hare and James Money made the following points:

- 1) Highlighted that the application had been formally amended since its original submission. 149 Newmarket Road was now due to be demolished to erect 11 residential elements. A café would fill the ground floor which would cosmetically enhance the building.

- 2) Outlined a need to maintain Logic House, the building would be preserved and enhanced.
- 3) Referred to policy 3:10 of the Cambridge Local Plan and stated that although there would be some impact on properties on Beche Road, it would not be significant. Light studies confirmed that the gardens would still receive the requirement of 2 hours of sun in March and would not be impacted in summer which was acceptable under BRE guidance.
- 4) Existing vegetation on the edge of the site would be removed which would help alleviate any shadowing impact.
- 5) A 1.7m high screen would be installed to prevent overlooking; the visual specialist was content with these plans.
- 6) The application was not contrary to policy 3:6 of the Cambridge Local Plan, due consideration had been given to future development on the church site.
- 7) Expressed interest in meeting with the church for a discussion on a more co-ordinated approach.
- 8) Referred to the objections against the loss of the Post Office at the current site. Highlighted that the current tenants lease was due to expire so they would be moving out regardless of the development plans.
- 9) A café had been proposed to occupy the ground floor unit after a request was made from the tenants of Logic House.

Case by Petitioners

Lynette Gilbert spoke on behalf of local residents. She made the following points:

- 10) Highlighted that the application site was part of the Conservation Area.
- 11) The drop in land level between the development site and the gardens on Beche Road was significant which exacerbates the overbearing height of the building. The impact was highlighted with images taken from a Beche Road garden.
- 12) Stated that the blocky design of the building was not very attractive.
- 13) Policy 3:10 of the Cambridge Local Plan should be applied for garden grabbing, causing a significant adverse impact.
- 14) The development would adversely impact plans to build on the adjacent church site; it would be only 2/3 metres away.
- 15) The three cabins planned for the church site had been consulted on for the past 18 months with local residents. The community fully supported the plans to build eco-friendly dwellings with landscaped gardens. The income from the project would support facilities provided by the church.
- 16) The applicant in this development had not undertaken any consultation with the local community.
- 17) Outlined the alternative options proposed by the petitioners.

Case Officer's Comments:

18) Details regarding the application were sent to neighbouring properties on 19 November 2017.

19) The application received approximately 24 objections which covered a range of impacts.

20) Policy consultations had been undertaken with statutory consultees. The comments on the Planning Policy Team were read out. No objections had been raised from key consultees, subject to further considerations and conditions.

21) Confirmed that the application was likely to come before the Planning Committee in March 2018.

Case by Ward Councillor:

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

22) He hoped that both the applicant and Church could have a discussion on the plans to see if some issues could be mutually overcome.

23) The Conservation Area needed to be more thoroughly considered.

24) The impact on residents of Beche Road would be adverse.

25) The loss of the Post Office would be detrimental to the community. Suggested that there should be a condition in place to replace the existing Post Office with another one.

Members' Questions and Comments:

Members raised the following questions:

26) Queried the status of the discussion, asked whether this meeting facilitated a negotiation to alter the proposals or whether the application was unchangeable.

27) It appeared that no coordination between the Applicant and the church had taken place. They had a mutual interest to agree a proposal which considered one another. Asked what degree of discussion or attempts had been made and encouraged further effort in this area.

28) Asked if the Applicant's proposals went ahead, would this have an impact on the outcome of the Church's application being granted.

29) Queried whether this development would have any impact on future development on Newmarket Road.

30) Referred to the shadow study and requested more detail on the impact for Beche Road residents.

31) Made reference to a photograph taken by the Petitioner which showed the view of the development from neighbouring gardens. Asked whether this was taken from the most impacted property or whether they all had this view.

32) Requested more information on vehicular access to the development.

- 33) Asked what plans were in place for the court yard in the centre of the development and who would maintain the area.
- 34) Queried why the application for the ground floor unit was for A1 use and not A3.
- 35) Requested confirmation that the units within the new development would only be for residential. Raised concern over the amount of amenity space for the residents.
- 36) Expressed concern over the potential over development of the area.

Referring to the Church's prospective planning application, the Principal Planner stated that with a 2/3 story building on its northern boundary there would be limitations to daylight and enclosure, Officers would have to consider these implications thoroughly.

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

- 37) Confirmed that the application could still be changed at this stage. Discussions were currently underway with legal officers to understand how to fairly process and treat the dual applications.
- 38) Confirmed that the Highways Authority did not have any objections to the development.
- 39) Affirmed that there was a 3.3 metre drop in land level between the development and neighbouring properties. The outcome of the shadow study adhered to the BRE guidance.
- 40) Stated that there was no proposal to demolish Logic House, the lawful use of the land was restricted to D1 use. Under D1 use, policy 5:11 of the Cambridge Local Plan, the use of the building was protected. Logic House contained an active D1 tenant.

Lynette Gilbert confirmed that she had not selected the worst affected property to take the photograph from; many further down Beche Road were be more heavily impacted.

Matt Hare, James Money and Simon Davies answered as follows in response to Members' questions and comments:

- 41) No personal discussion had taken place with the Church but their client had an existing relationship. A series of meetings had been arranged but due to other circumstances they had never gone ahead.
- 42) They were very willing to meet with representatives of the Church to discuss plans further.
- 43) Confirmed that the shadow analysis accounted for the changing land levels so it was accurate.

44) Outlined plans for the central court yard:

- A green plant border around the parameter.
- The rear of Logic House would be screened.
- Two parking spaces, one of which would be disabled.
- A cycle store area.
- The bins would be fully enclosed.
- The communal area would be independently managed either by a management company or a freehold agreement.

45) Highlighted that an A1 application had been submitted for the cafe because the sitting tenant in Logic House had specifically requested it due to current demand.

46) Affirmed that the dwellings would be for residential purposes only. Each individual unit would have its own enclosed amenity space such as a balcony.

Summing up by the Applicant's Agent

Re-iterated:

47) The three principle raised by the Petitioners would be thoroughly considered.

48) An attempt to enhance the proposals would be undertaken.

49) Referred to policy 3:6 of the Cambridge Local Plan, stated that they did not believe the development would hinder the Church's plans to develop. They were open to discussion with the Church.

50) Reaffirmed that their client wanted to support their tenant by providing a café and not use the space for retail use.

Summing up by the Petitioners

Reiterated:

51) Residents would support a coordinated approach.

52) Maintained concerns about the overbearing nature of the development and the impact on the church.

Final Comments of the Chair

Notes of the Development Control Forum would be made available to relevant parties.

The meeting ended at 11.30 am

CHAIR