

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FORUM
Notes of Meeting14 April 2010
11.30 am - 12.35 pm**Present:**

For Applicant	For Petitioners
Michael Liverman (Agent)	Phil Coates (Resident)
	Tom Culver (Resident)
	Islay Dring (Resident)

Members of the Planning Committee

Councillors Al Bander, Baker, Blair, Blencowe, Dryden, Stuart and Zmura.

Other Members in attendance

Councillor Boyce.

Officers

John Summers (Head of Development Services - Chair), Peter Carter (Principal Development Control Manager – acting as Planning Officer) and James Goddard (Committee Manager).

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**1 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor	Interest
Blair	Personal – Attended Residents Association meeting where application was discussed.
Blencowe	Personal – Attended Anglia Ruskin University when it was a polytechnic.

2 Application and Petition Details**Application No:** 10/0082/FUL**Site Address:** 73 Humberstone Road, Cambridge

Description: Demolition of existing buildings and erection of new three and four storey student accommodation of 13 studios and 21 one bed self-contained units with ancillary facilities

Applicant: Good Cambridge Pubs Ltd

Agent: Michael Liverman

Lead Petitioner: Islay Dring

Case Officer: Catherine Linford

Text of Petition

The local residents hold a range of opinions on the planned development, from some holding outright in-principle objections to others who do not object to the creation of new student accommodation but would like to see the development scaled back. All the signatories to this petition would welcome the opportunity for a constructive and face-to-face discussion.

Concerns expressed at a recent meeting of residents include:

- The loss of a pub and local amenity
- The loss of a period property in a conservation area
- Increasing traffic and noise from over 34 new residents in a street
- Increased pressure on parking facilities
- Loss of light into some properties

Case by Applicant

Michael Liverman made the following points:

1) Reference was made to the accompanying presentation on the proposed development:

- The site is on the edge of the Conservation Area (CA) with a petrol filling station opposite – it is the place where the CA breaks down – something demonstrated by the existing car park, which is unattractive and creates pressure for movements along Humberstone Road.
- The existing building is not distinguished, and has few original features left and ugly bollards; old does not mean good
- The proposal promotes a traditional form with traditional detailing following the street lines, with rooms mainly outward facing
- Thirty four student units are proposed.
- There will be legal restrictions on occupation and car ownership.
- Sympathetic design to neighbours (will echo local features) using traditional materials.
- Improved townscape.

- The new development will be bigger than the existing building, but will have more green space on site.
- Access from Humberstone Road with rear parking as before.

Case by Petitioners

Phil Coates, Tom Culver and Islay Dring spoke as local residents and raised concerns about the development in their presentation. They made the following points:

2) Replacement of unique period property in a conservation area with an incongruous building:

- The Fleur Pub is an integral part of the Conservation Area.
- The proposed design is not in keeping with the existing building. The new building mass is 150% the size of the pub.

3) Increased noise, traffic and parking pressure:

- On street parking is barely adequate currently.
- If additional dwellings are added to the current eighty, this will impact on traffic flow through the narrow surrounding streets. This raises safety concerns.

4) The community are strongly opposed to the development on the grounds of:

- The demolition of a unique period property in a conservation area.
- The over development of the site.
- The associated increased parking pressure.
- Loss of a local amenity.
- Loss of a local employer – this is the only pub in the area.

Case Officer's comments:

5) Plans for the development have been received and consultation undertaken with local residents. From this, responses have been received raising the following concerns:

- Loss of period pub/facilities.
- Density.
- Out of scale.
- Traffic issues/lack of parking.
- Loss of light.
- Noise.
- Impact on Conservation Area.
- Remoteness of student dwellings from a higher education institution.

6) Policy consultations have been undertaken with:

- Highways Agency - no comment.
- Environmental Health – raised the issue of noise impact.

- Conservation Team – object due to the loss of building and impact on the Conservation Area.

Members' questions and comments:

7) Clarification was sought concerning the period of occupancy by students in the proposed thirty four units.

Michael Liverman said the units are let for fifty one weeks of the year and are expected to be empty during the holidays due to Anglia Ruskin University's lease agreement. Two car parking spaces have been allocated, one for disabled parking and one for operational needs, deliveries etc.

8) Clarification was sought concerning demolition consent for the Conservation Area.

Peter Carter confirmed that consent was required to undertake demolition in the Conservation Area, and that an application has been made. He noted Councillors request for both applications to be reported to Committee, and that the justification for demolition is adequate.

9) Clarification was sought on the Agent's response to contextual issues raised by the Petitioners, specifically around height, massing, the more extensive footprint and where the building has taken its form from.

Michael Liverman said:

- The application uses similar materials, colour and form to neighbouring properties to reflect the general design of the area; the massing is broken down by use of different materials.
- The proposed building is bigger and higher than the existing pub, but the design is being refined with the Council's Conservation Team. The height is appropriate for the intended usage. Officers have expressed no concern concerning the building mass. The Applicant is open to discussion as to whether three or four stories are more appropriate.

10) Clarification was sought on which institution was sponsoring the development and whether there would be proctorial control.

Michael Liverman said one institution does not sponsor the development. Legal requirements in leases will control parking, and the intention is to fully comply with policy 7/10 of the Cambridge Local Plan. A traffic report modelling theoretical data was undertaken three months ago.

Councillor Blencowe asked if there is a policy objection to student accommodation of itself. The answer was no, subject to restrictions on who occupies. It was stated that local residents viewed Montague Lodge (a similar development) as a well-managed property with no parking issues, but with heavy taxi use.

11) Clarification was sought on relevant council policies concerning change of building use. Also how much consideration should be given to the re-use of the building to retain it as the main building in the development.

Peter Carter answered that public houses are not protected as community facilities in the Cambridge Local Plan 2006.

Michael Liverman stated that he is in discussion with the Conservation Team to consider retaining or reusing the existing building with an extension as part of the design. Another option is to demolish the pub and replacing with another building.

12) Clarification was sought on density and appropriateness of building height.

Members referred to the Agent's previous comments and felt it useful to explore the possibility of reducing the number of building storeys.

Michael Liverman said that student accommodation is treated as a commercial development not a dwelling, so it is not covered by density dwelling requirements. He reiterated that height is an issue under consideration and could be affected by today's Development Control Forum comments and the response by the Conservation Team to the application to demolish the current building.

Councillors asked that the Planning Officer's report deal with the issue of density and adequacy of the amenity space being provided, as the nearest amenity space is across a very busy highway.

13) Clarification was sought on cycle parking and bin storage arrangements.

Michael Liverman said that covered bicycle parking was allocated on the ratio of two spaces per three rooms. Adequate bin storage was provided for waste and recycling facilities.

14) Clarification was sought on whether the redevelopment would go ahead even if the Fleur Pub remained a viable business.

Michael Liverman answered that this was a decision for the pub owner. However, there was a real possibility that the pub will close in the autumn anyway

15) Clarification was sought of the petitioners as to the changes required to the design in order for it to be acceptable to them.

The Petitioners felt that they were not in a position to answer this without knowing much more; Mr Liverman suggested a wide range of possibilities in a very general way. Meeting delegates did not think they could represent all residents' views at the Development Control Forum, but would consider discussing compromises outside of the meeting.

Councillor Boyce suggested feedback from residents indicated that more of the local residents consider that the current building should be retained; a smaller number of residents would be happier if the size was reduced significantly.

Councillor Blair queried whether consideration had been given to using two buildings or some other means of change to reduce/break up the mass.

Summing Up by the Applicant

16) Can we meet the tests for demolition? Presently Conservation say no. We need to meet the tests; if the demolition application is unsuccessful, the Agent may appeal or may withdraw the application and submit new plans.

17) The Applicant is willing to be flexible concerning size and scale. This will be affected by the demolition application and if a new scheme is required because the current application is unsuccessful.

Summing Up by the Petitioners

18) Reiterated concerns previously raised with regards to:

- Expected 150% increase in the number of residences in the road if the scheme goes ahead.
- The application is a new build in a road of established family houses.
- Loss of local amenity.

Final Comments of the Chair

19) The Chair observed the following:

- Notes of the Development Control Forum will be circulated to relevant parties.

- Application to be considered at a future Planning Committee.

The meeting ended at 12.35 pm

CHAIR