

PLANNING - PRE-APPLICATION DEVELOPER PRESENTATION

**Pre-application developer presentation to Councillors:
Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a new Travelodge Hotel,
180-190 Newmarket Road**

Notes of Meeting held on 19 July 2010 at 5.00pm in The Guildhall

Attendees:

Councillors Hipkin, Stuart, Walker, Saunders, Wright, Znajek, Blair, Brown, Rosensteil, Zmura, Pogonowski, Nimmo-Smith

Officers:

John Summers – Head of Development Services (Chair)
Sarah Dyer – Development Control Manager.

Presenters:

Colin Brown – Januarys (Planning Agent)
Justin Bainton – Januarys (Planning Agent)
Neil Ruffles – Barber, Casanovas, Ruffles (Architect)
Patrick Llanaway – Llanaway Associates (Transport Consultants)
Malcolm McPherson – Eastern Gate Properties Limited (Owner)

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

1 Apologies

None

2 Declarations of Interest

None

3 Pre-Application Presentation by the Developer - Eastern Gate Properties Limited

Introduction

The Chair explained the role and purpose of pre-application developer presentations to Councillors and the format of the meeting. He referred to the guidance contained in the agenda.

Presentation by the Developer Team

Colin Brown explained the history of the site and the planning policy context. He referred to the site allocation in the Cambridge Local Plan 2006 for a mixed use development, to the previous reserved matters office permission on the site granted in 2006 (valid until March 2011), and to the recent Travelodge hotel proposals. An appeal into the Council's refusal of the second hotel application in February 2010 had now been withdrawn and his client now wished to discuss a revised proposal for the site that would overcome previous concerns. He outlined the key issues that he felt needed to be addressed in relation to the previous reasons for refusal.

Patrick Llanaway said new traffic surveys had been undertaken at Travelodge sites in Bath and Brighton, sites that had similar characteristics to the Newmarket Road site. The profile of trip arrivals/departures at the Bath site is considered to be more representative of the Cambridge site. Comparative trip arrival/departure information was shown, which he felt indicated that there would be no undue traffic impacts from the Travelodge hotel at the Cambridge site.

Neil Ruffles explained the key site characteristics and the proposed design changes, which he felt were significant whilst retaining some of the original thinking. A number of images were shown of the proposals including floor plans, cross-sections, elevations, shadowing, perspectives, and viewpoints. The main design changes are: removal of top floor; internal space changes to achieve same number of rooms; building to be timber framed and not of a pod design; new orthogonal design to Newmarket Road to add interest, which also released internal space; softer, semi-circular, elevation to Coldhams Lane; different palette of external materials – ground, first and second floors brick (as at 35 Parkside), top two floors cedar cladding; new canopied entrance; south elevation, potential for trellising and climbing plants; smaller site coverage by building (38%) compared to the previous office approval (48%); stronger landscaped boulevard to Newmarket Road; redesigned canopy entrance; single storey only extension at rear, taking advantage of natural light; ramp to underground car park, all cars parked underground; access officer and police

comments taken on board; trees retained along Harvest Way; 2 metre high plant space on rooftop; maximise opportunities for renewable energy; west elevation, modest escape stair.

Member questions and Developer responses

Cllr Walker: Seems more pleasing than the previous scheme. Visual appearance important because of impact on streetscape and the Council's wish to improve the planning of the area. Would like the parking arrangements to be clarified. Will it all be underground?

Cllr Dixon: The shadowing diagrams need to be looked at carefully.

Cllr Pogonowski: The Council's Eastern Gate visioning document has just been released and a proposal for a new crossing from Godesdone Road. Has the impact of this been considered?

Neil Ruffles: All the cars will be underground and out of site. They will only be visible down the ramp and through the ventilation slots. Not aware of the proposal for the crossing but would look at any implications.

Colin Brown: Have only just become aware of document. Will review it and respond to consultation.

Cllr Wright: Concern that traffic figures underestimate the impact on traffic flows. Will there be a traffic reduction? Question whether the public will sit out on public realm improvements to Newmarket Road.

Cllr Hipkin: Asked whether Eastern Corridor Area Transport Plan contributions would be for general or specific use.

Cllr Brown: Commented on importance of views from New Street and allotments.

Neil Ruffles: Agree that people will not want to sit out in front of Newmarket Road. However, it is a transition point /refuge area that would be well used. The landscaping proposals would augment the existing planting.

Colin Brown: We can produce a viewpoint sketch from New Street.

Patrick Llanaway: Interested in looking further at times when traffic would be busiest and finding ways of dealing with that. The proposal will generate more traffic in the evening than the previous office scheme and there will be a higher proportion of taxis. We need to look at how that can be actively managed to mitigate the impact. We are allocating monies towards improvements to Newmarket Road, making land available for the bus lane, improving the junction with Coldhams Lane, and the works to the front will generally improve the transport corridor, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. We will also have an active travel management plan for guests and staff to seek to influence their behaviour about travel and to manage expectations.

Cllr Nimmo-Smith: Asked for pavement dimensions around into Coldhams Lane.

Neil Ruffles: About 5 metres.

Cllr Blair: Struck by the proposal to plant generous trees on Newmarket Road frontage. Appears to be a different and more interesting design. Some concern that maturity of trees will not be immediate. Asked about proposals for renewable energy and public art.

Neil Ruffles: Committed to use of renewables. Will all be provided on the roof in the form of solar panels, will exceed the 10% policy requirement.

Colin Brown: Fully aware of the Council's policy and requirements on public art. Will deal with this as part of the planning application.

Cllr Hipkin: Queried the provision of the public realm, bus lay-by, pedestrian and cycle route.

Neil Ruffles: It would be a 100 metre x 10 metre space, with adequate space for people to move around. The bus lane would be outside that.

Patrick Llanaway: The proposal is to improve the transport corridor, with bus lane/cycleway.

Cllr Znajek: Asked about the profile of the hotel customers, where they would come from and what would they do.

Colin Brown: They would be from a wide cross section. It is unlikely that any of the ancillary facilities (e.g. the restaurant) would be attractions in themselves. Conferences are not envisaged.

Cllr Wright: Concerned about the possibility of 'fortress' architecture. Asked for a reminder about the height proposed. Asked for clarification about accessibility of facilities to the public.

Cllr Walker: Asked about taxi access. Questioned desirability of access to the car park from the rear and traffic movements through a residential area.

Cllr Pogonowski: Asked for information about numbers of people who book on line; by how much would the renewable energy exceed 10%; is grey water recycling envisaged.

Neil Ruffles: Clarified heights. People would not be aware of the solar panels at close distance.

Colin Brown: The restaurant would be mainly used by guests, but would not preclude use by others.

Patrick Llanaway: The Highway Authority wish to limit direct access off Newmarket Road and recommend access from Harvest Way. Some taxis would use Newmarket Road. Unsure about numbers that book on line, but can find out.

Neil Ruffles: Cannot be precise at this stage about how far the renewables would be in excess of 10%. Will review opportunities for water recycling.

Cllr Pogonowski: Asked whether the bar would be available to local residents.

Colin Brown: The bar will be accessible to the general public

The meeting then closed. The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and for attending.