

PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING – 27th June 2012

Amendment/De-brief Sheet

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

CIRCULATION: First

ITEM: APPLICATION REF: 12/0489/FUL

Location: Former Cambridge College For Further Education, 23 Young Street

Target Date: 17.07.2012

To Note:

-The Council's Access Officer has provided further comments. The officer accepts that the applicants have now addressed most of the concerns. The only outstanding issue remains improved access to the raked seating in the auditorium, which the officer confirms is desirable rather than essential. This constitutes an internal access issue that is covered by Part M of the Building Regulations

-The Council's Cycling and Walking officer has raised no objection to the revised plans. The officer seeks for the ramped access to be designed for ease of use for cyclists. The detail of the access is covered by condition.

Amendments To Text: None

Pre-Committee Amendments to Recommendation: None

DECISION:

CIRCULATION: First

ITEM: APPLICATION REF: 12/0321/FUL

Location: 190 - 192 Histon Road

Target Date: 08.06.2012

To Note: Nothing

Amendments To Text: None

Pre-Committee Amendments to Recommendation: None

DECISION:

CIRCULATION: First

ITEM: APPLICATION REF: 11/0338/FUL

Location: Intercell House, 1 Coldhams Lane

Target Date: 28.07.2011

To Note:

1. Please note that the notes of the Transport Briefing on 13th June 2012 are attached to the amendment sheet.
2. Please note that a letter in response to the Transport Briefing from Savills, on behalf of the applicants, has been received. This has been attached to the amendment sheet.
3. Please note that an objection has been received from Councillor Johnson. This letter has been attached to the amendment sheet.
4. Additional submission from RARA, BruNK and PACT attached.
5. Copy of WSP commentary for 27th June committee meeting attached.

Amendments To Text:

Pre-Committee Amendments to Recommendation:

It has been suggested that members of Committee may wish to review the principal materials proposed for the development. If this is the case, I recommend an additional resolution:

‘ **AUTHORITY** to officers to discharge Condition 3 is limited in the following manner. Officers are required to notify all members of Committee when the sample panel is installed. Officers have **AUTHORITY** to discharge condition 3 only if no member requests, within 21 days of the date of notification of the sample panel, that the acceptability of the panel be brought to Committee for determination.’

DECISION:

CIRCULATION: First

ITEM: **General**

Location: 9-15 Harvest Way

To Note:

Amendments To Text:

Pre-Committee Amendments to Recommendation:

DECISION:

Member Briefing on Transport Issues in connection with planning application at Intercell House, Newmarket Road

Wednesday 13th June 2012

The notes below are summary notes only, indicating the main points raised. The notes need to be read in conjunction with the written version of the County Council presentation.

Attendees:

City/County Council Officer and advisors:

James Lindsey – Atkins (JL)

Rob Bailey – Atkins (RB)

John Hicks – Independent Advisor to City Council (JH)

Graham Hughes – Cambridgeshire County Council (GH)

Patsy Dell – City Council (PD)

Sarah Dyer – City Council (SD)

Tony Collins – City Council (TC)

Members:

Councillor Hipkin

Councillor Saunders

Councillor Brown

Councillor Johnson

County Councillor Sedgwick-Jell

County Councillor Harrison

Representatives of Residents Associations including Lynette Gilbert, Roger Chatterton

Presentation by City/County Officers and advisors

GH gave a presentation on the County Council's assessment of the transport impact of the development including the interrelationship with other developments. The County Council's view is that the proposal is acceptable and that the impact is small. The Council could not justify a recommendation of refusal.

PD advised that the City Council have retained an independent consultant to oversee the work carried out by the County Council. She invited JH to comment on the advice that had been presented by the County.

JH went through the key points that he would expect the County Council to have considered in their assessment. His view was as follows:

Existing Situation:

- Were the correct period identified for assessment? YES weekday AM/PM peak and Saturday PM

- Has the County observed the situation on the ground? Not clear but officers would have a good feel for it.
- Has the County required recent data to be used? YES
- Has the County made sure that analysis reflects observed conditions? YES

Baseline:

- Has the County included permitted uses? YES.
- Has required permitted development been taken into account regarding Cromwell Road and the CRC Brunswick site? YES
- Growth. This could be a red herring. His view is that as long as comparable scenarios have been compared, that is all is required. In his view, it is unlikely that large amounts of background growth will occur on Newmarket Road as the road is already congested..

Development:

- Has the County checked the figures provided for traffic generation? YES Bespoke surveys were carried out in Bath and Brighton

Modelling:

- Has the County used modelling to determine advice? YES initially dependent on modelling but the most recent comments take a common sense approach. Earlier advice about cumulative development was not credible.

Recommendation:

- Has the County considered the implications of objecting? YES It is agreed that an objection could not be substantiated at appeal.
- Has a sensible conclusion been reached by the County? YES.

Cllr Hipkin:

There is already congestion. Your input says this is acceptable but what would you say is unacceptable?

GH: It is not possible to identify an absolute limit. This would depend on a number of circumstances. There used to be a DfT guidance figure of a 5% increase being material but the current council assessment has not used this as a benchmark..

JH: Agreed that the previous DfT guidance was 5% but this is no longer used, Cannot give absolute answers. Sites like this need to be determined on a case by case basis.

Cllr Brown: 1 - the original presentation to Committee was adjourned – what prompted change in advice based on modelling. 2 - The County Council’s remit is to provide advice but what about impacts on customers of hotel.

GH: Agreed that presentation was adjourned. However, to clarify, the County Council hasn’t changed its position. The original advice was that there was

insufficient extra traffic to justify detailed modelling and that is effectively the conclusion being presented here.

GH noted that the primary function of the County is to consider the impact of traffic generation on the network. In terms of the customers to the hotel, the councils remit would be limited to their access to the site, its impact and available transport choices for them. In reality, it is likely that staff will not bring cars to the site.

JH: Agreed staff are unlikely to bring cars.

Cllr Sedgwick-Jell: 1. Danger of a case by case approach. 2. Questions whether we should always assume growth is a good idea. The cumulative effect of development, Cromwell Road should be taken into consideration, changes to Beehive site, Business Park Newmarket Road. Put these together and the impact is massive.

GH: The County rely on DfT guidance which suggests that they must take a reasonable view. The accepted methodology is to look at individual developments as they come forward, even though there may be a cumulative impact from other developments that emerge at a later date. Committed development, i.e. that with a planning permission, is included in our assessments. There has been a lot of growth in Cambridge but overall not a huge impact on traffic because growth has been in use of cycles and bus more than in the car. It could be said that congestion is a good source of traffic management. The County Council is acting as Highway Authority and the advice given here is within its remit as such. Broader issues of growth are for the City Council.

JH: Understands point about cumulative effect but the Council has to determine applications as they come in. They take into account what has been committed and traffic counts reflect new development.

Cllr Harrison: The County Council has a central role to play in decisions on growth. Sites do have to be redeveloped. Officers are avoiding issues of policy and relying on defunct DfT policy. The City Council's Local Plan Policy 8/2 requires zero increase in car traffic. The County Council's 2002 statement requires zero impact on Coldham's Lane/ Newmarket Road junction. The public should be concerned - no confidence in policies. The Local Authority does not have policies to protect the public.

GH: I disagree with Cllr Harrison. The County have undertaken a professional assessment and has not thrown the policy aside. We're not working to the 5% - that was only mentioned as background information.

Based on the fact that the proposed use of Intercell House will generate just 16 new trips on Saturday pm, an objection could not be substantiated.

The Local Plan policy referred to would need to be addressed by the City Planning officer in undertaking the overall assessment of the proposal for the planning report.

Cllr Harrison: What about Policy 8/2 and previous policy statements?

GH: At 16 trips the impact is not significant - it would not be reasonable to argue zero impact as any development will have some impact. The Council has not disregarded policy but is taking a reasonable approach.

PD: The allocation within the Local Plan is for mixed use redevelopment.
Cllr Harrison: The expectation from public is that there will be zero impact. One of the most congested parts of the City.

GH: The County Council have never said it would not object if 5% or less and are not relying on the 5% assessment. There needs to be an assessment in the round of Local Plan policies.

Cllr Johnson: Local Plan Policy 8/2 needs the confidence of the public. The Eastern Gate SPD (EGSPD) has been adopted – why are commitments not included in Assessment.

Lynette Gilbert: Commitments in the EGSPD include changes to the junction to improve highway safety.

GH: The County has used committed development approved under the planning system. Whatever happens to the junction, the number of movements associated with Intercell House (16) is too small a number to make significant difference.

The EGSPD does contain additional proposals such as the pedestrian crossing. This could be implemented with or without Intercell House and therefore needs to be seen separately from this assessment. In reality, any such highway proposals will have to be assessed in the normal way but are not part of this application. Schemes such as the proposed pedestrian crossing would be introduced for a number of reasons, most probably safety. As such, whilst it may improve safety, it may also have a detrimental impact on traffic flow/congestion but may still be justified. Generally, the hierarchy of users, as shown in the Local Transport Plan, would be used to assess if the need for safety schemes such as this. GH reiterated that this is not an issue that has affected the county council's assessment..

Cllr Saunders: What mitigation measures will there be. Implications of consented use. Please confirm the percentage associated with group compared with local development.

GH: Saturday PM is the worst case scenario. The consented use would generate more traffic than the hotel if occupied during the week. Have added 14% growth between 2011 and 2018 in line with national database. That level of growth is highly unlikely because 14% more traffic cannot be accommodated on the roads. What is important though in the assessment is the actual increase in traffic and this is so small as to be insignificant. GH agreed with JH view that growth is a red herring.

JH – Growth is massively bigger than development impact and is not helpful.

PD: Policies need to be matched against each other.

Roger Chatterton: 16 does not equate to zero. Each site is considered in isolation which is not justifiable in the real world. Either have zero or

have not. Actually have 56 (16+9+31) – very large accumulative input. Growth could cause gridlock, might sort itself out but could be detrimental to Cambridge. Growth cannot be ignored.

Lynette Gilbert: Common sense not modelling. 340 hotel rooms on most congested junction. There is no scope to increase traffic flow on Coldham's Lane – superficially very small – impact on already gridlocked system. System already at its limits on Sunday am and pm also. Impact is to treble journey time on Newmarket Road. Need to look at impact not numbers.

- 1. Does County Council Highways have a strategy or policy to deal with Newmarket Road/Coldhams Lane.**
- 2. Does County Council Highways ever test or audit previous decisions?**

GH: Hotels have low traffic generation – other uses would have higher traffic generation e.g. residential. Hotels produce little movement in urban areas. Gridlock - this is a particular term and in GH view, Coldhams Lane is rarely gridlocked. There is often a moving queue though, not gridlock. Transport Strategy for South Cambs and the City is at consultation stage. Barnwell Road changes - could look to fast track changes using developer contributions.

Annual surveys – lots of data about how road network operates. Over the years, the level of traffic generation has changed little. Core traffic zone has reduced central area traffic and journey times are stable. Impossible to look at individual development impacts after the event as there are so many other external impacts – given changes to existing network, change of use etc. The network is at equilibrium at present because it is congested.

JH: No formal definition of gridlock – cannot add to GH response. Cambridge not unusual in the way they approach strategy. Assessment not different – rely on DFT guidelines not policy.

Member of residents' association: Councillors represent people– will the comments be taken seriously?

PD: Lack of confidence in the earlier advice given by the County Council resulted in appointment of independent consultant - to try to understand issues and concern. Best advice available.

2nd member of resident's association: GH should be ashamed. Junction – pedestrians – no crossing – not safe – more traffic – junction needs sorting out first.

GH: Difficult junction Whilst there is congestion in the area, the council's remit is to look at the impact of this development and that is acceptable given the small amount of traffic.

Cllr Brown: Elected to represent local people – look at advice from the Planning officers – address planning policies. Not a 'fait accompli'.

Lynette Gilbert: Mixed use redevelopment – existing designation changed to allow hotels.

PD: Policy promotes active redevelopment. The intention is for this item to go to June Committee. Report on the Harvest Way application with most recent advice. Representations can be made in advance of the Committee Meeting.

20 June 2012
CAPL/208219/A6/MM

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Planning Reference: 11/0338/FUL

Dear Tony

RESPONSE TO PRESENTATION BY COUNTY COUNCIL: REDEVELOPMENT OF INTERCELL HOUSE AS A 121 BED HOTEL WITH RESTAURANT AND BAR, CAR PARK AND WORKS TO THE PUBLIC REALM/HIGHWAY, COLDHAM'S LANE, CAMBRIDGE

Following on from the presentation by the County Council to the Members of the Planning Committee, local City and County Councillors, the various Resident Associations and ourselves in respect to the highway issues I thought it would be useful to provide you and the members of the Committee a brief summary of the application and in particular its impact on the highway network.

As you know the application, submitted in March 2011, relates to the redevelopment of Intercell House which is located on the corner of Coldham's Lane and Newmarket Road. Intercell House, which has an open B1 use (can be used for any use falling within Class B1 including call-centre, light industrial, research and development uses) was built in the 1980's but is now looking rather tired and dated. The building is currently empty and has been the subject of various acts of anti-social behaviour.

The proposal is to redevelop the site for a high quality hotel, restaurant and bar for Premier Inn. The design of the building is contemporary and has been subject to extensive discussions and dialogue with key stakeholders and in particular the Design and Conservation Panel and the Council's urban design team who raise no objections to the proposal and who consider the scheme to be in accordance with the aspirations of the Council as detailed in the Eastern Gate Development Framework.

Highways Modelling and LHA Conclusions

- The County agreed that modelling is of limited value because of the negligible impact of the development. This was agreed before the application was submitted (March 2011). It was only after submission and following comments from the Resident Associations and others that modelling was requested. The original TA stated that due:

...to the limited trip generation arising from the proposed development and by agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council, capacity modelling of the adjacent junction was considered to be superfluous.

- Notwithstanding the above, additional modelling was requested twice by the County Council and paid for by the applicants. The latest modelling was undertaken at the expense of the County Council.
- At the presentation it was confirmed that modelling had little value when the development impact was so low. The County Council confirmed that the impact of the development, together with other

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committed development was negligible and that there were *no highway objections* to the development.

- The City Council's own independent highway consultant confirms that objections to the proposals from a highway point of view could not be substantiated.
- It was confirmed that the impact of the existing lawful use had to be taken into account. The assumption is that B1 uses do not operate on a weekend. This is not a correct assertion. A call centre use within Class B1 could utilise the existing building and potentially operate 24/7, having a similar impact to the proposed hotel in the Saturday peak hour period.
- A call centre use would generate a significant amount of traffic and off-site parking demand, with a Saturday peak hour traffic generation similar to that of the proposed hotel.
- When compared to use of the premises as a call centre the hotel would have a zero or reduced impact on the network.
- Contributions from the developments in the area, including Intercell, may potentially contribute towards the comprehensive junction improvements requested by local residents.

After being asked to pay for additional modelling work to be undertaken on a several occasions over the last year and a half, it is clear from what we heard during the last weeks presentation was that the modelling was of little value precisely because of the *limited trip generation*. It was also confirmed that the development in conjunction with other nearby committed schemes would have no significant impact on the network.

During the member and RA discussion, extensive reference was made Policy 8/2 'Transport Impact' of Cambridge Local Plan. As you will be aware, this Policy states:

Developments will only be permitted where they do not have an unacceptable transport impact. Proposals must include sufficient information in order for the likely impact to be assessed.

It is wholly apparent that during the formulation of the development proposals and the subsequent consultation relating to this application, extensive examination of the development impact has been undertaken, thereby enabling the County Council to draw the robust conclusion that the development does not have an unacceptable transport impact. This conclusion has been cross-examined by an independent transport consultant, and found to be sound.

Further, reference is made to the National Planning Policy Framework, Section 4 'Promoting sustainable Transport which states at paragraph 32:

All developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment. Plans and decisions should take account of whether:

- *the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;*
- *safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and*
- *improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively and which can limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.*

Again, the development has been examined at all appropriate levels in accordance with Department for Transport Guidance, and it can reasonably be concluded that the development impact cannot be regarded as 'severe' in the context of the NPPF.

As noted at bullet point 5 above, it is worth noting that the existing lawful use has to be taken into account in terms of assessing the impact of the proposed development. However, the assumption is that B1 (Business) uses do not operate at weekends and therefore the assessment gives a false impression of the potential B1 use impact. In reality B1 uses can include uses that do operate 24/7, for example a call-centre. There are no restrictions on the use of Intercell House and as such it is reasonable to assess the existing lawful use impact on the basis of any use falling within Class B1.

In which case, the development is likely to have a zero or further reduced impact on the highway network. Whilst in practical terms the difference between having a zero impact and negligible impact is insignificant, local residents are keen to see no impact at all and notwithstanding the commentary relating to Policy 8/2 in the Local Plan, this expectation is considered unrealistic.

To give further reassurance to local residents and members, evidence from Premier Inn in respect of the operation of their hotel at York (which is comparable to the Intercell proposal) indicates that:

- An estimated c. 50% of Friday night guests also stay Saturday night, significantly limiting Saturday arrivals and departures;
- A good proportion of guests arrive by public transport, in particular train;
- There tends to be higher car occupancy for those guests arriving by car at the weekend as more of residents arrive in groups, and;
- Guests staying for the whole weekend tend to leave their car in place and use other means of transport to access the locality for the duration of their stay.

In addition to the above, the following should be borne in mind from a transport perspective:

1. Technical Comments from the Lead Highway DC Engineer (Mr Ian Dyer dated 13/05/2011) and comments relating to the Transport Assessment and Travel Plan reviewed by the Senior Transport Assessment Officer (Mr Andi Redhead – dated 27/5/2011) were comprehensively resolved by Capita Symonds Transport Planning with their letter and drawings dated 18/7/2011.

2. The proposed Hotel Travel and Transport Management Plan (HTTMP) provides a positive strategy for non-car borne staff travel and the promotion of travel options for guests from the time of booking and for the duration of their stay, and emphasising a limited availability of car parking at the site. The plan will include car parking management measures to discourage parking on nearby streets. The plan will be monitored, reviewed and revised in accordance with the agreed targets, methodology and programme, including the potential impact and mitigation of parked vehicles on adjacent streets and to encourage sustainable travel.
3. Whilst subject to negotiation with the City and County Council, it is proposed that any consent granted is subject to the following transport mitigation package:
 - ECATP overall contribution £141,865.00 (for 121 bed hotel less 1200m² extant office use);
 - HTTMP and car park management plan (including off-site parking surveys/ contribution to residents parking review);
 - Land contribution for highway/ public realm improvements along site frontage;
 - Junction works Coldhams Lane/ Newmarket Road – pedestrian crossing islands to be delivered prior to opening;
 - Coldhams Lane/ Henley Way pedestrian crossings – physical works to be delivered prior to opening.

It is concluded therefore that all matters relating to highways traffic and transport have been comprehensively addressed and that no material reasons exist to justify a refusal from a highway point of view exists in relation to a form of development which will have an extremely limited impact.

Other Matters

In terms of harm, the other potential effects of the development are also minimal. This has been confirmed by the various internal and external consultees that have responded to the application. It should be noted that the applicants have responded positively to the comments made and wherever possible have modified their proposals to accord with the comments received.

We suggest that following these amendments the development's only real impacts are positive and include:

1. The replacement of a tired, unattractive and dated building on this prominent gateway site with a quality, bespoke hotel building which is in accordance with both planning policy contained in the Adopted Local Plan as well as the aspirations of the City Council as detailed in the Council's Eastern Gate Development Framework.
2. The redevelopment of the site will bring back into a use which is the subject of various forms of anti-social behaviour due the building being unused. Redevelopment will also cease the B1 use which can include high traffic generation uses such as call-centres.
3. The provision of much needed hotel accommodation close to the city centre.

4. Construction jobs and over 50 permanent jobs once the hotel is opened.
5. Will act as a catalyst and help to stimulate the redevelopment of the surrounding area.
6. Financial (and land) contributions to help provide highway improvements including improved crossings, widening footpaths etc., together with the planting of poplar trees and other landscaping to help green the streets. (see above)
7. Contribution to public art.
8. Promotes sustainable development which encourages walking, cycling and public transport use.

Conclusion

The proposed development is consistent with Adopted Local Plan Policy which allocates the site as a hotel. It is also consistent with the policies of the East of England Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The various supporting documents, together with the other work that has been undertaken since the application has been submitted, confirm that the development will not give rise to any significant adverse impacts and this is supported by the Council's own technical experts or by those of their consultees. In particular, the County Council, together with the City's own independent transport consultant confirm that there are no reasons to object to the development on highway grounds.

In the absence of any harm arising from the development, its compliance with policy and the significant benefits the scheme will bring to Cambridge we can see no grounds for refusing this development and we trust members will support this scheme when it comes before them later this month in accordance with the recommendation of their officers.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Mann
Associate Director (Planning)

Savills (L&P) Ltd

Councillor Richard Johnson
688 Newmarket Road
Cambridge
CB5 8RS

Members of Planning Committee
Cambridge City Council
The Guildhall
Cambridge

25th June 2012

Dear Planning Committee Member,

Re: Planning Application 11/0338/FUL

I am writing to request that this planning application is rejected, contrary to the Advice of the Planning Officer, on the grounds that it contravenes Local Plan Policies:

- 8/2 (transport impact) and 3/7 (b) (creating successful places which should 'respond to their levels of use while not allowing vehicular traffic to dominate')
- 8/1 (spatial location of development)
- 6/3 (tourist accommodation)

I also draw attention that, in my view, this planning application runs contrary to the proposals outlined in Eastern Gate Supplementary Planning Document section 3, sub-section 2.4 (remodelling hostile junctions).

The Eastern Gate SPD is now a relevant and material consideration in planning policy, hence my inclusion in this Letter of Objection.

A) Local Plan policies 8/2 and 3/7 (b)

1. Impact on congestion

This objection through Local Plan policies 8/2 and 3/7(b) is based on the view that County Council Highway Engineers, in their assessment as included in the report to committee, continue to be evasive in respect of their responsibilities of acknowledging the issue of traffic congestion in this area of Abbey Ward.

I appeal to Members of the Committee to take a more balanced view, and take into account their responsibility to protect Coldham's Lane and surrounding streets from even greater levels of gridlock than exist currently.

I would remind Committee Members that there is precedent for in fact taking congestion on Newmarket Road and around this site into account for recommendations. Planning Committee, and East Area committee have, in the past, rejected McDdonald's application for a site immediately adjacent to this site and the West's garage expansion plans, and on both occasions the inspector upheld the decision.

The County Council's own forecast states that the number of trips on the surrounding road network will increase from the 2011 total of 7337 during Saturday 'peak time' of 1500-1600 to 7739 (excluding the impact of the three proposed or planned developments in the vicinity) at the same peak time by 2018. This represents a percentage increase of nearly 5.5%.

In my view this application should be seen in the context of projected additional traffic on the surrounding road network, which is already congested.

Therefore, the projected additional increase of 0.72% suggested from the three developments in the area (the Premier Inn, Travelodge and Harvest Way) - 56 extra cars/hour during 'peak time' – should not be seen as "negligible" in its impact.

If the view were taken that every new, additional, development is "negligible", yet creates an incremental increase on the volume of traffic, then the impact would, eventually, be significant enough to not be negligible but great. This is why we already have severe congestion on Newmarket Rd and around this site.

I believe this underpins the assertion through Local Plan policy 8/2 that in areas of high congestion "zero increase or reduction in car traffic generation" should be upheld when considering applications for new development.

I would also like to remind Members that County Council Highways' policy in 2003 was to ensure new development had a zero traffic impact at this site, because of the severe congestion on the local road network. The Highways Officer at the time explicitly stated that their objective was to avoid setting a precedent for cumulative "small incremental increases of traffic" in this location.

Nearly a decade on, the County Council have now taken the view that since the area has through it 7337 vehicles per hour on 'peak times' during Saturday afternoons, cumulative small incremental increases of traffic will make "negligible" or "very limited" impact to the functioning of the junction. I ask that Committee Members note the a view taken nearly ten years ago should be considered as even more relevant now when traffic levels within the area have increased since 2003.

I strongly urge Committee Members to also consider that, as “a worse case”, this development could contribute to an increase of an extra 4% of generated traffic through Coldham’s Lane. As alluded to, for a junction that is already extremely congested¹², and described by the Travelodge's own traffic consultant as 'already at or nearing its design capacity' (see para 5.5.7, TA for 09/0297/FUL), and by County Council Highways itself as "at the limits of acceptability" in 2003, this is deeply concerning.

2. Impact on on-street car parking

I refer to the comments made by Mr Collins in his report on paragraph 8.59:

“Local residents, the Planning Policy Manager, and the highway authority are all concerned that although the level of [car parking] provision is in accordance with policy, and the proposed hotel is close to the city centre and served by bus routes, *there is a risk that visitors using private cars will increase pressure on on-street car parking in neighbouring residential streets.* I recognise that this is a genuine risk.” (My italics)

Close to the proposed development are situated a number of streets, such as Silverwood Close, that suffer from a lack of space for residents to park their own cars. A proposed Verge Parking Prohibition scheme, coupled with the new development already granted planning permission, and this application, would create even greater limitations for residents to find appropriate on-street car parking.

As a result this development does not respond well to levels of the existing use of surrounding streets due to the issues described above.

I do, however, agree with the recommendation by Mr Collins that if this application is accepted, the S106 agreement must make available a contribution to cover surveys and aid potential residents’ parking schemes for affected streets, including Silverwood Close.

¹ I draw attention to this table, which was Travelodge applicant’s traffic survey dated 23 October 2010 for application 10/0851/FUL, key comparisons shown. Coldham’s Lane is a single lane road, compared to the dual carriageway of Newmarket Rd.

Time	WEEKDAYS		SATURDAYS	
	AM peak	PM peak	11am-12	12-1pm
NEWMARKET ROAD traffic volumes	1649	1703	1656	1564
COLDHAM’S LANE traffic volumes	1668	1828	1855	1836

² Current average vehicle speed on Saturday afternoon is 14.12 km/h, compared to 28-29 km/h during weekday peak hours.

B) Local Plan policy 8/1

I refer to paragraph 8.6 in this policy in the Local Plan that states: “Out-of-centre non-residential development will only be acceptable where it can be clearly demonstrated that the location is suitable, and will not encourage additional car use compared with a more central location.”

The addition of a 121-bed Premier Inn will put a total of 340 new bedrooms on this busy junction. In terms of the definition of ‘out-of-centre’ development, I would add that the site is 2 km from the railway station, and it is a fair suggestion (and common sense) to state that the majority of guest will arrive and leave by car or taxi rather than walk. As a result this will put additional stress on the existing road network (see my earlier points on Local Plan policy 8/2).

C) Local Plan policy 6/3

Whilst I note that Local Plan Proposal Site 7.03 allocates the site for potential hotel use, I should remind Members of the Committee that there is now extant planning consent for the construction of a 219-bed Travelodge adjacent the Intercell House site.

Both the consented and proposed hotels are ‘budget’ hotels and, therefore, I am unconvinced that this proposed development “maintains, strengthens and diversifies the range of short-stay accommodation” in this area of the city, as outlined in Local Plan policy 6/3.

I also draw attention to Mr Collins’ comments regarding the Cambridge Future Hotels report (paragraph 8.4):

“The report predicts that the two budget hotels proposed on Newmarket Road (Travelodge and the current application) may open well ahead of market growth, increasing the existing downward pressure on lower-grade hotels and guest houses. The report suggests that better-located and better quality small hotels and guest houses, and those with a loyal customer base may be less affected, but poorer-quality, less well-run and less well located establishments may exit the market.”

This, in my view contravenes Local Plan policy 6/3 which states “development will not be permitted which would result in the loss of existing short-stay tourist accommodation”.

D) Eastern Gate Supplementary Planning Document

Additionally, this planning application contravenes Eastern Gate Supplementary Planning Document section 3, sub-section 2.4 (remodelling hostile junctions).

It appears that the County Council took no consideration of the Eastern Gate SPD in its modelling, based on the recommendations in the report. The County Council assumes road layouts will remain as they are until 2018. But the SPD recommends a pedestrian crossing on the Coldham's Lane junction. This would mean the junction would see a restriction of left turns.

The report does not make any reference to the interests of residents as walkers and cyclists, and no suggestion that this proposal will make a contribution to make this junction safer for them.

I would remind Members of the Committee that the City Council is committed to implementing the SPD's agenda and is now a material consideration in planning policy in the 'Eastern Gate' area.

I hope you will be able to use all these comments as the basis of a vote to reject the application.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Johnson
Labour Councillor for Abbey Ward

Riverside Area Residents' Association
Petersfield Area Community Trust
Brunswick & North Kite Residents' Association

25 June 2012

11/0338/FUL: Erection of 121-bed Premier Inn Hotel at Intercell House site, 1 Coldham's Lane, Cambridge

Dear Mr Collins,

The three local residents' associations wish to make the following additional comments about the above application relating to new traffic work and the report to Planning Committee. These supplement our original submission in December 2011, where residents raised concerns about design, traffic impact and the need for a second hotel in this location – concerns which we still hold.

For the record, we wish to restate our desire to see high quality redevelopment and regeneration of this area. Our concerns relate to the scale of the developments that have been consented and proposed, which we feel strongly are excessively large for this location, thus creating a hostile environment and increasing traffic in a not-very-sustainable location c2km from the railway station.

1. DESIGN

1.1 We share the view of the Design & Conservation Panel that a smaller-scale hotel would result in a more successful scheme, and note that the scheme still does not receive a single GREEN rating.

On the Newmarket Road frontage, the desired 'gateway' effect of a localised height increase (ref: Eastern Gate SPD) cannot occur because of the decision to consent a large bulky Travelodge hotel on the opposite side of the junction. On Coldham's Lane, the height increase is also not localised, but a monolithic wall with a slight curvature at its upper level. We do not agree that the approach is 'successful' therefore (para 8.13 of report).

1.2 We do not feel that a few landscape planters will sufficiently mitigate the impact of this bulky building on Coldham's Lane. We also note that the Principal Landscape Officer comments are dated June 2011 so do not address the revision from trees to planters.

We welcome the proposal for full-scale tree planting along Newmarket Road. We also recognise that tree planting on both frontages may be hard to achieve given the applicant's desire to maximise bedrooms. However, on the Coldham's Lane side, where the building has its maximum bulk, a 5-6 storey wall of brick with so little greening will make this a harsh and unwelcoming corner. The Design & Conservation Panel suggest a 'green wall' in the courtyard – could something similar be considered for the Coldham's Lane frontage?

2. TRAFFIC

2.1 There is a fundamental practical difference of view between residents and County Highways on what constitutes 'reasonable' additional traffic.

The view of Highways (and the applicant's agent) is that since projected additional trip numbers are small as a percentage of 7000-odd cars already traversing the junction, capacity modelling is 'superfluous', as the impact will invariably be 'negligible'. The view of residents, based on our experience of sitting in lengthy queues every weekend, is:

- (i) that the junction is clearly at or beyond capacity at weekends already

- (ii) that the impact of successive small increases could therefore be catastrophic -- a view borne out by the new modelling figures, which indicate that sub-6% growth in traffic on Newmarket Road will have the effect of almost trebling journey times along this dual carriageway
- (iii) that the impact of even small increases on single-lane Coldham's Lane could therefore be very severe indeed.

2.2 No figures have been provided for Coldham's Lane impact.

Highways posits a 'worst case' 4% increase in traffic on Coldham's Lane, yet no figures for the impact on congestion and journey times for this crucial route have been provided. Residents pointed out this omission in our comments dated May 3rd, but have been ignored. It is our view - given the disproportionate impact of small increases on congested networks illustrated above - that the Planning Committee cannot make a sound decision without this information.

We would also like to point out that Planning Committee in November 2010 also received no information showing impact on actual journey times in Coldham's Lane (or indeed Newmarket Road). Members also received a written assurance from the developers that new MOVA lights would fully mitigate any increase in traffic - a claim now known to be false, but not corrected by County Highways at the time. We have very little confidence that County Highways is properly fulfilling its responsibilities to address the known and growing problems with this junction.

2.3 No commitment to implement Local Plan policy 8/2, which means that scale of development is never questioned.

Policy 8/2 allows for zero traffic impact in areas of high congestion, but both County and City appear to ignore it. The report to Planning Committee states that the quest for zero traffic generation is 'unrealistic'. Residents are astonished that adopted policy can be ignored in this way. If 8/2 is not applied for a junction as badly congested as this, when will it be applied?

The issue is not whether any development is possible, but whether the scale and nature of the development is appropriate for its location. This junction is exceptionally congested at weekends, when offices do not generate traffic but hotels do. If a genuine commitment to policy 8/2 had been applied for the Travelodge application, officers and councillors might have questioned whether it really made sense to locate the largest hotel in Cambridge on one of its most congested junctions. Adding a second hotel on this junction seems utterly perverse. Offices can be made largely car-free, as most employees are willing to walk, cycle or take public transport to work. Hotel guests with luggage, unfamiliar with an area, are not.

2.4 Highway safety issues ignored.

The Eastern Gate SPD sets out a commitment to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety at this junction, which is acknowledged to be exceptionally hostile. This will obviously reduce the capacity of the junction to absorb further traffic increases. County Highways ignore this in their modelling, which assumes continuing unlimited left turns in and out of Coldham's Lane. We find it extraordinary that no concerns about Highway safety should be raised in the context of proposals to locate 340+ hotel bedrooms on this hostile junction, and - according to both applicants' Travel Plans - to encourage them to walk and cycle in the area.

3. LOCATION

3.1 Over-provision of budget hotel accommodation

Paragraph 8.4 of the report states that Cambridge has greater budget hotel provision than Bath or Oxford. It also states that 350 of 460 projected additional rooms are already in place or on their way. An urgent need for more 'chain' budget accommodation therefore seems unproven.

3.2 Two budget hotels in one location contrary to Local Plan policy 6/3

As we pointed out in our December submission, policy 6/3 requires diversification in supply. This point is not addressed in paras 8.2-8.6 of the report to Planning Committee which focuses only on the current Local Plan allocation and volume of supply. We do not see how locating two essentially-identical budget chain hotels in the same place can possibly help to diversify supply. It would be far more useful and sustainable (in terms of hotel guests travelling to alternative destinations) for further budget hotel development to be located in a different part of the city.

3.3 Not a very sustainable location.

Paragraph 8.2 of the report states that the application site is a sustainable one, close to bus routes and the city centre. We would respectfully point out that there are remarkably few bus routes in this area, and the main bus (Citi 3) is conspicuous mainly by its absence. The site is also close to 2km from the railway station, a very long walk which hotel guests with luggage are highly unlikely to tackle.

Conclusion

While we would welcome regeneration and redevelopment of this area, our conclusion remains as before: that the proposed hotel is overscale for this site and unsustainable in this location. The design problems arising from insufficient setback indicate that this is a case of overdevelopment. Nor is there a need for more hotel rooms so close to another budget hotel.

Together with the consented Travelodge Hotel, it will have deleterious traffic impacts because of the disproportionate effect of small increases on an already-congested junction. We believe that the single-lane Coldham's Lane in particular will become impossible to use at weekends, and we are concerned that no information has been provided to the Planning Committee on the impact on journey times for this road. We are also saddened by the continuing 'car first' mentality taken towards this junction, with successive increases waved through by County Highways without reference to the Eastern Gate SPD policy proposals to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety at this junction.

Yours sincerely

Cambridge City Council

Eastern Gate sites on Newmarket Road

WSP commentary for 27 June 2012 committee meeting

Our comments below relate to the information sent through and reflect what the City could have reasonably expected the County to do before providing their advice on the application(s).

Existing conditions

1. Identified key assessment periods? – yes these are the weekday AM and PM peak hours where traffic generation from the permitted uses (see below) would exceed flows from the proposed uses and Saturday afternoon because of the significant retail uses in the area – it is not significant that the busiest hour starts at 1430 rather than 1500 on Saturday.
2. Observed traffic conditions on Saturday afternoon? – WSP have no evidence that County Council visited the site on a recent Saturday, but it is reasonable to assume that they, as local highway authority, are familiar with local traffic conditions. In any event, WSP visited site on 19 May to observe conditions.
3. Required recent traffic data in TA? – yes weekday surveys were done in November 2010 and Saturday base flows form part of the County Council's existing Paramics model.
4. Made sure analysis reflects observed conditions? – there is only limited information about validation of the model but County have not relied on the model (see below). WSP have reviewed current year model runs against their site visit on 19 May and the two appear broadly compatible.

Baseline

3. Allowed permitted uses to be included? – yes the existing uses of the Intercell House and other sites have been included in the Transport Assessments – this is standard practice as set out in DfT's Transport Assessment Guidelines.
4. Required committed developments (Berkeley scheme and Cromwell Rd) to be included? – yes both of these schemes have permission but only the Berkeley site is under construction and both have correctly been included in addition to the Harvest Way and Travelodge schemes, so the cumulative impacts have been addressed.
5. Future traffic growth? – yes this has been included in the 2018 modelling work, but WSP think this unhelpful as it masks impacts of schemes and is unrealistic as WSP don't believe the predicted level of growth will happen on a congested network. In any event, growth is not relevant anyway since the County Council must consider the impact of the development only when advising on this planning application. Impact is assessed by comparing baseline versus a with development scenario – both should either include or exclude growth.
6. Should the SPD pedestrian crossing be included? – no, it should not be included since it is not yet a committed (programmed and funded) transport improvement.

With development and impacts

7. Checked applicant's traffic generation? – there is no evidence that this has been checked but it is the same information that was used for the Travelodge application and those rates were agreed with the County Council – we understand that these were based on bespoke Travelodge surveys at Bath and Brighton which had similar locations and parking provisions.
8. Used model as a tool not as sole determinant of advice? – yes the most recent County Council advice makes only brief reference to the modelling work and does not rely on the outputs but see below.
9. Applied common sense to model results? – yes in the most recent note County have but did not do so initially when suggesting that a very small volume of extra right turning traffic from Coldhams Lane to Newmarket Road could generate significantly lower travel times and less congestion across this part of the highway network. This resulted from an unusual form of analysis which, when revisited, identified no major changes in performance of the network.
10. Considered non-car accessibility? – there is no evidence of doing so in the County advice, though we note that there have been references in the submitted documents to improving pedestrian facilities in the area. It should be possible for some of the ECATP contribution to be used to investigate the feasibility and traffic impact of providing pedestrian facilities across Coldhams Lane and then providing pedestrian facilities if they prove not to have a significant detrimental impact on traffic conditions in the area.

Recommendations

11. Thought about ability to sustain any objection at appeal and avoid award of costs against authority? – yes the County have considered their position and concluded that an objection on highway grounds would not be sustainable at appeal, so risking an award of costs against the authorities if the appeal were successful. WSP agree that given the expected change in traffic flows as a result of the scheme, there is no robust transport objection.
12. Reached a reasonable conclusion? – yes despite concerns about some aspects of the County work, WSP don't think these issues would have affected the overall advice given to the City Council. In the context of Local Plan policy 8/2, County have judged impacts to be acceptable.