

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FORUM

16 June 2014
10.00 - 11.30 am

Officers:

(New Neighbourhoods) Development Manager (Chair): Sharon Brown
Senior Planning Officer: Catherine Linford
Committee Manager: Claire Tunnicliffe

For Applicant:

Applicant Representative: Chris Senior, DPA Architects
Applicant Representative: Dale Robinson, DPA Architects

For Petitioners (in objection):

Lead Petitioner: Diana Kazemi
Resident: Patricia Duff
Resident: Michael Bond

For Petitioners (in support):

Lead Petitioner: Chris Monachan
Resident: John Moore
Resident: Owen O'Loan (submitted statement).

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

1 Introduction by the Chair

The Chair outlined the role and purpose of the Development Control Forum. Those present were informed that no decisions would be taken at the meeting.

2 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

3 14/0575/FUL: 7 Church Street, Cambridge, CB4 1DT

Committee: North Area Committee
Date: 16 June 2014
Application No: 14/0575/FUL
Site Address: 7 Church Street, Cambridge, CB4 1DT
Description: The demolition of No.7 Church Street, garage and outbuildings and the erection of 4No. four bedroom dwellings with associated landscaping, access and parking arrangements.

Applicant: TBC
Agent: Chris Senior
Address: DPA Architects Ltd, The Gallery, 96 King Street, Cambridge, CB1 1LN
Lead Petitioner: Diana Kazemi
Address: 5 Church Street, CB4 1DT
Case Officer: Catherine Linford, Senior Planning Officer

Text of Petition in objection:

Church Street is within a conservation area. The proposed development involves the felling of a large number of trees, the demolition of a four bedroom house, and the construction of four four bedroom dwellings. The current house at No.7 Church Street was one of the first houses to be built in Cambridge after the Second World War and is possibly the only example of this type of building in Cambridge. The proposed dwellings are unsympathetic to the area, the density and height of the proposed housing on such a small site is totally out of keeping with the area. Provision for parking is inadequate. Wildlife will be adversely affected through loss of habitat. The neighbouring property and No.5 Church Street (The Old Dovecote) is a Grade II listed building. This will be overshadowed by the proposed development resulting in loss of light, in particular to the two main bedrooms on the ground floor and to the courtyard garden.

Do you think there are changes that could be made to overcome your concerns?

Preference 1:

The existing house at No 7 should be retained. Any new development should be restricted to the adjoining orchard area. An effort should be made to preserve as many trees as possible and to provide adequate on-site parking.

Preference 2:

Should approval to demolish the existing house be given, the new development should be on a much smaller scale. The number of dwellings should be restricted to a maximum of three, and the height of these dwellings should be much lower than the current proposal. An effort should be made to preserve as many trees as possible to provide adequate on-site parking. The building materials should be sympathetic to the area.

Lead Petitioner: Chris Monachan
Address: 12 Lynfield Court, CB4 1DP
Case Officer: Catherine Linford, Senior Planning Officer

Text of Petition in support:

Cambridge is in dire need of new, high quality family housing rather than just cookie-cutter high density flats. This development delivers new family housing with a high-quality approach to the development, at a location close to the recreation ground which is suitable for families with children.

We believe this proposed development, 14/0575/Ful, is a distinct improvement on the existing single and house and empty plot, and it is better in nature, quality and density than the existing consented development 11/1250/EXP for flats. The proposed houses are architecturally attractive, clearly laid out and built to last. They apply high quality materials which are rarely used in development construction, raising the building standards of the neighbourhood and the city of Cambridge; They support energy efficiency and immediately adjoining buildings, both in material and scale.

The density of four family houses is suitable for the large plot size, balancing the shortage of family housing with development density and amenity for residents. The existing house for the 1950's is unattractive, energy inefficient and in poor condition, while the overgrown derelict plot is an eyesore and decreases the safety of the neighbourhood.

Case by Applicants:

1. The application is for 7 Church Street (known as Fowey) and the land adjacent, accessed by heading south of the High Street located in the centre of Chesterton.
2. The area is in a conservation area and the application is for planning conservation area consent and the demolition of the existing property and garage and the erection of four new homes.
3. Adjacent to the site on the north side is a grade II listed building known as the Dove House, set back from the road side, the view to this building from the south east is blocked by No 7 Church Street.
4. Any new development should enhance the setting of this listed building.
5. No 7 Church Street on land which originally formed part of Chesterton House, a grade II listed building which has been sold off for independent development.
6. Reference to the site in the Local Conservation Area Appraisal is as follows "a good brick wall, the adjacent property continues the enclosure

- provided by the boundary wall of Chesterton House but the building itself is rather non-descript”.
7. Existing planning permission on the site seeks to retain the existing four bedroom house and erect a block of flats on the land adjacent, this block consists of three two bedrooms and 1 three bedroom with parking.
 8. This application has been improved by bringing the development forward and is an opportunity to enhance the setting of the conservation area.
 9. The proposal is for the removal of the existing building and garage which currently sits on the existing shared boundary wall and the erection of four family homes which meets Cambridge City standards.
 10. The Conservation Area Appraisal notes the importance of the boundary wall which will be rebuilt in a brick to match the proposed development that will continue around the southern boundary replacing the existing fencing.
 11. The build line is staggered and moved back 2.5 metres which enhances the view to Dove House and would reduce the level of overshadowing to this property.
 12. Existing access to the site would be removed and new access point provided away from the listed building.
 13. Public consultation was held on 27 March with a separate meeting with the resident of No 5 Church Street whose concerns were addressed in the presented scheme.

Case by Petitioners (in objection):

14. The present application seeks to revisit ground that was covered in 2008 which resulted in permission being granted for development that was more sympathetic to its setting than was originally put forward and retained Fowey.
15. The design of the proposed development would sit well on an industrial estate but does not match the character of Chesterton.
16. Residents do accept that there has to be a change but the object of a conservation area is to retain the best of the old while embracing change.
17. In 2008 when recommending planning approval the Planning Officer noted “The current revised scheme now proposes to retain the existing number 7 Church Street and erect a single new building within its curtilage. In my opinion 7 Church Street is a neutral building which its loss would not be resisted in principle. However the applicant has in part responded to a desire from residents for its retention and has designed a scheme which now retains and complements this existing building”. The view of the Planning Officer is not shared; it is a landmark building of its period and unique to Chesterton.

18. The Applicants view of Fowey is not accepted. It is an architect designed house that took into account its setting within the curtilage of Chesterton House, commissioned by the previous owner of Chesterton House and we wish to see it retained for posterity.
19. There has been no serious attempt to market Fowey as a family house at any stage. The planning application is an attempt to maximise what is seen as a development opportunity.
20. The site is in a conservation area and an important criterion for permitting demolition of premises and their replacement within the conservation area is that the new development should enhance the area. The current application offers little or nothing in the way of real family amenity space around them but space to park cars in the gap between each house and the Church Street Wall.
21. The approved scheme is far superior for the location. Applicants should withdraw their application and build what has been approved as their proposal is an inappropriate increase in density.
22. The petition for support emphasises the contribution to meet Cambridge's housing needs. However as the government has transformed the housing market by promoting buy to let this has led to most family homes in Chesterton going to buy to let purchasers. This development if consented would probably go the same way.
23. The market is saturated with four bedroom homes.

Speaking as the owner of the Dovecote property.

24. The proposed development would bring a large loss of trees and would result in a loss of privacy to me as the resident of Dovecote, the new development would mean that the current view would be replaced by a brick wall.
25. The balconies on the proposed development at the rear of the building would also impact on the loss of privacy although appreciate the architect's comments that this will be minimalised by some screen planting.
26. The proposed development would not have a huge impact on the over shadowing in Spring and Summer. But in the winter months when the sun is low there would be a loss of light over the courtyard and the back garden. The pitch of the roofs of the proposed development are not as steep as the existing roof of No 7 Church Street and are staggered across the plot which would also increase overshadowing.
27. Believes that No 7 Church Street is in good condition with no major problems and there is no reason for the building to be demolished.

28. The proposed development would bring extensive excavation and questions what impact this would have on the foundation of the Dovecote, a listed building
29. A high density development would result in an increase in noise.
30. There is not enough on-site parking with very little parking in the area, the front gardens would be replaced in time with additional parking reducing limited green space in the area further.
31. The existing property should be retained and any development should be in the orchard area only.
32. Should the existing property be demolished, the proposals need to be more sympathetic to the area and the number of dwellings reduced, with many trees kept as possible and adequate on-site parking.

Speaking on behalf of residents of Cannon Court, New Court and the Edward Storey Foundation.

33. The proposed development would have a detrimental impact to the residents who live in the surrounding area.
34. The residents of Cannon Court and New Court, many of whom are elderly, enjoy the views of 59 trees from the South and North area of 16 different varieties. These would be lost and every single tree inside the boundary of No 7 Church Street would be felled (with the exception of a couple) and replaced with a total of three trees.
35. Parking is an issue in the area; people do park in Cannon Court disturbing the residents and questions if visitors to the proposed development would do the same.
36. Believes that No 7 Church Street is of architectural value to the area and once demolished has gone forever.

Case by Petitioners (in support)

37. The proposed development brings a diverse style to the area which needs family houses and is impressed by the proposals.
38. Would set an example for future developments.
39. Stated that No 7 Church Street is an ugly design.
40. The proposed development is similar to the Accordia development on the South side of the city which won the Stirling prize architectural design award.
41. There is a limited opportunity to buy brand new family homes in Cambridge.
42. The existing permission would allow high density flats to be built in the area which does not match the proposed application's design quality.
43. The petition of support provides evidence that there is backing for the proposed development to bring high quality housing to the area.

44. Welcomed the public consultation by the architect on a relatively small development.
45. The proposed development of four new family homes is modest but not wasteful of the large plot which could accommodate a fifth home, providing generous space for each plot.
46. The sale of four bedroom homes move very quickly and there is strong need for such houses in this area.
47. Choice of high quality materials would mean that the proposed houses would be energy efficient, comfortable and stand the test of time.
48. The proposed development would add to the community in Chesterton in contrast to a transient population
49. Enhance the architecture in the community.
50. Ideal location for family homes.

Case Officer's Comments:

51. Have received three representations in objection to the application, a petition of objection with 39 signatures and a petition of support with 60 signatures.
52. Highways had originally objected to the application due to the gated access but these have now been removed and the objection withdrawn.
53. The Urban Design and Consultation team have expressed no objections and state the proposed development would not be detrimental to the character or appearance of the conservation area and have recommend conditions regarding materials and landscaping
54. Environmental Health expressed no objections but has recommended conditions relating to construction hours, piling, dust and waste.
55. The County Archaeologist has recommended a condition that an archaeological investigation of the site is undertaken.
56. Comments have yet to be received from the Arboriculture and Landscaping Team.

Questions and Comments to the Applicant:

57. Can any more of the trees be saved, predominantly on the side where the toilet block is?
58. Will the Arboriculture Team's comments be received before the application goes to North Area Committee for consideration? 4/4 of the Local Plan states that where trees are felled, appropriate planting should take place where ever possible. As this is a conservation area it is important to get the balance right.
59. There is currently parking outside the proposed development, will these bays be lost or will they been reinstated after completion.

60. Can we have the percentage of new houses, particularly 4 bed homes as opposed to flats being built in the area?
61. Have the elderly residents opposite the development been consulted separately as many would not have been able to make the public consultation and do not use social media?

Response to Questions and Comments.

62. The existing permission does allow for most of the trees to be removed on the southern side of the development. An independent arboriculture report has been undertaken on this application which highlighted trees that require attention as shown on the application. The thinning of the trees on the boundary to No 5 would allow an increase in natural light and reduce overshadowing. Was not aware that the preference was to retain the trees and there could be opportunity to retain boundary planting.
63. On the public toilet side there is an opportunity to replace the fencing with a brick wall and it is not clear if any trees need to be removed for the foundations, however there will be three new trees planted which will enhance the appearance of this area in conjunction with the brick wall.
64. The North Area Committee will receive comments from the Arboricultural Team before consideration of the application.
65. The current proposal will see a net increase in on-street parking but there is an assessment to relocate the parking bays, subject to approval by Highways.
66. Figures of new homes being built compared to flats can be obtained from Housing.
67. There was a letter drop in the Chesterton area but a separate consultation could have been done independently for the elderly residents. The Chair asked if this could be followed up with the architect.

Summing up by the Applicant:

68. The application was not 4 stories high as has been mentioned but 2.5 stories high.
69. With regards to landscaping there is an opportunity to develop further and await the comments from Arboricultural Team.
70. Reminder that No 7 Church Street has been described as non- descript.
71. Extensive pre-application consultation has been carried out with the Local Authority with no objection from consultees and support of the Conservation Officer.
72. A comprehensive over-shadowing study has been undertaken and demonstrates that this would be no worse with the proposed development but would enhance the light at certain times of the day.

Summing up by the Petitioners (in objection):

73. The applicants have fulfilled the pre application consultation and it will be for the Committee to decide on the merits for retaining No 7 Church Street.
74. The housing market is rapid which demonstrates the demand to live in Cambridge, with many houses going to the buy to let market
75. Demand for flats does serve the transient population and this has to be reflected.
76. The architect has done a great deal to minimise the impact but the consented scheme is preferred.

Summing up by the Petitioners (in support):

77. There is a lot of space surrounding the proposed development and not a high density development.
78. The area itself is not an ideal orchard space as described; it is not well kept which can lead to anti-social behaviour.
79. Grateful for the transparency around the project.
80. The proposed development would offer an opportunity for families in the area to upsize.

Final Comments of the Chair:

The Chair confirmed that the notes of the Development Control Forum would be made available to relevant parties and would be reported to the North Area Committee when the application are reported to them.

The meeting ended at 11.30 am

CHAIR

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