



Geraint John Planning

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15th January 2016

Toby Williams / Lisa Lamb
Planning Services
Environment Department
PO Box 700
Cambridge
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Dear Sir / Madam

14/1905/FUL: Application for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of a mixed use development comprising 84 dwellings, circa 152m² A1-A3 commercial space, and associated access, car and cycle parking, and public realm enhancement at 64-68 Newmarket Road, Cambridge, CB5 8DZ

Post-January Planning Committee Note

Preface

This Note has been prepared in support of the above planning application providing a response to the key issues raised by Members when the application was reported to Planning Committee on 6th January 2016 with a recommendation for approval.

The Note provides further clarification on aspects of the planning application in relation to the issues raised by Members. The Note follows and has had regard to engagement and dialogue with Officers which occurred post the January Planning Committee, and, in combination with the detailed assessment previously undertaken and reported is considered to allow the proposals to be viewed favourably and acceptably.

Applicant's Response

Issue Raised	Applicant Response
Form of affordable housing provision - Block H (comprising the affordable housing units), is not tenure blind as a result of locating the AH units in a	<u>Finishing Materials</u> Despite the glazed blue brick specified being more expensive in cost terms when compared with the other facing bricks, and Officers stating (on 02/10/2015) that they are 'happy with the glazed brick choice on Block H as there will be a number of other brick colours on the other private blocks', and (within the Committee Report) that the brick 'reflects the use of glazed

separate block and by virtue of the treatment and finish of the block, and it doesn't accord with the SPD / relevant planning guidance in force accordingly (in respect to pepper-potting etc.).

tiling used on the nearby Co-Operative Society building', the Applicant is happy to accept a condition specifically controlling the choice of materials on this block.

We will be generating an updated image to reflect the proposed amendment to the finish.

In any case, it is considered that the materials, treatments and finishes to be utilised on Block H can be capably controlled to meet the specification desired by the LPA via Condition 17 proposed within the Officer's report – which required sample panels to be submitted to, and approved by, the LPA.

Distribution

It is acknowledged that the Affordable Housing SPD (January 2008) states that *'the layout of developments should integrate affordable and supported housing with the open market housing in ways that minimise social exclusion'*. One approach suggested by the SPD to achieve this goal is through *'clustering, which is the development of the affordable housing in multiple groups normally of between 6 and 25 dwellings depending upon the size and design of the development and the nature of the affordable housing'*. The proposal, being 21 units, is considered to comply and be in accordance with the SPD accordingly.

The applicant has long experience of providing affordable housing within its developments and can advise that Housing Associations prefer the units to be provided in small blocks, as shown on the layout, since more widespread "pepper-potting" contributes to the financial burden placed on RSLs in terms of costs and problems of maintenance and management. Moreover, providing the single cluster in Block H provides the only opportunity for a freehold disposal to the RSL, as the other areas of the development are located above communal parking areas. This contributes to the deliverability of the affordable housing provision.

There are numerous recent examples in Cambridge where it has been considered acceptable for affordable housing to be clustered in separate blocks, such as the CB1 development, the Marque, the former Cambridge University Press site, the fire station site at Parkside. Pertinent Committee Report extracts considering this issue, and outlining the acceptability of such arrangements are shown below:

LPA Ref.	Site / Location	No. of Clustered Affordable Units	Officer Report Extracts
14/1648/REM	Homerton Business Centre, Purbeck Road	27	"In principle Strategic Housing has no problem with a cluster of 27 affordable homes together. It makes sense to have the entire block as affordable housing as the affordable provider can manage rents and service charges better."
06/1026/REM	The Marque	34	"The affordable housing has been located in independent blocks G and H... The Enabling and Development Officer from Community Services has commented on the proposal in light of the affordable housing provision. Many of the comments have related to the layout of the proposed units such as the need for a lift in each of the blocks, car parking and the treatment of some of the patios. The Officer also commented that the relationship between the private and affordable units is satisfactory."

It should also be noted that there is no reference to "pepper-potting" as a means of promoting inclusive and mixed communities in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Notwithstanding this, the development proposes significant public realm improvements creating a street which provides for social interaction as well as facilitating movement. The creation of a 'place' which can accommodate all sorts of activities, formal or informal, planned or spontaneous will facilitate integration between all residents of the development and the

	<p>wider community.</p> <p>The proposed distribution would be consistent with the objective in the NPPF of delivering a wide choice of quality homes and the creation of sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. This benefit would extend beyond the development site to the wider community.</p>																																																																																																														
<p>Lack of amenity & open space - albeit it is not clear whether this is a point made generally regarding the scheme i.e. overall, or whether just a deficiency perceived for Block H - this was a query raised in committee by Sarah Dyer (to obtain clarity for Officers) but which was not ultimately clarified to our understanding.</p>	<p>All dwelling units have been designed to follow the Lifetime Homes Design Guide with private, external amenity space for all residents. The level of private amenity space provided within the affordable housing provision is consistent with that of the open-market units. The specification of each unit in terms of unit size, and amenity space provision is set out in the table below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Unit Ref.</th> <th>Unit Type</th> <th>GIA (m²)</th> <th>Amenity Space</th> <th>Amenity Area (m²)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>H001</td><td>3B5P</td><td>106.56</td><td>Garden</td><td>18.77</td></tr> <tr><td>H101</td><td>2B3P</td><td>65.93</td><td>Projecting Balcony</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>H102</td><td>2B4P</td><td>74.16</td><td>Projecting Balcony</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>H103</td><td>1B2P</td><td>59.74</td><td>Recessed Balcony</td><td>6.59</td></tr> <tr><td>H104</td><td>1B2P</td><td>53.07</td><td>Recessed Balcony</td><td>7.05</td></tr> <tr><td>H105</td><td>2B3P</td><td>65.04</td><td>Recessed Balcony</td><td>6.98</td></tr> <tr><td>H201</td><td>2B3P</td><td>65.93</td><td>Projecting Balcony</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>H202</td><td>2B4P</td><td>74.14</td><td>Projecting Balcony</td><td>6.98</td></tr> <tr><td>H203</td><td>1B2P</td><td>59.74</td><td>Recessed Balcony</td><td>6.59</td></tr> <tr><td>H204</td><td>1B2P</td><td>53.07</td><td>Recessed Balcony</td><td>7.05</td></tr> <tr><td>H205</td><td>2B3P</td><td>65.04</td><td>Recessed Balcony</td><td>6.98</td></tr> <tr><td>H301</td><td>2B3P</td><td>65.93</td><td>Projecting Balcony</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>H302</td><td>2B4P</td><td>74.16</td><td>Projecting Balcony</td><td>6.98</td></tr> <tr><td>H303</td><td>1B2P</td><td>59.74</td><td>Recessed Balcony</td><td>6.59</td></tr> <tr><td>H304</td><td>1B2P</td><td>53.07</td><td>Recessed Balcony</td><td>7.05</td></tr> <tr><td>H305</td><td>2B3P</td><td>65.04</td><td>Recessed Balcony</td><td>6.98</td></tr> <tr><td>H401</td><td>2B3P</td><td>65.93</td><td>Projecting Balcony</td><td>6.04</td></tr> <tr><td>H402</td><td>2B4P</td><td>74.16</td><td>Projecting Balcony</td><td>6.98</td></tr> <tr><td>H403</td><td>1B2P</td><td>59.74</td><td>Recessed Balcony</td><td>6.59</td></tr> <tr><td>H404</td><td>1B2P</td><td>53.07</td><td>Recessed Balcony</td><td>7.05</td></tr> <tr><td>H405</td><td>2B3P</td><td>65.04</td><td>Recessed Balcony</td><td>6.98</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In addition to private amenity space, the scheme also enables Severn Place to be used as an active area of public realm / open space. Severn Place will be a controlled shared surface, which combined with drop bollards at either end, and a series of street trees and landscaping and raised planters will ensure the street is active, visually rich, safe, mews-like and suitable for play.</p> <p>The combination of private raised decks and shared areas provide an enjoyable, intimate and elegant space for private residents and the public. Communal seating will be located away from windows and the green infrastructure of tree and shrub planting will offer shade and attractive environment for users of the area. These are illustrated below:</p>	Unit Ref.	Unit Type	GIA (m ²)	Amenity Space	Amenity Area (m ²)	H001	3B5P	106.56	Garden	18.77	H101	2B3P	65.93	Projecting Balcony	6	H102	2B4P	74.16	Projecting Balcony	6	H103	1B2P	59.74	Recessed Balcony	6.59	H104	1B2P	53.07	Recessed Balcony	7.05	H105	2B3P	65.04	Recessed Balcony	6.98	H201	2B3P	65.93	Projecting Balcony	6	H202	2B4P	74.14	Projecting Balcony	6.98	H203	1B2P	59.74	Recessed Balcony	6.59	H204	1B2P	53.07	Recessed Balcony	7.05	H205	2B3P	65.04	Recessed Balcony	6.98	H301	2B3P	65.93	Projecting Balcony	6	H302	2B4P	74.16	Projecting Balcony	6.98	H303	1B2P	59.74	Recessed Balcony	6.59	H304	1B2P	53.07	Recessed Balcony	7.05	H305	2B3P	65.04	Recessed Balcony	6.98	H401	2B3P	65.93	Projecting Balcony	6.04	H402	2B4P	74.16	Projecting Balcony	6.98	H403	1B2P	59.74	Recessed Balcony	6.59	H404	1B2P	53.07	Recessed Balcony	7.05	H405	2B3P	65.04	Recessed Balcony	6.98
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It should further be noted that the site is well located in terms of wider community open space provision, being within easy, safe and convenient walking distance of Midsummer Common, Parkers Piece and St Matthews Piece.

A series of communal podium gardens and a communal rooftop garden are provided for occupants of the scheme. All occupants of Blocks F and G have access to the communal rooftop garden – which equates to approximately 37% of units.


Having regard to the LPA's calculation (as set out in an email from Education Officers dates 30/12/15) which confirms that the development is anticipated to generate three primary school children and two primary school children, it is considered unsustainable to provide any formal Local Areas for Play (LAPs) on site.

In regards to amenity space, the Officer's Committee Report states the following at Paragraph 8.83:

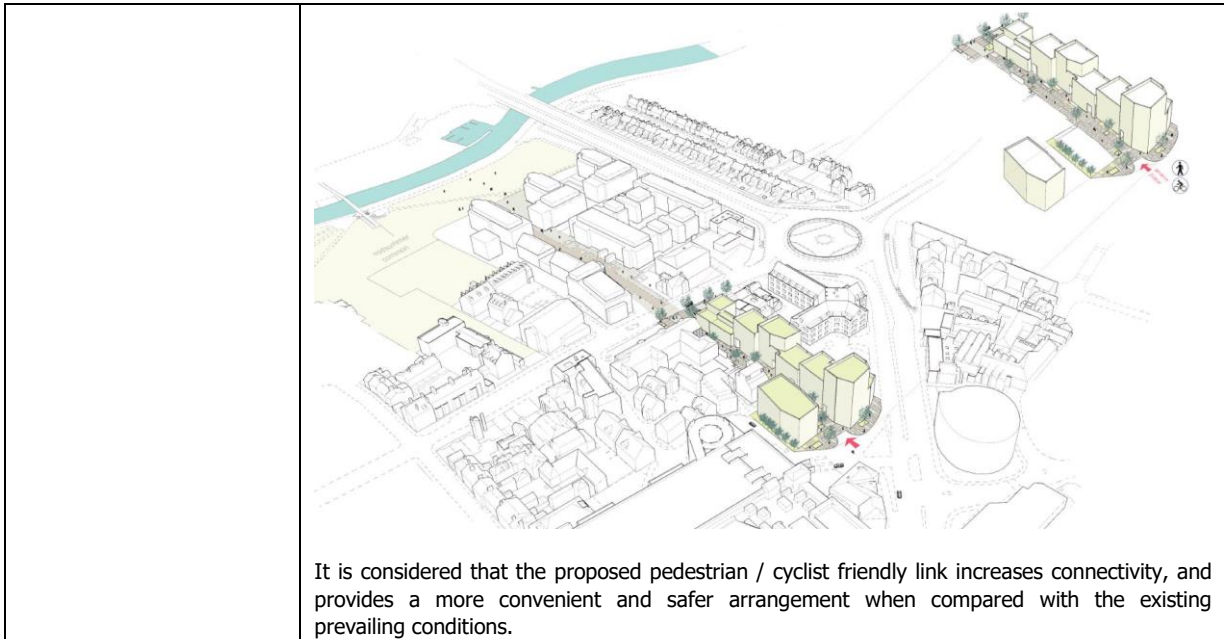
"The Council's Urban and Conservation Design Team have commented that the proposed amenity spaces for each of the units are considered of a functional size. The communal gardens are a welcomed addition to the amenity provision on site. I concur with this view and consider that given the size of the units proposed and their central location that there is adequate access to sufficient amenity space for all of the units. The amended proposals have also strengthened the boundary treatments to ensure maximum screening from the surrounding traffic noise."

Height - concern regarding Block G, and the need to reduce this by a storey: given its relative height in

Cambridge City Council Design & Conservation Panel (11/06/2014) have 'accepted the principle of an 8 storey Block G'. 'The Urban Design and Conservation Team advise that Block G forms an appropriate landmark building on East Road and can support a "gateway" style proposal. They advise that it would not be out of character with this built up, commercial part of the city

<p>its immediate/surrounding context, as opposed to its possible visibility/impact in a wider visual and a landscape sense.</p>	<p><i>and would also not compromise the function of any future development on the site of Compass House’.</i></p> <p>Given that no concerns have been raised regarding the height of all other blocks, it is considered that the height of Block G should be evaluated in the context of the other proposed blocks.</p> <p>The eight distinct building blocks have been appropriately scaled to reflect their immediate surroundings. Block A (2/3 storeys reflects the existing building heights facing Newmarket Road. Blocks G and H (8/ 5 storeys respectively) respond in height to the larger buildings facing East Road, such as the Crown Court, the Grafton Centre, the ARU accommodation at Young Street and Parkside Place. Block G will play a townscape role given its height and its relationship to the Elizabeth Way roundabout and to East Road. The taller section of Block G contains an open arcade at its base. Deeper reveals, taller vertical openings and open corners at the building’s top provide relief and visual interest and help to reduce its mass.</p> <p>Verified View 12 Occupation Road, adjacent to Elizabeth Way Roundabout (Easting 546195.909, Northing 258832.968) is included below to illustrate the height of Block G in relation to its immediate/surrounding context.</p>  <p>Further justification of the height of Block G in the context of its immediate/surrounding context will be provided under separate cover and in due course.</p>
<p>Level of provision of affordable housing - whether the scheme, notwithstanding the viability assessment and independent review findings, should provide for the targeted 40% provision.</p>	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework (at Paragraph 111) sets out a core planning principle that in decision-taking local planning authorities should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land). Paragraph 173 of the NPPF states that <i>‘pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision-taking’</i>. The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) states that <i>‘to incentivise the bringing back into use of brownfield sites, local planning authorities should ... take a flexible approach in seeking levels of planning obligations and other contributions to ensure that the combined total impact does not make a site unviable’</i>. CLP 2005 Policy 5/5 states that <i>‘the precise amount of such [affordable] housing to be provided on each site will be negotiated taking into account the viability of the development, any particular costs associated with the development and whether there are other planning objectives which need to be given priority’</i>.</p> <p>A number of recent appeal decisions support and confirm the approach to affordable housing provision –stating that if the requirement for affordable housing means that the development is not economically viable, the application must be dealt with so that it becomes viable. Example appeal references are included below for reference:</p> <p>APP/U1105/S/15/3129438 –allowed on 21st December 2015 APP/A5840/S/15/3121484 – allowed on 24th November 2015 APP/C5690/S/15/3032527 – allowed on 4th September 2015</p>

	<p>APP/J3015/S/15/3019494 – allowed on 17th August 2015</p> <p>Through the Applicant’s submission of the viability assessment (which has been independently verified and accepted by the District Valuer) it has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the LPA that a planning obligation of the 40% provision targeted by CLP 2006 Policy 5/5 would cause the development to be unviable. Indeed the viability assessment demonstrated that the 21 units offered are significantly in excess of the number of units which the viability assessment can justify. It has accordingly been demonstrated that the level of provision of affordable housing is entirely justified and acceptable.</p>
<p>Renewable energy provision - the lack of integration of Block H into the overall sustainability solution for the site – contrary to the Eastern Gate SPD.</p>	<p>As confirmed in the Applicant’s email to the Authority (dated 13/01/2016) the Sustainability Appraisal submitted in support of this application makes clear that all 84 apartments are served by the CHP installation irrespective of which block they are in. Accordingly, Block H will be connected to the proposed CHP installation.</p> <p>It is considered that the LPA’s enforcement of this can be capably controlled via Condition 14 proposed within the Officer’s Report – which requires information of the renewable energy provision to be submitted to, and approved by the LPA prior to its installation.</p>
<p>Lack of connectivity - throughout the site and to surrounds etc.</p>	<p><u>Existing Connectivity</u></p> <p>The pedestrian network surrounding the site is of a good quality and well maintained footpaths and street lighting on both sides of Newmarket Road. Located immediately to the east of the site is a signalised roundabout; pedestrian subway access is provided to all arms of the roundabout. The subway appears to be clean, lit and well maintained. Approximately 70m to the north west of the site a zebra crossing is located; this can be used to access Midsummer Common on the north side of Newmarket Road and eastbound bus stops. The zebra crossing incorporates a central refuge with guard railing. To the east of the junction with Auckland Road on Newmarket Road, a Toucan crossing is located approximately 200m east of the development site. Located to the north-east of the site is Walnut Tree Avenue; the latter provides a pedestrian route underneath Elizabeth Way, following the southern bank of the River Cam.</p> <p>There is currently no through-access from East Road in the south to Newmarket Road in the north. It is therefore considered that the current arrangement stifles permeability in this locality. Consequently, the Eastern Gate Development Framework has identified that opportunities exist in and around the site to create new links between communities.</p> <p><u>Proposals</u></p> <p>The proposed development enables Severn Place to act as a pedestrian and cyclist through route between East Road and Newmarket Road creating a comfortable and simplified pedestrian and cyclist environment. Accordingly, the development is considered in line with CLP 2014 Policy 22 through the provision of improved connectivity, and the re-establishment of historic routes.</p> <p>The development will facilitate access to the cycle path to the south of the site on East Road, and enhance the character of the area promoting walking and cycling accessibility in line with CLP 2006 Policy 8/4 and CLP 2014 Policy 80. This is shown on the below drawing which illustrates the proposed increased permeability and urban connections:</p>



Conclusion

Having regard to the considerations outlined, the applicant respectfully contends that the application is acceptable, and planning permission ought to be granted.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Geraint John
Director
Geraint John Planning Ltd.