

Development Control Forum DCF/1 Friday, 7 September 2018

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FORUM 7 September 2018

10.00 am - 12.15 pm

Present

Planning Committee Members: Councillors Blencowe, Hipkin, Smart and Thornburrow

Ward Councillors:

Councillor Massey

Councillor Johnson

Officers:

Delivery Manager: Eileen Paterson (Chair)

Senior Planner: Charlotte Burton

Committee Manager: Sarah Steed

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

18/14/DCF Declarations of Interest

The Chair outlined the role and purpose of the Development Control Forum. She stated no decisions would be taken at the meeting.

18/15/DCF Application and Petition Details 18/1002/FUL - 211-213 Newmarket Road & 2 Godesdone Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB5 8HA

Application No: 18/1002/FUL

Site Address: 211-213 Newmarket Road & 2 Godesdone Road
Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB5 8HA

Description: Demolition of existing buildings at 211-213 Newmarket Road and construction of a hotel (C1 use), with change of use and conversion of 2 Godesdone Road to C1 use, and provision of associated infrastructure.

Applicant: MPMerchant (NR) Ltd and easyHotel

Agent: Savills (UK) Ltd

Address: Unex House 132-134 Hills Road Cambridge CB2 8PA United Kingdom

Lead Petitioner: Resident of Riverside

Case Officer: Charlotte Burton

Text of Petition:

This site is not suitable for budget hotel use and in any case is not in accordance with the policy describing the need for hotel bedrooms. The application is overdevelopment of this small site on primarily residential Godesdone Road in the Riverside and Stourbridge Conservation Area. The overall quality of the design is not in keeping with such an important site. The building is at a gateway to the conservation area explicitly identified as critical in the Eastern Gateway Policy. There is no landscaping to soften the impact of the building. The transport statement and hotel travel plan are completely inadequate to avoid negative impact on residential amenity over a wide area as it will jeopardise road safety; increase existing overnight parking stress; and generate many extra journeys in an area already experiencing severe congestion. Approval of this application would add to anti-social behaviour issues including drug dealing associated with budget hotels. To address public safety there is a need for design changes to the entrance as well as additional street lighting to avoid street disturbance and noise. The application does not show how deliveries in the street rather than a courtyard and guests using taxis to arrive and waiting for departure would not increase air pollution to unsafe levels. The application does not address the loss of residential amenity from increased noise.

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

The site could be suitable for a boutique hotel with a reasonable number of rooms, and internal courtyard for drop offs; provision for disabled parking; and the reception / delivery entrance, and a much better travel plan either with on-site parking / compulsory valet parking / or a commitment in perpetuity to fund the extra costs of the council rather than residents to enforce an extension to the restriction hours of the neighbouring CPZs.

Case by Applicant

A representative on behalf of the applicant made the following points:

- i. Did not think that any new issues arose from the revised NPPF which had been issued that week.
- ii. Images were inserted in the presentation to give context of the site.
- iii. Commented that there had been a large number of third party representations, he went through the statutory consultation responses.
- iv. The Planning Policy Team had considered the application and said it was acceptable.

- v. The Urban Design and Conservation Team considered the scale and massing of the proposal was acceptable.
- vi. Commented that there was no landscaping on site at the moment but the scheme incorporated external planters along Newmarket Road / Godesdone Road to enhance the public realm. There would be an internal courtyard area which would include planters.
- vii. Amenity issues were addressed through a technical note. The Transport Assessment considered road safety as part of its scope. A travel plan had been submitted to address parking issues.
- viii. The applicant had spoken with the Environmental Health Team regarding air quality.
- ix. Easyhotel operated a zero tolerance policy in respect of anti-social behaviour.
- x. Noted that the Petitioner's view was that the site was suitable for a boutique hotel however the proposal was for an Easyhotel with 90 rooms.
- xi. There was an internal courtyard for drop offs and their proposal had been accepted by the Highways Department.
- xii. There was a travel plan in place to manage guests.
- xiii. Pre-application discussions directed the reception / delivery entrance towards the commercial frontage.
- xiv. Design changes had been considered following the public exhibition and consultation with residents and further design ideas could be considered.

Case by Petitioners

A representative on behalf of the petitioners made the following points:

- i. This was the third budget hotel on this small congested stretch of Newmarket Road.
- ii. First major concern was overdevelopment, the site was not large enough to support budget hotel use.
- iii. The development's Godesdone Road frontage would be 50% of the length of the Newmarket Road frontage.
- iv. There was a blind junction from Newmarket Road into Godesdone Road so vehicles took a wide line when turning.
- v. The 90 bedrooms proposed was more than all the bedrooms in the whole of Godesdone Road.
- vi. The application proposes to step back the Godesdone Road frontage to accommodate a drop off bay.
- vii. The site was smaller than the Travelodge or Premier Inn sites.
- viii. There were already 340 budget hotel rooms on this junction.

- ix. Easyhotel wants to locate 41% as many bedrooms as Travelodge onto a site that is only 17% of the Travelodge site area and 74% as many bedrooms as Premier Inn into a site that is only 31.5% of the Premier Inn's site.
- x. If the same ratios were applied to site area as Travelodge and Premier Inn, the site would support 38 bedrooms.
- xi. The reception area had no seating for guests to socialise.
- xii. The pavement at entrances was narrow and it was also narrow around the drop off bay.
- xiii. Budget hotel guest's behaviour can be disruptive for neighbours. This type of hotel usually operated a lean staff model but with large numbers of guests which could include stag / hen parties.
- xiv. Fire alarms were set off in the Travelodge; guests were evacuated at 2am which was disruptive to Godesdone residents. One on-site staff member cannot deal with all behavioural issues.
- xv. Coaches regularly parked on Newmarket Road despite travel plans providing for drop offs at the rear of premises.
- xvi. The second concern expressed was that this was unsustainable development which provided no social or environmental benefit to the community.
- xvii. This stretch of Newmarket Road was the resident's 'high street' and supported a rich mix of uses. Reference was made to the new local plan policy 22 which provided that development should reflect the predominantly residential nature of the area.
- xviii. Commented that if the site was given to hotel use it would take the opportunity away for other local uses.
- xix. The city had already satisfied its projected budget hotel need set until 2031, it was 11 rooms away from this projected need despite the growth period being 13 years away.
- xx. The Local Plan Inspector had identified a need for quirky 5* hotels. The development did not meet the needs of residents or those in the local plan.
- xxi. The third concern was traffic impact, questioned if the site was appropriate at all and commented on the impact on road safety and the local road network.
- xxii. Questioned how taxi drop offs would be enforced, following the Travelodge development.
- xxiii. The trip numbers on Godesdone Road will double.
- xxiv. Resident's fourth concern was the overbearing effect of the proposed development on the Conservation Area.

Members Questions and Comments

Ward Councillor Massey made the following points:

- i. Referred to anti-social behaviour associated with budget hotels and also TripAdvisor comments regarding drug dealing, prostitution and human trafficking.
- ii. Police were notified of drug dealing, mugging and prostitution issues in the East Area and these issues were made a police priority at the last East Area Committee.
- iii. Budget hotels cut costs to the bone, which limited resources to tackle anti-social behaviour, this was why budget hotels should not be located in residential areas.
- iv. Budget hotels attracted stag / hen parties, the wheeling of suitcases late at night had an adverse effect on residents.
- v. Referred to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions.
- vi. Could not see any benefit of the proposed development to the ward, which was the most diverse ward in the city.

Ward Councillor Johnson made the following points:

- i. Referred to policy 77 of the new local plan, more weight could be attached following the Planning Inspector's letter.
- ii. Referred to paragraph 8.47 of the Local Plan, the Hotel Future Study influenced policy 77.
- iii. 1500 bedrooms were identified in the Hotel Future Study (completed in 2012), the budget hotel room provision nearly exceeded the projected growth identified up to 2031.
- iv. Referred to a shortfall in 3-5* hotel sector.
- v. Easyhotel was a budget hotel brand, new hotels should be supported if they were at the upper end of hotel provision.

Case Officer comments

- i. There were over 150 third party objections and some representations in support received for this application. The application would go to Planning Committee for determination.
- ii. Following the publication of the Planning Inspector's report on Monday, the case officer would need to go through and address issues against the local plan policies.
- iii. The Planning Policy Team had said that the proposal was compliant with the adopted and emerging policy 77 but further discussions were needed with the Planning Policy Team.
- iv. In considering the impact on transport, an objection had been received from Highways particularly looking at Godesdone Road, further information had been submitted by the Applicant and comments were waited from Highways.

- v. It was difficult to make a clear link between anti-social behaviour and the budget hotel use proposed.
- vi. Commented on the availability of spill out space and residential amenity.
- vii. The Urban Design and Conservation team is supportive of the proposal in terms of scale and massing and the design of the frontage.
- viii. Cycle parking was in the process of being assessed by the Landscape Officer.
- ix. Environmental Health Team was satisfied with information submitted regarding air quality but other concerns remain outstanding.
- x. The Council's Sustainable Drainage Engineer had raised issues which needed to be addressed by the Applicant.
- xi. The Council's Access Officer had raised issues regarding the lack of accessible parking and the location of rooms within the hotel.

During the Case Officers comments the fire alarm sounded and the council building was evacuated, the meeting reconvened at 11.32am.

Planning Committee Members' questions and comments:

The Applicant responded to Members' questions as follows:

- i. The Applicant was still in discussions with Highways but would keep Members' comments about traffic in mind.
- ii. The site would have its own bicycles for guests to use so they should not need to use other bikes for example Ofo bikes.
- iii. No food or beverages would be available on site.
- iv. A single laundry van would be present daily and would have a stay of 20 minutes, the layby should be suitable to accommodate the laundry van.
- v. It was proposed to have weekly refuse collections.
- vi. Bird boxes and the technical aspects of a green roof were being explored.
- vii. The applicant had had pre-application discussions with the Planning Officers and had considered SPD requirements. This was a considered application bearing in mind the Conservation Area.
- viii. The design model of EasyHotel was to provide a place for guests to sleep, guests would go out to eat so would not be hanging around the hotel and would be enjoying the city.
- ix. The ethos of the hotel was to accommodate people in small rooms it was not expected that people would stay for a long period of time. There were some rooms without windows, this was common in London. Some people liked to take advantage of the discount price for a room without windows.

- x. A typical room was 12-14sqm but disabled rooms were bigger.
- xi. Members of the public who were registered disabled and had blue badges could park their cars in the local area. The information on the booking system would make it clear that this was a car free site.
- xii. The site was in an urban area so the applicant would need to be mindful of construction timings and issues. Basement excavation would take one week.

Summing up by the Applicant's Agent:

- i. Expressed thanks for holding the Development Control Forum.
- ii. The application was a detailed application for demolition and construction of a hotel.
- iii. The application contained a significant amount of information.
- iv. Referred to the public exhibition which was well attended at the beginning of the year.
- v. The statutory consultees either supported the proposal, had no objections or issues could be addressed through condition.
- vi. There were comprehensive representations from third parties but they would have to agree to disagree on certain issues.
- vii. Pre-application advice pre-dated the planning application.
- viii. Referred to policy 20 in the SPD.
- ix. Acknowledged the discussion regarding the Hotel Needs Assessment but commented that it was difficult to forecast hotels and market issues.
- x. Commented that this was a real opportunity to bring forward redevelopment.

Summing up by the Petitioners:

- i. Pre-application advice to the applicant about the intensity of use did not reassure the petitioners.
- ii. The site was embedded in a residential street, if people stayed daily this was 77-80 people staying daily, questioned how this could be accommodated on a tiny street.
- iii. Questioned if the drop-off bay was full what guests did.
- iv. Questioned what disabled guests would do if the drop off bay was occupied.
- v. Commented that there was not enough existing resident's parking.
- vi. Questioned why Travelodge was used by the applicant in the travel plan if it was not a comparator.
- vii. Amenity space was not addressed by Easyhotel.
- viii. Conservation Area legislation was clear, development should preserve or enhance, there was no half way house compromise.

- ix. This application would set a precedent for the rest of Newmarket Road.
- x. Regeneration should support the residential area.

The applicant agreed to provide a construction plan for digging the basement and a table to show the sqm of rooms.

Final Comments of the Chair

The Chair observed the following:

- i. Notes of the Development Control Forum would be made available to relevant parties.
- ii. Application to be considered at a future Planning Committee.

The meeting ended at 12.15 pm

CHAIR