

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL FORUM13 October 2021
10.00 am - 12.00 pm**Present****Planning Committee Members:** Councillors Baigent, Dryden, Gawthrope
Wood, Porrer, Smart and Thornburrow

Alternates: McQueen, Page-Croft and Herbert

Officers:

Delivery Manager Development Management: Nigel Blazeby

Case Officer: Steve Fraser Lim

Committee Manager: Claire Tunncliffe

Meeting Producer: Sarah Steed

For Applicant:

Mike Derbyshire (Bidwells)

Douglas Higgins (First Base)

Mathew Yeoman (Buckley Gray Yeoman)

For Petitioners:

2 Members of South Petersfield Residents Association

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**21/7/DCF Declarations of Interest**

Item	Name	Reason
All	Councillor Baigent	Personal: Cam Cycle

21/8/DCF Application and Petition Details (21/03620/FUL / Devonshire Gardens Devonshire Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB1 2BJ)Application and Petition Details (21/03620/FUL / Devonshire Gardens
Devonshire Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB1 2BJ)

Application No: 21/03620/FUL

Site Address: Devonshire Gardens Devonshire Road Cambridge
Cambridgeshire CB1 2BJ

Description: Demolition of existing depot building and redevelopment of site to provide two new buildings comprising Class E (g)(i) / E (g) (ii) floorspace with associated plant and cycle parking, three new residential buildings comprising 100 units with associated plant and cycle parking, one new building comprising flexible commercial space (Class E) to include a creche with associated cycle parking, flexible community space (Class F.1/F.2), hard and soft landscaping and associated access.

Agent: Alison Wright

Address: Bidwell House Trumpington Road Cambridge CB2 9LD

Lead Petitioner: South Petersfield Residents Association

Case Officer: Steve Fraser Lim

Text of Petition:

We, the undersigned, request a Development Control Forum on the planning application for Devonshire Gardens (21/03620/FUL) to address matters that the applicant believes have been adequately addressed or are immaterial considerations, but which we believe are of critical importance to the long-term success of this development:

1. The provision of usable open green space is too small and cramped.
2. There needs to be more provision for visitors, deliveries, and club cars.
3. The density and compactness of the dwellings is not conducive to a high quality of life.
4. The single-aspect dwellings facing north, and north-of-west will receive too little direct sunlight, and those facing south may receive too much in the height of summer.

Case by Applicant

- i. Believed the application met the key requirements of the proposed Greater Cambridge Local Plan:
 - Reducing climate impacts through compact development located to connect homes and jobs, and where active and sustainable travel can be maximised.
 - Making best use of suitable safeguarded and brownfield land.
 - Making best use of existing and committed key sustainable transport infrastructure.
- ii. In response to the petitioner's comment that 'the provision of usable open space was too small and cramped'. This application offered publicly accessible green open space at the heart of the development which offered a sense of community for all with the following throughout the site:

- Edible planting.
 - Play on the way elements
 - Creche Garden
 - Tree canopy
 - Cafe style of seating
 - Rain gardens
 - New trees and flowers throughout the site; 55% increase in the number of existing trees.
 - Improved foot and cycle way
 - Community event space
- iii. The developer also wanted to ensure that those living and working on site also had their own access with the open spaces.
 - iv. There would be employment space on site and office workers would have access to communal roof terraces and gardens.
 - v. Every residential unit would have private outdoor amenity space with either a balcony, gardens, or winter gardens.
 - vi. Feedback received from the consultation indicated strong support for the proposed public open space design including the open spaces, community garden and new planting throughout.
 - vii. 3000 people had responded to the consultation with only four negative responses.
 - viii. The application offered 51% open space compared to other local developments including Ironworks 28% and CB1 development 16.4%.
 - ix. The central green spaces would receive high levels of sunlight for significant portions of the day.
 - x. In response to the petitioner's comments 'there needed to be more provision for visitors, deliveries and club cars', the site was a car free development. The potential to provide additional car club / visitor space had been considered.
 - xi. Single-aspect dwellings have been minimised, with a secondary aspect into balconies. The Daylight / sunlight assessment demonstrates adequate levels of daylight to proposed units. The overheating assessment demonstrates that no units are at risk of overheating, including in future climate scenarios.
 - xii. The application would reduce climate impact through compact development located to connect homes and jobs, and where active and sustainable travel could be maximised.
 - xiii. The site made the best use of suitable safeguarded and brownfield land.
 - xiv. The application benefited from existing and committed key sustainable transport infrastructure.

Case by Petitioners

- i. The provision of usable open green space was small and cramped.
- ii. More provision was required for visitors, deliveries and club cars was required.
- iii. The density and compactness of the dwellings was not conducive to a high quality of life.
- iv. The single-aspect dwellings facing north, and north-of-west would receive too little direct sunlight, and those facing south could receive too much in the height of summer.
- v. The Local Plan envisaged 43 dwellings on this site, but the proposal was for 100 dwellings, office space for up to 1,000 employees, a crèche and community rooms.
- vi. Accepted that higher density development was appropriate, but this intensity of development would not support a quality of life the Local Plan promoted.
- vii. The additional employment space would create a net increase in demand for housing of over 500 dwellings in a city where there was a shortage of housing.
- viii. The central green wedge could only be considered as “usable green space”, 0.24 hectares for approximately 250 on-site residents, up to 1,000 on-site workers, and visitors.
- ix. The Local Plan stated 0.625 hectares for informal open space and children’s play area before considering the needs of workers and visitors.
- x. Most of the ‘dual aspect’ dwellings have been misclassified. Balconies, like bay windows, did not create a second aspect from within the dwelling.
- xi. 52% of living rooms did not meet the APSH (Annual Probable Sunlight Hours) target values.
- xii. The sunlight study explicitly excluded the effect of trees, these would further reduce indirect light to dwellings facing Devonshire Rd (north of west) and the railway cottages (north).
- xiii. The Chisholm Trail currently had no agreed connections to the north or south. Suggested the Planning and Highway Authorities must take responsibility with Network Rail and, as a backup plan, other landowners.
- xiv. The site required better provision for the level of deliveries to the site for both residents and businesses.
- xv. Residents would need one cycle parking space per person, and a higher than typical allowance for cargo bikes and trailers.
- xvi. This application should include enough electric club cars to serve the surrounding community.
- xvii. Questioned if the way the proposals had been presented to the public were accurate, the level of open space was minimum and cramped.

- xviii. Asked why there was no usable play space for children on site.
- xix. Expressed concern at the service charge to residents and how this increase annually if required.

Case Officer Comments

- i. Application was submitted on 2 August 2021, following pre-application discussions
- ii. The City Council notified 675 neighbours with notices displayed and the consultation period run until 9 September 2021.
- iii. 4 letters of objection had been received and 3 letters of support.
- iv. The objections raised were
 - lack of parking,
 - lack of space between the buildings,
 - concern regarding the rental housing which could damage the cohesion of the community
 - some buildings were too large
 - quality of the accommodation.
 - querying the location of the parking for the disabled.
- v. Those in support highlighted the following:
 - Application would deliver new open space
 - Enhance biodiversity.
 - Car free development would benefit the surrounding community.
 - Less HGV movements
 - Good quality office space would meet the needs of small enterprises in the city and creative sector.
- vi. Comments from consultees were as follows:
 - Housing Officers – requested a scenario setting table to consider the potential for an increase for the number of discount market rent units or whether the discounts be increased
 - Conservation and Design Officers - raised significant concerns around the amount of development, the visual presence alongside the railway, height of block C and D adjacent to the railway line.
 - Landscape Officers – expressed unease with regard to the impacts identified in the townscape visual impact assessment. Made comment on the public open space in the middle of the site.
 - Tree Officers – highlighted the trees along the frontage of Devonshire Road are subject to a Tree Preservation Order. The open space in the centre of the site could not accommodate larger species of trees.
 - Sustainability Officers – much to admire and welcomed a fossil fuel free energy strategy, the social value generated by the proposals

and ambition to achieve BREEAM 'Outstanding' rating for offices.. Concerned regarding the single aspect units, the overheating assessment did not take sufficient account of future climate scenarios. The ground floor units may not be able to have windows open all the time to achieve the required cooling.

- Pollution Officers – made comment on the noise assessment.
 - Drainage Officer – requested further information on how 1 in 30 and 1 in 100 rainfall events were managed.
- vii. Comments from external consultees were as follows:
- Highway Authority – raised concern regarding the loading bay on Devonshire Road on highway safety grounds.
 - S106 Officer (County Council) – highlighted a low child yield on the development due to the smaller size units on site; therefore, no need for financial contributions for education requirements.
 - Environment Agency – requested conditions regarding ground contamination, surface water management.
 - Lead Flood Authority (County Council) – highlighted the drainage infiltration scheme is likely to be problematic.
- viii. Currently in discussion with the applicant on the issues raised.

Ward Councillor Comments

- i. Fully endorsed all the comments from the petitioners.
- ii. The application was an example of over development.
- iii. With up to 1000 employees on the development this would create an additional need for housing.
- iv. Public open spaces would not be adopted by the local council but would be maintained by a service charge, paid for by businesses and residents.
- v. The service charge could be very high for future residential occupiers. business occupiers should be charged a higher percentage to reduce bills for future residents.
- vi. Suggested the service charge should be published and should be a flat rate for an agreed number of years.
- vii. Further discussions were required on the service charge.
- viii. 20% of the 100 homes would be affordable (Discount Market Rent). Further discussion was required to ensure that these 20% are genuinely affordable rent.
- ix. No service road at the back of site for the offices, not appropriate.
- x. Concerned about the decision to run a competition to decide on the planting throughout the site.
- xi. The planting needed a professional approach as the landscape needed to survive long term.

Members' Questions and Statements.

- i. The minimum space standard should not be a target, but developers should aim to exceed these.
- ii. Enquired if the figure of 96% compliance with BRE guidelines for daylight and 42% compliance for sunlight for future occupiers referenced in the presentation could be explained.
- iii. Enquired what, if any, fossil fuel would be used on site and if air conditioning units would be permitted.
- iv. Asked if the applicant had considered any other build materials than brick as it was not a sustainable material.
- v. Questioned if the case officer had any comment to make on the level of marketing which had been undertaken to promote the scheme.
- vi. Expressed unease at the lack of cycle space for the entire site, more was required.
- vii. Questioned if there would be any solar panels on site.
- viii. Asked if there would be individual electric and water meters in the flats.
- ix. Required further information on the recycling of grey water.
- x. Voiced concern at the affordable rent; given the emerging Local Plan would advise of 40% as affordable housing, would hope that the affordable rent was substantially lower than market rent.
- xi. Enquired how many EV charging points would be on site.
- xii. Recommended an access point for the future Chisolm Trail.
- xiii. Questioned how the trees along Devonshire Road would be protected during development.
- xiv. Asked why there was no play space for young children.
- xv. Enquired if the 20% of affordable rent would be made up of a mixture of all the housing on site or the cheapest on site; asked how it would be broken down.
- xvi. Noted the site was adjacent to the conservation area on two sides.
- xvii. Reiterated that minimum space standard and affordable rental units were not a target and should be superseded.
- xviii. No mention had been made of older people who would live on site, the community facilities and outdoor space would also suit this demographic.

In response the Case Officer said the following:

- i. The National Planning Policy Framework (PPF) did encourage public consultation at the pre application and application stage; the applicant was following guidelines.
- ii. There would be an opportunity for members of the public to respond to the Council as part of the planning application consultation process.

- iii. Root protection areas would be marked out for the construction phase with fencing to prevent vehicle access and storage of materials close to the trees.
- iv. Could request further details of tree protection through planning conditions attached to any planning permission.

In response the Applicant(s) said the following:

- i. With regards to the 96% daylight figure and 48% sunlight figure; daylight is more important for amenity of future occupiers. The sun light figure was not the essential measure in terms of the Building Research Establishment (BRE) guidance, as not all residential units can face southwards. These figures were extremely high for an urban site within an existing town centre.
- ii. There would be no fossil fuel on site with an all-electric energy strategy, with mechanical ventilation as standard on modern builds with a bypass mode to provide a cooling benefit. There would be no need for air conditioning.
- iii. There will be additional investment in the building fabric to ensure thermal efficiencies throughout so the space heating requirements throughout the buildings was minimal.
- iv. The one planet living approach framework which had been adopted went beyond the materials and energy used on site but looked at other issues relevant to those on site such as culture, health and wellbeing, sustainable food, and water.
- v. The design team had been challenged to reduce the water demand so had included rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling.
- vi. The choice of building material was looked at in terms of what were sustainable in production and sustainability of longevity; brick and stone had a long-life span.
- vii. Commercial buildings on site would achieve the BREEAM 'outstanding' standard.
- viii. The Statement of Community Involvement highlighted much of the feedback received from the consultation.
- ix. Due to the investment in the fabric of the building and the thermal efficiency electric panel radiators would be installed as the space heating requirement would be minimal.
- x. Currently exploring retention systems for the recycling of greywater. There was also rainwater harvesting points across the site and two blue roofs which would store rainwater to be used for sustainable irrigation.
- xi. Solar panels were integrated on the south facing blocks C & D.
- xii. Every individual apartment would be metered for water and energy.
- xiii. All visitor and car club spaces would have EV charge points.

- xiv. There would be a detailed discussion regarding rent levels when ready to let to take affordability into account.
- xv. The smaller buildings on site were closest to the Devonshire Road tree line with a significant distance between the front of the buildings and the trees. There was also an existing concrete hardstanding near to the edge of the trees, and tree roots would be unlikely to have grown under this. .
- xvi. The service charge was to ensure the site was maintained to the highest possible standard.
- xvii. There was dedicated open space specifically allocated to the creche. Would investigate the possibility if this could be used by residents after the creche had closed.
- xviii. The adopted policy for the Chisholm Trail was dependent on Network Rail Land. Landscaping on site allowed for future flexibility of access to the Trail.
- xix. The number of cycle spaces on site complied with the current standard for office parking. The residential cycle spaces had been a challenge, but all the cycle parking would be within secure areas within each building.
- xx. The 20% of affordable rent units would be predominantly 1 and 2 bed units as was the nature of the scheme, with fewer larger units overall.
- xxi. The open space on site had been led by context and design. The minimum private open space standard had been exceeded with the inclusion of balconies.

Summing up the Applicant:

- i. The application comprises a number of 'firsts'. The first major car free development, one planet living scheme, BREEAM 'Outstanding' office standard, and the first major build to rent scheme in the city centre.
- ii. The applicant was a long-term investor managing not just the buildings but the open spaces to ensure a long-lasting community.
- iii. Long-lasting high-quality materials.
- iv. Over half the site would be new public open spaces which would benefit the local community.
- v. 400% net gain in biodiversity in line with the Natural Cambridgeshire developing with nature toolkit.
- vi. Enabling the Chisholm trail to come forward.
- vii. No fossil fuels to be used on site.
- viii. There was a shortage of office space in Cambridge and the proposals would help to meet demand. There would also be co-working space open to the public and meeting rooms for hire to all users.
- ix. Engaging with Sustainable Food Organisation to ensure that the edible planting was well managed and offered longevity to all the community. Also, on site would a community kitchen.

- x. The development would benefit the wider community with the pavilion in the centre.

Summing up by the Petitioner.

- i. Requested the applicant scaled back the level of employment floorspace and create more open green space.
- ii. Only 20% of the site was usable open space.
- iii. More space was for delivery vehicles on the northern and southern access
- iv. More cycle space was required for residents.
- v. More controlled visitor spaces were required.
- vi. False to say a trade-off between trees and vehicle parking. Employment space should be reduced to gain space.
- vii. The dwellings needed to be reconfigured to increase the level of daylight and sunlight that all the dwellings would receive to improve the quality of light.
- viii. Recommended that one of the commercial dwellings was relocated to the north of the site to improve sunlight for residential dwellings.
- ix. The Highways Authority and Planning Authority need to take an active approach to future proof the Chisholm Trail, if necessary, undertake compulsory purchase order of land.

Final Comments of the Chair

- i. Summarised the main issues discussed.
- ii. Notes of the Development Control Forum would be made available to the relevant parties and published on the City Council website.
- iii. A copy of the minutes would be attached to the Planning Officer's report when the application would be considered at a future Planning Committee.
- iv. The Case Officer would contact the applicant/ agent after the meeting to discuss the outcome of the meeting and follow up any actions, as necessary.
- v. The applicant would be encouraged to keep in contact with the petitioners and seek their views on any proposed amendments.
All interest parties would be advised of the date when the application would be considered by the Planning Committee.

The meeting ended at 12.00 pm

CHAIR