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PLANNING

To All Members of the West Area Committee

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Our ref: PMcK/CWB
Your ref:

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Dear Councillor

11/1585/FUL – PROPOSED ERECTION OF 4no. FOUR BED LINK DETACHED RESIDENTIAL UNITS, TOGETHER WITH 11 CAR PARKING SPACES, CYCLE PARKING AND ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING WORKS (FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING OUTBUILDINGS TO THE SIDE AND REAR OF 82 RICHMOND ROAD)

82 RICHMOND ROAD, CAMBRIDGE, CB4 3PT

I am writing to you in advance of the forthcoming West Area Committee Meeting on Thursday 1st March 2012, when the above-mentioned planning application is to be considered with a recommendation of approval. I am the applicants' agent. The submission is a joint application on behalf of the present site owner, Mr E Seaby and Richmond Road (Cambridge) LLP, a joint venture set up by established local developers Enterprise Property Group and Laragh House Developments.

This amended proposal for the site is submitted in response to application 11/0921/FUL that was refused planning permission on the site in November 2011 despite a recommendation of approval from planning officers. This application has subsequently been dismissed at appeal in February 2012. The site was however deemed to be acceptable by both the local Planning Authority and the Planning Inspectorate. The principle of development on the site is acceptable and the sole refusal of this previous application related to design. We believe that this fresh application has addressed the design shortcomings considered to exist within the previous application by Members of the Area Committee.

Importantly, throughout the entire development process for this site, the applicants have been keen to involve all local members of the community in their attempts to bring forward the sustainable development of this previously developed site, in a manner which will be of benefit to the area. This application has once again been the subject of extensive public consultation and following submission of the application a public exhibition was held on the 25th January 2012. Further 'one to one' visits to neighbours in close proximity to the subject site were undertaken to provide an opportunity to discuss the revised design.

Following this exhibition, some additional information has been submitted to address concerns raised by the local residents. The main concerns raised by the local residents have been in relation to the access/egress and its potential impact on the surrounding properties within Richmond Road. An additional Technical Note, along with Tracking drawings, has been prepared by SLR Consulting and we are of the opinion that these have successfully addressed

the issues that have been raised by the Residents Association and within the Highways Consultation response. I have attached a copy of this information for reference. In summary:

- The initially proposed traffic calming rumble strips (cobblestones) have been removed;
- Suitable signing will be installed at the site entrance to ensure traffic uses the southern access;
- A fire tender can access the site via both entrances; and
- Correct car parking space sizes (2.5m x 6m) are now provided.

The Highways Authority has confirmed that the additional material submitted has addressed any minor concerns that they had. For the avoidance of doubt the Inspectorate who determined the appeal did not raise any concerns as far as the access arrangement for the site is concerned.

With regards to the design of the proposed dwellings and in particular the previous application, this new application, though crisp and contemporary in detailing and finish, has a plan form which is based on the model of the traditional terraced house and should be viewed as a materially different form of architecture to the previous scheme. Importantly, it cannot be viewed as incongruous and this view is supported within the committee report which states that the proposed dwellings will be ***“more contextually appropriate and will create a more pleasing overall appearance”***. In scale and massing terms this amended scheme is much improved compared to the previous application, due to its more relaxed layout and its variable roof form. This relationship is further improved due to the lower ridge height and the windows on the front elevation being significantly smaller, more domestic and therefore do not give the perception of being commercial in look and feel. The scheme, by accommodating the vehicle spaces between the units and to break down the massing, is spread further across the width of the site and has a shallower depth. The massing has been further broken up by the introduction of timber boarding to the recessed linking element which extends over the parking space. This change of materials also helps to break the scheme up and means that it is easy to distinguish between the four units. With regard to the front elevation a more attractive fenestration has now been provided and this will ensure the development enjoys a sympathetic relationship with the surrounding built form and not one that is heavy and industrial in appearance. The perspective drawing shown below clearly shows that the four dwellings now have more articulation and visual interest and as a result this scheme represents should be considered an entirely acceptable design for the site. This amended design represents a more appropriate design for the site which is more refreshing and non-commercial in its appearance.



We are of the opinion that the proposal addresses all the reasonable interests of neighbours and this view is supported within the committee report which states *“the proposal adequately respects the residential amenity of its neighbours”*. The residents of No.78 Richmond Road (adjacent to the southern boundary) have raised concerns regarding the balconies on the rear elevation of plot 1 and that these will overlook their garden. The garden of this property is approximately 45 metres long and this is considered to be an acceptable distance and as a result no overlooking or loss of amenity will result. However in response to this, part of the glass screen provided for the 2nd floor balcony of Plot 1 has been specified as obscured glazing which further limits views to the south west. This relationship will be further protected by the presence of two new birch trees at this location which also formed part of the previous application. The Inspectorate has indicated within the appeal decision letter for the previous application that any trees planted along the boundary with No.78 may struggle to survive and flourish. This is not the case and the attached note from Hayden’s Arboricultural Consultants indicates that these trees will survive and flourish and they will provide an instant impact that will create an element of screening that will develop further as they mature. With regard to the appeal decision an acceptable relationship between Unit 1 and No.78 has now been provided and importantly the scheme will not appear as intrusive or overdominant.

A number of changes have been made to the scheme and we believe that this fresh application has successfully addressed the sole reason for refusal of the previous application that referred entirely to design. We again support the Officer’s recommendation of approval in this regard and we believe that this innovative and modern design should also be viewed in a positive way by the members of the Area Committee. This proposal represents an entirely appropriate design for the site and importantly it will not cause any adverse harm to either highway safety or neighbour amenity.

For all of the above reasons, we would invite you to support this planning application, and we very much hope you will feel able to do so.

Yours sincerely



Colin Brown BA (Hons) MRTPI
Director

cc. John Evans, Planning Officer, Cambridge City Council