

LATE REPRESENTATIONS AND COMMENTS

29 April 2020

Former Church Inn, Cambridge Street

Nine further emails have been received from residents (one from Chorlton) whose comments have been summarised as follows:

The development is incongruous and residents don't want it.

Loss of historic building which should be saved from private speculators

Blocking out light and playing pressure on infrastructure, anti-social behaviour from students. Should be a community facility not student housing

Impact on infrastructure, increase in air pollution, loss of building.

Stop ruining the community with student accommodation

Not enough time for residents to comment, poor publication and notice. Elected representatives should be involved, this is undemocratic.

After being minded to refuse this application for a third time members commissioned planning officers to prepare this report to bring forward reasons for refusal. Instead it has unfairly allowed a platform for rebuttal, for the developers who have been afforded the undemocratic further opportunity to promote their application (clarify matters) without the democratic scrutiny of the planning committee and other interested parties.

The report addresses members concerns about overlooking and privacy of neighbouring properties, especially Elmdale Walk to the rear (west). It confirms there are 32 transparent windows of habitable rooms overlooking the homes, gardens and communal spaces of Elmdale Walk with the associated loss of privacy. It fails to highlight this is a material consideration and is in itself a reason for refusal.

Members grave concerns regarding loss of light to neighbouring buildings have again been sidestepped. The developers own light report cites 152 transgressions of the B.R.E. Guidelines, the most devastating being a 97% loss of daylight and sunlight to 5 living room windows of its Cambridge House neighbour.

Nowhere in the Guide does it state that bedrooms, or dual function study bedrooms are not important, hence, the requirement to test them all. The guide does not suggest that students do not have the same requirements for daylight amenity as any other population.

Members have repeatedly questioned the development's compliance with Core Strategy Policy DM1 and EN2, regarding the scale, form, massing and appearance in its environment. The building is almost 4 times the height of its neighbours to the

west and between 2 and 3 times the height of all its neighbours on both sides of Cambridge St., including the strong corners of the junctions of Cavendish St next door.

This over massing has an overbearing effect on what is otherwise a balanced streetscene.

The report again ignores Members valid concerns.

The Chief Executive is asked to give these points as much weight as has been singularly afforded the developer in this report and please follow the direction of 3 previous planning committee decisions and refuse permission.

As much as it is considered the application should be refused, this decision does not constitute or deserve any kind of emergency consideration and should be deferred until such time the planning committee meeting can be held.

An email has been received from Councillor Annette Wright who has asked on behalf of the ward members that the application be considered at a virtual meeting of the planning committee.

The decision to delegate the authority to decide on applications was made when there was no other alternative as the Planning Committee could not, under legislation, meet virtually. This changed with the passing of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and particularly applications like these, which have already had significant involvement from ward residents, should be dealt with in the most inclusive and open way possible.

Councillor Wright has asked that whoever is considering the applications make detailed reference to the previous application if they have not already seen the video, to watch the personal representations made by residents and councillors at the Planning Committee. The Planning Committee had a site visit to the Former Church Inn and was minded to reject the application.

The applicant had previously submitted copies of correspondence which confirmed other ward members did not object to the proposal.

Director of Planning

The City Council is looking to progress virtual meetings as quickly as possible; however, planning committees are more of a challenge to undertake virtually not least as there are a wide range of members, officers and other interested parties including residents who could be either objectors or applicants involved.

It is important that such meetings take place safely and as interactively as possible and this is being worked on.

The process therefore is to bring to determination those applications that would have been considered by the Planning Committee and that require a decision to be made.

The report acknowledges that this application has raised concerns and has addressed all the issues, including those by residents and Members. It responds to the matters that were raised in the previous committee meeting and comments in relation to loss of privacy and daylight.

The application is materially different to that originally submitted and as set out in the report it is not considered there are planning reasons that would sustain a refusal of permission.

The recommendation is to approve the application.

Any additional comments on the items will be reported verbally during the meeting.