

**EXTRAORDINARY DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE held at
COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 2.00pm on
21 NOVEMBER 2007**

Present:- Councillor J F Cheetham – Chairman.
Councillors E C Abrahams, C A Cant, C M Dean, C D Down, E J
Godwin, J I Loughlin, J E Menell, M Miller, D G Perry, J Salmon
and L A Wells.

Officers in attendance:- M Cox, H Lock, J M Mitchell and C Oliva.

DC74 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from R Clover and C Smith.

DC75 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cheetham declared a personal interest in the application as she knew one of the masters that taught at the school.

Councillor Menell declared a personal interest in the application as she knew one of the Governors of the School but it was not a close personal interest as defined by the Code.

Councillors Down and Abrahams declared personal interests as they knew the agent.

Councillor Perry declared a personal interest as a member of Saffron Walden Town Council but had taken no part in the discussion on the application.

Councillor Eden declared a personal prejudicial interest in the applicant as he was a neighbour of the Friends School. He would make a statement to the Committee and then leave the meeting for the consideration of the item.

DC76 APPLICATION 0653/06/OP & 0691/06/CA FRIENDS SCHOOL SAFFRON WALDEN

Members considered application 0653/06/OP & 0691/06/CA Saffron Walden - outline application (including details of access, siting and landscaping) for 25 dwellings (Site A), 15 detached houses (Site C), 72 apartments in 3.5-4.5 storey buildings (Site B), 32 dwellings in 3-storey buildings (Sites D & E); 3-storey school boarding house; 2-storey replacement junior school; restoration of main building for school use; extension to school car park; relocation of vehicular access onto Debden Road and provision of internal roads, including school drop-off point. Construction of performing arts centre (details of siting, design and external appearance included for this element). Installation of traffic signal scheme at Borough Lane/Debden Road/Mount Pleasant Road, and other financial contributions to highway works; provision of footpath link between Site A and Mount Pleasant Road (adjacent playing fields/eastern boundary of site). Provision of communal gardens, play areas and replacement wildlife habitat. Demolition of school buildings - Friends School Mount Pleasant Road for Friends School.

RESOLVED that the application be refused for the following reasons

1. The proposed development on Sites B, D & E would be of a scale and design out of keeping with that of the development surrounding the school site. The Site B apartments, by virtue of their excessive height, mass, lack of space between blocks, and monolithic design would be overbearing and unacceptably dominant in contrast to the more domestic scale housing beyond the application site. The building forms, height and design (albeit indicative for Site D) would be unsympathetic and out of keeping with other dwellings fronting Debden Road. In particular, the form of the development on Site E would be damaging to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area. The proposals would therefore be contrary to ULP Policies GEN2, S1, H4, H3 and ENV1, and advice contained in PPS1 and PPS3.
2. The development of Site A would result in the loss of a parcel of land designated as a Protected Open Space of Environmental Value in the Uttlesford Local Plan. The loss of this planted greenspace would be detrimental to public amenity, and would result in adverse impact on the wildlife which it supports. It has not been demonstrated that the need for the development would outweigh the amenity value of this land, contrary to ULP Policy ENV3 and advice contained in PPS9.
3. The proposed car parking spaces to serve the performing arts centre are considered insufficient to address the demand generated by public performances and dual use with the school, and their position on the site, would result in unacceptable disturbance to local residents as users move between the car park and arts centre. Furthermore any shortfall in provision could result in increased pressure for on-street parking at times of peak parking congestion, to the detriment of highway safety and residential amenity. The proposal would be contrary to ULP Policies GEN2, GEN4 and GEN8.
4. The proposal makes provision for only 25% affordable housing, contrary to the aims of ULP Policy H9. Inadequate justification has been put forward for this shortfall in provision, which would compound the shortage of affordable housing in Saffron Walden. The package of community measures offered in lieu of 40% affordable housing would not compensate for this shortfall, and it has not been demonstrated that the need for those community facilities outweighs the need for affordable housing for the Saffron Walden community.
5. There is a shortfall in parking provision across the development site, and the new dwellings would not on average be served by sufficient private vehicle parking in accordance with the Council's standards. Although the site may be within walking distance of the town centre, Saffron Walden is served by a limited range of facilities, and there would likely be a high degree of out-commuting by residents to satisfy employment and social needs. Saffron Walden has limited public transport, and as a result reliance on the private car is likely to remain high. Failure

to meet the required parking standard within the development site itself would add further pressure on existing on-street parking in the vicinity of the site. The proposals are considered contrary to ULP Policies GEN2, GEN4, and GEN8.

6. The residential elements of the proposals are considered overdevelopment of the parts of the site in which they are set due to inadequate private amenity space to serve a significant proportion of the units. Furthermore, the proposals would exacerbate the existing shortfall in public recreation and amenity space in Saffron Walden as a whole, and would add further pressure to existing facilities. The proposals would fail to make adequate provision to meet the recreation needs of the future occupants, and as such are considered contrary to ULP Policy GEN2.

The following people spoke against the application:-

District Councillors H Rolfe, A Walters, S Howell and J Ketteridge
 Councillor Eden made a statement and then left the meeting
Members of the public Gillian Williamson, Catherine Flack, Nick Flack, Bill Rose, Ann Rose, Jim Dwyer, John Kearns, Jane Muir, Charlotte Lovegrove, Helen Riches, Lisa Venning, Ann Cardwell, Judith King.
Saffron Walden Town Council Malcolm White.

The following people spoke in favour of the application:-

Supporters David Earman, Andrew Timball, Darren Taylor, James Hawkes.
Applicant Tony Watson, Mark Bertram, Graham Wigley.

The meeting ended at 4.55pm