

LAND TO THE NORTH OF CAMBRIDGE NORTH STATION, CAMBRIDGE

LANDSCAPE STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

PINS reference: APPEAL APP/W0530/W/23/3315611

APRIL 2023

MATTERS IN AGREEMENT

The Appeal Site and its Context

1. The Appeal Site is approximately 9.9ha in extent. It comprises an area of former railway sidings that is now occupied by a car park, areas of waste ground, Cowley Road and cycle way, and more formal tree and shrub planting along this route. Cowley Road is illuminated by street lamps.
2. To the south of the appeal site is the existing Novotel, which reaches a maximum height of 25.7m, and the newly built office development at One Cambridge Square, which reaches a maximum height of 30.09m. To the south of these buildings is a pedestrianised square, additional car parking and Cambridge North Station. This area is illuminated by street lighting. Further to the south, beyond the guided busway, is the northern edge of the Chesterton Residential area.
3. The western and south-western edge of the site is defined by the Guided Busway, which is illuminated by street lamps. Along the western edge of the busway is an existing hedgerow and an established area of native trees, and beyond this is an area of allotments. To the west of the allotments is the residential area of Discovery Way, which comprises one to three storey homes. West of Discovery Way is the Nuffield Road Industrial Estate, which includes steel portal framed buildings and areas of outside storage and parking. Bramblefields Local Nature Reserve is also to the south of the allotments, and is approximately 180m from the appeal site at its closest point.
4. To the north and north-west of the appeal site there are existing office and industrial developments. Cambridge Business Park, to the north-west of the appeal site, comprises a number of three storey office buildings with landscaped car parks. North of the appeal site is an area of industrial development to the north-east of Cowley Road, comprising steel portal framed buildings, outside storage and parking areas. Further to the north is the waste water treatment works, which is then bounded by the A14 dual carriageway along its northern edge.
5. To the east of the appeal site is a number of railway lines, occupying a corridor with a width of approximately 36 metres. A transmitter mast lies to the east of the railway tracks. Further to the east, beyond a line of native trees and shrubs, is the mixed-use area at Fen Road, comprising largely industrial uses up to two storeys high at the southern end, and residential uses at the northern end, much of which is single storey buildings and static caravans. The west to east extent of the Fen Road mixed-use area is between approximately 100 metres at the narrowest point and up to 475 metres at the widest point.
6. Further to the east is the River Cam valley, which includes the river itself and areas of open grassland and paths to the east of the river. To the east of the river valley is the settlement of Fen Ditton, which is approximately 630 metres from the eastern boundary of the appeal site at its closest point.

7. The terrain of the site and its context is very gently sloping, with levels of between 6 and 7m AOD on the appeal site itself, grading up to approximately 8m AOD on the northern edge of Chesterton, to the west, and 10m AOD at the waste water treatment works, to the north. Levels adjacent to the River Cam are at or less than 5m AOD, and levels around Fen Ditton are between 12 and 15m AOD.
8. Policy SS/4 envisages that the character of the appeal site will change, with the addition of mixed uses creating a vibrant, employment-focused area.

Designations and Landscape Value

9. The appeal site is not within a landscape, or landscape-related designation, nor is it immediately adjacent to such designations.
10. The River Cam valley includes the Riverside and Stourbridge Common conservation area, to the south of the appeal site, and the Fen Ditton conservation area to the east of the appeal site. The River Cam valley contains a number of public rights of way including Harcamlow Way, Fen Rivers Way, as well as National Cycle Routes 11 and 51 and a number of other footpaths.
11. Land to the east of the appeal site, and east of the railway line, is within Green Belt. This is a spatial planning designation and does not imply landscape value.
12. The appeal site is not a valued landscape in the sense of NPPF paragraph 174(a).

The Appeal Proposals (Built Form)

13. The appeal proposals comprise a detailed application for One Milton Avenue (building S4), the Mobility Hub (S5) and two laboratories (S6 and S7), and an outline application for up to 425 dwellings (S11 to S21), and a laboratory and office (S8 and S9) in the “triangle area” at the centre of the appeal site.
14. The height of the proposed Mobility Hub (S5) would be 15.81m however the height of the building above the two stairwells at the northern and southern ends of the building would be 18.31m. The height of S6 and S7 would vary, with maximum roof heights of between 20.9 and 22.10m, and with terraces on the western and eastern elevations at 13.4m. One Milton Avenue (S4) would reach a maximum height of 30.835m, with lower elements ranging between 19.95m and 27.91m.
15. The residential element would also vary in height between a minimum of 15m and a maximum of 30m.
16. The height of the proposed buildings in the triangle area (S8 and S9) would vary between 21 and 26m.

Relevant Character Assessments

17. At a regional level the appeal site and its context is classified as part of the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands National Character Area (NCA) 88.
18. At a City level the appeal site is part of the Industrial – Railway Corridor landscape type in the Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (2003). Within this assessment land to the east of

the appeal site is included within the River Corridor – Open Rural character type at Ditton Meadows, and within the River Corridor – Commons character type at Stourbridge Common.

19. In the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (2021) the appeal site is classified as part of the Cambridge urban Area, with Stourbridge Common and Ditton Meadows combined into one landscape character area, Cam River Valley (area 9A). Fen Ditton itself is within the Fen Ditton Fen Edge Chalklands (character area 6A).
20. The Cambridge Inner Green Belt Boundary Study (2015) also includes a townscape character assessment and the appeal site is classified as being within character area 5B, Railway Corridor. Development either side of Fen Road is classified as character type 21st Century Mixed Use Development, which is part of character area 3A, River Cam Corridor.
21. The North-east Cambridge Townscape Assessment includes the appeal site within parcel 10, Cambridge North Station.

Methodology for Assessing Landscape and Visual Effects of Development

22. The *“Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment”*, 3rd Edition, (GLVIA3) provides best practice and widely accepted guidance on how to carry out landscape and visual assessments. One of the main objectives of this guidance is to achieve quality and consistency in the approach to landscape and visual assessments.
23. As a starting point, it is best practice in landscape and visual impact assessment to assess increased visibility/prominence of built form within a rural or semi-rural context as resulting in negative landscape and/or visual effects. However, it is also possible that new buildings, if well designed, can result in positive landscape and/or visual effects.
24. The most up to date guidance on how to assess landscape value is within the Landscape Institute’s Technical Guidance Note 02/21, *“Assessing Landscape Value Outside of National Designations”*.
25. The visualisations prepared as part of the ES follow the guidance within the Landscape Institute’s *“Visual Representation of Development Proposals”* (TGN 06/19) and are appropriate for the assessment of visual effects.
26. The methodology used in the Bidwells LVIA (at chapter 12 of the Environmental Statement) follows the guidance of GLVIA3 and TGN 02/21 and is appropriate for assessing the townscape, landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.
27. The landscape receptors used within the Bidwells LVIA (see for example table 12.4 of the ES) were agreed with South Cambridgeshire District Council’s Landscape Officer and are appropriate for assessing the landscape effects of the proposed development.
28. The representative viewpoints set out in table 12.5 of the ES were agreed with South Cambridgeshire District Council’s Landscape Officer following testing of visibility at a wider range of viewpoints. It was agreed at the time of drafting the ES that these viewpoints were suitable for assessing the visual effects of the proposed development.

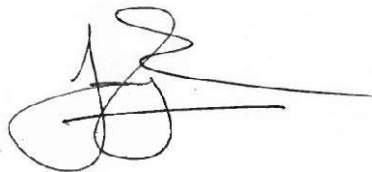
The Landscape, Townscape and Visual Effects of the Appeal Proposals

- 29. The proposed development would have negligible or no visual effects on any of the Strategic Viewpoints identified at figure F.3 of the Cambridge Local Plan.
- 30. The parties agree there would be no visual effects upon long distance viewpoints 10, P1, P4, P5 or P6.

MATTERS NOT IN AGREEMENT

- 31. The Appellant has concluded that the height, massing and design of the proposals is appropriate for both the site and the surrounding landscape/townscape, but the Council disagrees with this conclusion.
- 32. The viewpoints set out in table 12.5 of the ES are not agreed as being suitable for assessing all the visual effects of the proposed development as the Council considers additional viewpoints are required.
- 33. It is not agreed that the proposed development would result in both beneficial and negative landscape/townscape effects upon the appeal site itself.

Agreed by



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Jeremy Smith

(for Brookgate Land Limited on behalf of the Chesterton Partnership)

Fiona Bradley

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Fiona Bradley

(for South Cambridgeshire District Council)