

## Cambridge Past, Present & Future

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FAO: Susan Smith

8 February 2012

Dear Susan,

## **New Town & Glisson Road Area - CONSULTATION DRAFT Conservation Area Appraisal**

CambridgePPF welcomes the updating of this appraisal covering the above Conservation Area (CA). With reference to the above our internal Heritage Working Group has discussed the appraisal and has the following comments to make:

page 21 - **War memorial** - the soldier on the war memorial is returning (rather than departing) as he has a German helmet in his hand. It is one of 3 war memorials placed by local people after the WWI - together with Ely Cathedral's chapel to commemorate the fallen, an annex building to the old Addenbrookes Hospital to look after the wounded, this memorial celebrates Victory as well as remembering those who have not come home (see old environment improvement project and heritage lottery application by City Council ca 2001).

page 23 - **Green Belt** - the area around Fen Causeway, Coe Fen, Sheep's Green, Lamma's Land, New Bit and Empty Common (i.e. remaining ornamental planting/ triangle at junction Brooklands Avenue and Trumpington Road page 25 needs also inclusion) bring the Green Belt right to the centre of the city. This is a crucial designation and needs inclusion/ description. Note Area also to be declared a **Local Nature Reserve** in due course.

page 32 - **historic railings and gates** - different railings are located within the CA and their colours have changed over the recent decades and centuries. A full study should be undertaken to determine their original colours and adequacy in the current era. Reference should be made to "Cambridge Iron Founders - "  
E.g. The Botanic Garden's railings/ old gates were not black but painted in a dark green - so called 'Brunswick Green'. Equally some of the old railings have flaking paint and colours from cream white/ pink, black, dark green can easily be seen and highlight changes of finish under undercoating. This is discussed together with the naming of railing types in CambridgePPF welcomes in general to paint railings around the Conduit Head (corner Trumpington Road with Lensfield Road) in a darker colour as this will increase the visibility of the Listed building - fountain head.  
Note railings to remaining triangle of Empty Common (corner Brooklands Avenue and Trumpington Road) are of the Cambridge Bollard design with 'Hot-cross Bun' finials. Any replacement gates etc should keep design flair of the traditional railings and proper design coding should be undertaken.

Other railings and boundary features to commons and parks should be themed and mapped as well as good design detailing ensured - in areas hotchpotch design detailing and finishes (partly due to different department's responsibility - Highway section of County council as well as Parks & Recreation department of City Council).

**Lighting** - no descriptions have been made - e.g. special lighting columns have been installed as part of the Station Area/ CB1 development along Hills road between junctions at Cherry Hinton Road and Station Road. Equally lighting along Trumpington Road as a major feature needs review as otherwise black painted street furniture are now 'graced' with inappropriate street columns and fitting using a galvanised finish.

It also needs to be noted that there is no lighting within the commons - it is a key characteristic and CambridgePPF considers that any light columns/ bollards or similar as well as any sustainable lighting embedded within tarmac (usually along cycle routes) are totally inappropriate in these locations.

**Overall Street lighting** - areas need to be updated to include lighting strategy within the Conservation area. Description should also highlight areas where historic or special lighting should be kept. These should be extended along Hills Road and the County Council's current PFI-contract should be updated and County and City Council funding allocated accordingly and to phases of improvement works.

**Street Clutter and street furniture design** - clearer guidelines are required (see also above notes on lighting). Colour themes and finishes need to be looked more in detail and a full design guidance established and shared and used by the various City and County Council departments. This does not necessarily mean more costly schemes but needs to ensure an eye for detailing to prevent erosion of the quality of streetscapes and green space detailing and thus Cambridge's overall quality.

Examples are change in lighting columns and colour schemes not integrated - e.g. Trumpington Road, recent installation of new Pay & Display Ticket Machines - previously being of dark colour (either black or dark green) now white finish which visually are intrusive.

**Street Furniture** - there is a lack of street furniture in the area and this needs to be addressed within the area. See also comments made under the various Suburb and Approached Road studies - Hills Road and Trumpington Road. A large enough group walks to work, to shop and/ or for recreation. Seats are essential to ensure the needs of less able (including elderly and disabled) walkers to enjoy their city. During the economic down-turn and increasing costs of fuel more emphasis on sustainable access to the city centre should be ensured. Designs should be integrated which provide seating with arm rests and back rests but prevents anti-social behavior. The city-wide plan and management of street furniture should be revised and the various responsible departments at the City and County Councils should be co-ordinated to avoid loss of street furniture, ensure adequate design appropriate for a conservation area and City of Cambridge on the whole.

Throughout document - **Hobson's Conduit and Hobson's Brook/ Vicar's Brook** - descriptions unclear and confusing - more details should be given particularly where local naming differs from historic and terms used by the Hobson's Conduit Trust and locally used names. Perhaps also annotate maps in close liaison with the Hobson's Conduit Trust. Page 8 - Hobson's Conduit is now over 400 years old and was constructed in 1610. Its unique management trust should also be managed which was established early on. Page 7 - Conduit Head was moved to corner Lensfield Road/ Trumpington Road in 1849 i.e. relocated from its original location on Market Hill (square). Page 11 - Hobson's Conduit - stretch along Brookside - note there are also gates within 1-2m edge of Brook to facilitate maintenance access alongside - these historic features should be retained (adjacent to bridges, Bateman Street etc). Note special conduit features such as old steps to conduit to give access to water horses etc.

Page 8 - **archaeology** - which campus of Perse School is referred to regarding rammed chalk surface 4-5m wide?

**Commons** - description and management plan required covering the environmental issues - from historic environment and ecology/ wildlife management and archaeological matters etc. If the common is a Registered Common - then this needs to be clearly stated. The increasing urbanisation of the Commons should be prevented and more sensitive design detailing achieved (e.g. increased tarmacing of country tracks, usage of urban design detailing to site benches/ seats and signage, inappropriate bridge refurbishment), The Coe Fen & Sheep's Green Conservation Plan 2001 should be reviewed and a detail management plan developed for all the green spaces (commons and pocket parks - incl new one at CB1) in close consultation with the local community. Opportunities of neighbourhood planning and localism should be explored.

**Hodson's Folly** (Coe Fen) is missing - this small folly is an essential and well liked beauty spot along the river however building and site are in disrepair and require enhancements. CambridgePPF's Heritage Working Group is now working together with the City Council's Parks & Recreations department to enhance this area for future generation without losing its special character.

**Designation of the Commons as LNR** - this could be mentioned, too.

**Trees** - page 20 - Station road - lime trees create an avenue and needs to be described as such - this has been achieved in bits over recent century and any management should retain such feature and the drive to retain a straight avenue.

Page 25 - Brooklands Avenue is not just 'tree-lined' but has a characteristic "avenue" planting which makes it attractive. Refer to para 3.11 "From the late 19C, Brooklands Avenue has been notable for its fine tree-lined aspect - currently, semi-mature fastigiate beech and hornbeam which form a veritable tunnel." - description quoted from Brooklands Avenue Area Conservation Area Appraisal.

page 28 - large conifers hedge surrounding the Leys School - the loss / removal of such in the future will create a detrimental adversely affect the Green Belt and Common. Clear management plan needs to be developed highlighting the edge of the common and planting belt of the school and should be co-ordinated.

**Tree Planting** - opportunities for new street tree planting should be included and close liaison with County Council's Tree planting as well as City Council's Parks and Recreation Department is essential.

Major trees as focal points need to be better highlighted on map - e.g. Bateman Street - large copper beech in front garden. Equally description needs updating.

page 28 (and others) **Landscape** - The Botanic Garden is a 'Registered Historic Park and Garden' and as such is not just of local/ national importance but of international value and one of Cambridge's prime historic spaces.

Reference has been made to the **Coe Fen & Sheep's Green Conservation Plan** (2001 and which was at the time part sponsored by the then Cambridge Preservation Society now CambridgePPF). CambridgePPF considers that this document needs an urgent review to better integrated opportunities but also preserve and enhance the largely rural character of the common to benefit local people and wildlife and ensure an overall enhancement of the environment.

**Green and other Open Spaces** - there is a lack of open space/ green space in this area and this needs to be addressed and reference made to recently approved Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2011.

Area in front of Station needs improved description and importance of new Station Square highlighted. Note some buildings such as the low budget hotel (Sleeperz/ CityRoomz) is already agreed for demolition under the current master plan for the redevelopment of this urban quarter.

page 21 - **art work** - feature brick facade of Kett House needs description (see Hills Road - draft S & A Study for details)

pages 30-31 - **Key Characteristics**

- tree avenue design should be include as well as key feature trees

page 8 - **Recommendations** -

- **Article 4** - CambridgePPF welcomes the inclusion of Article 4 matters and wishes to see more details how this is achieved as well as guidance for owners of buildings/ land and decision makers.
- question the colour of railings and requires a full review as outlined earlier
- need to improve street furniture, look for appropriate seating locations and overall design coding (see notes earlier)
- height and bulk of building - have adverse impact on area including the Historic Park and Garden Grade II\* - the Botanic Garden.
- CambridgePPF welcomes inclusion of areas into the CA however strongly objects to the exclusion of green space and new apartment blocks etc as part of the Station Road development area.

page 33 - **References**

Needs to include:

- W.D. Bushell - Hobson's Conduit - the new river (Cambridge University Press 1938)
- detail studies on Cambridge (and manufactured) railings, also note by Allan Brigham
- Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2011
- Cambridge Iron Founders - Ken Alger, Allan Brigham, Julie Wilkinson, Cambridge Archaeology Society 1996 - note: front cover has iron railings along Brookside section of Hobson's Conduit in white!!!

**Appendix 1 - descriptions of Listed Buildings** - unclear if this is the original full or a summary of English Heritage listing descriptions.

## **Mapping**

### **Proposed CA Townscape Analysis**

- long views need to be included across commons - particularly Coe Fen to Department of Engineering along straight ditch; views to and from Trumpington Road to New Bit, both directions along The Straights (between Coe Fen & New Bit); views and setting of Fenner's sports ground
- land mark - Kett House is a land mark - together with the new Lens Building (both at junction Hills Road with Station Road)
- annotate some key areas - names of commons and major roads etc
- Buildings important to the Character - unclear how buildings are chosen - buildings along STREET (between Glisson Road and St Barnabas Road) and streets to south, some historic villas along Brooklands Avenue are missing as well as those to southern side of Bateman Street, These should be included as they are important to the local character areas of the CA.
- frontages in need of improvements - area in front of station needs revision and line adjusted to edge of Murdock House (i.e. not across the Station Square).

**Additional maps** - changes of area over recent centuries could be depicted to highlight the development over time and make text more interesting and relevant by affording correlating all to maps.

**Potential loss of exiting CA designation area** (hatched shading in orange on map as well as page 10 - introduction paragraphs) - CambridgePPF does not agree with the loss of CA-status to south of Station area development - this should not be changed during development phases of the area and new development should be seen as an enhancement to the area. The exclusion of the current and future extension of the small green space within CB1/ station area is unacceptable - particularly as such will be privately managed by the management company taking on the entire CB1-site.

No reasons have been given why this area should be removed. In addition should ever the signal box area/ substation area (junction railway line with Hills Road) be

redeveloped, the retained CA-status to its edge should ensure adequate upgrade of this area worthy to an important gateway area of the City.

This CA area should be retained as it will ensure ongoing adequate redevelopment of the area and preserve enhance its quality for the future.

**Proposed CA** (solid orange with black outline on map) - CambridgePPF welcomes the inclusion of these areas as any redevelopment should be an enhancement and remove some of the less welcoming and poorly integrated large buildings. Annotation text needs to improve as at the moment confusing.

If you have any queries regarding this letter please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleague Nigel Bell.

Kind regards



Carolin Göhler

Encl - none

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