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<b>Application Number</b>	12/0130/FUL	<b>Agenda Item</b>	
<b>Date Received</b>	1st February 2012	<b>Officer</b>	Mr John Evans
<b>Target Date</b>	28th March 2012		
<b>Ward</b>	Market		
<b>Site</b>	Radcliffe Court Rose Crescent Cambridge CB2 3LR		
<b>Proposal</b>	Installation of new fixed walkway structure and seating areas within external courtyard area and other miscellaneous works including installation of fixed planters, rendering of walls and new signage.		
<b>Applicant</b>	c/o CBRE Investors 21 Bryanston Street London W1H 7PR		

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SUMMARY	<p>The development accords with the Development Plan for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The proposed walkway decking and landscaping will not detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.</li> <li>2. The location of the decking will not create significant noise and disturbance to the current occupants of Radcliffe Court.</li> <li>3. The decking will improve accessibility and the general level of amenity for Radcliffe Court.</li> </ol>
RECOMMENDATION	APPROVAL

## **1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION/AREA CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The application site relates to the 2 inner third floor courtyards of Radcliffe Court, situated on the northern side of Market Street.
- 1.2 The courtyards of Radcliffe Court serve as a circulation area and access for the upper level flats. The rooftop is bland and functional, surfaced with grey asphalt, with no defined amenity area or signage for residents or visitors.
- 1.3 The site falls within the Central Conservation Area.

## **2.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The application seeks consent for installation of a new fixed walkway structure and landscaped seating area, within the 2 external courtyards. The landscaping will consist of 3 linked raised timber walkways and 2 square shaped amenity areas with artificial grass.
- 2.2 There are other minor works consist of new planter boxes and trellis to the eastern boundary of the courtyard and the rendering of several of the dwelling houses.
- 2.3 Concurrent applications were submitted for a proposed new entrance shopfront and associated Listed Building Consent. The applicant no longer wishes to progress with these alterations.
- 2.4 The application is accompanied by the following supporting information:
  - 1. Design and Access Statement

## **3.0 SITE HISTORY**

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
09/0070/FUL	Removal of existing glazing and doorway that currently forms the ground floor entrance to Radcliffe Court flats and	Refused

	replace with new entrance door and glazing.	
09/0006/LBC	Removal of existing glazing and doorway that currently forms the ground floor entrance to Radcliffe Court flats and replace with new entrance door and glazing which compliments the surrounding shopfronts.	Refused
12/0128/FUL	Replacement facade to the existing residential flats' common parts entrances at ground and second floor levels and associated refurbishment.	Withdrawn
12/0129/LBC	Replacement facade to the existing residential flats' common parts entrances at ground and second floor levels and associated refurbishment.	Withdrawn

#### 4.0 PUBLICITY

4.1	Advertisement:	Yes
	Adjoining Owners:	Yes
	Site Notice Displayed:	Yes

#### 5.0 POLICY

5.1 See Appendix 1 for full details of Central Government Guidance, East of England Plan 2008 policies, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 policies, Cambridge Local Plan 2006 policies, Supplementary Planning Documents and Material Considerations.

5.2 Relevant Development Plan policies

PLAN	POLICY NUMBER
East of England Plan 2008	ENV6 ENV7
Cambridgeshire and	P6/1 P9/8 P9/9

Peterborough Structure Plan 2003	
Cambridge Local Plan 2006	3/4 3/7 3/11 4/11

5.3 Relevant Central Government Guidance, Supplementary Planning Documents and Material Considerations

Central Government Guidance	National Planning Policy Framework March 2012  Circular 11/95  Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010
Material Considerations	<u>Central Government:</u>  Letter from Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (27 May 2010)  Written Ministerial Statement: Planning for Growth (23 March 2011)
	<u>Area Guidelines:</u>  Conservation Area Appraisal:  Cambridge Historic Core

**6.0 CONSULTATIONS**

**Cambridge City Council Conservation Team**

6.1 Support. All the amendments are unexceptionable and will have no impact on the Conservation Area.

**Cambridgeshire County Council (Transport)**

6.2 No comments.

## **Cambridge City Council Environmental Health**

6.3 No comments.

## **Cambridge City Council Access Officer**

6.4 The proposed decking will need to be tight boarded and with the appropriate dropped sections on those routes that wheelchair users may need.

Generally board walks provide wheelchair users a good surface. It will also provide visually impaired people a safe route in which they can wayfind due the texture of the surface, the defined edge and the sound that the surface makes.

6.5 The above responses are a summary of the comments that have been received. Full details of the consultation responses can be inspected on the application file.

## **7.0 REPRESENTATIONS**

7.1 Councillor Rosenstiel has commented on this application. I have set out his comments below:

The application is called to West Central Area Committee.

I do share some of the residents' concerns, whether the surface materials would be suitable in all weathers and why such large and bold numerals are needed on the flats.

The numerals would be unsuitable in the context of the 1960's dwellings in a conservation area.

7.2 The owners/occupiers of the following addresses have made representations: 1, 8, 14, 15 Radcliffe Court,

7.3 The representations can be summarised as follows:

### Landscaping concerns

- There should be a full site context and needs assessment.
- The walkways will be dangerous when wet.
- The artificial grass is bad taste.
- The artificial grass will attract pigeons.

- Large flat identification numbers not appropriate.
- There should be more planting.
- The proposed walkways create an obstacle of for stepping up and down.

### Amenity issues

- The proposed seating area would be closer to number 8 resulting in noise nuisance and cigarette pollution.
- The landlord has to provide free and unimpeded access to all tenants to the houses.

### Other issues: crime

- The occupant of number 8 Radcliffe Court has submitted detailed logs of crime affecting Radcliffe Court.
- The survey plans are not accurate.

7.4 The above representations are a summary of the comments that have been received. Full details of the representations can be inspected on the application file.

## **8.0 ASSESSMENT**

8.1 From the consultation responses and representations received and from my inspection of the site and the surroundings, I consider that the main issues are:

1. Context of site, design and external spaces
2. Residential amenity
3. Disabled access
4. Third party representations

### **Context of site, design and external spaces**

8.2 The key design issue is the impact of the new walkway decking and landscaping on the character and function of Radcliffe Court.

8.3 The development is secluded from the public domain within Radcliffe Court, so there will be no impact on the character and

appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore compliant with Cambridge Local Plan 2006 policy 4/11.

- 8.4 I note concerns that the proposed design of the decking is inappropriate. I consider both its design and materials of construction appropriate in this context, in accordance with Local Plan policy 3/7. The decking and artificial grass area will in my view make a positive improvement to the quality of the courtyard landscaping. I recognise that the overall design concept may not be the preference of every current occupier of Radcliffe Court, but this is not sufficient justification to withhold planning permission.
- 8.5 In my opinion the proposal is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policies 3/4 and 3/7.

### **Residential Amenity**

- 8.6 Concerns have been raised that the proposed decking and seating area will create noise and disturbance for number 8 Radcliffe Court. At present, the courtyard is a communal roof top space with public and private space undefined. The proposed boarded walkways reflect existing pedestrian routes and desire lines across the space.
- 8.7 Sometimes decking can cause additional vibration through usage, which, if deliberately misused would cause more noise than a more solid floor. However, this is a tight knit community of dwellings and one must assume its use will be self regulating. I do not consider there to be any significant increased noise and disturbance to result from the new decking.
- 8.8 The areas of artificial grass have been positioned away from residential windows which will minimise noise and disturbance. The grassed areas will provide some visual relief to an otherwise bland surface. There may be increased use of these areas as they offer an additional amenity for Radcliff Court residents. I do not consider there to be significant noise and disturbance created by the use of these areas.
- 8.9 The proposed decking and landscaping will in my view make a positive improvement to the amenity of the currently unattractive rooftop of Radcliffe Court.

8.10 The applicant has confirmed that the decking will be treated with a slip resistant aggregate and/or grooving to aid walking. There will not therefore be any significant health and safety risk.

### **Disabled access**

8.11 The Council's Access Officer considers the timber decking a positive improvement to the accessibility of the Courtyard. Decking is suitable for the partially sighted because routeways are easily navigable by the texture and sound of the surface.

8.12 In my opinion the proposal is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policies 3/7 and 3/7.

### **Third Party Representations**

#### *Crime and Antisocial behaviour*

I recognise that Radcliffe Court has been affected by crime and antisocial behaviour.

The previous planning application for a new shopfront to the premises has now been withdrawn. The specific arrangement for access, mail boxes and door locks is the responsibility of the landlord and is not within the planning remit of this application.

#### *Survey plans inaccurate*

The applicant has clarified the position of all flues and vents on the rooftop and the fire escape to the pasty shop. I do not consider the location of these features to affect the planning merits of the application.

#### *Use of large bold numbering on the flats*

I do not consider the numbering will detract from the character and appearance of the 1960's development. The numbering also has a practical benefit of being more legible for the partially sighted.

I do not consider that it is the role of the planning process to be overly prescriptive on such matters.



## 9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposed timber decking will not detract from the character and appearance of Radcliffe Court, the Conservation Area, or the amenities of residential properties within Radcliffe Court. The landscaping will make a positive improvement to the amenity of the north and south courtyards, and while not to everyone's taste, will give a sense of place to an otherwise bland residential environment. APPROVAL is recommended.

## 10.0 RECOMMENDATION

**APPROVE** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### **Reasons for Approval**

1. This development has been approved, conditionally, because subject to those requirements it is considered to conform to the Development Plan as a whole, particularly the following policies:

East of England plan 2008: ENV6, ENV7

Cambridge Local Plan (2006): 3/4, 3/7, 4/11

2. The decision has been made having had regard to all other material planning considerations, none of which was considered to have been of such significance as to justify doing other than grant planning permission.

These reasons for approval can be a summary of the reasons for grant of planning permission only. For further details on the decision please see the officer report online at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/planningpublicaccess](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/planningpublicaccess) or visit our Customer Service Centre, Mandela House, 4 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1BY between 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

Under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972, the following are □background papers□ for each report on a planning application:

1. The planning application and plans;
2. Any explanatory or accompanying letter or document from the applicant;
3. Comments of Council departments on the application;
4. Comments or representations by third parties on the application as referred to in the report plus any additional comments received before the meeting at which the application is considered; unless (in each case) the document discloses “exempt or confidential information”
5. Any Structure Plan, Local Plan or Council Policy Document referred to in individual reports.

These papers may be inspected on the City Council website at:  
[www.cambridge.gov.uk/planningpublicaccess](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/planningpublicaccess)  
or by visiting the Customer Service Centre at Mandela House.