



APPENDIX B

CAMBRIDGESHIRE QUALITY PANEL

REPORT OF PANEL MEETING

Scheme: Cambridge Ice Arena

Date: 9th December 2014

Venue: Castle Court Rooms 3B1/3B2, Cambridgeshire County Council.

Time: 13:00hrs - 16:00hrs

Quality Panel Members

Meredith Bowles (Acting Chair)

Steven Platt

Lynne Sullivan

John Worthington

Panel secretariat and support

Judit Carballo – Cambridgeshire County Council

Stuart Clarke – Cambridgeshire County Council

Local Authority Attendees

Katie Parry – Senior Planning Officer, South Cambridgeshire District Council

Applicant and Representatives

Jim Kay – Director, Cool Venues

Bill Harris – Cambridge Leisure & Ice Centre Limited

David Henry – Savills

Hugo Keene – SBW Architects



1. Scheme description and presentation

Architect/Designer SBW Architects
Applicant Cool Venues
Planning status Pre submission stage

2. Overview

The proposed ice rink is located within the Newmarket Road Park and Ride site (P&R) in the parish of Fen Ditton in the district of South Cambridgeshire. It is also on the edge of Cambridge City where the majority of potential users are likely to arrive from, but it is also expected to serve wider communities across Cambridgeshire.

The site forms part of a landscaped area close to a former farmhouse and outbuildings that are owned and managed by Marshall of Cambridge (who own the site and the neighbouring P&R site too). The site and surrounding land form part of the allocation for an urban extension of Cambridge under the provisions of the Cambridge East Area Action Plan (2008).

In 1990 David Gattiker bequeathed £1M to Cambridge University to help fund the creation of a permanent ice facility for the City. Subsequently, Cambridge Leisure & Ice Centre Limited (CLIC) was formed to administer the donation and deliver the ice arena. CLIC has charitable status and the proposed development is planned to be privately funded. Today the Gattiker donation has grown to £2.8m and has been supplemented by additional pledges and contributions from potential operators. It is envisaged the arena will cost around £5m.

Various sites have been considered over the years including Cambourne, the southern fringe developments, Cambridge West and central Cambridge but all have proved difficult to find an appropriate solution for. Marshalls have offered a 22 year lease that coincides with the County Council's lease for the Park and Ride site. An agreement has been reached, in principle, for the ice rink to use some of the parking spaces at the P&R, which is operated by Cambridgeshire County Council.

If planning consent is granted, it is anticipated that construction could be completed swiftly due to the modular nature of the building which is easily demountable should the building need to move location should an extension to the lease not be granted (the building has a 60 year life).



3. Cambridgeshire Quality Panel views

Introduction

The Panel congratulated the applicant's ambition and passion shown in developing the ice rink and suggested that it would be a great asset for the community. Although the aspiration for an ice rink has been around for many years, the Panel were pleased to see this scheme, on this site, at an early stage of the planning where there is still a lot of detailed work on the planning application to do.

The business model for the ice rink was explained at the meeting. Two operators have shown an interest in operating the facility and it is expected that most of the income revenue will come from public sessions during Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, whilst the use of the ice rink during the week will be more orientated to schools and university's sport teams. The ice rink would have capacity for around 500 seats, but venue is not considered as a major spectator facility. It was explained that the operator will make a profit whilst CLIC has charitable status. Cool Venues will deliver the facility.

The Panel's advice reflects the issues associated with each of the four 'C's' in the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter. The comments below include both those raised in the open session of the meeting and those from the closed session discussions.

Community

The Panel welcomed the ice rink as a great community asset. Other uses within the ice rink such as a shop, café, party place for children, small exhibitions are being considered but the Panel questioned how much floor space will be available for these uses other than the ice skating rink itself. The applicant also explained that there is an aspiration to have an educational programme for people to learn about global warming or the Arctic but ultimately the operator will decide how to use the mezzanine floor spaces. The Panel encourages the applicant to think creatively about how design and how these spaces can be used to best advantage. At the moment the internal layout of the building has a narrow mezzanine at each end. It is suggested that if one mezzanine were wider and the other narrower, more opportunity would exist for the larger mezzanine to be used in different ways.

Conversations with Fen Ditton Parish Council and other community groups have already taken place. The Panel welcomed this and recommended having further conversations with other groups such as the British Antarctic Survey that could assist with the educational plans. The applicant commented that there is an aspiration for funding/subsidising groups or individuals from underprivileged areas too.

The success of the business model will depend on generating sufficient revenues from public sessions during the weekend, but the Panel suggested that the area is not currently "cool" for teenagers and space for them to hang-out may be worth thinking about further.

Connectivity

The Panel recognised the accessible location of the ice rink being next to Newmarket Road Park & Ride with good cycling, pedestrian and bus services from the city.



Newmarket Road will be the main route for people coming to the ice rink. However, the entrance to the ice rink itself was considered rather constrained and the cycling route is not very attractive.

The Panel noted that the use of parking spaces will be negotiated with the County Council for shared parking with the Park and Ride; therefore the Panel suggested concluding these conversations with the County Council as soon as possible to secure this provision. The applicant stated they were due to meet with County officers soon to progress this matter.

Whilst the P&R site is only used for P&R services currently, with conventional bus services stopping on Newmarket Road, the Panel speculated that in the future perhaps the P&R site may act as more of a bus interchange and other uses may develop around the ice rink arena. It may be worth thinking about how that could work for the ice rink arena design.

The applicant asked the Panel about the external finishes to the building (see character section below) and how signage to the ice rink could be best undertaken to make the building easily accessible and legible. It was recognised that the arena will not rely on passing trade as skaters tend to plan a trip, however, it should be visible and easy to find. The Panel suggested working with an artist to have a piece of art as a landmark feature and/or making the building more visible as it appears hidden by the trees.

The Panel also suggested that the ice rink should be considered further in the context of the neighbouring Wing development which is currently being considered for outline planning permission. The applicant should consider the natural desire and sight line that goes straight across to the ice rink if coming from the market centre of Wing and also the entrance into the ice rink arena itself should be much more significant.

The Panel queried the anticipated arrivals model. Around 50% of the arrivals are expected to be by cycle. A high percentage is also expected to be by parents dropping off children and the rest by car. With such a high proportion of people arriving by cycle it would also be preferable to provide cycle racks for those arriving through Wing or the Newmarket Road pedestrian/cycle road access.

Character

The building will be a great contribution to the community that could look attractive within the tree setting if the quality of the external cladding and roofing is developed, and subject to further landscape works. The Panel recognised that the building could eventually be integrated into a new edge for Cambridge as a result of the development of Wing and wider Cambridge East proposals. The east of the park and ride has a tree edge. The Panel noted that the view to the east is blocked and natural barrier. This is a large shed building that would be complemented by the screening provided by the trees but also the design of the roof is interesting and a feature to should be seen. It was not fully understood what the roofing material was; the sample supplied had a black rubber roof, although renders show a smooth metal roof. The Panel felt that the black rubber roof would provide a poor finish given the prominence of the roof both from the east and as it curves down at the corners.

The Panel understand that the quality of the ice depends, in part, on the insulation of the building. Pre-manufactured panels will be used in the building to create a 'black box'. The building design, it was explained, cannot include windows as the ice would be compromised by the sunlight because it would generate melting spots. Also, windows



would compromise the efficiency of the building in keeping it cool. The applicants were open to suggestions for creating features on the internal walls through the use of projection or art but nothing that would compromise the ice or cause distraction during matches on the ice.

The proposed building materials were presented at the meeting and the Panel had a chance to have a closer look at the panels that would be used for the construction of the walls and the roof using a panelised system. The panels are 5.8 meters wide with a maximum expansion of 6 meters. There are a number of choices for finishing but final choices will depend on the budget and their thermal efficiency (i.e. not black). The Panel recommended exploring alternatives for building finishes, including different colours that could work if they are light but discouraged the use of grey. An artist could be used to provide subtle etchings either onto the exterior panels or in another way.

The Panel strongly recommended exploring more options for making the arrival experience and the pathway more attractive. It was generally agreed that neon signage would not be appropriate for this development or its location.

The Panel reiterated that the applicant explore all possibilities to maximise the use of space for complimentary uses without compromising the ice pad.

Climate

The Panel welcomed the applicants intention of having a highly efficient building as per their brief but suggested that whilst it will perform better than is required by regulations it could go further in terms of being super-efficient. It was recognised that that are budget constraints are a factor and that it was about achieving a balance. Efficiency is a significant aim in making this building work. There is an efficient cooling system proposed under the ice pad as well as efficient lighting (LED). Heat recovery is limited due to the low grade heat output.

The site is surrounded by trees which the applicant explained was helpful to the buildings performance. There is balance to be struck to promoting the best micro-climate for the building and the aesthetics of its' setting and visibility.

The Panel noted that creating the ice pad consumes a lot of energy but this only needs to be undertaken once every 3 years. There are 3 levels of ventilation for the cooling pads which utilises chillers that are economical to operate.

The site is constrained by the operational requirements of the airport. For example, solar/PV panels cannot be installed on the roof because of potential issues with glare to pilots or bounce on the radar signals.

4. Conclusion

The Panel congratulated the applicant for putting this scheme forward and resolve in pursuing it for a number of years. They strongly supported its community role and felt the ice rink arena should be a building and facility that Cambridge should be proud of. The Panel understands that the site has some constraints and made the following recommendations:



- Make the building more visible and develop an aesthetic that distinguishes this building from bland retail or distribution warehouses. This may be achieved through the use of colour, pattern, screenprinting, etched panels, etc.
- Consider using an artist and landscape designer to enhance the arrivals experience to and from the site.
- The applicants could achieve a better efficiency rating for the building.
- Explore allocating cycle parking at key arrival points to the site and entrance.
- Improve the relationship with Wing by creating good cycle and walk links to the market square.
- The building needs to demonstrate that it would work for exhibitions and children's parties. Give more consideration to other interior uses and consider how to make the building attractive to teenage users.
- The facility may be enhanced as a place to meet if people are able to see the rink whilst having a coffee or snack.
- In terms of overall location and function of the building all are good choices.
- Confirm details of the roof finish; questions were raised about the sample that was provided.

5. Conflict of Interest

As per the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel Terms of Reference, the Panel is open and transparent about conflicts of interest. Therefore the Panel was advised that Meredith Bowles had previously employed a member of the applicant's team and worked with them before but he now has no direct relationship to the development.