

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

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REPORT OF: Head of Planning Services  
TO: Planning Committee  
WARD: Market Ward/West-Central Area Committee

**NEW MUSEUM'S SITE DRAFT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 On June 16, 2015, the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport approved the New Museum's Site Draft Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of public consultation. Consultation is due to commence on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015, and run until September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015. At section 11.9.1 of the Council's constitution, planning and development briefs shall be referred to the relevant area committee prior to consultation (however the approval of any draft or final brief rests with the executive councillor). The purpose of this report is to update West-Central Area Committee on this item.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That West-Central Area Committee receive this report as information.

**3.0 BACKGROUND**

The New Museums Site SPD

- 3.1 The aim of the draft New Museums Site Development Framework SPD is to set out the joint aspirations of the Council and the University of Cambridge regarding future changes to the site. These should improve the urban form with changes to the public realm, provide better access for all and adopt more sustainable forms of development while respecting the site's heritage and surroundings. Future development on the site offers an opportunity to create an improved, more coherent development and especially to improve the public realm on the site.

3.2 The key issues and opportunities on the site have been identified as follows:

- Enhancement of the Historic Core Conservation Area and the careful management of existing built heritage assets on and around the site;
- Integration of the site into the wider city centre;
- Improvement of the external spaces within the site and creation of an appropriate public realm with improved permeability and public access especially to University museums and the heritage of the site;
- Improvement of University facilities in support of its continuing academic success and its importance to the life of the city;
- Increased environmental sustainability including better energy use, increased ecology and biodiversity and settings supporting the health and wellbeing of the site users and visitors;
- Reduced car parking and improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

3.3 Once adopted, the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

3.4 The draft SPD has been written to support the Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission. This SPD will be adopted at the same time as, or shortly after, the local plan is adopted. It will not be adopted before the local plan is adopted.

### Planning Context

3.5 The New Museums Site (see Plan 1: The Site – Existing Buildings - in Appendix A) was first allocated in the Cambridge Local Plan 2006 as Site 7.08. It was allocated for “redevelopment/refurbishment for predominantly University uses, with some mixed use to enhance the attractiveness of the public realm.” This allocation required the development of a planning brief.

3.6 At the time of preparing this SPD, Policy 43 University Faculty Development and Appendix B: Proposals Schedule within the Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission identify the New Museums Site as Site U2 for mixed-use redevelopment for university related uses.

3.7 The Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission document is currently being examined by an independent Inspector. Upon adoption, the SPD will represent a site development brief and provide

greater certainty and detail to support the delivery of this allocation in the coming years.

### Masterplan

3.8 The University of Cambridge has prepared a site masterplan (see Plan 2: Illustrative Masterplan - in Appendix A) which illustrates how the proposals set out in the draft SPD could be implemented. As part of the preparation of the masterplan, there has been significant engagement between the University of Cambridge, the Council and Historic England (formerly known as English Heritage), which informed the proposals set out in this document and provided a brief for the development of different areas on the site.

### University Estate Strategy

3.9 The University of Cambridge's Estate Strategy (2012) sets out their strategy for the development of their estate and the creation of buildings and places that support world class teaching and research and efficient administration.

3.10 The University Estate Strategy supports the development of the New Museums Site as the centre for social sciences, conservation biology and student support services within the University. The site is therefore the focus of a sequence of institutional moves. The University Estate Strategy is supported by a Capital Plan and a Capital Projects Process which focus resources on strategically important projects.

### Vision & Objectives of the New Museums Site

3.11 The Vision for the future development of the site is:

*“The New Museums Site will develop as a place for University of Cambridge related uses involving world class teaching, learning and research. The quality of place will improve through the construction of new university facilities, a reduction in development density in the site core, an associated improvement to environmental conditions, and the provision of high quality public realm within the site. Development will support the creation of an attractive, accessible, safe and sustainable environment in line with the objectives.”*

3.12 The objectives of the draft SPD are:

- To capture the history and tradition of the site
- To improve accessibility

- To retain heritage and quality buildings that contribute to the site and its surroundings
- To provide a new spatial structure with links to the city
- To embrace sustainability

### Site Setting & Heritage

- 3.13 The New Museums Site occupies an historic location in the city centre with a unique and globally important heritage (see Plan 3: Site Location Plan - in Appendix A). It consists of the greater part of the urban block bounded by Pembroke Street, Downing Street, Corn Exchange Street, Wheeler Street, Bene't Street and Free School Lane. The buildings along the northern edge of the block fronting onto Wheeler Street and Bene't Street, including the Corn Exchange, are outside the site.
- 3.14 The site lies at the heart of the medieval city of Cambridge. Its earliest known history is as the site of an Augustinian Friary, founded in 1290 (see Plan 4: Historical Features - in Appendix A). The site therefore presents high potential for archaeological remains from the medieval period (see Plan 5: Archaeological Potential - Appendix A).
- 3.15 Any investigation of and, ultimately mitigation for, the archaeology will adhere to the principles outlined in national, local and industry guidelines which favour the preservation in situ of significant archaeological remains where they have been identified. Where preservation is not required, an appropriate level of recording of the archaeology will be completed prior to further work.

### Listed buildings

- 3.16 There are a number of Listed Buildings within and directly adjoining the site, (see Plan 6: Heritage Assets - in Appendix A). The Listed Buildings (all Grade II) within the site that need to be considered as part of any proposals are:
- Mond Building;
  - Zoology Building;
  - Old Physical Chemistry;
  - Cavendish Laboratory;
  - Arts School.

## Conservation Area

3.17 The entire site lies within the Cambridge Historic Core Area which is part of the large Cambridge Conservation Area No.1. Detailed assessment of the streets that the New Museums Site forms part of is provided in the Cambridge Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal that forms part of the background evidence to this draft SPD. The Conservation Area Appraisal can be viewed via the following link:  
<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/historic-core-appraisal>.

## Buildings of Local Interest

3.18 The site and surroundings also contain a number of Buildings of Local Interest (BLIs) which are 'non-designated heritage assets' as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (see Plan 6: Heritage Assets - in Appendix A). Within the site, the BLIs that need to be considered as part of any proposals are:

- Mond Building Annexe;
- Old Chemical Laboratories and Porter's Lodge;
- Chemical Laboratories extension (1907 building, the frontage of the Shell Building);
- Goldsmith's Laboratory.

## Building Significance

3.19 Building functions and uses within the site area have changed considerably over the centuries. The site's significance is now based on its function for University teaching (primarily sciences) and as a key block in the historic core of the city. The cultural significance of the site in terms of its scientific history and its previous uses as the University's original Botanic Garden, the site of the original Perse School and as an Augustinian Friary, is however less well-known.

3.20 The site contains a variety of building types, although they are all unified by their University use.

3.21 The New Museums Site Historic Environment Analysis study<sup>1</sup> undertook a detailed assessment of the site, including each building. The level of architectural, historical and townscape significance attributed to each building was measured (see Plan 7: Heritage Significance – Appendix A) as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> The New Museums Site Historic Environment Analysis (Beacon Planning Ltd., 2015)

- Very High: Usually reserved for designated heritage assets of the highest importance, i.e. Grade I and II\* Listed Buildings and Historic Parks and Gardens and Scheduled Monuments;
- High: Grade II Listed Buildings;
- Significant: Non-designated heritage assets (e.g. BLIs) or Buildings of considerable townscape interest and/or intrinsic architectural or historic interest;
- Moderate: Buildings of some townscape interest and/or architectural or historic interest, but which have no formal heritage status;
- Low: Buildings which are neutral in townscape terms and/or have little architectural or historic interest;
- None: Buildings of no or insignificant townscape or heritage interest.

This document will be made available as a background document during the consultation on the draft SPD.

### Land Ownership and Use

3.22 The whole of the site is either owned by the University of Cambridge or held by it on long leases. There are approximately fifteen different University institutions on the site along with a variety of support functions such as central library facilities and lecture theatres. All of this is used almost exclusively for teaching and research (see Plan 8: Land Ownership & Use – in Appendix A).

3.23 Two of the University's museums, the Museum of Zoology and the Whipple Museum of Science, are also located on the site. The site is surrounded by a wide variety of land uses, with Colleges, shops, restaurants, businesses and civic and cultural amenities all within a short distance.

### Transport Connections

3.24 The site's central location provides access to the wider city beyond the immediate city centre in terms of public transport. A taxi rank is located on St Andrew's Street and a public car park is adjacent to the site (see Plan 9: Public Transport – in Appendix A).

3.25 Large vehicles, including articulated lorries, use the route along Pembroke Street, Downing Street and Corn Exchange Street to service the Corn Exchange and the Arts Theatre as well as commercial premises along Wheeler Street and Bene't Street.

## Site Access

3.26 Access into the site is currently very poor. One example of this is the main entrance through the arch in the Zoology Building on Pembroke Street, almost opposite Tennis Court Road. This provides the only vehicular access to the interior of the urban block and there are significant problems caused by the needs of different users. This is a particular problem in term time when there are large numbers of undergraduate students accessing the large lecture theatres on the site, (see Plan 10: Existing access into the site – in Appendix A).

## Quality of the External Spaces and Movement within the Site

3.27 Some of the external space on the ground level of the site is given over to parking for motor vehicles though cycle parking stands have been introduced to some of these spaces as part of the University's plan to generally reduce car parking and increase cycle parking provision. None of this space can be described as a public realm though it is publicly accessible, (see Plan 11: Existing External Spaces – in Appendix A).

3.28 Access and movement around the site is particularly poor for those with limited mobility due to the presence of motor vehicles though the site is fundamentally level. Again, improvements are being made through the works to the David Attenborough Building (previously known as the Arup Building) on Corn Exchange Street.

## Landscape Features and Ecology

3.29 There are no significant landscape features on the site other than a small area of garden at the northern end of Free School Lane outside the Old Cavendish Laboratory, (see Plan 12: Townscape Quality – in Appendix A).

3.30 The recent work to the David Attenborough Building (Arup Building) on Corn Exchange St. includes a green roof designed to encourage biodiversity on the site and an area of planting with a tree on the raised podium outside the new entrance foyer to the Museum of Zoology, and on Corn Exchange Street. Bird boxes, bat boxes and insect hotels are also included in these works.

## Townscape

3.31 The poor quality of the public realm within the site has been identified as a key issue throughout the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the

present day. The problem is the rather piecemeal way in which the interior of the site developed with buildings erected as needs and budgets were identified rather than to conform to any particular plan, (see Plan 12: Townscape Quality – in Appendix A).

### Roofscape

- 3.32 At roof level, aside from the towers of the David Attenborough Building (Arup Building) on Corn Exchange St., the site does not feature strongly in the city’s skyline, and there are limited points outside the site from where it is seen at a raised level.
- 3.33 In common with much of the historic core, the prevailing feature of the site’s roofscape is its variation, a consequence of 150 years of continual development. It diverges between single storey to eleven storeys and traditional pitched roof forms and materials to flat roofs; all across one city block of approximately 1.5ha.

### Infrastructure

- 3.34 The infrastructure on the site and the servicing of individual buildings on the site has developed in a piecemeal fashion over time. The systems are therefore complex, confused and inefficient and as a result very difficult to maintain and adapt. Energy use is high due to the nature of the various buildings on the site. There is no attenuation of storm water drainage.

### Parameters for Change

- 3.35 The draft New Museums Site Development Framework SPD identifies the constraints and opportunities that will shape how future development of the site will take place.
- 3.36 Four key “parameters” are set out, including related “sub-categories” that help inform those parameters. They include connectivity and movement (see Plan 13: Access, Entrances & Public Realm outside the site boundary; and Plan 14: Management of Motor Vehicles – in Appendix A); open space and the public realm (see Plan 15: Proposed Open Space & The Public Realm – in Appendix A); built form (see Plan 16: Proposed Built Form – in Appendix A); and finally sustainability.

### Phasing and Implementation

3.37 Infrastructure on the site should be improved, where possible, through rationalisation and consolidation of services in order to ensure fitness for purpose and minimisation of disruption in the future.

### Planning Obligations

3.38 As part of improving the immediate public realm around the site, the University should provide a contribution to the upgrading of Downing Street near the revised entrance to the site. Such improvements are necessary also to help improve the site relationship with the entrance opposite to the Downing Site (also known as the Biocentrum), also a University facility. Agreement will be necessary with Cambridgeshire County Council on the design and implementation of such measures.

### **Consultation Arrangements**

3.39 It is proposed that a public consultation takes place on the draft SPD for an eight week period, running from Monday 13 July to Monday 7 September 2015.

3.40 In line with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, the proposed consultation arrangements are as follows:

- Letters / e-mails including consultation details to be sent to statutory and general consultees.
- The draft SPD to be made available to view at the following locations:
  - The Council's website – [www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk)
  - Cambridge City Council's Customer Service Centre, Mandela House, 4 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB1 0JH.
  - Cambridge Central Library.
- An on-line consultation system will be available on the Council's websites in order for people to respond directly via the internet. Hard copies of the response form will be made available at the Council's Customer Service Centre for those who do not have access to the internet.

3.41 A Sustainability Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report have been carried out and consulted upon for the emerging Cambridge Local Plan 2014. This consultation took place between 19 July and 30 September 2013. These documents, along with other supporting documents will also be made available to view

during this consultation. As the draft SPD supports the Cambridge Local Plan, there is no further need to undertake a separate Sustainability Appraisal of Habitats Regulations Assessment for this document, although screening reports have been completed and will be made available during the consultation.

## **Next Steps**

3.42 The representations received will then be used to help guide the development of the draft SPD and will be reported along with the final version of the SPD at a future meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee.

## **4. Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no significant direct staffing or procurement issues arising from this report. Staffing resources are already committed through the budget and service plan process. Funding for consultation is allowed for in existing consultation budgets.

### **Staffing Implications**

4.2 There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report. The development of the SPD is already included in existing work plans.

### **Equality and Poverty Implications**

4.3 The SPD, once adopted, will have a positive impact by ensuring the site is better integrated into the wider city centre. New development within the site should improve access for people with limited mobility.

### **Environmental Implications**

4.4 The guidance contained within the draft SPD follows the principles of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF. The redevelopment of the New Museums Site will also for enhancements to be made to the energy efficiency of buildings as well as the inclusion of renewable and low carbon energy generation. Proposals related to enhancing the public realm of the site will also allow for the inclusion of sustainable drainage systems. Overall there should be a positive climate change impact.

## **Consultation**

- 4.5 Consultation arrangements are set in paragraphs 3.45 to 3.47 and are consistent with the Council's Code of best practice on consultation and community engagement and Statement of Community Involvement 2013.

## **Community Safety**

- 4.6 There are no direct community safety implications arising from this report.

## **5. Background papers**

- 5.1 These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:
- Cambridge Local Plan 2014: Proposed Submission (as amended)  
<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/local-plan-review-proposed-submission-consultation>
  - The New Museums Site Historic Environment Analysis (Beacon Planning Ltd., 2015)  
<http://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s28744/CityCentreAccessStudy.pdf>
  - Cambridge City Council Historic Core Area Appraisal (Cambridge City Council, 2006)  
<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/historic-core-appraisal>

## **6. Appendices**

- Appendix A: Draft New Museums Site Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document
- Appendix B: Proposed Statement of Consultation

## **7. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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