



CAMBRIDGESHIRE QUALITY PANEL

REPORT OF PANEL MEETING

Scheme: The Circus & Piazza Development

Date: 11th June 2014

Venue: The Clifford Allbutt Lecture Theatre, Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Cambridge CB2 0QH

Time: 13:50 – 16:30

Quality Panel Members

John Worthington (Chair)

Simon Carne

David Prichard

Meredith Bowles

Oliver Smith

Panel secretariat and support

Judit Carballo – Cambridgeshire County Council

James Tipping – Cambridgeshire County Council

Local Authority Attendees

Elizabeth Rolph – Principal Planning Officer, Cambridge City Council

Jonathan Brookes – Principal Urban Designer, Cambridge City Council

Mark Parsons – Principal Planning Officer, Cambridge City Council

Applicant and Representatives

Andrew Blevins – Liberty Property Trust

Anthony Miller – AstraZeneca

Mark Chatham – Countryside Properties

Matthew Reeve – Countryside Properties

Steve Wardell – Gillespies

Jon Akerscoyle – Gillespies

Andy Robinson – Future Systems Projects

Andrew Barron – ARUP

Inga Poulsen – ARUP



1. Scheme description and presentation

Master Plan	Allies & Morrison/Devereux
Landscape Architects	Gillespies
Applicant	NHS Trust
Planning status	Pre application stage

2. Overview

The developers, Cambridge Medipark Ltd (CML), a partnership between Countryside Properties, Liberty and Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust, are responsible for bringing forward the Circus and Piazza. The Circus is a substantial area of public realm and will include significant public art. The Piazza links the Circus to the High Street, which will be delivered by the Trust.

Following approval of the outline planning permission (ref. 06/0796/OUT), the NHS Trust appointed Allies & Morrison/Devereux to prepare a strategic masterplan for the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) and to further articulate the Trusts own Addenbrooke's 2020 vision. Cambridge City Council has been involved in the development of this document and supports the principles within it. The Masterplan has no formal planning status and is currently being updated to reflect the recent developments which have come forward.

The Masterplan proposes a new 'High Street' running through the existing campus, and a new southern perimeter road. Part of this High Street is included within The Forum application site however the High Street element will not necessarily be delivered at the same time as The Forum. The full delivery of the High Street is a long term aspiration of the NHS Trust but there is no current timescale for its delivery, as it will involve substantial redevelopment including the existing food court area and some of the operating theatres.

Under conditions attached to the outline permission, the proposed Piazza and Circus shall be:

- a) a minimum of 46.5m width and a minimum of 6,000sqm in area for the Piazza.
- b) a minimum of 104m in diameter and a minimum of 7,000sqm in area for the Circus.
- c) a maximum 1000sqm in gross floor area for buildings within the Circus.

This scheme comprises a comprehensive Public Realm Design Strategy applicable to the entirety of the proposed Circus and Piazza areas. The Strategy shall set out a vision for the proposed Circus and Piazza areas.



3. Cambridgeshire Quality Panel views

Introduction

The Panel welcomed the site visit to the AstraZeneca and the Circus sites, which was useful in understanding the context for the proposed developments.

The AstraZeneca development fronts part of the proposed Circus and Piazza to the north, which will connect the current Addenbrooke's site to the new part of the CBC. Planning officers at Cambridge City Council proposed that both applicants of the Circus/Piazza and AstraZeneca proposals, which was also reviewed by the Panel, were present during both reviews of the schemes.

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 collaborative working relationship with the Hospital and the joined-up cultural, art and architectural approach, with the vision of connecting the new and the old campus; and the ambition to create an area where people would like to meet and find their spot. This proposal has to connect the CBC with the people using the open space, that being academic, patients, clinicians, other staff and visitors, in the main. At present, there are currently 12,000 employees who work at CBC, which will be doubled over the course of the development. The Panel heard that there was a Public Arts Strategy approved by Cambridge City Council in 2011. From that strategy funding was allocated to commission an 'artist in residence' to develop bespoke public art for the public realm at CBC.

It was questioned how the site is going to be managed and maintained in the future. The Panel also asked how the night-time economy will be taken into account, and how will this be realised.

Connectivity

The Panel highlighted the importance of the circus within the CBC development as this will have to act as the connection point between people and places within the campus. With the improvement of the public transport system, it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in car usage as people will change behaviour. However, in respect of public transport, the Panel considered that some of the connectivity and aspirations of the proposed public realm may be lost due to the proposed guided bus route, cycle lanes and other infrastructure requirements.

It was recognised that the site is well connected by the Cambridgeshire Guided Bus, with good walking and cycling links to the city centre. However, the Panel did express concern over the current positioning of the proposed guided busway stop. It was considered that it might be more appropriately positioned adjacent to the proposed Papworth Hospital.

The Panel also questioned the frequency of buses and their speed accessing the public realm.



The Panel were supportive of the concept of the public realm having a strong connection to the wider park area to the south west, and that the Circus was seen as a green corridor into the CBC.

Character

The Panel noted that the edge of the proposed buildings become your defensible space within the Circus and Piazza. The Panel also recognised that there is a gradual change in typology from the older buildings from the east leading to the more recent and proposed buildings to the west of the CBC

The Panel highlighted the role that the design of the Piazza/Circus will play in defining the character of this part of the overall CBC district and establishing quality. The scheme has the opportunity to contribute to the variety of settings within the CBC east/west public real spine as it moves from a dense urban grain to the research campus with buildings in a park, bounded by the railway with open space and residential beyond.

The Panel welcomed the layout and available spaces and recognised that the piazza does not appear to fit with that definition. As such, the Panel questioned whether this area needs to be re-labelled something different as the piazza seems to have been re-defined. The Panel recommend that aspirations for the Circus and Piazza should be drawn on from the green spaces to the west, and questioned where the limits for the overall vision are.

The Panel recommended breaking the landscape into 'rooms of space' because there is a lot of potential within the Circus area. The Panel also raised concerns over how the public realm will be lit at night. It is expected that there will be ambient light coming from adjacent building, but what would be the overall lighting strategy?

Climate

The Panel welcomed the proposals relating to biodiversity, but there were not any sufficient drainage details to comment upon. The inclusion of natural SUDS, including swales would be supported. The Panel suggested that the applicants look at the possible use of heat source pumps in the ground of the Circus, given the amount of land that could be exploited for this purpose.

4. Conclusion

The Panel welcomed seeing this proposal at such early state of the development and applauded the vision for the proposed Circus and Piazza areas. However, the Panel failed to see how the Piazza vision was to be realised. The Panel recommended that the Circus/Piazza should be tested against spaces of similar size and the character and quality of settings for interactive to reflective activities be re-defined. Further work is required for this important focus of the masterplan in order to achieve the overall vision.

The next review could gain by having representation from the CBC master planners and the surrounding building design teams.

The Panel also considered that there was a lack of detail regarding the drainage of the Circus to provide fuller comments, although the Circus and surrounding buildings could benefit from the use of head source pumps within the grounds of the Circus.



The Panel recommended that further consideration should be given as to the night-time use and economy of the Circus and Piazza, and of the lighting strategy for the area.

In addition to the constraints highlighted by the route of the guided busway and cycle lanes, the panel also questioned the positioned the positioning of the guided busway stop, which they consider would be better positioned adjacent to the proposed Papworth Hospital.