



CAMBRIDGESHIRE QUALITY PANEL

REPORT OF PANEL MEETING

Scheme: Cambridge Biomedical Campus Phase 2

Date: Tuesday 13th October 2015

Venue: Council Chamber, the Guildhall, Cambridge City Council

Time: 9:00- 11:15

Quality Panel Members

Robin Nicholson (Chair)

Luke Engleback

Simon Carne

Ashley Bateson

Kirk Archibald

David Taylor

Panel secretariat and support

Judit Carballo – Cambridgeshire County Council

Stuart Clarke- Cambridgeshire County Council

Local Authority Attendees

Mark Parsons, Principal Planner – Cambridge City Council

Jonathan Brookes, Principal Urban Designer - Cambridge City Council

Applicant and Representatives

Andrew Blevins – Property Trust

Christian Coop – NBBJ

1. Scheme description and presentation

Architect/Designer NBBJ

Applicant NHS Trust

Planning status Pre – outline application stage

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2. Overview

The Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) Phase 2 site is situated to the South of the first phase bounded by the Addenbrooke's Rd and railway to the west, Dame Mary Archer Way to the north, the Bell School Site (residential site currently under construction) to the east and the Green Belt to the south.

The site (approximately 10ha) was taken out of the Green Belt in the 2006 Cambridge Local Plan (site 9.09) on the plan below for clinical development and research uses but was safeguarded land for post 2016.

The development is to be an outline planning application to form the second phase of expansion of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC). Phase 1 (2009 planning permission) is under construction with AstraZeneca and Papworth Hospital the next buildings to be completed. CBC Phase 1 amounts to 215,000 sqm; Phase 2 is to be around 78,000 sqm. Phase 2 will be utilised two-thirds for commercial biomedical research and related uses and one-third for clinical and related uses for Addenbrooke's Hospital.

It has been anticipated that an outline planning application will be submitted in November/December, approval anticipated March/April, and expectations to start on site (first building) in third quarter of 2016 and expects first building completion in third quarter of 2018.

3. Cambridgeshire Quality Panel views

Introduction

The Panel welcomed the presentation made by the applicant, and although the Panel usually discourages Power Point presentations this was well thought through.

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 overall population of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus will double up to 25,000 people when all developments in phase 1 and phase 2 are completed. Therefore the Panel highlighted the importance of high quality streets to bring this community together and link it to the wider campus. An understanding of how and where people on this latest phase will go to access services and facilities is important. It was suggested the inclusion of a document capturing the link between health and wellbeing as part of the planning application.

Connectivity

The expected increase in population at the CBC presents a great challenge in terms of connectivity. The Panel noted that a third of the people will arrive to the site by car, a third by bike while the final third will do it by either foot or public transport.

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The Panel questioned how clear the walking routes within the site are and how workers would meet their friends or go for lunch. The plans presented did not show how this scheme connects through to the high street with clear crossing points on Dame Mary Archer Way.

The Panel queried the movement profile as it was difficult to see how the modal shift between the campus and the city centre works. Currently the plans do not show the detail of Mary Archer Way and the activities along it nor how a clear route that links from the south to the north is planned and how the Bell School development links in.

The CBC presents the challenge of knowing whether this is a campus or part of a town of 25,000 people; when the CBC develops where will all the cafes and restaurants be? The Panel suggested the provision of a plan for both existing and proposed that shows all car parks, bus stops and cafes and restaurants and other shops across the whole of Addenbrooke's. What will it be like at night? The Panel noted the applicants' intention of including some retail in the multi-storey car park but need to see it in the wider development context.

The Panel noted that there is not enough concentration of the few retail and social facilities to form a 'hub' within the development, so more robustness in the parameter plans is needed.

When queried, the applicant explained the need to allocate a route for blue parking badge and service vehicles but they are trying to keep flexibility in the overall site planning.

Character

The Panel noted that the applicant's brief is to create a strong sense of place rooted in the landscape but questioned what character elements have been captured from the surrounding areas and its history; how will these courtyards feel/mature into the future? The applicant explained they have used the concept of 'a field' to inform their approach and that they have worked on other parts of the CBC campus such as the Circus and the Piazza so they are very familiar with the wider site.

The applicant described how the character of the edge will help in mitigating the impact of the development. Within the site, the feel is related to the green belt through the woodland buffer and by introducing swales and rain gardens, but it was noted that the plant species haven't been decided yet. The Panel asked what palette types had been explored and felt that the understanding of what the site needs to respond to and use to inform the landscape palette wasn't yet precise enough. It was noted that the southern edge will have UK native trees while the northern edge will have a much urban character with mature tree planting.

In terms of the edge, the Panel was unsure about the use of the term 'woodland' to describe the approach to tree planting along the southern boundary. The Panel recommended the design team explore local species that are related to Cambridge and submit a more specific palette of colours that show a variety of different species and types. The Panel wondered whether poplar or willow species might be more suitable for a wet edge.

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At this stage of design development, a quite specific planting approach, including a rainwater strategy would be expected. The Panel struggled to see how the proposed and needed scale of planting would fit into a 17m width once the ditch, access road and threshold to the buildings were all factored in on the southern boundary. The 15m strip between Dame Mary Archer Way and the buildings creates a situation where buildings are somewhat divorced from this new street and compound the concerns of a 'separated' campus. The Panel noted that the draft local plan policy requires at least a 20m buffer to the south adjacent to the green belt.

The Panel noted the constraints of the site include a high pressure gas mains and water mains that limit the opportunity to develop the elevated nature at Dame Mary Archer Way.

The Panel noted that rain gardens relate directly to the countryside and will be embedded in the southern quads or courts with a softer environment.

The landscape courtyards and proposed 'productive' landscape approach was welcomed by the Panel but there were concerns about whether the applicants can accommodate the necessary drainage and planting requirements within the spaces. Service buildings within these spaces could significantly impact on their character and quality.

The Panel appreciated the piano key layout of the simple but flexible buildings. The applicant showed different configurations that could work with the buildings having two facades and no backs to the building either onto Dame Mary Archer Way or the rural edge. The quads relate to the surrounding environments; the northern quads to the urban grain while the southern quads to the rural edge.

The Panel were concerned that the street concept wasn't mentioned during the meeting and considered that a street sketch would have been useful. There is a danger that Dame Mary Archer Way would not look like a street as it has a number of building flanks facing it. What is the quality of this place and space? There needs to be more robustness in the design.

The Panel welcomed the applicants' intention of not wanting private spaces so as to support accidental meetings as part of the scientific/ research offer.

Climate

The Panel welcomed the functionality of the Courtyards, however questioned how swales etc. could be incorporated as part of the wider site strategy when such flexibility is being sought. It feels as though the masterplanning and sustainability aspects haven't yet synchronised. The applicants explained that they would like to give some flexibility to whatever comes next. The Panel expected this scheme to be aspirational in terms of carbon reduction and was concerned as to how the design vision will be maintained in the subsequent developments. The Panel noted that this will be done through the parameter plans rather than design codes.

The Panel questioned what the SUDs target was and how this will be met? The Panel felt that the sustainable strategy for water, waste and energy is not sufficiently

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integrated into the masterplan. Therefore, the Panel suggested the need for a combined SUDs and energy Strategy. It was explained to the Panel that conversations with the City Council's Sustainability Officer were being carried out in order to demonstrate minimum requirements for the scheme. A bespoke sustainable energy site strategy will be worked up for review 2 weeks after the day of this Panel meeting. The Panel also recommended providing the heat projection plan around these buildings.

The Panel noted that it is not possible to connect to community energy and that low carbon aspirations will be measured against a bespoke BREEAM rating.

The Panel recommended investigating how to connect to the energy centre at Addenbrooke's, although it was recognised that this could compromise the energy price paid and quantity provided as new companies would only have the energy released by the hospital.

4. Conclusion

The Panel enjoyed the presentation and highlighted the importance of providing images such as the views from the train but would like to see the latest version of the university and CBC campus buildings and the Bell school development shown on the plans and renders.

The Panel made the following recommendations, further details can be found above:

- The history of Cambridge landscape must inform the planting palette.
- More information should be provided in relation to the management of the water and sustainable drainage.
- Water waste and energy aspiration are very important as these buildings will leave a legacy.
- Maximise landscape opportunities to provide SUDs and biodiversity and consider the quality and character of the southern boundary.
- Service strategy should be integrated in the landscape.
- Consider future communal carbon reduction strategies across the site.
- Need for a strong pedestrian route (street concept). If there is key pedestrian route it should be clearer both along Dame Mary Archer Way and north south.
- Support for Health and Wellbeing should be incorporated in the plan.
- The quality of the streets is crucial to develop new communities. Quads could potentially be great social spaces but need to understand how and where retail facilities will be on this and the wider site.
- Decide on the overall character of this place either as a Campus or as a Town? What is it going to look like in 50 years' time?