

Application Number	16/0674/LBC	Agenda Item	
Date Received	22nd April 2016	Officer	Michael Hammond
Target Date	17th June 2016		
Ward	Market		
Site	Cambridge Union Society 9A Bridge Street Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 1UB		
Proposal	Demolition of ancillary buildings and removal of 1930's facade at the grade II listed Cambridge Union Society. Construction of replacement facade, reinstatement and refurbishment of historic features and internal and external access and refurbishment works including enlargement of existing cafe (use class A3) and re-opening of 'footlight's' entertainment space (sui generis). Demolition of squash courts and un-listed 3-5 Round Church Street in the conservation area. Construction of new link building for access and ancillary uses for the Union Society. Construction of adjacent new building with ground floor restaurant (use class A3) with 38 room post-graduate student accommodation above (use class C2) together with basement storage and services.		
Applicant	See Company. C/o Agent United Kingdom		

SUMMARY	<p>The development accords with the Development Plan for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In my view the proposed works would cause less than substantial harm to the setting and special interest of the Listed Building and this harm would be outweighed by the public benefits that the scheme would deliver.
RECOMMENDATION	APPROVAL

1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION/AREA CONTEXT

- 1.1 The Cambridge Union Society is located in the historic core of the City Centre. It occupies a large site on the south-west corner of Park Street and Round Church Street. The majority of the site is occupied by the main Grade II Listed Building of the Cambridge Union Society. The building is three-storeys in height with a half level below. It was completed in 1866 by Sir Alfred Waterhouse, most famously known for his design for the National History Museum in London. Since its construction, the building has been the subject of later extensions and additions, notably the 1930's extension to the Round Church Street elevation and the squash court. The half level below was formerly used by the Cambridge University Footlights Drama Club. The debating chamber is situated in the heart of the building and occupies a large proportion of the main building and hosts the oldest debating society in the world. This aspect of the building has retained its appearance for over 140 years and has hosted a variety of well-known speakers including former prime ministers and major international figures. There is also the Cambridge Union Society coffee shop/ bar at ground-floor level which is open to members of the public. The upper floors and remainder of the building are predominantly office/ educational space, in addition to the large library and snooker room. In the north-east corner of the site is a row of three terraced properties (3-5 Round Church Street) used as student accommodation which are under the ownership of Trinity College.
- 1.2 To the west of the site is the Holy Sepulchre Church, commonly referred to as the Round Church, which is a Grade I Listed Building. To the north of the site is the Park Street multi-storey car park. There is a row of terraced properties to the east along Park Street, the southern half being Grade II Listed Building and the northern half being designated as Buildings of Local Interest. To the south-east of the site is the Grade I Listed 'Little Trinity' building. The ADC theatre is situated to the south of the site.
- 1.3 The site is situated in a sensitive location in terms of conservation and heritage assets. As stated there are the Grade I Listed Buildings of the Round Church and Little Trinity in close proximity. The main building on site is Grade II Listed. The row

of terraced properties to the east along Park Street are Grade II Listed/ Buildings of Local Interest. The site is situated in the Central Conservation Area.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

2.1 Listed building consent is sought for the following works:

2.2 Demolition:

- Removal of the 1933 elements of the Round Church Street facade of the Grade II Listed Cambridge Union Society buildings;
- Demolition of the 1883 dilapidated toilet block of the Grade II Listed Cambridge Union Society buildings;
- Demolition of the 1933 former Squash Courts of the Grade II Listed Cambridge Union Society buildings;
- Internal and external demolitions and removals of fabric from various periods to allow for the improved access to, and usage of spaces within, the Grade II Listed Union Society buildings;

2.3 Development (as revised):

- Construction of a new Round Church Street facade of the Grade II Listed Cambridge Union Society building based upon an adaptation of the original 1883 design to tie-in with surviving original elements;
- Recreation of four dormer windows to the 1866 element of the Grade II Listed Cambridge Union Society buildings to re-instate those lost through bomb damage in the second world war;
- Creation of a new doorway to the Park Street elevation of the original 1883 building known as Round Church House of the Grade II Listed Cambridge Union Society buildings;
- Recreation of doorway from Snooker Room to the stairs of the Grade II Listed Cambridge Union Society buildings to re-instate the later change to remove the door;
- Creation of a new doorway between Round Church House and the Debating Chamber of the Grade II Listed Cambridge Union Society building;
- Re-location of the doorway from the café and members bar into the courtyard through enlargement of an existing window and creation of a ramp to create a level access entrance and subsequent closure of existing café entrance through

reinstatement of former window detail of the Grade II Listed Cambridge Union Society building;

- General refurbishments to the interior of the Grade II Listed Cambridge Union Society building including to enlarge and refurbish the ground floor café and members bar (Use Class A3) and to enlarge and refurbish the basement 'footlights' entertainment space (Sui Generis);
- Construction of new three storey 'link' building connecting the Debating chamber entrance to a new building entrance onto Round Church Street including internal circulation space, stairs and lift and
- toilet facilities and ancillary spaces;
- Construction of new ground floor restaurant venue (Use Class A3) with frontage onto Round Church Street and Park Street with 38no. room post-graduate accommodation above and basement for associated plant, refuse and cycle parking and storage;
- Associated landscape works to front, rear and side including creation of level access entrances.

2.4 This report focuses on those aspects that only require listed building consent.

2.5 In response to a number of concerns raised by consultees relating to heritage issues, the applicants have amended the scheme, specifically the proposed Trinity College post graduate accommodation and restaurant building. The amendments consist of alterations to the scale, massing and design of this element of the proposed works. These amendments are discussed in greater detail in the assessment section of this report.

2.6 The proposals have been the subject of extensive pre-application discussions between the Local Planning Authority and the applicants/ agent.

3.0 SITE HISTORY

3.1 The site has an extensive planning history. The most recent applications on this site are listed below:

Reference	Description	Outcome
16/0673/FUL	Demolition of ancillary buildings and removal of 1930's facade	Pending Consideration.

at the grade II listed Cambridge Union Society. Construction of replacement facade, reinstatement and refurbishment of historic features and internal and external access and refurbishment works including enlargement of existing cafe (use class A3) and re-opening of 'footlight's' entertainment space (sui generis). Demolition of squash courts and un-listed 3-5 Round Church Street in the conservation area.

Construction of new link building for access and ancillary uses for the Union Society. Construction of adjacent new building with ground floor restaurant (use class A3) with 38 room post-graduate student accommodation above (use class C2) together with basement storage and services.

12/0829/LBC	To increase the height of the chamber balustrade to minimise the risk to people using the chamber balcony.	Permitted.
06/0576/LBC	Removal of 2 No. existing metal escapes (external) and installation of a new hand rail (internal) to Grade II Listed Building.	Permitted.
C/03/0914	Re-opening of original blocked up doorways, formation of new doorways and other alterations.	Permitted.

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, Cambridge Local Plan 2006 policies, Supplementary Planning Documents and Material Considerations.

5.2 Relevant Development Plan policies

PLAN	POLICY NUMBER
Cambridge Local Plan 2006	4/10

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

Central Government Guidance	National Planning Policy Framework March 2012 National Planning Policy Framework – Planning Practice Guidance March 2014
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5.4 Status of Proposed Submission – Cambridge Local Plan

Planning applications should be determined in accordance with policies in the adopted Development Plan and advice set out in the NPPF. However, after consideration of adopted plans and the NPPF, policies in emerging plans can also be given some weight when determining applications. For Cambridge, therefore, the emerging revised Local Plan as published for consultation on 19 July 2013 can be taken into account, especially those policies where there are no or limited objections to it. However it is likely, in the vast majority of instances, that the adopted development plan and the NPPF will have considerably more weight than emerging policies in the revised Local Plan.

For the application considered in this report, there are no policies in the emerging Local Plan that should be taken into account.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

Urban Design and Conservation Team

Original Comments (22/07/2016)

6.1 Objection. Reasons for refusal:

- The height, scale massing and elevational treatment of the proposed student accommodation block would have an adverse impact on the setting of listed buildings within the Union Society site.
- The internal changes to the main stair area would have a significantly harmful effect on the fabric of the listed building.
- The height, scale massing and elevational treatment of the proposed student accommodation block and would not preserve or enhance the character of this part of the Historic Core/Conservation Area.
- The height, scale massing and elevational treatment of the proposed student accommodation block and would have an adverse impact on the setting of the Listed Park Street terrace.
- The demolition of 3-5 Round Church Street is not acceptable given the contribution which these buildings currently make to the character of this part of the Conservation Area.
- The proposed development will lead to ‘less than substantial harm’ to the settings of listed buildings and the Conservation Area as designated heritage assets and this harm is not outweighed by the public benefits of the development.

Proposed Trinity College Accommodation Block & Restaurant.

- The accommodation block would be of greater scale and bulk than the existing Northern Waterhouse wing on the same street elevation. It would also be of the same scale as and would thus compete with, the debating chamber building – the latter being the most significant element of the buildings and currently signalling this in its relationship with the existing lower wings. In these respects, the scale and bulk of the new building is considered excessive and to fail to respond sympathetically to

the existing listed buildings and therefore to harm their character.

- It also does not help form a notional townscape intermediary between the more commercial & institutional city centre and the more modest scale of the residential inner suburbs. The mass of the building is not convincingly broken down by the notional 'double-pile' form or the two gable ends with projecting bays. It still seems to present an overwhelming visual intervention into the townscape, especially when viewed from the Northern end of Park Street. The mass seems more oppressive when viewed across the 'back yard' because of the solid brick mass of the student block and the heavy metal-clad parapet at eaves level.

Impacts on the settings of Listed Buildings – (planning application)

The Setting of the Terrace on Park Street:

- There is clearly scope for improvement of the current prospect and the proposals potentially improve the service yard and boundary treatment. However, the accommodation block's scale, design and bulk in view across service yard would make it very dominating. Round Church House (the admin office) is set back from the Eastern boundary and is 2 – 3 storeys towards this boundary and the gable of 5, Round Church Street is of comparable scale to Round Church House. In contrast, the accommodation block would be much taller and much wider (14metres) than the main front to back depth of the existing cottages (7 metres). That it would be much closer to the boundary and occupying the corner as it would, its scale would be emphasised. The scale, bulk and design of the new building would result in it being unduly dominant in the setting of the terrace and a major adverse impact on the setting of the Listed terrace. There same can be said of the locally listed element.

The Setting of the Holy Sepulchre Church (Round Church)

- In the passage way along the Southern side a new gate is proposed in a position where there is none presently. Subject to the agreement of the details of this gate, there is judged to be no material adverse impact on the setting of the Church.

The Setting of the Union Buildings

- The setting of the Union buildings is currently marred by several elements. The scheme would improve the appearance of the

building's setting at the service yard including by the removal of the toilet block.

- As an adjoining building, the Round Church St wing would be of significantly greater scale and bulk than the Northern wing and would be of the same scale as the debating chamber building – the latter being the most significant element of the buildings and currently the tallest. In terms of the immediate setting of the listed building then, the new wing/building would appear the largest part of the group and this is considered to detract from the latter's setting.
- The proposed accommodation block would be apparent from Bridge Street in longer views down Round Church Street towards the Union buildings where it would appear above and beyond the existing Northern wings of the Union buildings.
- The dominance of the proposed accommodation block is therefore considered to harm the immediate setting of the older buildings.

Impacts on the conservation area – (planning application)

Demolition of 3 – 5 Round Church Street

- 3-5 Round Church Street are considered to contribute positively to the character or appearance of the conservation area and their demolition is considered to cause harm to the heritage asset.
- Returning to NPPF paragraphs 133 or 134, In either case, harm caused by the proposal must be weighed against the public benefits which in the case of para 133 must be substantial. Weighing against these are harm to the conservation area and Listed buildings settings that would arise from the design of the building proposed and the demolition of the cottages.

Improvement of yard facing Park Street

- This is currently a visually poor service yard viewed from the street. There is clearly potential for improvement and for mitigating views of the gable of No.5 Round Church Street

The scale, bulk and design of the new building.

- The substantial length, width and height of the building allied with the rigid repetition of elements (windows, dormers, banding, gables, and chimneys), result in it being likely to appear very dominant – especially seen from across the rear yard or on Park Street from opposite the car park corner. Its height, position on the site boundary and form would effectively

project the building out into the street scene when viewed from the Park Street / Jesus Lane junction. In addition, the architectural treatment of the end elevation consists of very demonstrative elements with only shallow recessions and would be alien in the context of smaller scale buildings on Park Street and Lower Park Street. The combination of these factors would produce an overly dominant building on Park Street.

Alterations to the Listed Buildings – (Listed building application)

Removal of the 1930s extensions.

- The removal of the 1930s extensions is acceptable.

Demolition of Toilet Block

- If the demolition were properly recorded and the better fittings salvaged for reuse elsewhere (or in the listed building), then it is probably acceptable to demolish the block, on balance.

Additional bay to the Waterhouse Northern elevation and reconstruction of the lower facade of the range.

- A part of the proposals for the existing 19th Century northern block is the construction of an additional bay in brickwork to the Waterhouse Northern elevation. This is not a reinstatement as it was never part of the Waterhouse design. A straight vertical line on the Northern elevation drawing indicates the join between the two and the bay is confirmed by the floor plans to be at an angle to the existing main wall. How the brickwork at this junction was to work would need to be detailed. This bay would require brick and stonework of precisely matching materials.

Interior changes to Listed Building

Basement

- The works to basement are acceptable, subject to conditions.

Ground Floor

- The proposed link building (atrium area) affects early layout in the existing stair area by removing the short adjoining wall of the 1866 build. This area currently has some enclosure which reflects the character of this part of the building. The drawing 745 183 P1 Indicative Central Atrium Circulation indicates the contrasting character of space that is envisaged. To retain the character of the early phase, the existing stair configuration

should be retained and the new space start only beyond (north of) the short adjoining wall.

- The proposed additional number/position of further large openings in the main spine wall between the Members Bar and Blue Room is undesirable in terms of the character of these rooms – this will impact on the shape & scale of the proposed ‘forward kitchen’ and the bar.

First Floor

- Here the main concerns remain in the area of the link block between the reconstructed end of the Waterhouse Northern block and the new student block. How much is demolished, how much is reconstructed, how much retained and so on.

Second Floor

- Acceptable subject to condition.

New Link Building

- To Round Church Street a link block provides both visual and literal separation between the listed building and the accommodation block and the recessed threshold should help visitors ‘read’ the buildings and how they are meant to be approached & used. However, it is important that the transparency of the facade of the foyer allows the two ends of the two separated blocks to be seen and understood as separate buildings but also that the link block itself has a real architectural presence on the street.

Comments on Amendments (09/11/2016)

Accommodation Block.

- Noting the reduction in height of the proposed Round Church Street elevation of the accommodation block, and reduced height and bulk of the proposed Park Street elevation, these revisions are considered to substantially address the height, scale, and massing issues previously objected to.
- In addition to the height and bulk reduction, the fenestration changes to the Park Street elevation also contribute to avoiding the overbearing effect of the gables of the previous version.

3-5 Round Church Street.

The harm to the conservation area caused by the proposed demolition of 3-5 Round Church Street remains as per the comments on the original proposal.

Cambridge Union Society Buildings.

A part of the proposals for the existing 19th Century Round Church Street block is the entrance link and construction of an additional gabled bay in brickwork to the Waterhouse Northern elevation. The latter is not a reinstatement as it was never part of the Waterhouse design and replaces the existing roof hip. However, the applicants have declined to respond to the Victorian Society's criticism of this element of the proposals and have submitted a justification of the design approach they have taken.

Conclusion.

The harm versus the benefits of the scheme are discussed in the Conservation response to the original proposal. The issue remains one of the loss of 3-5 Round Church Street, and the inclusion of arguably undesirable alterations to the Listed CUS buildings (link and staircases) compared with benefits of reinstating the lower part of the Waterhouse, Round Church Street elevation; sustaining the historic Cambridge Union Society buildings; and any other perceived benefits.

The proposed development will lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the settings of listed buildings and the Conservation Area as designated heritage assets and this harm is not outweighed by the public benefits of the development.

Historic England

Original Comments (10/06/2016)

- 6.6 The application is not supported.
- 6.7 Historic England appreciate the Union Society's aims to develop the overall site to safeguard its long-term future. However, the submitted proposals in their current form would cause severe harm to the significance of the Cambridge Historic Core Conservation Area, as a result of the impact on their setting. We do not consider that a clear and convincing case for the demolition of 3-5 Round Church Street has been made in accordance with the requirements in Paragraph 132 of the NPPF. The repair of nos 3-5 should be central to any scheme for this site if it is to be consistent with the Framework's objective of conserving significance and the weight accorded to

the conservation of significance reflects the statutory duties laid upon decision-makers by the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. Even were the Council to conclude that a case could be made for demolition, the scale of the new build element should be significantly reduced in line with the advice above.

Comments on amendments (01/11/2016)

- 6.8 The revised proposals showing a reduction in height of one storey, together with amendments to the detailed design of the gable end of the student accommodation facing Park Street, would have a lesser impact on the streetscene than the previous proposals. However, our stance remains that demolition of 3-5 Round Church Street would cause severe harm to the significance of the Cambridge Historic Core Conservation Area, as a result of the impact on their setting, particularly in relation to the listed Park Street terrace. The repair of nos 3-5 and their integration into the wider development should be central to any scheme for this site if it is to be consistent with the NPPF's objective of conserving significance, and the weight accorded to the conservation of significance reflects the statutory duties laid upon decision-makers by the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. In accordance with guidance in the NPPF, the level of harm that would be incurred to the significance of the conservation area through the loss of 3-5 Round Church Street should, therefore, be carefully balanced against the perceived public benefits of the revised proposals.

The Victorian Society

- 6.9 Object to the application (as submitted).

Demolition of 3 -5 Round Church Street

- 6.10 The most damaging aspect of the scheme is the proposed demolition of the attractive terrace of later nineteenth-century houses at 3-5 Round Church Street which would cause substantial harm.

Proposed accommodation block

- 6.11 The proposed accommodation block excessively and damagingly tall and bulky, seemingly on quite a different scale from the Union building that it would dominate and overshadow, not to mention the smaller scale domestic properties nearby. We object also to the crude, heavy treatment of the proposed link block proposed to abut the north end of the reworked North Wing.

Works to the listed building

- 6.12 While we raise no objection to the loss of the twentieth-century fabric (and defer to the Twentieth Century Society on its significance), we object to an approach that would see an approximation of the Waterhouse's northern ground-floor elevation recreated. If the twentieth-century remodelling is to be unpicked, it makes sense to reinstate Waterhouse's design and reintegrate what survives of his work on Cross Church Street with its original setting.

Design and Conservation Panel (Meeting of 10th August 2016)

The minutes of the Panel meeting were as follows:

- 6.13 **The impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.**

Although the Panel did see the benefits of removing the existing discordant 1930s elements, concern was expressed as to the quantum of development on this site, and the impact of such a dominant development on the Conservation Area. The Panel regard Round Church Street as transitional space; moving from the busy, commercial character of Bridge Street to the quieter and predominantly residential character of Park Street. It was therefore felt that this development should respond to this changing character, but instead of stepping down in scale and massing it steps up, with the taller elements likely to create a canyon effect along Round Church Street and result in a significant increase in overshadowing of the public realm. The Panel was also not convinced that the height of the existing debating chamber element of the Waterhouse building should be seen as the precedent for the height of the new-build

element on the back of the pavement along Round Church Street. The debating chamber is sited in the heart of the site, well away from the adjacent streets, in much the same way as Trinity College's taller Wolfson building is encircled by lower buildings lining the adjacent streets.

6.14 Treatment of New Entrance (Round Church Street).

The Panel noted the examination of options for the new entrance off Round Church Street, but questioned the decision to treat this as a negative 'void' between the new Trinity Building and the restored and extended Waterhouse wing. The Panel was not convinced by the justification that this formed a third element in the street-scene. The Panel would encourage a greater celebration of the entrance, but one which is also architecturally incorporated as part of the Trinity Building, for a more successful result. The Panel would also have welcomed the opportunity to learn more about the architectural treatment for the new circulation space and stairwell within the Waterhouse building, but lack of time forced the debate to focus on more pressing matters.

6.15 New Trinity Building.

In addition to their concerns over the building's impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the Panel felt that this building would be more successful if it could be seen to have its own identity, rather than attempt to be seen as part of the 'family' of Waterhouse structures on the site. Particular concerns were expressed regarding the end double-gable that appears over-dominant and muscular, in particular when compared to the scale of the listed cottages along Park Street. The Panel was not convinced that the lower elements facing on to Park Street helped address this issue of scale, while the large areas of glass would afford views into the communal kitchen facilities; the experience of the student housing at CB1 suggests this might be unfortunate, and particularly inappropriate when viewed in the context of the listed cottages on the opposite side of Park Street.

6.16 Treatment of the retained Courtyard space (including provision of disabled ramp).

The Panel noted that the current treatment of the Courtyard is to retain the existing paths and to introduce a new dog-legged path to provide a ramped access to a new disabled entrance on the side wing. At the same time a triangular area of grass abutting the rear of the Round Church would be replaced with paving. The Panel felt that this important external space would benefit from a more holistic consideration, including how disabled access might be provided to the main entrance (as opposed to a side entrance), and where it might be best to provide hard landscaping for external seating (including consideration of the impact on the setting of the Grade I listed Round Church).

6.17 Listed cottages (Park Street).

The presentation made no reference to the impact of the proposal on the setting of the listed cottages on the east side of Park Street. The Panel felt that further clarity was needed regarding the development's impact. Based on the information provided, the reference to the stepped end gable 'addressing' the cottages was viewed as tokenistic and unconvincing. The Panel also had a concern that the new Trinity Building appeared to mask more of the cottages in the proposed image looking down Round Church Street from Bridge Street.

6.18 Conclusion

At the last presentation in September, the Panel stated that they could accept the demolition of 3-5 Round Church Street providing the quality of redevelopment was of a sufficiently high standard.

The design of the scheme as currently proposed has not met this requirement, and the Panel considered the case had not been made to justify the quantum of new development on the site. The Panel recognises that this is an opportunity to restore the Waterhouse Building and put the future finances of the Cambridge Union Society onto a sound footing but, in the Panel's view, this scheme would be harmful both to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the adjacent Grade II listed cottages on Park Street. While there would be some undoubted enhancements to the Waterhouse Building, on balance, the Panel felt these benefits did not outweigh the harm.

VERTICT – AMBER (2), RED (3) with 1 abstention.

6.19 **Officer's note**

The programme for determination of the application did not allow for the revised application to be considered by the Design and Conservation Panel.

Twentieth Century Society

6.20 No comments received.

6.21 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 The owner/occupier of the following address has made a representation in objection to the application:

- 27 Nutters Close, Grantchester

7.2 The representation can be summarised as follows:

- The design of the east elevation is unacceptable and should be rethought.

7.3 The owners/ occupiers of the following addresses have made representations in support of the application:

- 8 Park Parade
- Cambridge Past, Present and Future

7.4 The representations can be summarised as follows:

- The proposal will enhance the neighbourhood.
- Proposals to radically alter a listed building should respect that building as it stands with any extension or alteration being on a subservient scale. The proposed refurbishment of the Cambridge Union involved a loose restoration along the lines of how the building was prior to the 1930s Tomlinson alterations, but with the re-development of the eastern half of the site with a

building that is substantially larger than the listed building that is to be retained. Although this breaches the general principle, it is the opinion of Cambridge PPF that the circumstances justify this reversal provided the quality of the architectural design and finish materials is not allowed to become compromised during the development process.

- 7.5 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 The historical and architectural significance of the site, together with the background to the application(s) is set out in the associated assessment for planning permission 16/0673/FUL.

Listed Building Consent Issues

Demolition Works

- 8.2 The following demolitions to the Grade II Listed Building are proposed:
- Removal of the 1933 elements of the Round Church Street facade of the Grade II Listed Cambridge Union Society buildings;
 - Demolition of the 1883 dilapidated toilet block of the Grade II Listed Cambridge Union Society buildings;
 - Demolition of the 1933 former Squash Courts of the Grade II Listed Cambridge Union Society buildings;
 - Internal and external demolitions and removals of fabric from various periods to allow for the improved access to, and usage of spaces within, the Grade II Listed Union Society buildings;
- 8.3 The agent has prepared a heritage assessment which highlights the significance of each element of the Listed Building. The assessment confirms that the areas of highest significance are the Debating Chamber, front entrance and faces and interior of the 1886 extensions of the parallel ranges. The 1930's Round Church Street facade, 1883 toilet lock and 1930's former squash courts are identified as being of low significance.

- 8.4 The Conservation Team, Historic England and Victorian Society have raised no objection to the removal of the 1930's Round Church Street facade, demolition of the 1883 toilet block or the former squash courts. The vast majority of the demolition works to the interior of the Listed Building are also supported by consultees, subject to conditions. As such, I do not consider any harm to the significance of the Listed Building would occur from these proposed demolitions.
- 8.5 The main point of contention in terms of demolition affecting the Listed Building is the proposed removal of the main staircase in the atrium. The Urban Design and Conservation Team and Historic England both object to this element of the scheme and consider that in order for the demolition to be acceptable. The consultees have stated that the existing stair configuration should be retained and the new interior space should start only beyond (north of) the short adjoin wall.
- 8.6 The heritage assessment provided with the application defines this staircase as clearly being of some heritage significance as an aspect of the 1930's alterations. In their view it is of no higher than moderate heritage significance. I am inclined to further the view of the applicant.
- 8.7 In my opinion, the removal of the staircase would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the Listed Building. In accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF I have weighed this harm against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
- 8.8 Conservation and Planning Officers, together with the agent, have explored ways of trying to overcome this issue. No solution to this matter was agreed upon but it was clear that trying to retain or mimic the existing staircase would have significant impacts on the circulation and functionality of the scheme. At present, the Cambridge Union Society effectively turns its back onto Round Church Street and the existing entrances are relatively discreet and out of the public view. The proposed entrance onto Round Church Street would counteract this by providing an inviting and legible entrance into the site from the public realm. The new entrance would also drastically enhance the levels of active frontage along the street. In addition to this, accessibility and circulation would be improved substantially as the existing corridors and routes through the

building are narrow and extremely difficult for people with impaired mobility to access. The Disability Consultative Panel recognise this in their support of the scheme.

- 8.9 In my opinion, the public benefits of the increased public exposure of the building and its uses, and the significant improvements to accessibility, would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the Listed Building.

Proposed works and additions to the Grade II Listed Building

- 8.10 The application proposes the following works and additions to the Listed Building:

- Reinstatement of lost dormer windows
- Reinstatement of a Waterhouse derived facade
- Access improvements
- Internal changes to improve circulation and usage of spaces
- Creation of ancillary spaces

- 8.11 The relevant consultees have raised no objection to the proposed reinstatement of the lost dormer windows, creation of ancillary spaces and most of the access improvements and internal changes. In the absence of objections to these elements from the expert consultees, I am minded to support these aspects of the proposal, subject to conditions.

- 8.12 One exception is the lack of support for the proposed removal and replacement of the staircase. The impact of this element has been assessed in paragraphs 8.22 – 8.25 of this report and is deemed to be acceptable.

- 8.13 I also acknowledge that concerns have been raised from the Victorian Society regarding the proposed reinstatement of the Waterhouse derived facade. The Victorian Society considers that if the twentieth-century remodeling is to be unpicked, it makes sense to reinstate Waterhouse's design and reintegrate what survives of his work on Round Church Street with its original setting. In contrast, Historic England state that no harm would be caused to the building's significance by the proposed restoration of the lower section of the Waterhouse elevation on Round Church Street. The Urban Design and Conservation Team recommend conditions relating to the junction of

brickwork and material samples and do not object to the this element of the scheme.

- 8.14 In my opinion, the proposed Waterhouse facade would improve the appearance of the building and would not amount to substantial harm to the heritage asset. The current Round Church Street 1930's facade is of poor quality and in a dilapidated condition. The proposed facade would take inspiration from the architectural attributes of the existing Waterhouse building and would rejuvenate the appearance of the building in the street scene. The works will make a positive contribution to the setting and appearance of the Listed Building.

Proposed restaurant/ accommodation building and link building
– Original proposal

- 8.15 The proposed building would occupy a highly prominent location in the street scene by virtue of its position occupying the corner of the site between Round Church Street and Park Street. As explained in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 of this report, the site is in a sensitive location in terms of heritage assets both on-site and off-site.
- 8.16 The application originally proposed a four-and-a-half storey building with the ridge line over 3.1m above the adjacent Round Church Street element and sought to use the ridge line of the large debating chamber roof to inform its scale and mass. The gable end featured a set of double gothic style bays and the Round Church Street facade had a high frequency of dormer windows with rows of horizontal stone coursing demarcating each floor of the building.
- 8.17 The original scheme came under strong criticism from the Design and Conservation Panel. The Panel felt that the development should respond to this changing character, but instead of stepping down in scale and massing it steps up, with the taller elements likely to create a canyon effect along Round Church Street and result in a significant increase in overshadowing of the public realm. The Panel was also not convinced that the height of the existing debating chamber element of the Waterhouse building should act as a precedent for the proposed height. The Panel wanted to see the glazed linking element portrayed as a greater celebration of the

entrance. Furthermore it was recommended that the new building should have its own identity and that the end double-gable appears over-dominant and muscular in appearance when compared to the listed cottages opposite.

- 8.18 Continuing this theme, concerns were raised by design-based consultees. The Urban Design and Conservation Team encapsulated their criticism by describing the scale and bulk of the new building to be too excessive and failing to respond sympathetically to the existing listed buildings, thus harming their character. Historic England shared this view, explaining that the new building would constitute an extremely prominent intervention in the street scene. This was also reiterated by the Victorian Society, who added that the crude, heavy treatment of the proposed link block appears highly incongruous, working against, not with, the form and manner of the listed building.
- 8.19 In assessing the original proposal, I agreed with the concerns raised regarding the proposed new building as the proposal would have adversely impacted on the setting and historic interest of the nearby Listed Buildings and would have failed to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Proposed restaurant/accommodation building and link building
– Revised proposal

- 8.20 In response to the unanimous criticism of the original scheme the applicant elected to revise the proposal to try and address the concerns raised. The main changes are as follows.
- 8.21 The building has been reduced in scale down to three-and-a-half storeys with the ridge line being lowered by 2.75m, approximately 400m above that of its neighbouring building. The number of dormers has been decreased down from 5 to 3 with the dormers now slightly wider and sitting lower in the roof plane. The central stone coursing between the first and second floor has been removed and replaced with recessed brickwork and the window detail simplified to read as single vertical planes breaking up the horizontal nature of the buildings along Round Church Street. There was originally an overhang above first-floor level and this has since been removed so that the building line is flush at all levels. The eaves line has also been lowered and reads level with that of the Waterhouse element adjacent

along Round Church Street. The set of double gables has been replaced with two regular gable ends and the window fenestration has been altered in terms of a significant reduction in the level of glazing and introduction of ornamental arrangements, notably oriel windows. There are also other more detailed changes to minor elements of the scheme.

- 8.22 Since the amendments were made comments have been received from the Urban Design and Conservation Team and Historic England. The Urban Design and Conservation Team has stated that the revisions are considered to substantially address the height, scale and massing issue previously objected to and that the fenestration changes to the Park Street elevation also contribute to overcoming the overbearing effects of the gables of the previous version. Historic England explain that the amendments would reduce the level of harm caused to the setting of the Listed Buildings and that this would have a lesser impact on the street scene. No comments have been received from the Victorian Society on the amended scheme.
- 8.23 The original scheme was criticised by the relevant consultees due to its excessive scale and mass, treatment of the end gable and dominance compared to the Listed Buildings both on and off-site. The responses received after the amendments suggest that the level of harm caused by this element has been reduced significantly. There were concerns raised by the Design and Conservation Panel and the Victorian Society regarding the proposed link building/ entrance from Round Church Street which do not appear to have been resolved. However, these were not shared by the Urban Design and Conservation Team or Historic England.
- 8.24 In my opinion, the proposed amendments have overcome the main issues regarding the treatment of the gable end, excessive scale and mass and the dominating impact it would have on the relevant heritage assets. The treatment of the Round Church Street elevation and reduction in mass has resulted in a scheme which appears much simpler in its form and appearance. This combined with the significant reduction in scale means that the development would not harmfully compete or draw attention away from the prized debating chamber building. Furthermore the revision to the gable end means that it will appear far less pronounced and dominant in the street

scene when viewed from key public viewpoints in the context of the Listed Building.

8.25 I do not share the views of the Victorian Society and the Design and Conservation Panel in respect of the concerns relating to the link building and entrance. In my view, the glazed link would act as a sensitive mediator between the reinstatement of the Waterhouse facade and the new building, providing a key delineation between the ends and beginnings of these two elements. The recessing of this aspect behind the building frontages of these two buildings and glazed fenestration also ensures that it does not clutter or confuse the successfully contrasting treatment along Round Church Street of the two buildings. My opinion is that celebrating this entrance any further, by way of widening, bringing forward or changing materials, would appear awkward in the juxtaposition it finds itself. In addition to this, the scheme needs to be taken in its current context, whereby there is no meaningful active frontage along this elevation, and the proposed glazed link would be a considerable enhancement to improving the levels of active frontage along this street.

8.26 In my assessment of the revised scheme and interpreting the consultee responses received before and after the revisions, I am of the view that the proposed building, as amended, would cause less than substantial harm to the setting and special interest of the Listed Building. In accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF I have weighed this harm against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Assessment of Public Benefits

8.27 The applicant has presented what they consider to be a number of public benefits that would arise from the development of the proposed building. The full list of these public benefits is detailed in paragraph 8.18 of this report. I have assessed the public benefits put forward and the level of weight they should be afforded in decision making.

8.28 Firstly, with respect to the improvements to the public realm, the opportunity to repair the harm of the Park Street road widening, replacement of pavement and visual improvements to the service yard would be site-specific and are relatively minor

when compared to the other public benefits put forward. Nevertheless, these would represent a benefit to the area. The increase in width of the pavement on the corner of Park Street and creation of an active frontage along Round Church Street would substantially improve the pedestrian environment in terms of safety and active surveillance and I believe these are moderate in terms of their significance.

- 8.29 Secondly, in considering the improvements to the building conditions, the replacement of deteriorating housing is very much exclusive to Trinity College and I am not convinced that this is a notable public benefit. The replacement of the 1930's Round Church Street facade would inevitably improve the appearance of the street scene and would benefit the character of the area as a whole. The repair and maintenance work of the Cambridge Union Society building would be a significant public benefit and this is explored in greater detail in paragraph 8.55.
- 8.30 Thirdly, the replacement of low quality student housing with higher quality units would be, in my view, a private benefit to Trinity College as it would only be readily experienced by their students. In contrast, the release of housing currently owned by Trinity College would be a substantial public benefit. The properties in question are all in sustainable locations and ideal for use as dwellinghouses. The release of this housing would contribute to easing the holistic housing issues that the city is currently experiencing, notably increasing the supply of houses available to help meet the growing demand.
- 8.31 Fourthly, there would also be public benefits arising from the improvements to the Cambridge Union Society. I consider the reinstatement of the dormers above the snooker room not to be a public benefit. The opening up of the building and its associated functions would improve opportunities for members of the public to experience the uses offered, which, at present, are almost invisible to people using the public realm adjacent. The reopening of the Footlight's entertainment venue would also offer new cultural experiences for those living and visiting Cambridge. The new entrance and internal works to the building would dramatically improve the accessibility of the building which is currently extremely difficult and challenging for anyone with impaired mobility to navigate. The overall sustainability and carbon footprint of the building would be improved as a result of

replacing outdated forms of heating and energy usage with modern-day technology.

- 8.32 Finally, and most significantly, the works would ensure that the long term future of the Listed Building is secured and that the world's longest running debating society is able to continue operating in the heart of Cambridge. The existing building is in a poor state structurally which is encapsulated by the fact that existing leaks are managed by catching water in buckets. In addition to this, the heating of the building uses extremely old forms of boilers which are inefficient in both their energy use and the financial cost of running. The consequence of this is that the historic fabric of the Listed Building is at a serious risk of deteriorating without these necessary internal works. The Cambridge Union Society has, and continues to host, a variety of world renowned public speakers and guests and plays a critical role in forming the global presence of the University of Cambridge. The ability to attract high profile speakers and host high quality debates on economic, social and environmental issues adds significant weight in the overall city branding of Cambridge as a forward thinking and progressive city.

Summary

- 8.33 The proposed internal works to the Listed Building would cause some harm to its special architectural interest due to the removal of the main staircase. The properties at nos.3 – 5 Round Church Street are considered to have a neutral contribution to forming the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the loss of these would result in a degree of harm. The proposed link building and entrance from Round Church Street would harm nearby heritage assets according to the Victorian Society and the Design and Conservation Panel. The revised scheme for the post-graduate accommodation/ restaurant block is considered to cause low harm to heritage assets. Overall, I am of the opinion that the proposed demolitions and additions amount to less than substantial harm to the relevant heritage assets.
- 8.34 There would be dramatic public benefits to the pedestrian environment and accessibility of the area both internally within the site and externally outside the site, such as the widening of the pinch point between Park Street and Round Church Street. The internal improvements and long term structural and

financial benefits for the Cambridge Union Society that the proposal would create would take important steps to securing the legacy of the world renowned Cambridge Union Society and help preserve the historic integrity of the Listed Building. The replacement of the 1930's extensions and additions, which are considered to detract from the Listed Building's significance, would contribute positive to the area. The proposal would also involve the release of five properties currently owned by Trinity College to the open market which would be beneficial in the City meeting its overall housing need.

8.35 In my opinion, in weighing the less than substantial harm to the heritage assets caused by the demolition of nos.3 – 5 Round Church Street against the public benefits (including securing its optimum viable use) that would accrue, I am of the opinion that the public benefits would outweigh the harm and the scheme is acceptable, in accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF.

8.36 As such, the proposal accords with local policy 4/10, national policy guidance (para. 134) in relation to heritage impact (with reference to sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990), and adequately responds to its context, sense of place and is of good design.

Third Party Representations

8.37 The third party representations have been addressed in the main body of this report.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 The key factor in considering the application has been weighing the harm caused by the proposed works on the special architectural and historical interest of the Grade II Listed Building at the Cambridge Union Society against the public benefits that the scheme would deliver. The application has been found to be justified and the less than substantial harm caused to the Listed Building would be outweighed by the extensive public benefits associated with the proposal.

9.2 Listed building consent should be issued provided the associated application for planning permission is endorsed by the Planning Committee.

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 consent.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended by section 51(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as listed on this decision notice.

Reason: In the interests of good planning and for the avoidance of doubt.

3. No development shall take place until a full photographic record and survey by measured drawing and salvage of samples has been made depicting the exterior and interior of the building (including any parts to be demolished) and a copy deposited with each of the following organisations: the Cambridgeshire Collection of the Central Library, Lion Yard, Cambridge; the County Archive, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge, and the local planning authority. The precise number and nature of the photographs, drawings and samples to be taken is to be agreed in advance with the local planning authority and the format in which they are to be displayed and titled is to be agreed with the local planning authority before the deposit is made.

Reason: to foster understanding of the building's importance in the national and Cambridge context, and to ensure proper recording of any aspects of the building's special interest which are to be lost or altered. (Cambridge Local Plan 2006, policy 4/10 and paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012).

4. The means of preservation, protection and treatment of the following items of architectural / historic interest is to be agreed in advance of any works on site in writing by the LPA and carried out in accordance with the approved details thereafter:

- i] Joinery such as staircases, library shelving, doors & doorcases, etc..
- ii] Plasterwork to ceilings, walls, etc..
- iii] Decorative stonework such as mouldings, string courses, finials, etc..
- iv] Windows [including sills, mullions, transoms, etc.] and historic glass.
- v] Parquet, clay pavers, brick pammets and other historic floor coverings.

Reason: To avoid harm to the special interest of the listed building (Cambridge Local Plan 2006, policy 4/10)

5. The following items of historic fabric are to be retained and not altered, damaged or removed without the express written consent of the LPA:

- i] Decorative lead rooftop finial(s)

Reason: To avoid harm to the special interest of the listed building (Cambridge Local Plan 2006, policy 4/10)

6. No roofs shall be constructed until full details of the type and source of roof covering materials and the ridge, eaves and hip details, if appropriate, have been submitted to the local planning authority as samples and approved in writing. Roofs shall thereafter be constructed only in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To avoid harm to the special interest of the listed building (Cambridge Local Plan 2006, policy 4/10)

7. No dormers shall be constructed until full details, at a scale of 1:10, showing the construction, materials, rainwater disposal and joinery of the dormers, including their cheeks, gables, glazing bars and mouldings, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Dormers shall thereafter be constructed only in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To avoid harm to the special interest of the listed building (Cambridge Local Plan 2006, policy 4/10)

8. No brickwork is to be erected until the choice of brick, bond, mortar mix design and pointing technique have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority by means of sample panels prepared on site. The approved panels are to be retained on site for the duration of the works for comparative purposes, and development must take place only in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To avoid harm to the special interest of the listed building (Cambridge Local Plan 2006, policy 4/10)

9. No stonework, artificial or natural, (including columns, strings, quoins, lintels, sills, copings, plinths or kneelers) is to be erected until details of the source, colour, texture, coursing, mortar mix design, joint type and thickness and pointing technique, have been submitted to, and approved in writing by the local planning authority in the form of large-scale drawings and/or samples. If so required by the local planning authority, the latter may need to be submitted as a panel, which must be retained on site for comparative purposes until the development is completed. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To avoid harm to the special interest of the listed building (Cambridge Local Plan 2006, policy 4/10)

10. Full details of decorative shields, plaques, coats-of-arms, decorative lettering or the like which is cut into the masonry of the building are to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. Thereafter the development shall be undertaken in accordance with the agreed details unless the LPA agrees to any variation in writing.

Reason: To avoid harm to the special interest of the listed building (Cambridge Local Plan 2006, policy 4/10)

11. Full details of all non-masonry walling systems, cladding panels or other external screens including structural members, infill panels, edge, junction and coping details, colours, surface finishes/textures and relationships to glazing and roofing are to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA prior to commencement of works. This may consist of large-scale drawings and/or samples. Thereafter the development shall be undertaken in accordance with the agreed details unless the LPA agrees to any variation in writing.

Reason: To avoid harm to the special interest of the listed building (Cambridge Local Plan 2006, policy 4/10).

12. No boiler flues, soil pipes, waste pipes or air extract trunking shall be installed until the means of providing egress for all such items from the new or altered bathrooms, kitchens and plant rooms has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Flues, pipes and trunking shall be installed thereafter only in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To avoid harm to the special interest of the Listed Building (Cambridge Local Plan 2006, policy 4/10).

INFORMATIVE: In relation to condition no.3, applicants or their agents preparing a survey for archive deposit are advised to refer to "Understanding Historic Buildings : A guide to good recording practice." - English Heritage, 2006.

INFORMATIVE: In relation to condition no.4, it will be expected that items vulnerable to damage during the works will be protected by means of fixed boxing [of plywood, etc.] or thick padding [of foam plastic or rubber, etc.] and this will be maintained for the full duration of all works to the Listed Building.