The application site lies on the corner of Cranmer Road and Grange Road. This area accommodates a mix of uses but is predominantly residential and educational. The site encompasses two existing buildings; Cranmer Lodge and Grasshopper Lodge. The site falls within the West Cambridge Conservation Area. Although neither of the buildings are listed, Grasshopper Lodge is noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) as being a positive unlisted building. It consists of two three-storey late Victorian red brick buildings which have been joined together with both buildings addressing Grange Road. Cranmer Lodge addresses Cranmer Road. There are a number of small ancillary buildings which surround this villa. The plots of both Cranmer Lodge and Grasshopper Lodge include a large number of mature trees and hedge.
1.2 To the north of the site is Cripps Court; a four storey residential building which provides student accommodation to Selwyn College. This building dates to 1968 and pre-dates the Conservation Area designation. To the east of the site is the Grade II listed Old Court at Selwyn College.

1.3 The southern side of Cranmer Road is characterised by red brick villa buildings on large plots. The houses here are set back from the street with walls and hedges to the front. The West Cambridge Conservation Area Appraisal details that this part of the Conservation Area is notable for the survival of many of the late 19th century residential buildings in their original plots, which tend to be quite narrow but deep, providing large back gardens.

1.4 Leckhampton Lane runs along the southern boundary of the site. The lane has a rural character and affords glimpses up into the large gardens of the villas on Cranmer Road. This is a private lane in the ownership of Corpus Christi. There are some buildings fronting onto the southern side of the lane but these are either moderate domestic scale buildings close to the edge of the road or multi storey buildings which are significantly set back behind a heavily treed frontage. The many trees on either side of the lane are important to its character and contribute to its rural quality.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The application proposes the erection of two buildings, a villa and garden building, to provide 73 student rooms with kitchen/living facilities and a common room.

2.2 The villa building is proposed to the north of the plot and would front onto Cranmer Road; in-filling the gap between Cranmer Lodge and Grasshopper Lodge. During the course of consideration of the application the proposals for the villa building have been amended by the applicants in response to comments received from Cambridge Past Present and Future. Officers did not request these amendments. The villa building as now proposed is to be 2.5 storeys with dormers to the front and rear. There is to be a chimney at either end of the building and it would be finished in red brick. A timber bike shelter is proposed to run along the side of the building. The villa building would provide a total of 22 study bedrooms over 3 floors with a
kitchen/dining/common room on each floor. One DDA compliant room is proposed on the ground floor.

2.3 The proposed garden building is to be sited to the southern end of the site adjacent to Leckhampton Lane. At ground floor level it takes the form of two square blocks with a linking glazed element to allow views through to the garden. However the building is three storey and the upper two levels produce an inverted U format to Leckhampton Lane with a courtyard occupying the open space. It would be a flat roofed structure with large glazed windows and louvred timber screens. It would sit on a brick plinth. There is to be a large common room in the ground floor adjacent to the courtyard. There are 7 bedrooms and 1 kitchen in the western wing and 6 bedrooms, including 1 DDA compliant room, and a kitchen in the east wing. The first and second floors mirror each other; these provide a total of 19 rooms each including 1 DDA bedroom on each floor. There is a lift in the eastern wing of the building to provide access to the DDA rooms. Two kitchens are provided on each floor. The garden building would provide a total of 51 study bedrooms.

2.4 A total of 30 trees are proposed to be removed as part of the development; 8 category B trees and 22 category C trees. There is currently a brick wall which separates the two gardens. This is to be removed as part of the proposal. 17 new trees are to be planted to replace those lost and attempt to mitigate the development. Many of these are to be adjacent to Leckhampton Lane to help screen the proposed Garden Building. A central garden is to be provided to occupiers of the scheme. This would consist of an amenity lawn with some ornamental planting as well as a productive garden space.

2.5 During the course of the consideration of the application the following amendments/further information was submitted:

   a) Planning Response – Landscape Design
   b) Response to Conservation Comments

3.0 SITE HISTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C/02/0682</td>
<td>New railings on top of an existing wall.</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
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</table>
C/83/0658 Change of use from residential to Permitted students hostel and erection of connecting link to adjoining students hostel

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLAN</th>
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<tr>
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<td>8/2  8/6  8/10</td>
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5.3 Relevant Central Government Guidance, Supplementary Planning Documents and Material Considerations

<table>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Circular 11/95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplementary Planning</td>
<td>Sustainable Design and Construction (May 2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planning Obligation Strategy (March 2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Material Considerations</td>
<td>City Wide Guidance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cambridge Landscape and Character Assessment (2003)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (November 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2005)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cambridge and Milton Surface Water Management Plan (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Guidelines</td>
<td>West Cambridge Conservation Area Appraisal (2011)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

Cambridgeshire County Council (Highways Development Management)

First comment

6.1 Objection: The applicant must provide a short Transport Statement explaining, inter alia, any changes in traffic generation (all mode) and parking demand resultant from the proposal. Unless and until such information has been submitted the Highway Authority objects to the proposal as there is insufficient information provided within the application to assess the impact of the proposal upon the highway network.

Second comment

6.2 Neutral: Requests further information regarding Proctorial control. An informative regarding the Residents Parking Scheme is recommended.

Cambridgeshire County Council (Transport Assessment Team)

6.3 Objection: The County Council have reviewed the additional information provided for the proposed site. There a number of points of clarification and elements of the analysis to be revisited.

6.4 Objection: The applicant has provided further information concerning the accident data and has shown that the accidents that have taken place at the junctions in question are not expected to be exacerbated by the proposed development. The
County Council require further reassurances that the students that will be living at the development will be prevented from parking on unrestricted streets in the vicinity of the development. The proctoral control applies to students who have not yet reached MA status; it is not clear what level the post graduate students will be that live at the proposed development and whether they will be excluded from proctoral control. Therefore the County Council require further information at this stage. Should the Local Planning Authority be mindful to grant planning permission the County Council request that a Travel Plan and Student Management plan be secured which detail how students’ resident at the development will be prevented from bringing a car into Cambridge and parking it on Cranmer Road.

**Environmental Health**

6.5 **Supported:** The proposal is acceptable subject to the imposition of 4 conditions. These relate to construction hours, collections/deliveries during demolition/construction, piling and dust. The applicant has submitted a combined Phase 1 Desktop Study and Phase 2 Site Investigation in support of the application. There are no concerns regarding contaminated land or ground gas. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System informative is recommended.

**Refuse and Recycling**

6.6 No comments received.

**Urban Design and Conservation Team**

I have set out the comments in full because they are highly significant to my recommendation.

6.7 **Reasons for Refusal**

- The proposed development fails to preserve and enhance the character of the west Cambridge Conservation Area

Background information/additional comments:
The West Cambridge conservation area is noted for spacious residential streets lined with mainly detached houses, mostly in red brick, in the Arts and Crafts style. (West Cambridge
Conservation Area Appraisal 1.2 p 2) The many private gardens and continued use and maintenance of the open green spaces and woodland has helped the area retain a less built up semi-rural character contrasting with the city centre. (2.2 p10).
The trees, hedges, gardens and allotments of West Cambridge should be seen in the context of the relative paucity of hedgerows and woodland in the surrounding countryside and the abundance of mature gardens provide a vital green corridor linking the field hedgerows into the city. (3.3 p13, 14)
The conservation area is notable for its many open spaces and for its variety of large gardens, most of them enclosed by high walls and planting, so not easily visible from the public domain. The trees within these spaces are very important in the way they frame views and the buildings themselves. (4.2 p16)
Grasshopper Lodge is seen as a positive unlisted building in the townscape analysis within the CA Appraisal and makes a significant contribution to the conservation area. The large garden of Pinehurst has been retained along with many mature trees. Leckhampton Lane, access lane to Leckhampton House, is now tarmacked but still retains a unique character within this part of the conservation area due to the number of trees along its length with mature gardens behind giving a sense of its past rural character. The section of the lane opposite the site has buildings well set back with mature trees and planting behind the concrete wall.
The Heritage Statement states that Grasshopper Lodge and Cranmer Lodge are not particularly good examples of their type. The inclusion of Grasshopper Lodge as a positive unlisted building in the appraisal is indicative that it is a good example where its style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and variety and makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. (5.4 p21). The rear of the lodge still reads as a coherent whole and retains the majority of original built features.
Section 4.07 of the Heritage Statement states that there is no interrelationship between the nearby open spaces and the character of the application site. It neglects to mention the contribution the gardens of the lodges make to the area as outlined in the CAA.
Section 4.15 of the Heritage Statement states that the CAA has not identified any views to the application site as important but does not analyse the positive contribution the large mature gardens make to the CA. The conservation appraisal is clear that the flat topography, many open spaces and long, straight
roads within the area all provide ample opportunity for long and short views, or shorter vistas which are often terminated by buildings and trees. The most important views and vistas are marked on the Townscape Analysis maps but there are lesser views in many other locations which are of equal significance in their contribution, so omission of any particular view or vista does not mean that it is of no importance. (4.3 p18)

Whilst the tree groups on the site are not specifically mentioned in the CA the general importance of mature trees and planting is highlighted throughout the appraisal.

Site proposals
One of the principle issues identified within the CAA is the control of new development. It has been highlighted that the open spaces and unusually large private gardens are potentially vulnerable to future development proposals which could adversely affect the special character of the conservation area. Since the evolution of the Sidgwick site from 1962 there has been a surge in College building programmes both for new colleges and residential blocks. A number of residential accommodation blocks were built from the late 1960s through to the 1990’s. Most of these building projects took place on open land but in some cases numbers of large 19th century villas and their gardens were lost to college development, notably for Cripps Court (1964-66) and Robinson College (1981). Both these developments were approved before this section of the West Cambridge Conservation area was designated in 1984. Alongside these new developments there has been a gradual conversion of many family houses into student accommodation with the incremental loss of gardens to cope with the increased demand for car parking. Over time university uses have come to dominate the area although enough private residential property remains to give the area vitality outside term time. Despite the impact of these large college buildings the Grange Road character area retains a domestic scale (6.2 p29) and is notable for the survival of many late 19th century residential buildings in their original gardens. The buildings are set to a common building line visually five to seven metres back from the pavement line and there is a high ratio of green open space to built area. (6.2 p29)

The buildings do not exist in isolation. They relate closely to each other, to the intervening spaces and the wealth of greenery. Buildings and spaces throughout the area create a continuing and varied sequence of solid and void. Gardens and
grounds are effusions of green which flow around the buildings fusing the area together and creating a rich habitat for a variety of wildlife. (6.2 p29).

The proposed villa is justified as a continuation of the rhythm of buildings and spaces along Cranmer Road. This is a spurious argument as the site is a corner plot and was planned as part of the overall development of the area not a gap created by an extended rear garden. There have been infill buildings and extensions along Cranmer Road however none of these are as large as this proposal and not all have been successful. The proposal is a double fronted house which is too large for the space and thought needs to be given about losing one of the last clearly defined villa and garden spacings which has been eroded in the rest of Cranmer Road.

The idea of a “pavilion” in the garden brings to mind a lightweight structure possibly with a pitched roof and definitely subservient to the host building. This current proposal, in contrast, constitutes over development of these two gardens. Whilst it has been reduced from the pre application proposal the form and scale at three storeys with flat roofs will dominate the two mature gardens and creates an awkward relationship with rear elevation of Grasshopper Lodge.

The addition of a large villa building and even larger three storey pavilion building will fail to maintain the key features of the site and the conservation area as a whole. By filling in the space and removing a number of trees the glimpsed views into these private green spaces will be blocked and the domestic character of the gardens irreversibly changed along with the sense of building to void character which is significant in the conservation area.

The loss of the original wall between the gardens of the two lodges and a large section of the garden wall to Cranmer Road will further compromise the strong linear character and separation of the villas and their individual plots. This has already happened at Grasshopper Lodge and the plot next to Cranmer Lodge.

This proposal would see the continued amalgamation of individual villa plots into larger development sites removing original lines of separation and eroding the sense of space and original villa/garden character that this part of the conservation area has managed to retain.

This proposal does not preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area and therefore does not meet the test in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act
1990 and represents significant harm to that character which is not outweighed by public benefit.

Comments in response to applicant’s Response to Conservation Comments document

6.8 This will be reported via the amendment sheet.

Senior Sustainability Officer (Design and Construction)

6.9 **Supported:** In line with the requirements of policy 3/1, the applicant has submitted a Sustainability Statement outlining a range of measures that will be integrated into the scheme to help deliver sustainable development. These include the use of rain gardens, rills and swales. With regards to the applications approach to energy efficiency and carbon reduction, the application does propose an approach which differs from the Council’s current renewable energy generation (policy 8/16). Instead, the application proposes an approach more in line with the Council’s emerging local plan policy on carbon reduction; although the approach goes beyond this policy as the scheme has been designed, and will be certified to, the Passivhaus standard. This approach is focussed on utilising a high performance building envelope to radically reduce the energy demand of the building and hence its carbon emissions. While it is noted that this approach represents a departure from the adopted Local Plan and policy 8/16, given the levels of carbon and energy reduction being achieved and the ethos of Passivhaus, which is focussed on high levels of occupant comfort while using very little energy for heating and cooling with rigorous quality assurance processes, this approach is fully supported. A condition is recommended requiring the applicant to submit details of Passivhaus certification to the planning authority prior to the occupation of the building.

Access Officer

6.10 **Objection:** The provision of 4 rooms is the minimum permitted under the Local Plan or Building Regulations. They all need parking spaces. Not all for need to be designed for wheelchair users; some rooms could be designed for students with sensory impairments. General support for sensory impaired students is needed, re signage, decor contrast, hearing loops in communal room, alarms, etc. The rooms seem very small for student who
are mature and maybe in accommodation for complete years, not just terms. The wheelchair accessible rooms need a total re-design; they are not fit for purpose. Rooms that carers can occupy if needed must be adjacent. Due to shared kitchens adjustable height sinks, surfaces, cookers and tables need to be provided.

6.11 Objection: Unsure what the developer means by DDA compliant. This piece of legislation has been replaced by the Equalities Act. Desks and cupboards need to be adjustable and built with needs of disabled people in mind. Concerned about upper floor bedrooms without a fire evacuation standard lift. Bathrooms in garden building need to be re-designed; current layout would leave wheelchair blocking doorway. Bathroom in Villa building should be re-arranged to allow for a hoist. No mention is given to signage/colour contrast to help visually impaired students. No mention is given to hearing loops, alarm systems to help hearing impaired people.

Head of Streets and Open Spaces (Tree Team)

6.12 Objection: The loss of trees required to accommodate the new buildings will have a material impact on the character and appearance of the area, especially Leckhampton Road, Cranmer Road and Grange Road at the junction with Cranmer Road.

The space available for replacement planting along Leckhampton Road will not allow tree species that will adequately mitigate the loss of amenity brought about by removals.

The Cranmer Road villa has less impact in terms of tree losses but its location blocks the views though to trees in the garden and therefore results in material impact on the nature of the views from Cranmer Road and Grange Road. Again there is limited scope for replacement planting sufficient to mitigate the impact of this building.

Comments in response to applicant’s Response to Landscape Design Comments document

6.13 These will be reported via the amendment sheet.
Head of Streets and Open Spaces (Landscape Team)

6.14 Objection: There is a strong concern about the loss of trees, loss of green space/garden from each existing individual villa and the impact of additional bedrooms on an much reduced amenity space.

☐ The tree survey and Arboriculture Implications Assessment consider that 32 trees require felling to allow development. This is a very significant proportion of the overall tree cover on this site and we feel it will have a negative impact on the site in respect of the Conservation area character. The two existing distinct properties convey the character of the area including extensive grounds, lawns and treed edges. We feel this character is worthy of retention and the reduction of garden area and tree cover would be a loss to the area.

☐ The size of the amenity space when seen in context between the space previously available for the existing villas and the space provided for the existing villas plus the new villa and student block will be undersized for purpose which we feel is not acceptable.

Conclusion

Comments in response to applicant’s Response to Landscape Design Comments document

6.15 Landscape has reviewed the submitted responses to our comments. Whilst compelling, there remains the matter that the proposals represent a distinctive change to the character of the area both through the loss of trees and through the addition of buildings and intensification of the external spaces.

Cambridgeshire County Council (Flood and Water Management)

First comment

6.16 Objection: We object to the grant of planning permission on the grounds that insufficient information has been provided to allow us to assess the proposals.

Second comment
6.17 **Supported:** We have reviewed the submitted additional information. The applicant has addressed our previous concerns in detail and we are therefore content to remove our objection. A condition is recommended regarding the long term maintenance arrangements for the surface water drainage system.

**Head of Streets and Open Spaces (Sustainable Drainage Officer)**

6.18 **Supported:** The proposal is acceptable subject to a condition relating to the surface water drainage scheme.

**Walking and Cycling Officer**

6.19 No comments received.

**Anglian Water**

6.20 **No objection:** A number of informatives are suggested.

**Design and Conservation Panel (Meeting of 11th January 2017)**

6.21 **The Panel's overall comments**

The Panel's principal consideration was to determine whether the application site has the capacity to accept the proposed quantum of development proposed and design of the additional buildings without causing significant harm to the character and appearance of the West Cambridge Conservation Area. Overall, it was agreed that the site has the capacity to accept the proposed additional buildings whilst retaining substantial private landscaped spaces. The development of the graduate campus still allows glimpses of the site from Cranmer Road and Leckhampton Lane.

In general, the Panel were comfortable with the scale, height and massing of the Villa and the Garden Building. The approach taken in the designs of the two buildings was felt to be an appropriate response to the different characteristics of Cranmer Road and Leckhampton Lane. Moreover, the proposed palette of materials for both buildings was considered to be appropriate. The Panel, however, expressed the reservations on some aspects of the detailed design of both the Villa and the Garden Building. These are presented below.
The Panel's comments on the Villa

The Panel noted the key design changes that had been made in response to suggestions made through the planning process. The Panel supported the proposal to move the chimneys to the gables, along with the reduced eaves line and a more prominent central opening in the brickwork for the stairwell window, but was not convinced by other proposed changes:

- The principal entrance court to be sited inside the existing gate of Cranmer Road. The Panel was disappointed to see that the proposed siting had been constrained. There was some discussion within the Panel about the role of this entrance, and whether it should be regarded as the principal entrance on to the site, or a secondary entrance only used by residents. Perhaps other options could be explored that require the creation of a new opening in the boundary wall on Cranmer Road that directly addressed the new Villa, though this would require careful consideration of the historical integrity and contribution to the streetscape of the current wall. Such a move, along with further adjustments to the Villa's Cranmer Road elevation, could provide a better relationship between the new Villa and its 19th century neighbours to the east. The Panel also considered there to be merit in removing the asymmetry to the ground floor of the street elevation. Such a re-appraisal should clarify public, as opposed to student resident, entrances and the siting of cycle parking.

- The extent of the cycle storage to be sited between the proposed Villa and Cranmer House. The Panel noted that such siting will obscure views of the proposed Garden Building and the central landscaped area.

- The treatment of the single storey element. The original proposals included a single storey element on the west side of the Villa contained under a lean-to roof. In the revised proposals presented to the Panel this element had been changed to having a flat roof, so as to better relate to the adjacent cycle stores. The end result is a rather awkward brick appendage to the side of the garden elevation of the Villa, and it would be preferable to either reinstate the lean-to roof so that it has a better relationship to the Villa, or change the external materials.
on this element (say timber cladding) so that it reads as part of the bike stores.

The Panel’s comments on the Garden Building
The use of brick on the parapet has arguably taken the layering of the facade too far. A comment was made that the building had been 'sandwiched' or capped inelegantly. The Panel suggests that the materials and detailing for the parapet be re-visited. The Panel also suggested that the windows at the ends of the corridors could incorporate window seats.

Landscaping
The Panel was supportive of the three over-riding landscape themes and of the proposed general layout of the landscaped spaces. However, if students are to be directly involved in growing vegetables, then practical issues such as storage for garden tools, outerwear for use in the students’ vegetable garden etc. need to be addressed. The detailed planting scheme for the whole site should specify flora that will encourage biodiversity.

Lighting
To fully appreciate the impact of the scheme on the surrounding area a lighting strategy should have been presented as an integral component of the development. It was noted that a combination of lights mounted on the buildings and ground level bollards would be used to create a subdued, but safe and well-lit campus. The internal and external lighting of the glazed common room, in the undercroft of the Garden Building, should enhance its presence and its setting.

Treatment of the site’s southern boundary
To enhance the streetscape of Leckhampton Lane, and the external appreciation of the Garden Building, it is suggested that the perimeter fence should vary so as to provide both privacy to the student rooms and offer glimpses of the courtyard landscaping and the architectural layering of the structure. The Panel wishes to be assured that the route from the Blue Badge parking to the DDA bedrooms in the Garden Building will provide attractive and safe access. No detail of the design of this access, between the southern end of Grasshopper Lodge and the screening of the proposed site for the campus bin storage area, was presented.
Sustainability
The Panel applauded the proposed adoption of the Passivhaus approach to the design, construction, specification of materials and mechanical and electrical systems in the two buildings. This will result in significantly less energy use. The achievement of Passivhaus certification could provide a benchmark for new student accommodation in the City. It is hoped that the client and the experienced multi-disciplinary development team have the constancy of purpose to successfully deliver the Villa and Garden Building to the Passivhaus standard.

The conclusions of the Panel meeting were as follows:

The proposed scheme that has evolved through a thoughtful and generally sensitive incremental approach to meeting the client’s brief for a site in an area consisting mainly of 19th century family houses, set within generous plots, is a good one. The Panel has high expectations that, subject to successful resolution of the detailed aspects referred to above, the proposed graduate campus for King’s College is capable of delivering benefits that more than outweigh any perceived harm to the West Cambridge Conservation Area.

VERDICT – GREEN (5 votes) and 1 abstention.

Disability Consultative Panel (Meeting of 29th November 2016)

6.22 As a new build, the Panel felt this was a particularly disappointing proposal that appears from the plans to be too densely developed to comfortably house post-graduate students. With very little communal space provided and 8-10 students sharing each kitchen, the Panel questioned the rationale behind this degree of over-development. The college are also advised to re-visit their approach to accessibility.

6.23 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 owners/occupiers of the following addresses have made representations:

- Cambridge Past, Present and Future
- Corpus Christi College
- Selwyn College

7.2 The representations can be summarised as follows:

**General**
- Support the project
- Have been in discussion with applicant regarding project
- Happy to work with the applicant to ensure smooth management of works

**Design – garden building**
- Request further consideration given to front and back of Garden Building to add interest and ensure character of street scene/conservation area not harmed.
- Should be additional tree planting to provide screening and reduce visual impact on street scene.

**Design - Villa**
- Concerned that Villa building is inappropriate; neither traditional nor modern. The front elevation requires further detailing.

**Other**
- The proposed garden is acceptable and likely to be of more visual interest than the current lawn
- Traffic management plan seems adequate

7.3 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 From the consultation responses and representations received and from my inspection of the site and the surroundings, I consider that the main issues are:

1. Principle of development
2. Context of site, design and external spaces (and impact on heritage assets)
3. Renewable energy and sustainability
4. Disabled access
5. Residential amenity
6. Refuse arrangements
7. Highway safety
8. Car and cycle parking
9. Third party representations
10. Planning Obligations (s106 Agreement)

**Principle of Development**

8.2 In terms of the proposal to use the site for student accommodation, Policy 7/7 (College and University of Cambridge Staff and Student Housing) of the Local Plan (2006) is relevant. It states development of additional student accommodation within college sites will be permitted. Kings College already accommodates more than 20 students on site and so is compliant with this policy. The Council has recently commissioned and completed an ‘Assessment of Student Housing Demand and Supply for Cambridge City Council’. This is also relevant to the determination of the application, in particular in view of the need to balance the harm to heritage assets against the public benefit accruing from the development.

The NPPG contains the following advice about provision of sites for student accommodation:

*Local planning authorities should plan for sufficient student accommodation whether it consists of communal halls of residence or self-contained dwellings, and whether or not it is on campus. Student housing provided by private landlords is often a lower-cost form of housing. Encouraging more dedicated student accommodation may provide low cost housing that takes pressure off the private rented sector and increases the overall housing stock. Plan makers are encouraged to consider options which would support both the needs of the student population as well as local residents before imposing caps or restrictions on students living outside of university-provided accommodation. Plan makers should engage with universities and other higher educational establishments to better understand their student accommodation requirements.*
The Council’s recently commissioned and completed ‘Assessment of Student Housing Demand and Supply for Cambridge City Council’ provides information on the student accommodation requirements of a range of educational institutions in Cambridge and assists the Council in addressing this element of the NPPG.

In the absence of a national policy requirement to provide purpose built student accommodation, the ongoing uncertainty about needs beyond the next ten years, and the provision of student accommodation which continues to be made through both allocations and windfall sites, it is considered there is no justification to conclude that the Council’s current strategy to address student accommodation in the emerging Local Plan is not reasonable.

However, the emerging Local Plan acknowledges the competing development pressures in Cambridge including student accommodation and it has always considered it important that a balanced approach is taken within the remit of sustainable development in order to support the economic and social needs as well as quality of life and place.

8.3 In my opinion, the principle of the development is acceptable and in accordance with policy 7/7.

Context of site, design and external spaces and impact on heritage assets

8.4 The West Cambridge Conservation Area is characterized by its wide residential streets with mainly detached red brick houses in the Arts and Crafts style, although there are some earlier and more modern buildings that break from this trend. The Conservation Area is notable for its many open spaces and variety of large gardens, most enclosed by high walls and planting. Trees within these spaces are noted to be important in the way that they frame views and the buildings themselves. The Grange Road character area, which the application site falls within, is particularly noted as having a high ratio of green open space to built area. The CAA states that these large open spaces, such as the unusually large private gardens which are characteristic in the area, are potentially vulnerable to future
development proposals, which could adversely affect the special character of the Conservation Area.

8.5 The applicants argue that the application site is an anomaly as it lies on a corner plot and as the gardens of the villas are not visible from the public realm. I do not consider this to be the case; the CAA notes that the gardens of these properties are normally hidden from public view by high walls and planting. The fact that the gardens are not highly visible does not mean that they do not contribute to the character of the area. The height of the wall is a historic feature; the wall rises in height at the location where the green house once stood. It is also a significant feature in the area which allows glimpses through to the large treed gardens.

Proposed villa building

8.6 The proposed villa building is justified by the applicants as being a continuation of the building line on Cranmer Road. The Design and Access Statement argues that it would create a ‘consistent rhythm along the south side of Cranmer Road’. The Conservation Officer disagrees with this statement. In her view the proposal is too large for the space. She argues that the gap between Cranmer Lodge and Grasshopper Lodge was planned and although there have been some infill buildings along Cranmer Road not all have been successful and none have been as large as what is proposed. The scale of the proposed building will dominate the street scene. A more subservient scale building may be acceptable in this location but the scale of what is proposed is considered harmful to the solid and void rhythm of this part of the Conservation Area.

Proposed garden building

8.7 The proposed garden building is to sit at the southern end of the site adjacent to Leckhampton Lane. The proposed building is of a significant scale and would not be read as a subservient building. Although it would not be highly visible from the public realm it will remove the glimpsed views of open green space and would irreversibly alter the ratio of solid to void which is important to the character of this area of the Conservation Area.

8.8 The Statement of Significance contained within the applicant’s Heritage Statement argues that Leckhampton Lane is, at best, a
neutral element within the Conservation Area. It also highlights that the lane is a private road and that only glimpses of the lane are available from the public realm at Grange Road. I disagree with both of the above assessments. Although Leckhampton Lane is not specifically referenced in the Conservation Area Appraisal, it is still a notable area. Here, one is afforded glimpses through the trees to the large gardens of the properties on Cranmer Road giving a sense of the rural past. Whilst Leckhampton Lane is a private road, the CAA emphasizes the importance of the preservation of views within the Conservation Area. There is no development on the northern side of the lane and whilst there are some buildings to the south of the lane these are either of a domestic scale and thus not comparable to what is proposed or significantly set back from the lane to allow the trees to dominate the streetscene. The presence of the garden pavilion will change the character of the lane by altering the solid to void ratio and removing the open green character obtained through the views into the large gardens. At ground floor level the glazed linking building would allow some views into the proposed garden area but the upper two floors would close this down and fundamentally change the streetscene. While there may be scope for some form of structure in this location the scale, height and mass of the proposed building is harmful to the visual amenity of the Conservation Area.

8.9 The Tree and Landscape Officers have both raised objections to the proposals. They both consider that the significant number of trees which would be removed would have an unacceptable impact on the character of the area. The Tree Officer raises concerns that there will not be sufficient space to allow planting along Leckhampton Lane to adequately screen and mitigate the garden building. She notes that the loss of trees from the villa has less impact but the building would block views through to the garden and its trees which would have a material impact on the nature of views from Cranmer Road and Grange Road.

8.10 The applicant has provided a response to the Landscape and Tree Officer comments. They note that the majority of the trees to be removed are category C. The response states that many of the trees within both sites have developed in close proximity to one another which is impacting on the health of these trees. They consider there to be adequate space for tree planting to mitigate the garden building and consider that views into the
garden between the villa and Grasshopper Lodge will be maintained. Whilst views may be possible the open green nature of the space would be destroyed by the addition of the large garden building. It may be possible to include a significant amount on planting on the boundary with Leckhampton Lane however the presence of the garden building will still remove the open character and change the historic solid to void relationship which characterises this area.

8.11 In my opinion the proposal is contrary to Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policies 3/4, 3/11, 3/12 and 4/11.

**Harm to Heritage Asset vs. Public Benefit**

8.12 Paragraph 131 of the NPPF notes that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The greater the importance of the asset, the greater the weight should be. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

8.13 As outlined in paragraphs 8.4-8.11, the proposal will cause harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This harm is considered to be significant but less than substantial.

8.14 Paragraph 134 of the NPPF is relevant in the case of less than substantial harm. This states:

*Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.*

8.15 When making an assessment the scales are tipped in favour of the heritage asset and any public benefit must be greater than the harm caused to the heritage asset to be considered acceptable.

**Justification of Need and Public Benefit**

8.16 The applicant has provided an Accommodation Needs Assessment relating to graduate housing as part of the
application. The college currently provides accommodation to 50% of its graduate students; there are 134 rooms spread out in different locations around the city. This includes 28 at Grasshopper Lodge and 17 at Cranmer House. The college has an aspiration to accommodate 90% of its graduate students while also accommodating a 2% increase in graduate student numbers per annum over the next 15 years. As a result the college has a clear need for additional graduate accommodation.

8.17 The applicant has submitted a response to the Conservation Officer’s comments. This provides a justification for the proposal where the applicant weights the public benefit against the harm to the Conservation area. A summary of the key points which the applicant considers to be public benefits of the project are as follows:

- Additional high quality accommodation will increase the ability of the College to compete nationally/internationally, thus contributing to the international standing of the university.
- Includes DDA compliant rooms which the college cannot provide within historic building stock.
- Would ease pressure on private rental market.
- Would reduce bicycle movements around city by consolidating students on 1 site.
- Buildings are environmentally friendly with 100 year design life.
- Avoids need to develop on greenfield site.
- Potential for communal spaces to be made available to the local community.
- Construction work would secure employment.

8.18 I have considered the public benefits that have been highlighted by the applicants as follows:

*Additional high quality accommodation will increase the ability of the College to compete nationally/internationally, thus contributing to the international standing of the university.*

I accept that the College have a need for additional high quality accommodation and this is reflected in Assessment of Student Housing Demand and Supply for Cambridge City Council. However evidence of a demand for student accommodation does not in itself provide justification for harm to heritage.
assets. The Council’s approach is to seek to balance the demands of a growing city against quality of life and place.

- **Includes DDA compliant rooms which the college cannot provide within historic building stock**

  This is clearly a benefit to the College and would be beneficial to future students but in terms of a public benefit this justification has limited weight.

- **Would ease pressure on private rental market**

  It is accepted that providing student accommodation on existing student accommodation sites or windfall sites can have a positive effect in terms of ‘freeing up’ houses that are occupied by students to the rental market. However the applicant has not quantified this.

- **Would reduce bicycle movements around city by consolidating students on 1 site**

  There may be a reduction in some cycle movements as a result of consolidation if it is assumed that students currently cycle between current areas of accommodation. However the students will still need access city centre and other university departments and the College itself so the public benefit of fewer cycle trips is not significant.

- **Buildings are environmentally friendly with 100 year design life.**

  The NPPF is supportive of sustainable development and this in itself is a public benefit but the contribution of this particular building as an environmentally friendly design is not significant.

- **Avoids need to develop on greenfield site**

  I accept that this has the potential to be a significant public benefit and it is an issue for the growth of the City. However in this case I do not consider that the harmful effect on the Conservation Area is outweighed by the risk of further development in the Green Belt. My view is that some development is appropriate on the site as a matter of principle which would help reduce pressure for release of the Green Belt.
- **Potential for communal spaces to be made available to the local community**

  This could be a public benefit but has not been quantified by the applicant so can be accorded only limited weight.

- **Construction work would secure employment**

  In my view given the scale of development this impact would not have a significant public benefit.

  The proposal would provide an additional 73 bedrooms. This would bring the colleges total graduate room provision to 207 rooms. This would be nearly 77% of students with a shortfall of 63 rooms (based on 2016 figures). However it is worth noting that the university predicts a 2% growth to graduate numbers per annum.

  8.19 Whilst the college clearly have a great need for additional rooms, it is my view that the freeing up of a number of rooms in the private rental market would not outweigh the harm caused to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. I have considered the other public benefits listed in the response to the Conservation Officers comments document and in my view these combined with the benefit of freeing up housing would not be extensive enough to outweigh the irreversible harm to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area.

**Renewable energy and sustainability**

8.20 The proposed development is to be in accordance with Passivhaus principles. The proposal as a result does not seek to provide the required 10% renewable energy requirement as required by policy 8/16. Instead the proposal is more in line with a policy in the emerging plan relating to carbon reduction. The principle is to maintain a comfortable and appropriate internal environment by using the minimum amount of energy possible. This is achieved through design and the use of a high performance building envelope to reduce energy demand and as a result reduces carbon emissions. This approach is supported by the Senior Sustainability Officer subject to condition.
8.21 In my opinion the applicants have suitably addressed the issue of sustainability and renewable energy and the proposal is in accordance with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policy 8/16 and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2007.

**Disabled access**

8.22 The Access Officer has raised some concerns regarding the internal layout of some of the rooms. He has also raised concerns regarding the presence of accessible rooms to the upper floors without a fire evacuation lift. He notes that no reference has been made to signage or hearing loops for visual or hearing impaired students. These comments have been passed to the applicant. Were I minded to recommend approval an informative would also be included to make the applicant aware of these comments.

8.23 In my opinion the proposal is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policies 3/7 and 3/12.

**Residential Amenity**

Impact on amenity of neighbouring occupiers

8.24 The proposed villa building would sit roughly in line with the existing Cranmer Villa. There are residential rooms with windows in the east side elevation; facing towards the new building. However there is a significant separation distance of over 17m between the new villa and Cranmer Lodge. As a result I do not consider it would impact on the occupiers of these rooms in terms of enclosure or overshadowing.

8.25 The villa would run adjacent to a student room to the northern end of the rear elevation of Grasshopper Lodge. However there is a distance of over 10m between the villa and Grasshopper Lodge. As a result the proposal would not have a significant negative impact in terms of loss of light or enclosure to the occupier of this room.

8.26 The garden building is significantly set away from the existing accommodation on site. As a result this would not result in any significant adverse impact to the amenity of any of the existing student rooms.
8.27 The Environmental Health Officer considers the proposal would not have any significant adverse impact on the amenity of the surrounding occupiers subject to the incorporation of a number of conditions. However this is not considered to overcome the harm to the Conservation Area. The weighing of harm to public benefit can be found at paragraph 8.

8.28 In my opinion the proposal adequately respects the residential amenity of its neighbours and the constraints of the site and I consider that it is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policies 3/4 and 3/7.

**Amenity for future occupiers of the site**

8.29 The proposed study bedrooms are relatively small in size given that they are to accommodate graduate students who may occupy the room for multiple years rather than for single terms. The ensuites rooms within the garden room provide a total of 16.5m² per room (including the ensuites bathroom) and the non-ensuites rooms in the villa provide 13.6m². However a large communal common room is to be provided in the garden building. The occupiers of the units would also have access to the large central lawn and courtyard adjacent to the garden building. As a result the proposals are considered to provide an adequate level of amenity to future occupiers. It should be noted that the 2006 Local Plan does not include any policies relating to internal space standards.

8.30 The proposed development combined with the existing student rooms on site would result in a total of 118 student rooms. The total outdoor amenity space to be provided, including the paved courtyard to the garden building, the amenity lawn and the woodland area to the west of the site would provide a total of approx. 1875m² of outdoor amenity space. Whilst this is a significant reduction to the amount of outdoor space currently available to the existing occupier of the site, and I note the objection from the Landscape Officer, I consider this provision to be acceptable in terms of amenity to future occupiers.

8.31 In my opinion the proposal provides an adequately high-quality living environment and an appropriate standard of residential amenity for future occupiers, and I consider that in this respect it
is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policies 3/7 and 3/12.

Refuse Arrangements

8.32 A bin store is proposed adjacent the Grange Road to the south of Grasshopper Lodge. The Waste Officer has not commented on the proposal however I consider that the proposed bin store would be adequate were I minded to recommend approval.

8.33 In my opinion the proposal is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policy 3/12.

Highway Safety

8.34 The Transport Assessment Team requested clarification regarding Proctorial control and accident data on the surrounding junction. The applicant has provided this information and the Transport Assessment Team are satisfied that the proposed development would not exacerbate highway safety to the surrounding junctions.

8.35 There is currently insufficient information to assess whether the proposal is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policy 8/2.

Car and Cycle Parking

8.36 There is adequate cycle parking provision for the proposal. The Transport Assessment Team have requested further information regarding how students would be prevented from bringing a car to site given that the site is proposed to accommodate graduate students who are not currently included in the Proctorial control system. Were I minded to approve the application I would seek to control this element through S106.

8.37 In my opinion the proposal is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policies 8/6 and 8/10.

Third Party Representations
8.38 I note that there have been a number of representations in support of the proposal.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 The proposed new buildings would harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Due to the scale of both buildings they would negatively impact on the rhythm of solids and voids which is an important aspect of the character of this part of the Conservation Area. The proposal also results in the loss of a large number of mature trees from the site, whilst additional trees are to be planted the Tree Officer is not satisfied that there is significant space to allow sufficient planting to mitigate the scale of the development on Leckhampton Lane. The combination of the bulk and scale of both buildings with the loss of trees on site would remove the glimpses through to the large treed garden spaces and harm the green character of this part of the Conservation Area. The proposed harm is considered to be significant but less than substantial and has been weighed against the public benefit of the proposal in line with the NPPF. The public benefit of the scheme is not considered to outweigh the harm to the Conservation Area as a heritage asset and as a result the proposal is considered unacceptable and contrary to policy 4/11 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2006).

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE for the following reasons:

1. The proposed buildings, by virtue of their siting, height, scale and massing, the need to remove mature trees to facilitate the development and the lack of adequate space for new tree planting to mitigate loss of tree together fail to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of this part of West Cambridge Conservation Area. In so doing the development would result in significant but less than substantial harm to the West Cambridge Conservation Area as a heritage asset. This harm would not be outweighed by the public benefits accruing form the development and as a result the proposal is contrary to policies 3/4 3/11, 3/12 and 4/11 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2006) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).