



Cambridgeshire Quality Panel

1000 Discovery Drive, Phase2 Cambridge Biomedical Campus

1st October 2020

Virtual Panel

The Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth sets out the core principles for the level of quality to be expected in new development across Cambridgeshire. The [Cambridgeshire Quality Panel](#) provides independent, expert advice to developers and local planning authorities against the four core principles of the Charter: connectivity, character, climate, and community.

Scheme Description

Architect/Designer: Scott Brownrigg

Applicant: Liberty Property Trust

Planning status: Reserved Matters

Issue date: 15 October 2020

Declarations of Interest

Panel members are required to declare any interests they may have in relation to the development before the Panel and any such interests are recorded here.

No interests declared.

Previous Panel Reviews

The scheme has not previously been to the Panel.

Development Overview

The Panel considered the proposals for the plot known as 1000 Discovery Drive (1000DD), the second building on the Phase 2 extension of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC). Phase 2 has Outline Consent and the LPA has presented to the Panel the Parameter Plans which are fixed within the outline on matters such as access, landscape, developable area and heights. The reserved matters application for 1000DD is wholly Parameter Plan compliant.

The proposed building is to be built fully speculatively, designed to be single or multi-tenancy and enable flexible uses for office or laboratory focused research and development to support a variety of future tenants. The surface car park is a temporary measure until there is sufficient critical mass (set to be the next Phase 2 commercial building) of floor space to fund the construction of the multi-storey car park consented by the Outline application and then enable the removal of the temporary surface car park for 1000DD. The proposed open space (managed by the estate management company) would be available for all and is designed to be a useable space to be enjoyed.

The proposal has had to progress quickly to a planning application to respond to the fast-paced programme attached to grant funding that has been secured to support the development coming forward now.

1000DD aims to enrich the character and community on the Phase 2 campus through a variety of measures both in terms of the building design and landscaped setting. 1000DD is a flexible multi-occupancy building for SME's and Grow On's which will enhance the existing campus eco-system. The building and landscape have a strong relationship and offer formal and informal opportunities for social interaction and collaboration.

The landscape led scheme maximizes biodiversity and plans for comfortable microclimates for both people and wildlife whilst a range of landscape measures support a sustainable drainage hierarchy and SUDS.

The building has been designed to respond to current and future climates and will be an all electrical scheme to ensure emissions from the building continue to decrease well into the future.

Cambridgeshire Quality Panel views

The Panel has been issued with background reference information from the applicant and local planning authority ahead of the review session.

The advice and recommendations of the Panel reflect the issues associated with each of the four 'C's' in the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter and the main comments below include both those raised in the open session of the meeting and those from the closed session discussions.

Community – “places where people live out of choice and not necessity, creating healthy communities with a good quality of life”

The Panel questioned the need for the diagonal road cutting across the large open space at the front of the building; this should be designed as a more active and joyful area with the potential for pop-up spaces and events and places for people to mingle. Addenbrookes have asked to be able to use the area for occasional health related activities, such as blood donor trucks.

Other than the arrival/entrance lobby the shared areas within the building lack any real sense of community with the stairs being designed just to transport people to their offices. There should be more attention to providing flexibility in these spaces for employees to mingle and collaborate in less formal surroundings.

Connectivity – “*places that are well-connected enable easy access for all to jobs and services using sustainable modes*”

The Panel questioned the location of the bike shed as the next Phase 2 will need to use the space in front of 1000DD.

Dame Mary Archer Way needs to function more as a street and less as part of the Addenbrookes' road network. There is an opportunity in this development and subsequent plots to redefine the function and character of this street.

Movement patterns across the Biomedical Campus will alter significantly as Phase 2 and Phase 3 progress, especially with the opening of the Cambridge South rail station. Dame Mary Archer Way will form a barrier to accessing Phase 2 with pedestrians and cyclists being herded towards the single crossing point, unless that is reconfigured.

The Panel queried whether the access road running diagonally across the open front space was necessary given that there will be public vehicular access to the site on 2 sides from Discovery Way and from the service road between 1000DD and adjoining plot to the east. If it were possible to utilise these peripheral routes to provide vehicular and service access it would open up the front as a more enjoyable car-free place.

The Panel recognised that the car park is only temporary pending the conservation of the multi-storey car park later in the masterplan but questioned the need to such a large car park. Could more use be made of on street parking on Discovery Drive?

Character – “*Places with distinctive neighbourhoods and where people create ‘pride of place’*”

The landscape concept sets out a very clear plan and sense of arrival at the building but is quite sterile. The open space has great potential to be a collaborative and shared space with more intimate pockets within the landscape. The emphasis on arrival hurries people through the space whereas the layout and planting should encourage people to slow down and enjoy the space.

There could be opportunities to incorporate planting into the building fabric which might contribute towards achieving net biodiversity gain as Cambridge aims to double its natural capital from a low base.

The open space could include elements of a light woodland rather than an expanse of lawn which would bring benefits for biodiversity, hold the water and create a more attractive and healthy environment for employees and visitors.

The Panel liked the west, south and east elevations but felt that the northern elevation was rather bland and old-fashioned which is a lost opportunity as it will form the most prominent view from the rest of the Campus. The glazed façade would also be problematic when internally illuminated. The Panel were not altogether convinced by the steel tree structure used to create a two-storey arrival area.

The Panel felt the glazed enclosure of the roof plant did not really work architecturally and suggested that one approach, given its pavilion form, might be to adopt a more classical composition of bottom, middle and top.

Climate – “Places that anticipate climate change in ways that enhance the desirability of development and minimise environmental impact”

Permeable paving and rain gardens only accounted for around one third of the attenuation. The Panel would like to see more rainwater hydrating the landscape rather than storing it in underground tanks. The roof also has potential for holding water.

Although the application’s sustainability strategy aims to exceed building regulations by 18.5% the Panel considered that this target should be higher.

The Panel supported the all-electric strategy for the building but suggested that the bike shed roof could be used for solar collectors to produce cool air for the building.

The temporary car park would result in the sacrifice of a lot of high carbon embedded material when it was built over. Alternative approaches could be considered such as using crushed mineralised limestone as the surface material which would allow carbon to be sequestered and that material reused when the car park was decommissioned.

Panel Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the Panel was very impressed by the thoroughness of the presentation and the submission generally. Whilst the reserved matters submission had been made to the LPA the Panel was pleased that it was not too late for new ideas to be considered and the applicant is encouraged to giving further consideration to the Panel's recommendations:

Community

1. The external open space and internal communal areas should be a place for people to mingle and meet, making it less corporate and more playful, supporting more bio-diversity.
2. When the next building comes along the bike stands should not obstruct the next building's sharing of the open space.
3. Journeys within the building should offer places for people to meet

Connectivity

1. Impressed by the comprehensive approach but here is a need to make Dame Mary Archer Way into a street and to re-engineer the north-south crossing to encourage people to use it.
2. Need to plan for the near future with people arriving by train and for the future Phases.
3. The Panel challenged the diagonal cross route and suggested a turning head for service vehicles from Discovery Drive. This would then enhance the front landscape.
4. The panel queried the need for and size of the temporary car park and asked whether its capacity could be reduced and replaced with on-street parking.

Climate

1. Whilst the ambition is to exceed building regulations the Panel felt that this should go further
2. Consideration should be given to providing PVs on the bike shed roof to create cooling for the building.
3. Net zero is a real challenge for the whole of the Biomedical Campus and should be part of a Campus masterplan.

Character

1. The landscape proposals are very comprehensive but there is more to be done to achieve greater biodiversity and climate mitigation within the plot.
2. There is scope to employ an alternative surface for the temporary car park to allow carbon sequestration and reuse.
3. Doubling nature will need to be achieved from a low base in Cambridge. So for a start, the character of the front open space could be more enjoyable as light woodland.
4. The heavily glazed north elevation and the glass roof plant enclosure should be reconsidered.

Drawings

SITE LAYOUT



Landscape Axiomatic



Attendees

Chair	Robin Nicholson
Panel Members	Amy Burbidge Simon Carne Luke Engleback Lynn Sullivan David Taylor
Panel Support (CCC)	Colum Fitzsimons
Local Authority	Kate Poyser (Greater Cambridge Shared Planning)
Applicant Team	Andrew Blevins – Liberty Property Trust Felicity Meares – Scott Brownrigg Jon Akers Coyle – Growth Industry Edward Lucas – Hoare Lea

Background Information List and Plans/Drawings

- Applicant briefing note
- Local authority background note